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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 15, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Thursday, May 14, 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 O'Kurley (Elk Island): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in support of Bill C-73.

I support this bill because I believe that all Canadians can take pride in the entrepreneurial spirit that Canada Post is building and that this plan will allow the corporation to share that spirit with its employees directly.

The purpose of this legislation is to enable Canada Post to create an employee share savings plan. In turn, this legislation will provide Canada Post's employees with a tangible reward for building on their company's success.

We are entering a new era of communications world-wide, particularly the information transfer business of Canada Post. Competition is a constant in any business and to succeed businesses such as Canada Post must continue to improve the quality of their products and services.

Let us make no mistake about it. Canada Post is a business. It is in competition not only with other courier companies and delivery services but also with new information transfer technologies like fax machines and direct fund transfers.

In that competitive climate Canada Post has been proving to the public and Canadian businesses that it can provide a reliable and affordable service. In fact, Canada Post was the first postal administration to hire independent auditors, Ernst & Young, to measure its letter mail delivery performance.

The latest results for the period of January to March 1992 show that Canada Post has met its publicly stated delivery standards 98 per cent of the time. This compares with the performance of less than 85 per cent on time delivery when the surveys were first taken in 1987.

Employee participation through the share plan is a common sense step to ensure that improvement continues. Canada Post is now recognized as a modern, effective postal system able to compete with the best in the world at a price that Canadians want, one that has made the fundamental changes necessary to improve service and reliability.

A major step in this process has been the achievement of financial self-sufficiency. Canada Post has announced a profit for three consecutive fiscal years and for two years in a row it has paid a dividend to its shareholder, the Government of Canada.

Financial self-sufficiency ensures that Canada Post is not a burden on taxpayers and allows Canada Post to purchase the new equipment needed to keep improving its products and services.

• (1010)

Since the mid-1980s, Canada Post has invested in research to develop the next generation of mail processing equipment. Instead of equipping the postal system with off the shelf technology as was done 20 years ago, manufacturers were asked to build to specifications which had been designed to respond to customer expectations.

Computer based sorting equipment now enables Canada Post to deliver 40 million pieces of mail every working day to over 11 million addresses across Canada.

As we approach the 21st century, we find ourselves in a world where large corporations are competing in a knowledge-based global economy where technology will provide the edge. Canada Post is investing more than $2 billion over its current five-year plan period in such things as new equipment, building modernization and technology upgrades. The new equipment can even compare postal codes with addresses. If the code is wrong, the right one will be supplied instantly. It means that the speed of processing mail will be dramatically increased.

The work Canada Post has done in building a centralized, computerized network has paid off. Canada Post is not acknowledged as a world leader in the development of technology for postal systems. It is the result of the corporation's extensive work with suppliers to create, modify and extend equipment that can be used within the postal industry.

To meet the challenge of the electronic age, Canada Post now offers customers a mixed electronic-print mail service which can provide next business day delivery. Here again is an example of the package of services made possible by technology and necessary by the needs of the modern Canada business.

More and more businesses are supplying Canada Post electronically with their messages and client lists either through direct communication links or via magnetic tape or diskette. Canada Post manufactures the mail piece at eight sites across Canada. The final products which are indistinguishable from mail originating from the purchaser of the service are delivered by Canada Post within established service standards. Here now is a convenient way for businesses to cut their costs.

This type of mail combines the speed and efficiency of long distance transmission of information in an electronic form with Canada Post's capability for delivering hard copy messages to over 11 million businesses and home addresses across Canada. The advantage is that the message travels the bulk of the distance in bits and bytes rather than on paper and planes. It is fast and it relieves the mailer of the responsibility of physically creating and handling hard copy mail. This system not only works for large volume mailers but can work for any customer with the ability to connect to Canada Post's network.

Canada Post's involvement in new technologies not only benefits its customers, it has also created opportunities for Canadian companies. When Canada Post wanted to create a means to track and trace its products, it got some help from SHL Systemhouse. This company learned so much during the course of the co-operative project that in February 1991 it won a contract worth $270 million U.S. to supply a similar tracing system to the United States postal service.

Canada Post has also worked to build an international industry with Canadian skills. Co-operation in providing postal services has been critical in developing this strategy. Canadian businesses need a reliable means of distributing materials quickly and to accomplish that Canada Post needed partners.

Last year, Canada Post announced its participation in a joint venture with the Australian based transportation company, TNT Limited and the postal administrations of Germany, France, the Netherlands and Sweden. This joint venture will give Canadians access to a high quality international express service with assured on-time delivery and end-to-end tracking. The venture now means Canada is a major player in the international express market.

I have heard some members opposite criticize this Canada Post initiative as a waste of the taxpayers' money. Here we have a major foreign, Federal Express, the U.S. courier company, which also thinks so much of TNT that it is willing to sign for the delivery of its parcels in Europe. Federal Express knows a good thing when it sees it. This government knows a good thing when it sees it. Canadians can be proud of their postal system and its international accomplishments. It seems only the opposition wants Canada Post to return to the 19th century and delivery of mail by horse and carriage.

Another partnership effort has been the creation of the International Post Corporation. IPC is owned by 22 major postal administrations which among them deliver 60 per cent of the world's mail. In fact, Canada Post's President Don Lander is also chairman of IPC. IPC is working to remove technological and procedural roadblocks that may prevent its members from meeting the needs of their citizens.

Canada Post uses technology not only to improve its own operations but has formed an international consulting firm, Canada Post Systems Management Limited, to market its Canadian technology and expertise. This firm is consulting with postal administrations in Central

America and has worked in Europe, Mexico and the south Pacific.

The use of technology, the effective interpretation of the needs of Canadians and of business opportunities, the development of partnerships with industries and businesses both domestically and internationally, are all fundamental to the creation and successful development of a business that is growing and adapting to the needs of the marketplace.

Tremendous progress has been achieved by the corporation since it has been given a clear commercial mandate by this government. To achieve financial self-sufficiency, Canada Post transformed itself into the effective and reliable provider of postal products and services it now is. Technology, customer service, and partnerships made the difference and remain fundamental to the corporation's ongoing success.

However, for all the strategic decision-making, the investments in technology or work with customers, most of what the corporation does depends on the people who are Canada Post.

Obviously we on this side of the House, and hopefully our colleagues on the other side, support this legislation because we believe it will have a positive effect on employee-management relations at Canada Post.

Labour relations are no different from other aspects of Canada Post's business, so serious reforms were brought to bear on the relationship between employer and unions at Canada Post. An example of this is the attendance management program which has reduced absenteeism from an average of 19 days a year for each full-time employee to levels close to the industry standard.

Another part of the transformation occurred when the Canada Labour Relations Board reviewed the number of bargaining units at the corporation and ruled they be consolidated into four units. One of these is the operations unit represented by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Canadians are only too aware of the sometimes difficult relationship that Canada Post has with its largest union. It is not surprising that any postal disruption generates headlines and affects almost every person in the country who receives or sends mail.

It is my hope that this legislation will build on the improvements which have already been accomplished at Canada Post. The process of change at Canada Post has had its ups and downs but it has paid off.

Canada Post is a far cry from the post office it replaced a decade ago. Management's approach to its employees is far more than the headlines give them credit for. Not everything is dark in Canada Post's labour relations. There is another side to every coin.

The corporation has achieved collective agreements with all its other bargaining units without work disruption regardless of a number of serious incidents during the strike.

Canadians should remember that the vast majority of postal workers want only to have a secure job with good pay and decent working conditions. They want respect, fair treatment, and recognition for their good work.

• (1020)

One of the biggest challenges that Canada Post has had to face over the years has been to change the mind-set of its workers to instil the values, threats and opportunities of a competitive business in thousands of employees who once worked in a government department that had little competition.

This legislation will promote a greater understanding and involvement of employees and the challenges and opportunities of the future. That is fundamental to their motivation to become builders and beneficiaries of the corporation's success. It is important that employees realize that Canada Post is a competitive business, that success rests upon their shoulders, and that meeting the needs of Canadians is the strongest job and income security package ever invented.

This government initiative is the latest step in a process that has already begun to change the way that Canada Post relates to its employees. Many of them have already demonstrated their commitment to the corporation and its future and have made significant contributions. Canada Post introduced a number of programs specifically designed to recognize and reward exceptional performance.

Canada Post understands the importance of showing its appreciation to outstanding employees and now singles out and rewards exceptional performance through its silver and golden postmark awards. Each year employees in every division of the corporation may nominate their co-workers for the 10 categories of the silver postmark recognition awards. The awards go to employees for exceptional achievement in such areas as community or humanitarian work, or for those who go beyond the call of duty to make that special effort which meets customers' needs.

From among these winners, those whose actions or involvement truly stand out are selected to receive the national golden postmark awards. Let me tell the House about some of last year's winners.

Mark Eisenbraun, a retail representative in Keswick on Lake Simcoe, received a call from local police advising him that some stolen mail had been found floating in a swamp. While two co-workers collected letters at the edge of the marsh, Eisenbraun got a wet suit, a large net and waded into the middle of the swamp to get the rest.

John Brady, an operations manager in Victoria, spent seven hours on a Christmas Day making sure a local high school basketball team would be able to attend the Cotton Bowl in Dallas as planned. Responding to a last minute call from the coach, Brady found the team's package containing airline tickets, food vouchers and football game tickets, saving the trip.

Crystal Trider, an industrial engineer in Halifax, was working on a Saturday, the day before Father's Day. Among the mail arriving at her plant that day were Father's Day cards which had been sent in Canada Post's special occasion envelopes. Of course these had not been sent in time for delivery but she volunteered to deliver them herself. Her initiatives made the holiday even more special for dozens of dads in the Halifax area.

These are some examples of the outstanding people who work at Canada Post, people who believe that a job is more than job security and good wages, people who believe that satisfaction comes from doing a job well and not just meeting but exceeding the expectations of Canadians.

This is one of the ways Canada Post is recognizing employees. There is also the employee involvement program which encourages staff to submit ideas which cut costs, improve operations and increase productivity. Winning employees receive a percentage of the first year cost saving their ideas brought to the corporation.

Canada Post has also developed a scholarship program which provides financial help to 90 sons and daughters of CPC employees who are attending post-secondary institutions.

There is also a commitment to internal training programs so that employees can confidently operate the new state of the art equipment that is continually being introduced in mail processing plants.

In 1989 Canada Post introduced the Heritage Club, with membership restricted to long service and retired employees and their spouses. Currently there are 29,000 members: 11,000 who have retired, 5,000 who are still part of the work force and have 25 years of service, and 13,000 spouses.

Community involvement is the key to the Heritage Club's mandate. The activities of individual club chapters receive some financial assistance for local community enhancement.

Other activities have a community orientation. Canada Post employees across Canada volunteer their time for the Santa letter writing program sponsored by the corporation. This year alone, thousands of employees volunteered their time to answer over one million letters written to Santa's special HOH OHO postal code.

Thousands of people volunteer their time to answer the letters. I understand that even some of the most militant CUPW members participate in responding to letters that come from all over the world and are written in many different languages. The program adds something special to our employees' holiday season and generates goodwill on behalf of Canada throughout the world.

These are some of the good things that are helping to ensure that postal workers share in the sense of progress at Canada Post. The examples I have mentioned clearly show that things are evolving in a positive way at Canada Post. The share savings plan will build on this in a positive way.

The share savings plan will provide an incentive for employees to increase Canada Post's financial performance and thus increase the value of their shares. It will attract, motivate and retain highly qualified employees and recognize their contribution. It will permit all employees to acquire and own a piece of the corporation

in which they work and create a sense of entrepreneurial spirit.

It will build the level of pride by employees for the success of their company. It will develop a long-term commitment for the company, its products and quality of service.

These are the reasons I believe all Canadians should be enthusiastic about the opportunities offered by this measure. This spells out improved service for Canadians, improved employee-management relations and a healthier Canada Post.

People want to be proud. I believe that Canadians in general and particularly employees are seeing that Canada Post is becoming a place they can be proud of.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for his recognition of the qualities of the postal system in this country.

I too share his view. I stated on the floor of the House last night that the post office, in terms of productivity and efficiency, probably has one of the highest rankings of any organization in Canada. I think a lot of Canadians are really surprised when I stand and say that, but by using the criteria that business uses to judge productivity the post office comes out ahead most of the time.

Of course we salute all the things people within the post office are doing within their community. We salute the efforts of management to improve the morale and to improve the productivity.

The problem I have with this attempt to experiment with equity participation, a principle that I support, is that I do not see anything in the bill which talks about the criteria for assessing the value of the shares. How is the value of a share to be determined? To me, I just do not see anything in it that would set up the criteria.

Another point would be shareholders' rights. Often people get involved in share option schemes and sometimes they do not have any rights. That could come back to haunt the government.

A third point I would like to ask the member about has to do with the federal presence. I need the member's attention because it seems to me this is the most serious problem we have with the postal system in this country.

In 1980 we put the Canada word mark on every postal unit in this country. Whether it was a post office, a post box or a truck that delivered the mail, we put the Canada word mark on it. It was a symbol of the national government's presence in not just the larger communities but small towns. The Canada word mark is the symbol of this great country and of this great government.

• (1030)

A few months ago the Prime Minister was talking about patriotism. I support his view that we should be more patriotic.

I would like the member to give me his reasons as to why the post office was stripped of the word "Canada" in close to 40,000 units across Canada. They were stripped of the Canada wordmark. In all postal operations across Canada, the word "Canada" was painted out on trucks and post office boxes. They were stripped of it.

We spent millions of dollars of taxpayers' money in 1980 to put the word "Canada" up there to give people, especially those in disadvantaged regions, smaller regions and smaller towns of our country, a feeling that the national government was present.

On the value of shares, what criteria are to be used? On the rights of shareholders, what rights are shareholders to have? Finally why was "Canada" stripped from the postal service?

Mr. O'Kurley: Madam Speaker, the hon. member opposite asked a question with regard to the details about the shares, how the dividends will be determined, and so on. Obviously there would be consultations with Treasury Board and the Department of Finance.

Canada Post is an arm's length Crown corporation. It is owned by the Government of Canada. Therefore the Government of Canada through Treasury Board and through the Department of Finance would have some input into how those details would be determined.

In terms of the offering of shares to its employees, it is important to point out that Canada Post is a corporation. As I mentioned in my earlier remarks, Canada Post is a business operating in a competitive business environment. In that vein the whole aspect of relations between labour and management is critical.

In countries where there is the most success with labour and management we see that labour has had an opportunity to participate in some sense of accountability in the system. That is why I believe this initiative in the bill will be a positive one.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, I find something really very troubling about the exchange that occurred between the Liberal member and the hon. member subsequent to his speech.

I cannot believe the speech we heard earlier could have been written by anybody except a press officer for Canada Post. I cannot possibly believe these two gentlemen on both sides of the House could regard the paternalistic arrangement and relationship between management and labour described in the member's speech as an appropriate one for stimulating good productivity.

If they have not learned the lessons of Alcan, Chrysler, Ford and a number of other productive industries in this country, that the relationship between management and labour should be a partnership with a common purpose of serving the customer, then they do not understand at all. They do not understand that giving employees a 10 per cent shareholding without any voting power is no contribution to improving productivity and labour relations in the decision-making process at all.

It is ridiculous and absurd to suggest that workers are so stupid as to believe that 10 per cent of non-voting shares will give them effective influence.

I cannot understand how that member or the member on the other side could believe that this would overcome the distrust that has existed in the post office for years, highlighted by the fact that post office management said that it had a wage offer on the table which it withdrew in the face of arbitration. It think this penny-ante stuff is going to help labour relations in the post office. I say there should be a reform that recognizes that labour and management have a common responsibility and that is to serve the Canadian public. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers is ready to do that. Let the management wake up, let this government wake up and let those on the other side of this House wake up and understand what a good labour relationship is all about.

Mr. Mills: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Last night when we debated this issue there was not a single member of the New Democratic Party here when I gave my speech in which I said that I oppose this bill. The member is totally taking things out of context.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It is a nice Friday morning, is it not?

Mr. O'Kurley: Madam Speaker, with regard to the member's comments about labour relations, it is important for members of the House and also for all Canadians to recognize that success is not achieved by the old model of confrontation. Effective service to Canadians is not achieved by the NDP's preferred model of confrontation between labour and management.

When we look at the strongest economies in the world, Japan and Germany for example, one of the things that we find in those economies is a co-operative model, co-operation between management and labour. This initiative by the Government of Canada is the first step in achieving that co-operation which is necessary.

Often we see labour posturing for a strike and wanting that confrontation. It puts millions of dollars into strike funds. It would be important for the NDP, as representatives in many cases of labour—taking its marching orders from labour—to encourage labour groups to invest those strike funds into shares in corporations. It is important to recognize also that you cannot have authority without accountability. Buying shares in a company is one way of assuming the accountability that management always assumes.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, I must say I am not thrilled to participate in this debate, but I am glad I am participating in it at the moment after hearing my colleague's speech from the Conservative Party suggesting that his idea of good management-labour relations is to have a chart. If you behave well you get a star beside your name at the end of the week. This somehow is supposed to cause elation and productivity among the workers.

I have heard a lot of talk about labour-management relations and I have listened to a lot of speakers suggest how to get more productivity out of their operation and encourage participation at a very high level among their employees. I have never once heard the set of recom-

mendations that the way to do that is to refuse to sign a collective agreement with your employees.

Imagine how humiliated those people working for the post office this morning will feel when they find out that while the government has decided not to sign a collective agreement for nearly three years with the employees of the post office, the government members are standing up and saying: "We found a solution. Forget collective agreements, we have this star idea. We are going to give everybody a gold star if they perform well". It is embarrassing and humiliating.

Now we have Bill C–73. This is the ace in the hole. They said that already the people of Canada, including those who work for the post office, own the post office. It is a Crown corporation. We own it. The government says: "We have another idea. We are going to allow you, who already own the post office, to buy shares in the post office but there will be no voting and you will have no say in its operation". Somehow this is supposed to get people elated.

• (1040)

This is awful. It is awful for the House of Commons to spend time on this sort of nonsense. Imagine what every rank and file worker is feeling across this country who works for the post office.

Here they were waiting for a collective agreement, waiting for some leadership from the government, and this is what they got, Bill C–73.

An hon. member: More letters to Santa Claus.

Mr. Riis: The whole thing is laughable, but it is sad. It is sad when we consider that one of the most important services we have in this country from the federal government is the postal service. This is the kind of management approach, the kind of paternalistic approach to those thousands of hard–working employees across the country. All of us, from our own personal experience, whether it is in our work as members of Parliament, meeting with those who work for the postal corporation, whether it is our friends who happen to be members of various unions attached to the postal corporation or their affiliates, or whether it is simply the people who deliver our mail whom we know personally, these individuals are dedicated and committed Canadians.

They work very hard to deliver the mail. As others have stated, one of the most effective and efficient systems in spite of management and in spite of this government is Canada's post office. The rank and file workers of the post office are committed to the post office, committed to mail delivery, committed to a high level of service and committed to the people of Canada. I cannot say that of the government or of most of management. I wish I could.

Let us look at the legislation. Bill C–73 will make 10 per cent of Canada Post non–voting shares available for purchase by Canada Post employees on a voluntary basis. As soon as this was uttered by the postal corporation, those who work for the corporation came forward and said that this was absolute nonsense. Therefore, here we are continuing on.

An hon. member: Did Don Lander say that?

Mr. Riis: A number of people are suggesting that this is the beginning of the full privatization of Canada Post. I know the minister responsible for Canada Post has said that this is not the case. What did he say? If you listen to what he actually said, it was: "There are no immediate privatization plans in the cards". He went on to say on May 1, 1992: "If I had to bet, I would bet that in the next couple of decades you will see post offices being privatized all over the world and I would not mind seeing Canada first". That was a minister of the cabinet responsible for Canada Post saying that he would love to see Canada Post privatized. He said this is not immediate privatization. We are suggesting that this is the first step.

Then the Prime Minister has said that he is not aware of any plans to privatize the post office. As a matter of fact, he said he would not be in favour of that. This is the Prime Minister who had other things to say.

On April 13, 1988 the Prime Minister said that some people wanted to buy the CBC but that the CBC was not for sale. He said that Air Canada was not for sale. We all know that the government sold Air Canada, beginning in 1988 with the shares offered first to its employees. In other words, this is the government's approach. The first step is to sell some of the shares to the employees before moving into full privatization.

I say that the Conservative Government record speaks for itself. When you want to privatize a major Crown corporation, you offer some shares to the employees first before you go on to the general share market. We oppose this because it will have absolutely nothing to do with improving labour–management relations with the postal corporation.

How could you expect employees of the postal corporation to feel that they are part of an operation when the government is treating them this way? At the moment there are over 100,000 outstanding grievances at Canada Post. That is roughly two grievances per person.

That tells it all. The unions said they wanted to resolve this dispute, agreed to resolve the dispute, turned it over to an arbitrator and the legislation came through to require this. The postal corporation pulled all of its offers and today we have no collective agreement for the employees.

This is not the way to conduct an operation. My hon. friend from the Conservative Party who just spoke said that the government is committed to making Canada Post a profitable business. It has to be a profitable corporation. This is a government service that has to make money. It has to be profitable.

An hon. member: It is the measure of all things.

Mr. Riis: It is the measure of all things, as my colleague from Edmonton reminds me. That is the Tory measurement.

The government does not suggest that this is necessary for the RCMP. It does not have to be a profit-making policing corporation. The fire departments are not profitable. The ambulances do not make profits. The hospitals are not supposed to make profits. Universities are not supposed to make profits. The Canada Post Corporation, which services every person in this country on a regular basis, has to make money to be successful.

We say this is nonsense. NDP logic asks why should we choose one service to have to generate revenue from the people of Canada when already we own this? Quite frankly, we can say that in terms of cost recovery, we have always supported measures that would result in cost recovery, but to be convinced that this ought to be a profit-driven business is ludicrous.

We say that having these programs put into place in an effort to increase employee morale by using the silver star system is something you would find in a kindergarten class. A grade three class would probably be embarrassed by that approach.

We oppose this legislation, obviously. We oppose this legislation because we believe that this will do absolutely nothing to promote labour-management peace within the postal corporation. As a matter of fact, it is such an embarrassing piece of legislation, such a humiliating piece of legislation and such an aggravating piece of legislation that it is like walking up to every postal employee and poking them in the eye with a finger. That is what the minister is trying to do here. We think this is the wrong approach to labour-management relations.

We also oppose this legislation because unquestionably this is the first step toward the full privatization of Canada Post. I know the record is clear that the government's plan is to privatize every rural post office in Canada. That is the stated goal.

Already it has privatized significant numbers. One of the best examples of this totally silly decision was in my own constituency in a small community called Westwold, British Columbia, which has a few hundred citizens and services a rural farm area primarily.

It had a post office which was the centre for the entire community. It provided the nucleus for the community. People would come during the day, exchange views and see what was happening in the community as a result of notices, and they would conduct their postal business.

The postmaster had to vacate and so the postal corporation said this is the opportunity now to privatize the post office, to close it down. The question was where does it to go? There are no businesses, no retail outlets in the community. It said: "Listen, we have a good idea. There is another community about 30 kilometres away. We can put it there and let everyone drive there every day to collect their mail and do their postal work. Or, there is a legion in the area that has a bar and we could have it as an adjunct to the bar". A lot of people said: "This seems to be kind of silly because a lot of times the children are picking up the mail or, quite frankly, I do not relish the idea of picking up my mail in a bar".

Mr. Rodriguez: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Riis: That is exactly what the postal department said.

Today the post office in Westwold is in the Legion bar. This is wrong. This shows the bull-headedness and the single-mindedness of the postal corporation to privatize no matter what, no matter if it makes any sense at all.

This is about the most ridiculous decision of the postal corporation imaginable.

• (1050)

We oppose this bill because we have looked through it carefully and we have asked if this bill improves the service to Canadians. Does this bill help improve service to urban and rural Canadians? We have gone through this bill clause by clause and we have not found a single point in this legislation that would lead us to believe this will improve service one iota. We cannot support it for that reason.

We asked ourselves if this will result in the postal corporation's stopping harassment of its union members and sticking to its word. We looked through and found no evidence of that. We assume that will continue.

I am trying to think of a single reason why anyone would support this legislation. I have listened carefully to my colleagues across the way and perhaps this is their idea of comedy or humour because I have not heard a single reference to any reason why this bill ought to be supported, even by members of the government.

They talk of a need to have a more efficient post office. This will not do that. They talk about improved management relations. This will not do that. They talk about this being a progressive idea because it will give the opportunity for people to be meaningfully involved in the future of the post office. That is not the case. These are non-voting shares. The post office is already owned in part by its employees and now to say they can have a chance to buy and own a part seems to be nonsensical.

As we pour through the legislation at second reading and discuss the principle of the legislation, we are trying to identify a single reason why we should support this. We are trying to listen carefully to the Conservative members while they speak to identify a single reason and yet it is very wanting. I can only say we will not support this legislation.

Let me make a suggestion to my hon. friends sitting opposite on the government benches. If they wanted to send a very positive signal to the employees of the postal corporation, they would withdraw this legislation and say our first priority will be to settle the collective agreement. That would be the first gesture.

If they said they would withdraw this silly nonsensical legislation and instruct our negotiators to resolve this contractual dispute immediately, it would send the second most positive signal to the employees of Canada Post. It would encourage them to see some hope in an approved operation.

The way the government and the minister responsible for Canada Post could make Canadians and the people who work in the postal corporation the happiest of all would be to announce that on July 1, Canada's birthday, the Progressive Conservative government will call an election.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's remarks. I have a question for him.

He is seeking a single reason why his party should be supporting this legislation. I would like to ask him if he agrees with any of the reasons for this type of move currently being proposed by the New Democratic government in Ontario.

I noted in the Speech from the Throne that one of the objectives of the Government of Ontario in the coming session is to achieve worker-ownership legislation. Worker-ownership legislation will come forward for final debate.

I would like to quote from the proposed reform of the Ontario Labour Relations Act, a discussion paper tabled by the Ontario Ministry of Labour in November 1991. This is a most interesting document. I will quote from the Ontario NDP government's labour reforms under section 1.3, entitled "The Government's Social and Economic Agenda". I note with interest that one of the points the Ontario NDP government is making as part of its agenda is:

"Encouraging worker investment and ownership in Ontario companies in a manner which recognizes the benefits of worker participation for both labour and business".

If the hon. member is looking for a single reason to support this legislation it is surely coming from his colleagues in Ontario. The Ontario government is saying that workers should be stakeholders. They should be more than employees, they should be participants in the ownership of companies.

The single reason that the member is looking for is the benefits. Consider the phrase that members of the Ontario NDP, your colleagues, are using. They are the benefits of worker participation.

What are the benefits of worker participation? Obviously, when somebody who is an employee becomes a shareholder, a stakeholder in an organization they have more interest in the success of that corporation, in the efficient management of that corporation, in the delivery of better services for that corporation and in the establishment of better labour management relations for that corporation. Those are four benefits. There are now four reasons why you can support it, and standing right behind you is the NDP government, your colleagues, in Ontario. It obviously has recognized that this move is the right move. Comments?

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I know my hon. friend was not serious when he put those questions.

This legislation prohibits employees from having meaningful participation in Canada Post. It says: "You will not be able to vote on anything we do in Canada Post". I have a savings account with a local credit union. I have more voice simply by having a savings account with a credit union than these employees would have by having non-voting shares. He knows that. He knows he is simply making some nonsensical gesture in this House to mislead.

On another point. Surely to goodness if you want to—

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure the hon. member erred in the inflammatory language he was using. He alleges that I have sought to mislead the House. I have not. I would ask that he withdraw.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not think that the hon. member for Kamloops was saying that the hon. member for Halton—Peel was deliberately trying to mislead the House, though he was getting very close to impugning motives to the hon. member. Maybe the hon. member for Kamloops could have the opportunity of concluding his comments.

Mr. Riis: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. member obviously did not know what he was talking about then. I do not think that he would intend to mislead the House. His suggestion that this legislation will give employees meaningful participation in Canada Post is absolutely false. It is a falsehood. I am only assuming that he has not yet read the legislation.

Second, the employees already own this business. The employees own the business. He is now suggesting that they can have further ownership. I do not understand the points my hon. friend makes.

Ask anyone who has studied or bothered to read a single book on labour-management relations how to encourage the maximum amount of efficiency and productivity from your operation and they would say that it is wise to include people in a meaningful way, in terms of ownership and participation in management. That is what the New Democratic Party government is suggesting we do in the province of Ontario. That is what we would like to see done right across the whole country, not this scam or illusion that somehow this is going to enable people to play a meaningful role in the management of Canada Post.

Mr. Harb: Madam Speaker, are questions and comments finished?

Madam Deputy Speaker: There is a minute left before we go into statements pursuant to Standing Order 31. Does the hon. member have a question or a comment for the hon. member?

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, I am quite interested in the tone of the debate. I wonder if it is not time to bring this whole debate to a civilized level so that we could have some meaningful discussion on the pros and cons of this legislation.

It is an extremely important piece of legislation. It is an historic one in a lot of ways. I would not want to take the time of the House of Commons to debate the details of it at this point in time. I can see that we are getting close to eleven o'clock.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Maybe the member will have his wish after Question Period.

As it is eleven o'clock, we will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

NATIVE AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Madam Speaker, next week has been declared Native Awareness Week. Several departments will be participating in the event this year which will be sponsored by the Canada Department of Agriculture.

This initiative complements the federal native work force participation initiative. It is designed to increase an awareness of and promote the contribution of natives in the Public Service. In doing so, it will promote more harmonious and productive exchanges between natives and non-natives.

On behalf of the Minister and the Minister of State for Indian Affairs and Northern Development, I am pleased to highlight and support this event. I commend the Department of Agriculture for its initiative and all participating departments for their co-operation.

Let me take this opportunity to recall that our government has taken several initiatives in recent years to ensure that natives take their rightful place not only in the work force but also in Canadian society. These include the native agenda, the royal commission on aboriginal peoples, and the integration of aboriginals in the constitutional discussions.

However today I want above all to pay tribute to our aboriginal community for its increasingly important contribution to our work force and our common heritage.

* * *

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Madam Speaker, I rise to draw the attention of the House to the mortal danger menacing Canada's science and technology infrastructure.

Yes, it is none other than the dreaded techno-punching terminator, alias the Prime Minister. Nothing has escaped his scourge of devastation and destruction: Nobel prize winning labs at the National Research Council, industrial research and research on the environment, alternative energy and health care, the Science Council, and now our very ability to gather and analyse research and development statistics.

What message does this send to Canadians? Does this imply that the results of the prosperity initiative are in and science and technology does not play a central role?

As for science and technology statistics, both the quantity and the quality of the data are at risk, especially quality. We need a government that will demonstrate in deed as well as in words that science and technology are critical in addressing the economic, social and cultural challenges facing Canadians.

* * *

VOYAGEURS 92

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, several weeks ago the Secretary of State announced a program called Voyageurs 92 intended to allow members of Parliament to twin their ridings and give 125 young people in each riding a chance to visit another part of Canada.

I would like to thank the minister for doing that. I would also like to thank the corporate sponsors, especially Air Canada, for making this exchange program possible.

In Halton—Peel the concept has been embraced enthusiastically by the eight secondary schools located therein. The Voyageurs program in my riding under the direction of committee chairman Alf Spence was quickly over-subscribed and now has a growing waiting list.

The students look forward to learning about a new part of Canada. They believe that as more Canadians experience the beauty and majesty of their country any thoughts of it breaking apart will certainly melt away like the spring snow.

* * *

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge the government to implement a focused systematic program to examine in detail breast cancer research, education, early detection, and treatment.

It is astounding that this year one in nine Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. The rates are up substantially from 20 years ago. In 1991 alone 5,000 women lost their lives through breast cancer and

15,000 new cases were diagnosed. However, in 22 years early detection methods remain largely unchanged.

I am hopeful that the subcommittee on the status of women will recognize in its report, expected in June, the need for greater public awareness about the impact of breast cancer, the need to increase our research efforts to find out what causes breast cancer, to discover better early detection methods and to improve treatment with a view to finding a cure.

* * *

SOUTH MORESBY NATIONAL PARK

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, a great battle was fought and won in this Chamber five years ago to protect forever the Gwaii Haanas Archipelago, or South Moresby National Park Reserve as it has come to be known. Some $106 million was committed to be spent over eight years. Canada has failed to live up to its legal commitments.

Also $50 million was promised to develop a world-class tourism destination to diversify the regional economy and to adjust from logging to tourism.

Yesterday the Minister of the Environment announced that an agreement has been reached with the Haida nation regarding Gwaii Haanas. Bill C-59 will now proceed, with agreed amendments. Some $5.8 million will be spent this summer on visitor reception centres and park reserve development.

However, the delays to date in implementing the spirit of the agreement are unreasonable. Residents expect $44 million to be transferred now to the locally controlled Gwaii trust. The funds for reception centres and operation and development costs must come from Ottawa.

The cost for the Sandspit small craft harbour must come from Ottawa. The forest companies and the loggers have been compensated. The funds for reforestation have been allocated. There can be no more delays in funds for the affected communities.

CANADA HEALTH AUXILIARY WEEK

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast): Madam Speaker, this past week has been designated Canada Health Auxiliary Week by the Canadian Association of Health Care Auxiliaries. The theme this year is auxiliary leadership through education.

There are more than 100,000 health care volunteers affiliated with over 800 auxiliaries in local communities across the country. These volunteers play a strong and vital role in our health care system in humanizing the health care given to hospitalized patients, in raising funds for much needed equipment and services, and in sponsoring educational programs within their communities. They provide a unique and valuable service to Canadians.

I invite my colleagues and all Canadians to recognize the work and dedication of health auxiliaries as well as their enormous contribution which makes our Canadian health care system unequalled anywhere in the world.

* * *

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, section 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, 1978 says that it is discriminatory practice for an employer to establish or maintain differences in wages between male and female employees who are performing work of equal value.

The pay equity provision of the act must be respected by all federal government agencies, all federal Crown corporations and all private sector businesses regulated under federal law. Almost one million employees are covered by the Canadian Human Rights Act. Approximately 45 per cent are women. Very few women, as we know, have benefited from the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value.

We must eliminate discrimination in compensation between men and women. Employment equity concerns fairness in the representation of various target groups such as women, aboriginal people, visible minorities and the disabled in the work force, and in the treatment and employment practices such as recruitment, training and promotion.

I call on the government—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

CANADIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Etobicoke—Lakeshore): Madam Speaker, several years ago the government cancelled the Katimavik program and said at that time that a new and better program would come along in its place for Canadian youth.

I believe now is the time to initiate something that could be called the Canadian Youth Service Corps. It would be a new program that would recruit Canadians from age 18 and upward on a voluntary basis for one year of service to the nation.

This would be an opportunity to serve in perhaps one of several different streams: for example, environmental, military, social help to seniors and Canadians with disabilities and community service.

Canadian youth participating in such a youth corps would move to different parts of Canada and work with Canadians from different parts of our country. In the course of giving service they would learn both about Canada and about themselves.

* * *

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, Canadians and particularly seniors have a continuing concern about the price of prescription drugs.

Green Shield has documented the dramatic increase in the price of drugs averaging 11.4 per cent a year since the extension of drug patents in 1987 to the multinational drug companies. This increase threatens our provincial drug plans and our entire health care system.

Even the federal minister of health stated recently that such increases, which are well above the rate of inflation, would kill the health care system.

Who should Canadians hold responsible for this dramatic increase in drug prices? The Conservatives, for agreeing to the extension of the patent protection on behalf of the multinational drug companies as a pre-condition to the free trade deal, and Judy Erola, a former Liberal minister of consumer affairs, the chief spokesperson and lobbyist for the multinational drug companies.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil—Papineau): Madam Speaker, I too would like to remind members of this House and the general public that this is National Nurses Week. The theme "Nurses: Allies for Change" shows the key role that nurses play in looking into the system and changing and strengthening it. The physical, mental and social well-being of all Canadians depends on this system. Nurses are committed to meeting the challenge of applying the principles set forth in the Canada Health Act, to maintaining effective, affordable health services and to renewing partnerships in the field of health.

• (1110)

I call on my colleagues to join me in congratulating Canada's nurses.

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MONTREAL'S 350TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, I have the honour and pleasure, as a Canadian, a Quebecer and the member for Saint-Léonard, to wish all Montrealers a happy anniversary celebration. On May 16, 1642—historians do not agree on the exact date—the French founded what was to become one of the greatest cities in America. In the past 350 years, Montreal has become a leading centre of culture and economic vitality for Quebec, Canada and America.

Despite the temporary economic difficulties that the city is going through, I hope that all members of this House join me in wishing Montreal and all its citizens very happy 350th anniversary celebrations.

Bonne fête, Montréal. Happy anniversary, Montreal. *Buon compleanno, Montreal.*

S. O. 31

[*English*]

FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Madam Speaker, foetal alcohol syndrome, known as FAS, is a disease with far-reaching repercussions. It is caused before birth when a pregnant mother consumes alcohol.

While we do not know a great deal about FAS, we do know that children born with FAS exhibit varying symptoms of mental retardation. Some children are visibly handicapped, while others learn of their disabilities later in life. The trauma for the child in the family is great. It is often worse for adoptive parents who have no clue to the cause of their child's problem.

Witnesses appearing before the House committee on health issues told us there was no cure for the neurological damage of foetal alcohol syndrome. Although the tragedy is great there is hope. foetal alcohol syndrome can be prevented: Alcohol consumption should be avoided during pregnancy.

I encourage the Minister of National Health and Welfare to undertake with his provincial counterparts a campaign to inform expectant mothers about foetal alcohol syndrome. Let us avoid further tragedy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Madam Speaker, there was an article in the papers recently about excessive amounts spent by the Canadian International Development Agency on a reception held in Ottawa. This has created considerable controversy among Canadians and certainly does not enhance CIDA's reputation. In fact, it was not the first time excessive spending by the agency was mentioned.

Canada has a moral obligation to help less developed countries where famine and extreme poverty are prevalent. Considering its mandate and its mission, CIDA should realize that the public will not condone such excesses, which are a flagrant contradiction of its mission to help countries where famine is endemic. I ask the government to order CIDA's senior officials to—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired. The hon. member for Drummond.

* * *

WINNERS OF MARC LESCARBOT AWARD

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to two of my constituents, winners of the Marc Lescarbot Award, in the local awards category, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the advancement of the arts in the region. This year, the Lescarbot award, volunteer category, went to Germaine Proulx for her contribution to the arts. Ms. Proulx is well-known in local cultural circles. She was actively involved in promoting cultural activities in a number of areas, in addition to founding the Drummondville Ballet Academy which celebrates its 45th anniversary this year.

In the arts patron category, the Lescarbot award went to Noël Sylvain. Mr. Sylvain is a patron of the arts, in the true sense of the word. At his instigation, Union Life has repeatedly and in many ways supported, encouraged and sponsored artists and the arts in our region.

I am delighted to see that the unselfish and dynamic contribution made by Germaine Proulx and Noël Sylvain is finally given tangible recognition.

* * *

[*English*]

TRINITY—SPADINA CONFERENCE

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, justice and jobs, alternatives to free trade and the corporate agenda will be the subject of a conference starting this evening in Trinity—Spadina, Toronto.

The themes will include thrust and key elements of the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the proposed North American free trade agreement, discussion of alternatives for Canada and Latin America, strategies for democratizing the economy, how Canadian banks gouge Canadians and Latin Americans, why the banks support the FTA and NAFTA, and how NAFTA and the

FTA will affect food processing jobs, family farms and access to affordable food in Canada and Mexico.

Speakers will include spokespersons of the Canadian Autoworkers Union, Miguel D'Escoto, a former Nicaraguan minister of external affairs, a leading opposition member of the Mexican Congress and a leading Mexican economist, members of the Canadian Parliament for Surrey North and for Oshawa, and Tony Clark, chair of Action Canada, on why renegotiations will not work and how to build for cancellation of the FTA and NAFTA.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Every day this week members of the Liberal Party have risen in the House to plead with the government not to abandon Canada's unemployed. We talk about the lack of mobility assistance, adequate training dollars, job availability, and what not.

Today the Canadian Mental Health Association said that as unemployment rises in Canada there are increases in infant mortality, suicide, murder, spouse and child abuse, family breakdown, and so on.

When will the Minister of Finance start to consider that this never-ending recession which has been going on now for more than 27 months is hurting all Canadians very badly and the time has come to change his policies?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, the hon. member refers to the Canadian Mental Health Association report. Are we going to lead Canadians down the path of only doom and gloom?

If he wants to compare the rates of suicide, family break-ups, alcoholism and drug abuse and tie them to the unemployment rate, I invite him—and I am not saying it has no affect—to compare it with other countries in the world where there are rampant problems in that area.

The answer is not to try to blame unemployment for everything. We should, rather, maybe join other Canadians under this prosperity initiative and try to identify ways where we can improve this situation. That is what the government is doing.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I would like to point out to the hon. minister that yesterday one of his colleagues in this House, the member for Halifax West, said: "One of the things that you learn in an election is not to bother with welfare houses".

Was he reflecting the views of that party and that government not to care for the people who are suffering in society and who have lost their dignity because they cannot find jobs? When will this government put on a human face and repudiate that awful statement by the member of Halifax West?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, if words mean anything, the leader of the Liberal Party stood on January 21 and called for a great one-year emergency economic plan. Do you know what he suggested for unemployed Canadians? He suggested that the Government of Canada should increase its training funding by a meagre $150 million.

We are providing 20 times that amount each year for unemployed Canadians. The Liberals should come clean with Canadians and tell them what they really think.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I simply wanted to say to the minister that the problem is not going away. One and a half million Canadians are out of work, and we now know that more than 600,000 Canadians have left the labour market and have given up on finding a job. This means that 1.5 million people have lost their dignity in Canada because they cannot work and that 600,000 more Canadians have given up altogether and may be too embarrassed to go out and look for work, because this government refuses to give them a chance to earn a living, to live with some dignity and to be proud citizens of this country.

• (1120)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition keeps saying this government has no consideration for the unemployed and is not

concerned about their situation. The fact is that we increased our budgets. At a time when fiscal responsibility is paramount, we still increased all funding used to help these people. I fail to see why the hon. member thinks he can improve their situation by shouting that we have done nothing at all, although program effectiveness and program funding have both increased. I suppose we could also do what the Liberals did. We could keep raising taxes or increase the deficit.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, I too have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The Leader of the Opposition raised a question about the statement of the Conservative member for Halifax West in the press and I quote: "One of the things you learn in elections is not to bother with welfare houses". The Leader of the Opposition invited the minister to reject that statement and he did not do so.

I ask the minister, will he reject the statement right now, or does his silence mean that he and his government agree with his colleague and are writing off the poor and unemployed in this country?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, if rejecting a statement by a member of Parliament or interpreting silence as a kiss-off, then the Liberals are guilty of a lot of things in this country.

The question is simply, what efforts are being devoted by this government to try to help the unemployed? We have increased the spending under the Department of Employment and Immigration by $300 million this year to try to address that tough situation.

Canada is subjected to this recession. Canada is subjected to restructuring that is taking place in this global economy. The private sector has to answer this challenge with the help of government. It does not want us to substitute and do it for them. The tools have to be in place and that is what we are trying to do.

Talking about education and training, Canada is spending $11 billion a year. When looking at the books that is more than last year and the year before but the Liberals will still claim that it is less.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, I return again to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and invite him and ask him to reject the callous words of his colleague the Conservative member for Halifax West who said: "One of the things you learn in elections is not to bother with welfare houses". Does he not realize that by remaining silent he is confirming that this is the view of his government?

I ask the minister to speak up and reject these callous words or stand condemned of rejecting the more than 1.5 million unemployed people in this country.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, if the hon. member, who is an experienced member of Parliament, wants to know whether it is the policy of this government not to care about people on welfare and about housing, no, it is not. It is quite to the contrary and the record clearly shows that.

I was not there. I do not know what the member said, but I know that member. I think the member for Halifax West is just as concerned about poor people and people in need than any Liberal in this House. Therefore, do not try to make the member for Halifax West out to be an uncaring member of Parliament. Of course, he is not a Liberal. He does not have a corner on everything, but I think he is a hard working member for his people.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, this week the anti-poverty critic for the New Democratic Party, the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, released the action plan on behalf of the New Democratic Party entitled "Changing Course". In that document we made 38 recommendations on how this government can reverse some of the effects of its economic policies.

I would like to say to the Minister of Finance that while the official unemployment rate in Canada is 11 per cent, the Canadian Mental Health Association in its report outlining not only the effects of unemployment in financial terms but also the traumatic psychological effects points out that the real unemployment rate is 19 per cent.

Clearly, this constitutes a serious crisis in this country for every community, every family, every province and territory. It is clear that as we reduce unemployment we will reduce social expenditures.

Given that we have a serious crisis of unemployment in this country, would the Minister of Finance consider bringing in an emergency budget based on the principle of full employment as we have promoted to be included in the Constitution of Canada, which would address the need in Canada to have an economic policy based on full employment?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, in spite of what the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party suggests, there has been a substantial decline in the number of low-income Canadians since we assumed office in 1984, something in the order of 600,000.

That has been brought about by new job opportunities, by skills upgrading, by tax reform, and by improving and directing scarce resources to those people most in need. That is what the child benefit package I unveiled in the budget is really all about.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration has outlined the emphasis we are making with respect to job training and skills upgrading, an increase in that budget of about $300 million this year over the previous year, some $3.4 million. We are seeing a larger number of Canadians leaving the unemployment rolls and becoming more involved in training and skills upgrading.

That is precisely what is required under the restructuring that is going on within the Canadian economy.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of Finance.

We are seeing more people using food banks and more people even giving up looking for jobs. The Minister of Finance cannot turn aside from the reality of what is being affected by these high unemployment rates across this country.

[*Translation*]

I have a supplementary for the minister. A single parent with two children who earns the minimum wage would have to work 90 hours a week to rise above the poverty line. More than half the poor in this country have jobs. The unemployed are not the only people in this country who are living in poverty.

If his government is sincere about wiping out poverty, why does it not collect the $8 billion worth of unpaid taxes mentioned by the Minister of National Revenue, and use the money to deal with this problem right away?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member keeps referring to a so-called $8 billion worth of unpaid taxes. I do not know where she gets that figure, but the hon. member should know that when she refers to those people who have paid lower taxes or no taxes, a lot of it has to do with the application of the lifetime capital gains exemption.

I am not sure what the position of the New Democratic Party is. It depends on what day you listen to those members. Some days they are in favour of a lifetime capital gains exemption on farmers and small businesses and on others they are not. They are going to have to make up their minds.

The hon. member has colleagues who are in provincial governments. They too are faced with the reality of meeting fiscal constraints. They are also faced with the difficulty of rising costs, both in health care and education, and we are trying to deal with those.

However, let me just say this. The hon. leader of the New Democratic Party talks about New Democratic Party proposals. Its unemployment insurance critic said the government should look into just printing the money needed and to spend its way out of the recession. Instead of borrowing the money we should just create it and then we will not have to pay it back. That is the silliest economic philosophy I have heard in Canada, let alone coming from a member of Parliament.

• (1130)

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I am suggesting to the minister today that the Minister of National Revenue has said there is $8 billion of uncollected revenue. His government in fact should look at collecting that and addressing poverty in that way.

The minister mentioned the responsibilities of the provinces. The Canada Assistance Plan states that governments should provide funds to ensure: "The basic requirement of food, shelter, clothing, fuel, utilities, household supplies, and personal requirements". This is not being done.

This government, by putting the cap on CAP on the three provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario where over half of Canada's poor reside, has walked away from one-half of Canada's poor. Will the Minister of Finance in a sincere attempt to address poverty, reinstate the 50/50 cost-sharing of CAP with those three provinces that contain half of Canada's poor?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the hon. member wants the federal government to print more money or find more money and send it on to the provinces.

If she looked at page 91 of the Ontario budget she would find according to its records that federal payments to the Government of Ontario in 1992-1993 will rise by 17.2 per cent. This is at a time when we are trying to constrain our government expenditures to no more than 3 per cent per year.

The hon. member cannot have it both ways. Is she suggesting we follow the policy of her party as enunciated by her employment critic, the hon. member for Timmins—Chapleau, as reported in the *Hamilton Spectator*: "The government should look into just printing the money they need to spend their way out of the recession". He goes on to say: "When we borrow money to do a project that money has to be repaid. We are just chasing in circles like a dog chasing its tail and not getting anywhere. Instead of borrowing the money we should create it and then we will not have to pay it back."

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Madam Speaker, I too have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The Canadian Mental Health Association says this is the worst recession in Canadian history. It has brought with it record numbers of suicides, child and wife abuse, drug addiction, alcoholism and the breakdown of families.

Instead of accepting the association's report and helping these unemployed victims of recession, the government kicks them when they are down by slashing UI benefits and killing job training programs.

Will this government today introduce programs to save our 1.5 million unemployed whose pain is eating at the soul of this country?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, many members of Parliament have seen first-hand the devastating results of a family faced with long-term unemployment or no job prospects. I do not think anyone takes pleasure in seeing that.

Many of us have struggled to fight the destructive elements that flow from this kind of situation. Just last week with the Liberal premier and an NDP premier in British Columbia, this government entered into a demonstration project with both B.C. and New Brunswick to try to break that cycle of dependency of people, to try to help these people in need to become self-sufficient and independent.

The hon. member should recognize that these measures which have been taken are important steps in trying to help needy Canadians.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Madam Speaker, the numbers are not good enough.

Last week I met with unemployed constituents in my riding of Winnipeg North. They told me the federal government has done nothing to help them. There is no job training, no counselling, no hope.

Will the minister fly to my riding and tell my constituents he is doing all he can do? Can he look them in the eye and say that his hands are tied?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, again and again, we have Liberal theatrics. The hon. member wants to look at Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg and he wants numbers. I know the Liberal way is always measuring any action in terms of dollars spent, the taxpayer's money, by the way, and only one taxpayer.

We have in place in the city of Winnipeg, just like in every other city in Canada, a whole range of programs for Canadian youth, for the unemployed and for social assistance recipients.

I have just completed with all provinces the signing of a social assistance recipients agreement. We are working co-operatively with the provinces in trying to complement each other's programs in order to be more effective for those poor people.

The Liberals like to print money the old way and then they want us to tax people more or even increase the deficit. Canadians have made it clear that they have had enough taxes. They have had enough of this deficit that is killing the future of our kids.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

This government has made a practice of blaming unskilled workers for high unemployment when the real culprit is their own anti-inflation experiment that has starved the country of jobs.

The workers sacrificed by this government face the perils of family violence, higher rates of infant mortality and family breakdown, while traditional unemployment support is being denied.

Did the minister calculate the human toll on Canada's unemployed and their families when he chose to pay for a 2 per cent drop in inflation with their livelihoods?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, the hon. member refers to the plight of Canadians who are affected by job losses and unemployment resulting from a recession that is not confined to Canada, and a restructuring that our economy has to go through. That is not unique to Canada but it is imperative for the country if we are going to remain competitive in these markets. That allows us as Canadians from coast to coast to coast to earn the money in order to have the standard of living we do in this country.

She says we blame unskilled Canadians. We do not blame unskilled Canadians. But maybe unskilled Canadians could blame that member and her party for having in this House and in the other place stalled the reform of this UI program to take this money and activate it in order to train Canadians.

From $500 million a year two years ago to train unemployed Canadians, this year we will be spending $1.8 billion and unemployed Canadians will benefit from the policy of this government.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Madam Speaker, Canadians know that Tory times are hard times.

We have witnessed a Tory chain of despair that has forced workers off assembly lines, through the unemployment lines and straight on to welfare.

I ask the minister who prides himself on competitiveness to tell us how Canada can compete when the talents of nearly one-fifth of Canadian workers have been wasted in this Tory fiscal furnace.

• (1140)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I know I have to be polite and respect the rules of this House and I will.

I will tell the hon. member this. I think Canadians see it. The people over there, *les socialistes en cravates*, want us to print money to get out of our problems, and the Liberals want us to spend our way out of our problems. However Canadians are telling the government that we have to be more efficient with their dollars, with the taxpayers' hard earned money. We are doing this, Madam Speaker.

I know the hon. member cares about poor people. She asks what the Minister of Finance did for the working poor. In the last budget this government started something that will revolutionize social security programs in Canada by targeting hard earned money to the working poor, to those people who need government assistance in order to meet their obligations.

Of course, no Liberals could see through this, it is much too complicated.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Madam Speaker, when it comes to printing money they will print it for Olympia & York.

My question is for the Minister for International Trade. I want to ask the minister what mechanism he has in his office to monitor legislation in the United States that is being passed by the House or by the Senate that is

in direct violation of the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, the hon. member should withdraw the innuendo in the first part of the preamble.

Mr. Barrett: It is not an innuendo, it is an accusation.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Okay, withdraw the accusation if that is how he is going to describe it, because he knows there is no truth in it.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the hon. member's question because he has misstated something I said in this House last week, when he said that I referred to some practices undertaken by municipalities in the southern United States as contrary to the free trade agreement. They are not contrary to the free trade agreement; they are practices which I would just as soon not see take place. They are not contrary to the free trade agreement.

He did ask a specific question: Do we have people monitoring what is happening in the United States to see whether actions are taken which are contrary to the free trade agreement? Yes. That is what our embassy is for. It is very active in aggressively seeking out places where bills have been presented by various members of Congress and making sure that the administration understands where they are contrary to the free trade agreement. In practically every case we have been able to get those beaten down.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Madam Speaker, in the aside that we are exchanging, I will not withdraw that statement about Olympia & York. The government will find money for them if they need it and that is my accusation.

My second question is for the same minister. Is the minister aware that two days ago, in the House of Representatives, a bill passed that would require all ships involved in foreign trade to certify that they were neither built nor repaired with the aid of foreign subsidies? They were ships without certificates showing that would be barred from transporting goods in or out of United States' ports. Also the bill would require the commerce department to publish a list of foreign ships that receive government subsidies.

The only large floating drydock in the hands of the Canadian people is on the west coast of Vancouver and it has had a subsidy. It could not have been built without one. If this bill is enforced, it means any ship carrying Canadian products into the U.S. could not land in the United States.

This is a direct violation of the free trade agreement. What is the minister going to do about it?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I suppose the innuendo or accusation, however he wants to describe it, that he has just thrown this way would also apply to his friends in Queen's Park because the speculation that is running around about Olympia & York applies equally as much to the province of Ontario as to the federal government. Is he saying his friends in Queen's Park are wrong as well?

When it comes to printing money, that is a specific policy I understand of the New Democratic Party. With all the bluster that the hon. member can sum up, maybe he might get it through his head that he could tell the truth about the policies of the New Democratic Party.

* * *

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

After studying the cost of over 3.5 million prescriptions, covering 16,000 drugs worth over $1 billion, the Green Shield report clearly shows that Canadians have been misled and that drug prices have been rising in Canada at an annual rate of over 11 per cent.

My question to the minister is this. Why does the minister and his government continue to deny and obstruct the fact that they have completely failed in their responsibilities to protect Canadian consumers from unwarranted rises in the cost of prescription drugs?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Madam Speaker, our officials should not be accused of misleading consumers throughout Canada, because the figures—I have the Green Shield report which our officials analyzed—do show that the cost of patent and non-patent medicine increased in one province, Ontario, in a

limited period. The cost includes pharmacists' fees, prescription fees and the fact that new medicines on the market are being used. Many new drugs on the market are much more expensive than those that were there before, so it is like comparing oranges and apples, or tomatoes and corn. Yes, we are very concerned about this situation, and that is why my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and I and our provincial colleagues will look at this together—

An hon. member: It is a disgrace.

Mr. Blais: Yes, the former minister of consumer affairs just spoke about a disgrace, although they opposed—

[*English*]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister.

In 1987, when the government decided to increase monopolistic patent protection in Canada, in response to concerns from seniors, provincial governments and consumers that this would lead to higher drug prices, the hon. House leader said, and I quote: "The Drug Prices Review Board will ensure that prices are reasonable and do not get out of line".

Do the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and his government really believe that an 11 per cent annual rise in the cost of prescription drugs is reasonable? Further does he believe that the Patent Medicine Prices Review Board warrants any credibility in the eyes of Canadian consumers?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Madam Speaker, I said yesterday and I repeat today that I am not satisfied with a general increase of that size in the price of drugs. I already said that and I hope that my colleague is not suggesting that we should invade provincial jurisdiction, since the provinces are responsible for generic drugs.

What I am saying is that we, in our field of jurisdiction, have to look after patent drugs. The figures that we have on the price increases of patent drugs throughout Canada show us that they are less than the rate of inflation. Those figures are real, and the hon. member knows it because he did not challenge successive reports of the Drug Prices Review Board even once since 1987. Nevertheless, since the prices have increased in general and it is in provincial jurisdiction, we must sit down with the provinces and look at this increase together and find a solution together.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the same minister.

Yet another promise was made by the current House leader when he was the minister responsible in this House on November 18, 1986, when he said: "The price of drugs will not increase by one cent, not those now on the market, not those coming on the market. Drug prices will not go up but by a single penny".

Given that the price has not gone up by one penny but has gone up by 11 per cent every year since 1987, why did the government mislead Canadians on such a fundamentally important health issue to all Canadian families?

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Madam Speaker, I will use the words spoken by the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel. It is a disgrace for a member who knows the facts to lead Canadians to believe things that are not true. That is a disgrace.

The truth is that the price of patent medicine throughout Canada has increased at a lower rate than inflation. The over-all price of all medication, including generic drugs, with the cost of medication, pharmacists' fees and the more expensive medicine which doctors now prescribe more often, has increased for consumers and health costs across Canada have gone up as a result. We are prepared to discuss this reality with the provinces not to invade their field of jurisdiction, but to discuss with them how to control these prices, as we have done at the federal level. We have managed to control them.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, on this issue, we on this side of the House agree with another quote, one from the member of Parliament for Halifax West when he said in reference to this government: "The public no longer considers us honest". That is what his colleague on the government side said.

Given that Canadian families know that the price of medicine has risen dramatically, why does the government refuse, given its false promises, to roll back the cost of medicine being currently charged to Canadian families and hospitals against the commitments of this government?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Madam Speaker, as for quoting a former minister of consumer affairs, I might quote one myself. Judy Erola was a minister of consumer affairs and she considers this government's position good. She was a Liberal minister, if I am not mistaken. What we did in 1987 was to align Canadian legislation with what was going on in other parts of the world, so that now Canadian researchers can work here in Canada to improve medication and create new drugs to treat Canadians. That is what we wanted to do with Bill C-22. The price of patent medicine over which we have jurisdiction has not gone up more than inflation, despite what members opposite seem to be saying.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister.

As the Acting Prime Minister will know, the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development will begin in Rio de Janeiro in less than three weeks.

A little less than three months ago, the Standing Committee on Energy, Mines and Resources tabled its interim report. Contained in that report was a series of recommendations to which the standing committee requested a response. No response thus far has been forthcoming and the UNCED deadline is drawing near.

I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister if the government has accepted the standing committee's recommendation No. 3 to, and I quote from the report: "seek a global commitment to a reduction of total global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent from 1990 levels by the year 2005 to be achieved by co-ordinated global efforts". Has the government accepted that recommendation and will it be working for it in Brazil?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows that the Standing Orders of the House allow the government 150 days in which to report, as was discussed with members of the committee. The hon. member is possibly trying to create the impression that the government is not willing to respond. The government is responding.

The Minister of the Environment has clearly stated many times that the issue of the Canadian position in Rio is one that has been established for some period of time, namely on stabilization based on 1990.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, a supplementary question. The problem, of course, is that the 150 days does not expire until July 23. If we are to have a response from the government prior to the commencement of the UNCED conference, we must have it very soon.

Let me ask as a supplementary question whether the government has accepted now, as policy, the fourth recommendation of the standing committee which is: "the federal government instruct the Canadian UNCED delegation to support proposals to facilitate Canada taking global action such as contributing financially and through technology transfer, to emissions reduction efforts in other countries".

Has the government accepted that recommendation? Will it pursue that goal in Brazil?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, my first answer applies also to this recommendation concerning the Standing Orders of the House. The government will reply at the appropriate time.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, we have been listening to the responses of the Minister of Employment and Immigration and we certainly agree with him that he has revolutionized the social welfare programs.

He has just been forcing more and more Canadians on to the welfare rolls with those programs. The figures of Statistics Canada show that in Quebec, there are more families who live under the poverty line than anywhere else in Canada except in Manitoba.

Does the minister not realize that the Stats Canada figures are just confirming the growing food lines, the poverty lines, the hopeless and the homeless lines across this land? I ask the Minister of Communications—do not mix me up—the minister of employment—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Finestone: —what concrete, new measures is this minister prepared to announce today that might give one ray of hope to a Montrealer, to a Quebecer with these new statistics in front of them?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, again the hon. member refers specifically to the people unemployed and on welfare in Quebec.

She will be pleased to know that notwithstanding the opposition's strong resistance to trying to activate this passive money under UI, instead of paying people to do nothing at home, we are encouraging them, helping them get new training and upgrading their skills.

I know that Liberals have opposed this and are still opposing this, but we are doing it. Because we are doing this, we will be spending close to $800 million this year in the province of Quebec trying to help these people retrain and upgrade their skills.

She says that this policy of the government has resulted in more people being unemployed. Last year my department helped 630,000 Canadians go through these training programs and we expect with the increase in the training money that we have brought forward, $300 million, that we should be able to help more this year.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, all this propaganda with no policy is why I mistook him for the Minister of Communications.

Community cultural groups have been reporting to me that there is the highest level of social tension ever being experienced in the centre of Montreal right now. The government's policies are drawing and driving more and more Montrealers into poverty, and it is not prepared to announce even one new program.

I would like to know, does the minister not meet poverty and homelessness on his streets like I do along Victoria and Côte-des-Neiges? Will the minister listen? Could he tell me what he says to his constituents so that I can tell them the same story?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, for the information and edification of the hon. member, I need no lessons about poor people.

I come from northern New Brunswick. I come from Atlantic Canada and I have seen what these passive programs are doing to our people in Canada, in Atlantic Canada. We pay them money to do nothing on welfare and UI. We are trying to activate this money and we are being opposed every inch of the way by Liberals instead of standing up here and trying to help those people.

All they can do is call for more money, more taxes, a higher deficit.

* * *

• (1200)

TRADE

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade.

Certain representatives of the Government of Saskatchewan have recently been critical of the amount of consultation that has occurred between the federal government and themselves concerning NAFTA and GATT.

Can the minister rationalize this accusation? Has there been meaningful consultation or is this accusation simply posturing for the top row of the chicken coop in the hallways of the Saskatchewan legislature?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I am not sure how to characterize it, but there have been very extensive consultations on the NAFTA itself.

In the last year, we have had some 30 federal–provincial conferences or telephone conferences. On the Uruguay round, over the same period, it is a few more. It has worked out to at least one federal–provincial meeting a week on either of the two major trade negotiations that are under way.

My last meeting was this past Monday. We went through in some detail the current status of the NAFTA negotiations. It was my assessment, having heard the comments of the provincial representatives, that they are quite satisfied with the level of consultation and feel that their interests are being well represented in the negotiations.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

It is beyond belief that the government has refused to support a compulsory international ban on the dumping of radioactive waste into the world's oceans. It is all the more incredible that it has refused to do so at the earth summit in Brazil where Canada is seeking global support to prevent overfishing in the north Atlantic. Our case on the fishery depends in part on convincing the world to take environmental custodianship of the oceans. The place to make that happen, according to the minister of fisheries, is in Brazil.

Why then is the government undercutting the earth summit? In fact, why is the government undercutting its own attempt to protect the Atlantic fishery?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, if the hon. member spoke to the participants in the prep–coms from other countries he would find that Canada had played a leading role in all of the issues that are coming before the earth summit in Rio.

Our Prime Minister will be there making strong statements on a number of the things that we want to accomplish there and certainly the high seas summit and the conservation of the fishery has been well received. We took the lead on that, and I will be raising it again at the Organization of American States when I am there this weekend.

I think that the hon. member will want to join with all Canadians at the earth summit and be very proud of the record that Canada will have there.

TRADE

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

Yesterday the Minister of the Environment indicated that it is his understanding that Canadians will not be informed of the environmental impact of the North American free trade agreement until after the minister signs the deal with Mexico and the United States.

Will the Minister for International Trade assure this House that the Minister of the Environment was wrong and that the environmental assessment will be made available to all members of this House prior to his signing the agreement?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, at various stages in dealing with the agreement there is an initialling of the agreement, the initial announcement after the negotiations are completed. There is a signing of the agreement at which time it would go to the legislatures for handling and then there will be the full debate on the legislation as presented.

At this point in time, I cannot give my hon. friend a specific statement as to when the environmental assessment results can be made available to members of Parliament, but there will be opportunity for full discussion before the final legislation.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Madam 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 27 petitions.

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

[*Translation*]

FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Charles-Eugène Marin (Gaspé): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries. The terms "Department of Forestry" and "Minister of Forestry" will be changed to read, respectively, "Department of Forests" and "Minister of Forests", with the necessary adjustments in both official languages.

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

* * *

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

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

Mr. Andre 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.

* * *

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (for the Minister of Public Works) moved for leave to introduce 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.

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.

* * *

PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I have five petitions signed by some 200 Canadians who would like the government to reconsider its decision to abolish the Court Challenges Program.

This program, according to petitioners, helped clarify to the courts the constitutional, linguistic and equality rights of Canadians. It also made the courts accessible to all Canadians seeking justice and was a very inexpensive program that benefited all Canadians, regardless of their means, which approximately cost about 10 cents per person per year.

The Court Challenges Program was an essential development of legal precedents in this country following the adoption of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These people rely on this program to have their rights clarified in the courts all over this court. The abolition of the Court Challenges Program is an incalculable loss of equality and social justice in this country and the petitioners urge the government to consider the advisability of reinstating the Court Challenges Program which facilitated the accessibility of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to all Canadians.

EAST TIMOR

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to present four petitions signed by over 500 Canadians from Vancouver Island, Vancouver and the Ottawa area.

These people are pointing out the hypocrisy between the government's words and actions when it comes to human rights violations internationally, specifically the very tepid Canadian response to the slaughter of innocent Timorese several months ago.

• (1210)

These people are calling on Parliament to condemn the Indonesian military occupation of East Timor, to condemn the genocide of the East Timorese people, to support publicly the right of the East Timorese people to determine their own destiny by referendum and free

elections, and to support these causes in the United Nations and all other international arenas.

CANADIAN RACE RELATIONS FOUNDATION

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present four petitions from people in Manitoba, Ontario and most of Quebec.

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation is one of the most essential components of any drive to eliminate racial discrimination in Canada.

The petitioners call on Parliament to urge the government to consider the advisability of establishing the Canadian Race Relations Foundation this fiscal year.

CONFEDERATION

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Madam Speaker, I have a petition from Edmonton Kinsmen and Kinette club members indicating their support for the proud to be Canadian project during the celebration of the 125th anniversary of Confederation.

Unfortunately this petition could not be certified since it does not meet all the criteria, but as a kin member myself, I wanted the members of this House and the Canadian public to know of the strong kin support to nurture a positive life-long—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have to call the member to order. It is quite unfair to rise under presenting petitions with a petition that has not been certified.

REFUGEES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, I have a petition signed by residents in the national capital region. These petitioners are calling on the government to step up its efforts when dealing with refugee cases.

Many of these refugees are suffering from personal and economic hardship and their future is undecided as they are awaiting the slow refugee process.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on the same subject. Your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to urge the government to take special steps to deal with the refugee problem and to show some compassion. Thousands of people need the government's compassion, and I hope the minister of immigration will respond with compassion to the thousands of very important cases that are still pending.

[*English*]

CAPITAL GAINS EXEMPTION

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, I have a petition with 30 signatures from Nepean and area residents. The 1992-93 federal budget has eliminated the $100,000 lifetime capital gains exemption on real estate purchased after February 1992 and restricted on real estate purchased before 1992. This capital gains exemption gave many middle-class Canadians an affordable means of investing their savings at a minimal cost to the government.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to reinstate the $100,000 lifetime capital gains exemption on real estate.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, I am pleased especially today to be able to present a petition on behalf of 31 members of my riding who ask this Parliament to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people related to constitutional amendments.

We just saw first reading of such a piece of legislation and to my constituents, I hope we have that in place sometime in the very near future.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk)

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 236, 278 and 288.

[*Text*]

Question No. 236—**Mr. Caccia:**

Since the June 1990 announcement of the Minister of the Environment that cabinet policies would be subjected to an environmental impact assessment and that a public statement would be released, (*a*) which policies have been subjected to environmental impact assessments (*b*) who conducted each assessment (*c*) when and how was, or will, the public statement be released?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): As the hon. member knows, policy and program proposals, where appropriate, are advanced for cabinet review, after consideration of the environmental implications of such proposals. Of course, when the analysis shows that no significant environmental effect is anticipated as a result of a certain proposal, that conclusion is indicated and no further elaboration or statement is required.

Some examples of recent policies and programs that included a rather substantial environmental assessment which supports the early integration of environmental considerations in the decision-making process, include:

The Canadian Policy on Nuclear Vessels in Canadian Waters which examined the environmental considerations and effects of visits of nuclear-powered vessels to Canadian ports; and

The Transit of Dixon Entrance by U.S. submarines, a policy for which an environmental assessment was an integral part of the decision.

Of course, on the program proposals side, all program initiatives proposed under the green plan—77 to date—were subjected to an environmental assessment at the planning stage.

Similarly, Agriculture Canada integrated an environmental assessment of the Farm Safety Net Program.

In addition, an environmental review of the North America free trade agreement is being conducted by this government.

In response to the question of who conducts each assessment, it is the initiating minister of the policy or program that is responsible for ensuring that the integration, quality, and timeliness of the environmental assessment is considered fully and early in the decision process.

The public statements are released at the same time as the government's policy or program initiatives are announced. Supporting studies or documents are referred to in these statements. For some of the policy proposals cited above, the entire studies were referred to and made available to the public.

Question No. 278—**Mr. Milliken:**

For each fiscal year since 1988, did the Department of Finance commission any public opinion polls and, if so (*a*) how many (*b*) what was the total cost?

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Public opinion polls commissioned by the Department of Finance 1988-1992:

a) Fiscal year 1988-89—2
Fiscal year 1989-90—6
Fiscal year 1990-91—13
Fiscal year 1991-92—2

b) Fiscal year 1988-89—$230,000
Fiscal year 1989-90—$397,500
Fiscal year 1990-91—$679,850
Fiscal year 1991-92—$226,800

Question No. 288—**Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East):**

Since January 1, 1989, has the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs received any complaints concerning unregistered lobbyists' activities and, if so (*a*) how many were referred to the RCMP for investigation (*b*) how many were referred to other agencies for action (*c*) how many were referred to the office of the Minister (*d*) what was done with the remaining complaints?

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): The Lobbyists Registration Act came into force on September 30, 1989. Since that time, the registrar who is responsible for administering the act has been made aware, through the media, of two cases of potential non-registered lobbyists, and both cases were referred to the RCMP. No other formal complaints have been received.

[*English*]

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

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QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Madam Speaker, if Question No. 164 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 164 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 164—**Mr. Stupich:**

Since September 1984, has the government entered into contracts with (*a*) Saga Communications of St. John's, Newfoundland (*b*) Ad Vantage Ltd., of St. John's, Newfoundland (*c*) Medford Associates Ltd. of Halifax, Nova Scotia (*d*) Triton Development Ltd. of St. John's, Newfoundland (*e*) Omni Facts Research of St. John's, Newfoundland and if so (i) on what dates (ii) for what amount (iii) for what purpose.

Return tabled.

[*English*]

Mr. Belsher: 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*]

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 a second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Boudria (p. 10744).

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, it is an interesting bill we are debating here today. It is one of these bills that in the future we would always be able to go back to, if the government had the opportunity to govern much longer, which it will not, and there would be a wealth of denials about the actual intent of the government when it introduces pieces of legislation.

I listened with a great deal of amusement to the minister responsible and some of his colleagues opposite. They gave eloquent speeches in the House today on those wonderful employees of Canada Post Corporation.

All I can ask is, why did it take you so long to realize that the people who work at Canada Post Corporation are indeed wonderful public servants who deserve some respect from this government and deliver a tremendous service to all Canadians?

A member opposite was speaking just prior to Question Period, and I was almost apoplectic in my chair. He was talking about the wonderful service and what terribly efficient people work at the Canada Post Corporation. He even had to delve into the Never Never Land of the North Pole and Santa Claus. All these wonderful men and women that work at Canada Post even process mail that comes with the postal code HOH OHO. I say to him: "Oh, oh, oh".

He converted himself on the road to Damascus on this issue, because the record of this government in dealing with those wonderful public servants who are just trying to get a decent day's pay for an honest day's work has been absolutely abysmal.

The government got up today and got its members up like trained seals to read memorandums and speeches written by the department saying: "Forgive us, forgive us, forgive us, we know not what we have done. We really did not mean to kick you all over the mat and all over the carpet, you employees of Canada Post".

It is saying: "Yes, we finally realize that you are nice people and are deserving of some praise from the government, your employer in this country", but that is not the way it has been. To deny the past is not something I will allow the government to do here.

The Canada Post Corporation is perhaps the one service that touches every single Canadian because hopefully at some point in your life you are going to receive a letter from somebody. Every month I get too many bills from a whole lot of people and maybe a few letters as well.

Canada Post is one of the most visible signs of the Government of Canada for the people of our nation. The postman used to ring the door bell. We used to be proud that we had a national system of mail delivery which was second to none anywhere in the world. We used to talk about how proud our public servants were to deliver that service for Canadians from the Canadian postal service, Canada Post.

When the government led by Brian Mulroney came in, and I do not have the quotes here but I put them to the record often enough, the reckless rhetoric of the Prime Minister leading up to the 1984 election should have

given us a signal of what his true intent was in terms of the Public Service in Canada, including those public servants at Canada Post.

He talked at length about how there would be pink slips issued everywhere. We all remember those quotes from the election campaign. The master of hyperbole on the other side of the House, the great Prime Minister of Canada, was going to clean out the House, he was going to teach those nasty old public servants and post office workers a lesson.

He was saying: "Torydom is in town and fear for your jobs. You are going to be the scapegoat of everything we do wrong. You are going to be vilified by this government because you are an easy mark and an easy target". That is exactly what the Tories did.

We saw the great postal service of Canada dismantled piece by piece, letter by letter, by this government opposite.

• (1220)

The government first of all announced that in urban areas there would be no more delivery to new homes. There is the unbelievable situation in places like Dartmouth, where a small piece of the community had not yet been developed residentially. Maybe it was a farmer's field, or maybe it was something else. Maybe it was just not developed. Everybody around them has been getting mail for 100 years. Now somebody puts a new street in and they do not get door-to-door delivery any more. This Conservative government with its penchant for cutting back and its absolute desire to destroy anything Canadian, anything that every Canadian could reach out and touch and say: "That is what makes me a Canadian". It put in supermailboxes. In the middle of some of the biggest cities we have supermailboxes. Is that not wonderful. I pay the same price for my postal service as the person down the road, but the person down the road gets supermailboxes.

Back when I was elected the post office was a big issue. People wanted to know how the Liberal Party would deal with Canada Post, whether the Liberal Party was committed to reinstating door-to-door delivery, or whether the Liberal Party would ensure that in rural Canada, where the post office is the most visible and perhaps the only symbol of this national government, we would not abandon them.

There have been thousands and thousands of petitions presented to this Parliament since I got elected.

An hon. member: Places like Cow Head.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): My hon. friend from Newfoundland says places like Cow Head. I was in Cow Head. Those people have been abandoned. They have been abandoned because Canada Post made a decision that came right from the mouth of the government babes opposite in the front benches that it was going to dismantle Canada Post and not run it as a service, but run it as a business.

If that means that some Canadians can expect to get less service than other Canadians then so be it. If that means breaking the backs of the unions then so be it. If it means raising the price of a stamp as high it can dare go then so be it. If it means Canada Post acquiring companies and competing with good private sector companies, such as courier services, then so be it. If it means having the president of a Crown corporation, Canada Post, who does not feel that he is responsible to anybody but God, and maybe not even to God, then so be it. That is what this government has set about to do.

We have seen an erosion in mail service right across Canada. The government can give you all kinds of statistics. Maybe in an urban area like mine it is okay. Maybe people do not mind going down to the IGA to buy their stamps or pick up their parcels, maybe they do not. However, in a rural area the post office was not just a building where you picked up your mail; it was a symbol of Canada. In many of those communities all over Canada, in the prairies, the only visible sign of the Government of Canada, of this great nation of ours, of this great institution of Parliament, was the post office. The Tories did not have any mandate from the Canadian public to shut it down, to deliver it to the hands of the private sector. However, that is exactly what it has done.

In the last few years we have seen the government develop a policy, an abominable policy, to go into areas of our Public Service and make people feel that they are no longer welcome to contribute their day's labour for the meagre pay they get. It means going into places like Canada Post and allowing the president of Canada Post and some of the people he has put around him to go in and poison the atmosphere between labour and management to such an extent that last year, a year and a half

ago, there were nearly 100,000 grievances in Canada Post.

This is our government. This is our government's own postal service. This is the government that passes laws, that dictates the procedures that are acceptable and are not acceptable for workers on job sites. Yet in this corporation, which it owns, it has poisoned the atmosphere so badly that pregnant women down in the Gateway plant in metropolitan Toronto were not given permission to go to the washroom. That was two years ago. Racial discrimination was a practice in postal sorting stations in other parts of the country. Grievances that should have been settled right there on the workshop floor were forced into the grievance procedure. That was not by accident. It was by grand design.

This government is hell-bent on, and I have said it since 1988, privatizing Canada's postal service.

If that means delivering it to the highest bidder and that highest bidder happens to be an American south of the border, as much as I love my American neighbours down south, I do not want them delivering my mail in Dartmouth.

What the government has done here is a little sleight of hand. It has come in and said: "Look, here is what we are going to do here. We are going to sell off 10 per cent of the shares"—whatever the heck that means—"of Canada Post. We are going to let the employees buy into it".

The hon. member opposite said: "We think that if we allow them to take part of the ownership of the corporation, it will motivate them to provide better service. We think that it would give them a sense of entrepreneurial spirit. We think it would deliver a sense of commitment".

The hon. member opposite talked earlier about the awarding of medals and talked about some postal worker down in Atlantic Canada, I think it was in Halifax, who did something that he considered extraordinary. He went beyond the call of duty. If this government were not on a search and destroy mission on the unions of Canada Post, which it has been on since it was elected, it would have recognized that what he was talking about today was not the exception, it was the rule and it still is the rule in most of the postal service in Canada. Those people do not have horns. They are just like you and I. They are trying to make a decent day's pay for a decent day's labour and they do not want to be harassed on the worksite and they do not want to have grievances filed and they do not want medals from the government.

All they want is a little respect for the job that they do on behalf of each and every Canadian. That is all they want. They do not need shares in a corporation that they already own as Canadians to have a sense of pride and commitment to their work. As a Canadian citizen, each and every one of those employees does own that Crown corporation because it is owned by the Government of Canada.

Let us strip this bill down for what it is. It is nothing short of a scam. It is a waste of time even to be debating the damned thing if it were not so important that we try to uncover the government's true agenda here. The government's true agenda here is not to motivate its employees. Can you imagine? I was almost waiting for elevator music to be played in the background while the hon. member eloquently professed this new-found love for the postal workers in Canada.

This bill is the first step on the slippery slope to privatizing the Canada Post Corporation. That is what it is. One of the members opposite is smiling. He is probably smiling because he knows I am on to them. He is smiling because he is not running again. He knows that what I am saying now is not going to affect him. He has probably already got his pension, he is okay.

What this does is it brings into legislation a process that was begun a few years ago. If you break the union's spirit, if you convince the Canadian public that these people really do not give them good service anyway, and then if you mandate the Crown corporation to increase rates, get into competition in the private sector so that it can improve its profit line, it makes it more attractive when you want to sell the darned thing off.

The government, if it were ever allowed to govern again after the next election, it would bring another bill in and would ask: "What is so different? We already started this thing. We gave 10 per cent to the employees. I do not know why the opposition is complaining and bellyaching".

The opposition is complaining and bellyaching because not everything can be run exactly like a business when you have a country like Canada. You cannot run everything exactly like a business. You cannot run the country exactly like a business. You have to run it as a nation. To run it as a nation means that there are costs incurred. To run it as a nation also means that you have to understand the requirements, the desires and the aspirations of those people whom you govern. This gang opposite has lost all sense of sensibility on that score. We all know that. It was jumping for joy last week because it was at 16 per cent in the polls. Can you imagine? Just think how it is going to jump if it ever hits 18 per cent.

We had the president of Canada Post at the consumer and corporate affairs committee. It was an experience. I have never heard so many words say so little in all my life.

We wanted to find out whether Canada Post was in the business of providing service or if it was in the business of improving its profit line so that it could ostensibly sell itself in the public sector, in the private sector.

• (1230)

One of the things that we looked at was the courier service. Maybe I am a little dense but I thought Canada Post's responsibility, since it had a monopoly on first-class mail, was to deliver first-class mail. I did not think that the responsibility of a Crown corporation, which has the weight of the public purse behind it, was to go and compete with private sector corporations. That is exactly what this corporation has done.

This corporation is cross-subsidizing a courier service, Priority Courier Service. It has now been able, through cross-subsidization from the profits on its first-class mail service, to go in and capture 25 per cent of the courier market in Canada.

Everybody here and out there probably watched something dealing with the Olympics. I asked the president why he would be getting into private sector areas which are well served, in private sector areas where people are losing jobs now because the market has softened because of this government's induced recession. Why would he be getting in as a Crown corporation and competing with those individuals? It is a business decision, he said.

"Are you taking money", I asked, "from the monopoly that you get on first-class mail and all the profits that ensue and pumping it over into your courier service, basically undercutting predatory pricing and undercutting your competition?" "Never would we do that", the president said.

I asked if Canada Post did any advertising in the Olympics. He said it did. When I asked him how much, he said that was confidential information. I watched the Olympics and I cannot remember once seeing an ad from Canada Post, but I remember seeing all kinds of ads from the courier service which is competing with private sector courier services and putting many of them out of business in small towns in Canada.

Now the president of Canada Post knows what his mandate is. It is to make the company as profitable as he can. If that means a loss of service in rural Canada, so be it. If it means higher prices, so be it. If it means dismantling the corporation, so be it. If it means predatory pricing practices on the private sector, so be it. The ultimate goal of this government is to privatize Canada Post.

I can foresee the day, if we ever gave these guys opposite another chance, that UPS would be delivering mail to my door by a fellow with an American flag on his lapel or on his shoulder. I can see that day if these guys opposite have their way.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Get serious.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): The hon. member opposite said to get serious. I am very, very serious. The hon. member opposite knows full well what the government's intent is. If he were honest with himself and his constituents he would tell them. If the intent of the government in this bill is try to motivate the employees of Canada Post to be more productive and to feel that they have a better say in what goes on, treat them with a little bit of respect. Do not be forcing them through the grievance procedure every time something happens on the floor of the post office. You do not have to bring a bill into Parliament, you just have to have some respect in the way that you treat the people of Canada Post.

The hon. member opposite knows this because he was the chairman of the consumer and corporate affairs committee. When the Liberal task force on Canada Post was conducting hearings, he came and sat in on some of the hearings and he expressed to me his concern about

the way Canada Post management was handling some of those grievances at the shop floor level. I want to remind him of that.

This bill here is awful. This bill seeks through the back door and through the premise that the government is trying to help the employees, to de-stabilize and start us on the slippery slope to privatization of Canada Post. It is not a bill I am going to support.

I believe that Canada Post has a primary responsibility to offer quality service to Canadians. I am not opposed to Canada Post's mandate being changed to suit changing times. I am opposed to Canada Post's getting involved in the private sector. They are all supposed to be private sector people over there. They all jump up and down and say: "Private sector, private sector". If they are so concerned about the private sector, get Canada Post out of the business of competing with private courier services across Canada for a start and start preserving some jobs. You cannot speak out of both sides of your mouth all the time, although a lot of members opposite try that all the time. I find that they bite their lip a lot.

I cannot support this bill. I know what this bill is all about and the Canadian public knows what this bill is all about. No matter what flowery language those converted on the road to Damascus opposite are going to use in this debate, those individuals who work at Canada Post will judge the gang opposite by its record and not by its rhetoric.

The record has been abysmal. It has crushed the spirits of people who wanted to work at Canada Post. It has driven people out and a once proud, productive and wonderful place to work, Canada Post, has become a nightmare for most of those employees.

In conclusion, let me say I would hope that the people listening out there do not get sucked in once again by another Tory promise that this is going to improve service. Remember what they said and judge them accordingly the next time you go to the polls.

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Madam Speaker, I did not want to stop this show. This gentleman is about to graduate from the George Baker school of oratory. He has been so amusing so far that I want to ask him a question so that he can continue for a little while.

He came here in 1988. He is telling us all the wonderful things that have gone on with Canada Post. He does not remember the days prior to that when Canada Post was running a deficit of almost $1 billion. He does not remember when 70 per cent of complaints in member's offices were about Canada Post from the citizens of this country who were not getting service and turnaround time.

Now we have a corporation that we can be truly proud of. It is finally showing a profit, finally being productive and putting forward a real effort to deliver on time. Ninety-nine per cent of the mail is now delivered on time. It is showing a profit.

My question to the hon. member is does he not realize that when he talks about the ultimate privatization of Canada Post, by selling to the employees 10 per cent it will make it almost impossible for anyone else to buy it? Who are you going to sell it to? You offer it to someone and they say: "We do not want to buy it, 10 per cent is owned by the employees. We cannot buy it".

His argument is totally out of whack. I really did enjoy the hand waving and the George Baker school of oratory style. Please continue and please try to answer that question.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): If the hon. member enjoyed the performance, perhaps he should have also listened to the content of what I said because the content was much better than the performance.

The content was absolutely factual and the hon. member opposite knows that. The hon. member can go back. If the hon. member thinks that they have done such a great job at Canada Post, I would invite him to see how many Canada Post employees he can get at his next rally if he were running again. I will show you that those Canada Post employees would not be on the inside of the hall. They would be on the outside of the hall with placards, where they were the last time after four years of Tory government in 1988.

I want to clarify something. The hon. member opposite would have us believe that I think profit is a dirty word. On the contrary, good management practices have to be promoted and, where established, recognized. There have been some substantial changes in Canada Post. Some have been extremely positive. Unfortunately, some have been absolutely devastating, mostly the ones affecting the employees of Canada Post.

The Canada Post corporation is also in the business of delivering something else which is not a dirty word and it is called service. What I seek is only a balance. I seek cost effectiveness in the delivery of the service but I also seek the delivery of service. I understand that as a Crown corporation it has a responsibility when it is owned by the federal government to try to equalize to the best of its ability, to try to equalize the level that is given, no matter where you live in Canada. That clearly is not the case now.

If the hon. member opposite believes that Canada Post just delivers letters and that is it, then he should talk to some of the people from Rural Dignity of Canada who came up here and met with his caucus. They met with the caucus of the New Democratic Party and they met with our caucus. They talked about the role of the post office in their communities. Every time they came and did that, it fell on deaf ears.

The other thing I want to say is basically that Canada Post offers good service. It is not the middle-level management and it is not the regional manager I have down in Nova Scotia. The regional manager has now been transferred to Toronto and he is one heck of a fine gentleman. He works as best he can with the restrictions that are put on him by the policies decided at the top. As a Crown corporation, the policy directive comes directly from the cabinet table through the minister responsible. That is where it comes from.

• (1240)

Mr. Horner: Oh, come on.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): The hon. member opposite says: "Oh, come on". He knows full well that when people are hired by Governor in Council they take orders by Governor in Council. He knows that is the case.

In conclusion, profit is not a dirty word. Neither is service, respect nor recognition for the great service that the employees, the men and women of Canada Post, have given to the Canadian public.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member alluded earlier, he and I served together on one of the House of Commons standing committees which spent six or seven months looking into Canada Post and its operations. It came up with a fairly comprehensive set of recommendations for the future of Canada Post. One of those recommendations did in fact deal with the privatizing of the corporation.

My own personal position is in favour of that for this reason. If Canada Post could be privatized and then regulated by an independent, third party agency similar to the CRTC and the way the CRTC regulates the telephone monopoly in this country, perhaps we might have more accountability in terms of the operations of Canada Post. Perhaps there would be a mechanism whereby communities, unions or anyone else in this country interfacing with the post office might be able to go to an independent, decision-making third party or independent agency which would then be able to regulate the affairs of Canada Post.

I would like to know whether the member would see any merit in that particular reform of Canada Post and whether he might in fact see some real good coming out of a structural repositioning of Canada Post as I have just described.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, I am quite familiar with the hon. member's views on this point. I believe he is truly interested in trying to have a more efficient Canada Post corporation.

I am not opposed to measures that would see a more efficient Canada Post corporation. I am certainly not opposed to any measure that would see greater reportability as well by the corporation to the Government of Canada for the people of Canada.

The current problem we have, as the hon. member knows, is that it is like trying to find hen's teeth at times to get answers out of the senior officers of Canada Post. Every time we ask them a question they hide under commercially sensitive data. We do not know what half the decisions are, unless we sit around the cabinet table.

The one thing I am against is establishing bench-marks of absolute profitability for every service delivered. It is just like user pay. When the government opposite talks about instituting user pay, it is wonderful if you are in an area where fees can be kept low. It is wonderful if you are in an urban area, but God help you if you live out in

the backwash somewhere. God help you if you live in a small community.

We know darn well that if we get into privatization of postal services, the next thing that will happen is that the services in the outer reaches of the country will diminish. Toward the centre and in the larger centres services will increase because that is where the money is made.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): That is what a watch-dog would take care of.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): I hear the hon. member opposite. Let us get real here. Once we start dealing with the private sector, there are way too many members of Parliament who are lobbied far too heavily by high-priced lawyers and lobbyists in Ottawa.

The hon. member shakes his head. He should have sat down lately at the consumer and corporate affairs committee and listened to the banks wailing that they are not making enough money when they made $3.4 billion in profits. He should see the effect they have on government members opposite whenever any changes are proposed in any of the committees of Parliament dealing with their preferred position.

He knows as well as he knows his own name that the corruptness of the political system allows that as long as political parties are financed by private sector donations, the private sector companies that have the donations to give are going to seek a day of atonement.

I would like to see a Canada Post Corporation that has a renewed mandate to provide a certain level of service and that that certain level of service is delivered right across this country according to those standards in the most cost-effective manner possible. That is what I would like to see. In terms of those new areas it is getting into to provide a better service to Canadians like a private courier service, I would like to see it get the heck out of there.

Here is one of the problems we had. He talks about getting into the private sector. I personally would like to know how much money Canada Post lost on its courier service last year. I happen to know that almost every national courier service in Canada last year lost big bucks. I want to find out whether or not that competing priority courier service lost money. If it did, why in the name of goodness are people paying for it when they go and lick a stamp to mail a first-class letter?

The member opposite talks about the private sector. That is what starts happening when we have Crown corporations with national mandates to provide levels of service and they start tinkering with the private sector where they really should not be.

The hon. member has raised a number of interesting points. He talked about privatizing this and privatizing that. Perhaps he tells us the true agenda of the back bench and the front bench as well.

In conclusion, no, I am not for privatization. I am for the efficient management of the Canada Post corporation and fair treatment of its employees.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-73. The constituents of Saint-Laurent—Cartierville are concerned about the fact that this legislation does nothing to improve postal services. This bill, which amends the Canada Post Corporation Act, is merely a first awkward attempt at privatization.

To quote my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, even Margaret Thatcher had the good sense not to privatize the British postal service.

Instead of building a postal system able to meet the needs of a country the size of Canada, the Conservatives are now destroying another Canadian institution, an institution that maintains links between all the regions of our country.

[*English*]

Liberals and in fact all Canadians do not want to see the privatization of Canada Post, which is something the bill does through the back door. In fact this bill is not even attracted to those people who would like to see Canada Post privatized.

The fact that this proposed legislation only allows employees to acquire non-voting shares is an attack on the rights of postal employees. By only giving the employees non-voting shares the government is denying them the right to have any direct input into policy-making decisions or administrative functions and is preventing them from being on the board of directors.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, unfortunately, this bill does nothing to improve postal services for the people of this country. Canadians want our postal system to improve its delivery of postal services.

[*English*]

Canada Post is one of a long list of institutions that this government has gutted. It has limited home delivery by setting up supermailboxes. It has viciously attacked the fibre of our rural areas by eliminating many local post offices. It is little wonder Canadians are going through a type of identity crisis.

Members on the other side are convinced that the best way to build our nation is by destroying and dismantling the very things that bind us as a nation.

The government has wounded VIA Rail. It has slashed the CBC and it has begun the privatization of Canada Post. Members on this side of the House will never stand for this kind of action. We will oppose it because it is bad for Canada Post and because it is not in the interests of all Canadians.

We have to wonder why this government did not take the opportunity when it introduced this legislation to address all the problems involved with Canada Post.

All of us on this side of the House are in touch with our constituents and realize that the problems of this Crown corporation have to be addressed with the best interests of all Canadians in mind.

The minister responsible for Canada Post said that he believed this plan would be good for morale at the corporation. His argument is that if morale at the post office would improve then the service would improve. I have news for this minister. The employees who he claims will be thrilled because of this legislation have said no thanks. The union has said that the best shares in Canada Post are their wages. The employees want to have a new contract that will respect their needs and rights.

• (1250)

I am particularly concerned that this bill will do nothing about the conversions and closures of post offices that have caused so many problems around the country.

While money might be the only thing on the government's mind, I believe that in this country the post office is an essential public service. I feel that we must provide equally efficient and proper service throughout the country.

I urge the government to take this opportunity to address the problems associated with a postal service that is only interested in looking at the bottom line, and I am not talking about the postal code. We need to put people first. If this government is not willing to take on that challenge, those of us on this side of the House are.

[*Translation*]

Postal services are essential to everyone in this country, from the business community in large urban centres to the child living in a remote part of this immense continent. The government can hardly expect this bill to do anything to solve the problems facing our post offices across the country.

The intentions behind Bill C–73 may, and I stress the word "may", be good, but there is considerable uncertainty among those directly concerned by this legislation. There is every indication that once we start going this route, other measures will follow and there will be no turning back.

Giving employees a chance to buy shares in the Canada Post Corporation may be praiseworthy in itself, but I must admit I find it very hard to believe the government is acting in good faith.

Does it really expect to be taken seriously when it says: "Sure, you can buy shares and you will be really part of Canada Post, but no voting rights, so no say in decision making".

[*English*]

Can anyone in this House possibly imagine what the shareholders of any major company would say if they were presented with such a proposal? Does anyone seriously believe that people who have put up their hard earned money, the ones who have accepted to foot the bill, must be muzzled when decisions are taken?

It is simply ridiculous that members opposite would take such action. No one can afford to purchase shares

and then simply defer all the major decisions that directly impact on their financial well-being, especially with this Treasury Board and cabinet.

I do not know a single investor who would be willing to sit back hoping everything will go well and knowing that when things turn sour whatever he has to say will go nowhere because his voting power is nil.

[*Translation*]

It is pretty obvious the Conservative government is trying to get out of the fix it is in by selling shares to Canada Post employees. Canadians know for a fact that something is definitely wrong at Canada Post. However, to let them pay the bill without giving them any power or guarantees in return is rather close to being obscene.

[*English*]

We do not only have to debate the philosophical implications of this bill. We must also discuss the practical. When embarking on this kind of venture I believe Parliament must be provided with the specifics. To be frank, this bill does not provide us with any details at all.

We have to ask ourselves why this legislation does not disclose the value of the Canada Post corporation. How are we as parliamentarians supposed to know the value of the shares being sold? We know that it is 10 per cent, but 10 per cent of what?

We also have no idea how much each share will be worth. We have no idea how accessible this program will be to the average worker at Canada Post. If there are very few shares then this will not benefit the employees of the corporation to any great measure. If on the other hand, the number of shares put into public hands grows quite large the fears of the Canadian public and the members of the Liberal Party that this ideologically driven Conservative Party will privatize Canada Post would have been realized.

Liberals oppose the privatization of Canada Post. We believe that essential public services such as mail delivery belong in public hands.

I think that members on the other side must forget exactly how vast this country is. They forget that profit motive does not take into account service in very remote parts of our country. How does this government intend to guarantee continued, high quality service to the northern parts of Quebec and the territories if the private sector is allowed to take over this essential public service? That is why we opposed the recommendations of the consumer and corporate affairs committee when it tried to privatize Canada Post. It is very difficult to understand the committee's recommendation. It is very difficult to understand why it recommends an eventual privatization of the corporation while at the same time it says that industrial relations must be improved first.

When one considers the fact that the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is fundamentally opposed to the privatization of Canada Post one must question the government's commitment to improving labour-management relations.

As I mentioned earlier, such an action contributes to the destruction of our national symbols. It is destroying the ties that bind Canada into one nation. Even the actions of the corporation in recent years have shied away from promoting the national nature of Canada Post.

People in my constituency of Saint-Laurent—Cartierville have asked me to explain why the maple leaf and the Canadian flag have disappeared from our mail boxes. They have been asking me why they have disappeared from all material related to Canada Post. What do we have now to represent our national postal carrier? To tell the truth I am not exactly sure what it is. I think it is an envelope with wings, but I am not sure.

If the intent of this bill is to improve morale at the post office it is clear that the bill is completely ineffective. If the government was truly interested in improving morale, it would insist on improving labour-management relations by dealing fairly and equitably with the employees of Canada Post.

If the objective of Bill C-73 is to improve the quality of service we get at the post office it has clearly failed. There is absolutely nothing there. Not only has the service not improved, but the corporation is also losing money.

We must conclude that this is the first step in privatization, something that the minister responsible for Canada Post said he clearly supports. We in the Liberal party clearly condemn this action and we will fight it.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, when Canadians look back on the years when this government was in power, they will remember mostly what it destroyed, starting with VIA Rail, which practically made this country, to our postal services, a means of communication that is still available to all Canadians, whatever their income or social status.

Canadians will remember high taxes, jobs that were lost and promises that were forgotten. And above all, they will remember elected representatives who failed to represent them. It is high time to put Canada back on track, and we in the Liberal Party intend to do so after the next election.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, it is a sad day when we have to speak once again against a bill by the government, such as Bill C–73, which is selling off an essential government service.

We are told that the purpose of this bill is to make 10 per cent of Canada Post's non–voting shares available for purchase by Canada Post employees on a voluntary basis. We are not told what the shares are worth in dollars. We know what they are worth in dignity or voting power. They are worth absolutely nothing. They are non–voting shares.

What Canada Post is doing is pretending to give the workers a share of control of the management of the company in which they work. That share of control is, taken in itself, a worthy goal and it is one that the Ontario government supports. However, the Ontario government does not try to cheat the workers out of having a voting share in the company if they buy shares in that company. It does not try to con them into thinking that by holding non–voting shares they have some power over their working conditions, over their wages and over the future of their jobs. That is what this government is trying to do. It is trying to con the workers and trying to con the public.

The government probably has two purposes in this. One is to further stall the labour negotiations which are already disgracefully late. It has been nearly three years that Canada Post has held its employees without a contract. This presumably is meant to change the agenda so that we do not talk any more about labour relations; we talk about employees getting gold stars if the supervisor looks on them with favour.

We are told that by giving the employees the dignity of being shareholders they will work better. We are also told that they are fine employees and they are working very well now. In other words, the government has not got its story together correctly.

I agree that the employees are good workers. There are some who live in my constituency, and when they come to me with their complaints I can size them up as people who have worked there for years and decades and want to serve the public but are frustrated. Sometimes they are immigrants who are being shabbily treated on the midnight shift by a supervisor, but who sincerely want to work and have a good record in the community in terms of their character. I know that these employees are good employees that want to serve the public. They do not need to be given gold stars or meaningless shares.

We are not told what the shares are worth in dollars if an employee wanted to sell them, for example. We are not told what Canada Post is worth. What is 10 per cent of a question mark? It is a sham and a fraud, but it is in keeping with the past history of Canada Post and its dishonest dealings with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

The idea that this will improve the service to urban and rural constituencies is a sick joke.

The government pooh–poohs the idea that this is a step toward privatization. Yet the minister was quoted in *The Ottawa Citizen*, and I am not aware that he has repudiated this quote, and the article says: "Andre insisted that immediate privatization is not in the cards". We buy that. He did not immediately privatize Air Canada when he started selling shares to the employees, that was just the first of several steps toward privatizing. He let the cat out of the bag when he said that there is no immediate privatization.

The minister went on to say: "There are no plans either on the table or buried in a desk anywhere to bring forward a privatization of the post office". However, he then refused to say that there would not be any privatization. To say: "We do not have any plans" emphasizes that it is not going to be tomorrow or the next day but it could be farther down the road.

The Ottawa Citizen story goes on to say:

> He refused to rule out future privatization—except to say that nothing will happen until after the next election.

We understand what those promises mean. The Prime Minister made a famous promise to maintain unemployment insurance without change or reduction. Yet immediately after the last election he reneged on that promise and slashed unemployment insurance, destroying a program that had existed in this country for nearly half a century and on which working people depend.

If we will just believe the Prime Minister and the minister in charge of the post office until the next election, then they will do whatever they had planned to do all along.

He admits that. He thinks they can get away with making it a joke. He said:

> If I had to bet I would bet that in the next couple of decades you will see post offices being privatized all over the world and I would not mind seeing Canada first.

That is like the famous boast of the Prime Minister when he said: "Give us 20 years and you will not recognize Canada". He has not even taken 20 years to destroy some of our best institutions, such as VIA Rail and Canada Post, and he has not even taken 20 years to seriously damage the health system and post-secondary education by cutting back on the federal government's commitment to share in those costs.

It could well be that selling these shares to some willing employees is an attempt to make a future private industry profit-oriented buyer more willing to buy Canada Post with the idea that the employees are tame. There are some gold star receiving employees who will do whatever they are asked to do and will not ask to have a union. Right now they have a union but the union has no contract. Perhaps Canada Post is waiting not just for the next election but for the final destruction and disappearance of all unions within Canada Post's jurisdiction in order to make it easier to sell.

The fact that it likes to remove Canadian emblems from visibility on Canada Post property certainly encourages the suggestion that the buyer that the government might very well prefer would be an American one, perhaps one of the American courier corporations who are already operating in Canada.

One of my colleagues said, jokingly: "Why not privatize the fire department?" As a matter of fact, it is not quite a joke. There is an historical precedent for privatizing a fire service. In ancient Rome there was a man called Marcus Crassus, an entrepreneur and a smart man, who organized a fire brigade. When a house caught fire Crassus and his men would come on the run carrying buckets and towing a big tank of water. Crassus then would begin to negotiate with the owner of the house to buy it. If the owner thought his price was too low and began arguing with Crassus that it should be higher, then he could stand watching his house burn down while they argued about the price. If the owner finally agreed to Crassus' price, perhaps Crassus by that time had dropped his price, but if they finally agreed on his price then Crassus became the owner of the burned down house. Crassus became perhaps the largest landowner in the city of Rome in his time. He certainly became what we would call a multimillionaire, if not a billionaire.

However, I do not think that service is a model we would want to follow. Just letting private citizens' homes burn down is one thing, but if we were going to let the major buildings in the centre of Toronto or in the centre of Ottawa, or, Heaven help us, the Parliament Buildings, burn down, I do not think that the Crassus system would really be equal to the occasion. We must have certain public services that are provided by the elected representatives, with the money the elected representatives collect from the public, with whatever cost recovery is reasonable.

• (1310)

In other words, the first object of a service such as the fire brigade or the post office is to provide service to the public. The first object of the post office is to deliver mail to all Canadians because all Canadians are taxpayers. It is not merely to deliver mail first to those who can pay the most for it and let the others wait or not merely to give a low-priced service in the high density areas and let the people in the country pay far higher prices on somebody's reckoning of cost benefit.

The gambit of offering these shares to the employees as a move toward privatization is a dishonest one, especially against the record of this government. I do not believe people will trust the government with that any more than they trust it now.

It is said this is supposed to give us labour-management peace. That shows a 19th century attitude. They may be talking about 20th century or 21st century technology but the brains on the government side are locked in the 19th century, when owners believed they had a right to refuse any union representation among their employees, and they often used violent methods to enforce that so-called right.

Canada Post has the worst record in Canada as a bad and dishonest employer toward its employees. It has racked up an incredible total of 100,000 outstanding grievances. Some of those grievances have been entered by constituents who have come to me to ask me to help. They know their union is trying but with 100,000 grievances blocking the road, the chances of getting a reasonable, early and just settlement are pretty dim.

I believe that Canada Post was willing to have those grievances pile up in order to force the union out on strike. The grievance procedure is half a century old, developed first in the United States and then in all parts of Canada. The grievance procedure is an essential part of modern labour relations so that employees do not have to go on a wildcat strike in order to get an injustice rectified.

There is a procedure. You start with a steward and so on. You work up. Eventually you go to arbitration. In return for that procedure, plus other key matters such as seniority clauses, the union signs a contract. Even without seniority clauses, that procedure, at least in the province of Ontario and I believe in the other provinces, is part of the law. It is based on the law that there shall be a procedure of that sort although the details of it vary from contract to contract.

Without that procedure no union in its right senses would sign a contract. What the union gives in a contract is the guarantee that there will be no work stoppage during the life of the contract. That is the labour peace that is bought by union contract.

The most dynamic employers of our country such as the auto industry well understand the efficiency and the financial value to the owners of signing a contract. It does not mean they agree to everything the union wants. The union does not get everything it asks for. The company does not get everything it asks for.

Both sides understand that they have to make cars. They have to have an orderly work process and so they settle on a contract, sometimes with a short strike, but not with the kind of dishonesty that Canada Post has displayed in the handling of a strike. Canada Post advertised for casual workers and swore up and down it did not intend to use them for strike-breakers which was all it was intending to use them for. It hired helicopters to bring the mailbags in and out of the sorting station in eastern Toronto, paying non-unionized Canada Post employees their room, board and travel expenses to replace unionized staff and so on.

These are dishonest strike-breaking practices which I hope before too long will be outlawed in the province of Ontario, as some of them are outlawed in the province of Quebec.

An hon. member: So a company cannot run its business.

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is afraid that somebody might go on strike. There is that possibility. There is also the possibility that the company will violate the contract and force a union out on strike. The union has two recourses against violation of the contract by the company. One is the grievance procedure which the management of Canada Post has destroyed by blockading it. The other is the right to strike at the appropriate legal time, which is what the union followed.

The company not only showed its bad faith in the time leading up to and during the strike, but Canada Post showed particularly bad faith in the settlement of the strike. It was proposed by go-betweens that there should be a resolution, that the union would come back to work and that an arbitrator would be imposed because both Canada Post and the union said there were only about seven, eight or nine items left of dozens and dozens that had been on the table in dispute.

The union not only agreed to come back to work, it sent out the word to its members to come back to work as soon as possible. Many of them came back before the deadline. They wanted to demonstrate their good faith in getting the post office working again.

After the arbitrator was appointed, management withdrew what it had already agreed as part of the offer. That was thoroughly dishonest. Six months later there is still no contract. There is now this gimmick to try to put the union entirely out of the picture.

There is no way that the employees of Canada Post are going to trust the management that destroys its union contract by violation and by outright deception. There is no way they are going to trust them in return for gold stars or a gimmick like that which are used in some companies to set one worker against another to try to

undermine the morale of a union. There is no way that there will be industrial peace.

What the Canada Post management and the minister in charge probably want is a complete breakdown of the post office. It seems to me that they are pushing it for all their worth.

They brag that there is 90 per cent efficiency in first day delivery. Many people that I know seem to be among the 10 per cent that cannot get it, including myself. I know that parcel post has deteriorated greatly since it was farmed out to little stores around the district instead of using the two post offices on Spadina Avenue, as they did before. Parcels are not delivered. They come back marked "not open" when mailed to an office that is open every business day of the week. We have to wait weeks to find out where the parcel is. Then we have to go around to some other part of town to get that parcel. It is a most inefficient system that has been brought in.

Nobody believes the claim of 90 per cent efficiency. Sometimes we have a happy surprise and there is next day delivery, that is true. You cannot make the employees work with a system that is being disrupted by the closing of post offices, disrupted by giving services away to competitors, disrupted by using patronage to give little sub-post offices to stores that often are not equipped either to store or to handle the mail efficiently. There is no way that post office will work. The first thing to do is settle that contract with the union and then go on from there.

• (1320)

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, this bill is an initiative to try and improve relations between the management at Canada Post and the employees, the labour group.

It is no surprise to most Canadians that the NDP and other political agents of big labour are opposed to any initiative that offered hope of real management and labour co-operation or team building.

One of the primary objectives of the union movement, one of the main purposes of the union and the NDP, is to stimulate conflict in the labour place, in the work place.

While the union-controlled NDP publicly supports the notion of improved labour relations, the secret constitution of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the national constitution adopted in 1990, tells a different story.

This NDP supported document reveals the true motives of the NDP and the union movement. On page 2, A-5, it says: "The union views as a primary direction of accomplishment of workers is to control the work place. This principle ensures that the union and its members will seek at all junctures to limit the power of the employer to organize our jobs, the methods of production and planning our work, or otherwise discipline our members. In its place the union will seek for its members full control of the work they perform and the environment in which they perform work".

In addition on page 12 it says with regard to industrial democracy, something you might find in Beijing or Tiananmen Square a couple of years ago: "Because the union recognizes the power of the labour movement and of our union rests on the collective strength of its members, and because the union views the interests of workers as conflicting with the interests of employers, the union rejects all forms of industrial democracy and quality of work life schemes promoting the notion of union participation and co-operation in employer programs".

In addition, in terms of co-operation between government, management and employees this is totally rejected by this secret document which the NDP supports.

In line with opposition to industrial democracy the union condemns—

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member for Elk Island insists on describing the union constitution as a secret document. To the best of my knowledge it is not a secret document, it is public document.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is not a point of order, it is a point of debate, and I know the hon. member will put his question.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I cannot rule when I cannot hear.

Mr. O'Kurley: Mr. Speaker, following on what I said about the opposition of the NDP and the union movement to any form of co-operation whatsoever between government, management, and the workers, confirmation can be found on page 13 of this constitution: "In line with opposition to industrial democracy, the union condemns any and all attempts by labour bodies to establish partnerships between labour and government, or between labour, government, and employers".

"Within the trade union movement the union wants to promote and strengthen a militant and combative front with which to oppose any form of co-operation with management and government serving management's interests".

The most successful economies in the world have demonstrated that the way to become successful is through team work, through working together. We have seen that in Japan, in Germany, particularly the western part of Germany.

We have also seen the result of socialist policies in the former Soviet Union. We have seen the destruction and the degradation of the economy there.

We find that the NDP, through its support and through its control by the union movement rejects any form of co-operation.

We have seen what has gone on in the former Soviet Union.

Would the NDP come clean? Publicly it supports the notion of co-operative efforts between labour and management. It supports the notion publicly of improved relations and teamwork, yet it does not seem to be coming clean with the Canadian people in the sense that it also supports this document, this secret constitution by the union that seems to provide a different story for Canadians.

Which does it support, the idea of conflict and confrontation or the idea of co-operation?

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to answer that question. I would say the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

In fact, regardless of what quotations the member may choose to select out of a document that he claims is a secret constitution, the fact is that last year, for example, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers attempted to co-operate.

I know that in Toronto the union asked that the old age pensions and other government cheques be made available for distribution before the legal strike date. The post office refused. It asked after the strike had begun on the legal strike date if it would be allowed to deliver them as volunteers. The post office refused.

Instead, the post office set up special stations and invited the public to come and collect its mail. Half the time, according to complaints from my constituents, their mail was not at the stations on the day they were told it would be.

The co-operation in action was on the side of the union, not on the side of the company.

Furthermore, I have experience of my own with a union, the Canadian Paper Workers Union. During the 18 years I worked in a factory I was a shop steward and I was secretary of the local. I took part in grievance bargaining, in contract bargaining. As a delegate to the Labour Council in metropolitan Toronto, I had regular reports from other delegates on the progress of their union affairs.

My point is that the labour movement and the NDP, to the extent that we are affiliated with the labour movement, are trying to get fair and reasonable bargaining. More than 90 per cent of contracts are settled without a strike or even intervention by the government in the way of mediation or arbitration. Of course, that does not hit the newspapers.

During the 18 years I worked at the Continental Can box plant we did not have a strike. But the people who want to blame the unions for all disputes simply do not look at the huge majority of times when the unions are the ones making the concessions in order to get the operation working again.

I am sorry that the hon. member has such a closed mind on the matter.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to follow the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina, my neighbour actually. Parkdale—High Park and Trinity—Spadina are neighbouring ridings.

We used to do joint television programs, but then I discovered that the Liberal ideology is quite different from the NDP ideology so I canned that in a hurry.

An hon. member: He was with Continental Can.

Mr. Heap: The competition was too much for you.

Mr. Flis: The hon. member will be missed in this House. He asked a very important question when he began the debate. He asked: What is the government's agenda in bringing this bill forward?

• (1330)

I think I can answer him. The government's agenda is a hidden agenda. It is like many other things the government does in this House. It brings in certain bills but then it has a hidden agenda. The hidden agenda is to dismantle Canada Post Corporation step by step, the heritage of our country.

We saw this when the minister was asked whether this was the first step towards privatization. He said that philosophically, he is not against privatization. This means he is already giving Canadians the signal that this is one of the first steps toward privatization. If it is toward privatization, and I think it will be, there will be post office after post office shut down across the country.

In my own riding I just have two postal outlets, Station M and Station V. Station M has already been reduced in its service. Station V is on the chopping block again. The government wanted to close it two years ago. Those of my constituents who use the post office gathered petitions and I made representations to the minister. We held off the closure for two years, but now rumours are that Station V is back on the chopping block. Why? There is no reason.

Station V is the heartbeat of the community. People come in and they gossip. The post office manager, Mr. Cosy, knows most of the clients. He greets everyone by name practically. What a nice community atmosphere this post office provides.

I was born and raised in Foston, Saskatchewan. It is called a one-horse town. Today maybe it is a one-car town. I remember as a small boy everyone gathering in the post office and catching up with the news of the community. We later moved to a slightly bigger town called Hendon. It was the same thing there. The post office was the heart of that community too. Then we bought a bigger farm and moved to Wadena, Saskatchewan. Even in this bigger town to this day the post office is the centre of the community. It is the town hall of Wadena.

I want to raise something that no other member has raised. I think the points about improved management-labour relations are a facade.

The minister talked about 76,000 employers and this will strengthen the partnership. This will make the relationships more harmonious. He talked about the *esprit de corps* that this bill will bring in. How can he think that giving 10 per cent shares, with no value defined yet, with no voting rights for the shareholders, that by throwing this little tidbit it is going to improve management-labour relations?

Come on. These workers know better. They know that this is just a facade. If anything, it will make relations even worse. Let them settle the three years of the collective agreement which has not yet been signed. Let them work on that if they want to improve the *esprit de corps*.

What is it that I want to raise that no other member has raised? I want to do something about the heritage of Canada because if these post offices in the small villages are going to be closed one by one, we are going to have yet another bit of Canada's heritage wiped off the scene.

We spend a lot of time debating what should go into the Constitution and how to keep this country together. Well, let us not dismantle it. Here is our heritage.

When I was a member here between 1979 and 1984, I brought in a private member's bill to preserve the old railway stations. If you recall, one morning, without telling anyone, CP came and bulldozed down the railway station in west Toronto near my riding. After I left, Mr. Taylor from the Conservative Party picked up that bill, reintroduced it and it was subsequently passed.

It was thanks to the initiative of two private members, myself and Mr. Taylor on the Conservative side that the railway stations across this land are now preserved. Companies cannot tear them down without going to the public, to the community, holding hearings, looking at alternatives, before touching that building.

I am recommending to the government in my portion of debate that if it is going to go this route, and I hope it does not, but if the Prime Minister and the government want to destroy another part of Canada, let the government bring in legislation that will preserve all of the old historical post offices from coast to coast to coast to the

U.S. border. If it does not bring in that legislation, another bit of Canada goes down the drain.

If I can make any contribution in this speech, and I do not want to repeat everything that has been said before, I just want to emphasize. Be Canadian, Mr. Prime Minister. You say you love Canada. Show it.

I do not think we should play games and waste time with a private member's bill for that important legislation. I am tossing a challenge to the government to bring in a government bill to protect the post offices across this country.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest and some fascination to the hon. member's comments.

During the period of time that I was chairman of the House of Commons consumer and corporate affairs committee we conducted a study into the history and the future of Canada Post and the postal service in this country.

I recall distinctly two of the witnesses who appeared before the committee were historians. They had recently completed a study on the history of mail delivery and mail service in Canada.

I was struck by the fact that the vast majority of postal outlets historically in Canada were located in private enterprises. They were located either in people's homes or general stores, almost without exception in rural Canada.

Canada Post in its former incarnation as a department of the federal government almost without exception in small communities operated in the private sector. It was only in a few of the large Canadian cities that there were what we would now term to be corporate-owned postal outlets, in other words buildings erected by the Government of Canada, or the governments of Upper or Lower Canada at the time, and operated by those governments.

So I think the member is really not being true to his history when he talks about the need to preserve government-owned post offices because they are historic monuments. Well, history does not bear that out.

Canada Post in its former incarnation started out in the private sector providing services to small communities in storefronts and in people's homes. It is an interesting devolution that has gone on where again Canada Post is abandoning a philosophy of having a large corporate-owned structure and going back into the small enterprises, which often and ironically are open for longer hours and provide better service.

I am wondering if the member could give us his comments on that piece of history?

Mr. Flis: I do not know who these historians were but I am sure their research must have been dependent on what period of Canada's history they were looking at. If you go back far enough in the history of our postal service, you go back to the pony express. Now, I am not asking that the pony express be reincarnated here. But I am asking that our heritage be preserved through all the stages of history, from the pony express to priority post today, which cannot deliver a letter for me on a long weekend.

• (1340)

A year ago today I went to the local post office to send a letter to Ottawa. The recipient did not have a fax or anything fancy, but I had to get the letter there for Monday. I went into the post office late Friday. The post office apologized because Saturday the workers were gone, Sunday nothing moved and Monday was a holiday. The postal workers told me to go to a private postal delivery service to deliver my letter from Toronto to Ottawa.

This is indeed ironic when we hear the minister and other members boasting about how efficient the system is now. That is how efficient it is.

The hon. member who spoke earlier this morning talked about finding mail in the swamp. I sent out a lot of letters one December and two never arrived. A year later, two of those letters were returned to me in Ottawa. I guess those letters were floating in the swamp that the hon. Conservative member was talking about. Let us not play games.

Getting back to the heritage of Canada, I am glad the hon. member is interested in this. Maybe he can convince his Prime Minister and his ministers responsible to bring in such legislation. Knowing how aggressive he is, maybe he will do it himself.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear my colleague in his opening comments in response to the New Democratic member from the Toronto area in a neighbouring riding where he said that he used to share television time with him. I do not think he realized this, but the member said he used to work for Continental Can for 21 years and the member for Parkdale—High Park said that he quickly canned those shared television meetings. I did not know whether he

was making a joke. Anyway, I thought that was kind of interesting.

There is another aspect that I do not think my colleague or anyone else in the House has thought of and I am wondering if this is maybe a point worth considering as to why the government is proposing this bill. We all look at the bill and question whether there is something devious with the bill. I agree that there probably is.

I would like the member to respond to this. I am wondering if this bill is not a way to possibly drive a wedge between the union and the employees. Even though they are going to be non-voting members as shareholders in this corporation, would those shareholder employees be reluctant to criticize their employer which is Canada Post. I really believe that the question begs an answer. They would be almost put into a very difficult position if they felt there was something wrong with the management of Canada Post. Would they, as shareholders, be reluctant to question that employer?

Mr. Flis: That is an excellent question. Responding to her preamble about joint television programs, they were excellent programs because the people from the two ridings could compare ideologies, philosophies, the approach of the Liberal policy of doing things and the New Democratic policy of doing things.

In fairness to the member for Trinity—Spadina, getting together at the same time was really the difficulty. I did not stop doing it because he worked for Continental Can. My brother worked for Continental Can, so I have to be very kind to Continental Can. Unfortunately, Continental Can was closed and my brother, after working 35 years there, lost his job; gone with hardly any pension or benefits. That is an aside.

The member is very astute in seeing what the hidden agenda is, to drive a wedge between labour and management.

If you are a shareholder, now you own the company. What do you do? Do you not agree with the workers who want this collective agreement signed? On which side of the fence will the shareholders be? Will they be on the management side or will they be on the labour side? If the minister was sincere in what he said about improving *esprit de corps* in relationships, then you would think the government would have sat down with the union and with groups of workers and come to an agreement before it even tabled this bill. It did not do it. The union is against the bill. Where is this *esprit de corps*? Where is this harmonious working relationship that the minister promises through this bill?

Nonsense, hidden agenda? Dismantle, privatize, get rid of all unions in Canada. That is the philosophy of the Tory policy. That is the hidden agenda.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, is the bill before us today.

Essentially, this bill would permit the sale of up to 10 per cent of Canada Post Corporation to employees by establishing an employee share savings plan.

The bill provides very few specifics of the share offering. We do know it permits shares to be given away. We know the shares offered to employees would be non-voting, therefore the workers would really not have a voice in the operations of Canada Post.

There are a number of inadequacies with this offer which I will address shortly. However, first I would like to point out that this bill does not address a number of areas with regard to Canada Post that this government really should be looking at. What about service to Canadians? What about protecting employees? Nowhere does this bill address the mandate given to the Canada Post Corporation in the original bill establishing the Crown corporation, the Canada Post Act.

At that time it called for the desirability of improving and extending its products and services in the light of developments in the field of communications; the need to conduct its operations on a self-sustaining financial basis while providing a standard of service that will meet the needs of the people of Canada and that is similar with respect to communities of the same size; the need to conduct its operations in such a manner that will best provide for security for the mail; the desirability of

utilizing the human resources of that corporation in a manner that will both attain the objects of the corporation and ensure the commitment and dedication of the employees to the attainment of these objects; and the need to maintain a corporate identity program approved by the Governor in Council that reflects the role of the corporation as an institution of the Government of Canada.

That was the mandate provided in the Canada Post Act that created the Crown corporation. Bill C-73 does nothing to address these areas. It is the beginning of the end in terms of meeting the provisions of this mandate. The bill gives no hints as to how the non-voting shares would be priced or what would be the rules for redeeming them or transferring them if a worker decided, for whatever reason, that he no longer wanted the shares.

Further, even those people who support privatization would disagree with the fact that employees would be given the right to acquire only non-voting shares. Such shares deny the employees any input into policy making or administration functions and excludes them from being members of the board. The main beneficiaries of such an offering, from my reading of this bill, would be the executives as part of their compensation plans. It provides for dividends to be set by Canada Post in accordance with the rights, privileges, restrictions and conditions attaching it to the shares.

The government is not saying what this might be. That is typical of this government. It really never tells us what it is going to do. The general lack of details and the sketchiness of those present make it difficult to debate this bill. This is par for the course for this government. We in opposition and all Canadians are not about to be fooled by this government's hidden agenda. We know it all too well.

• (1350)

Let us call this so-called incentive scheme what it is. It is nothing more than a back-door route to privatization. The minister says the proposal is to assist in employee-employer relations. Is that not a cute term? The unions have indicated they are in opposition to the concept, calling it a sham. If the unions are calling it a sham, why? It is because the shares owned by the employees are to be limited to 10 per cent and are non-voting in the affairs of the corporation. The employees of Canada Post and all Canadians already own Canada Post.

The Union of Postal Communications Employees says it has advised the corporation that the value of Canada Post must include at least $70 million to cover its liability for equal pay for work of equal value payments to UPEC members. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers says its members will not be bribed by this share scheme. It is calling instead for expanding and improving services for Canadians, which it confirms the government is cutting in an *ad hoc* manner in the name of profit.

Also, as CUPW says, if the government really wants to improve employee-employer relations, it would give the union a contract since it has yet to implement the terms of the back-to-work legislation passed last November.

I mention that the government is being dishonest about its reasons for this share offering. It claims one thing, improved employer-employee relations, and yet is really interested in privatizing the Canada Post corporation.

In the report of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations entitled, *Moving the Mail, Canada's Postal Service in the 1990s*, recommendation No. 36 suggested that the Government of Canada privatize Canada Post once adequate financial performance comparable to private sector levels has been attained and once the industrial relations climate has been approved.

The Liberal Party emphasized in the minority report that we are opposed to the privatization of Canada Post because we believe that essential public services belong in public hands and furthermore we agree with what my colleague from Parkdale—High Park has just said. We said at the time that it is hard to comprehend the total impact of the committee's recommendation. It recommends an eventual privatization of Canada Post, and at the same time it says that industrial relations must improve first.

How will relations ever improve when Canada Post employees are so vehemently opposed to privatization? Canada Post has approximately 46,000 workers across Canada and we asked at the time of the release of the report, in our minority report, questions such as what would happen to their security of employment, benefits and wage levels. We predicted that adjustments and lay-offs would be widespread. These concerns and predictions are valid today, more than two years later.

What of the equity of Canada Post land, its buildings and equipment? Most of the total $2.9 billion in land, buildings and equipment are in prime downtown locations. Privatization would result in a bonanza of prime space for the buyer at fire sale prices.

What about competition? Will the monopoly of our mail delivery be transferred to a private company? Who will regulate the activities of this company?

No other post office in the world has been privatized, so we have no precedent which might provide answers to some of these questions. Therefore, the Liberal Party recommended in the minority report and still holds firm today that Canada Post should not be privatized.

The government also let the cat out of the bag about privatization at that time when it said in recommendation No. 37 that the privatization plan be carried out by means of public share issue and should incorporate an employee share ownership plan. The Liberal Party recommended that this recommendation be eliminated and we say the same thing today.

On April 30 of this year we asked the minister responsible to admit to Canadians that this bill signifies the first step of the privatization of Canada Post and he flatly denied it.

Let us face it, Canada Post is being fattened up for slaughter. In other words, it is being prepared for sale to the highest bidder.

Much of the corporation's recent business success has been earned on the backs of average Canadians: higher postal rates, cuts in home delivery and the burgeoning use of supermailboxes in new suburbs. Vital postal subsidies in support of the fragile Canadian magazine and publishing industries have been cut. So have payments to Canada Post that subsidize air freight in the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and areas of Canada that really need it.

Labour relations have not improved and have grown worse in recent years. Who is winning? Obviously it is not rural Canadians who have already lost the majority of their post offices. It is not urban Canadians, many of whom now have to go to supermailboxes a way from their homes. Certainly all Canadians are paying more money for less service.

Canada Post workers are not the winners. They still have no contract, no job security. They are living with the looming threat of privatization which will put many of them out of their jobs. All they have is an offer of bogus shares in a company which because it is a Crown corporation they already own. The quality of their relations with management has declined steadily during the time of this government's mandate.

Will the only winners be the future owners of Canada Post, I ask? There is no doubt that eventually this essential service will be in the hands of the one of the Tory government's big business friends.

This bill, lacking though it is, is yet another step by this government in the selling out of Canada Post and in the selling out of Canadians in terms of having a secure and competent delivery of mail service in this country.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite quoted at some length in her speech from the House of Commons the consumer and corporate affairs committee report entitled *Moving the Mail*. I was quite involved in the preparation and the writing of that report so her remarks naturally interested me.

She noted correctly that one of the recommendations of the report was that Canada Post ultimately be privatized, that shares be offered to individual Canadians, and that shares also be offered to employees of Canada Post. She is quite right in saying that.

Where the member is not being fully fair to those listening to this debate is that she did not mention that was one recommendation which was intended to go hand in glove with another. The other recommendation was that an independent third party, regulatory, decision-making body, a watch-dog body, be created to oversee the operations of a privatized Canada Post.

When she conveniently forgot to include that part of the recommendation, it enabled her then to make the fabulous leap of faith that she did in her speech by then saying that a privatized Canada Post would have to have a fire sale of its assets, would have to cut service to individual Canadians, would particularly cut service to

rural Canadians and those in remote areas of Canada and would increase the cost of its services.

All those things can be handled completely in a privatized Canada Post if there were an independent, regulatory, third party agency. I ask the member to consider the model of Bell Canada. It is a privately owned monopoly providing a public service and is regulated by the CRTC to which any Canadian or any Canadian group can go. I know she would be cognizant of a few years ago when the Consumers' Association of Canada took on Bell Canada at the CRTC and won rate reductions. No similar mechanism exists today with Canada Post. I would consider a privatized Canada Post regulated by a CRTC-type organization to be much better than today.

There are communities in my riding, as I am sure in hers, that get up in arms from time to time when a postal outlet is being replaced by a retail postal outlet or by community boxes, et cetera. Whether those moves by Canada Post are right or wrong, the community or individuals now have no mechanism by which to go and question the actions of Canada Post.

Could the member envision any good at all in a restructured Canada Post, whether it is publicly owned or privately owned, which is governed by a regulatory agency modelled along the lines of the CRTC?

• (1400)

Is it not a model that could have some hope of winning and providing better service? If shareholders were also employees, would they not perhaps feel they had an independent court to which to go as well?

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his question.

I guess to compare the Canada Post Corporation to Bell Canada Enterprises is very difficult for me to envision. Bell Canada Enterprises is a major corporation with several different arms connected thereto. It started from a private company. As it grew into Northern Telecom, Bell Northern Research and all the subsidiaries of the corporation, obviously this was when the federal government had to step in and provide regulatory measures for the corporation because it did have a monopoly. It had to ensure that this was a corporation that did not get out of hand. This corporation has done a tremendous job in this country and as Canadians we should be very proud of it.

I do not know whether or not the Canada Post Corporation, because it is working in reverse, can fit the same mould as that of Bell Canada Enterprises. This is a corporation that has been managed by the federal government since inception. It has been managed by Canada for reasons of the immense size of this country and of the immense cost of getting our mail to the northernmost and the outermost regions so that all people of Canada and the territories would be served in an equal manner at the same cost.

There is a big difference in cost in getting mail out and in getting telephone services out. I have a very difficult time visualizing how we can even compare the two corporations. I am certainly open to looking at a model for Canada Post.

What has happened in recent years because of what I have to call interference by the Government of Canada in Canada Post? We have seen the deterioration of a system that has been the pride of this country. As my colleague from High Park has said, we have lost a bit of our heritage because this has gone down.

Nowhere have we seen such deterioration in a federally owned corporation as we have in Canada Post. I cannot fault the employees. I have to fault the restrictions imposed upon the corporation and the fact that it is required to make money. It is the only Crown-owned corporation, I might add, that is required to do so. The CBC certainly is not required to make money, yet Canada Post Corporation has to. We have seen the infliction of an incredible increase in postal rates over the last few years which has created probably one of the highest postal rates in the world.

However, to get back to the question of the member opposite, I am always open to listening to any proposal that is going to create better service for Canadians in the future. If he has some wonderful idea that can show me that our corporation can be as efficient as Bell Canada Enterprises and its subsidiaries then I certainly would look at it, but I am not convinced that we can even compare apples and oranges, because that is what I see.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, among the points made by the hon. member in her speech this afternoon was the contention that this bill can, properly in my view, be seen as the first giant step down the very slippery path to complete privatization.

This is a point that has been made by other speakers in this debate as well, and it is a point that I think bears some consideration. Certainly the record of the government in this regard is very clear. For example, the first step in the privatization of Air Canada was a share offering to the employees. In a sense what we had there was a template that is just being applied to Canada Post in this instance.

However, I would like the hon. member to take this one step further and consider, should the government after the promulgation of this bill take subsequent further steps to effect a complete privatization of Canada Post, to what degree she would think it likely that the buyers of the privatized Canada Post would in fact be large American courier firms.

Is she aware of any firms engaged in businesses like the delivery of mail, in other words Canadian courier firms, that are of a size and capacity sufficient even to contemplate swallowing so huge a corporation as Canada Post? Or, would it not be natural to assume that the only companies on this continent capable of such a giant lunge at the public trough would in fact be the American courier giants?

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from the New Democratic Party. I think he has made an excellent point.

In response to a question just like that one the other day, the hon. Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons said that the privatization of Canada Post would require separate legislation to come back to this House and that there would be ample opportunity for us to make a choice between private ownership or state ownership when that came up.

However, I think the member of the New Democratic Party is asking whether I perceive an American company moving into Canada or who do I see taking over the privatization? It could very well be an American company, but it also could very well be a Canadian company.

If I could go one step further than that, we as Canadians have been up until this point in time subsidizing Canada Post. There is no way on God's green earth we can ever have a postal service, whether it is publicly or privately owned, that is not going to be subsidized by the government of this country. I really believe that and that is because of the immensity of this country and of far-reaching outposts.

I would much rather subsidize a publicly owned Canada Post corporation than a privately owned Canada Post corporation. I certainly would not want to subsidize an American owned private corporation that is running our Canada Post.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in her remarks the member made reference to the back-to-work legislation passed by the House last fall and said that in fact it had not been implemented. Could she tell us what part of the back-to-work legislation has yet to be implemented?

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to my comments with regard to what back-to-work legislation was not implemented. Is that what he is saying?

Mr. Richardson: Yes.

Mrs. Gaffney: I am sorry, I do not have my back-up notes here and I cannot answer that question.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, in entering into the debate on Bill C-73 this afternoon I would like to start, if I may, by quoting some of its directly pertinent elements.

As members will know but as may have thus far escaped those who have been condemned to watch this on television, the bill seeks to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act, in other words that act which has established the Canada Post corporation and under which the corporation operates.

It would seek basically at its heart to insert new sections into the act which would provide for the creation of shares and the dispersing of up to 10 per cent of those shares to the employees of Canada Post Corporation. It would provide as well for the statutory regime necessary for the administration of this sort of thing.

• (1410)

The key elements in this bill can be found in proposed section 27.1(5) which reads:

> (5) Not more than ten per cent of the issued and outstanding shares of the Corporation may be held or beneficially owned by the employees of the Corporation.

and in proposed section 27.2(4), which reads:

> (4) The shares held by the Minister have the exclusive right to vote at meetings of the shareholders of the Corporation.

Simply put, this means that shares in Canada Post Corporation will be created. Ninety per cent of those shares hereafter will be held by the minister on behalf of the Crown, in right of Canada. Ten per cent of those shares may be disbursed to the employees of the corporation.

The 90 per cent held by the minister will be the voting shares. The 10 per cent disbursed to the employees will have no voting rights.

This raises a number of questions at the outset. I suppose that one of the most important concerns what happens to a share held by an employee when that person ceases to be an employee. The only answer given in the bill is to be found in proposed section 27.1(3)(a) which allows the corporation, with the concurrence of the minister and the Governor in Council, to make by-laws that among other things can, and I am quoting from sub-subsection (a):

> (a) prescribe voting rights, rights of shareholders to require redemption, rights of the Corporation to redeem, restrictions or prohibitions on transfer, procedures for the enforcement of the restrictions or prohibitions, and rights on liquidation;

The act proposes to create a situation in which the corporation can, under whatever terms it deems fit, grant or sell shares to its employees and then it may turn around and haul those shares back again, under whatever circumstances or conditions it deems fit, and the employees are left to enjoy it as best they can.

This is a very peculiar form of employee participation in management of a company, which is what the government insists, and has been insisting throughout the duration of this debate, is intended.

There are other questions. What if—and I must admit that this is an incredibly hypothetical case and one I do not at all expect to see—there were such a demand for these shares among Canada Post employees that the demand exceeded the available 10 per cent? Some employees would then be told: "No, I am sorry. The shares are gone. You cannot have any". What would that do to morale?

What if—and I think this is much more likely—the day comes when this government drops the other shoe and moves to full privatization and in the best free enterprise tradition calls for anyone who wants to bid on these shares to buy them up? What if at that point the union decides: "Well, this is a tasty little venture and we can in fact now have the opportunity to put into practice that which our own constitution calls for", which was so ably quoted earlier by the member for Elk Island, "and assume control of the company?"

This bill prohibits that. It says that: "Not more than 10 per cent of the issued and outstanding shares of the corporation may be held or beneficially owned by the employees of the corporation".

Not only is it a question of the government introducing legislation that in no way advances effective management-employee co-operation, but this is a bill that precludes for all time the possibility of the workers in Canada Post assuming ownership and thus management of that company.

When one finds oneself confronted with the smoke that has been billowing up in this Chamber today, concerning worker participation and co-operation from the benches opposite one should take it with a very strong fan.

The argument has been advanced that the whole point of this bill is to jolly up the post office, to create a situation in which, because the workers own a part of the corporation, even though they will be specifically prohibited from exercising any of the normal rights of ownership, they will thereby be keenly interested in its fate and operations even though they will be granted no authority to do anything about its fate and operations. The idea is that they will feel much more well-disposed toward the corporation, a sort of warmth will well up in their innards and suffuse their entire bodies causing a smile to spread across their face every morning when they go to work and resulting in ideal employee-employer relations at Canada Post.

Let us assume just for a moment that such an assessment, however laughable it may appear on the face of it, is accurate. Let us then ask what happens if the shares are unequally distributed among the employees of Canada Post, so that some employees get 10 shares, some get five, some get one, and some get 50? Does this mean that we will then be confronted with the odd spectacle of varying degrees of employee satisfaction at Canada Post based entirely on their amount of their shareholdings? Of course not. Clearly that is absurd.

However, the thesis being advanced in defence of the bill would seem to carry that in its wake.

Let us examine another possibility, in my opinion a far more probable one, which is that some employees take up the offer to hold shares and many do not. This effort to create a new harmony and enthusiasm at Canada Post would then create a situation in which some employees are owners of the corporation, though not effective owners, and some are not. What do you suppose that is going to do for employee morale and functioning? What do you suppose will be the result of a situation in which there is a clear cleavage within the work force at Canada Post, on one side being those who have at least a residual corporate interest in the corporation and on the other those who remain, simply and straightforward, employees. That is the situation we are going to have.

In that situation I cannot but suspect that the outcome will be greater rancour, lower morale, greater disputation and unease at Canada Post. That will be the outcome of this government's bill. I find it difficult to believe that the government does not understand that.

Therefore, I find myself looking for other explanations for the introduction of the bill. However, before moving to that I would like to note a couple of instances of circumstances that have created the ill will, the lack of co-operation, the distress, and the unease at the post office.

As members will recall, April 28 has been declared by this Parliament to be a national day of mourning for workers killed and injured in the work place. It is a most worth-while observance and one that we in this House observed with a standing moment of silence.

When the members of the Edmonton local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers went to Edmonton management and said that they too would like to observe April 28 they proposed three possible means of doing so. They proposed that the flags on corporation facilities could be lowered to half staff, they proposed that a minute of silence could be observed during each of the shifts contained within the 24 hours of April 28, and they proposed that employees wishing to do so could be permitted to wear black armbands during the day.

The response of Canada Post management, in fact it came from the labour relations manager for the entire foothills division, was: "No no; and oh, all right, but only where nobody can see you".

• (1420)

They were three perfectly harmless, reasonable requests from the employees at the Edmonton local and Canada Post management made a perfectly Draconian and unreasonable response. If you think that this is somehow uncharacteristic of operations at Canada Post, you have not been paying attention.

I recall one afternoon about a year and a half ago which I spent in my constituency office. The afternoon was almost entirely consumed talking to a Canada Post employee, a young woman who had been injured on the job, who had gone for physiotherapy, had been on worker's compensation, and according to her doctor was now prepared to go back to work under light duties. Canada Post management at that time said: "Sorry, there are no light duties you can perform. Therefore we require you to go back to full operations, and if you cannot do that your contract of employment will be terminated".

I spoke to this young woman for about three hours in my office and several times during that period she was reduced to tears, to weeping in my office. It was not a pleasant experience. I can only imagine what it was like for her. This is also indicative of the kind of compassion evidenced regularly by the management of Canada Post.

On June 19, 1991 there appeared an article in the *Toronto Star* by Mr. Peter Edwards in which it was reported that:

> A high-level law enforcement agency likely bugged the headquarters of Canada's largest postal union during the last mail strike, according to a confidential report by a former military surveillance expert.
>
> "It is obvious that the telephone system has been compromised," concludes the study, obtained by The Star. "Therefore, the telephone system should not be used to relay information that is considered sensitive".

The headquarters of the union is bugged. This is the action of a co-operative, indulgent management or government? No. This is the action of an outfit, regardless of which it was, that is determined to crush the legitimate organized voice of the employees of Canada Post by any means necessary. We are going to jolly them up by offering them fake shares? It is absurd.

Let us continue the litany of goodwill from the management of Canada Post. During the last strike of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, this last fall, only one corporate entity in the entire country brought suit against the union because of the disruption of that corporation's work during the strike. Was it a grain company? No, it was not a grain company. Was it a trucking company trying to get across the border? No, it was not a trucking company. Was it a single member of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association whose operations had been disrupted? No, it was not.

Mr. Speaker, I bet you can guess which corporate entity it was. You are right, the Canada Post Corporation was the only corporate entity in the country to bring suit against PSAC when it was on strike. This is the same management that has decided that in the interests of efficiency in shipping mail from Toronto to the west that mail, in part, will go courtesy of an outfit called "N. Yanke" of Saskatoon. It will run the mail through the United States, not through Canada, not through the towns with their gas stations along the Trans-Canada Highway. No, it is going to send it through the United States. It may save some money doing that but it is not good for the local economies of the towns along the way. However, this is all of a piece with the corporate philosophy of Canada Post management.

Last, I would be remiss if I did not note that this is the same management whose concept of service includes closing postal stations across the country. I have a list here. No, this is not like Senator McCarthy's list, it is an accurate list. It is not a secret document, I hasten to point out. This is a list of the rural post offices that previously had been federally operated Canada Post offices. They have been closed by Canada Post since November 29, 1985. There are 151 post offices on this list in Alberta alone.

For the hon. member opposite who suggested that what in fact is happening is simply a reversion to those halcyon days of yesteryear when the post office was run out of mom and pop's local country grocery store, sad to say, that is not what is happening. What is happening is they are being shut down and the operations are being moved miles, occasionally scores of miles away.

It is not a question of closing down a government facility and moving the services across the street into a drug store. Those services are gone, not in all instances it is true, but in the overwhelming majority of these instances.

All of these instances, rolled together, are why no one should have been surprised that the announcement of the bill by the minister was greeted with, let us say scepticism, by the duly elected leadership of the union.

By the way, might I note for the benefit of those opposite who took particular umbrage at the quotes from the constitution of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers previously read out by the hon. member for Elk Island, that those provisions were democratically agreed to by the members of the union and what is more, can be democratically altered by the members of the union at any of its national conventions, which I believe, although I am not certain, are held bi-annually.

That seems to be a great deal more than can be said for the policies of this government. However, this too comes as no surprise, knowing as we do the mixed enthusiasms with which the government clutches at the doll of democracy.

At the time the bill was announced, the duly elected president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers noted very correctly, in my view, and I quote from his release: "Our best share in Canada Post is our wages, and our security rests on the services provided to Canadians". They are very wise words.

An hon. member: He is well overpaid.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): He went on to say that it is clear—he is what? I am sorry I did not catch that. Did the hon. member say he is overpaid? He is paid at exactly the same rate as the line workers down in the postal stations.

Mr. Parrot went on to say that it was clear the Conservative government has no intention of permitting employees to influence the direction of the corporation: "If they really wanted to benefit postal workers, they would give us a contract". That is an admirable observation, given that the postal employees have been without a contract for close to three years, the final, the concluding, the conclusive example of the tender mercies of Canada Post management.

This bill is a sham and a joke. That it is even before us is a pathetic comment on the declining mental fortunes of the government opposite.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): We have adjacent ridings, as you know, Mr. Speaker, so you will be kind to both of us, I am sure.

Does the member recall the cartoon in the 1964 election campaign when Senator Goldwater was running for president? They had a picture of him looking quite surprised and the caption was: "But Senator Goldwater, don't you recall that the government has always carried the mail?" These people want to have the government stop carrying the mail. They want their friends in the business community to carry the mail.

It is true that some of the people who carry mail are Liberals. The member from the back row over there who used to be a free enterpriser would doubtless like the *Toronto Sun* to carry the mail. The *Toronto Sun* is not going to carry the mail because there are a lot of people who have a lot of their lives, their effort, their sweat tied up in carrying the mail and they do a good job. They even deliver mail in the riding of the hon. member for Calgary Southeast until the next election. I was there last week speaking at a Liberal meeting. He will be happy to know there are lots of people there who are going to run against the member.

• (1430)

The really good news is that three people at the meeting were individuals who had been on the member's executive for Calgary Southwest until very recently. I would call that a switch.

Mr. Richardson: Were you a free entrepriser?

Mr. Kilgour: I got them stirred up Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. member opposite is not commenting on the speeches that have just been delivered or addressing a question to any topic that the member covered.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): This is comment period. He has a little comment period and then he can address his question.

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I have spent a lot of time with people who work for the post office in Edmonton too. Will the member tell us whether he thinks that on a balance of probabilities the fault is more with the management of the post office than it is somewhere else?

I have the feeling that the problem is mostly a management one. I have here a letter from a lady which took 12 days to arrive. I would be, and other members too would be interested in hearing whether the member thinks we can build bridges between people who work for the post office and management? How can we get more happy campers in the post office, more happy employees?

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I must thank the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast very much for that question. The answer is a remarkably simple one.

First of all, stop resisting the grievances. Clear up the grievance backlog. Send them through the process and get them solved. That is step one.

That is not hard to accomplish. All it takes is a wee bit of will on the part of management. The problem is that for the longest time there has been a stonewall approach to those grievances. Clearing up the grievances would be a tremendous first step.

Second, stop closing the postal stations. Stop slashing away at the work force. As the member may know, the entire northeast quadrant of Edmonton is now without a Canada Post post office. There is none there. With the closure of Station C on White Avenue, the entire southeast quadrant of Edmonton will be without a Canada Post post office, with the consequent losses in jobs and services and the rest of it.

The third point is give the employees who are there now the technological and infrastructural tools they need to do the job. That would make them deliriously happy.

I speak to postal workers regularly. I have a lot of them in my riding and my dark confession is that some of my best friends are postal workers.

What they tell me over and over again is that they cannot provide the service that they want to provide because they are not granted the technological means to do so. That would be step number three.

Again, step one, clear the grievances; step two, stop the cutback programs; step three, upgrade the technologies so that the workers can provide the service they want to provide.

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would not want this opportunity to go by without commenting on the remarks of the turncoat member for Edmonton Southeast. It is not surprising—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. You will have to address your question to the Speaker instead of any other member in this House.

Mr. Richardson: That is fine. We do not know what side members are going to be on, flip-flopping across the House and supporting the NDP one day, the Conservatives the next.

In any event, I will deal now with the member for Edmonton East who was referring to the earlier comments of the member from Elk Island who referred to this socialist manifesto here. He raised the matter of the secret national constitution adopted by the postal employees. He even referred to it as "our constitution". I do not know if he used to be a postman. He is also the NDP energy critic. We heard earlier today the wisdom of various NDP critics.

For example, we heard today the critic for unemployment in Hamilton discussing training programs, welfare and unemployment insurance. This NDP critic said that the government should look at just printing the money it needed to spend its way out of the recession. I just want to quote from *The Hamilton Spectator*. The NDP critic said: "When we borrow money to do a project that money has to be repaid. Instead of borrowing the money we create—"

Mr. Fulton: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The government members were rising just a moment ago about matters of relevance. I think many viewers would be interested in knowing that the national debt has doubled under the Tories. They are the real money printers.

Mr. Richardson: I appreciate that the various NDP critics are a little touchy over these matters when we quote the wisdom they bring to the people when they say that all we have to do to get out of debt is to print more money. There it is, I have just quoted the critic.

We are now dealing with the energy critic. I wonder if the energy critic would support this constitution which he referred to. I will have a look here at one section, section (d)(20) with regard to natural resources. This is the relevance the member for Skeena requests. This is the national constitution adopted by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Let me ask their comrade from Edmonton East if in fact he agrees with (d)(20), the position in the constitution on natural resources which is: "The union calls for a nationalization of all resource industries without compensation". Would that be the view shared by the two members from Edmonton?

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, no.

An hon. member: That is your union.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): It is not my union. My union, when I was a member of it, was the Office of Professional Employees International Union. I have never been a member of CUPW. I would be curious to know whether or not what he was quoting was in fact the constitution of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers or a policy document appended to the constitution? It is a small thing but I would be interested in knowing that.

Last, I do not know that it is really our part here in the House of Commons to be debating the provisions of the constitution of a duly constituted union within Canada. It may be a point of some considerable interest, but surely the hon. member would be serving his constituents and the people of Canada better were he to concern himself not with the provisions of the constitution of the Canadian Union of Postal Employees, but with the provisions of Bill C-73.

I can only suspect that the provisions of Bill C-73 are themselves so indefensible and that, by the way, is why there are no government members rising to participate fully in debate this afternoon. They feel themselves compelled to pull out of the hat whatever rabbit they can and wave it around hoping nobody will actually see Bill C-73.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the member opposite his feelings on recent moves by the NDP government in Ontario to involve workers more in the participation and the ownership of enterprises?

The recent throne speech in Ontario promised worker ownership legislation to come forward soon in the province of Ontario. The proposed reform of the Ontario Labour Relations Act proposed in November of 1991 has, under this heading, the government's social and economic agenda: "Encouraging worker investment and ownership in Ontario companies in a manner which

recognizes the benefits of worker participation for both labour and business".

The NDP government in Ontario is saying there are benefits when workers are involved in the participation and the ownership of companies. If the Ontario NDP government has recognized that and accepted it, why is the federal NDP government adopting a position 100 per cent opposite?

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, it will be. I would just note that yes, I am in complete agreement with those proposals and programs by the Ontario NDP government. I think they are long overdue and I heartily applaud them.

I would simply point out that they have absolutely nothing in common with the bogus share offering that the government proposes now be granted to the employees of CUPW.

When the Ontario NDP speaks of investment and ownership it means investment and ownership and control. It means that if you have part of a company you get to direct the company in direct proportion to the part that you own.

• (1440)

The benefits of worker involvement are precisely that when the workers are involved in the direction of a company, there are social benefits to be gained. What Bill C-73 provides is that either the employees of Canada Post can have their money sucked out for these shares that give them no rights whatsoever, or they can simply be granted the shares, still with no rights whatsoever.

To say that has absolutely anything to do with worker ownership and participation is—I will not say misleading—in error.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House to discuss Bill C-73, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

This bill would permit the sale of up to about 10 per cent of Canada Post Corporation to employees and this basically would be accomplished by establishing an employee share saving plan.

On reviewing the Canada Post Corporation Act that was put in place when Canada Post was created, there were five different points which were properly put. The first point is the desirability of improving and extending its product and services in light of the development in the field of communications.

I would like to state that I had the pleasure of visiting Canada Post recently and I was most impressed by the quality of equipment and the quality of technology. I might say that it is perhaps one of the finest technologies that exists anywhere around the world.

I was informed that many corporations from around the world come to Canada to visit Canada Post. They see the technology that is being used in terms of its tracking of delivery and in terms of the monitoring of the services.

A second point is the need to conduct its operation on a self-sustaining financial basis while providing a standard of service that would meet the needs of the people of Canada and that is similar with respect to communities of the same size. That by itself is a very noble objective and I would suggest that really there is nothing in the mandate that will require Canada Post to generate profit.

The only reference to the business aspect of it is that it has to be self-sustained in terms of its revenues and expenditures. Canada Post, being a Crown corporation, is in charge of providing services to the public.

Any extra funds or any surplus revenues generated can and should be used in order to enhance the services that Canada Post is providing to the public. Or, the extra funds can and should be used as an investment in future technologies or as an investment in research and development in a way in which Canada Post can remain on the leading edge and as a leader around the world in providing quality services to the public.

We have noticed something recently in Canada Post which is not its fault. It was pressured into this situation. We have seen services shrinking in a way. Nowadays, if a new development has taken place, the resident would have to go to a central location in order to pick up their mail. When you look at the over-all community, other mail persons still deliver the mail from door to door.

There is already a lack of standards when it comes to the services that Canada Post is providing to the community.

In some areas the taxpayer would have to go to a central location. In some other areas the mail person will come to the taxpayer's door.

I would say Canada Post has to choose this venue because of government pressure on Canada Post to not only meet its objective but to push Canada Post so it will start generating additional revenue. It will show that there is a profit whereby it could put the government in a position to sell off Canada Post eventually.

The third point in terms of objectives states the need to conduct this operation in such as manner that would best provide for the security of the mail. At least in dealing with my constituents I would say that there is a very good level of satisfaction when it comes to services provided by Canada Post. From personal experience, every time we have received a complaint we have taken that up with the administration of Canada Post and Canada Post has dealt fairly effectively with the complaint.

Part D, in terms of objectives, states the desirability of utilizing the human resources of the corporation in a manner that would both attain the object of the corporation and ensure the commitment and dedication of its own employees to attaining this object.

Here we might see quite a bit of tension when it comes to employee-employer relations at Canada Post. While one cannot put the blame totally on one party or the other, we can look at some of the facts that still exist at Canada Post, as they exist in many other Crown corporations and at the government level. As of today, the pay equity legislation or the pay equity act has not been fully implemented. When it comes to Canada Post, we have not seen the result of its implementation.

Estimates tell us that it would take approximately $70 million on the part of Canada Post to deal with the question of pay equity. On this front alone section 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, 1978, states: "It is a discriminatory practice for an employer to establish or maintain differences in wages between male and female employees who are performing work of equal value".

It is already in the Canadian Human Rights Act and I would suggest that Canada Post is obliged under this act to deal with the question of pay equity and to proceed with it.

Having said this, a $70 million liability on Canada Post's hands would probably put the corporation in a deficit position, not only for the next two or three years but perhaps for the next five years.

Speaking of the financial situation at Canada Post, over the past three years or so the books have shown some surplus, in excess of about $260 million profit. One might argue whether these profits are only in the books as a result of assets being calculated as assets that were sold and came to the treasurer of Canada Post being shown as revenues. On the other hand, one might say it might have been revenues.

In any event, for 1991–1992 Canada Post will see some deficit in the range of close to $100 million. When you add the additional $70 million that Canada Post will have to come up with in order to deal with pay equity, I would suggest that will put Canada Post in a situation in which it will not see a positive profit for the next five years or so.

• (1450)

One would then ask what this particular bill will do. Which employee, which corporation and which part of the country and what country in the world would want to invest in a corporation that is not making a profit? No one in their right mind would want to take his or her money and invest it in shares when there is no revenue.

An hon. member: The government does.

Mr. Harb: In the back of my mind I am asking, what is the logic? Why has the government come up with this scheme? As the minister argued, it will improve morale. That might be true if you have a corporation that really has a good track record in terms of profit and ability to generate more revenue.

In the case of a corporation like Canada Post, that is not the case. It is not a private sector corporation. The hon. member from Toronto was talking about the province of Ontario. I am not here to defend the province of Ontario.

When they were talking about employees being able to purchase shares in a corporation, they were talking about the private sector. I do not think they were talking about public sector institutions or public sector Crown corporations.

The minute we allow or make provisions for employees to invest in a corporation, if that corporation is a public corporation, automatically we have admitted to the fact that we are privatizing at least part of that corporation, whether it is 5 per cent or 6 per cent or 10 per cent. In the case of Canada Post, we are privatizing, as of the date the legislation is approved, 10 per cent of Canada Post.

I want to say that is the case. It is not in the act, looking at the five different objectives. I would like to read the last part of the act: "The need to maintain a corporate identity program approved by the Governor in Council that reflects the role of the corporation as an institution of the Government of Canada". Already the act states that Canada Post is a Crown corporation, it is in the hands of the Government of Canada.

This legislation amends the act. However, one would suggest to stop moving it out of public hands and into private hands at this time at a rate of 10 per cent.

I want to say that the best way to deal with the question of morale, whether we are talking about the public or the private sector, is through encouragement, training of the work force, dealing with issues of fairness and dealing with issues of the ability of an employee for advancement. Those are the kinds of things that would improve morale in both the public sector and the private sector.

As my colleague has indicated, in the case of Canada Post, the employees have not had a contract for the past three years. That is not a good thing. That will not help morale. It will not improve productivity. If anything, it will be to the detriment of the corporation.

That does not reflect on the corporation as well as on the government who oversees the operation of the corporation. In cases like this, it is the obligation of the government to step in in order to ensure that the question is resolved. To that extent, I would say only by doing that can we address the question of morale in Canada Post.

The minister is on record in *The Ottawa Citizen* dated May 1, 1992. He is quoted as saying that one of the main reasons he is introducing the amendment is that it is a proven vehicle for improving morale. I presume he is referring to the employees in Canada Post.

Then let us see what the employees have said on this. They have said that their best share in Canada Post is their wages and their security rests on the services provided to Canadians and not the profit and the dividends of the corporation.

So right here we have the minister making a statement which is immediately refuted by the workers' representatives. On that I would suggest that the government with this legislation is privatizing Canada Post not through the front door but through the back door and that is not fair. I do not think Canadians should accept this. We have to be up front with Canadians.

Perhaps what the government is trying to do with this legislation is to throw a trial ball. If there is an outcry in the public domain and the public complains then it might think it over and might not proceed further. If government comes to the conclusion that it might be able to get away with it, I am sure that we see here today will be the beginning of the end of Canada Post as a Crown corporation.

I suggest that the government at this point in time withdraw the bill and go back to consultation both with the public as a whole and with the workers at Canada Post. Try to bring back legislation that will truly address the question of morale of employees at Canada Post, that will help Canada Post to continue to do the quality work it is doing in the community.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if he has a clue of anybody outside Canada Post management who has requested this bill? I know none of the postal workers in my riding and my city came to me saying: "I really want to have a share in Canada Post Corporation". Did any of the postal workers in his riding? I suspect he cannot come up with an example like that.

Would he not agree that what we have here is a situation like exchanging gifts at Christmas without ever asking what anybody wants. Granny winds up getting a train set maybe and the six-year old nephew gets the night-gown. If nobody, and I mean nobody, outside Canada Post management has requested this then why the heck is it being done?

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. In fact, I have not heard an outcry from the public, the workers, or even the management of Canada Post pounding on my door saying: "Please support the legislation. It is a good piece of legislation and we want to proceed."

• (1500)

I want to take this opportunity to say no. It has been on the mind of the government from the very early days to privatize not only Canada Post but also VIA Rail, CBC, Air Canada and Petro-Canada. It is part of the over-all mandate. What we have seen lately with the closure or the deferral of over 46 Crown corporations is a clear indication that this government is really interested in one thing. That is to wash its hands completely of anything that has to do with public service.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. It being three o'clock the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

ESTABLISHMENT OF TRI-LEVEL FUNDING PROGRAM

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should join with provincial governments to establish a tri-level program for the funding of infrastructure improvements, including improvements to sewage and water treatment facilities, road and bridge repair and the construction of grade separations at railway crossings.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am happy that I got lucky and my motion was drawn. At this point I want to thank my colleagues in all parties who, through negotiation, agreed to let me come on early since I may not be able to be here much over the next several weeks. I am happy that my motion was selected for a three-hour debate with a vote which I hope I can be here for.

I want to begin by saying that any government, provincial or federal, of any political party that becomes so hypnotized, mesmerized and traumatized by current deficits and total debt, become immobilized in doing very much if anything about reducing them or eliminating any significant portion of those debts.

Whether the debts are inherited from a previous government or as a result of the financial and fiscal actions of the government itself, it must take actions that result in a sounder financial position. This means it must start doing things that fly in the face of conventional wisdom of old line party policies going back many decades, namely, in tough times instituting cutbacks, reductions and eliminations of programs that in the end would allow them to reduce deficits and debts.

My Motion No. M-281 is one of the many ways available to government at both the federal and provincial level to start doing that. Policies aimed at full employment, increased production and thus more people paying taxes, are the only way to reduce deficits and debts, if not totally eliminate them.

We went through this before at the end of the Second World War, at the end of the Korean war, and in the early 1960s.

While I am on public debts and deficits, I am compelled to remind this House and the country that every provincial and federal debt has been brought about by Conservative, Liberal and Social Credit governments, every single one.

The Government of Ontario inherited about 80 per cent of the present debt it has and that was not done by NDPers. It was not any NDP government that got the country or any province into the financial mess we are in now. We did not do it and we refuse to accept any of the blame for it. However, in four jurisdictions in Canada, NDP governments will do something about it.

An hon. member: Les, where were you?

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I am going to get to that one in a minute.

Is it not strange that over the decades the CCF and the NDP were accused of being the party with the big spenders. Well, who were the big spenders over the last 50 years? I will not go back any farther; that could be even more embarrassing. Who was it who got us into this financial mess? It was our federal government and

provinces, the mess that they are presently in. Who was it who really were the big spenders?

It is ridiculous and laughable to hear Tories, Liberals, and Socreds, whatever number is left of them, criticizing NDP governments that have been in office anywhere from six or seven months to a year and a half or two, for their policies and their budgets.

It is equally ridiculous and laughable to read editorials and articles by columnists on the business pages and to hear various economists and other so-called financial experts who lecture NDP governments about these issues. All of them continue to advance policies that got us into the mess in the first place. Business executives are equally guilty. They lecture us, while they rush to Ottawa and provincial governments with their hands out as soon as they are in trouble because of their own stupidity.

Well, we do not need nor want any more lectures from these people. We will advocate and implement policies as much as we can that result in full employment, which in turn is the only way of reducing the deficits of federal and provincial governments.

We have done that before. I remind the House that we financed the entire Second World War without a nickel of foreign investment. All this running around, kissing the backsides of other places and corporations outside of Canada for foreign investment is another way of losing sovereignty and economic independence.

After the end of the Second World War all the debts that had accumulated during the dirty thirties and the war were paid off within the next 12 years. We had full employment. Why? Because our infrastructure had to be rebuilt. Every town and village and city in this country, our road system, factories, all had to be rebuilt and retooled, and we did it. By the mid-1950s all those other debts were paid off and we had full employment. I can recall making a speech once in the mid-1950s, along with a lot of other people, including Tories because the Liberals were in power, who were complaining when unemployment hit 3 per cent. We thought that was terrible. Now 7, 8, and 10 per cent are sort of accepted.

• (1510)

My motion is one of many ways in which governments at the federal and provincial levels can start to deal with the financial straits of this country in a significant manner. When I look around and see all that needs to be done, I realize that we need another high-rise office building or shopping centre like a hole in the head. Public investment should be involved with private enterprise in rebuilding the infrastructure of our municipalities and providing more housing, both of which are high employment areas of commerce and production.

I deliberately left my motion general so that, should the House and the government agree to it, they can implement this sort of a measure in any way they see fit, according to their own policies. I did not get all that specific.

I want to suggest one way in which it can be done, and this was advocated many years ago. It would require by legislation if necessary financial institutions, banks, trust companies, and what not to allocate a certain percentage of their lending capacity to this national public infrastructure fund. That money would only be paid the going bank rate interest. If it was 8 per cent, that would be it. The federal government and the provinces would negotiate a sharing of some of the interest costs.

I would suggest that the federal government could pick up 2.5 per cent of the interest and the provinces, 1.5 per cent, or make it 1 per cent and 3 per cent, so that the municipalities can have money at not more than 4 per cent and do not end up in a worse situation than they presently are in with a servicing debt cost that grinds them under.

The money is there when we consider what is in the pools of investment capital, whether it is from RRSPs, pension funds or people who invest in financial institutions. When we look at the pool of capital that is there, we have no excuse for not doing it.

There is a list as long as your arm, Mr. Speaker, of towns, villages and cities in Canada with sewer and water systems that need rebuilding, renewing, enlarging. My God, we still have communities pouring raw sewage into our lakes and rivers. We are in no position to lecture any other country in the world.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities says it will take $20 billion over the next five years. So what? It is only money. Most, if not all, of it will be money we owe to ourselves. We would be investing in our own nation. We would be investing in our own people. We would be providing needs that are staring us in the face anywhere we go in Canada.

The situation is the same with housing. There are lists as long as your arm, Mr. Speaker, for chronic-care beds, for co-operative and low income housing. Again these are areas which are high in employment.

I mentioned the grade separations at level crossings which were cancelled. We used to have a revolving fund of $10 million a year, but that was cancelled since 1984. We kill more people at level crossings than those who die of AIDS in any given year. I am completely in support of all the efforts, the medical research, treatment, comfort and assistance to those suffering from that terrible disease, but we killed more people at level crossings last year than those who died of AIDS.

I cannot get anybody excited about that. How come? Why not? God knows there is a need to improve the efficiency of our transportation systems and the safety factor for our public.

There is a variety of ways to do this and this is only one of many, but I submit that full employment is the only way we are going to defeat deficits, national debt or provincial debt. We have gone through this many times before in our history. The problem has been that on many occasions we have had a recession or depression and then some more recessions. As far as I am concerned the present one we are in, in many aspects, is as bad or worse than the depression of the 1930s. All the nation does is sit and wring its hands. It cries and screams about the debt and the deficits.

If we put one million of those million and a half unemployed to work they would pay taxes. The municipalities should be able to afford financially to do a lot of things with their infrastructure, their sewer and water systems, streets, roads and bridges. Something should be done in the way of improvements to our national railway system. There is so much out there that one would have to be blind not to see what needs to be done.

We have proven this many times before. I recommend to my colleagues a little book called *The Unnecessary Evil* by Professor Reuben Bellan of the University of Manitoba. Please get it from the library and read it, because it throws into a cocked hat all the conventional ways in which governments tried to deal with increasing deficits and increasing debts.

When I mentioned that we paid for the entire Second World War ourselves without any foreign investment, that is where I got that information. Nobody has ever refuted that and nobody can. The money is there. Unless we require financial institutions to put it up and the provinces and the federal government pay at least half of the interest costs so that municipalities can afford to draw upon those funds, nothing is going to happen. We will sit and muddle our way through. Too many places and too many people will be neglected in terms of the kinds of public, municipal infrastructure they must have and should have.

I hope in the three hours allotted for this debate that my colleagues on all sides will consider the national objective of full employment and this motion as one of the many ways to achieve that. We did it during wartime. We can do it in peacetime by declaring war on poverty, unemployment and insufficient and inadequate housing.

• (1520)

The fact that we have tens of thousands of people in the north living in slum homes without sewer and water or electricity is incredible and unnecessary. That applies to the four or five million Canadians who lack basic fundamental human rights: the right to a decent roof over their heads, the right to a job, the right to good health care and the right to good municipal services. Those rights are being denied to too many people in our country right now. My motion is one of the ways to help correct that.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I might say I am pleased today to rise in this House to respond to the motion of my hon. friend from Regina—Lumsden.

As the House will know, I have had occasions in the past to share many debates on many important issues with my hon. friend from the opposite side of the House.

The member opposite from Regina—Lumsden has once again spoken eloquently on this subject. This is no surprise to anyone who has listened to him over these many years in this House of Commons. This Chamber, I might add, has been in awe of his prestigious memory regarding transportation issues.

I can speak from experience on my own part from the many years we have spent on opposite sides in the transportation committee. I would use the phrase a worthy opponent as being the most appropriate way of describing our relationship.

It will come as no considerable surprise, though, that I would speak against this motion and take a different tack on it than what the member opposite has said. As I have said in the past, we have often found ourselves on opposite sides on such positions. This does not however diminish my own admiration for my hon. colleague, and I am glad to have an opportunity to say so in the Chamber this afternoon.

The hon. member today is speaking about the government going out and playing a greater part in terms of infrastructure. It would almost seem he is alluding to the fact that the government has not had any part in the infrastructure in our country, but this is simply not the case. We have in the past contributed money to help provinces and occasionally local governments with infrastructure, construction and maintenance.

Highways in fact have been traditionally an area where the federal government spends money to help other levels of government with infrastructure construction. Over the years the federal money has paid for a lot more than the road and bridge repairs envisioned in the hon. member's resolution.

The House well knows that the vast majority of roads is not federal jurisdiction. Indeed road mileage under direct federal control amounts to less than 3 per cent of the national total, and these are mostly in our national parks and on aboriginal lands.

The federal government for one reason or another also owns a number of significant bridges, mostly connecting Canada with the United States. Of the 97 per cent of Canadian highway mileage out of federal jurisdiction, almost two-thirds is under municipal and local control. The hon. member opposite has alluded to the fact that he is talking about the infrastructure within the municipal structure.

I might add that despite the fact highways are outside our federal purview, federal government contributions to highways go back a long way. The very first highway assistance program was established by Parliament in 1919 with the object of stimulating construction and co-ordinating provincial activity to achieve some uniformity in highway standards. This program lapsed in 1928.

Subsequently highway construction was a significant component of federal relief programs in the 1930s. It was during this period that work started on the Trans-Canada Highway. Serious work on the Trans-Canada however did not get going until after the Second World War. Parliament passed the Trans-Canada Highway Act in 1949 and initiated the era of major federal-provincial highway cost sharing programs. The Trans-Canada alone cost the federal government over $800 million before the act lapsed at the end of 1970. By that time, highway cost-sharing programs had become a fact of Canadian life.

I will not bore you or this House with a litany of all the programs which the federal and other levels of government undertook over the years, but a few bear mentioning. There were the Roads to Resources and the Atlantic Trunk Road programs in the 1960s and the regional development agreements in the 1970s. Over the years, all regions of the country have benefited from one or the other of these programs.

This brings me to where we are now and what we are doing. At present there are a number of federal departments and agencies involved in highway construction. Basically they can be divided into two groups: the builders and the funders. The builders include public works, environment and the National Capital Commission. These are directly involved in road construction on federal land. The main funding department these days is Transport Canada.

At present, Transport Canada oversees programs involving cost-sharing agreements with the Atlantic provinces and Quebec. A further program which provided money for improvements to the Yellowhead Highway and involved agreements with the four western provinces expired in 1991.

Generally speaking, the programs fall into the following categories: regional development programs, including economic and regional development agreements or ERDAs; co-operation agreements with the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador; highway improvement programs with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; and the specific Newfoundland transportation initiative. These programs collectively

amount to a federal commitment of over $1 billion in funding spread out over a number of years.

The highway improvement agreements with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick expire in 1995–96. The ERDAs run to 1994–95. The Newfoundland initiative is until the year 2003.

In all, the federal government has averaged around $230 million a year in highway spending over the past decade. All provinces have received some of this money, with the bulk of it going to the provinces most in need of it.

As the recent federal budget indicated, the time may come for the federal government once again to launch a program to develop further our national highway system. I would certainly welcome such a program, primarily for the economic benefit it would bring in the form of a more efficient system for both domestic distribution and exports. This is really much in line with what the hon. member opposite has been proposing.

Even without a new program, however, the federal government is involved in highway construction and at levels beyond that envisioned in the resolution that is before us.

Although the hon. member's aims are worthy and I have no doubt about his sincerity, I was beginning to wonder at what stage of history he was going to take us back to, but he only took us back today to the 1950s. Many a time he has done this with us in the transport committee over the years. Rarely have we ever caught him out on his facts either. The member has failed today to take into account the current programs. For this reason, I will not be supporting this motion.

In closing, I would once again want to salute my hon. friend opposite for what he has contributed today to this debate. I also want to wish him the very best in the treatments that he is undergoing at this time for his health.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, first let me start by congratulating the member for his motion. Certainly the Liberal Party, when we looked at this issue back in the early days of 1988 and before, was the only national party that not only supported the idea of providing help to municipalities, but we had put a dollar and cent figure on it. We were the only national party that committed a $15 billion fund to be put toward infrastructure across Canada. That was done as a result of a request which was made by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. That was not the case for the NDP. The NDP did not have a program, did not support a program, nor did it even want to talk about a program of partnership. However, my colleague's motion is a good one. Perhaps he has moved that extra necessary step.

• (1530)

Back in 1990 as a result of a request that was put by my colleague from Nepean and myself to our leader, the Liberal Party of Canada has launched a task force. This task force has travelled almost in every province and territory across Canada in order to meet with community leaders, business leaders, environmental and special interest groups to find out what they want us as a party to do in order to move forward with the question of infrastructure.

I would like to put on the record some of the recommendations that the Liberal task force has brought forward. Those recommendations at the time were endorsed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

While we believe that no single action will be enough to ensure the future health and viability of Canada's infrastructure, we believe that a broad range of measures is necessary to make a meaningful difference.

Our recommendations include:

a federal recognition of municipal infrastructure as a crisis of national proportion;

a federal commitment to share the responsibility for municipal infrastructure with the provincial and municipal counterpart;

the establishment of a minimum national criteria for infrastructure to provide environmental protection and a uniform level of services for all Canadians, so we will not see ourselves in the same situation every 15 or 20 years and we will set those standards and then we will make sure that our partners are meeting those standards;

a federal commitment to rehabilitate and expand the Trans-Canada Highway; and

the establishment of a process through which the federal government can take action. This includes defining the respective role of federal, provincial and municipal governments in infrastructure construction and management, identifying and priorizing needs on a national scale in consultation with and with the concurrence of provincial and municipal governments.

It also includes increasing incentives for maintenance and reconstruction of existing capital assets and the use of low capital, environmentally conscious techniques, such as waste reduction and recycling, exploring alternative funding sources including such options as more rational user fees for water services, applying fuel tax revenues to road construction, maintenance and increased private sector involvement.

Finally it includes increasing support for research and development to accelerate technological innovation and encouraging efficient municipal management methods to permit phased programs of rehabilitation, better management of infrastructure systems and effective use of funds.

We have on the record the position of our party when it comes to municipal infrastructure. Also, very recently the opposition leader has put forward a number of points that will help the Canadian economy. One of those points was a federal government involvement in the area of infrastructure.

It has been estimated that in excess of 300,000 jobs can be created as a result of a partnership between the three levels of government. As my colleague indicated earlier, this is an incredible investment in the future of Canadians.

When we talk about infrastructure, we are talking about roads, sewer systems and bridges. Believe it or not, those are the most important ingredients for economic development because industry will not locate in a town that does not have a proper infrastructure.

Housing construction will not take place in a town that does not have sufficient municipal services that would include proper roads, as well as sewer systems, water treatment plants, and so on.

My colleague from Nepean and I, when we were travelling across Canada, heard horror story after horror story from mayors, from councillors, from business people and so on. Every one of them told us quite bluntly that they would not be able to do it alone. They do need the involvement of the other partners, and that is the provincial government as well as the federal government.

Whether we want it or not, there is an environmental spin-off as a result of the federal government's involvement in infrastructure. The environment is at stake here and any federal government involvement in the area of infrastructure would help the environment.

Think in terms of the sewer systems that are leaking into our rivers, our lakes and the oceans. Think in terms of the water treatment plants that are not meeting provincial standards. In Ontario alone there are in excess of 90 different municipalities in which it was found the systems were not up to standard, and they were forced by the provincial government to meet those standards.

I cannot tell the House how devastating the situation is in Atlantic Canada in areas in which there is raw sewage being dumped right into the ocean. I say this and I am at a loss because in situations like this I would say that the federal government should have stepped in a long time ago in order to provide the necessary help and support for those municipalities to implement a proper sewage treatment plant and a proper sewage system.

I was informed as well that in areas such as Newfoundland there are a number of homes, thousands of homes, that do not even have sewer systems. That by itself is quite alarming and that is why the Liberal Party has recognized this issue as a national issue. That is why we are the only party to put forward a tangible proposal and a proper strategic plan that will deal with this question of infrastructure and will deal with the question of partnership among the three different partners.

With that, I would like to close by thanking my colleague who has introduced this motion for providing me as well as other colleagues with the opportunity to put forward the positions of our collective caucuses and our collective parties.

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the motion of the member for Regina—Lumsden on Canadian infrastructure funding.

I support in theory the idea of federal involvement in infrastructure spending but I disagree strongly with the hon. member's approach. I know that he would be very disappointed if I did not.

I have had many discussions. The hon. member for Regina—Lumsden and I had the honour to go to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria a little over a year ago. During our spare time we spent a lot of time discussing transport issues and I bow to his extensive knowledge. Having been

in this House since 1968 and having served on the transport committee for many of those years, as my colleague from British Columbia has stated, his facts are very seldom wrong.

As I said before, I disagree with his approach. He seems convinced that with a few repairs here and there and the whole country will benefit. He made a statement that this motion is one of many ways that we can bring about full employment and thereby assist our country and our people.

• (1540)

I am convinced that in these times of severe fiscal constraint the federal government should confine its financial support for infrastructure improvement to areas in which it has identified clear national objectives which will be of lasting value to the country as a whole.

All this is by way of introduction to the national highway policy study, which is an excellent example of how this sort of thing ought to be done.

The federal government has identified highway improvement as an area in which scarce federal resources can be used to best effect. The federal government is now well advanced in studying the most effective way to make a valuable contribution to the national highway infrastructure needs. It is doing so in a rational, carefully considered, non-partisan fashion.

As we all know, highways are a provincial responsibility under the Constitution. Successive federal governments have recognized that highways also have a national economic significance as avenues of interprovincial and international commerce. Federal involvement in highway construction funding goes back a long way to, as the hon. member stated, the early 1920s when it was important to find jobs for our returning soldiers.

In the early 1950s federal participation was essential if Canada was to ever have a Trans-Canada Highway linking east and west. However, by the mid-1980s federal highway policy had been reduced to *ad hoc* support for various provincial priority highway projects. These were often, as it has been said, local roads which did not have any truly national significance.

Work on a comprehensive national highway policy commenced in 1988 and has proceeded through four successive phases. From the beginning this policy development has been a historic federal-provincial co-operative effort, and the major industry's stakeholders have also been consulted at the appropriate points.

In the first phase the criteria for selection of highways comprising a national system of economic importance was established. The system thus identified comprises 25,000 kilometres, which amounts to only 3 per cent of the total Canadian highway network but carries over 75 per cent of freight and 90 per cent of inter-city passenger traffic. Think about that. Three per cent of the total highway network carries 75 per cent of freight and 90 per cent of inter-city passenger traffic. This network links all major cities, ports of entry and other major transportation nodes in our provinces and our territories.

Seventy-five per cent of this system is still two-lane and, incredibly, some portions are still constructed of gravel. When analysed in 1988 over 38 per cent did not meet the minimum national highway engineering standards.

The second phase looked at the economics of the national highway system, in other words, highway related revenue, annual expenditures on capital and maintenance, the potential cost of upgrading and the economic impact of improvements to the system. It was in this phase that both the federal and provincial governments began to get a clear idea of the magnitude of the costs involved.

Effectively, governments were told that to upgrade the system to minimum standards, spending levels on the national highway system would have to double. The total bill now stands at an estimated $14 billion. This total will continue to grow while much needed upgrading is deferred by provincial governments.

The third phase included consultations with the main stakeholders. From this phase it was learned that there was strong industry support for a national highway policy. We also found that the public recognized that additional revenues may be necessary and was even willing to support new taxation, provided that it was dedicated to road improvements. That is food for thought in a country

in which dedicated taxation is not a common instrument of public policy.

The fourth phase of this study, which has just recently been completed, developed a framework for setting priorities and design and maintenance standards. It also examined principles for cost sharing, and possible preliminary program scheduling.

In summary, we now believe that we are at about the stage at which we know what has to be spent and where it has to be spent. We have now come to the most critical element of all, funding.

At issue are federal-provincial cost sharing and the sources of revenue. Not easy questions for any government, especially in times of fiscal restraint. I have dealt at some length with the national highway policy study because the process seems to me to exemplify how infrastructure issues involving different levels of government should be addressed.

It also shows how the current government has acted on an infrastructure issue which it has identified as being of national economic importance.

This brings me back to the hon. member's motion. What I have described is both more and less than he called for. It is more because it deals with the whole complex process of resolving a particular infrastructure issue, and not just road and bridge repair here and there.

It is less because it has focused on a comparatively narrow area, but it is an area in which federal intervention will have a significant and lasting impact on our national, economic, and social well-being.

I believe that this is the responsible way to treat national infrastructure issues.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to speak to the motion of the member from the New Democratic Party on Canada's infrastructure.

This is probably the third time I have spoken in this House on this issue. Another time it was an opposition day. I and my colleague for Ottawa Centre initiated a study back in 1990 on the state of Canada's infrastructure. As a result of that study we developed this report which was available to anyone who was interested.

This issue is probably one of the most important issues facing Canada today, in terms of how it affects the environment, our deteriorating infrastructure, how it could affect jobs in this country and reduce unemployment and welfare in the country as a whole.

In travelling across Canada and interviewing many people in many municipalities right across the country it certainly hit home as to how critical the state of the infrastructure is in many, many areas of the country, in particular Atlantic Canada.

On many occasions since 1984 representations have been made to the federal government for the creation of a program to shore up Canada's deteriorating infrastructure. These proposals to date have been ignored by this government.

I do support this private member's motion. It simply reiterates what we already said in our report in 1990. Without a major infusion of funds for the preservation and expansion of bridges, water-mains, roads, and sewers in Canada both the productivity and safety of all Canadians will be jeopardized. A Canada-wide infrastructure program would create more jobs than the trade deal alone. It would help develop every region of the country rather than bail out corporations in select communities as this government has done.

The member who spoke previously asked whether this problem has just been created since 1984. It has been created since 1984 because historically all three levels of government—municipal, provincial and federal—have contributed to the costs of financing urban infrastructure.

From 1938 to 1984 the federal government made funds available for infrastructure programs in this country. Some of the programs included the Municipal Improvement Assistance Act from 1938 to 1949, the Sewage Treatment Program from 1961 to 1974, the Municipal Development and Loan Act from 1963 to 1966, the Neighbourhood Improvement Program from 1973 to 1979, the Municipal Infrastructure Program from 1975 to 1978, and the Community Services Contribution Program from 1979 to 1980.

• (1550)

These were all programs that helped municipalities right across the country. I might say that these programs were all initiated under Liberal governments.

In those years the governments of Canada had been committed to the infrastructure of this country. Today's federal government has refused to accept any share of the responsibility for infrastructure, leaving the munici-

pal and provincial governments to struggle with this increasing financial burden.

The government argues that in the Constitution it has no responsibility in the area of infrastructure. It is, however, very important to note that the Constitution does not provide for federal involvement in health care, education or social services. Yet, of course the federal government must be involved in those areas. It must be a major contributor and it is, although it has certainly been reducing that too in recent years.

Therefore, can the federal government deny its responsibility for the environment, clean water, regional and national economic development? When I talk about clean water and I talk about sewage treatment, there has almost been an abdication of political leadership on the part of this government. I am talking about an environmental impact here.

I want to give you an example. The Canadian government spends $3 billion to $4 billion in subsidies on fossil fuels while supposedly fighting for conservation. The same is true with our lobbying for the forestry management. At the same time we are decimating our own resources.

Why not cut these subsidies to an industry which is producing fossil fuels harmful to the environment and use the $2 billion, $3 billion or $4 billion to help with a municipal infrastructure program, reduce the debt or energy conservation? There could be any number of aspects that money could be used for. Do not tell me, fellows, that you do not have any money across the way.

The federal government is not only a badly needed funding partner, but is also in the best position to co-ordinate the establishment of national standards and goals. The federal government is currently levying heavy taxes.

The gentleman across the way just said that there was no way he could get money from whatever. They currently levy heavy taxes on the uses of gasoline and diesel fuel but channel not a cent of these revenues into our road systems. Do not give me that nonsense across the way.

Beyond speech making from the government side of this House we have so far seen little federal commitment to the environment. Our rivers and harbours are polluted from Halifax to Vancouver. Beaches are closed summer after summer because the federal government does not make sewer construction and repair a national priority.

It is ironic that under the Great Lakes action plan the federal government has recently announced a $125 million fund for the restoration and preservation of this vital water system. This is in addition to almost $1 billion already spent by the government on the Great Lakes since 1972. Yet we are still pumping raw sewage into the Great Lakes system, and it does not make sense.

There is a cost to doing business and I recognize that. The transportation of goods and services is one important cost to business. Roads in poor condition increase costs, not only through increased use of fuel but through deterioration of vehicles and lost time. Poor roads and lack of waste disposal facilities also add to the cost of doing business, either through increased dump fees or increased costs to have their own waste hauled away.

As governments at all levels start placing stricter environmental controls and ask business to bear the cost of its pollution, business will be able to operate more efficiently in communities that have the infrastructure to handle and treat waste water.

We know that Canadians are the least energy-efficient consumers in the world. Every possible method has to be used to improve our record through sustainable development. The cost of cleaning up our damaged rivers and lakes far exceeds the cost of treating sewage before it gets to these rivers and lakes.

Polluters to date have remained unpunished. The federal government has failed to prosecute a single polluter in the province of Ontario during that last year. That is just disgraceful. The failure to go after polluters has occurred even though Ottawa has the Canadian Environmental Protection Act which carries a maximum penalty of $1 million.

No single action will be enough to ensure the future health and viability of Canada's infrastucture. A broad range of measures is necessary to make a meaningful difference. Specifically, these should include the following:

A federal recognition of municipal infrastructure as a crisis of national proportion;

A federal commitment to share the responsibility to rebuild infrastructure with its provincial and municipal counterparts;

The establishment of minimal national standards for infrastructure to provide environmental protection and uniform levels of service for all Canadians;

A federal commitment to rehabilitate and expand the Trans-Canada Highway;

The establishment of a process through which the federal government can clarify the respective roles of federal, provincial and municipal governments;

Identify and priorize needs on a national scale; and

Increase incentives for maintenance and reconstruction of capital assets.

We in the Liberal Party have supported this. My leader is on record as supporting a national infrastructure program. I would suggest that this government get serious. If it is not serious about the environment, it has a responsibility to Canadians and to everyone to get people back to work to improve our environment and to get on with the job right away.

It has been a privilege for me to travel across the country and to talk to Canadians. I have heard desolate responses from a lot of people.

I thank the member from the New Democratic Party for putting this motion forward and giving me the opportunity again to speak to this in the House of Commons.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to rise in support of the hon. member's motion to provide new funding for the infrastructure of our country.

It is an honour not only because of the substance of the motion that he has put and the wisdom of the suggestion that he makes. It is also an honour for a member of Parliament like myself who has only been in the House for the last three and a half years to rise in recognition of the contribution that the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden has made throughout his political career.

In the province of Saskatchewan, the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden has been known for many things but above all else, he has been known as a gutsy fighter. He will take on a fight for what he believes is right whether it is popular at the time or not, whether what he has to say is in keeping with the political fashion of the day or not.

He is a member who has always stood by his principles. He has always been prepared to fight the good fight. I think it might be instructive to some of us that this hon. member has been here for 24 years, since 1968. In fact, his courageous and principled stands have not ended up costing him politically. In fact, they have won him respect way beyond the boundaries of the political party he represents, or the constituency that he represents.

The motion which the hon. member has presented today should be seen in that same light. It is not popular nowadays to talk about governments spending money. The popular talk these days is how to slash, how to cut, how to reduce deficits and how to bring down government involvement in providing goods and services in this country.

The hon. member is a student of history. He is a student of economics. He has seen these cycles happen before and he has seen what happens when governments fall prey to the easy wisdom of cutting when times are tough.

The inevitable other end of that cycle is when times get better. Then governments start to spend like crazy and reinforce people's notions about what is possible. Therefore, we are always in a situation where we are doing exactly the opposite of what we should be doing if any kind of economic sense were to prevail.

Certainly, the need has been established for the infrastructure program that the member outlines. Certainly, those of us who have not recognized the need in our own country need only go across the border to the U.S. of A. and see what has happened to their splendid cities since they have introduced the thinking of proposition 13 in California that forbids the raising of taxes at the municipal level to provide the kinds of services that the member is talking about.

The deterioration in those American cities is a scandal to behold. It came as no surprise to any of us who have walked those streets that they should develop the kind of tinder-box situations like we saw in Los Angeles. Certainly, what happened in Toronto is a wake-up call for us to pay attention to those same factors.

If I may just turn briefly to the notion that there is no money, in my constituency of Prince Albert—Churchill River when I first got elected in 1988, the federal share of welfare and UI was $70 million. People were appalled when I raised that figure. They were not aware that it was anywhere close to that.

Now that figure, three and a half years later, has risen to about $125 million in welfare and unemployment insurance costs in one constituency alone. That is the same constituency that has the highest rate of tuberculosis in the country, the highest incidence of infant mortality in the country, much of which is related to inadequate infrastucture.

As well, we need economic development to make taxpayers out of the people now currently on welfare and UI.

Therefore, I would like to conclude by congratulating the member and urging all members to support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member will have six minutes remaining in his debate when this comes up again.

The time 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 list of the order of precedence of the Order Paper.

It being four o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 28(1) this House stands adjourned until Tuesday at 10 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4.00 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 19, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to table five petitions today. These petitioners ask Parliament to convince or put pressure on the government to reinstate the Court Challenges Program. As we know, the government abolished this program in the last budget.

These petitioners maintain that this Court Challenges Program was and must continue to be an essential tool in developing constitutional rights and must continue to give all Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

They ask Parliament to reconsider the possibility of restoring the Court Challenges Program, which gives all Canadians equal access.

• (1010)

[*English*]

RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions today.

In the first, petitioners ask Parliament to ensure the CRTC regulate the use of foul language on radio and television. They believe the current usage of the amount of foul language that is used counteracts parental efforts in the home and it undermines what it is they are trying to do. They indicate that foul language is unacceptable on radio, television, or in other media whether it is used in English or in French.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): My second petition is from petitioners who point out that Canada's greatest challenges are in the area of the social sciences. They refer to violence, abuse, environment, aboriginal issues, poverty especially among children, illiteracy, et cetera.

They point out as well the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's providing of the kind of leadership that permitted individuals to address those issues.

They point out as well that it has now been merged with the Canada Council. They indicate there was no consultation. They ask that this decision be deferred, that there be consultation, and subsequent to that a decision be made.

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): In my final petition, the petitioners point out there needs to be substantial investments in education if we are to compete internationally, that we respond to globalization if we are to increase productivity. They indicate there is still the 3 per cent tax on student loans.

They point out there has been an additional six months of interest added to student loans. They indicate as well the goods and services tax still exists on books, tuition fees are increasing, student debt is increasing at an alarming rate and they indicate there have been major cuts to transfer payments to the provinces.

They ask the government to review its policies with respect to education and retraining.

ILLEGAL DRUG ABUSE

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting quite an impressive petition signed by some 300 constituents, collected by Mrs. Edith Iwama of my riding of York West, pertaining to the issue of illegal drug abuse which is unfortunately afflicting many of our youth right across the country, including metropolitan Toronto.

The petitioners are calling upon the government, the minister, in particular the Solicitor General, to amend our Narcotics Control Act so the proceeds from drug seizures, rather than going completely and solely into the Government of Canada general revenue fund be shared with both police forces and local organizations which are responsible on the leading edge, on the streets, and in the back alleyways of trying to put back this drug epidemic.

I might add that many of the people who signed this petition are police officers.

DRUGS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition to the House signed by over 125 constituents from Victoria and the surrounding area. They are concerned with the provisions of section 462.2 of the Criminal Code dealing with literature for "illicit drug use", and in particular the application by the administration of justice of that section respecting the uses of hemp and literature in respect of the uses of hemp, which the petitioners say has many beneficial uses.

The petitioners call on Parliament to amend or remove from the Criminal Code section 462.2 so that the freedom of Canadians is there to discuss and consider the possible beneficial uses of hemp or other substances.

* * *

BILL C–55

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the questions which are before this House in Bill C–55.

The petitioners state that many women in Canada are living in poverty after years of home making which allowed their husbands to pursue careers without the burden of child bearing, child rearing and housework. Many of these women are disentitled by divorce to an equal share of their husband's federal pension credits accumulated during their marriage.

The government has stated in the past that it is in favour of mandatory automatic pension credit splitting. The pensioners request that Parliament amend Bill C–55 which is before this House so that all federal superannuation acts in which inequities exist allow for the retroactive pension credit splitting for all divorced spouses so that they may receive half of the federal pension credits accumulated by both spouses during the period of their marriage.

* * *

REFUGEES

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): I have a second petition which addresses the fate of refugee claimants in Canada, which is deplorable. They state that Canada, until recently, had an enviable record of compassion for the underprivileged, especially refugees, and that Canadian taxpayers have spent in the past three years an unjustifiably exorbitant amount of funds on a determination system that has proved to be inequitable and ineffective.

They call on Parliament for an administrative review, which this party has also repeatedly called for, which grants a general amnesty to all refugee claimants presently in Canada subject to the exclusion only of those who have serious criminal records in Canada or abroad for offences that would be considered serious in Canada.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise under Standing Order 36 to table a petition signed by residents of northern British Columbia, and in particular the city of Prince George.

These people are still concerned about this government's bringing in of the goods and services tax and they call on Parliament to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

* * *

TOWNSHIP OF FRONT OF YONGE

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the residents of the Township of Front of Yonge in Leeds County petitioning the CRTC to prevent the erection of a radio–TV tower in their community because of the negative effects that they perceive the installation of this tower would have in that particular location.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition, certified correct by the clerk as to form and content, signed by residents of my riding wherein the petitioners sheweth that Canada has put forward proposals for amending the Constitution of Canada. The government has established a citizens' forum to ascertain the views of Canadians on numerous matters and committees to consult with the people of Canada concerning the proposals. The Supreme Court upheld that the Constitution of Canada belongs to the people.

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.

* * *

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the honour to submit two petitions today calling upon the government to reinstate the Court Challenges Program.

These are individuals primarily from the province of Ontario, as well as the province of Saskatchewan, and other Canadians who have signed this petition in the hope that the Government of Canada will not cancel the Court Challenges Program. They call upon the Government of Canada to rescind this action in order to reinstate this very worth-while project on behalf of the people 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): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1020)

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved that Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking in favour of this bill today so that we get this important legislation moving.

It is important that Canadians be acquainted with the proposed legislation and are informed about how it relates to the constitutional issue. This legislation is a precautionary measure. It is no more and no less than that. This legislation would enable the federal government to hold a referendum on Canada's constitutional future should such a step be required.

Under current law, the federal government could not hold a referendum now even if it wanted to. There is no law to allow it. The bill would correct this obvious limitation.

In a democratic society, particularly one undergoing constitutional change, the idea of the federal government having this ability only makes common sense. It is simply a matter of management prudence.

If there were no legislation in place permitting a referendum, the people of Canada would rightly condemn Parliament for not having this instrument at hand to use in dealing with any eventuality.

In saying that this measure is a precautionary one, it is important to underline that there is nothing in the legislation saying that there will be a referendum at all. No decision to hold a federal referendum has been made. Likewise, the bill does not say anything about when a federal referendum might be held. Neither is there any provision in the legislation, nor has there been any decision about what a referendum question would ask.

There is no provision in the legislation saying what a so-called victory would be. Speculation on anyone's part on any of these issues is meaningless because the bill before us only provides that a referendum could be held—could be held, nothing more.

Probably there are some people who do not want the federal government even to have the power to hold a referendum and who will oppose the bill for this reason alone. They are entitled to their views, but it is our view as a government that it would be irresponsible to leave Canada without all appropriate and democratic means necessary to advance the constitutional reform process.

This government believes that Canada has the right to hold a referendum if it wants to, just as the provinces have a perfect right to hold referenda on matters of their choice. There is simply no sensible argument in favour of the position that the provinces should be able to hold referenda but the federal government should not.

No one on the government side has claimed—I certainly do not—that this legislation is perfect in all respects. I look forward to any practical suggestions to improve it, but I do believe that under our Constitution this bill meets the test of fairness that reasonable Canadians demand.

In drafting the bill, the government kept the principle of fairness very much in mind. We wanted to ensure that any referendum held under the provisions of this bill would be fair and workable, and would be seen as such by the Canadian people.

In addressing the issue of fairness, a key feature of this bill is that the wording of any referendum would have to be approved by Parliament. Without Parliament's approval of the question, no referendum could be held at all.

Second, the Canada Elections Act legislation which enjoys the great respect and confidence of Canadians throughout this country would provide the basic framework under which any referendum would be held. The Chief Electoral Officer would have the same responsibility for the conduct of a referendum as he has for the conduct of a general election. He would be responsible for making the regulations under the Referendum Act to adapt the Canada Elections Act process to a referendum just as he has the responsibility for making the regulations to adapt the Canada Elections Act to a general election.

Third, the bill assures that the process is open and transparent. Anyone or any group intending to spend more than $5,000 in any federal referendum campaign must register. Any contribution over $250 and the name of the contributor must be identified.

Fourth, free broadcast time will be allocated equally to both sides by the broadcast arbitrator, which is a position under the Canada Elections Act, by using criteria set out in this legislation.

The bill requires networks to provide at least 90 minutes of free broadcast time to each side of the referendum question.

Fifth, any point of view on the referendum may be advanced via normal advertising, a matter to be decided between participants and broadcasters, subject to the governing CRTC regulations which require broadcasters to allocate all broadcast time during a referendum campaign on an equitable basis.

Some are of the opinion that there should be further restrictions in the legislation. For example, some might argue it should require that strict limits be put on spending. We examined this question very carefully. From the government's point of view, strict controls on spending would be helpful. As a practical matter, however, we believe that they would be ineffective and do little to ensure fairness.

In fact it could be counterproductive to have a referendum process which does not engender confidence and trust in the people.

The reason we hold this opinion is that while spending limits *per se* may not be contrary to the charter, there is the practical issue of making these limits meaningful.

The only way to ensure these limits would be honoured is to force everyone to campaign via yes or no committees. The courts would very possibly view this as an infringement upon people's freedom of association and freedom of speech. The practical effect of a successful court challenge would be to disrupt and discredit a referendum campaign, hardly a palatable result for Canadians.

Some may ask why is it then that the parties can be restricted in their spending during election campaigns. Hon. members should bear in mind that while the elections act may limit the spending of candidates and political parties in a federal election, it does not limit the

spending of others during election campaigns as a result of a successful court challenge in 1984.

These others are individuals and groups with various options about current issues and who advance these opinions during an election campaign. The courts have ruled that they have a perfect right to express their views.

Some may suggest that even if restricting participation to yes or no committees is impossible, the bill should set spending limits on any individual or group. This could be done. But it would not be meaningful because people would simply set up one committee after another in order to accommodate any amount of spending they wished to undertake. When one committee has exhausted its limit, another group made up of essentially the same people or groups could be set up and spend up to the limit and so on. The net result would be that the limit would not be enforceable in any practical way.

In addition, people would develop a disrespect for the referendum process as a result of the loophole preventing any limitation on the number of committees.

Ms. Copps: So having no limitation gives them respect.

Mr. Andre: The hon. member for Hamilton East is again heckling from her seat. I would like to acquaint the hon. member for Hamilton East with the document *Canada Referendum Bill, An Explanation by the Minister of State for Federal–Provincial Relations 1978*. The minister of state at that time was the Hon. Marc Lalonde. This following statement was made in that document:

"No country has ever conducted a referendum in which total expenditures by parties or groups were controlled. The government is convinced that any attempt in this direction must involve unacceptable infringements of freedom of association and speech. Limits on the size of contributions or expenditures may be made by individual persons who preserve all democratic rights while ensuring that no contributor will have an unfair advantage because of its withdrawal".

This document is available in the Library. It also examines how different countries handle referenda. For example, Australia has no ceilings on expenditures by parties in referendum campaigns, in contrast with strict limits on candidates during election campaigns.

California has referenda with no limits on spending campaigns.

France has referenda. There are no limits on spending by parties or other groups during referendum campaigns.

Ireland has no limits on expenses during referenda.

• (1030)

Italy does not impose a ceiling on campaign expenditures and the state bears the administration costs.

In Massachusetts, there are no limits on spending.

Norway has set no limitations on expenditures by umbrella movements or political parties.

In Switzerland there are no limitations on expenditures by political parties, individuals or associations during referendum or election campaigns.

In the United Kingdom, there were no limits on the expenditures of the organizations that campaigned for the Common Market referendum even though it has very strict limitations on candidates during elections.

The previous Liberal government reached the conclusion that the only way to impose limits was by having people forced to campaign within fixed groups and it was an infringement on their freedom of association, their freedom of speech. Even in common law countries like the United Kingdom, this was felt unsustainable and that is why they have no limitations.

That is where the government came to it. I do not quite understand the heckling from the other side because we are talking here about a practical detail. This is not a philosophical question. I wish the hon. member for Hamilton East would appreciate that what is at stake here is not partisan advantage. What is at stake here is the future of the country.

Lest there be any question as to whether it would be challenged, I have a letter from the National Citizens Coalition which—

Ms. Copps: What happened to your legal opinion?

Mr. Andre: The hon. member for Hamilton East laughs again. Attached to it is a legal opinion by the law firm Code, Hunter. Bill Code, the senior member of that law firm was the Liberal candidate in Calgary West in the last federal election.

An hon. member: A loser.

Mr. Andre: I am simply responding to the heckling. The hon. member for Victoria asks why I mentioned this. I am responding to the member for Hamilton East who from her seat continues to heckle and barrack, showing she is truly respectful of opinions different from hers and that opinions different from hers ought not to be heard.

Mr. Gauthier: You're cruising for a bruising.

Mr. Andre: I am sure Bill Code would accept a call from the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. He could argue whether Bill Code's opinion of the kind of limitations of the charter he has talked about are appropriate.

Ms. Copps: It's already at risk. Who wrote this speech?

Mr. Andre: There are other legal opinions which will be available. I am sure the hon. member is not as interested in that as she is in anything else having to do with the future of this country.

Enacting laws which are simply impossible to enforce and as a result promote public disrespect for the law is poor law-making indeed. Canadians have the right to expect more from their federal Parliament.

Others might take the position that Quebec's referendum law should be used as a basis for any federal referendum. Quebec's referendum law deals with its own political culture in a way that its own National Assembly believes appropriate. Laws to fit all of Canada must reflect the reality of the entire country and not just part of it.

I would like to turn to the issue of government spending for a moment. I have heard that many who think they are promoting fairness believe that the bill should be changed to prevent or limit in some way the federal government from participating in any referendum campaign.

First, let me underline that no decision to hold a referendum has been made so any thought about the federal government's role is highly speculative.

If there is a campaign, no law should limit federal activity without a concurrent limitation on provincial government activity. Otherwise it would be unfair to the federal government if the provinces could spend anything they want and the federal government could not. A federal law limiting provincial spending in this way would be anathema to the whole concept of responsible government. One could just imagine Bob Rae or Don Getty or Clyde Wells or any other premier meekly submitting to a federal law telling them what they could and could not do with provincial moneys approved by their own legislatures. The very thought of such an intervention into the provincial spending power is abhorrent.

Furthermore any limitation on the federal government's role in any referendum campaign would have to include all federal spending. That would include spending by members of Parliament.

I can imagine the howls of protest and questions of privilege if the travel, householders, telephone use and other expenses of MPs were restricted if they were directed in support of one side or another of a referendum question.

Under this scenario, Parliament would be hamstrung to the point at which responsible government itself would be put at risk; a fine message indeed to Canadians in the midst of a referendum on the future of their country.

Canadians recognize that the pursuit of perfection must not become the enemy of progress. We have all seen the difficult process of constitutional reform over the past two years. The government has ensured that Canadians have had the opportunity to express their views and comment, debate and otherwise express their thoughts on how to make a better Canada.

From the citizens' forum to the constitutional conferences to the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee, Canadians know a great deal about what is necessary to keep Canada constitutionally fit for the next century. However, one thing that will not serve Canada well is blind insistence on perfection at the expense of getting this job done well and fairly. This bill is no different.

A perfect bill is beyond the power of anyone in this Parliament to craft, much less implement. We must, however, ensure workability and fairness. To the extent

that it is possible, I believe this bill accomplishes this purpose.

I recognize that in an adversarial system as we have, it is common practice for ridicule, harassment, barracking and so on to occur. Perhaps that plays somewhat of a role in ensuring that issues are examined and that it helps the public get some sense if both sides were argued vigorously.

The laughter from the member for Kingston and the Islands is a disappointment because I would have thought that he would recognize that what we are talking about here is enabling legislation and technical details to allow for the possible use of a tool which might help to keep this country together. If that is a subject of mirth, then I say again how disappointed I am in the hon. member that he should find this a subject of mirth.

This is an attempt to come up with enabling legislation for referenda. I have given the arguments as honestly, openly and fairly as I can. I have indicated in my remarks and I have indicated previously and privately that the question of spending limits would be helpful to the government.

The practicality is that it would be an infringement on the freedom of association and freedom of speech. As I have indicated, every country in the world that has referenda has reached the same conclusion. We have legal opinions to that regard and I would ask the hon. members opposite to seriously consider the consequences of putting something into the bill that would be challenged. We know it would be challenged and possibly it could be successfully challenged. I ask them to think about the circumstances in which it became advisable and desirable to keep this country united, to have a referendum. In the midst of it, a court has declared the process null and void because of the infringement. If they were on this side of the House, would they be taking the same risk?

I do not think, if they look at it carefully and think about what is at stake, they would be doing that. As I say, some of the antics in the House are part of our adversarial system and I understand that but please, please, please recognize what is at stake here. Recognize that this is a sincere effort to bring forward as fair a piece of legislation as possible. Act in that responsible manner and we will be doing the citizens who support us and the country a service for what we have been doing.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, we in the official opposition support the concept of this bill but we do not believe that it is anywhere near perfect.

We believe that there are many important improvements which are needed and we believe that it is a step in the right direction. It is not a step as big as we would like.

• (1040)

It is not as bold a step as we would like, but it is a step in the direction of giving the Canadian people the ultimate voice in determining the structure of their government.

We were pleased a year ago when the Speech from the Throne opening the present session of Parliament indicated that legislation regarding constitutional referenda would be forthcoming. It is disappointing, however, that this legislation took more than a year to emerge from the government's legislative mill. It is disappointing because any bill of this nature demands thorough consideration. It requires public airing. It requires the advice of experts. It requires careful thought by members of Parliament, who must pass judgment on it.

The delay of a year gives Parliament less time to do this job. This delay means that we must undertake a task demanding great precision within a time frame that is unnecessarily short. We have used every possible forum in the last few years, especially since April 1991, to express our support for a national referendum as a device for legitimizing constitutional change.

It is our belief that a revised Constitution should require popular approval, not only with a national majority, but also with a majority within each of the regions of this country.

We put this position forward successfully to the Beaudoin–Edwards committee on the constitutional amendments and we did the same with the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee. It is difficult for us to understand why a government that included this proposal in its Speech from the Throne and whose own supporters twice endorsed the suggestion in important special joint committees has only brought forward its legislation at the

last minute, forcing Parliament to work, as it were, under the gun.

Some of the issues that we wish to address and some of the suggestions that we have for change to the bill are matters that would be more adequately considered in the fullness of time. Some of our differences with the government on the form of this bill depend upon the interpretations of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The government has attained legal opinions on some of these issues, but we believe that Parliament should have the opportunity to consider legal opinions from a variety of sources before being called upon to decide.

I hope that the government House leader will undertake to live up to his commitment of some days ago to provide this House and all members of Parliament with copies of those legal opinions which he has now sought.

We have a number of strongly held views on the form of the legislation to which the government replies there are constitutional barriers. We believe that Parliament, given the time it needs, can reconcile these views with the charter.

I cannot help but observe that, given the time that has been lost by the government's internal agonizing, the public might have better been served had the government many months ago asked a parliamentary committee to prepare this legislation. Two such committees had no difficulty in agreeing on the principle of a constitutional referendum. Surely another would have been able to tap into the considerable expertise, both in Canada and abroad, in order to produce a more acceptable bill in a more timely fashion.

We were given some advance briefing by the government. We take note of the government's profession of openness in entertaining our suggestions for conducting and improving the bill. I do not intend to show any meanness of spirit when I say, as I am compelled to say, that we hope the government's proclaimed intention to proceed in a consultative manner will be more reflective of the generally understood meaning of the word "consult" than demonstrated last week by the government House leader.

Consultations consist of more than informing and more than rejection out of hand. The government House leader should be careful about attributing perfection to the same advisers to whom, when he was on this side of the House, he attributed the precise opposite. He may have made some compromises with his colleagues in order to squeeze this bill out of the government's legislative bottomless pit, but if we really want an acceptable law to emerge out of the legislative process, he is going to have to accept broader based judgments than those he has had up to the present time.

On April 21 the Leader of the Official Opposition issued a nine-point constitutional plan and one of these points was that the final word on the constitutional framework of the Canadian government should belong to the people of Canada.

His view and the view of the Liberal Party of Canada is that a national referendum on constitutional change should require the approval of the majority of the voters nationally as well as of the majority of the voters in each of the regions of this country.

Thus, a new constitutional arrangement would enjoy the support of the majority of Canadians while no one region of this nation would ever be made to feel that the other regions had forced it to accept an arrangement with which it was not comfortable.

The Liberal Party of Canada believes that the day is long gone when the Canadian people will accept a constitution that is brokered behind closed doors. We do not accept the self-serving separatist argument that Quebec was left out of the 1980-1982 constitutional agreement.

Not only did the majority of elected representatives in Parliament from that province support that arrangement, but successive provincial governments in the province of Quebec have quite happily made use of the new constitutional provisions that resulted from the 1982 agreement.

Nonetheless, the absence of the clearly expressed opinion of the people on the 1982 agreement serves to perpetrate that vicious myth. Had the 1982 arrangement been put to the people, had the voters responded with a national majority and a majority in each of the regions, I am certain had they done so the entire nation would have been spared a decade of bitter, bitter misrepresentations.

In the event that arrangement had been rejected either nationally or by one of more of the regions, while we would have had to go back to the drawing boards, the nation would at least have been spared these misunderstandings and these intolerable misrepresentations.

I do not understand why there is resistance to giving the people the final authority in determining the structure of their government. Constitutional amendment by referendum has been a normal feature of innumerable democratic nations for centuries. The Swiss have used this device for centuries and France enjoys its most stable structure of government since Napoleon under a constitution that is subject to comparatively frequent amending referenda. Even Britain, the citadel, if you will, of parliamentary democracy, resorted to a referendum concerning its major constitutional change in joining the European Community.

Canadians are well known for their generosity and tolerance. They are an intelligent and educated people and they usually demonstrate a remarkable sophistication in their political behaviour. The Canadian population of 1992 is as well prepared as a whole as any group of officials, elected or not, to make the decisions on the basic structure of its government. It is unreasonable and unconscionable to suggest otherwise.

If democracy itself lends support to the concept of constitutional amendment through a referendum, human nature provides a clinching argument. A national referendum is the only device whereby all Canadians in all regions are able to give an answer to the same question or questions. This provides them with the chance to say yes to Canada and, more important, it gives Canadians a chance to say to yes to each other.

It is for these reasons that we are unhappy with the fact that this bill would leave the matter of a referendum as merely an option. The bill does not even require that any referendum be held in all of the provinces. It provides that the vote need only be held in one or more provinces.

In our view this is an unfortunate provision. It leaves the purpose of the bill open to misinterpretation. Given the particular timing of the introduction of the bill and the strange provision about one or more provinces, there may be cynics who suspect that the government's intention is to use a referendum, not as an instrument of legitimizing a constitution, but as a tool to be used against a provincial premier or premiers.

This would be unacceptable and unfortunate. It represents a denial of the ultimate sovereignty of the people and it demonstrates a contempt for the political integrity of the duly elected governments of the provinces.

• (1050)

If a referendum is to be held, it must be held only for positive and constructive constitutional purposes. It should not be regarded as the course of a last resort. It must be viewed as the natural and legitimate democratic path. Canadians will not tolerate an exercise of whipping up passions, costing upward of $100 million, for the sole purposes of partisan, political one-upmanship.

We do not believe that a referendum should be optional. In order to be credible it ought to be mandatory. We disagree with the three-year sunset provision of the bill. We believe that the referendum should be a permanent part of the process for revising the Canadian Constitution. Nor can it be restricted to one or just a few provinces. The referendum ought to be national so that all Canadians in all regions of this country have the opportunity to speak on the same issue.

The referendum must also provide for majorities in each of the regions. Never again can we afford to let partisans in any one region create a malicious myth that they have been ganged up on by all of the others.

We are also concerned about the method provided in the bill for the framing of the question or questions to be asked in the referendum itself.

The bill provides that the government will frame that question or questions and place it before Parliament for three days of debate in each House where presumably amendments may be offered by the other parties.

There are two difficulties here. First, the rules of Parliament severely restrict the scope for offering and considering amendments. Second, the period allocated for debate is so short that under the rules at most one-quarter of the members of this House could participate on so important a question affecting our country.

Under these rules a government could draw up a loaded question and ram it through the House under conditions similar to the most abusive use of closure. Let it be said that the gang across the way has demonstrated time and time again its receptiveness in order to utilize closure at every opportunity.

In our opinion the bill should establish a formal process of inter-party consultations, and I underline inter-party consultations, real consultations with give and take for the formulation of the question. Only under this kind of arrangement can so abbreviated a period of debate be tolerated by members on this side of the House.

There is no reason that a system of inter-party consultations should not be included in the bill. The history of amending the Canadian Constitution is one of remarkable consensus between parties in the House of Commons. There has rarely in our history been partisan division remaining at the point of ultimate decision by the House of Commons. This was true in 1981-82 and 1987-88 and on the most previous occasions. This legislation should recognize explicitly our traditional consensus approach to such important matters.

We in the Liberal Party are also concerned about the absence of acceptable financial controls on the referendum campaign itself. The provisions in the bill for any person or group spending more than $5,000 to register and to account for donations and expenditure constitute in our view no control at all. It remains open for either side of the question to spend huge amounts without limitation.

If the results of the referendum are to be considered credible—and this is key—it is essential that the process be transparently fair. We must never allow the losing side to be in a position to claim that victory was bought. There must never be permitted a system that is loaded on the side of the rich and the powerful. This means that over-all expenditure on each side of the campaign must have some form of limitation.

The government House leader asserts that such a system would require so-called umbrella committees which, according to the legal opinions which he has received but which we have not, would conflict with the freedom of political expression guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As a lawyer I should like to see legal opinions on this issue obtained from several sources, and as a legislator I should like to have the opportunity to see how the law could be formulated to effect spending restrictions within the ambit of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Any referendum must not only be fair; it must be seen to be fair in all regions of this country. Even a shadow of suspicion will destroy the value of that referendum. In our attempt to build a strong national fabric we cannot risk giving ammunition to those who would destroy that.

We have in Canada a long and unsavoury history of untoward financial dealings during election campaigns. We cannot take pride in 125 years of overspending, going even further back than the Pacific scandal of 1873 and coming up as recently as the massive third party interventions in the federal election of 1988. This has been well documented by researchers, by experts, and by those of us who follow the political scheme in this country.

The Lortie commission made a number of recommendations that are now before a special committee of this House which will, one hopes, recommend corrective and needed actions. It would be completely unsuitable for us to ignore the potential for overspending that borders or even constitutes corruption while we are setting out on a new and hopeful course.

We should take care to examine this bill with regard to how it interfaces with the Canada Elections Act. It is only sensible that a referendum should be conducted *mutatis mutandis* by Elections Canada under the established system of the Elections Canada Act.

However the bill before us—and this should be noted by those who are viewing our proceedings today—merely establishes the bare bones of that interface. The rest, as I say to the government House leader and his parliamentary secretary, is to be fleshed out by regulation. I ask the Chair: Where are those regulations?

This is a rather massive gap in the information put before us. We really ought to insist on seeing the draft regulations before passing this bill, and there should be a device whereby the House or a committee can approve them before they are given royal assent.

There is a number of important issues here. The appointment of deputy returning officers, the appointment of poll clerks, and the appointment of enumerators, revising officers, scrutineers or their equivalent. This is all part of assuring the integrity of the system.

Why would I raise such a point on second reading? Why would I do that? I think it important that we note what is contained in clause 38 of the bill, and I say this in no mean spirit to members opposite. It reads:

> Where the polling day at an election is within one year after the polling day of a referendum, no enumeration of electors shall be made for the purposes of the election—

With the passage of this bill the enumeration takes place and then it will be used for the purposes of a general election. Hon. members opposite may shake their heads and say: "We would not do that. Trust us". We have heard enough of sacred trusts.

As I mentioned, the Canada Elections Act is itself presently being reviewed by a special committee. My colleague from Kingston and the Islands is actively involved in the pursuit of corrective measures under that particular piece of legislation. We are all, I am sure, hopeful that this committee will shortly be making recommendations revising this act. In the short term there is a host of largely administrative amendments mostly based on the recommendations of the former Chief Electoral Officer. I suggest these amendments to an act that is over 20 years old are long overdue.

• (1100)

We are also expecting more substantive recommendations from the committee on issues raised by the Lortie commission. Some of these will have profound effects on the Canadian electoral process.

Should we not have some indication of progress from the chair of the special committee? Can the government House leader give us assurances as to the priority that the resulting legislation will be given? Is it acceptable that a referendum should be conducted under the provisions of an antiquated and not quite adequate law?

These are some of the questions we want answered in the second reading debate and in subsequent deliberations with regard to this subject matter.

This bill is overdue and it is incomplete. We welcome its arrival, even if it is tardy. We will work with the other parties to make it a better bill.

In our opinion, a referendum to approve a new constitutional arrangement should not be optional; it should be mandatory. The question should not be dictated by one party; it should be worked out through all party consultations.

I want to stop there because I want the record to show that notwithstanding the assurances and undertakings of the right hon. Prime Minister and the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, we in the Official Opposition were not consulted about the provisions of this bill, Bill C–81. We were summoned late in the day. We were told what was contained in the bill and it was a *fait accompli*. There were no consultations. I wish to draw that to the attention of the House so that there are no illusions, no misunderstandings, no misinterpretation of fact.

A national majority is not sufficient. A majority in each of the regions should be required. The electoral machinery administering the referendum must be efficient, modern, and it must be fair.

Most important of all, the entire system must be fair. There must be strict limitations on expenditures on the campaign accompanied by strict enforcement of those restrictions.

We must give real meaning to the fundamentals of democracy in letting the people decide. I hope that other members in this Chamber, regardless of their political faith, will take the opportunity to participate at second reading stage to present their views.

I hope that in our attempts to improve upon the bill for a referendum on behalf of all Canadians that the government will entertain meaningful consultations and arrive at suitable solutions to the problems that we have focused on here today.

I know many of my colleagues will want to participate later this day and perhaps on other days during the week, but I hope that the government is finally getting the message that it must consult, it must concede to some major amendments on this particular bill.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words on the bill before us today, a bill to enable the government to have a national referendum on a constitutional matter.

To begin with, our party is not not against the principle of a national referendum at this particular time on this very complex package of constitutional changes. Unlike the parliamentary leader of the Liberal Party, we would oppose a mandatory referendum on every constitutional change. I do not think that is necessary in our parliamentary system and certainly that is not the position presented by the three parties on the two parliamentary committees, including the Liberal Party during the hearings of both the Beaudoin–Edwards and Beaudoin–Dobbie committees.

This is an exceptional case. We have a broadly based Canada round of many amendments. We have had two parliamentary commissions that have commented on the possibility of national referenda. I want to refer briefly to what both of them recommended.

Last year, the committee on the amending formula which tabled a report in June 1991 said the following when it came to the possibility of a referendum in this country. I quote: "We recommend that a federal law be enacted to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal whether to confirm the existence of a national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolution. The referendum should require a national majority and a majority each in the four regions—Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the west".

That is a position supported by the three national political parties, that we should consider a referendum to facilitate the amendments or to confirm a national consensus.

On March 1 of this year, we tabled a report on the comprehensive changes to the Canadian Constitution known as the Beaudoin–Dobbie report. We also had the following recommendation:

"Recommend that the federal law be enacted if deemed appropriate by the government of the day to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal whether to confirm the existence of a national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolutions."

We have had two extensive parliamentary studies in this country endorsed by the three national political parties suggesting the possibility of a national referendum to confirm a consensus worked out through negotiations, or to facilitate in this country the passage of amendments to the Canadian Constitution.

It will be noted that all parties said "a consultative referendum". At this stage, it is impossible to make the referendum binding. To make the referendum a binding one, we would have to amend the amending formula itself. That requires the unanimous consent of Parliament and every single Canadian province. It is not possible to do that at this particular time, so it could only be consultative.

I suggest that if there is a national referendum, it will become politically binding upon the Parliament of this country. If the federal government decides to go ahead, it should at the same time say that even though it is not legally binding, as we know, it would be politically and morally binding upon the federal government of the day. Why consult the population of this country if at the end of the day it is not going to listen to what the people of this country say? It seems to me that is a very important point.

A year ago, our party did an internal report on Parliament reform in this country entitled "Making Parliament Work". At that time, we took a very similar approach to the two parliamentary committees when it came to national referenda. We said that as a rule, we should not use referenda in this country, but there might be an exception and I quote, "on matters of national importance such as the Constitution where a referendum might be used".

In this country, historically, we have had two referenda. In 1898 it was on the question of prohibition of liquor, wine and spirits in Canada. At that time the referendum passed by a slim majority of 51 per cent in favour and 49 per cent against. But it also pointed out one of the perils of a referendum. There was a regional division on linguistic lines, where over 80 per cent of Quebecers voted no to prohibition and the overwhelming majority of English speaking Canadians voted yes to prohibition.

The result was inconclusive. It was consultative. The government of the day did not try to bind itself to anything because of the closeness of the result. Indeed, it left the whole question of prohibition to the nine provincial governments, or the provincial governments that existed at that particular time.

The second referendum was in 1942. Again, it was a divisive result, with Quebec voting against the question put at that time, which was to release Prime Minister Mackenzie King from a campaign promise against bringing in conscription. The Quebecers voted no to releasing the Prime Minister from his commitment, while the rest of the country voted overwhelmingly yes. Again, this is one of the perils of a national referendum.

At the provincial level we have had more than 50 or 60 different kinds of referenda; at the municipal level we have had thousands over the history of this country.

One of the points to be made is that in reality the bill we are talking about here today is not really a referenda bill because it is not binding. It is really a bill about plebiscites, which is consultative and really nothing more than a glorified public opinion poll.

• (1110)

I now want to mention about five or six concerns that I have about the bill before us today.

There should be at least three major amendments made to the bill. I hope that the government across the way will be open in considering these amendments. It is very important that it does. If we have a referendum in this country, it is very important that it be fair, perceived to be fair, and be a non–partisan event where it is worked out by all members of this House regardless of what party or what part of the country we represent.

First of all, we believe there should be spending limits imposed on the participants on both sides of the referendum. We have an example of that in this country today. I have a copy of a bill from the Quebec National Assembly. There was a referendum in 1980 on the question of independence of the province of Quebec. In this particular bill, the limitations were 25 cents per elector. That provided a sense of fairness between the yes and no camps.

It is fundamental in a democracy that if we are to have real freedom of speech in this country in a meaningful way, there has to be some spending limitations. Then the people with money cannot go out and buy the media, buy the best organizers, the best PR people to get their point of view across.

If we allow that to happen without limitation, then is it really freedom of speech or is it freedom of the almighty dollar? It is certainly freedom of the almighty dollar if somebody can go out and spend several millions of dollars or tens of thousands of dollars compared to the ordinary citizen or poor people's organizations that do not have access to the funds.

I recall last week when the government House leader said that there are legal opinions saying it would be a violation of the charter. Today, if I heard him correctly, he said it may not be a violation of the charter, but what would happen when this is challenged in the courts in the midst of a referendum campaign? Already there seems to be some uncertainty as to whether or not this is a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I suggest to the government that if we want to clarify this, let us have a quick reference to the Supreme Court of Canada to make sure that this bill is charter proof with spending limitations in it. If we have spending limitations in the bill, we would have a much better chance of a fair referendum that would be perceived to be fair by the people of this country.

The other concern I have is if we do not have limitations in this bill, what kind of legislation do we expect in the next few months or weeks from the government across the way when it comes to amending the Canada Elections Act? This is going to happen because we have had the Lortie commission on electoral reform.

Are the limitations to spending that we have now as political parties or candidates going to be removed? Is the government going to succumb to that kind of pressure in this country? Are the courts going to look back at the referendum bill and say: "Look, there are no spending limitations in the referendum bill. Therefore there should not be spending limitations on people running for Parliament or on political parties or indeed on third party advertising".

That happened *ad nauseam* back in the 1988 election campaign on the issue of free trade. In terms of free trade, 1988 saw the expenditure of hundreds of thousand of dollars by the big business community as it bought

television, radio and newspaper ads, printed brochures and printed leaflets across this country to persuade the people of this country that the free trade deal was a good deal. Those did not come within the limitations of the Conservative Party of Canada. Yet the opposition parties, the two opposing the free trade deal had spending limitations where even if we could have raised the money to fight the big business agenda, we had spending limitations and ceilings where we could not have spent the money anyway.

Was that freedom of speech? Was that freedom of association? We could make a pretty strong case in the Supreme Court that just having access to big dollars and big bucks in this country does not give one the unfettered right to spend those dollars in pushing an idea on the population of this country.

Let us put in spending limitations. Let us have a free referendum in this country, if there is to be a referendum in this country, a referendum that would be free of being bought by people who have access to large funds.

Second, we should have a very substantive amendment in this bill concerning the wording of the question and the issuance of writs of referenda. If we look at the bill before us today we find that the government, through an Order in Council, will word the referendum question. The government will decide on the timing of the referendum writ. On a constitutional issue, if this is suppose to be non-partisan and involving members from all sides of this House, why should we not have a non-partisan committee that drafts that question?

Maybe we should look at the possibility of subjecting the question to a special majority in the House because, after all, this is a constitutional matter. We now have an amending formula that requires five things to have unanimous consent of the provinces and the federal government and, for other issues, the support of the federal Parliament plus seven provinces representing at least half of the population of the country. Those are special majorities; more than a straight 50 per cent of governments or 50 per cent of the members of the House.

Why not look at the idea in this bill of an amendment that would require the approval of 60 per cent or two-thirds of the House of Commons for the approval of the question? That would ensure for the population of this country that the government, acting alone, unless it had an extraordinary majority like it had in 1984, could not impose a question on the people of this country because it imposed the will of the majority on the House of Commons. Why not have two-thirds majority of this House in approving the question? Why not a two-thirds majority of this House before we drop the writ of referendum on this question to have a national consultation of the Canadian people?

It seems to me that if we want to democratize the process, if we want to make this a more non-partisan effort, if we want to involve the judgment of people who are elected here and representing Canadians from all corners of this country, then a two-thirds majority or a special majority would be appropriate in a referendum bill on a constitutional matter.

It is very rare in our parliamentary system that a government, elected in a country such as ours with a majority, will receive a majority of the votes. In the last election our government had around 43 per cent of the votes and it got a majority because of our electoral system.

On a constitutional matter, when the Constitution belongs to the people of the country, not to the government and not to politicians, is it asking too much that we have a regulation saying that if we are to have a referendum, then two-thirds of the members of the House should approve the question and approve the issuance of a writ for that referendum? I do not think that is asking too much.

The government says it consulted the opposition and involved the opposition. We have heard this from the minister in charge. We have heard this from the Prime Minister time and time again. Sometimes the opposition is consulted very well. Sometimes the opposition is involved very well in this process. Sometimes the opposition is ignored in the process. This is one time when the opposition was not consulted and not involved until the referendum bill was actually drafted by the government across the way.

Again, if we want to have a meaningful, non-partisan look at changing the Constitution and the process of doing so, it seems to me that we should involve the opposition parties in the only meaningful way; namely, to have a non-partisan process for the writing of the question and the dropping of the referenda writs.

Finally, we need a third amendment or change to the referendum bill that is before us today.

[*Translation*]

Take the report of the Beaudoin–Edwards committee last year—Mr. Edwards is in the House today. On that committee, we were unanimous about the need for a double majority in this country to change the Canadian Constitution. The three political parties all supported giving each of the four regions of Canada a veto.

• (1120)

According to the Beaudoin–Edwards committee report, it is first of all necessary to have a majority of members of the House of Commons and senators of Canada, but also a majority in each of the four major regions of Canada: the Atlantic provinces, Ontario, Quebec and western Canada. This double majority is necessary because without it, it would be easy to isolate not only Quebecers but also western Canada, the Atlantic provinces or Ontario.

I think that it should not be possible to change the Constitution of Canada without the massive support of Canadians. If there were a national referendum on the federal government's major proposals, like those in the report that the parliamentary committee published two months ago, and western Canada were opposed, I think it should be out of the question to change our Constitution without western Canada's support.

The same goes for Quebec. If Quebecers are against, it is hard to believe that we could make a major change to our Canadian Constitution. We are for an amendment requiring a double majority in the bill presented by the Government of Canada.

[*English*]

In the two minutes remaining I want to say that we have a number of other concerns as well. My colleague from Churchill, who has spent a lot of time on electoral matters in this House, has a number of concerns about the electoral details in this bill and a number of amendments that should be moved to make sure this bill is fair in terms of how the referendum will be conducted if we have a referendum in Canada.

The other point I want to mention is that any referendum at this time would involve the division of powers. It would involve the competence of provincial governments. If we are to have a referendum at this time, it seems to me that it is very, very important that the provinces, the territories and the aboriginal people be consulted and involved in a meaningful way in terms of the wording of the question and the rules and regulations, including spending limitations.

We are a federal state and we do not have the right to make decisions unilaterally that affect the powers of the provinces. It is important that we look at an amendment in that area, and if not an amendment in that area, then certainly meaningful involvement and consultation with the provinces, territories and aboriginal people.

I conclude by saying that we do not oppose the principle of a referendum but we have major concerns about spending limitations, about what constitutes a majority, about the wording of the question and the approval of the wording of the question, and the dropping of the referendum writs.

We are looking forward to moving those amendments and discussing with our colleagues in government the acceptance of those referenda amendments which will make this a much more acceptable piece of legislation. If it is used, it will be used as a tool that is fair and just for all the people of this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville mentioned three possible areas for amendment and I want to ask him the following question: If the government does not accept the principle of spending limits, will the member for Yorkton—Melville and his New Democratic colleagues still support the bill on second reading?

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, on second reading, we discuss the principle of this bill. As I said, we are not at all against the principle of a national referendum on an important question like a significant amendment to the Canadian Constitution.

But it is very important to have a bill that is fair for Canadians. Our caucus will make that decision after the government opposite responds. I suppose that the Liberal Party will give the same answer after two or three days of speeches by government members.

[*English*]

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I also have a number of comments and questions with regard to the bill. This is the question or comment period, therefore I will keep my comments fairly brief at this point and speak later on the bill in total.

I would like the member for Yorkton—Melville to address my concern. Not only are there no effective spending limits in this legislation, but the definition of a referendum expense is exactly what the government wants to achieve as it changes the electoral law of this country. In other words, the definition of expenses will be very limited, the ones that you register, the ones that you have to account to the public for. What will happen is that the various business interests in this country, as they did in the free trade debate, will be able to spend millions of dollars that they will not have to account for.

The definition in this legislation says that only direct expenses, a very exclusive list of direct expenses, would have to be included. Those same firms could spend millions of dollars doing polling and millions of dollars in preparation which would not count as referendum expenses.

In addition, those same corporations could volunteer their expert staff, their advertising staff, their PR staff. Under the Elections Act of this country, those people who are acting in their full-time capacity such as organizers, ad agencies and PR people must count as an expense and be included under some spending limit. In this legislation they are not included as an expense and they do not come under any limit.

This legislation, in so many aspects, has nothing to do with a referendum. It has to do with a government agenda to distort the whole electoral process of this country.

I would like the member to speak on that issue.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my remarks that this is one of the fears I have. If we do not have a number of amendments in terms of how the referendum is conducted, spending limitations, a direct expense or an indirect expense and the section 38 mentioned by my friend from the Liberal Party which concerns enumeration, these could all be used as precedents by the government across the way in terms of changing the electoral law.

We have just come through a very lengthy process in this country. We had a royal commission on electoral expenses headed by Mr. Lortie. I believe we spent some $16 million holding public hearings across this country. We had a tremendous amount of public input. We issued a very comprehensive and detailed report about having an electoral system in this country that is fair and just for every single Canadian.

If we are to spend that money, it is very important that we accept most of the recommendations made by that particular committee. One recommendation it talked about that was so important was having a limitation on spending in federal election campaigns. If we can do it in a federal campaign, surely to goodness we can do it in a national or a federal referendum campaign. The only democratic thing to do is have a limitation on what a candidate, a political party or somebody outside of the political parties can spend. It makes a farce of our electoral system if somebody can spend $30,000, $40,000, or $50,000 as a candidate and yet you are fighting an organization on a single issue that is unlimited, that can spend a couple of hundred thousand dollars in fighting you. It is very important that we take our guidance in terms of amendments to this bill from the Lortie Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing Expenses. It has done the research, consulted with legal advice, spent hundreds of days drafting a very good report. The people on the commission came from all political parties, different walks of life, distant parts of this country. It seems to me their advice should be taken into account.

• (1130)

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the theme of limits on election expenditures.

It is important for the House to bear in mind that the case that has been referred to so often on the issue of election spending dealt with the question of an absolute prohibition against certain kinds of advertising, not on the question of limitation or regulation of spending either by political parties or by third parties.

For the government to take refuge behind that case and the legal opinions based on that case is doing a disservice to the House and to the country. It seems to me, and I would ask the hon. member to comment, that this particular flaw in the bill arises out of the govern-

ment's peculiar failure in such a sensitive issue as this to consult with all sides of the House.

If the government would be prepared to open up and listen to the wisdom on all sides of the House this bill could be substantially improved, particularly in the area of spending limits. It is entirely possible within our Constitution, within the charter, for regulation to be imposed on spending so that the referendum be seen to be fair.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very important point. The whole question in terms of the Constitution is consulting people, involving people, making the process very inclusive.

I refer to a couple of members on the other side who have done a very good job in terms of their concerns about this bill.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Jonquière, who was on the special joint committee, has spoken publicly about this problem several times. For him, the lack of spending limits is a big problem in this bill. Other government members share this opinion.

[*English*]

If the government would listen to members of this House, it could have drafted a referendum bill that would reflect what the Canadian people want. The important thing is to involve people, to make this a non-partisan issue in terms of involving all members of the House of Commons.

We must always remember one thing when it comes to the Constitution in this country. The Constitution does not belong to the government of the day, it does not belong to members of this House, but the Constitution belongs to the people of this country.

We have involved the people of this country better this time than we did during the Meech Lake round, than we did during patriation back in 1981-82. We have had parliamentary committees, we have had them at the federal level, the provincial level. We have had five national conferences. We have had the aboriginal round. We now have a package that is more reflective of the Canadian people than we have had before. Let us not screw up this time by the government going back to its old ways of doing things through Orders in Council, consulting no one but a few key people and mandarins from the government side.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak on second reading of Bill C-81, an act that will enable the Government of Canada to consult Canadians by means of a referendum.

Basically, the purpose of this bill is to provide Canadians with a fair and democratic instrument to settle the constitutional debate, once and for all.

I think it is important to point out that there has been no decision by the government to hold a referendum on the constitutional question. It is by no means certain that this type of consultation will take place. In fact, we on this side of the House would prefer not to have to hold a referendum.

The government has said repeatedly that its primary objective is to reach a firm constitutional agreement through the discussions currently taking place with our provincial, territorial and aboriginal partners. Considering what has been accomplished in the past few months, we can be reasonably optimistic about the outcome of the current process.

In any event, we intend to focus all our efforts on reaching a political and negotiated solution to our constitutional problems. However, we must be ready for any eventuality. The bill before the House today should be seen as a precautionary measure and as an insurance policy for all Canadians.

Basically, this bill is a democratic extension of the current consultation process. From the outset, Canadians have made it clear that they did not want to be left out of the constitutional process. That is why our initiatives in this area have included a high degree of consultation, and we can be justly proud of the results.

First of all, the Citizens' Forum on the Future of Canada went to communities throughout the country and listened to thousands of Canadians. Cabinet ministers met many Canadians to find out what they had to say

about the future of their country. Subsequently, the Beaudoin–Edwards Committee examined various aspects of the amending formula. Finally, between last fall and the end of February, the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada went to all the provinces and territories, received more than 3,000 briefs and held 78 sittings for a total of 227 hours, during which it heard 700 witnesses.

The government's purpose in tabling this bill is also to ensure that the rules of the game for any consultation that takes place will be fair, open and transparent, in accordance with our democratic traditions and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

What are those rules, Mr. Speaker? Basically, they would be the same as for a general election. The referendum would be supervised by the Chief Electoral Officer and be subject to the provisions of the Canada Elections Act, already a guarantee of a fair process. Furthermore, the "yes" and "no" sides would have equal access to free air time, as determined by the arbitrator. The CRTC would also supervise the purchase of air time on radio and television networks for advertising purposes.

However, there are some differences because of the very nature of this kind of consultation and the implications of the charter. First of all, the bill does not make so–called umbrella committees mandatory. Any obligation to take part in the referendum campaign under the aegis of such committees would be contrary to the Charter of Rights, according to the legal opinions we have received so far. In fact, such an obligation would not only be likely to violate freedom of expression, it would also force groups that may be for or against the question for entirely different reasons to operate under the same umbrella.

What should be understood is that the situation is entirely different from the referendum held in Quebec in 1980. At the time, both options were represented by a political party which headed an umbrella committee. That would not be the case in a Canadian referendum on constitutional reform. In this connection I would like to quote the senior editor of *La Presse*, Mr. Alain Dubuc, who wrote the following on May 14:

> If we apply the Quebec model to the Canadian referendum, the result is frankly grotesque. This is especially true when we consider the umbrella–committee concept. Any attempt to put those who say yes to constitutional reform in one group and those who say no in another group makes a mockery of democracy.

However we believe Canadians have the right to know all the details of the process. That is why the bill contains some very clear provisions to ensure the referendum campaign's funding process is absolutely transparent.

Mr. Lapierre: Except where the government is concerned!

Mr. Danis: Any group or person spending more than $5,000 will have to register, disclose contribution amounts and publish the names of anyone contributing in excess of $250 to either side.

We realize that fairness is of the essence. The obligation to register is a response to this concern for fairness.

• (1140)

Some members complained the bill did not provide for a double majority when calculating the results of an eventual referendum. Generally speaking, an amendment to the Canadian Constitution requires the consent of the legislatures of seven provinces representing 70 per cent of the Canadian population. This rule would not change in the case of a referendum.

However, these critics forget that although the referendum certainly would have moral and political weight, it would have no legal implications. It would have no force of law, so that the double majority concept is irrelevant. Furthermore, a federal referendum would not in any way prevent Quebec from holding its own referendum and determining its own future, as provided under Bill 150.

The purpose of the Canadian referendum would certainly not be to prevent the provinces from exercising their prerogatives under the Canadian Constitution.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it should be understood that most of the people opposed to this bill today already decided our constitutional proposals were unacceptable before knowing what they were. Being consistent they decided that a referendum held by the federal government would be unacceptable as well.

We hope the constitutional question will be settled through normal channels. In fact, we are confident this is what will happen. The bill before us today can certainly be improved, and we will try to do so in the days to come, with the help of all members of this House. However, I am convinced it is a welcome response to the expectations of Canadians and that is why it deserves to be

supported by all members of this House, except perhaps by a few diehards in the back.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I see there are several members who have questions and comments. I maintain, failing evidence to the contrary, that my good friend the minister, with whom a number of us worked on the Parliament of Canada Act, did not convince me, first of all, on the double majority issue. I am sure we will need far more conclusive arguments than those we have used so far to explain this double majority right to Canadians who are listening.

Just imagine two planets, side by side: the majority on the first planet, which would represent all of Canada, and the majority in another planet, divided into four or five regions. I think this has to be made very clear, so that we can explain the concept to the public and avoid undue divisions between Canadians and Quebecers. That is my first comment. Of course, I will be taking part in debate later on.

My second comment, more importantly what I call the plumbing, the mechanics of holding a referendum, and some people do not like what they see. The minister and a number of other colleagues and I have been actively involved in revising the Standing Orders of the House. I wonder whether he could answer the following question: Why can we not immediately adopt a concept we developed after hours and hours of work? The critic for the Liberal Party and I are working on another bill, to amend the Canada Elections Act. We worked on this—this is not debate—and the amendments are ready. We would like to table more in the House, but we already have some that are ready, for instance, on the appointment of scrutineers and clerks, which would get rid of all the controversy about appointing enumerators, something that was very annoying in the past. This is all very specific stuff. It is about the mechanics of process. It is not as interesting as talking about lofty principles, but when you hold a referendum, it is important to demonstrate the government means what it says about this not being a matter of setting up a big election machine across Canada. As for the rights of the opposition, at least the Official Opposition or the party that came second in the last election, that party could at least have the right to select one of the two officers for the referendum as well as for the enumeration process.

As for the two witnesses, I am looking forward to going to committee so we can elucidate the implications of this new idea of appointing two witnesses representing the two sides, whether we have umbrellas here or not.

I do not think we were given a very clear explanation. Of course, this is only a preliminary debate.

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague raised three points.

First, on the double majority issue, I can inform the hon. member that personally, I would be in favour of a double majority in a referendum if the results were legally binding. In this particular case, under this legislation, the referendum will certainly have moral weight but is not binding and does not amend the Constitution.

Some people say the present formula is a good one, while others are less enthusiastic, but as far as I know, it will be 7/50 or unanimity, for the time being.

Since this referendum is not binding, I personally see no need for a double majority, but I do understand what the hon. member is trying to say.

As far as the Canada Elections Act is concerned, I know a committee of this House is considering the legislation, and I am sure that with the hon. member for Saint-Denis as a member of the team, the committee will do an excellent job.

The hon. member realizes of course, that this type of amendment which mainly concerns the Canada Elections Act should be the result of a consensus among commitee members. I am certainly looking forward to his suggestions. In that, I hope the hon. member, and members of the other parties as well, will make a number of suggestions that we will be able to adopt by the end of June, so these improvements will be in place for the next election campaign.

As for the issue of the witnesses, or representatives at the polling stations on election day, the purpose of the bill is to have the yes and no sides each have one representative at the ballot box. I assume this is what will happen: The returning officer for the electoral district of Verchères —I am taking my own riding as an example —will probably ask the "federalist" forces to appoint or suggest representatives who will be appointed by the returning officer. I assume the returning officer will also

ask my friends in the Bloc québécois or other opposing factions for a list of witnesses or representatives at the 241 polling stations in my riding, to ensure there are no doubts about the ballot counts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Any more questions or comments?

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, there is a major contradiction in what the minister said, which I found very surprising. He tells us the referendum results will have no legal value, will not be legally binding on anyone, but he said at the beginning of his speech that he wants a referendum and I quote: "to settle the constitutional debate once and for all".

Either the referendum settles something or it does not. I wish the minister would tell us why, as a Quebecer, he thinks a referendum that ignores the entire amending formula could possibly settle the constitutional debate once and for all.

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, the whole point of this referendum legislation, and especially the current process headed by Mr. Clark, is that the federal government will try and settle the constitutional question once and for all.

The hon. member knows perfectly well that all the energy being spent on the constitutional question would be better spent on economic issues and on finding jobs for Quebecers and Canadians.

I think the time has come to terminate the process. If we think a referendum should be held, we will do it, but it is not a binding referendum. However, we see it as a device that could bring the whole constitutional process to a conclusion.

• (1150)

This is only one phase. We have gone through several phases, as I mentioned in my speech. However, it is one phase we would prefer to avoid. If this week in Montreal or next week in Toronto, Mr. Clark's group were to reach an agreement, it would be a relief. Quebec would be able to hold its referendum, and everything would be fine. However, if there is no agreement, I think it only makes sense for the government to consider all the options. I think it stands to reason that a democratic country like Canada should go to the people.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, the bill contains no provisions for spending limits. Many of us feel spending limits should be set. The Liberal Party and others suggested a reference to the Supreme Court to find out whether the bill violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Is the government, through its minister, prepared to tell the House today that it is willing to refer this bill immediately to the Supreme Court for an opinion on the implications of the bill for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, personally, I would prefer to see spending limits in this kind of bill. However, officials of the federal Department of Justice were unanimous in their opinion that if people were forced to associate under the aegis of two umbrella-committees—which would be the only way to limit spending, because one could then limit the spending of these committeess—and if this were challenged before the courts, the group or person initiating the challenge would have an excellent chance of winning their case. If this were to happen during a referendum period, we have no way of knowing what the courts would do. The court might decide that the clause in question was *ultra vires* or it might decide that the bill itself was *ultra vires*, which could have disastrous consequences.

To answer the questions raised by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier and the hon. member for Saint-Denis, at the committee stage we intend to call as witnesses the people who gave us these legal opinions. At that stage, either my colleagues will be convinced, or if members of the two opposition parties have a better idea that would make it possible to get around this legal point, then, as the government House leader said, we are prepared to improve the bill in order to obtain the broadest possible consensus among members of this House.

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal Party support the principle of this bill, that is, we support the principle that the new constitutional proposals should be submitted to a national referendum or a plebiscite for the approval or disapproval of the Canadian people.

But we have serious reservations about several parts or clauses in the bill. In particular, we are opposed to the bill in so far as it does not place serious financial controls on the different groups that will participate in the referendum campaign. Because it does not do that, we do not think that the process can or will be fair. Second, we oppose the bill in so far as it does not provide for a majority in all the regions of the country. The bill simply sets that aside and provides for a simple majority right across the country.

We believe if you are going to have a national referendum or a plebiscite on constitutional proposals, it must be perceived as being absolutely fair. Otherwise, once you have the results in, it will not have the validity or will not solve the problems that you wish to solve. You submit these proposals to a referendum because you want to gain the consensus or the approval of the Canadian people on a new constitutional proposal. But if, for one minute, regions of the country perceive the referendum process as not being fair, or if they perceive it as having been bought off by big financial interests, then you will not have the results you want, and no matter who wins or who loses the other side is going to claim that the result is tainted because it has been manoeuvred or manipulated by financial interests or because one region of the country with a greater population will simply overwhelm another region of the country and impose its views on that region.

We in the Liberal Party approve of a referendum in principle because as far back as April of 1991, the Leader of the Opposition, proposed, with eight other points, that there be a referendum to approve of the new constitutional proposals. His reason, supported by our party, is that the Constitution, different from other laws, is the basic law of the land, and the basic law of the land is the law by which we give authority to the Parliament of Canada, by which we give authority to the provincial governments and the federal government.

The people are saying that they agree with this process, this law, by which certain powers are given to members of Parliament, by which certain powers are given to the Government of Canada, by which certain powers are given to provincial governments and legislative assemblies.

If we are going to change that basic law, it is appropriate that the people of Canada be involved in approving or disapproving that basic law that we call our Constitution.

I mentioned our two serious reservations with respect to the bill before us; first, that it does not provide adequately for the financial control of the parties taking part in the referendum and second, it does not provide for a double majority.

Let me explain the double majority. In any referendum on constitutional proposals there should not only be a majority for those proposals from all the voters, right across the country, but there must also be a majority in the four or five regions of the country. There should be a majority in Atlantic Canada, a majority in Quebec, a majority in Ontario and a majority in the west and the north. In this way, we get around the difficulty of what happened in the only other two referendums or plebiscites that we have had in Canadian history; where in Quebec they voted one way and in the rest of the country they voted another way. It only led to more disunity or division.

Let me refer to a bit of history. As I pointed out, we have had only two so-called referendums in Canada. I think I should clarify that as well. Usually the word "referendum" is understood to mean a binding consultation with people, such as proposition 13 in California. The people are consulted, they vote on a law or on a proposition. Once they have voted, the assembly or the Parliament has no say whatsoever, the results are binding. That is the strict definition of a referendum.

What we have had in Canada on many occasions, both federally and provincially, are plebiscites, which have a serious political impact but are not binding. We have had two at the national level. The first one in 1878 was a referendum on whether or not we should allow liquor to be sold. It was a referendum on whether we should have prohibition as they had in the United States or whether it should be left to local option. The proposal carried in all other provinces of Canada but was defeated in Quebec. Even then Quebec was distinct and believed in a more flexible approach to the sale of liquor than they did in the other provinces.

The other instance at the national level was in April of 1942 on the subject of conscription, of forcibly requiring Canadians of a certain age to serve in the armed forces in the Second World War. It came about because in the national election of 1940, which Mackenzie King and the Liberals won, Mr. King had promised there would be no conscription for overseas service. However, when we got more into the war and things were not going good for us—good for us or good for the allies—Mr. King sought a way to be released from his election promise of 1940 and passed the Dominion Plebiscite Act of 1942. The plebiscite took place and the yes side won a vote in favour of conscription. But once again in Quebec, 72 per cent of the population voted against conscription. If we want unity after any referendum then we should learn the lessons of that referendum.

• (1200)

The no forces in Quebec and across the country were not even allowed access to the public broadcasting system to explain their point of view. In other words, in 1942 those in Quebec on that referendum were not even allowed to appear on Radio Canada or CBC Radio to explain their point of view and why they were opposed to conscription. The whole process was viewed as being unfair.

At this point I am not taking sides on the question. What I am trying to do is to demonstrate to the House, to the government and to the Canadian population that if we have another referendum it has to be perceived by the Canadian people as being absolutely fair.

It will not be absolutely fair if both sides to the question have not had ample opportunity to present their points of view and their arguments, or if it is also perceived that by massive advertising, which costs millions and millions of dollars, one side is able to outspend the other side and therefore win the question.

We know that in the election of 1988, the last election, many of us in the opposition parties, the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party and other elements in Canada, believed that election was won by third party groups who supported the free trade question and were not subject to spending limits.

The Lortie commission studied election spending and how to control spending by large corporations on elections. It said that there must be more control so that third party interests will not be able to influence elections simply by the size of their financial expenditures on advertising, whether on television or in newspapers and magazines, and so on.

If we are going to have a referendum and it is going to be perceived by all parties to be fair, then there must be controls on the amounts of money spent on either side. There must be adequate opportunity for both sides of the question to properly express their views and to give their arguments.

Also, in order to come out of the referendum with people accepting the result and having national unity no matter what the result, and if not unity at least an understanding between peoples, then there must be majorities in the different regions of Canada and not simply a national majority as we had in 1942 and in 1878. If we do not do that then we are going to end up with a split country.

I have listened to the ministers argue that we do not really have to do that this time because in fact this is a plebiscite and it is not binding. If it is not binding, then we do not have to provide for regional majorities. The minister and the government are speaking from a very legalistic point of view.

I took part in the plebiscite in Quebec in 1980 and it was not legally binding either. It was an advisory sort of opinion, but once you are into it, it is a very serious matter. People do spend money. They spend a lot of time and dedicate their lives to winning one side or the other of the referendum.

To not clearly set out in advance how the results are going to be treated will lead to a lot of confusion and a lot of ill feelings. We do not want that. It is much better to say in advance, right in the law, that in order for the proposals to win, what is needed will be not only a national majority but also majorities in the different regions of the country. People will then know what the rules of the game are. Of course, they know that the results are not binding, but they know that the political influence of the results are overwhelming.

It would be very difficult for a premier of a province or for the Prime Minister of Canada to deny the results of the referendum or to try to do something differently when the people of his province or the people of the country have spoken clearly in the referendum.

The political impact will be very significant even though the results are not binding. Consequently, if the political impact is going to be significant, then the rules of the game have to be spelled out.

The rules of the game, if we are going to come out better after the referendum than when we went into it, should make it clear that it will have to be a double majority with a majority nationally and a majority in the regions of the country.

The government House leader has said that one reason for not putting financial spending limits in the bill is that these would be subject to challenge based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

He refers to freedom of opinion. Our charter guarantees freedom of opinion and he feels that if we try and put restrictions on the expression of opinion through spending limits, on what can be spent on advertising, that that would be against the charter of rights.

But it also says in the charter that these rights are subject to reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrated and justified in a free and democratic society.

I think that putting such financial limits in the bill can be justified in a free and democratic society because they guarantee the democratic society. To have no spending limits, no financial controls, then those with the most money control the results. That is not democracy.

When the minister says that, we would be interested in seeing the legal opinions, more than one legal opinion. We would like to see the legal opinions he has from the Department of Justice as well as some independent legal opinions on this point.

As a lawyer, I am convinced that there could be and we could formulate much better financial controls and spending limits in this bill that would be acceptable under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I referred to our experience at the national level with plebiscites in Canada. I pointed out that we only had two other examples in our history: the prohibition of liquor situation in 1878, and conscription in 1942.

Canadians should know that referenda and plebiscites have been used much more often at the provincial level. It is interesting that they have been used more often in the west than in the east. As a matter of fact, the more you go toward the east the less they are used.

For example, in British Columbia we have had nine referenda, with the last one in 1972. Alberta has had seven, with the last one in 1971. In Saskatchewan and Manitoba they have had six referenda, with the last one in Saskatchewan in 1956 and the last one in Manitoba in 1952. Ontario has had only three, with the last one in 1921. Quebec has had two with the last one in 1980, but it has passed Bill 150 which provides for another one this year. New Brunswick has never had a referendum or plebiscite. Nova Scotia has had two, with the last one in 1929. There has been one in Prince Edward Island, in 1948. Newfoundland had three, all having to do with whether or not it should join Confederation.

Most of these provincial referenda or plebiscites had to do with subjects such as the prohibition of liquor, the introduction of daylight saving time, the application of the Lord's Day Act, or whether women should have the vote or not.

I bring up that history to point out that referenda and plebiscites while being rare in Canada are not unknown. We have had them on important issues, but never an issue as important as the unity of the country at this time.

I should also point out that in some countries they are used quite often. In Switzerland they have had over 300 referenda. Australia has had 40; France, 20; Denmark, 14. They are used quite often in the states of the United States. In the United Kingdom there has only been one referendum. That was an important one in 1975 on whether or not the United Kingdom should join the European Economic Community.

I refer to that history because a lot of people when they hear the word referendum get very up tight and feel it will be wrought with difficulties and risks. There are difficulties. It is very difficult to put some complex constitutional proposals to the Canadian people in a referendum.

It is not a simple matter. There are risks and it is difficult but it has been done before. It was done on a very complicated matter in the United Kingdom with respect to the European Economic Community in 1975.

I believe that the positive elements outweigh the risks and the difficulties in these matters. By the way, so did the two parliamentary committees which recommended the possibility of a referendum, the Beaudoin–Edwards committee and the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee, in recommending that the Canadian people be consulted on constitutional proposals.

• (1210)

There are reasons that I believe the positive elements outweigh the risks. First of all, the Canadian population felt cynical after the collapse of the Meech Lake proposals. The process by which the governments of Canada examined the Meech Lake proposals, behind closed doors, sometimes as the Prime Minister said, rolling the dice on the future of the country and all that sort of rhetoric, extremely upset the Canadian people. They felt that this is our Constitution, this is how we give authority to governments and we should have something to say about it.

Even though it is complex and even though it is difficult, the final say on these matters should be with the Canadian people. Beyond that, why it is important is that it can settle the matter once and for all. If a government approves or disapproves of certain constitutional proposals, that government is always open to question as to whether or not it really represented the people of its province.

If the country goes down the drain as a result of the way one provincial government votes or does not vote especially behind closed doors at a federal–provincial conference, there will always be doubt in our minds as to whether the country broke up over some whim of a government or partisanship that should not have been present.

On the other hand, with a referendum, the people will decide, not the governments. I should say, they will at least give their advice. It will be up to the governments to legislate on that advice, but at least they will have the formal very clear-cut advice of the population. That having been said, it will settle the matter in a much more definitive way, not perfectly, but in a more definitive way than has been done in the past.

To conclude, as I said, we in the Liberal Party support the principle of this bill, that there be a referendum on constitutional proposals, that the Canadian people be involved in approving of such constitutional proposals.

However, we want to see changes in the bill. We believe that there should be stricter limits on the spending of money by parties involved in the referendum, so that it is a fair process.

We also want to see provisions in the bill that provide for not only a national result but also regional results and that no question be carried without the support of the regions.

We will be looking at the process very closely, what happens in committee, whether the government is flexible, whether it is willing to accept amendments.

We will also want to see the legal opinions I referred to as to why financial controls would be against the charter. We doubt that and we want to see the legal opinions.

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 who has served this country with distinction in many capacities, most recently in this context on the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee. I have a couple of comments and two or three questions for him.

First, he referred to the question of financial controls. He suggested it was lamentable that there are no financial controls on plebiscite spending within this bill. He was a member of the government which drew up Bill C-9 in 1978. Would he not agree that that bill also provided for no particular spending limits. In fact, I think under clause 8 of old Bill C-9 if a group was registered under that bill, in a referendum or plebiscite campaign then the sky was the limit.

There may have been some good reason for that in 1978 and some good reason today. I know he follows very closely the distinguished columnist William Johnson in the Montreal *Gazette*.

Mr. Johnson writing last Friday said: "Elections lead to corruption if ambitious people have unlimited money to buy their way to office. Personal ambition requires spending constraints but plebiscites are not fuelled by personal ambition. They do not put people in power for years able to wield that power for personal advantage, wealth and prestige. A plebiscite merely leads to an expression of opinion. It puts no one in power. Corrup-

tion is less likely because the plebiscite does not serve personal ambition as do elections".

The electorate is not stupid. As long as all views are sufficiently expressed, there is no reason to think the people will vote for one side because they hear that side's message more often. Trust the people, let everyone participate, that is the best course in a plebiscite.

My hon. friend also advocated there should be a majority in all regions of the country. I listened with care to him in that. He was perhaps looking at the recommendations of the committee which I had the honour to co-chair where a referendum would require a national majority and a majority in each of the four regions: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, and the west.

Discounting the wrath of British Columbia of not being regarded as a region unto itself, and I think his former leader might take issue with him on that particular omission, there is the other difficulty that immediately this report was tabled in June 1991, there was of course a response from at least two provinces saying that kind of approach to constitutional amendment is not acceptable. As my hon. friend knows, being a constitutional scholar, given our current amending formula under 41(e) no change can be made without the unanimous consent of the provinces. With great respect, I think the position of his party is an absolute non-starter.

The Beaudoin-Dobbie committee I think reflected that when it said simply: "We recommend that a federal law be enacted if deemed appropriate by the Government of Canada to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal either to confirm the existence of the national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolutions". There is no reference there to a regional majority.

Of course the people of Canada will inform themselves on the issues. They will interpret the results according to however they choose to interpret them. In the final analysis, given our present Constitution, the implementation of whatever decision is made, whatever advice is given by the people of Canada, must take place under the Constitution Act of 1982 which would require the House of Commons, the Senate, and the legislatures of seven of the provinces constituting 50 per cent of the population to approve.

What I suggest to my hon. friend is that he is advocating overriding the present amending formula with his party's position or he is advocating entrenchment of this plebiscite in the Constitution; one or the other and I am not clear just what he is referring to.

Very quickly, my final comment refers to his House leader's comment about this bill being required to apply to all provinces. I would remind him in the old Bill C-9, clause 3(1) of the 1978 bill had identical wording. There was wisdom in 1978 as well as in 1992.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raises some good points that should be dealt with. First of all, Bill C-9 which was a Liberal bill in 1978 as he said, did not provide for limits but that bill was not passed. It was objected to from many sources. It was before the referendum of 1980 in Quebec. I think because of the various objections to it the government did not proceed with it, did not push it through Parliament, and did not pass it.

Personally, I believe having gone through the experience of the referendum of 1980 and seeing what has happened in other elections, the spending limits are necessary. They are necessary not only to ensure a fair referendum and plebiscite but to make sure the plebiscite is perceived by all Canadians as being fair.

While the provision may not have been in Bill C-9 in 1978, that bill was not passed. I think looking at the situation now, we do require spending limits. I would be very adamant on that. I think they are as important with a referendum bill as they are with the Elections Act for the House of Commons where we do have spending limits and we are going to improve the spending limits.

• (1220)

My hon. friend referred to comments by William Johnson in which he, in his column, differentiated between financial controls for elections to Parliament as opposed to financial controls for a referendum. He said that personal power was at stake in the one, but not in the other. That is true.

Again, the reason I propose and our party proposes spending limits is not because there is an element of personal power involved. It is because it must be perceived by all participating, especially by the side that will lose eventually—one side will lose—that the process has been fair.

I point out to my hon. friend that in 1942, the losing side, and I am not discussing the merits of the question, was overwhelmingly in Quebec. The "no" side was not even allowed access to Radio-Canada and the CBC, the public broadcasting network that they paid for with their taxes.

When the result came in, they perceived the result as being unfair. They may have lost anyway, but the fact is if you do not have the spending limits and the spending controls and you lose, there is always the accusation such as we in this party firmly believe that in the 1988 election the pro-free trade elements in Canada bought that election.

We firmly believe that, and nothing you say over there will change our mind. If there had been better financial controls—let me put this argument to you—on third party advertising and we had lost, we could not have used that as an excuse in accepting the result. I am telling you that it is very important when our country is at risk, that once the referendum is over those who have lost as well as those who have won will be able to say: "Nobody bought the result". It is not a question of personal power buying the result.

On the regional majorities, again by looking at our history and the two national plebiscites that we had in 1878 and in 1942, there were vastly different results in Quebec from the rest of the country. After it was all over, it was perceived as unfair, even though they were not binding in those cases. The referendum on conscription was not binding. It was the plebiscite.

Parliament was still supreme. It still had to legislate, but there was heat generated. The political heat and the passions of individuals in all parts of the country were very significant and they will be again. To say simply that the results are not binding legally does not really get to the core of the matter. The core of the matter is that politically, those results will have a lot of significance. Consequently I think it is much better to say in advance that there must be a majority not only in the country but in the regions.

I agree with my friend that there is a question as to where the regions should be—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order please. The time for questions and comments has now expired. Resuming debate.

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak on Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

I am particularly pleased because I served as did many other members of this House and of the other place on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee on the renewal of Canada. That was a rare opportunity and a rare experience which we all learned a great deal from. I refer to that because I think it is important that we think about what the real goal is here.

The goal here is to renew this country, to renew Canada in a way that is meaningful, in a way that stands the test of time. As a result, I think that issues such as the referendum legislation which we have before the House today are an extremely important element of a whole series of initiatives, the end result of which is the renewal of our country.

I am also pleased to speak today because I have returned from the riding over the weekend. I can tell you that in my riding of Macleod and in the town of High River on Saturday, there was a tremendous show of support, interest and love for Canada. The right hon. Joe Clark was the guest of honour for the Little Britches Parade. There were 6,000 or more Canadians out there, all waving their little Canadian flags, showing their great support and love for this country. I can say that in the riding of Macleod, there is a great deal of interest in renewing this country, showing support for Canada. It was truly heartening to see that last Saturday.

This historic legislation has many facets and potentially far-reaching implications. While the government has yet to determine whether the actual holding of a referendum would be beneficial in assisting us in achieving national consensus, we must be prepared for such an eventuality.

What are the objectives of this legislation? Clearly, it is important to have in place a law that will allow this consultation to occur with the greatest possible efficiency and effectiveness. The law must allow the vote of the people to occur in a process that ensures the integrity of the process and the integrity of the result, while minimiz-

ing the hurdles to the exercise of that franchise by the people of Canada.

This bill meets that objective through its reliance on our tried and true experience with the Canada Elections Act and by giving the role of superintending the referendum process to the independent Chief Electoral Officer of Canada.

The other main objective of the legislation, an objective to which I will direct my remarks today, is that of fairness in the referendum campaign. I believe it is trite to say that a referendum campaign which is conducted without a sense of fairness of the process that leads to the answer of the referendum question deprives the result of legitimacy and negates the whole exercise. Fairness is critical to the campaign and must be reflected in the enabling legislation which governs any such campaign.

Fairness is a concept that is sometimes difficult to define in words but always easily recognizable in practice. When we think of fairness we think of something that is unbiased. We think of equitable opportunity. Of course, key to the fairness concept is the notion of playing by the rules. Bill C–81 exemplifies these elements.

The registration requirements of the bill are a case in point. As hon. members know, no person or group other than a registered referendum committee can incur referendum expenses during the referendum period in excess of $5,000. Therefore, while participation is welcomed from all Canadians, there is a requirement that one must register with the Chief Electoral Officer where one intends to spend over $5,000.

The registration procedure is set out in clause 13 of the bill and is quite straightforward. There are provisions that ensure fairness in the registration process itself. For example, the Chief Electoral Officer is required to examine applications for registration in the order he has received them and, second, provisions to guard against confusion in the name of a referendum committee are there in order to avoid confusion between committees or as between a committee and a federal or provincial party.

What the registration regime brings with it are two essential ingredients. Those essential ingredients are accountability and transparency. Accountability for larger sums of money expended by these committees is ensured through the requirements for the use of auditors, a chief agent and for the keeping of books and records. Returns must be made detailing expenses incurred, contributions received, et cetera, much as is the case during an election campaign.

In addition, the law will require that those contributions received in excess of expenses must either be returned to contributors or, if that is not possible, to the Receiver General of Canada. This will protect against the misuse of funds by unscrupulous individuals.

Transparency is also present in that the bill requires that any contribution received from individuals, corporations, trade unions, political parties and other groups that exceed $250 must be reported. In this way contributions to registered referendum committees and the committees themselves will know that contributions and expenses over certain amounts will be matters of public record. This is as it should be. This does not limit participation of Canadians or the expression of their views.

• (1230)

It does, however, allow Canadians to see who the financial participants were. This is of tremendous importance for the public's confidence in the outcome of a referendum.

I would like to turn to another thrust of the bill that I believe is laudable and that has fairness as its hallmark. This bill makes available to both sides of any referendum question free time for broadcasts on networks in order to get the message of both sides out without the barrier of cost and in prime time. This is a very significant initiative, a very significant part of this legislation.

Three hours of broadcasting time in prime time will be split equally between those registered referendum committees that support the referendum question and those committee that oppose the referendum question. This provides the essential fairness. The broadcasting arbitrator and an impartial official appointed pursuant to the Canada Elections Act will allocate the time available to registered referendum committees that have applied for registration before the 27th day before polling day; all committees that have indicated their wish to be considered for an allocation of free time.

To guide the broadcasting arbitrator, certain criteria are set out in the bill which will rely upon, among other things, the consideration of whether the allocation would be equitable with regard to the different views expressed on the referendum question, ensuring that there is a fair distribution of time and second, the consideration of the public interest in fairness to the referendum committees.

Again, fairness is explicitly recognized when the bill lists the factors the broadcasting arbitrator must take into account in deciding the broadcasting time that is to be made available to the various committees. Clause 24(4)(b) of the bill requires the broadcast arbitrator to take into account that any broadcasting time should be made available fairly throughout prime time.

This means that one committee cannot end up with broadcasting time in the middle of the night and somebody else in prime time. Everybody has to have fair time. That is a very important part of this process.

On the the same subject, it is also important to note that the bill requires the sponsor of referendum advertising to be identified when that advertising is aired. Similarly, printed advertisements will have to show the name of the sponsor. Again, this is a fair provision to help Canadians avoid confusion as to who is transmitting the message involved and to ensure transparency of the financial side of things. Those are important aspects of this initiative.

I would like to turn to other evidence of fairness in the process established by this bill. All hon. members of this House know the importance of the men and women who work on compiling and revising the electoral lists in an election campaign and the importance of the other men and women who make the campaign work as scrutineers and volunteers. The bill provides that the returning officer shall appoint the enumerators, revising officers and revising agents.

Given the fact that during a referendum campaign there are no candidates, the apparatus in the Canada Elections Act that allows candidates to have their agents present at the polling stations cannot be directly imported into a referendum campaign. Instead, in the interest of fairness, the law will provide for the appointment of two persons to act as witnesses for each polling stations. These witnesses will be appointed by the returning officer who must, as far as possible, select a person who supports the questions and a person who opposes the questions. These individuals will take an oath of office and will have all the rights and obligations of a candidate's agent under the Canada Elections Act.

The presence of these witnesses at the polling stations in electoral districts will reassure us that the fairness and the integrity of the referendum process will not only be integral to the taking of the consultative vote, but will also be seen and very visible to all Canadians.

A similar practice will be utilized for revising agents who are appointed by the returning officer.

Here again, the bill stipulates that revising agent pairs should, as far as possible, be comprised of a person who supports the question and a person who opposes it.

The bill provides as well that electoral lists will be made available on request to the designated agents of a leader of a federal or provincial party, or a registered referendum committee in the electoral districts. This provision, too, helps evoke confidence in the process, as both sides of any referendum question will have this crucial information available to them for the conduct of the referendum.

Another example of the element of fairness incorporated into the proposed law is the recount part of the bill, which allows electors to attend a recount, representing those who support and those who oppose the question.

Finally, I would like to refer to the statute which is the basis of the scheme that will be used to conduct the referendum campaign. The bill takes relevant provisions of the Canada Elections Act into the referendum process. Clearly, the Canada Elections Act is the foundation upon which this bill would operate. When one speaks of fairness in the conduct of an election campaign, one immediately thinks of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada and his very able and excellent officials who work tirelessly to ensure that campaigns unfold in a way that is the epitome of fairness in an unbiased approach.

Canada is the envy of the world, and the counsel of the Chief Electoral Officer is often sought internationally by other countries whose electoral systems are not up to the same standards and which are seeking the highest standards possible. We are fortunate to have a Chief

Electoral Officer, with all the accumulated expertise in his office, to oversee any potential referendum.

Let us not forget all the provisions in the Canada Elections Act that will be drawn upon and that work when we assess the fairness mechanisms in this enabling legislation. For example, let us remember such sections of the Canada Elections Act that deal with the qualification of electors and residency requirements, ballot papers and ballot boxes and safekeeping, polling stations and fairness procedures of polling day, the initialling of ballot papers, and no impeding of electors. There are a lot of things that we take for granted in the course of running a fair and open election. Other aspects are secrecy of voting, maintenance of peace and good order, the counting of the ballots in a fair and open process and the prohibition of broadcasting from outside Canada.

The fairness mechanisms of this bill are also backed up by offence provisions so that they can be enforced effectively.

Today is an important day as we debate the provisions of Bill C-81. We are setting the stage for a possible public consultation of historic proportions. We have a law that respects the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by allowing maximum participation and freedom of expression, while being fair and encouraging an open, transparent and accountable process.

With this newly-created opportunity to vote in a possible future referendum comes the responsibility to ensure that the vote is done according to rules that are clear and fair. I believe this is such a law. I believe this bill strikes the right balance. I hope that if a referendum occurs Canadians will participate in this great opportunity to be even more involved in national renewal. Canadians have to date received unparalleled opportunities to participate and have joined in this renewal process with vigour.

I am also mindful of the words of the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada, a committee on which I served and spoke of earlier. It recommended that a law be enacted if deemed appropriate by the Government of Canada to enable the government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal, to either confirm a national consensus or facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolutions.

This bill will ensure that should it be decided that a referendum is required, we will have the tools available to hold such a vote in a fair and appropriate way.

• (1240)

As I mentioned earlier, this is but one step along the road to renewing this country, to giving Canadians the opportunity to feel better about their country, to feel fully a part of this country. When we get into some of the substance of the issues it is an opportunity for western Canadians like myself to feel that our part of the country is fully responded to and is fully reflected in the national character of this country. The same is true for the people of Quebec, the same is true for aboriginal Canadians and the same is true for all other Canadians.

I hope that if this is necessary, Canadians will participate in this referendum in a full and meaningful manner because this could be a historic opportunity if it is deemed appropriate.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the more I hear about this bill, the less impressed I am with it and the more distressed I am that the government has not taken the trouble, in advance of this bill, to consult with all sides in this House effectively.

Let me ask the member about two particular provisions. He made much of the fairness of the bill and yet in the area of spending limitations, let me draw the member's attention to the provisions of the bill that you could drive a truck through.

The alleged limit on expenditure in clause 14 says that no person or group, other than a registered referendum committee, shall incur and set expenses exceeding $5,000. A registered referendum committee is defined by the most circular of all definitions: a person or group that intends to incur referendum expenses over $5,000. In effect, you can have any number of referenda committees, each of which is then authorized to spend as much as they like. How is that fair?

The government suggests there are legal limits. I defy the government to put forward a single, judicial decision which prevents the government or Parliament from regulating or limiting expenditures of third parties or referenda committees in an effective way. Parliament is

clearly entitled to do that. You will not be able to find a single legal opinion to the contrary.

Second, and I would ask the member to comment on this as well, section 3 of the act gives to the Governor in Council, i.e. the cabinet, the authority to consider proceeding with the referendum if, in its opinion, it is in the public interest to do so. The question comes back to Parliament for approval but not the decision to proceed with the referendum. On a constitutional issue of this kind, surely it should be up to the Parliament of Canada to decide on whether to proceed with the referendum because governments, being who they are, will proceed in part on their definition of public interest and their political interests as well.

As the member said, it is critical that this process be seen to be fair and that there be genuine consultation on whether to proceed with the referendum and, second, that the procedures on finance limitations be fair.

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the questions from the hon. gentleman from Victoria.

On the question of spending, it is the judgment of the government that the value of the freedom of speech, which is recognized in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of this nation, is an important value which overrides other considerations. There is legal advice, I understand, which would suggest that we would have to be very careful about limiting the ability of Canadians to form their own committees to work on one side or the other of a referendum question. That value of freedom of speech is something which clearly this government and the House of Commons respect. It is a value which we would all want to hold high in this country.

On the question of whether to proceed, clearly my colleagues suggest that perhaps there would be partisan considerations which would come into effect.

I fully believe that the only factor that would be taken into consideration at the time of a judgment about this by the cabinet, by the Privy Council, would be the future of this country. I reject this outright because I have been through this process, through the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee in which I saw some interests and some members of the House trying at times to slip a little bit away from the non-partisan attitude which was so central to the work of that committee.

I hope that no members of this House slip into partisanship at this critical time in our history because what we need to do is ensure that this country is united. We need to ensure that this country comes through this process in which Canadians respect one another, Canadians all are united in their support of a united country. Canadians must respect the process through which we arrived at this point.

I encourage all members not to be partisan. I encourage all members to take into account the importance of the country and I fully expect that the cabinet will be doing that at the point at which it has to make a decision on whether to make use of this enabling legislation.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, on page 7 of the bill it says:

> Where the polling day at a referendum is within one year after the polling day at an election or a previous referendum, no enumeration of electors shall be made for the purpose of the subsequent referendum unless—

More or less it says that if we have an election a year after this referendum is being held, no enumeration will be done.

That might be fine in rural ridings but not in suburban ridings, in metropolitan ridings such as mine and the riding of my colleague from York West. Something like one-third of our constituents are apartment dwellers. Apartment dwellers tend to change within a year, a 25 per cent vacancy and turnover rate.

I am wondering if the hon. member sees the need for an enumeration during the election because we have heard great debates in the House about the unfairness of enumeration. My colleague from York North went back and forth a couple of times between ourselves and the Conservative members.

I am wondering if he shares with me the the idea that although there could be enumeration done during this referendum, there should be an enumeration in an election because all the parties involved, the other parties during the election, will not have a chance to make sure that the enumerations are done correctly, fairly. It could be to the advantage of a member and/or the government.

My question is does he not agree with me that because of great metropolitan cities like Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver we need to do an enumeration at the next election and this should be struck completely out?

Mr. Hughes: Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting detail which my colleague raises and I suspect that the purpose here is to help ensure that the enumeration costs are kept to a minimum.

I believe in the legislation. There is an aspect which gives the Chief Electoral Officer some flexibility in the way in which he deals with the enumeration. If there is a problem in ridings such as that of my colleague in which there is a lot more mobility than there is in ridings such as mine, then I am sure the flexibility is there to afford the Chief Electoral Officer the opportunity to make those adjustments in between the time of the proposed possible referendum and any election in the subsequent year.

It is potentially a useful cost-saving exercise. There obviously will have to be flexibility in the implementation and I am sure the Chief Electoral Officer can do that.

Third, enumeration is clearly an important aspect of both the referendum and the election and I do not think the Chief Electoral Officer would be in a position that would limit his ability to ensure that those lists are appropriate, up to date, and ready for any potential federal election at which point I look forward to returning to the government side of the House.

• (1250)

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I think there have been discussions with members on all sides to permit the completion of at least the 20 minute portion past one o'clock. I believe if you ask the question you will find unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. members have heard the terms of the motion proposed by the member for York West. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for York West for a maximum of 20 minutes.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the government members as well as the New Democratic Party and members of the Bloc Quebecois for their kind and generous co-operation.

Bill C-81 is no ordinary piece of legislation, particularly as we consider the time of the national unity dossier that is involving governments at all levels and Canadians from one coast to the other.

We on this side of the House accept the principle of a national referendum as a tool and a mechanism by which Canada and Canadians can legitimize constitutional reform. As has been expressed already by our House leader, on April 21 of last year, the Leader of the Opposition made public a nine-point constitutional agenda for national debate in this House and across the nation.

One of those points, and a very important point, was that any constitutional arrangement that was arrived at by the first ministers ought to be placed before all Canadians, regardless of whether that deal was a good one, a bad one or an indifferent one. At the end of the process, when governments crossed their *t*s and dotted their *i*s, it was the belief of the Leader of the Opposition that because the Constitution of Canada, as the premier piece of legislation of this place, belongs to all Canadians, all Canadians are deserving of a voice and a stake.

It is no longer acceptable that only the chairman of the board or the chief executive officer or the board of directors be given the ability to dictate the future, but essentially that there are 27 million shareholders of this public company Canada who deserve a vote, a voice and a franchise.

We are pleased on that basis that the government has put before the House this piece of legislation, particularly as we concern ourselves with what went wrong on the Meech Lake round. It was not only a question of substance that caused consternation among Canadians, but the process of back room, secret, roll the dice dealings that undermined any integrity and confidence in the system.

My only point along this line was the hope that the government would have accepted at least one of the Leader of the Opposition's points on the referendum early enough so that a committee could have been stuck months ago with respect to preparing the legislation rather than the seemingly mad rush to try to

complete this in the next number of weeks and months before the House rises. It would have served the public interest much better had we taken that initiative some months ago.

In principle, this piece of legislation is acceptable in the sense of giving Canadians the ability to also dictate the future of their country. The bill at the same time is in need of serious amendments, serious modifications, to make this bill as fair and as up front as possible.

I would suggest seven changes. The first one is this national referendum should not be optional. The government House leader has said maybe, perhaps, it would be his intention or his preference not to have one at all. I am saying it should not be an option that Canadians perhaps or maybe will be a given franchise.

I believe a national referendum should be mandatory. Let us for certain give the opportunity to all Canadians to express themselves on the constitutional arrangement that first ministers will arrive at in a number of weeks and months. In order for constitutional reform to be truly legitimate, I believe this tool of a national referendum should be mandatory and guaranteed as the final part of this constitutional process.

In terms of the possibility or options, this piece of legislation should be enacted. A national referendum should take place regardless of the size or shape of the constitutional arrangement.

Point two is that currently in the bill there is a sunset clause of three years which means that at the end of the three-year process this bill will die. That should be changed. The national referendum in terms of major constitutional arrangements should be a permanent mechanism. What is wrong with offering Canadians a say on the future of their country after all?

I believe Canadians are tolerant, educated, interested, mature enough and deserving of an ability to be actively involved and engaged in deciding and shaping the future of Canada's constitutional make-up. Therefore, it should not be grandfathered after three years. It should be a permanent mechanism so that the process that soured the Meech Lake round could never happen again.

It has been tried in other countries with a fair amount of success. Some people suggest constitutional arrangements are something too complex for the average Canadian. Based on the experience of other countries such as Australia, in which the citizens disposed of many options that they saw as unfit or unpopular and really came down with a bottom line, I believe Canadians are able to to do that. In many cases, they can probably do it much better than the elected representatives in terms of being viewers at a distance in trying to ascertain what is truly important as opposed to what is not important, or what is good or what is bad for the country. Put our faith in the hands of those 27 million Canadians and I do not think we will go wrong.

Point three is that the national referendum must be truly national. Currently the bill is written that if the referendum is held, it need only be held in one or more provinces. From my viewpoint, that is a very dangerous exercise.

If we have a national referendum, it must be held in each of the 10 provinces and 2 territories. If there is anything less than that, we cannot call it a national referendum because if we have a referendum by the federal government in one or two provinces and then provincial referendums in three or four and then no referendums in the remaining territories or provinces, what kind of a verdict will that yield?

You will have a situation potentially that the provincial referendum in the province of British Columbia, for instance, will be a very different question than the provincial referendum held in Alberta or even than the federal referendum held in three other provinces. What we will see is a chequerboard of referendums that will yield different conclusions based on different questions. I would submit that it would not offer clarity, it would not offer solid direction but would only cloud the issue and lead to a multiplicity of interpretations which would undermine any sense of national purpose that a national referendum can mobilize.

• (1300)

I would suggest that the government House leader and his parliamentary secretary and the members of the government think of the consequences of having a referendum in only some parts of the country. We cannot have a part-time referendum in various spots along the way. We need one question asked of all shareholders of this country and only then can we ascertain what direction the electorate has imposed

on its elected leadership. Anything short of that will drain the integrity or clarity from a referendum.

Point number four concerns what has already been well mentioned, the lack of any spending limits or regulations. Currently the bill only has the stipulation that if any individual or organization gives more than $5,000 with respect to the referendum, he or she or the group must register. There are no ceilings attached to expenditures in the national referendum. That is a very dangerous situation because many Canadians will see the referendum as being fair only in direct relationship to what one group or individual can spend.

We saw in the general election of 1988 the concern, the consternation and the damage that was done by third party advertising. On the one hand, the election act controlled what individual candidates and parties could spend, yet third parties had no limits on what they could spend on television advertising, newspaper advertising, radio advertising, general flyers going around to homes or at general meetings that were organized. They had *carte blanche*.

If it was wrong, and many dispassionate observers would say it was very wrong, a national referendum that would have serious consequences for the future of this country should not be put at the whim of any group or clique of individuals who would have an ability to spend whatever they wished in order to influence and dictate the outcome of the national referendum.

The message coming from Canadians is that this issue should not be dictated by the depths of one's financial pockets, it should be up front. It should be clear and the same for all Canadians. There should be a ceiling by which all Canadians' actions *vis–à–vis* the referendum is governed.

This issue is crucial enough, given the history of this constitutional dossier, to be up for grabs depending on the power that individuals have with respect to expenditures. That goes to the very heart of how Canadians view this referendum. All matters should be fair, up front and equal for all.

Point number five is along the same lines as the whole question of expenditure limits. I would suggest there be a component of public financing through the tax credit. I believe there are a number of Canadians across the country who might not have the ability or the time to get involved with any of the referendum campaigns, writing letters, presenting papers, presenting a brief or participating in a rally but they would be prepared to spend $25, $30, $50 for Canada. I believe that those individual Canadians in my riding, in the ridings of hon. members from all sides, should be encouraged to participate and put their $25 down for a united country and be supported through the tax credit as they are when they contribute to any of the political parties across the country. I do not think we should exclude average Canadians, despite the tough economic malaise that is gripping the country, from saying: "I believe in Canada and my way of showing it is to give $25 to the committee supporting a strong united Canada".

I urge the government to take a look at, not spending by governments in the campaign, but allowing Canadians to use the tax credit so that they can participate and also get a tax break based on their involvement come tax time next year. I think that is fair and it would show an openness to involve all Canadians.

Point number six is that we should have the prerequisite not only of a national majority with respect to the question but a double majority in this bill. It should be a majority across the board, across Canada, plus a majority in each of the four defined regions, namely the west, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

If the answer coming back from the majority of Canadians is for a strong united Canada with a strong national government, it would be beneficial and very reassuring if we had a double majority. In that way, no region of the country would feel that it had been coerced or pressured or ignored by other Canadians in other regions of the country wanting something that that particular region was uncomfortable with.

Therefore, it would be a win–win situation; it would be a national majority complemented by majorities in each of the four regions of the country. It would give rise to the feeling that the referendum had played the politics of inclusion rather than the politics of exclusion. The feelings of alienation that come from that type of arrangement would be gone.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, a double majority would be an investment in good will and in feeling that everyone is a part of this Constitution which, after all, belongs to all Canadians.

My last point, point number seven, is that we should have a change in how the opposition parties are consulted. It was mentioned today by our House leader that there was no consultation, despite the promises of the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs, in the legislation before us today. I believe that there ought to be consultations from here on in, particularly if we have a national referendum—and I hope we do—and particularly in the writing of the question.

We saw in the Quebec referendum in 1980 what a nebulous question can do to a population and, indeed, to a country. I believe the question is important enough to merit the close scrutiny of this Parliament and to involve the three federal political parties in a joint venture, if you will. We must ensure that the question which inevitably will be asked is a clear one, an honest one and a relevant one so that the result will will be of a positive, clear, concise nature. We should not play with the wording of the question to get a particular result. It should be clear and up front and its result should be equally clear.

I am pleased that I was given the opportunity of sharing with the House a few of the important issues that this member for York West sees in this legislation. I welcome the bill in principle. It is long overdue. I do have some reservations, essentially defined by those seven issues. I hope in the committee studies following second reading we can iron them out so that at third reading we can debate a bill that is significantly stronger and fairer for all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): According to the motion passed earlier, the question or comments period is transferred to after the Question Period.

[*Translation*]

It being 1.11 p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon, pursuant to Standing Order 24(2).

At 1.11 p.m., the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

350TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTREAL

Mr. Jean–Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, Montreal celebrated its 350th anniversary. The valiant men and women who faced the adversity of impossible situations had the faith and courage needed to make that adventure an outstanding success.

The 350th anniversary of Montreal is also a celebration for Quebec and all of Canada. Montreal, the world's second–largest French–speaking city, takes pride today in its uniqueness in Canada. It is a place where many ethnic communities live together in mutual respect.

As our Prime Minister, among other dignitaries, said, much of Canada's history can be traced back to Montreal. Congratulations to all who contributed to these celebrations and to the development of this beautiful metropolis.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was International Museums Day and I take this opportunity to salute Canada's museums, which are dedicated to the preservation and presentation of our culture, our heritage and our valued treasures.

According to StatsCanada there are over 2,200 museums and related institutions which welcome over 57 million visitors each year. Our museums are non–profit institutions. They are a vital link, reflecting the world's varied cultures through many different mediums. They add and give pride and a sense of identity to our citizens while contributing to our economy and tourist industry.

However, the Minister of Communications has not given any assurances that grants and services to non–federal museums will be retained by the federal government in the constitutional negotiations.

The Standing Committee on Communications and Culture unanimously recommended that the Museums Assistance Program, the Cultural Initiatives Program and other heritage programs be retained by the federal government while acting in close consultation with the provinces.

What better time for the Minister of Communications to give the museum and heritage community the message that the federal government will stay in business and support them through grants and services to these non-federal museums.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA FIT WEEK

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out the national launching of Canada Fit Week, which will take place tomorrow at noon in Confederation Park in Ottawa. It is the greatest celebration of active living in the world.

On the theme of celebrating the active life, the hon. Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, will officially launch this event that runs from May 22 to 31. This unique activity was made possible with the co-operation of the federal, provincial and territorial governments and the participation of 18 national organizations and private-sector sponsors, and for a good reason: the success of active living has been clearly demonstrated.

Last year, more than eight million Canadians took part in over 16,000 activities. I call on all hon. members to participate in the launching of Canada Fit Week and related activities in their communities so that it will again be an outright success.

* * *

REFERENDUM ACT

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the government tabled its bill on referendums in Canada. Just as in 1978, the federal government's fear of letting Quebec decide its own future is behind this bill.

Just like the Liberals then, today's Conservatives, including those from Quebec, refuse to let Quebec make its own decisions. Although the Conservatives voted at their convention last year in favour of a motion by a Quebec member, the hon. member for Louis-Hébert, recognizing Quebec's right to self-determination and have boasted about it so much, the government has decided to ignore it.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the purpose behind all this is to avoid holding a general election, since the Prime Minister thinks it is too soon. Too soon for whom? For the Conservatives, not for us in the Bloc Quebecois. We are ready and we have been demanding an election again and again. Call an election now and you will see how Quebec will answer.

* * *

[*English*]

MORGENTALER CLINIC

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, according to friends and foes, the explosion that destroyed the Morgentaler clinic yesterday on Harbord Street in Trinity—Spadina was caused by a bomb. If so, that act of violence will not stop abortions.

Abortions arise in the pattern of violence toward women: not only rape and gender directed murders but systemic pressures on women as child bearers. Our North American society not only peddles sex as a commodity but too often it abandons the woman who bears a child.

Low wages and unemployment, husband desertion and non-support, shortages of good child care for children of working mothers and shortages of decent affordable housing condemn many single mothers and their children to poverty and humiliation.

The bombing of abortion clinics in the United States has not stopped abortions, nor has the threat of jail for women or doctors stopped them in Ireland.

We need good sex education, good and available contraception, and respectful economic and social support for every woman bearing or raising a child.

* * *

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister went to Montreal this past weekend to remind people what it means to be a Canadian.

To a cheering crowd, The Prime Minister quoted Sir John A. Macdonald: "Let us be English or let us be French, but above all let us be Canadians".

The Prime Minister also reminded people about the realities of politics in Canada. There are three national political parties in Canada which will field candidates in every province. There are two regional parties which will not even try to represent all of Canada.

In the next election you will not be able to vote against a Bloc Quebecois candidate in Toronto and you will not be able to vote against a Reform Party candidate in Trois-Rivières and that is simply wrong.

The parties of the western separatists and the Quebec separatists will surely attract those people who are blind to Canada's history and intolerant of its realities. But as the Prime Minister said in Montreal, Conservatives and Liberals and New Democrats will work for Canada together.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, the problems created by the changes in the UI act by Bill C-21 continue to grow in number and severity, and as is usually the case in situations of this kind, the innocent and well-intentioned get hurt the worst.

Of particular concern right now is the Revenue Canada appeal system. A large number of people in my riding filed in good faith for UI benefits. UI referred these people to Revenue Canada for an eligibility ruling. They were refused because of interpretations of the terms "arm's length" and "contract of service". They then had to appeal through the Revenue Canada system.

For many this began last November. Six months later they have had no decision. The final stage of the appeal process is the Tax Court and it will not hear most of the appeals until the fall. That will be a full year of waiting for an answer from Revenue Canada.

Bureaucratic delays have forced innocent people into debt, in some cases debt which puts their homes in jeopardy.

People who had been told by the UI Commission, by Revenue Canada, and by various lawyers and accountants that their employment arrangements and business structures were legal now find themselves in limbo with no answers coming from Revenue Canada.

People are into another earning period still not knowing what their legal UI status is.

Justice is not being served when a bureaucratic structure can play havoc with peoples' lives.

I ask the minister to intervene immediately, to speed up all stages of the appeal system, and to hold special hearings of the Tax Court in order to clean up the backlog.

* * *

CYSTIC FIBROSIS MONTH

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to remind members of the House and all Canadians that May is Cystic Fibrosis Month. Cystic fibrosis, or CF, is a genetic disease which affects the lungs and digestive system.

For the past 30 years, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and its many dedicated volunteers like Tim Hunter of the Calgary Flames, the honorary chairman, Mila Mulroney, and thousands of financial donors have been helping to support research and to provide much needed programs and services to CF sufferers and their families.

The theme for cystic fibrosis month is "We've never been so close to a cure. They've never needed your help more".

Tremendous advancements have been made since the 1989 discovery of the gene that causes cystic fibrosis. With our help, the next decade promises improved treatment for this terrible disease and even possibly a cure.

On behalf of the federal government, I invite all Canadians to support the work of this organization so that they may achieve success in finding a cure.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, co-operative housing provides shelter while offering a supportive environment and the opportunity to develop skills learned through co-operative management.

These are the words of the housing minister this past December and yet in the federal budget two months later the co-op housing program was axed.

I am sure all Canadians want to know why the government had such a sudden change of heart in those two months. Did it think that all the 165,000 people on waiting lists for co-op housing won the Lotto 6/49?

In justifying this decision, the government told us that it would be spending more on social housing but the budget reduced this commitment as well, from $97 million down to $70 million.

The objective of co-op housing is not to create public housing ghettos for the poor, it is to give them hope and a way out of this route. In this regard the program is a Canadian success story. It provides housing to moderate and low-income people, seniors and the disabled. It fosters a sense of pride and community and does this in a very cost-effective way.

• (1410)

By cutting the co-operative housing program, the government has destroyed the pathway from poverty to self-sufficiency. I call upon the government to reinstate this vital and important program and to recognize the damage that its policies are doing.

* * *

RECREATIONAL FISHERY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans visited New Brunswick to announce a major initiative designed to promote the conservation and enhancement of recreational fish resources in Atlantic Canada.

The goal of the $5.7 million Educational and Public Awareness Program is to raise the level of appreciation, particularly among our young people, to the important role the fishery plays in the Canadian economy.

Co-ordinated through a number of organizations, including the Huntsman Marine Science Centre in St. Andrews and Memorial University in Newfoundland, EPAP is aimed at restoring the freshwater and coastal habitats for salmon, trout, mackerel, and smallmouth bass.

The initiative is based on the grassroots participation of local people and native groups who will play an active role in identifying and taking action on habitat problems.

* * *

NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, during the past weekend more than 500 parliamentarians from North America and Europe, including the republics of the former Soviet Union, met in Banff for the influential North Atlantic Assembly.

The beauty of Banff, the warm hospitality of Alberta, and the efficiency of the organization lead by the indefatigable member for Scarborough East, put the delegates in a receptive mood to hear a creative message from Canada on the issues before the conference. But no senior minister of the government took the opportunity to speak to the plenary session.

Where was the Minister of National Defence? It was his duty to represent Canada at that conference. A great opportunity was missed to set out Canada's views on the future security arrangements for Europe and North America, on the vital need for even sharper cuts in arms, for conflict prevention measures.

Canada has a stake and an interest in these issues. It was a disgrace that the minister was not there.

* * *

REFERENDUM ACT

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, Canadians must reject calls for spending limits and umbrella committees to be put into the referendum legislation. We must be mindful of the words of U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who said on June 24, 1957:

> Free speech is not to be regulated like diseased cattle and impure butter.

On June 18, 1986 U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist said:

> In a modern democracy, to resist political spending is much like allowing a speaker in a public hall to express his view while denying him the use of an amplifying system.

Let us not muzzle the free voices of our nation. Canadians are mature enough to make their own judgments on this or any other issue.

Tributes

CANADIANS AGAINST RACISM

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, this evening the National Capital Alliance on Race Relations is organizing an assembly of Canadians against racism here on Parliament Hill. Local religious and community leaders, business, labour, politicians and citizens will gather to express support in working to eliminate racism in our national capital community and in Canada.

In light of the recent demonstrations and violence in Toronto and other Canadian cities following the riots in Los Angeles, it is critical to ensure that racism is not tolerated in our society and for all to speak out.

While it was one particular incident that sparked the deplorable violence and destruction, there are other causes of unrest; high unemployment, high drug use, large numbers of high school dropouts, illiteracy, hopelessness. Racial tension is but a part of a greater social malaise and we must all work at fixing the root causes.

The government must also commit to invest available resources for the elimination of racism, including an immediate lifting of the funding freeze imposed in this year's budget on the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

I applaud the National Capital Alliance on Race Relations for its work and encourage Canadians to organize similar events.

* * *

[*Translation*]

350TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTREAL

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, who could not feel proud about the great events that took place over the weekend in Montreal? More than a million people celebrated the 350th anniversary of the founding of Montreal. French-speaking and English-speaking people joined those of other language backgrounds to celebrate a really distinct society together.

To mark the event, I would have three suggestions to make. First, settle the constitutional issue, with the leadership of the first ministers and the native people; second, make Bill 178 more flexible so as to allow bilingual signs in Montreal; third, have the federal government work with the unions, Montreal City Hall and the Government of Quebec to revive Montreal's economy. If we work together, Mr. Speaker, we will all celebrate Montreal in grand style 365 days a year.

* * *

[*English*]

JOB TRAINING

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and other local ridings have been hit over the head with yet another government two-by-four.

In the depth of this economic recession, the government has cut training grants under section 26 of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Originally, our area was to get $1 million from this program. The amount has recently been reduced to $78,000.

Some people in school with literally days left before graduation were struck off the list of qualifying for training. Luckily a demonstration by local unemployed people in Cornwall restored part of the funding to end the present school year, but countless other individuals in Hawkesbury, Alexandria, Cornwall and elsewhere are still going to be denied the usual benefits.

I take this opportunity to call upon the Minister of Employment and Immigration to restore section 26 funding for the people of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. What the people want is training so that they can get jobs if and when this recession ever ends.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions and I believe there is an understanding at this point in time that we will have testimonials with respect to the situation in Nova Scotia and the coal mine.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE DISASTER

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Government of Canada, I am sure all members of this House and of the people of Canada to express our most heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of the 26 miners who died in the Westray mine in Plymouth, Nova Scotia as a result of the explosion of May 9.

Our thoughts and prayers have been with the community ever since, and are so especially today. A memorial service organized by the Pictou Council of Churches and attended by His Excellency the Governor–General and the right hon. the Prime Minister is under way in Pictou county at this moment. The service pays tribute to those who died and to the indomitable courage and spirit of all miners. Their loved ones have learned to face tragedy and somehow rise above it.

The families and friends of those who died as well as the whole community of Plymouth now face the painful task of carrying on without those whom they have lost so tragically. They do so in the knowledge that their community and in fact the country wishes to offer every assistance possible. We also pay tribute to the heroic efforts of the rescue teams who risked their lives in the hope of finding the miners trapped in the explosion.

Mining has played a significant role in the history of Nova Scotia and of Canada. These men will not be forgotten. As the late Helen Keller once said: "Although the world is very full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it".

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I join with other members of this House to remember the 26 men who met sudden death at the Westray coal mine in Plymouth, Nova Scotia.

Death and disaster are all too familiar to the coal mining communities throughout this country. These men bring the total number of deaths in Pictou county, Nova Scotia to 272, yet for many in eastern and central Nova Scotia, the mines provide the only opportunity for meaningful work.

It is not pleasant work. It is hard and unsteady work. It can be dangerous and unhealthy but for many, it is their only way to enhance their economic opportunity. Miners are an indomitable breed. They do not shrink from the arduous nature of their labours nor from the dangers posed to health and safety. Their object is to earn an honest living for themselves and their families and they take these awful risks to do so.

Disasters like those at Westray mine are brutal blows, not just to families of the victims, not just to the communities in which they live but indeed to an entire nation. All Canadians feel the pain and join in the grief. We marvel at the spirit of the people, not only from the communities directly affected which united in support of the stricken families, but also those from all over Atlantic Canada who came voluntarily to Plymouth to risk their own lives in the valiant but futile attempt to rescue.

• (1420)

We know that as long as there is a demand for coal and as long as there is coal to be mined, there will be brave and honest men in Nova Scotia to do the work. There is a special spirit in the mining communities of Nova Scotia that marks that of mining communities everywhere, a spirit that was well summed up by a poet of Wales when he said:

> Though they go mad, they shall be sane;
>
> Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
>
> Though lovers be lost love shall not;
>
> And death shall have no dominion.

In the last few days, we have seen that spirit at work. The extended communities, of not just Plymouth or even just Pictou County but of all Nova Scotia and all Atlantic Canada have gathered around the stricken families. Especially impressive have been the courageous draggermen who so valiantly attempted the rescue. Many of these men came from my own constituency but they also came from various parts of Pictou County and parts of New Brunswick. To each and everyone I express the appreciation of the House for their heroic efforts.

This is the way of Nova Scotia's mining communities, resolution and strength in the face of adversity. The pain of the past is eased by the determination to build a better future.

Words alone cannot express the depths of our sympathy for the families, friends and communities who have suffered such tragic losses. So let us today offer our own personal prayers and sincere condolences to the families of these special men. And let us reassure these miners that their struggle was not in vain. We as a people shall never forget.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus and our leader, the member for Yukon, who is also at the memorial service today, I wish to offer our condolences to the families and the friends and the people of the community who are affected by the mining disaster.

It is no news to you, Mr. Speaker, that this House was very quiet over the last week as we waited for the rescue efforts to finish. We are concerned in this House about what happened in that community. We are concerned with the trials, the tribulations and the sorrow that those families went through.

As we say in war, people should not die in vain. I would hope that after this memorial service is finished hard questions will be asked as to why the mine was allowed opened when in 14 years 246 people died. There are many serious questions. They must be answered.

We again offer our condolences but we do not want these men to die in vain.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, like many thousand Canadians, every day we have been watching the news and hoping for good news.

[*Translation*]

But after several days, we lost hope, as all those families did. We all know that fathers, friends and husbands died in that terrible tragedy. We want to join their families and friends in saying that suffering knows no boundaries, no partisan allegiance and in the hope that such tragedies will not recur. We hope that we will all learn lessons from their terrible death. Naturally, Mr. Speaker, like all of you, we want to join those who are at the memorial service to share our sympathy.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. members to stand for a moment's silence. One minute, please.

[*Editor's Note: The House stood in silence.*]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

TRADE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

In next week's issue of *U.S. News and World Report* there is an appalling interview with the Prime Minister of Canada. Along with telling Americans it would be unfortunate for the United States if he were not re-elected, the Prime Minister had this to say about U.S. trade harassment of Canada, and I quote:

> President Bush has spoken to his cabinet about this and I have had a number of calls from him recently. He is clearly indicating his intention to restore this relationship.

As this interview went to print, the United States slapped another unfair $200 million American duty on softwood lumber from Canada. How does the Prime Minister explain ongoing American trade harassment when he claims that he has directly spoken to the President of the United States and that it will not continue?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no question that the Government of Canada takes a very dim view of the recent indication by the United States that it intends to continue on the softwood lumber issue.

We will win this case. We will take it, as we have, to the GATT, we will take it to the FTA panel, and we will prove the United States to be wrong. That is exactly what the Prime Minister will be telling the President.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Well, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was right about one thing in the interview; he is the best Prime Minister the United States could hope for.

Unfortunately, Canadians want someone who is going to speak up for us, not only here but also in Washington. While our Prime Minister sounds more like President Bush's press secretary, we are being hit from all sides—Honda, unfair softwood lumber claims, durum wheat, magnesium. When is the Prime Minister going to get off his knees in Washington and start speaking up for Canada?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the Prime Minister has done and what he intends to do again this week when he meets with Mr. Bush.

It is easy to criticize the trade arrangements between Canada and the United States. It is the largest trading agreement that there is anywhere in the world between two countries, and there is bound to be friction. We do not like it, we intend to try and put a stop to it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims he has a very good relationship with the President of the United States. However, as you know, this weekend the President of the United States again decided to ignore the clean air agreement between Canada and the United States.

Why does the Prime Minister go along with a situation in which the clean air agreement between the Americans and the Canadians will no longer be observed as a result of the actions of the U.S. President on the weekend?

[*English*]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the clean air agree-

ment between Canada and the United States is a significant step forward. There may well be difficulties in it, but my colleague the Minister of the Environment will be able to look at those and clear them up.

Every time you have a significant dispute, it seems that the opposition then wants to stop all trade with the United States or stop the free trade agreement, cancel it, change it. We would be far worse off if we did not have these agreements with the United States.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, last Friday the U.S. Department of Commerce ruled against our softwood lumber industry once more. This biased ruling is both politically motivated and hypocritical. Furthermore, the industry will lose $200 million this year.

• (1430)

Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform this House whether the Prime Minister will obtain a guarantee from President Bush that this politically motivated duty which has caused extensive damage and injury to our softwood lumber industry will be terminated once and for all?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I assume my friend knows that there is not a new imposition of a new tax. The experience last Friday was another step in a process that will culminate some time in June.

We now have a final determination of a countervail assessment that was made sometime ago. The determination in fact is somewhat less than what the original findings were. It is half that.

What my colleague, the Minister for International Trade, and I did on Friday was to immediately call for the establishment of the binational panel that will adjudicate this issue and, of course, will find in our favour.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister.

The decision handed down last Friday is just as harmful and irrational as all the other decisions that were made since 1986. The industry is dying while the government watches the parade. Even with this reduction, the industry will lose $200 million this year.

Does the minister intend to accelerate the dispute settlement process so that Canada's softwood lumber industry will get a fair deal and stop submitting to this despicable show of U.S. dictatorship?

[*English*]

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of submitting to this action or any action like it which has no basis in law and which we have protested from the very beginning.

To this point, I should tell my hon. friend that the industry has not been required to pay the duty, but rather to issue bonds in the event that the American action can be sustained. The same situation prevails for another 45 days until the final decision on injury can be made.

As I have told my friend, we have already asked for the establishment of the binational, quasi-judicial panel that will deal with this issue as soon as possible. There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that any objective observer of this situation would have to agree Canada has a very strong, if not unassailable case.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the earth summit begins a mere two weeks from tomorrow. It is time for this government to act, not just talk. Canada must take concrete actions nationally and a leadership role internationally on the environment and development.

My first question is for the Minister for External Relations. The Conservative government has failed to meet Canada's development aid targets for the last five years. World governments will be asked at the summit to substantially increase their aid targets and fundamentally re-think their criteria for aid projects.

Will the minister assure this House that the Canadian government's commitment to aid will be met, unlike the past performance of this government, and that human priority needs such as family planning, poverty and women's education will become the bottom line for aid funding?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of our government's achievements in Third World development assistance, whether we are talking about programs operated by CIDA or our own very firm position in various international forums where the Canadian government is often seen as a leader in promoting major development issues.

As for our environmental concerns, since the hon. member alluded to these, CIDA, together with various other departments, intends to play an important role, as it did during the preliminary meetings, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

This year, tens of thousands of Canadians will develop skin cancer and cataracts because of exposure to cancer-causing ultraviolet radiation. Millions more will be exposed to dangerous levels that will result in deaths and illness in the future. Will the minister provide an example of leadership and act now to educate and regulate the safety of Canadians on sun awareness? Will he introduce legislation to rate and test the ultraviolet protection of both sun-screens and sun-glasses? Will he make a commitment today to introduce legislation before Parliament recesses for the summer?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member will recall a couple of months ago I said to an audience here in Ottawa that I would like to consider action in terms of the problem of sun exposure and cancer. We are dealing with it now and later this week with the Minister of the Environment we should make some announcement in terms of the way the problem of sun exposure should be treated and the way Canadians should consider the problem.

In terms of cancer, she knows very well that the department and the Medical Research Council make money available to researchers.

Legislation has not been considered so far, but I do not say that it could not be considered in light of the discussions we had, particularly with my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, and organizations such as the cancer society and the lung association. I take note of the proposal and I consider that it is quite possible.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment. The proposed text of the climate change convention is a definition of false security. It does not even meet the minimum standards set by Canada's national round table on the environment to protect world climate. It has no targets or timetables for specific greenhouse gas reductions and according to the Americans, it will not be legally binding.

Will the minister assure this House that Canada will not sign the agreement proposed for signature in Rio until there are serious binding targets and timetables?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member took the time to look at the proposed convention very carefully, he would find in article 4, section 2, paragraphs (a) and (b) reference to the reduction of CO2 or greenhouse gases outside of those covered from the Montreal protocol that cause climate change and reference to certain dates that are

useful and meet the general objectives of certain countries, although they do not go as far we wanted to.

The member does make a statement that is very important. He says that Canada should walk away from this and not sign the climate change convention. I take note of his position. I can assure you we will have discussions. However, if that is the NDP way of approaching this issue, I do not think it is going to be useful.

Furthermore, I invite him to look at what happened on ozone depletion substances. A Vienna convention also preceded the Montreal protocol that lead to real action.

We feel that we may have exactly the same type of situation here with the climate change convention.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Despite above average unemployment statistics in Northumberland and area, government approved training criteria are more restrictive, inappropriate and counter-productive than ever before.

The fee payer program is an example. In Trenton, where over 20 per cent of manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last several months, only four people will be able to benefit from this program this year.

Will the minister commit to a specific review of all government and UI funded training programs in Northumberland and area?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of funding for fee payers under section 26, this, by the way, is the amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act which she and the Liberal Party vehemently opposed. These are the same people complaining in this House today about a measure they fought for a year and a half. Let us get that straight.

On the issue of funding, last year there was $43 million under section 26 just for Ontario. We are increasing that amount to $125 million in 1992. That is almost three times as much as was spent in 1991. Because of the needs and demands on this program, yes we have to be more selective. We will be in order to ensure that in the end we get a better trained workforce which the Liberals opposed.

• (1440)

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, the people of Northumberland are fed up with this government. That program we opposed eliminated government funding to important programs, yet the government stipulates inappropriate use of employee-employer programs.

My next question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. With the permanent loss of tens of thousands of jobs in Ontario alone, and one in every six Canadians being illiterate, upgrading of our jobless is essential. However, without a job at the end, much of the skills training can be wasted.

Will the government commit to working immediately with the Government of Ontario and municipal representatives to determine appropriate niche markets in Ontario so that any skills training can be efficient and cost effective?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the call by the Liberals for partnerships is exactly what the Labour Force Development Strategy is all about.

If she cares to talk with Minister Allen in Ontario, she will find out that there is great co-operation among the federal government, provincial government and the business and labour sectors in Ontario to try to train people in order for them to fill these jobs and also get the fundamentals of our economy right.

These people were calling in this House for lower interest rates, for a lower dollar and we have all of that. Everything will not happen overnight, but we are on the right track.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In metro Toronto last month, there were some 220,000 unemployed. We are told that of these, some 5,300 are enrolled in training programs. That is only 2 per cent of them. There are still another 200,000 with UIC benefits expiring over the next few months.

Will the minister now admit that both his job training money and his government's economic policies are failing Toronto and the whole country. Will he tell us why this government is refusing to take the necessary

corrective economic measures which are needed to salvage our very sick economy?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, to his first question, the answer is no. To his second question, the answer is yes, we are taking those steps.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question is obviously in order. I think we need more meat for the table.

This severe recession is exacerbated by the Bank of Canada's misguided battle to reach zero per cent inflation, fought on the backs of the unemployed and by adjustment to the free trade agreement with none of the Prime Minister's promised adjustment assistance. Zero inflation plus zero free trade adjustment equals zero opportunities.

Will the minister of employment admit that Canadians are now desperate for a new economic initiative and new jobs that will help keep their families and their futures together?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member plays with the phrase that there are no adjustment programs, I invite him to read a report commissioned by this government which was chaired by one Mr. de Grandpré.

There are over 400 adjustment programs all across Canada. Billions of dollars of taxpayers' money are being channelled to help Canadian workers adjust and to allow the business sector to restructure in order to meet the global challenge. This is happening.

As for his claim that the government is doing nothing, I remind him again that he will find in the last budget of my department we have some $300 million more to train unemployed Canadians. Surely this is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Immigration just pointed to the extra $300 million that his government allocated for training. The reality is that it is not enough to deal with the problems out there today.

In the Thunder Bay area office, there are at least 687 laid-off workers who have been identified by CEC as eligible for section 26 funding. There are at least another 200 who are being laid off as we speak.

Is the minister prepared to open up the purse so that these men and women who have decided that they do need training can in fact get access to it, not just for one year but for all three years?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I often hear NDPers in this House calling on us to come clean. Maybe they should come clean with Canadians.

If they remember correctly, last December we increased the premium on UI to do exactly what the member is calling for us to do today and they blasted us; it was terrible to increase UI premiums.

Today he is asking me for more at a time when the UI premium rate is the highest we have known in this country and when workers and business people are trying to remain competitive.

The answer is that we cannot tax people more or increase the deficit or increase the UI premium rate because I think people are taxed enough.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about being selective and the fact that it will be possible to be selective with these new constraints on training.

Does the minister think it is being selective when in Windsor it is not going to be possible for a single extra person to take training under section 26?

Is it being selective when the people at the Canada Employment Centre say they need $2 million more to cover the desperate needs of people in Windsor?

I ask this minister to get serious and to start doing something for the people of this country.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I know, especially on TV, that the member likes to be selective. Does he want to talk about the $293 million that we will spend on training in Ontario other than under section 26? No, we cannot talk about these other training funds because "this is just taxpayers' money"; of course not.

The reality of the matter is the demand by unemployed workers for further training is there. We have started this UI reform in order to provide that training, and at this point we have to live within our fiscal means. This is what we are able to do. Unless we further increase taxes or increase the deficit, I am afraid we cannot do more.

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Last week President Bush declared that he was trying to negotiate a free trade agreement with Chile. Does Canada intend to participate?

[*English*]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, Canada has no intention of negotiating a free trade agreement with Chile.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The reason given for sitting at the table with Mexico was to protect Canada's interests. Why then is it not important to protect Canada's interests in this particular instance?

Why is the danger of the United States signing a series of bilateral trade agreements from which Canada would be excluded and which was the reason we sat down with the Mexicans not a factor now that that series of free trade agreements is in fact becoming a reality?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the negotiations with Mexico were something that were on the burner. The negotiations if ever with Chile are something that are a long, long way down the road and we do not need to consider them at the present time.

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[*Translation*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. We were horrified by the repression and violence in Thailand. Why did Canada, which claims to defend human rights, approve an increase in direct aid and arms and munitions exports to the military regime in Thailand during the past 14 months?

[*English*]

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I know we all deplore and were saddened by the violence that took place over the weekend in Bangkok.

• (1450)

I would like to advise my hon. colleague that the Secretary of State for External Affairs issued a statement yesterday deploring that violence and asking for all involved to exercise restraint. Upon her instructions today, she called in the Ambassador of Thailand in Canada again expressing to him the need to exercise restraint and called upon all parties to find a way of dealing with this very tragic problem.

Our concerns at this point obviously are to see a cessation of the violence and ensure the safety of all Canadians in Thailand. I am pleased to say from our information at this point that all Canadians are safe.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the statement issued yesterday by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, she said: "Canada supports the movement toward increased democratization in Thailand".

Apparently this support for democratization included an increase in aid to a repressive regime and an approval for Canadian arms, tank parts and ammunition which could have been used to oppress those civilians last Sunday night.

Will the minister and the government stop this hypocrisy, stop the export of arms and cut off aid to Thailand until there is a restoration of democracy in that poor country?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, at this point in time it is important to assess the over-all situation in Thailand. To take any precipitous or unilateral action I do not think would be helpful. We will be continuing to consult with our allies.

I might just remind my hon. colleague that we have a modest development program with Thailand. The major focus of that program is on development of democratic institutions, support for universities in Thailand, and support in the fight of the drug war.

One has to look at this issue in its over-all context and find ways to encourage the democratization of Thailand and a peaceful situation.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I could just advise the House that because of the condolences with respect to the Nova Scotia miners Question Period will extend to 3.10.

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MULTICULTURALISM

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship.

Yesterday many elder citizens of Chinese origin rallied on Parliament Hill to raise the question of redress now, and several of them are in the gallery.

Mr. Jackman, age 91, paid the racist Chinese head tax to come to Canada in 1918. Mrs. Lee, a widow, endured terrible hardships in China and with her sons was separated from her husband for 31 years because of the Chinese Exclusion Act. They and many supporters want redress now for this injustice, before they die.

When will the government on behalf of all Canadians acknowledge the injustices of the Chinese head tax and the exclusion act and negotiate appropriate redress?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I was not here to meet the group yesterday, but hopefully I can meet some of them after Question Period today.

I have indeed met on numerous occasions with the Chinese Canadian National Council Redress Committee, as well as the National Congress of Chinese Canadians and other individuals, and many others representing Canadians of Italian origin, Ukrainian Canadians, Jewish Canadians, NACOI and indeed the Canadian German Congress.

I attempted to put forward some ideas that I thought would be helpful for us to best symbolize the act of discrimination which is a very dark day upon all of us. I have had those meetings. I have now prepared a report which the government is considering.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the minister's effort and hope that there will be action on this as soon as possible.

Japanese Canadians who also support redress for the Chinese head tax are very saddened by the government's betrayal of its redress promise to them to establish the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

In order to show good faith, will the minister persuade the government to proclaim Bill C-63, which has not even been proclaimed? Will he also facilitate the allocation of $2 million annually to begin establishing a Canadian race relations foundation even if the capital amount that was promised is not possible at this time? Let us show faith and get started with this race relations foundation.

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, four years ago when I became the minister responsible for multiculturalism I indeed made this the highest priority, fighting racism, racial discrimination, and bringing forward a program on integration and equality.

I am as fully committed to the establishment of a race relations foundation as I was there in Ottawa when we announced the opening of the new information centre at the Canada Police College. It was decided not to proclaim it in this current fiscal year in the budget announced by the finance minister. Of course we all completely agreed that the budgetary constraints must be respected.

Whether more can be done within my established budget, I am always looking for ideas that could be helpful to make sure that we do all we can at this particular time in our history.

* * *

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, freedom of speech must not be restricted or channelled in a free and democratic society.

The recent calls for spending limits and two umbrella committees in our referendum legislation are calls for controls and limits on our most fundamental freedom. These suggestions are élitist and patronizing.

Given that the referendum bill is being fast-tracked through the House—

Some hon. members: Order, order.

Mr. Speaker: I listened to the question and of course hesitated to interrupt the hon. member. The bill is before the House and I think that is anticipating an order of the day.

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[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, who is passing through Ottawa on his constitutional tour. Will the minister be able to make good on his commitment to table formal offers for Quebec by May 31?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could answer this question when the hon. member's leader is back in the House.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the minister may be pleased to hear that my leader is in Montreal, at the request of the Crown, to help one of his colleagues. My question is quite straightforward. Will the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs be able to table formal offers for Quebec by May 31, as promised?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, May 31 remains the target date for the group I have the honour to chair.

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MULTICULTURALISM

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. From 1885 to 1923, a head tax was imposed, followed by an exclusion act specifically targeted to the Chinese until 1947. Will the government act now to compensate the victims of this form of institutionalized racism?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, we have already been able to meet a number of people representing the Chinese-Canadian community and probably other communities. As I said in the other official language, I have already submitted a report which the government is now examining.

We are all aware of these events which took place in the past. Such activities are abhorrent to all of us, and they are nothing to be proud of. Today, we are working all out to gain a better understanding of what happened in the past, and I intend to watch very closely whatever can be done in this respect.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I did not expect a specific answer. I am going to try again.

There are elderly head taxpayers in Ottawa today, very close to us right now as I speak. They are here to urge the government to redress a wrong committed against them because of their race.

Specifically, once again, will the minister formally apologize to Chinese Canadians for this blight on our history and announce a redress package today? Or, is his government interested in redress as a tool for partisan, political gain?

• (1500)

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I deeply appreciate the manner in which the elders in particular have brought forward their feelings and the strength of the feelings they brought forward.

I myself have met such a head taxpayer from Montreal, Mr. James Wing. I am not sure if Mr. Wing is in the gallery, but it is a touching experience to have him show you the yellowed piece of head tax paper.

One could imagine with all the efforts we are putting in to fight discrimination that we will certainly try to do all we can to erase this dark day from our history.

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GRAIN AND OILSEEDS

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Last week the prairie wheat pools made a proposal to the Prime Minister and to the government asking the government to negotiate an interim grain trade agreement pending the completion of a successful Uruguay round at the GATT. This proposal would provide a cease-fire with no escalation of the grain wars between

the United States and the European Community which have been so destructive to Canadian farmers.

Does the government support this proposal by the wheat pools? Will the government be proposing it to the European Community and to the United States to make sure there is not an escalation in the grain trade wars?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the hon. member is aware, at the start of the Uruguay round at Punta del Este there was a proposal put forward and supported by Canada for a standstill and a cease-fire in the trade war while the MTN was negotiated.

We have consistently asked and supported other trading countries such as the Cairns Group in requesting a standstill while the negotiations take place. At this point we have not been successful, but that does not mean we will not continue our efforts.

This is not new to the government. We have been involved in it for the last six years.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the United States export enhancement program has cost Canadian grain producers $1.8 billion over the last five years. If there is no agreement reached in the Uruguay round of negotiations by June of this year, the United States plans to expand its export enhancement program by $1 billion to $2 billion in the next crop year.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture what action the government is going to take, whether the Prime Minister is going to be raising this matter and taking action with the President of the United States in his meetings tomorrow and with the European Community so that we do not have a violent escalation of the export enhancement program and the destruction of thousands of Canadian grain and oilseeds producers and farmers.

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right in referring to the U.S. farm bill as putting another billion dollars forward in export enhancement. That is for the 1994 year.

We hope, as other countries involved in the MTN, to have successfully concluded an international agreement under the MTN that will bring about a cessation to the trade distorting subsidies by both the European Community and the United States, which are not only harming Canadian agriculture but agriculture around the world, particularly agriculture in developing nations.

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SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Forestry.

Last Friday's decision by the Bush administration to impose a tariff on Canadian softwood exports is in reality a grab for Canada's raw logs.

Can the minister assure Canadians that the Prime Minister will tell President Bush that Canadian raw logs are not going to be negotiated away as we all try to resolve this dispute?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think I can give my hon. friend this assurance simply because of the fact that there are no materials either in British Columbia, which has been targeted for a special tax to make up for log exports, or in the rest of the country. We just simply do not have any surplus materials to export.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, our staff has just spoken with commerce department officials who say that the decision as to whether the dispute settlement mechanism applies to this dispute is still under review. They have indicated that the department may have a different position when the Prime Minister meets with President Bush.

I wonder if the minister could tell this House whether they actually have a decision from the United States yet as to whether it recognizes the dispute settlement mechanism to try and resolve this dispute. Yes or no.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party wants to do away with the free trade deal. If we did this there would not be a question, we would be stuck with the imposition of a countervail duty on our lumber.

I can tell my hon. friend that the MOU is a part of the free trade agreement and we have launched an appeal to the bi-national panel which will eventually resolve this problem for us under the free trade deal.

JOB TRAINING

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In Windsor, Ontario, and in many other communities across Canada the funds set aside this year under section 26 of the Unemployment Insurance Act for training of people who pay fees for their courses has already been used up, although there are still some eight months to go this current year.

In spite of the answers the minister has given already to questions on this subject, I want to give him another chance and ask him if he is going to take a fresh look at this matter. Will he put aside his partisan responses and take a fresh look at this matter and see what he can do to provide the funds required for this type of training. If he is serious about training, why can he not give that constructive answer now?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about Windsor. In the Windsor area in 1990–91 the department spent on training under the regular program, under SARS, SEED, and fee–payer, section 25, section 26, a little over $8 million to train these people in Windsor. The next year this went up to over $11 million and I contemplate that we will spend even more in this fiscal year.

If the hon. member wants to test our resolve to train more unemployed Canadians by the amount of money we spend for training, the answer is yes, definitely. We have increased the training of UI recipients throughout the country by $300 million this year, and that means there will be more training, not less.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister.

In Windsor, Ontario, unemployment has gone up from 10.3 per cent in February to 12.8 per cent in April. This is an indication that whatever the government is doing, so far it has simply not been enough.

The fact of the matter is that for people paying fees for their courses, the amount of money he has provided this year under section 26, while it has increased, has already been used up. Second, under the section 26 portion for project–based training, his department has actually reduced the amount of money by 34 per cent.

You cannot say you are going to increase funds and reduce that aspect by 34 per cent. I ask the minister if he will take another look at the matter and, in spite of his rhetoric, put it aside and do something constructive for the unemployed people in Windsor and across Canada.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the member should talk to his caucus. I have already had a discussion with another member from his caucus, the member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon. Instead of standing up and grandstanding in the House, he came to see me. He had problems with workers in Thunder Bay who had received a commitment from CEC and we have dealt with them.

I cannot on the floor of the House commit to the hon. member that I will increase the funding in the Windsor area by *x* dollars. What I can tell him is that with the funds that we have targeted to Ontario, in order to do more and not less we will try to be as helpful as we can.

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CITY OF TORONTO

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): My question is again for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

This government has consistently ignored the economic plight and woes of metropolitan Toronto, which used to be a vibrant economic engine for the Canadian economy.

• (1510)

Given that a new metropolitan government study indicates that as of last month 640 Torontonians lost their jobs through reduced operations of businesses, 48 through partial closures and 3,200 through complete closures of Toronto firms, what plans does this government have to put Torontonians back to work and restart the Toronto economic engine?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member pays attention to the budget which my friend, the

Minister of Finance, laid before this House, he will find measures in that budget to help small business and the manufacturing sector do better in this economy.

As for other measures, we have increased spending in a very substantial way in Ontario on training with the provincial government in order to yield the kind of work force that is required in order for this economy to do better and keep on progressing.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C–81, an act to provide for referenda on the Constitution of Canada, be now read a second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): At the midday break, the hon. member for York West had finished his speech. We now proceed to the period for questions and comments.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member gave us a brilliant speech, but like us, he does not believe the government's arguments about the Charter of Rights not allowing spending controls and umbrella committees.

Would the hon. member be prepared to accept the use of the notwithstanding clause under the circumstances?

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I believe it is prudent to keep all options possible. But I do not think that we should start from that premise necessarily because what I pointed out in my intervention in the House this morning was that Canadians are very concerned with the fact that there is no ceiling currently in the proposed referendum legislation and that people will measure the fairness variable of any national referendum by how well we try to control the financial expenditures of individuals, corporations and other organizations in a national referendum.

That is why the Leader of the Official Opposition and our House leader this morning put on the table a very, very important principle, that while we favour the principle of a national referendum, while we support the concept of the legislation that was put before the Chamber last week, we also believe that it is absolutely vital in a number of areas to amend the legislation so that we have a national referendum which can be a powerful tool with which to bless any constitutional reform. That piece of legislation is in need of some radical restructuring.

One of those areas clearly is in the whole question of placing a ceiling on what Canadians can spend. It is our hope that the government House leader and the parliamentary secretary and indeed the Prime Minister, who have promised a spirit of non–partisanship and consultation, will see fit to come at the committee stage and put some water in their referendum wine as tabled on Friday so that we may have a referendum that truly will be acceptable to the vast majority of Canadians which currently, unfortunately, it is not.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech of my hon. friend opposite. He touched on this subject but he did not elaborate on it in his speech although others speakers from his party have elaborated on it. It relates to the question of a referendum having majorities in four regions of the country, which I understand is perhaps the official position of his party.

I reminded the hon. member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce that the Beaudoin–Edwards committee had recommended such a venture but that it had been rejected outright by at least two provinces and perhaps others. With the unanimity formula of changing the Constitution, any aspect of the amending formula itself was thus rendered inoperative.

I wonder if the hon. member could elaborate a bit on the Liberal Party position with regard to regional majorities and give us his own personal observations as to whether that is still a realistic policy, given that the provinces hold to the view that provincial considerations, rather than regional, should prevail in the Canada of today.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, when I advocated earlier today that another area needs modification, that was essentially in advocating a double majority.

We on this side of the House, despite the good work by my hon. friend who was the co–chair of one of the two committees that he alluded to, and despite the complications of the amending formula, believe that a national majority, complemented by a majority in four regions of this country—the west, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada—would be a win–win situation and would preclude as far as possible any Canadians or provinces within one of those predescribed regions from feeling that a constitutional arrangement has been forced upon them by the rest of the country, despite that one region perhaps having reservations with the over–all package or with one particular element of that package.

Thus, in order to try to avoid any regional aspirations as being shut down by other Canadians or for some people to suggest in the patriation of the Constitution in 1982 that somehow Quebec was left out despite the fact that it was a sovereignist government that was negotiating with the national government, and despite the fact that the existing Prime Minister was a big cheerleader of the 1982 constitutional deal, this double majority would avoid those feelings of alienation or being left out of the constitutional arrangement.

What we are suggesting is that this mechanism would certainly improve from the procedural viewpoint the feeling that we have incorporated all Canadians and that we have not played the politics of exclusion and have pressured one region against the other, but that we are seeking a complementary double majority so that this country may be strengthened by this national referendum and that once and for all, in a successful and united way, we can put the Constitution behind us and address the economic challenges.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, we are very interested obviously in ensuring that all of the regions, western Canada, as well as other regions, have a voice when it comes to a referendum if that is the way we go.

Is my hon. friend saying that it would be in his best interest, in terms of the country, to ensure that in the event of a referendum, western Canada, British Columbia, the Yukon, Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada would all have to pass a majority in order to be interpreted as a success?

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, what I put forward today with all sincerity was a formula that I believe would work better than simply having a national majority. Some members in the House advocate that British Columbia ought to be a region in itself. Some advocate that the two territories should be another region. I suppose we can have those debates without any final resolution.

I am trying also to inject a dose of practicality into it. We may be in a national referendum this summer or early fall.

• (1520)

What we are attempting to do is try to avoid the Meech Lake process that not only failed many Canadians in the substance but failed miserably in the process. Canadians felt that they were disenfranchised by a constitution they thought they owned, given that is the premier law of this land. We are saying that there happens to be 27 million shareholders of this public company called Canada and we should no long rely simply on the chairman of the board or the chief executive officer or the board of directors to have a strong voice. We are suggesting it is time for all Canadians to have that voice. Putting in a prerequisite for a double majority as defined by those four regions would further solidify the feeling of unity and belonging to this country. It is certainly far superior than having 50 plus one pass the post.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to have the opportunity to intervene in this debate concerning the legislation which would put in place the regime for a referendum, should one be called for.

This flows from the recommendations of the joint committee, which I had the privilege of co–chairing last year, and the one co–chaired by my hon. colleague for Winnipeg South and Senator Beaudoin which reported at the end of February. It is a useful piece of machinery to have on the shelf, should the need arise, to establish a national consensus.

I am happy to observe that there appears to be a growing confidence among Canadians that the current process of constitutional renewal will reach a successful conclusion. After many months of debate, open discussion and private reflection there is good reason to

believe that Canada's future is brighter than that of yesterday. Tomorrow we will continue our steady advance toward achieving true and lasting constitutional reconciliation within the Canadian family.

[*Translation*]

We have many reasons to be optimistic. On several issues, positions have become more flexible. Important agreements have been negotiated. Increasingly, the meetings and discussions across the country in recent weeks have taken place in a true spirit of compromise. Our ultimate goal is a renewed federation in which all Canadians can feel at home. Every step that we take in that direction is another reason to stay together. Of course, we would all prefer the debate about the Canadian Constitution to be settled quickly and to stop taking so much energy.

Other priorities, like our economic growth and social development, also demand our attention. But we cannot really devote ourselves to these urgent matters until the issue of our national unity is resolved.

The constitutional process that we are now going through is starting to bear fruit; not dramatically, but gradually, some would say too slowly, but steadily, as Canadians make the effort to understand one another better and discover how much they have in common.

Nevertheless, we should not fall back into naive optimism. We must keep on working. We must maintain this feeling of urgency and the sense of commitment that made it possible for us to achieve these results.

The multilateral constitutional process in which we are engaged began only a few weeks ago. On March 12, in Ottawa, my hon. colleague, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, announced that the federal, provincial and territorial governments as well as the other national native associations had agreed to begin a new series of discussions. The purpose of this process was to prepare a package of constitutional amendments that could be presented to Canada as the result of consensus among all parties.

The representatives of the parties involved in these negotiations agreed on an optimum timetable that provides for possible agreement by the end of May. Since then, in order to succeed, the participants in the multilateral process have met almost every week, both at the ministerial and at the senior official levels.

No effort has been spared to ensure the success of this process and the results of each meeting have helped forge the consensus that Canadians want and deserve.

[*English*]

During the month of April ministers and the four national aboriginal leaders met in Halifax, Ottawa and Edmonton. This month they have already met twice, in Saint John and Vancouver, and they will be meeting this week in Montreal.

Next week participants will be meeting virtually the entire week in Toronto to build on the considerable progress which they have already made. Throughout this multilateral process, all parties have understood quite clearly that nothing will be etched in stone until the whole package has been completed.

The constitutional affairs minister has repeatedly stated that some decisions can only be made by first ministers, and that in accordance with Canada's constitutional amending formula, nothing is final until it has been approved by Parliament and the requisite number of provincial legislatures. Nevertheless, the tone of these meetings has been positive.

Issues have been tackled slowly but surely and there has been remarkable consensus in some of the most contentious areas. Participants in the multilateral constitutional process have demonstrated a genuine willingness to compromise and to accommodate each other's differences and this spirit bodes well for the successful conclusion of the Canada round.

I will review some of the progress which has been made. While most decisions are comparable to agreements in principle, they still provide a measure of difficult issues which have been tackled and the areas of consensus which have been forged. For example, ministers agreed in Halifax to recommend to their respective governments the entrenchment of the inherent right of aboriginal peoples to self-government within the context of the Canadian state.

At that same meeting there was also agreement that the Senate should be elected, that it should not be a confidence chamber and that Senate elections should be

for fixed terms. In Edmonton there was further discussion on the Senate and on aboriginal issues.

In addition, ministers and aboriginal leaders reached broad agreement on the principles of a social and economic union. There was a clear preference for returning to the earlier rules for giving provincial status to the existing territories. Those rules had allowed the decision to be made by a territory and the Parliament of Canada. The range of options on the Constitution's amending formula is being narrowed in order to meet the needs of all parties, including the concerns of Quebec.

Another important area of agreement in Edmonton concerned the Supreme Court. Ministers and aboriginal leaders agreed to recommend the entrenchment of the Supreme Court's composition, including three judges from the civil law tradition of Quebec, and on the principle of provincial participation in the appointment process.

Where provincial powers might be transferred to the federal government, there would be compensation. On spending power, there was agreement to adopt the language of Meech Lake with respect to reasonable compensation if they choose not to participate in national shared cost programs provided they undertake a program or initiative compatible with the national objective.

In May at the Saint John meeting there was further discussion on the Senate. Ministers and aboriginal leaders dealt with the Senate's power to ratify appointments. Ratification of senior appoints such as the heads of the CBC and CRTC would be spelled out through amendments to the laws under which they were established.

There was unanimous agreement that the Senate should reflect groups now under-represented in our political system. In Saint John there was agreement on 90 per cent of the legal language on the social and economic union.

• (1530)

There was discussion of legislative interdelegation with an agreement in principle to allow the federal government to delegate some of its power to make laws in a particular field to a province and vice versa.

Most recently in Vancouver ministers agreed to recommend the creation of a new order of government to the first ministers. They agreed that the inherent right would be stated in a new proposed subsection of 35(1) and that this inherent right would exist within Canada.

The various agreements in principle and areas of consensus which I have just cited are significant steps forward. While I must re-emphasize that all participants in the multilateral constitutional process want to review these issues in the context of the complete package, nevertheless they show that real progress is being made.

As we move on to the final meetings in the multilateral process, Canadians have good reason to be confident about their future. For many issues a working consensus has developed on how to resolve questions that not too long ago seemed to defy solution.

[*Translation*]

Of course, we all want Quebec to return to the negotiating table. Recently, we have all had encouraging signals from the Government of Quebec. Premier Bourassa visited several provinces where he had bilateral discussions with his counterparts. This evening, the Government of Quebec will host a reception for participants at the multilateral meeting to be held in Montreal on May 20, 21 and 22.

I believe that these are very positive signs. The Government of Canada will spare no effort so that all participants can consider the results of this Canada round with satisfaction and pride in the work done. If, despite all this progress, the process could not result in full agreement, the federal government will go on to the next step, which would be made possible with this bill that we are considering today.

We would consult all Canadians in a national referendum. This referendum would be fair and give everyone an opportunity to express their opinion. It would be the culmination of the most extensive consultation exercise ever undertaken by a Canadian government.

This bill is a prudent precaution. I urge all hon. members to give it their full support.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member who just stated his support for Bill C-81, a bill that will enable the federal government to prepare for and hold a Canadian or almost Canadian referendum, since we are not sure whether this referendum will be held in all provinces, or

in all provinces except Quebec. It remains to be determined by our government.

I have the following question for the hon. member: Is he aware of the following statement by Mr. Roch LaSalle, made on January 31, 1979, in referring to the referendum legislation tabled in the House in 1979: "This national referendum bill is in my opinion nothing more than a political gadget. The Prime Minister, in the wake of this fiasco and monumental failure on the political and economic fronts, has designed this tool to enhance his image as the great saviour of Confederation".

I wonder whether the Conservative government endorsed this criticism. That year's *Hansard* is full of similar statements by Ms. Flora McDonald and the right hon. Joe Clark. They all said it was a monumental mistake.

In what way, therefore, is this referendum bill different? How is it different this time? The Conservatives are in power. They presented the same bill, I think, after having consulted Bill C-9, the old Liberal bill. How do these two bills differ?

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. He was asking what the difference is between the situation in January 1979 and the present situation and why statements by a former minister and the then Leader of the Opposition should reflect a situation different from that in which we find ourselves today.

He was the Leader of the Opposition in January 1979.

The situation is that we have had 13 years of rather chequered history pass between us since that time. This bill before us today is largely a technicality. The genuine software of any referendum initiative that is to be taken will be contained in the question itself. The member's own party acknowledges that through its not entirely unreasonable demands in that quarter.

The situation between 1979 and today has changed rather drastically. The mechanics of the bill can remain the same but the situation is very different.

We have had a Quebec referendum in the interim and we have had the remarkable situation of all the Quebec members of Parliament, including the Hon. Roch LaSalle, voting for Quebec's involvement in the Canadian constitution and for the patriation of the constitution and, if I am not mistaken, all the members of the Quebec National Assembly voting against it.

It cannot truly be said that Quebec had subscribed to the 1982 constitution.

Criticisms made of an initiative in 1979 or with an initiative in 1992 often do not relate to the mechanics of the bill, which is what I believe we are examining, the principle and the mechanics of the bill today, but rather the use to which that would be put.

If I could go right back in conclusion to the preamble to the hon. member's question, I can only conclude that he does not believe that the people of Canada ought to be consulted on this question or that the government should avail itself, that this House should avail itself, of the opportunity to put the question should that later be desired.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest what he thinks of a statement made by Senator Gérald Beaudoin, with whom he co-chaired a certain committee; the statement, in a document on the constitutional aspects of the referendum is to the effect that electing a majority of *péquiste* members of Parliament in Ottawa for Quebec would have the same value as a referendum.

In view of this statement, I would like to know if the hon. member agrees with his co-chairman's statement which means that all we need is an election to find out what Canadians, and especially Quebecers, think?

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the quotation that my hon. friend has cited. I have immense respect for Senator Beaudoin's capacity on questions of constitutional law, as I think do most if not all Canadians.

I would only respond by saying that the way to resolve our constitutional dilemma is not by having an election. It would be probably the last issue that might be addressed if an election were called today and we would be no closer to solving our constitutional problems.

• (1540)

There will be an election by November 21, 1993. It is then that those issues can be addressed. In the meantime, if there is a need to identify a national consensus on constitutional issues, then the bill before us, Bill C-81, will provide the means of establishing that consensus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against this bill. To begin with, I would like to say that in principle, I am not against consulting the Canadian people, I am not opposed to using a referendum to consult the residents of a city or town or province in Canada. As was already said, it is something like the GST. We are not against taxes as such, but the GST is not the right tax at the right time and the way it is collected is not fair. We can say the same thing about this referendum. We are not even sure that it will be held all across Canada, because the government House leader said that it might not be held in all provinces. This bill is not quite clear and we do not know exactly what we will vote on.

I think this bill is a fraud. It is expensive and it is also very provocative for the first ministers and even for native people. It is deceptive because it does not allow having yes and no camps as we had in the Quebec referendum in 1980. Furthermore, there is no spending ceiling. If I remember correctly, the federal government spent more than $17 million in 1980 to win majority support. This bill sets no spending limit. There is a symbolic limit, if you will, but no real limit in that millions of dollars can be spent.

As for what constitutes a majority, will it be a double majority or a single majority? No one knows. Lysiane Gagnon, who I think is an excellent columnist, wrote a report in *La Presse* of April 4, 1992 in which she said: "Besides the issue of interpreting the results, which is an insoluble problem" —she is talking about a Canada-wide referendum —"with a single majority, Quebec's vote would be drowned out; with a double majority, the experience of the 1942 plebiscite is likely to be repeated; with a quadruple majority (meaning a regional majority in the West, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic), the risk of fragmentation increases. If the native people are included, there could even be five majorities". Finally, Ms. Gagnon asks how the federal government could override the will of a whole region. If the native people voted against, would that mean the referendum would fail? I think that is an excellent question raised by Lysiane Gagnon in *La Presse*.

There is not only the issue of a double majority. There is also the question of free air time proposed by the federal government. They want to give the yes and no sides air time on television and radio and space in the newspapers as well, I suppose, I don't know, but they will give enough air time, probably on the CBC, for both sides to express themselves. But how will they choose the yes and no supporters, especially the no supporters? Will they choose them from the Reform Party? From the Bloc Québécois? Will they choose other spokespersons? Who will choose whom?

If there is no real spending limit, one may ask how one can really have a fair, even-handed, open referendum. In fact, those who can give more money can buy more advertising. Even federal MPs can heavily influence a referendum because I think they have considerable resources just by virtue of being members of Parliament.

But something interests me more than that: Quebec has already said that is does not want to negotiate as one among eleven. But with a referendum, are we not starting to negotiate as one among 27 million? That is important, because I find that with a referendum—yes, the general public should be consulted. Most of the time, there is some polarization between those who are for and against the question. But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that is not the case here. The answer to our constitutional problems cannot be summarized in a yes or a no vote.

Excuse me, but that is so, unless you want to trivialize the question so much that it becomes meaningless. Are you for Canada? Are you for Quebec? It makes me think of Yvon Deschamps who said that what Quebecers want is a strong Quebec in a united Canada. That is true, but it is trite. It does not solve the constitutional problem. And how much will it cost? One million? No. Ten million? No. We will spend $108 million for this kind of super opinion poll that will decide what? It will settle nothing. I think that it is a mistake to propose a referendum at this

time, because besides being costly and not fair to all, it is provocative. How can a referendum be provocative?

I will tell you that the way I see this bill and the way it was presented by the minister, it was provocative. How can I say such a thing? It is very easy. He says that there cannot be real spending limits or umbrella committees for the yes and no sides because there would surely be court cases —yes, lawsuits —under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But when a journalist —I think it was Mr. Fraser of *The Globe and Mail* —said, "Did you think of maybe using the notwithstanding clause?", the government House leader said, "Yeah, but you know that Canadians take a dim view of it." They may not like it, but the notwithstanding clause could have been used.

Look at the question. If the referendum is not held all across Canada, if it is held in the other provinces but not in Quebec, it will set a double standard. It means that Quebecers will be treated as second-class citizens. It would mean that Quebecers have no say in the matter. You cannot deal with Canada-wide issues, because the expression Canada-wide does not include Quebec.

• (1550)

If there was a suit based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, this would be a good opportunity for people from Quebec or elsewhere to say: Wait a minute. We would like Quebec to give its opinion on this.

If the government decides to hold a Canada-wide referendum without a double majority, will this help the constitutional cause? Will it help solve the issue? I do not think so. I think it will be more provocative for the Prime Minister and the aboriginal groups, but especially for the Prime Minister, because instead of doing his job and trying to make offers to Quebec, he will simply say: Listen, you do not trust us; therefore, we will wait until the referendum is over.

In my opinion, that is the mistake. I want to compel the Prime Minister of Canada and the provincial premiers to make offers to Quebec and to the rest of the country to really do their job, not at a cost of $108 million, but just do the job for which they were elected. It seems to me that once elected, this government decided that it could throw money at the problem; spend, spend and spend even more.

I can tell you about the Spicer commission. I can tell you about Beaudoin-Edwards. I can tell you about the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee. As a member of that committee, I was proud to work on a project in which we proposed what we saw as solutions. A referendum was not one of our first solutions. Mr. Speaker, if you read our recommendations, you will see that a referendum was one of the last recommendations made. There is a reason for this. It is because the present constitutional problem is not the fact that Quebec negotiates with 27 million Canadians, nor the fact that it negotiates with 11 people, but the fact that Quebec receives offers concerning which Bill 150 can be amended to enable us to vote on these offers, at which time the referendum on sovereignty would become null and void if we accept the federal offers.

But do not tell me that we will get federal offers in the context of a Canada-wide referendum. This is no place to make federal offers, and you know that. If we hold a Canada-wide referendum, we will ask questions on the division of powers. The division of powers is what Quebec is interested in. I am not talking of something like asymmetry; we have to define the division of powers.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that when we get to the division of powers, you will see that the rest of the country is not as generous as you may think and that this referendum is more than provocative. People will find a reason to vote against Quebec, not necessarily because they are against the idea of giving more powers; in fact, I found it rather amusing to watch the New Democrat leaders of Ontario, B.C., Saskatchewan, and even Yukon say that there will more powers to the provinces. This is a tendency that will pick up momentum, because it costs less, it is less centralizing and people are much more responsible with the monies and the programs that are theirs.

It is not on a technicality that I oppose this bill. My opposition is based on common sense.

We will have to take our responsibilities. As a Quebecer and a Montrealer, I know that the constitutional issue has been zigzagging a lot: the aboriginal groups have been clear, then not so clear, and then not clear at all. We cannot ask a question and call upon the ordinary Canadians to do our job. I support the idea of a referendum in principle. In the case of a municipality, before it undertakes a megaproject, yes. Why? Because

people can tell whether they are in favour or not of such expenses by simply answering yes or no.

Mr. Speaker, do you remember the last referendum held in Canada, more specifically in Quebec? I am talking about the latest referendum, not the one held in 1980? My friend from the Bloc Quebecois might remember the last referendum held in Quebec. I am referring to the referendum in the town of Rosemère. People had to answer yes or no to the question: Are you for or against bilingualism for our town? That was a clear question. People voted in favour of bilingualism. It is to their credit. But this will not happen with a Canada-wide referendum that is rigged, that offers no protection to people disagree, and that is provocative. Even so, are we stupid enough in this House to believe that a Clyde Wells or a Gary Filmon can be persuaded to vote in favour of this referendum because 49, 51 or 60 per cent of their population agrees? No, those premiers will do their job; they will vote for or against, depending on what they themselves believe. I think that the provincial ministers will find this very provocative. In fact, the premier of Saskatchewan did not appreciate the fact that the federal government wants to usurp his responsibilities through a referendum.

In 1979, the Liberals had a good cause. They wanted the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to be passed. The Canadian population was rather in favour of Mr. Trudeau's idea, the Prime Minister at the time, of a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There was some consensus in the country. I believe it is a mistake for the Liberals and Conservatives to support this referendum today as a consultation tool, as it may destroy our country rather than make it stronger.

In the course of this debate, I have tried to be non-partisan, to truly see the problem as a Quebecer. I have tried to see the issue of a referendum by looking at what happened when other national referenda were held.

In conclusion, I would like to mention what happened on those two other occasions when a Canada-wide referendum was held. There was one in 1898. It dealth with prohibition and the sale of alcoholic beverages. What was the outcome? Forty-four per cent of the Canadian population participated in the exercise. Fifty-one per cent, a sober majority, gave their support. However, in Quebec, 83 per cent of those who voted were against the idea.

Let us now turn to the plebiscite of 1942 on the issue of conscription. Mackenzie King used to say that this was not a binding process. He said that the government would not send Canadians to war. It was just a survey. Well, we hear the same thing today. This is not a binding process. Talk to those who were sent to the front and you will see that it was truly a binding process.

• (1600)

Mr. Speaker, 70 per cent of Canadians were in favour of conscription, while 72 per cent of Quebecers opposed such a measure. The mayor of Montreal—we talk a lot about the mayors of Montreal these days—even went to jail because he opposed the idea. He went to jail because he felt betrayed by Mackenzie King. It is unfortunate that we don't have mayors like him anymore.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated the comments my colleague the hon. member for Chambly made about the Canadian referendum process. If I understood him correctly, he said he was against a Canada-wide referendum.

I would like to ask him if the same would apply to the Quebec referendum? If not, what is the difference between these two referenda?

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it will be the same in Quebec as in Canada because I think that the choice is clear in Quebec, very clear indeed. I would like the Quebec referendum to be twofold and ask, first, do you approve the federal proposals, if any, yes or no? Then, if the answer to the first question is no: Are you for the independence of Quebec, yes or no?

If the public response to the first question were: "Yes, we approve them. We are not at all happy. This is a partial victory, a temporary benefit, but we agree." Then, I think that a referendum on sovereignty would become useless. We would not need one. However, the Prime Minister, the natives, the native groups and we, in this House, must take a non-partisan look at the work we are doing and try to get, if at all possible, the premiers to approve the Beaudoin-Dobbie recommendations instead of putting the decision-making process on the back of the public at large.

I am for consultation and, as former president of a consumer protection agency, I could not be against it. However, I disagree with this form of referendum, because I think that it is an extremely expensive sham.

[*English*]

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested to hear what my friend and colleague across the way had to say about the referendum. I was a little bit surprised at some of the things he mentioned. He said, for example, that people will find a pretext for voting against Quebec. It may be the translation that was inaccurate, because I know my friend has been very, very fair and non-partisan in this whole question of national unity.

If that is what he did mean, it is certainly not the impression that I got as we travelled across the country. I felt very much that Canadians wanted to reach out and accommodate Quebec in every possible way they can, and that the idea of tabling legislation for the possibility of a referendum is really a way of the federal government's responding to the "what ifs?", the possibility that there is no other way of bringing the whole country's opinion to bear in a positive manner on this very important issue.

I was also a little surprised to hear the member say that in the referendum there is no provision for people who have a dissident point of view. Again, it may be just a matter of the translation, but I was beginning to wonder if perhaps he was speaking on behalf of another party when he made that point. It tied in to something he had said earlier when he mentioned that he was very concerned about there not being any expenditure limit.

I cannot understand for the life of me why anybody would object to private citizens or the federal government doing everything within their power to try and convince the people of this country to stay together, to keep the country intact.

Why does the member object to private citizens or the Government of Canada's doing everything in their power to keep this country together?

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. Perhaps I got a bad translation because I really feel the government should do all it can to bring this country together.

I believe the way this referendum is presented, the way the bill reads, it will not do that. If we are to do our jobs as members of Parliament, as first ministers, as leaders of the aboriginal groups and First Nations properly, we can get over this difficult period without spending $108 million.

I do not believe this is a question of being against the people of Canada or for the people of Canada. In fact, I would hate to see a question on the ballot of this referendum asking if we are in favour of Canada or against Canada or if we are in favour of Quebec.

I do not know what the question will be but I disagree even more with this legislation in that fundamentally I do not think it is needed at this time. I think it is unduly provocative, $108 million is extremely expensive, and the message I am getting from across the country is that Canadians want us, NDP, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc Quebecois, and Reform to do our jobs.

Our job is not that whenever we get into some difficulty because we perhaps cannot convince quickly enough the first ministers or others to lay it out across the board, across Canada, to give the problem to the Canadian people.

In those provinces where we will have two referenda, what is the percentage that really applies? If we have a referendum with 40 per cent of the population supporting the same question in one province and the federal question has the support of 60 per cent, does that mean the federal question won? What does it mean exactly?

There are a lot of problems here and I am glad I am on side with my party when we say there are fundamental problems that we have to see changed before we can vote for this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I have just heard the hon. member for Chambly say that he and his party would oppose such legislation. I am a little confused here and I would like him to tell me this: When he talks against a Canada-wide referendum and

says he would not vote for such a law, is he speaking for himself or on behalf of his party? I am quite puzzled.

Mr. Edmonston: Mr. Speaker, I will gladly answer my hon. colleague's question. Let me just quote an article from the April 29, 1992, edition of *La Presse* which says: "The NDP refuses to approve the plans for a referendum without first knowing what the wording of the question will be." In the same article, Ms. McLaughlin is also reported as saying, and I share her views on this: "Why put a bill forward if you do not know where you are going?" That is what I was saying. To those who would like to drive a wedge between Ms. McLaughlin and myself or to set us against each other, I will repeat what I said before: Cut the partisanship. This makes a lot of sense. Let us not forget it.

My point is that we would like to see this constitutional issue resolved. That is the basic issue. The way to resolve it is, especially at this time, for the native groups and the Prime Minister to come to an agreement. We in Quebec can hold our own referendum because they say the problem is with us. If that is the case, we will decide for ourselves.

Another thing, it is highly scornful for the people of Quebec and even the people of British Columbia and Alberta who are pretty well in the same boat.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, this has to be pursued. The member says that to justify his position he and his party are in favour of a referendum for Quebec but against a referendum for the rest of the country because if we have a referendum across the rest of the country we will somehow be scorning Quebec.

He quotes his leader and maybe I misunderstood. He spoke about *mépris pour le Québec, les Québécois*. "Mépris" is "scorn". I would like to know whether he is speaking on behalf of his leader when he says that he supports the principle of a referendum for the province of Quebec, yet he does not support the principle of a pan-Canadian referendum. If he does take this position, how can he square that circle? Surely the notion of a referendum in giving the chance to the people to have their say is a notion that is not exclusive to one part of the country but indeed is critical for all parts of the country. I would like him to square that circle because he and his leader are saying two different things.

• (1610)

Mr. Edmonston: I think I can say that pretty well, Mr. Speaker, in one minute. What we are saying essentially is that the provinces have decided that they would like to go the referendum route, certain provinces: British Columbia, I mentioned, which my colleague conveniently or perhaps inconveniently forgot. I mentioned Alberta and I also mentioned that perhaps even Manitoba would like to have hearings before a referendum comes out.

What I am saying is this. There is a timetable for Quebec to decide on federal offers and to decide on sovereignty. Let us get those federal offers up front and maybe a renewed Senate and maybe I hope self-government for aboriginal people. There may be a number of other things, including some administrative agreements between Quebec and Ottawa on power sharing.

Once that is done, let us vote on it. Do you know what, Mr. Speaker, we may as Quebecers not only save Canada but also save Canada $108 million. Maybe that is something that Liberals would not understand.

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate this debate on Bill C-81 with some trepidation. When I was elected back in 1988, and prior to that, I formulated the opinion that as a member of Parliament I was elected first to represent my constituency; second, to make decisions that were in general good for Canada; and third, to make sure I understood those decisions and made on behalf of my constituents. Yet here I am in this House debating the idea of a referendum, something that in principle I have been not comfortable with in my view of Canada.

I look back in history at some of the referendums that have taken place. What I will do is go to a questionnaire that I did in my riding on the issue of the Constitution.

I mailed out some 55,000 questionnaires to my constituents. I asked them their views on the 28 different proposals that were put forth by the government on amending the Constitution. I received quite a number of responses. In those responses people were asked to indicate whether they were either strongly in favour, in favour, opposed, strongly opposed or had no opinion on the question.

On all 28 proposals I would say except for one, there was very strong support for 27 proposals and on the 28th it was 50/50. I put a 29th question in. That question was: Would you be prepared to compromise your position? If you got all those things you agreed with, would you accept all those things you did not agree with? I had a 75 per cent no vote, even though if I looked back at all the questions, I had an overwhelming yes vote.

I am talking about a referendum where I presume the question will be yes or no; do you agree with this, whatever that magic formula or equation is. I look at my constituents who all thought there were a bunch of good deals in there but they would vote no on the whole package. My concern is that I sense that as being very divisive.

We have heard reference in this House to other referendums that have taken place in this country. We can go back to the conscription referendum. There is the argument about was there concurrence in this country. It appears that the majority of those who voted clearly voted yes. However, there is a group saying in this House that there was a significant group who voted no and therefore that particular referendum should have been interpreted on a regional basis. There is an argument that there was a region upset because the balance of Canada overruled them.

What would be different if we had had it done in the reverse in the early forties? We would have had another chunk of Canada upset with the outcome even though they were in the majority because a minority supported it.

I stand here and say that I am not sure I am comfortable with referenda, but I also understand very clearly in my riding, as happened in the rest of Canada, that Canadians want to have an opportunity to input.

Although there have been quite a number of opportunities, I would like to quote a particular line from the Speech from the Throne: "You will be asked to approve enabling legislation to provide for greater participation of Canadian men and women in constitutional change".

I note that this particular bill is entitled "An act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada". This referendum bill is a very specific bill that deals with a very specific subject. We are not talking about general legislation as it might apply to a whole series of questions that could be put to a national referendum.

Since it relates to this particular subject and a debate that many Canadians have wanted to participate in, in spite of my thoughts about the general thrust of a referendum, I plan on supporting this legislation.

Why would I go along with this process? First off, it is clear to me that the Constitution of Canada and the problems that are being caused by this never ending debate must come to an end. One way or another, this debate must end. Hopefully, it ends because we have the federal government, the 10 provincial governments, the two territorial governments, other interested parties, the aboriginal community and whoever else may be covered in this constitutional amendment. Hopefully we have a deal. If we have a deal there may not be a need for a referendum. Would that not be absolutely great? That is what this legislation provides for.

If we have a deal that is accepted across this country, then the government really has a choice of whether to hold a referendum. Personally speaking, if we have this deal across the country I would then argue that there is really no need for a referendum. Members of Parliament are elected to make decisions, therefore let us make them because we have this concurrence across the country.

If we did not have that concurrence, and we have had some debate in this House today about the need for a referendum, could you image what will happen in this country? There is going to be a referendum question in Quebec. There is going to be one in British Columbia and I believe there may be one in Saskatchewan. We will have three provinces for sure and there may be others that will hold a referendum.

If the other seven provincial governments decide in their wisdom that they do not need to hold a referendum but that ratification of the Constitution is dependent upon at least seven provincial governments in this country approving it, it seems to me that the federal government should have the ability to go to those seven provinces and say the other three are holding referendums to approve this package or not to approve this package, as the case may be. It seems to

me the federal government should have the right to consult with the other seven governments.

It is also possible that because of provincial legislation, the three governments that require a referendum will have one, but it could be the same question we put in the other seven provinces so that all Canadians in all 10 provinces and the territories are being asked to answer the same question. That would be an ideal situation. I guess that is part of the option available to us in this particular piece of legislation.

This referendum is not binding on the government. Should the bill pass and ultimately should the question be put to Canadians, it is not binding. Why not? I go back to the question I asked my constituents in which the majority very clearly said they agreed with the individual 28 proposals but objected to the 29th question which asked if they accept the whole package. It seems to me that in parts of this country, whether it is my particular riding east of Toronto or some riding in western or eastern Canada, if they should really get into a debate point and they vote no, even though they like the individual proposals save one, the federal government should certainly have the ability to interpret throughout the land the substance of the debate and then determine whether it agrees with the substance and then take its decision, which is what we were elected to do.

Over and above that, what happens in this referendum? Clearly, the legislation says that the vote must be taken 45 days after the question is approved by both the House of Commons and the Senate. There is a very clear time line on that. The point is that all members in this House will have an opportunity to fully participate in the preparation of the question and deciding whether the question is the right question to put to Canadians.

• (1620)

Between these two houses, the House of Commons and the Senate, I am sure we will come up with a question that Canadians can easily understand, not like some of the questions that we have heard asked in the past. We need to look at some of those questions in the past which have left a lot of doubt as to their actual meaning.

I can even go back to the last major provincial referendum that has certainly had an impact in Canada. The one held in Quebec basically argued the concept of sovereignty association. With all due respect, what did all that mean? I would say that was not a very clear question, at least not in my mind as an observer to that particular debate.

Is there fairness in the system that is being proposed by this bill? I think so. I would probably support some amendments. I may not put them myself, but there is some fairness in this legislation. It requires that three hours of time be given by national broadcasting networks to the question. Those on the yes side and those on the no side would have the time equally split. I am not sure why we would even put that in here.

Why would we force private networks to accept equally, free of charge, participation on this subject? We should not require the CTV, the Global network, the Ontario network or the CBC to give anybody any free time. They can sell it. If they cannot afford to buy the advertising time on television, then they should not have access to television.

There are some spending limits which are very appropriate such as the spending limits of $5,000 or else you have to form a referendum committee. If you form a referendum committee, you have to declare your sources of revenue over $250. It seems to me that that is very appropriate. Some would argue that may not be fair.

I go back again to that last election that I participated in in 1988. There was a group called the Council of Canadians. It started a campaign against free trade. Never did you see or hear how much money it spent or where it got its money from.

Because it did that kind of stuff, there was another group formed called the BCNI, the Business Council on National Issues, which spent money on promoting the yes side of the free trade agreement. I guess my point is whether you are on the yes side or the no side, those groups were able somehow to fund themselves and participate in the debate.

Should the same kind of debate occur this time, it will be compulsory, unlike it was then, for these groups to publicly identify themselves and to identify their sources of money if they spend more than $5,000. That is a degree of fairness that did not exist in 1988 and whether you were on the yes side of the free trade debate in 1988 or the no side, very clearly, it was very difficult to distinguish because not in every ad, not in every article was there a very clear indication of who

these groups and people were and who was paying all these gobs of money for whatever the viewpoint was.

This legislation is going to be very clear. It sets out that if you spend money, you are going to have to identify yourself. The committee that is organized on their behalf will have to do so. That is a very positive step.

The other rules that apply are those that relate to elections. You do not very often, at least in areas I travel, hear complaints about the fact that the elections were not fair, that there was cheating at the ballot box or there was unfair registration of candidates and all of those kind of accusations that may go on in other countries around the world.

At least in Canada the election system by and large is deemed to be a very fair and open process. The majority of the rules that apply to federal elections will apply to this particular debate. That is another degree of fairness that I do not have any problem with.

I have already mentioned the idea of donations and expenses, that these will have to be registered if they are more than $250. They must be reported to the returning officer. The committee that spends this money must have its accounts audited, not unlike a federal election. It must verify all expenses.

All of the surplus revenue either must be returned to the people who have donated it so there is no chance for a personal profit on somebody's part or must be given over to Her Majesty in right, I believe is the term used, so that nobody can personally pocket funds from this particular process.

I see that whole process lending more fairness to it all.

Further, there are differences in all parts of Canada and I do not think anybody would debate that. We come to the whole issue of who asked the question, who answers the question and on what basis.

Imagine the federal government putting out the question and one province deciding that it is not going to support this, rather, it is going to put the resources of its provincial government on to the no side of the campaign. I do not know why that would happen but for argument's sake it could happen.

Whether the legislation was there or not we cannot control provincial governments and their participation in the democratic process, nor do I want us to control that. We have to recognize that Canada is a federation in which there are provinces with specific jurisdictions in certain areas that we cannot interfere with.

When we talk about federal government spending versus provincial government spending, it is wise that this bill does not really say a lot about those two subjects because we have the controls, we have the ability to react if necessary. We also have the ability to go into a particular province if that province or that region of a province decides it does not like the way the process is going and interferes. I support that whole–heartedly.

There are other provinces that require some public hearings to to deal with any amending legislation and it seems to me that this process will not interfere with their hearings. I guess in theory it will not interfere if the province decides to hold hearings at the same time that the federal government is holding its referendum. In the media at least one might be overshadowed by the other.

One has to understand that in order to amend the constitution referendum, this House, the Senate, and at least seven provinces if not 10, depending on the exact amendments, must vote in their respective jurisdictions yes to the particular amendment that is being proposed.

When we have that specific amendment, whether there are hearings or whether there is a referendum or a plebiscite, we cannot lose sight of the fact that governments ultimately must vote on the issue.

The final point I would like to make is the issue of different kinds of governments that we have in this country and the problems that we have faced. We experienced them the last time we had a deal on the Constitution. There were elections held in some of the provinces between the time the accord was ratified by the various premiers and the Prime Minister and the three–year time frame.

Governments changed and in the wisdom of those governments the deal was cancelled. I find it unfortunate that kind of situation occurred but we have to understand that with the multiplicity of government types, the multiplicity of viewpoints that come from those governments, whether they be the socialist views of the Liberal and NDP opposite us or the Conserva-

tive view, there has to be some open option for the government to deal with this very important question.

It is because of the openness required and the many options that we face that I plan on supporting this particular referendum legislation even though in principle I do not think I was elected to deal with referenda. I was elected to make decisions.

Finally, I have heard the point about should we have regional requirements. Should there be a requirement that if a certain portion of Canada votes no and the rest votes yes that it cancels out? If we were in a unitary state one might argue that is a legitimate point of view. This bill is in a sense silent on that because it does not get to the specific question being asked.

When I look at the 185,000 people I represent, I want to know full well that the voice of my constituents is equal in stature to the voice of anyone else in this country.

• (1630)

That is why I am pleased to see this bill is silent on the particular issue of regional voting. When that question is ultimately put forward and when the future of this country is voted on, if it is voted on in a referendum, my constituents want to know that their voice is worth exactly the same as every other voice in Canada.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I followed what the hon. member said with great interest because I understand of course he does see the need for changes. Although he may not propose amendments to this particular bill, he would perhaps support a certain number of changes to it. In all frankness, I appreciate the fact that he made us aware of that today.

I would like to ask him this question. It comes from a study of referenda that was made by Michel David from *Le Soleil* in Quebec City. He said that there is a basic problem with a government which is unpopular hoping to get a mandate from a population which may not be able to differentiate between the question and the government that poses the question. Let me be precise in what I am trying to get at.

With a government that is as unpopular as this Conservative government is right now—it is at about 20 per cent popularity right now, but has been at 11 per cent—there is a great risk that people will vote against the messenger or will vote against specific questions in this referendum mainly because they do not like Brian Mulroney. They do not trust Brian Mulroney; they do not want to see him in office for another term. They would vote against this because Brian Mulroney is unpopular.

Does the hon. member on the government side recognize this problem of shooting the messenger and perhaps killing Quebec and Canada as well? I ask for the same measure of frankness as I have just heard. If he does recognize that, what would he suggest could be done to avoid this possibility?

In a referendum question so that we could have a consensus, what would be a question in a referendum across Canada that could rally everybody in a yes or no response?

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comment about the possibility of people shooting the messenger.

All I would indicate in the first case is that in my constituency when people go to the ballot box they are prepared to make an educated vote. They did so in the last election and I believe they will do so in the future.

Having said that, using the logic of the hon. member, I do not know why Bob Rae's government continues to do all the things it does because it is certainly very unpopular. The New Democrats in Ontario believe the myth that what they are doing is in fact good for the people of Ontario. They are entitled to that view.

I come back to the situation we are in. We were elected to govern. Sometimes governing means making tough decisions. In this case, what we are proceeding to do is to ask a question and Canadians have indicated they want to participate.

If we fall back on the hon. member's logic that because we are unpopular we should not ask the question, in the last public opinion poll the New Democrats were not anymore popular so they should not participate in putting the question together. If you put our two parties together and compare us to the Liberals, we were as unpopular combined as they were so they should not participate either. The only people who should participate in this question are those who are undecided in this country. The only undecided

people around here are sitting on the other side of the floor.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, one of the amendments that has been proposed by a number of people on this side has been to modify the wording in the current proposed referendum legislation. We should truly make any referendum conducted by a national government national. As the member knows, the wording only provides for one or other provinces. It sets up a potential uncomfortable situation because I do not think it is going to provide clarity. It is not going to provide just one interpretation but a multiplicity of interpretations that can confuse rather than assist the situation. There is the possibility that there will be a number of provincial referenda in a number of provinces, a federal referendum in a few others, and perhaps none in other provinces or territories.

If in fact a referendum by the national government is conducted, and I hope it will be, does the hon. member not believe that it ought to be conducted in each of the 10 provinces and two territories? Then the 27 million Canadians who are shareholders of this public company called Canada will in fact be able to express themselves on the same question from one coast to the other and to the other. Does he not believe that would be an improvement over the chequer–board situation which may potentially make the situation worse?

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and I understand the direction from which it comes.

I would respond that hypothetically, if there is a deal sometime this month on the Constitution, two or three provinces in this country must hold a referendum. The possibility is that in this deal those three provinces will say: "This is the common question we are going to ask in our three provinces". The federal government could concur that that is the common question and say: "In fairness, we will hold the question in the other seven so that all 10 provinces and the territories have an option". But whether we hold a national campaign or not, in three provinces there must be a referendum. It seems to me this option allows us to work with the provinces in only that example.

I suppose there are many other examples that could come forward as to why the Government of Canada wants an option in the bill, but the one I have given is a clear example of why an option would be beneficial to all Canadians.

Mr. Edmonston: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When I raised a question to my hon. colleague dealing with what he had just been speaking on with the referendum, I asked two specific questions and he had answered one of them. Perhaps he did not understand or hear me. I understand we do have under the Standing Orders that when something like that—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I must recognize as many members as possible. It is up to the previous speaker to answer or not, the choice is his.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I am sure I misunderstood the hon. member earlier when he said he agrees with a single majority, because all votes, from all voters, are equal, and a single majority must be binding.

Have I understood the Conservative member correctly? Is he asking for a repeat of the conscription crisis? Does he know so little about the reality in this country to want to use the tyrannical powers the majority gives him to force his will on the minority? I am shocked by his words, and I am sure he made a mistake.

[*English*]

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had been listening to my comments earlier, he would have heard me say that because of clear examples in the past of referendums that were very divisive, I generally did not support it. In fact, I could easily oppose the whole concept of referendums.

Having said that, since we have had a very clear indication in this country that people want input, through this bill, they will be given the opportunity to do that.

He may not like the tyranny of the majority. All I would say to him is that in this country, either you have tyranny of the minority or tyranny of the majority, or hopefully we have a deal that all Canadians will

cherish and we do not need to ask them the question in the first place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier—Court Challenges Program; the hon. member for York North—Youth employment; the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway—Immigration; the hon. member for Vancouver East—Canada 125 Corporation.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to this bill because Parliament has been expecting for a long time the introduction of a bill like Bill C-81.

It is appropriate to recall the story about someone who is asked whether he wants to hear the good news first or the bad news first. I think we had better start with the good news and that is the government has agreed, at long last, through this bill C-81, to give itself the means of consulting the people on amendments to the Constitution of Canada.

I do not have to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, as early as April 1991, the importance in the present round of constitutional negotiations of the possibility, as a last recourse, of consulting the people on proposed amendments to the Constitution.

In the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, our party stressed the importance of having within the Canadian constitutional arsenal the capacity of going to the people. That is why we, Liberal members, joined with other members of the House and the Senate in this joint parliamentary committee to pass unanimously a recommendation to the conservative government, urging it to pass a bill permitting it to go to the people.

It is clear, that if we allow that the people of a province, Quebec in particular, be given the opportunity to express their opinion on their constitutional future, it ensues that we are perfectly justified to give Canadians in other provinces an opportunity to express their views on their constitutional future.

Holding a referendum is a very democratic process. In our democratic system, this might be the most logical, natural and desirable course of action. We in the Official Opposition can only be pleased to see, at last, the government assume its responsibilities and introduce a bill to hold, if necessary, a referendum on constitutional proposals that could be accepted by all provinces and the Canadian government, or by some provinces and the Canadian government.

Now for the bad news, as the story goes. There are frightful shortcomings in this legislation that could totally void even the most democratic aspects of this consultation of the people.

How can the Conservative government do this amazing trick, provide on the one hand for a very democratic means of going to the people and, on the other hand, present such an anti-democratic bill? It is clear that we are going to try and convince the government of amending its bill, that we are going to do everything in our power to pressure the government into amending this bill.

First, we believe that there should be a spending limit. The bill does not limit spendings by either side of the referendum question. Finally, it does not even provide for an umbrella, as was the case with the referendum held in Quebec in 1980. Canadians support the idea of a referendum. I believe that the polls show clearly that a majority of Canadians would like to be consulted at this particular time on the constitutional issue. But, as much as they want to be consulted, they also want this to be done on an equitable basis. The bill, which does not provide for umbrella committees and which does not include any reasonable spending limits, is severely lacking in this regard. This could result in a process which might not be as democratic as it should be.

Canadians do not want the outcome of the exercise to be fixed. They want a well-deserved result.It seems essential to us, if we want to convince Quebecers that they should remain part of Canada, that this exercise be credible, acceptable and not flawed from a procedural point of view. There is no point for the minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs, to try to convince the provinces to accept a valid proposal to solve the constitutional deadlock and tell Quebecers "here is what we are willing to offer, which is much better than an independent Quebec", if this exercise is to be thwarted by a steamroller of a referendum which literally buys Quebecers and which deprives them of a logical, rational and fair debate. We, the Liberals, are

not afraid of holding an equitable referendum in Quebec, based on concrete and specific proposals that are favourable to Quebecers. Quebecers do not need to be bought by Mulroney's big dollars to give their support to Canada. What concerns us is the approach undertaken now with this bill, which is totally unacceptable in the circumstances.

We also think that in the present context, given our past experiences with referenda, it would be important to include a small clause clearly stipulating that the government will be guided by the results of the referendum, not only by a majority that it hopes to get for all of Canada, but also by a majority that it will want to obtain in each of the main regions of the country, so that Quebecers, when they participate in this referendum, will know that they are not buried by the majority vote of the Canadian population, but that they will also have what we call the "double majority", that they will also have in Quebec, we hope, a majority that will accept the constitutional proposal.

It seems to us that it is absolutely essential at this time to be very up front with the population of Quebec and say that the overwhelming majority of Canadians will not force a constitutional change upon them. With this referendum, we will recognize at the outset that it will not only be necessary to get a majority throughout the country, but also a majority in Quebec as well as in each of the other large regions of Canada, so that this consultation process take into account the legitimate ambitions of each of the large regions of our country.

• (1650)

A third change we are advocating deals with the wording of the question. A spokesperson said earlier, and justly so, that the Canadian Prime Minister no longer has the credibility to hold a Canada–wide referendum alone and win the support of all Canadians. It seems obvious that those who believe in Canada among the three major national parties—meaning the government, namely the Conservative Party, the Official Opposition, namely the Liberal Party, and the New Democratic Party, three of the best known members of which are provincial premiers—should all get together to draft the question to be put to the people of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear. Hear.

Mr. Ouellet: We can obviously not rely solely on the discretion of the Prime Minister. He has neither the credibility nor the support at this point in time to carry the constitutional issue through on his own.

Canada's interest transcends political parties. It is in that context that the Leader of the Opposition has been talking for over a year now about the need for co–operation between the three major national parties in order to resolve the constitutional crisis.

To my great regret, I must say that, unfortunately, opposition parties were not consulted at all on this bill. We have been called to the office of the government House leader only to be told: "Here is what it will be." There was no consultation, only a briefing.

Under the circumstances, we deeply deplore this move on the part of government. If this is any indication of what it has in store for the weeks to come, it tells you this is scary, very scary, because we feel that the interest of Canada should obviously take precedence over that of political parties. It seems to me that the Prime Minister of Canada is more concerned by his self–interest and his political survival than by the best interest of this country when he brings forward a bill such as this one.

I think that the points made about the Canadian Charter of Rights are totally preposterous and superfluous. I will refer to an article by Michel Auger published on May 16 in *Le Journal de Montréal* which state, regarding this argument: "Prime Minister Mulroney said on Thursday that the government would have gladly used the Quebec model, with two umbrella committees, for its own referendum on the Constitution, but the Charter prevents it."

The Lortie commission looked into the matter. I must remind my hon. colleagues that this commission worked for two years and made very specific recommendations based on legal opinions paid for by the Conservative government which state clearly that it is possible to limit expenses incurred by a third party for an election or by umbrella committees for a referendum without contravening the charter.

I would suggest that the Prime Minister and the government House leader refer to the Lortie report to make sure that the legal opinions provided by the lawyer they have paid to assist the Lortie commission are not ignored. It seems obvious to me that the charter clearly says that the citizens have rights, but it also says in its first section that freedoms are not absolute and can be subject to such reasonable limits as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

During the weekend, Professor Mendes of the University of Western Ontario law school, faxed me his legal opinion in which he explained in great detail how the charter can limit certain expenses in the case of a referendum legislation. He referred particularly to the recent decision of Justice Sopinka in the Queen v. Butler. I will read this paragraph of his legal opinion:

[*English*]

> I would suggest that the appropriate standard is that laid down by Justice Sopinka in the R *v.* Butler decision that Parliament is entitled to have "a reasonable apprehension of harm" resulting from the dangers which the legislation is attempting to avoid.

"It would be quite easy for the government to have proved in an appeal from Justice Medhurst's decision"—and this is the decision that was rendered in Alberta at the time of the 1984 election—that the Conservative government did not want to appeal. It should have appealed. The chief electoral officer asked the government to appeal and it never wanted to appeal.

This decision is quite clear, that "there is a reasonable apprehension of harm resulting from unlimited spending during elections or referendums".

Professor Mendes concludes by saying:

> Perhaps the reasons why the government did not appeal Justice Medhurst's decision and why they do not wish to put spending limits in any referendum legislation have nothing to do with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or with law at all.

[*Translation*]

In a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, those are the comments that I wanted to make at this point. It seems obvious to me that this bill, while it is desirable in itself, will have to be seriously amended if it wants to get the attention and the credibility that it needs.

I note that the member for Edmonton-Southwest spoke earlier in this House. He reminded quite appropriately that the parliamentary committee he co-chaired with Senator Beaudoin specifically recommended to the government of Canada, should it want to get a consensus on constitutional amendments or should it fail to agree with the 10 provincial governments, to submit to the people a constitutional agreement which could be supported by at least a majority of the provinces representing more than 50 per cent of the Canadian population.

It seems to me that this last resort approach of consulting the population to tell us whether or not our constitutional proposal is valid and acceptable and in the best interests of Canada is something that must be done, but it must be done properly, with very strict rules of election spending limits and also with umbrella committees for the yes side and the no side.

Observers will recognize that referendum legislations is historically common.

• (1700)

One was submitted to the Parliament of London to determine whether or not England should join the Common Market. On the yes side was a major group composed of all sorts of people and of all political allegiances. The same can be said for the no side. Now, the fact that the representatives from the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party —

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The hon. member's time is now expired.

It being five o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CHILDREN

TERMINAL ILLNESSES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona) moved:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation to enable mothers with terminally ill children to take leave from their employment in order to care for such children.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in favour of this motion finally .It is a private member's motion that I have had in the hopper, so to speak, for a long time, I believe going back as far as 1989. The way in which Private Members' Business works here, in order for something to be debated, and perhaps even voted on, one has first of all to win the lottery by which we select those bills and motions that will come before the House.

In the last draw I was selected and this is the motion which I have chosen to bring forward. I say that because I want the House to know that I have been working on this issue for some time. I raised it in the House before in the context of Standing Order 21 and was somewhat disappointed when I learned that this motion had not been selected as a votable item.

The committee makes its own judgments about this and I am not here to dispute that, but I am told that one of the reasons the committee employed for not selecting it as a votable item was that it might have been in contravention of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The reason for that is that in the motion I singled out mothers with terminally ill children as people who should be provided with some legislative protection *vis–a–vis* taking leave from their employment in order to care for such children.

There are some things which are obviously contrary to the charter and there are other things which are arguable. I do not think the committee or the House, for that matter, should prejudge in this case whether singling out mothers is something that goes against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If that were the case then I suppose the family allowance ought to be brought into disrepute because of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in that it singles out mothers.

I do not think it should be beyond the legislative purview of the House of Commons to designate a benefit for mothers. On those grounds it is unfortunate that this is the reasoning that was employed.

Having said that, it probably would have been better if I had said in my motion legislation enabling parents or one parent or something like that. I acknowledge that. However, to have denied the House the opportunity to vote on this for that reason is at least debatable. The House can vote on this. Those members who are in the House this afternoon can either vote on it or simply allow it go to committee and pass it.

What we have in this motion is an attempt to deal with the needs of a very small but significant group of people: those families stricken with what I think is the ultimate nightmare for any family or for any parent or parents, that is having to deal with a terminal illness, for instance cancer having inflicted itself upon one of their children.

The success rate in curing cancer is going up and up. We see that and everyone rejoices in it, so the group that I am talking about in the sense of children actually dying is getting smaller.

In the sense of families who are dealing with a process that has a successful outcome, we are still talking about a group the numbers of which are holding and perhaps expanding. Even with those families whose children are successfully cured of cancer or in beating cancer, there is an entire treatment and healing process they have to go through that can be very, very hard on families, particularly when we consider the number of double income families of necessity in the country today. It seems to me that we should not add misery upon tragedy by putting at least one parent in the situation of having to forgo the income which is necessary to their economic integrity at the same time as he or she is being attacked by fate or whatever you want to call it when one of their children is so seriously ill.

That is the object of this motion. I have written to ministers about this over the last few years. At first I would simply get answers which, to sum up, were basically that this would set a precedent that the government was not willing to live with because there might be others who wanted to take leave from work in order to care for an elderly parent or for a spouse or whatever.

Of course, my contention with the government was yes, I understand all those needs but what I am trying to make the case for then and now is that this is a special group of people who need a special form of attention by the government. I still think that is the case. If the government wants to look at other ways through our health care system or whatever mechanism we want to devise for enabling and/or helping out or even helping to recognize those many Canadians who do all of us a service by staying at home to look after sick or disabled

relatives, that is something the government should do. I am not arguing against that.

I have come across constituents when I have been canvassing either at election time or otherwise when people have complained to me that they are staying at home to look after a relative and get absolutely no recognition, economic or otherwise, for doing it. However, if they farmed out that person to the neighbour next door, they would be able to claim something for doing that.

This is a loophole, if you like, in our entire system; a loophole by which the kind of care motivated by family connection is not taken into account. That is a larger question and I do not think the fate of this particular motion should hinge on what people think of how we address that larger question because here we are talking about a very specific need.

Proposals have been made, and I refer in particular to a proposal for what is called a "caretaker allowance" for the families of children with cancer. The idea of a caretaker allowance has been put forward by the Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation Canada, the acronym of which is CCCFC. It is a national parent support group for families with children suffering from cancer and represents about 30 family support groups across Canada.

Although obviously that is a small number of people, nevertheless it is probably larger than any of us here care to think about. Unless we come up to them face to face in our own lives, we tend to be blithely unconscious of just what other people are experiencing or suffering.

• (1710)

This proposal has been made on a number of occasions. What I am trying to do through this motion is give Parliament an opportunity to cause the government to focus on this issue. I can chip away at the mountain, and other members might want to do so as well from time to time on issues like this, but if the House of Commons were today, because today is the only opportunity it is going to have for a long, long time to come to pass this motion—it's only a motion, it would not go into law or anything—the government would have to presumably take into account the fact that it has been instructed by the House of Commons to deal with this issue. It is something that all of us could then hold the government to account for.

We could say there was a motion passed in the House of Commons instructing the government to deal with this problem. It would create a situation in which much more progress would be made on this issue and in a much swifter way.

That is my goal here today. I hope that other members might take the opportunity to speak to this, to support the motion and have it go through. Then the government would have to focus on this particular issue.

I would like to quote, if I might, from the proposal by the Candlelighters Foundation because I think they say it better than I could. They say:

> The treatment of childhood cancer has improved dramatically over the last 20 years due to co-ordinated efforts internationally. Whereas in the 1960s the overall long term survival of any type and stage of childhood cancer was less than 20 per cent, today it is in the 65 -70 per cent range and hopefully will be in the 80 -85 per cent range in the next ten years.
>
> The survival of children with cancer has improved because of the increasing use of intensive chemotherapy. This trend is likely to continue with the advent of new treatment modalities known as growth factors and oncogenes as well as the proliferation of new chemotherapeutic agents.
>
> However this approach has several ramifications. More intensive therapy causes more serious side effects resulting in lengthier hospital admissions and home convalescence. Hospital admissions for childhood cancer can range from a few weeks to several months. Length of treatment of childhood cancer, depending on the type, range from six months to three years and longer if there are relapses.
>
> Because of the increasing health costs and the focus in paediatrics to maintain the parents as primary care givers the families have assumed more and more responsibility to care for children at home, requiring complex treatment such as tube feedings, total parenteral nutrition, central line care, pain pumps, ostomy care and a myriad of other procedures.
>
> With most families —

This is a point I made earlier, Mr. Speaker:

> — being double income earners, of necessity, and with the intensive nature of treatment and outpatient management, parents must take lengthy absences from work, with usually one parent, the mother, taking an indefinite leave of absence or actually quitting her job. Very seldom do they qualify for unemployment sick benefits, as they must indicate they are under extreme emotional stress.

In other words, on top of having this, they have to jump through a whole bunch of bureaucratic and medical hoops themselves, which I think is totally uncalled for in the situation. Going back to the proposal:

> Disability insurance also requires consultation to a psychiatrist to prove that the applicant is indeed suffering severe emotional stress due to his/her child's illness. This type of absence is incorporated into their employment record and may unduly influence employers' attitudes. Many times social workers have had to lobby Members of Parliament who have interceded on a family's behalf. It is only then, with publicity, that the unemployment benefits have been approved.

I am aware of a few situations like that and I am sure other members here are as well. We should not have to do that. People should not have to go through that kind of hassle at that particularly difficult time in their lives. There should be a mechanism, which is exactly what this motion calls for, to provide for people in that kind of situation.

Going back again to the Candlelighters Foundation proposal:

> This issue is universal to all families who have children with cancer. We cannot expect families to assume the massive burden of care with little in the way of financial assistance, if a family is to survive the devastation of cancer.

The objective of the CCCFC is a caretaker allowance for the parent who must care for the child which has cancer whether in hospital or at home. It is not just a matter of being at home but sometimes it is the case of being at the hospital day after day and night after night.

They would like the allowance to be equivalent to the unemployment insurance illness benefit maximum payment. They feel this type of benefit should be by application and should begin within four weeks of diagnosis, continue until the child is off treatment, and resume if a relapse occurs.

Obviously they feel this would have to be supported by documentation from the child's physician. It is not the sort of thing that would be open to fraud in any way at all I am sure. Any worries people might have in that regard are unfounded.

We do have such a thing as special illness benefits under the current unemployment insurance benefits for those who are unable to work because of an illness, quarantine, pregnancy, or the adoption of a child. It is not as if we do not have these kinds of mechanisms within existing legislation.

Surely it is not beyond the wit, wisdom and wiles of the Canadian Parliament and the government with its resources to come up with a mechanism that would enable us to address the needs of this particular group.

As I say, in the instances of pregnancy and adoption a parent can claim special benefits to stay home to care for a child. Surely to goodness they should be able to do that in these circumstances.

If we had such a mechanism, the family would be able to continue to provide for regular living expenses as well as the additional costs that inevitably arise because of the illness of the child. These additional requirements, for instance, could include expensive medication, babysitting, perhaps for other children in the family, transportation to and from the hospital, hospital parking fees, meals, extra clothing because of weight loss or gain due to medication, special equipment for the care of the sick child, homemakers, home nursing. There are all kinds of expenses which are not necessarily covered by medicare.

All we are suggesting is that in this circumstance the people at least not be deprived of the income to which they are normally accustomed, although even the maximum payment under UIC might in many cases be less than what people would make if they stayed at their job. What is being suggested in this proposal is that people not be deprived entirely of one of the two incomes they are dependent on in this particularly difficult economic and emotional situation.

This is the proposal I am placing before the House. I would certainly be prepared to make copies of this proposal and some of the attached information and rationale available for members who may be interested in this. I hope that this afternoon we could actually do something here. Often we spend a lot of time here not feeling we are accomplishing a great deal. Surely we could agree among ourselves today, particularly given that it is a motion and not legislation.

It does not even go to a committee. All it has to do is pass this House in the next 40 minutes and it will be there on the record for the duration of this Parliament and for Parliaments to come, until such time as the government deals with this issue. It is an instruction by the House of Commons to the government, take heed, pay attention, look at the needs of this special group and do something about it.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, it is always a great pleasure to take part in such a debate.

[*English*]

One of the most significant labour trends in our country has been the increase in the number of working mothers. It is estimated that by the year 2000 women will account for nearly one-half of all Canadian workers.

Recognition of the family responsibilities of workers has prompted family-leave policies in the private sector, in collective bargaining agreements and provincial and federal legislation.

A comment that I would like to make about the hon. member's motion in connection with the necessity for women to take leave to care for a terminally ill child would be to add the word "father" along with mother as men are now taking on additional family responsibilities.

I was particularly impressed with the member's arguments about the need for us to be more open to suggestions like this, and he is quite correct. This motion has come up in Parliament on a number of occasions and I did take part in other debates. However, I would like to put the motion, if I might, in the context of the entire labour force and see how this suggestion fits in with it.

Under the labour force development strategy of Bill C-21 which became law, the member was here, in November 1990, maternity benefits were improved at an annual cost of $450 million. These benefits, as he pointed out in a cursory way, included 15 weeks of maternity benefits available to natural and adoptive parents, either mother or father, or shared between them. Parents are eligible for an additional five weeks in parental benefits if the child is ill. An additional five weeks was included primarily at the insistence of adoptive parents who wished more bonding time with their new child.

To be eligible for the additional five weeks, the child must be six months or older at the time of placement or when the child comes home. The illness of the child would have to be certified by a doctor, but I would point out that it can be of a physical, psychological or emotional nature. This leaves quite a broad spectrum for a doctor to make a pronouncement on. This would naturally require an extra period of parental care.

Departmental officials claim that 90 per cent of adoptive parents will qualify for the additional five weeks, 15 weeks sickness benefits. Any contributor to the UIC plan is eligible to claim sickness benefits. More than one type of benefit can be claimed; that is, maternity, parental and sickness. Within the claim period, one can claim up to 30 weeks.

If we look at these points in order, we can understand why the Employment Standards Act as a provincial statute is inconsistent with the UIC act. Labour standards vary from province to province. While the federal government can set examples, as in the case of reasonably progressive measures like maternity and parental benefits, it cannot force the provinces to pass similar legislation.

The fact that Ontario parents are eligible for a minimum, I repeat a minimum, of leave of six weeks is not the fault of the federal law. It is a failing, in my opinion, of Queen's Park; that is to say, it is a failing in the provincial legislation.

My party submitted amendments to Bill C-21 which would increase parental benefits for natural and adoptive parents from 10 to 15 weeks, regardless of child illness, and eliminate the maximum benefits of 30 weeks when maternity, parental and sickness benefits are combined.

It has always been our commitment to improve the maternity and parental leave provisions of the unemployment fund so that eligibility guidelines and benefits can better reflect the changing needs of Canadian society.

Some time ago a report on social trends reported that a poll taken from among a cross-section of women indicated, and I am quoting him directly, "a guilt so intense it has put many working mothers in a winding sheet of anxiety", the guilt being of course the fact that women are working outside the home.

One might well imagine how intensified that guilt is when a child is sick, or worse when a child is terminally ill. This is what the hon. member is talking about.

Working outside the home has became a financial necessity for many. Others often enjoy the satisfaction of a family and a career at the same time. This is their choice and I would surely not have any quarrel with it as I have two daughters who are doing that just at this moment.

Statistic Canada says that the picture of the household with dad at work and mom at home with the children is no longer a statistic. Fully 70 per cent of families with children under 16 in 1990 had mothers in the work force. Sixty-eight per cent of families with children under school age had a working mom. The Vanier Institute of the Family in Ottawa showed that the so-called family wage, a salary that could support a man, a wife and children, has largely disappeared in spite of the fact that many more women have entered the work force. In fact, if women stopped working, the number of low income families would rise by an estimated 62 per cent, according to the institute.

Canadians still crave the stability of a family rather than material goods. Goldfarb Consultants has also done some research tracking social trends nation-wide since 1980. About 30 per cent of parents polled declared categorically that they feel they do not spend enough time with their children. Social workers and counsellors often remark that during the counselling sessions with mothers of young children, the mothers comment about the torture they feel to do their best at a job and parenting at the same time. It is never easy for a young mother to go out and do a full day's work and come home and still be faced with all the chores she has to do at home, including of course spending time with her very precious children.

At the annual conference of First Ministers held in Ottawa in November 1989, the Government of Canada submissioned to the talks the necessity to support the family. Here is a text of the opening paragraph:

> In its capacity as legislator, the Government of Canada has an important role in regulating work practices and providing labour market programs to support the efforts of individuals to balance work and family responsibilities.

Through his motion, the hon. member has raised a most valid concern which must be addressed at the federal level if we are to follow through with a plan to really support the efforts of individuals to "balance work and family responsibilities".

I do have a few nagging questions. I wonder, if this motion was passed, would this leave of a parent, mother or father, be paid leave? Would it be paid through the UIC? Would there be benefits from there? Would there be a cap on the amount of time that the parent could spend with the child that is terminally ill?

I am very open to this type of suggestion, as is my party. If we could have some suggestions or information on it, I believe this is the type of thing toward which we should be advancing as we deal with the social problems and the social opportunities of this day.

I would encourage the hon. member to continue in his quest to have this motion passed. With a little more information, it could be supported by members on our side.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member's concerns are met with the motion.

The motion simply instructs the government to come up with a proposal to do this. It would be up to the people in his own party to come forward with a proposal. It is not a question of having to deal with the details today. It is simply a question of having the House instruct the government to come back to the House at some future date with a proposal that would deal with the concerns that the member has raised.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I was deeply touched by the motion from my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona, to enable mothers with terminally-ill children to take leave from their employment in order to care for such children.

We know that there are more and more women in the labour force. Being a mother myself, as my colleagues know —not a young mother, but a recent mother —I realize to what extent the responsibilities of caring for the children fall on the mothers, for the most part. I do not mean to belittle in any way the responsibilities fathers might assume, but it is a fact that the role of mothers is extremely important.

When children are sick, the role of the parents—I will use the plural, because I know that both mother and father have a very important role to play—becomes parts of the treatment and the cure. On top of chemical, physiological or medical treatments, you also have the moral, psychological, emotional and physical support that parents can provide to a child who has to undergo treatment, who must experience extremely stressful and

painful circumstances that have normally no part in childhood.

I was touched by the motion. Obviously our government could explore the possibility of amending labour laws or regulations to deal with situations like the one described, situations with are extreme and exceptional.

Clearly, as another member was saying a while ago, there are details to iron out. For example, would the leave be covered by unemployment insurance? Should there be a time limit for the payments, if payments are made? For the time being, we are only debating the principle of the thing, and I think it has merit, especially since we keep repeating that families make the social fabric, and that a healthy society starts with healthy families.

I wish to support this motion but add that the role of the father could be substituted for the role of the mother when the circumstances require it, but it is true that statistically it is more often the mother than the father who is involved.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to make a few remarks with respect to Motion M–72 which proposes that the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation to enable mothers with terminally ill children to take leave from their employment in order to care for such children.

One can certainly sympathize with the intent of the motion. However, my hon. friend has not taken into account the fact that by limiting the leave to mothers of terminally ill children, this motion is discriminatory. I have heard his remarks that explain that this could be amended down the road. There are also those who say that it contravenes the Charter of Rights and they ask about the fathers, step–parents and guardians of terminally ill children.

The motion is also vague in its lack of definition of a child. For instance, at what stage does a person cease to be a child? Is the standard one of chronology or one of dependency?

As well, there is no indication of criteria for determining the point at which an illness becomes terminal and what length of time is envisaged with regard to leave granted.

Surely these critical elements might introduce an emotion that has far–reaching repercussions.

We have also not been advised as to what obligations will be imposed on employers and to what extent they will be required to continue an assortment of benefits including seniority, health care, pension coverage and while the employee is on leave.

While I appreciate the spirit in which the motion is being tabled, I believe the hon. member did not quite take into account all the complexities and ramifications that any legislation in this domain will have incorporated.

This government has an ongoing commitment to harmonize the work and the family life of Canadians. Over the past few decades we have seen a profound change in attitudes in this increasingly important area. These changes have taken place as the nature and the composition of the work force have evolved.

Only a few statistics have been cited to show how dramatic the changes have been. In 1965, 65 per cent of all Canadian families were what has customarily been thought of as traditional families; that is, there is only one wage earner.

Ten years later this proportion was cut in half and by 1981 only 16 per cent of all families in Canada had the husband as the sole bread–winner. The result of the 1991 census will probably underscore that trend.

There have been other equally significant changes. The percentage of persons in the population over 65 is going up sharply. More and more working men and women are carrying for elderly parents or persons with disabilities. Men are increasingly sharing the care of the children.

Given these labour markets and attitudinal shifts, we have also needed to alter the manner in which we conceive of the relationship between work and family and even with one another.

These are important developments and actions must be taken.

What we actually do to integrate these two spheres of life needs to be considered. As well, we must consider all circumstances.

I hope my hon. friend appreciates that no single method is suitable for all work places. Initiatives will vary by both individuals and by work sites. Canadian businesses are showing increasing willingness to experiment to try whatever they believe is reasonable and practical to accommodate the needs of their employees.

This kind of progress calls for flexibility.

I would also like to point out that a wide variety of measures has already been introduced by employers and unions across the country. In many instances they have exceeded legislative minimum standards because of their growing recognition that the evolving nature of the work place plus the changing demographics necessitate resourceful measures which will come out in harmony rather than in disruption.

I can attest to this happening right in this very House where several years ago when I was the Whip of our party we were in the opposition. We had a member in the government party who had a child who was terminally ill. Because the balance in the House was rather close, he was unable to get permission to leave the House to go and spend any amount of time with his terminally ill child.

I arranged for a pair for him on a permanent basis so that he was able to be with the child in the last few months of its life. These sorts of things go on with employers across the country.

Computerized information is now available in many areas on community based facilities for children and the elderly as well as on support services available in the work place. There are subsidies available to sustain these ventures and many employers have introduced supplementary benefit plans and family supportive relocation policies.

• (1740)

Work on family initiatives requires planning and financial commitments. Some initiatives cost less than others and more are acceptable to a greater number of organizations. These include, for example, modification to benefit plans to cover elderly dependents.

I do not believe that the member, in proposing his motion, has considered how many variables are involved in the reconciliation of work and family life. This government is facilitating the process by working closely with labour and management as well as with the provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

Many highly beneficial adjustments have already taken place and the response from employers and employees has been positive. For instance, working hours have been rearranged to accommodate the new realities of the two-income family. Flexible working hours and options to work out of the home have already made great strides to meet family related needs of workers.

Balancing work and family responsibilities is also increasingly regarded as critical to the Canadian economy and the achievement of economic equality for women. Employers and labour organizations in steadily increasing numbers are recognizing the need to adapt the workplace to meet the changing needs of the work force.

I trust my hon. friend will appreciate from these remarks that considerable work has already been done to assist families to look after pressing personal needs. There is also a need to reconcile all these enterprising measures with the resources that are available. While the proposal that mothers with terminally ill children should be able to take leave from their employment in order to care for those children is both commendable and compassionate, I believe it is clear that any step in that singular direction is a piecemeal approach and is only one small part of balancing working and family responsibilities.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Perhaps the House should be reminded that what we are debating here is a motion, not a bill. It is a motion calling for legislation that would embody all the flexibilities and variables and everything else the member just talked about.

We are simply talking about a motion here and I think the House should keep that in mind. A bill could be criticized for not doing all the things the member criticized this motion for. A motion is simply a motion that would instruct the government to come up with the legislation that would meet all the concerns the member has so ably itemized.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before going on with the debate, I understand that the hon. member seems to be indirectly asking the Chair to be more strict as to the relevance of remarks. Since this is a private member's motion, I would rather take the risk of being tolerant in this debate even if it means being too generous. That is why I try to intervene the least possible and let members express themselves with much latitude on the motion under study.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to Motion M-72, which proposes that the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation to enable mothers with terminally ill children to take leave from their employment in order to care for such children.

There is no question in my mind that this motion was born out of compassionate motives, but unfortunately it does not take into account a number of very important considerations.

The hon. member should know that restricting this kind of leave to women is discriminatory or could be discriminatory toward male parents and therefore it could be a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Provincial and territorial ministers of labour met recently with the federal Minister of Labour to discuss, among other things, the whole issue of balancing work and family responsibilities. Each jurisdiction is developing policies and practices that will apply to all workers who have responsibility for children, spouses and elderly parents.

Labour Canada has already taken a number of significant steps to address the challenges intrinsic to a changing work force and shifting family priorities.

For instance, over the last 18 months Labour Canada has hosted three regional seminars on balancing work and family responsibilities.

As well, through the Workplace Equality Fund, WEF, Labour Canada supports projects aimed at ensuring equality for women in the work place. This fund gives priority to projects involving labour management partnerships and to those focusing on the integration of work and family responsibilities.

Increasing numbers of employers are getting together with unions and employers to consult and co-operate in reaching an accord on family and work related issues. There is a growing recognition of the need for family-responsive work places that will act decisively as the labour force participation rate for women continues to grow and as elder care needs become increasingly important. This is particularly pertinent in the context of the apparent trend among Canadian workers to favour flexibility and choice in their lives.

One initiative involves increased work and family integration through work place support for workers with dependants. For example, some companies offer subsidies for respite care. This arrangement enables employees to return to work while care-giving responsibilities are assigned to health care professionals.

Other organizations have established on-sight or near-sight child care centres and still other companies have extended their employees dependant care coverage to include health and dental expenses for the employee's parents. Recently, the Bank of Montreal, recognizing that already two out of every five Canadians over age 30 provide some form of care for elderly relatives, began an elder care program. It offers employees counselling and assistance in dealing with older dependants. It seems likely that with the Canadian population aging, more and more workers will want to have benefits of this kind.

I believe that this kind of enlightened action, which benefits employees and employers alike, demonstrates clearly that legislation is not the only approach to family related issues that are felt in the workplace. We frequently underestimate the degree to which management and labour can sit down and co-operate on matters that affect both productivity and workplace harmony. This kind of collaboration can have a favourable impact on a company's over-all ability to compete and prosper for the benefit of all concerned.

While the bargaining table may be one area where problems or misunderstandings can be resolved, more often than not common sense and good will can form the basis of co-operation and partnership that will remove the obstacles toward accord and mutual trust.

Even with the difficult economic circumstances we face today, I believe it is possible for the work place partners to give a high priority to matters concerned with the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities. The progressive initiatives that have been implemented and perpetuated by far-sighted companies in the collaboration with responsible unions mirrors a more flexible and considerate perspective.

Recent research confirms these observations. It has been demonstrated that employers who offer family-responsive benefits to their employees find these benefits to be effective ways of recruiting and keeping competent workers. These factors also have been found to weigh heavily against stress and absenteeism in the work place. Improved morale has resulted and the over-all efficiency of the worker has also been enhanced in the process.

I believe hon. members are aware that the federal government continues to act as a catalyst, moving employers and employees closer together in the pursuit of solutions to work place and family questions. We know that an unhappy work force is less productive, less motivated and less lucky to make adjustments to the rapid technological changes taking place in the new world economic order.

All governments must continue to play a significant part in promoting partnership between employer and employee. We must encourage the expression of good will and common sense as we establish a more altruistic and amicable atmosphere, one within which we can make substantial progress in improving the lot of the worker while also addressing the viability of our economy.

Under the circumstances, in addition to the fact that the motion excludes fathers, step-parents and guardians, I am not prepared to support it at this time because there are already substantial innovations being undertaken to deal with work and family responsibilities. These initiatives are proceeding in an ongoing and effective manner.

The thought is good but I believe, as I have said earlier, we are addressing those issues on an ongoing basis and for that reason, I do not feel that I can support the motion.

• (1750)

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I also want to respond to Motion M-72 proposed by my colleague across the way. I know he introduced this motion and put it in the hopper, as he said, a good long time ago because of his great interest in this very important area.

It proposes that the government, as he said earlier, should introduce legislation to enable mothers with terminally ill children to take leave from their employment to care for the children.

Previous speakers have indicated how responsive they are, and I think my hon. friend from Winnipeg knows that this government's response has been changing to the needs of the work force. As well, ample documentation was provided as to the manner in which companies and employees are collaborating to arrive at harmonious decisions affecting the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities. Certainly all are to be lauded for the amount of work that is going on in collective agreements and in co-operation between employer and employees.

I am sure all members realize that balancing work and family is increasingly recognized as being critical to the Canadian economy and to the achievement of equality for women especially. Employers and labour organizations acknowledge the need to adapt the work place to meet the changing needs of our work force. We also know that in the current economic circumstances, employers are looking for cost-effective ways in which to enhance the balance between work and family responsibilities and I know this is of great concern to my hon. friend.

A wide variety of practical strategies have been already implemented at little cost to reduce the stress associated with competing work and family priorities for workers, while at the same time meeting the employer's operational objectives.

The government is working toward ratification by Canada of the International Labour Organization Convention No. 156 on equal opportunities and equal treatment of workers with family responsibilities, hopefully to coincide with the celebration of the United Nations International Year of the Family in 1994.

The provinces are presently looking at the provisions of the convention. Taking this step would be an opportunity for Canada to communicate world-wide its commitment to meeting the needs of workers and family

responsibilities. I know my hon. friend who proposed this motion has been following this UN convention with interest.

The convention recognizes that change in the traditional role of men as well as women in society and in the family has to be recognized if there is to be full equality between men and women. It further states that the problems of workers with family responsibilities are aspects of wider issues regarding the family and society and are matters which should be taken into account in national policies.

Article 6 of the convention states that competent authorities in every country should take appropriate measures to promote information and education which engender broader public understanding of the principle of equality of opportunity and the treatment for men and women workers, including workers with family responsibilities.

I do not intend to go through the entire convention with hon. members, but there are provisions in this document which are important to the matter at hand. For instance, Article 9 recognizes that there are many important ways to achieve equal opportunities and treatment for workers with family responsibilities, be they men or women. These include, among others, collective agreements, work rules and appropriate practices.

We all should realize that the principal parties in any venture are best equipped to recognize their own requirements and then take the necessary steps to attain their goals. We know there is a growing sense of partnership between labour and management when it comes to the manner of work and family responsibilities.

We have heard about companies that have exercised initiative without recourse to legislation. This kind of action augers well for increasing collaboration between the stakeholders in this regard.

It is clear that Canada already has a progressive framework of legislation and practices in place with respect to the treatment and benefits accorded its workers. However, we in the government are determined to maintain our vigilance over matters related to labour standards and will amend and upgrade them as necessary in order to make them mirror the realities of the time.

As our employers and employees make adjustments to a restructured global economy and the increasingly competitive international marketplace, it is incumbent upon governments at all levels to respond if and when our existing regulations are inadequate.

The federal government will continue to monitor the whole world of work, but we will only step in with legal measures when it becomes absolutely necessary. In the meantime, it is prudent to allow market forces, coupled with a spirit of co-operation, to dictate the course of future arrangements in this very important area.

Under the circumstances I am sure hon. members will agree that the motion before us is certainly well-intended. As the hon. member from Winnipeg has indicated, he put this motion forward, I believe he said, back in 1989 for the first time. He indicated in committee that he might have approached it slightly differently and, as he mentioned in his speech, he would have included men as well as women in his redrafting. Certainly this bill is well-intended.

One of the members of the Conservative Party mentioned earlier that a new mother would have a lot of interest in the government taking heed, if not of passing the motion. Certainly it would be an indication to the government to take heed of this very important debate and this very important initiative that has been brought forward. Even though there are a number of non-legislative initiatives being implemented, they have to be implemented successfully and we have to see some results.

It is incumbent upon all of us to make these work and it is incumbent upon us to take special note of the motion put forward by our hon. friend from across the way and reflect upon it. As he has said, it is not legislation, it is proposed as a motion to have the government work toward legislation. If it does not reach that stage it certainly brings it to the attention of the House and all our constituents across the country who are listening that this is an important area of parental concern that we as a government and all members of the House should be concerned about, take heed of and watch as non-legislative approaches come forward. We hope that this will be successful and conclude in what the hon. member had in mind when he put forward this motion for the government to introduce legislation.

• (1800)

I thank the hon. member for putting forward the motion and I thank the Speaker and the House for the opportunity to speak to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is now deemed to have been moved. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

[*English*]

Mr. James: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have some motions to put forward in connection with standing committees.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair is in a quandary because the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier was about to speak. I would prefer the House to indicate to me unanimously whether they are willing to give the floor to the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton for the purpose of proposing a motion. I must admit that if I do not get that unanimous consent, I would prefer to recognize the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

[*English*]

Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to move his motions?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ENVIRONMENT

AUTHORIZATION FOR STANDING COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour) moved:

That five members of the Standing Committee on the Environment be permitted to travel to Rio de Janeiro from June 1 to June 12, 1992 to attend the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; and

That, notwithstanding any standing order of this House, the chief Whip of any recognized party may effect substitutions for that conference 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 shall be effective immediately when they are received by the clerk of the committee.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

AUTHORIZATION FOR STANDING COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour) moved:

That, as part of a study on aboriginal housing, five members and three staff of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs be authorized to travel to Saskatchewan and the western part of the Northwest Territories from June 1 to June 6, 1992.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

AUTHORIZATION FOR STANDING COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour) moved:

That five members of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries be permitted to travel to Rio de Janeiro from June 1 to June 12, 1992 to attend the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development; and

That, notwithstanding any standing order of this House, the chief Whip of any recognized party may effect substitutions for that conference 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.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, on March 17, 1992, I again raised in this House the issue of the Court Challenges Program, which as we know was abolished by the government in February. Many Canadians think this program is essential and I believe that it should be restored or reinstated. I asked the minister why, at a time when we are rethinking our constitutional future, the government abolished this program which is considered essential and as we know gave legal recourse to women, native people, racial minorities, linguistic and ethnic groups, who are very well aware that it is illusory to give them rights if these rights are not correctly interpreted by the courts. Why could the minister not give the cabinet convincing arguments so that all Canadians, whatever their means, rights and privileges, can defend themselves in court?

My party and I take this issue very seriously. April 1 was an opposition day and it was completely devoted to the Court Challenges Program. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, I think that we proved beyond any doubt that the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship and his colleagues who spoke in that debate did not have very strong or convincing arguments.

The body of precedents is far from complete, even though the minister said that there were 300 cases and that they now had a body of jurisprudence. He also told me that it was time for others—I will quote page 8362 of *Hansard* of March 17:

> Whether a program must go on forever should be determined now either by other jurisdictions which have a responsibility, or by the private sector, if there is such an interest.

These causes were essential for Canadians to obtain a clear and precise interpretation of their rights regarding education and equality. I cannot imagine a more important issue, at a time of constitutional reform, than to give all Canadians, regardless of their revenue, the right to appear before a court.

The Conservative government has raised the issue of the cost of that program, which totals $2.7 million per year. This amount represents less than 10 cents per Canadian per year for a program that gave each and every one the possibility to go before the courts and defend their rights. This program was but a drop in the federal budget of some $160 billion.

I find it hard to see how the Conservative government was able to find $15 million to increase the budget of the legal services in the Department of Justice, that is $15 million for litigations, but could not find $2 million for the Court Challenges Program, which helped Canadians to protect their rights.

Numerous people wrote letters—I have received a great many and so has the government—including experts such as former judges from the Supreme Court, to say that this program was very useful. We also received many petitions. To this day, more than 5,500 petitioners have asked Parliament to restore this program.

This was not an expensive program but it was valuable. I will end with a quote from Mrs. Rolande Soucie, the vice-president of the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada*, and a former researcher here at the Library of Parliament. She said, regarding official languages: "The government sends a very ambiguous message. On the one hand, it is proud of the linguistic duality and it makes a big thing of it, especially at the international level, but it is not ready to support the individuals and groups that want to have their rights enshrined in the charter."

Once again I ask the government, on behalf of all the citizens that care about Canadian rights and liberties, to recognize its mistake and to restore as soon as possible the Court Challenges Program.

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I have the dreadful task of answering to my hon. colleague who always puts his heart in what he does. As spokesperson for the government, I want to remind him that it is true that our nation is in the midst of constitutional debate—discussions that will indeed affect the future of Canada, but never the commitment to the basic rights and fundamental freedoms that our citizens share as Canadians.

I am referring, of course, to a topic raised yet again; this government's decision to abolish federal funding of the Court Challenges Program. Our critics claim that, through this action, we are abandoning the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is clearly not so. Rather, the charter remains a living document that will continue to be strengthened in our daily lives. However, in this period of fiscal restraint the government has to limit its expenditures.

• (1810)

The issues surrounding the equality and rights of disadvantaged and minority groups are shared by all of us. Canadians must do their part to join us in supporting our charter. This government is asking the leaders of the provinces, and of the private sector, to share the responsibility of enforcing our rights and freedoms within their own sphere of influence. Surely this is not too much to request of the very people who speak so strongly for those rights.

I reiterate for hon. members that we shall continue to pursue the fundamental values of Canadian citizenship that bear a direct impact on our daily lives: equality and participation.

In conclusion, the court challenges decision was a difficult one. We now ask our provincial colleagues and the private sector to work together with us in furthering our national human rights goals.

[*English*]

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, when I rose in this House on April 28, I asked the Prime Minister why his government has cut 40,000 jobs from the Summer Employment Experience Development program since 1985.

The minister of youth gave the expected response. He told the House the budget for the SEED program was increased last year and has been increased again this year. That is a very clever answer but it is misleading. Since 1985, this government has cut $72 million from SEED's budgets. When one removes the $6 million that has been added over the past two years, there is a cumulative cut of $66 million. The government's increases are cosmetic and do not even begin to make up for the devastation caused by those earlier cuts.

The facts prove this. In 1990 when the total SEED budget was $77 million, the number of jobs created through SEED was 54,000. In 1991 with a budget increase of $3 million, the number of jobs created actually fell to 53,800. The reason for this drop is simple. While there are private companies and organizations in our communities that are willing to hire young people for the summer, they are unable to do so without the support of government. This government is robbing young people of the opportunity to work and is denying access to firms and organizations that are willing to tap into a dynamic and ambitious work force.

The statistics illustrate the cold hard truth. Without government help there will be no jobs for young people in this economy. While the general population struggles with an unemployment rate of 11 per cent, the rate for Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 is 16.8 per cent. This is because young people are usually the first to be laid off in a recession and they are the last to be hired when the economy begins to recover.

For example, of the 32,000 full-time jobs that the Canadian economy lost in February 1992, 22,000 were held by young people. However, the worst effect of a youth unemployment rate of 16.8 per cent is that many young Canadians are being robbed of their future. I am speaking of those post-secondary education students who must work in order to pay their tuition fees, their living expenses and other costs. Because tuition fees have skyrocketed since 1985, it is critical for an increasing number of students to find work during the summer.

Between 1985 and 1991, tuition fees increased 45.5 per cent in Ontario and 145 per cent in the province of Quebec. If these students do not find work this summer, tens of thousands of them will be squeezed out of the system, unable to pay for their tuition or to support themselves. This happens at a time when the government is speaking about a prosperity agenda and global competitiveness, but the fact is I do not think that this government understands what it means to be competitive in a global market. Given the urgency of the situation, I call on the government to take action immediately. I call on it to increase its commitment to

the SEED program and create badly needed employment for Canada's youth.

Today is an extreme situation and it requires immediate measures. As a nation we cannot afford to have a generation of citizens who have given up on their future. We must not discard young Canadians who are badly in need of employment simply because they do not fit into rigid economic policies.

Anyone who doubts the urgency of this problem need look no further than this Sunday's *Toronto Star* edition which paints a very depressing portrait of the dire straits in which so many young Canadians now find themselves. I hope the government will understand that the future of these young people is a worth–while investment.

[*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): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question asked by the hon. member for York North, I am pleased to discuss, on behalf of the Minister of State for Youth, the government's summer programming as it concerns Canada's youth.

This government is committed to assisting Canadian youth find employment. In this regard, a number of summer programs have been developed over the years to prepare Canadian youth for the challenges of the future. These programs are mostly funded under the Challenge '92 program whose allocation this year was set at $110 million.

The member is obviously interested in the SEED component of the challenge program which subsidizes summer jobs for canadian students. The SEED (summer employment experience development) component of challenge '92 was increased by $3 million this summer to ensure that our commitment to youth was maintained. This means that this summer some 55,000 jobs will be created fo youth.

For the past two years, Ontario has distributed the SEED funds based on two factors: student population and communities experiencing unemployment rates greater than the provincial average. This concentrated funds in Northern Ontario, Windsor and the Niagara peninsula. This was and still is an acceptable way of doing business because it recognizes that other areas are more able to create sufficient job opportunities without assistance.

This year, however, every area in the province is experiencing higher than average unemployment rates. It was therefore decided that a more even distribution of funds would be needed. This means that some areas in Ontario will actually receive less SEED funds this year than last. However funds under START and the Canadian Jobs Strategy allocated in these areas will offset the reductions in seed funding.

Finally, the member should remember that there are other summer programs like the Business Loans Program which will receive some $900,000 this summer. There is also the Business Drive for Jobs which will receive $800,000, the Native Internship Program and the Canada Employment Centres for Students which will receive $12 million in funding.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, in late February of this year I raised a question in this House with the Minister of Employment and Immigration concerning the situation of two women living in the Yukon Territory, Andrea Underwood and Anna Carrott.

Andrea Underwood, a Canadian citizen, has been living with her partner Anna Carrott in a committed and loving relationship for some eight years together with Anna's children. This couple run a lodge in the Yukon, the Morley Lodge.

I asked the minister at that time to recognize the fundamental inhumanity of the policies of the immigration department which denied any status whatsoever to this and similar relationships. I urged the minister to extend Anna's visa while this case is being considered by the Federal Court.

I am very pleased that the minister did, in fact, agree to extend the visa in these circumstances. I want to take this opportunity to again draw to the attention of the House the fundamental cruelty and immorality of a policy which states that Canadians, men and women who are involved in committed loving relationships with non–Canadian citizens of the same sex, are denied any recognition whatsoever of those relationships in Canadian immigration law. In the eyes of the law that relationship does not exist. It is invisible.

• (1820)

In a number of other countries including Australia, New Zealand, The Netherlands and Scandinavian countries, there are policies in place recognizing that same sex relationships should be recognized for purposes of immigration law.

Indeed, a task force of a number of individuals, a number of prominent citizens of British Columbia, chaired by Professor Douglas Sanders of the University of British Columbia, is looking into the whole question of the implications of the current discriminatory policies affecting the lesbian and gay community in Canada.

The government itself is studying these policies. It has been studying them for some three years. I received a letter from the Secretary of State for External Affairs back in 1989 in which she stated that she had asked her officials to look into the policies and consider the possibility on compassionate humanitarian grounds.

I have another letter from the current Minister of Employment and Immigration stating that this is being studied. But surely the time for study has ended. If the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is to mean anything, then there must be full equality.

On March 4, 1986 the federal government, this Conservative government announced that there would be an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation in all areas of federal jurisdiction. That must include immigration as well.

I want to pay tribute to the two women in the Yukon who have the courage to publicly challenge these policies, as well as to Christine Morrissey and her life companion of 14 years, Bridget Coll, who have challenged these policies similarly in the Federal Court.

As Ms. Morrissey said: "I feel as a Canadian I ought to have the same rights as any other Canadian to sponsor the person with whom I have chosen to share my life. We are not claiming any special rights for same sex couples but asking for the same consideration from the immigration department to be able to live in Canada with the life companion of our choice as any Canadian sponsoring a member of their family is given".

Christine Morrissey's 76–year old mother added: "I cannot understand why Christine is not allowed to sponsor Bridget for immigration".

I hope that the government will reconsider these policies. Unfortunately, the Court Challenges Program which was funding the challenge to this discriminatory area of the law has been eliminated. I hope that the funds will be there for Christine and Bridget and for the others who challenge these policies.

Again, I call upon the government to recognize there must be an end to discrimination in this area. It is time that this government recognized that lesbians and gay men are equal citizens in this country and entitled to be treated with equality, dignity and respect.

[*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): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I welcome the opportunity to further discuss the matters raised by my hon. colleague, the member for Burnaby—Kingsway.

It is not possible to sponsor a same sex spouse under the Immigration Act. Such a relationship does not meet the current definition of spouse under the family class regulations. Given that this issue is now before the Federal Court, it would be inappropriate to use this House as a means to influence or interfere with this legal process.

I will take this opportunity, even if the member for Burnaby—Kingsway did not mention it earlier, to address another aspect of the question he submitted to the hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration on February 25 concerning the case of Mr. Abo Shandi. The Solicitor General and the minister signed a security certificate because of the seriousness of this case. I would also like to point out to the hon. member that the Federal Court found that this certificate was reasonable. This action to exclude terrorists and subversives from Canada clearly states this government's view that Canada will not be a safe haven for persons with active terrorist or subversive backgrounds who constitute a menace for Canada.

[*English*]

CANADA 125 CORPORATION

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, on March 17 I asked the Secretary of State why in this year's budget the Canada 125 Corporation was allocated another $30 million, an outrageous 150 per cent funding increase, while many essential programs are being cut and cancelled.

Over the last two years, the Canada 125 Corporation has been allocated a total of $50 million of taxpayers' money. By contrast the Secretary of State has only $2 million for local community celebrations of Canada's 125th birthday.

Canadians will be astounded to know that this private non-profit corporation, whose three legal directors are Tories, is not subject to the same disclosure rules as government departments. Where is this government's accountability to the citizens of this country? Why would Canadians believe that the $50 million of public money is well managed when we hear of the waste and mismanagement by Canada 125 Corporation? A $1 million direct mail campaign brought only .001 per cent response. Also, $4.2 million was wasted on ambiguous TV ads which stirred up interest but gave no toll-free number for viewers to call. English pamphlets were distributed through direct mail when the French version could only be obtained by purchasing a newspaper. Over $71,000 went to two countries for the development of two different logos for the Canada 125 Corporation.

Is this efficient private sector management? Surely Secretary of State Department would have done it better and for a much lower cost.

The Canada 125 Corporation's mandate is to act as a catalyst for private sector initiatives, institutional projects and individual participation of Canadians from all walks of life. Yet none of the $50 million allocated to Canada 125 Corporation goes to direct funding for local community celebrations.

Local communities apply to the Department of Secretary of State which only has $2 million to fund about 1,700 projects for Canada. Remember this is half of the money wasted on TV ads. To celebrate this year, the demand has greatly increased while funds are the same through Secretary of State.

In its last budget, this government abandoned Canadians who are most in need. The indefinite postponement of both the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute, the abolishment of the Court Challenges Program, the elimination of co-op housing, a $100 million cut from job training programs, all these hurt the people who are most disadvantaged. Surely these programs are more important than pre-election pizzazz by corporate Canada.

We have a glorious country. Canada 125 celebrations are needed to lift our collective spirits and bring our country together. Canadians want our celebration to be fun and meaningful, involving people from all walks of life who come together to celebrate the joy of being Canadian and to celebrate our achievements and our common values.

Canadians want a government that is accountable and honest. Allocating $50 million of taxpayers' money for the Canada 125 Corporation with no public accountability, coupled with poor management, is a disgrace.

Instead of funding Canada 125 Corporation, this government should have increased funding through Secretary of State for community groups to hold genuine celebrations. Canadians deserve better.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to set the record straight about the partnership between the Government of Canada and the Canada 125 Corporation.

Last year, eminent and nationally recognized Canadians like Frank King, Iona Campagnolo —not Conservatives —Claude Dupras, Alex Colville, Mel Cooper, Paul Desmarais and Angus Reid came together in a spirit of public-mindedness to organize and coordinate a meaningful celebration of our great country's 125th anniversary.

The corporation has forged a strong and dynamic partnership across the breadth of Canada. Imperial Oil, Manu Life, Canadian Tire, Greyhound, Canada Dry and many others have joined with thousands of community volunteers to mount the celebration of our generation.

For example, Participaction, with the kind sponsorship of Imperial Oil, has animated over 10,000 local events, making this anniversary a most special one.

The hon. member charges that this sum is a waste, but she should ask Montrealers how wonderful it was this weekend. I must say I was there. I would remind her that, in 1967, the Centennial Commission spent far more than this amount.

The philosophy of this government has been to build partnerships, not to impose solutions. Her party traditionally favours impositions and state intervention.

We on this side uphold what Canadians in 1989 resoundingly said—our celebration of Canada 125 must be a partnership and not a made-in-Ottawa event.

For far too long, Canadians have been somewhat reluctant to express their pride in Canada. Our approach to Canada 125 fosters the pride which is in each one of us.

For every four dollars spent by the Canadian goverment, the private and voluntary sectors are spending five.

On this side, we see this as a success. On their side, the hon. member's colleagues see any positive returns as a failure. What can we do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 20, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

PERLEY RIDEAU VETERANS HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the announcement by the Minister of Veterans Affairs that veterans now living at the Rideau Veterans Home in Ottawa will be moving into new premises late next year.

The Rideau Veterans Home has been of great service to veterans in the national capital area but as can be expected of a facility built at the end of the Second World War, it is past its best.

Our government has been going all out to reach agreement with the provinces and increase the number of beds available to veterans across the country.

Last Thursday's announcement is another step in the right direction. The agreement with the province of Ontario means veterans will have access to 250 beds in the Perley Rideau Veterans Health Centre.

* * *

THAILAND

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, during the past several days the world and Canadians have watched in horror as unarmed demonstrators in Thailand have been shot down in cold blood by the Thai military.

In February last year the democratically elected government in Thailand was overthrown. A new undemocratic constitution came into force. In March of this year the elections which took place resulted in the appointment of the chief of the armed forces as prime minister of Thailand.

Shortly before those elections the very respected opposition party leader Chamlong Srimuang stated that going against the will of the people could cause them to resist and this will turn into an uprising. The soldiers must understand if they do this they will have confrontation.

As a Canadian I have to ask: Where was our government? Why has our government increased the level of bilateral aid, direct government to government aid from Canada to Thailand? Why have we not announced an arms embargo on Thailand? Why is it that the Canadian foreign minister has said that Canada supports the movement toward increased democratization of Thailand?

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE DISABLED

Mr. Allan Koury (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to express my support for Bill C-78, the omnibus bill tabled by the minister responsible for the status of the disabled. I would be very pleased to see the provisions of this bill implemented, since this legislation is one more step toward eliminating the barriers that prevent the disabled from becoming full-fledged members of our society.

The bill, and related policies and regulations were prepared in consultation with the disabled. With the Secretary of State and many of those who worked on this bill, I am convinced that the proposed amendments will enhance the well-being of 3.3 million disabled Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, this omnibus bill is tangible proof that the Government of Canada intends to pursue its policies for the the disabled, with their co-operation.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

SAFE GRAD PROGRAMS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, graduation time is upon us and I would like to take this opportunity to commend the laudable actions of many students across Canada for their participation in the Safe Grad program.

This year, students throughout the country, including Manitoba, will once again take part in the Safe Grad programs. Safe Grad combines students' graduation celebrations with realistic measures to prevent accidents and other problems which could be associated with drinking and driving.

The aim of the program is to enable graduates to have their graduation parties but to ensure others look after their transportation afterward. Safe Grad is a student run program with much assistance from parents, teachers and police too. Safe Grad is geared toward the needs and wishes of individual schools and their students.

I am most impressed with the students of our country and their support of Safe Grad. I would like to take this opportunity to commend them for their actions.

On behalf of this House and my colleagues I wish all students a happy and safe graduation.

[*Translation*]

Have fun, but take care.

* * *

[*English*]

BRITISH COLUMBIA PHYSICIANS

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): The medical profession in my home province of British Columbia is being blind-sided by two pieces of provincial legislation brought down by the NDP government. Bills C-13 and C-14 attempt to cap the earnings of and eliminate the pension contributions for physicians in B.C.

This unilateral action by the government threatens to limit the access of British Columbians to quality health care, alienates the medical profession, creates longer waiting lists and forces doctors out of B.C.

It is obviously unjust to require specialists such as a radiologist who purchases high tech, high-priced equipment for one's practice to come under the same earning limits as the low overhead physician.

The province has not consulted with the BCMA and refuses to negotiate a more equitable settlement even now. This unilateral action jeopardizes the historically co-operative relationship between the medical profession and the government.

I call on the federal government to take whatever action is necessary under the Canada Health Act to force the B.C. government to resume meaningful negotiations with the doctors of British Columbia.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, on April 23, I wrote to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans urging the federal government to maintain the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' laboratory in Charlottetown in its current state.

I am disappointed that the minister continues to hold fast to the plan to phase out the bacteriological portion of the Charlottetown facility.

Producers have relied upon regular monitoring of shellfish to ensure that the environmental conditions have not adversely affected their product. According to some industry members, the proposed change could make some operators less inclined to monitor their products as strictly.

The reduced testing could jeopardize the industry if a bad lot makes it through the system. In addition, this type of testing demands stringent and complex handling procedures. One mishandled sample could cost a producer thousands of dollars in lost product.

Therefore, I renew my call to maintain the DFO lab in Charlottetown in its present state.

* * *

[*Translation*]

"ACTIVE LIVING" PROJECT

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, on May 1 this year, it was my privilege to attend the launching of a national Active Living pilot project in

Dieppe, New Brunswick. Active Living is a new philosophy of life which stresses the integration of all kinds of physical activity into our daily lives.

The pilot project in Dieppe is one of five projects across Canada being used to test this new concept. The federal government is pleased to have been able to contribute to this initiative, especially since the municipality is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Since Canada is celebrating its 125th birthday, we have another reason to applaud this stimulating and laudable initiative.

On behalf of the Minister of State for Youth and on my own behalf as well, I encourage members of this House to emulate the positive approach to Active Living shown in Dieppe today in their own communities.

* * *

[*English*]

AJIT SINGH BAINS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, on April 3, prominent human rights activist, Ajit Singh Bains, a retired judge and current chairperson of the Punjab Human Rights Organization, was arrested in India.

To the surprise of his relatives living in metro Toronto, the 71-year old justice has been thrown in prison and denied the right to a full and legitimate trial under the rule of law.

In addition, more than 300 police personnel took over his residence and, without any warrants, entered and confiscated documents relating to the human rights organization he heads.

The manner in which Justice Bains was arrested, the forced entry into his home, and the lack of any due legal process has evoked condemnation around the world.

I urge our government to voice Canada's strongest disapproval of the violation of Mr. Bains' fundamental human rights. I urge our Secretary of State for External Affairs to communicate this dissatisfaction immediately in the most forceful and concise terms to her counterpart in the Indian government.

S. O. 31

CANADA–U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago, the Prime Minister and the President of the United States held a news conference in Washington. The Prime Minister has travelled to the U.S. to deal first-hand wi th some of the trade irritants which have arisen out of the latest round of American protectionism.

Right now, a lot of Canadians are wondering about the future of free trade, given the disputes over softwood lumber, Honda cars, and so on. So it was reassuring to hear President Bush a few moments ago say that since the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement was signed in 1988, the trade between the two countries has grown by over $30 billion. That is thirty thousand million dollars of additional trade since free trade and that translates into more jobs on both sides of the border. Those are the facts.

The economic recession which has bedevilled both countries would likely have been a lot deeper if it had not been for those $30 billion.

• (1410)

Of course problems remain. The trade deal can be improved. Americans' attitudes can be improved. If there is one person who can do it, he is in Washington today.

* * *

MACMILLAN BLOEDEL

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak of a grave situation that has arisen in my riding, one that could affect elected representatives across this country.

MacMillan Bloedel, the forestry megacompany with a virtual stranglehold on my home province of B.C., has launched a lawsuit against the elected local representatives of Galiano Island, among others.

These island trustees, in fulfilling their responsibilities toward their electorate, passed a ruling on land use that MacMillan Bloedel did not like. It was simply that: MacMillan Bloedel did not like it. Hence, it is suing the island's trustees personally.

I trust even my colleagues in this House who condone the appalling rapid destruction of the remaining old

growth forests in Canada would agree that this is an unacceptable price to pay while fulfilling one's role as an elected representative.

I plan to do everything in my power to ensure that Canadians hear and understand the ramifications of this suit, an American invention called the Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation, or SLAPP. With this kind of threat, megacompanies could ensure that no elected representatives feel free to do the job they were elected to do, namely, representing the voters who elected them who have the unassailable right to do local planning and decision-making.

This is a threat to the very basis of our democratic system. It is a threat I hope the members of this House and all elected representatives in Canada will resist to the utmost of their ability.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs has warned that the silence of concerned Canadians could threaten our future.

That future affects us all, but it belongs to the youth and I find it encouraging to know that there are young people in Canada who are not going to sit back silently and allow the forces of negativism to destroy their nation.

The city of Red Deer has more French immersion students per capita than any other English-speaking city in Canada. Last week, 33 of these students from Central School in Red Deer were here in Ottawa. They were *en route* home following a visit to Cap de la Madeleine where they delivered a message of national unity to the mayor and people of Red Deer's twin city in Quebec.

We met briefly with the Prime Minister where they were able to share the same message they had taken to the mayor of Cap de la Madeleine. Their message was straightforward. They want their country united and their Canada includes Quebec.

I commend these students and their teachers. We have some serious constitutional challenges, but we will succeed because of people like them and the fact that they are willing to take a stand.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRACY IN HAITI

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, on the night of September 29, 1991, the army in Haiti staged a bloody coup d'état, ending the democratic process begun with the election of Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Since then, the Haitian nation has lived in terror. On February 23, 1992, a memorandum of agreement was signed by President Aristide and the Speakers of the two Houses of the Haitian Parliament. Unfortunately, because the army controls the government now in place, the agreement was never discussed in that Parliament.

I believe that it is important for the Canadian government to demand the restoration of the constitutional system and to encourage democratic countries to respect the OAS embargo.

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, Canadian business is suffering from excessive government regulations that are costly and burdensome for management and undermine our global competitiveness.

This was a message of a recent survey completed by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. In a letter to the Prime Minister, the chamber stated that its members believed they were being tramped on by our regulatory processes which are driving up the costs of conducting business in Canada.

Three out of ten responses indicated they had experienced negative effects from the lack of harmonization or duplication of regulations. Thirty per cent of respondents said they had run into duplication in payments to governments. The most frequently sighted overlap was in the tax system. Clearly the lunacy of maintaining two separate sales tax systems creates a heavy compliance burden as does the frequent conflict between federal and provincial regulations.

The message is clear. Governments at both the federal and provincial levels have to put aside entrenched considerations and work toward creating an environment that will foster, not hinder, economic growth in this country.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, negotiations on the international treaty to slow down the loss of plant and animal species have been gutted by the United States this week.

Biologists have warned that unless international action is taken to curb the destruction of species and their habitat, a mass extinction will occur over the next few decades.

Despite the awesome warnings of the best informed scientists on earth, the Bush administration believes that protecting wild plants and animals would interfere with the profits of private companies involved in the manipulation and patenting of life forms.

There should no longer be any illusions about the role of politically powerful vested interests in relation to the key conventions for the earth summit. They are hell-bent on destroying international consensus and co-operation. They stand for profits ahead of survival, for business as usual ahead of sustainable development, for their imperial control over the planet's living resources.

This is a call to all thinking people to get involved and pay attention to the earth summit. Twenty thousand species will become extinct this year. If we fail on biodiversity we will soon be one of the listed statistics of extinction.

Canada has been silent on the attempted U.S. murder of the biodiversity convention and for this we stand shamed before the world.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

WESTRAY COAL MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Westray coal mine was made possible and was only possible because of the $85 million in federal loan guarantees and over $8 million in interest buy-downs. It also received close to $700,000 in research and development moneys from supply and services.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will provide the House of Commons and thereby the general public copies of the agreements which have been consummated between the Government of Canada and Mr. Frame as well as the memorandum of understanding signed by the Government of Canada and the Minister of Supply and Services.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, if I may I would like to express my condolences regarding this terrible accident. I would, with the hon. member having just posed the question, extend my deep thanks to the draggermen from Devco. There were six teams from the hon. member's riding who were there to help, together with very brave draggermen from Westray as well who did all they could to help mitigate the severity of this terrible tragedy.

As to his question, the hon. member is right. The federal government provided assistance, principally in the form of a loan guarantee of 85 per cent of the $100 million term loan connected with this project.

That was the federal government's involvement. What we will do, of course, is bring forward all the appropriate information as soon as possible, and this we are preparing. There are thousands of pages of documents relevant to this question. The government is preparing those and will bring them forward shortly.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. minister for his kind comments with regard to those draggermen who worked to try to expedite, if you will, a rescue.

But I want to say to the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, that more than a week ago I had written a letter to the government House leader requesting co-operation with regard to securing and obtaining the necessary documents which would shed light on this particular incident.

I ask the minister again if he is prepared today to table in this House copies of an agreement which provided a contractor the amount of $85 million in loan guarantees, interest buy-downs in excess of $8 million, research and

development moneys in excess of $700,000. Will he provide those documents, those agreements, and that memorandum of understanding?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the hon. member knows this, but there are, I think, three or four requests now under access to information for information of that sort. We are readying those documents to comply with that request.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, this is the House of Commons. This is where the government is accountable for the expenditures that it makes on behalf of the people of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dingwall: I want to remind the House that a senior member of this House, a senior minister, said the following: "A member of Parliament I submit has a right and a duty to pursue investigations and ask questions on behalf of his constituents and the general public and any interference or obstructions in this respect must be undertaken very carefully and supported by citations and precedents of the greatest weight and substance".

• (1420)

This statement was made by the hon. member for Central Nova, the Minister of Public Works.

I ask the minister again, will he now table in the House of Commons the agreement which was consummated with Mr. Frame as well as the copy of the memorandum of understanding?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, among the documents which are being brought forward there are thousands of pages and many hours of cataloguing to be done. We hope to get this out as soon as possible.

In there is included, of course, the agreement between the Bank of Nova Scotia, Mr. Frame of the Westray mine. Under this loan, the Bank of Nova Scotia was guaranteed 85 per cent by the federal government. As a result of that we had to comply, as would be expected, with the regime put in place by the Government of Nova Scotia for safety and for health in the mine. The loan by the Bank of Nova Scotia could not flow unless there was that compliance. We could not put our guarantee in place unless there was compliance with the health and safety requirements of the two departments which were going to administer it for the Government of Nova Scotia.

That particular reality was there. We are very pleased that these documents are coming together very quickly. I hope that we will be able to get them before the public shortly.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same minister.

When Suncor, the previous owner of the leases, decided in 1987 that it wanted to sell these leases and sell them in a hurry, it was not only Curragh Resources that was interested. Esso Resources was also interested. In fact, it did not want millions of dollars as Curragh did. It just wanted six months to be able to study the whole project, the geography and the topography involved.

Other than the fact that there was an election coming up, why would the government not wait to allow Esso Resources to complete its study? Why was the government in such a hurry before it gave millions of dollars to Curragh Resources?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, in fact this is quite a myth. The over-all project took over three years to put together and to hammer out. There are thousands of pages of contractual agreements that had to be put in place between the principals, the banks and the various governments and also to make sure that all health and safety requirements were complied with.

Three years is not rushing a project into completion. It was quite a lengthy process.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, it seems the government had plenty of time to read the reports of the Bank of Montreal, the lawyers and the consultants involved but it did not take any time to read the reports of Suncor and Esso Resources.

Why did the government not read these reports? If it did read these reports, surely it must have seen the dangers involved. Will the government admit that it did not adhere to these reports and will it make these reports public?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows a judicial inquiry has been established. Nova Scotia will inquire into those matters.

Let me respond from the federal government's point of view. The particular studies done by various groups which have looked at this are well known to our government. The concerns we had originally with Westray were basically business and economic. Originally the safety concerns had to be answered through the province putting in place a very strict regime. It is that regime which is going to be inquired into by the judicial inquiry. That regime was the responsibility of the province. In fact, that regime was being complied with regularly in all its particulars by the mine and confirmed by the Bank of Nova Scotia which regularly monitored it month by month through independent mining consultants.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and is on the same subject.

It is clear that there were a number of studies done on the Westray mine site to which the federal government was privy. One of those studies, for example, states and I quote: "As a result of such difficulties it seems"—referring to the Westray mine site—"have given off large volumes of gas and proven extremely liable to spontaneous combustion".

I understand that the government's role was, as the minister has just said, in one sense economic and business, but surely the federal government also has a role when it sees these reports to make some response to this and perhaps to receive some assurances from the company that these safety concerns will be addressed before loan guarantees are given.

Can the minister, given the concerns raised in these reports, tell the House what actions were asked of the company regarding these safety concerns before loan guarantees were agreed to?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is rightly pointing out where the regulatory authority lay in this particular case, which was the province. She is asking whether we received assurances that the mine was complying with the regulatory regime put in place by the province.

We did better than that. In fact, the Bank of Nova Scotia would not give the loan unless it assured itself in every particular, with certifications at each step, that the safety regime was being complied with in its entirety. Otherwise its $100 million would be at risk. We, guaranteeing 85 per cent of that loan, also undertook the same due diligence to make sure that in every particular we had certification that the health and safety requirements as laid down by the province of Nova Scotia were being followed.

All of this was done, was followed, and we still had the tragedy. I have to remind my hon. friend, the leader of the NDP, of what Gerry Finfinger, head of Research and Ground and Methane Controls at the U.S. Bureau of Mines said: "In general we should be able to produce coal from an underground coal seam, no matter how gassy the coal seam is, without an explosion. It is very doable and it is done around the world every day. Part of the hazards of so many mines around the world is methane".

That is why there is a strict regime put in place. Unfortunately, in this case something happened, but it was not a failure on the part of the federal government or the Bank of Nova Scotia to comply with the regulations.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I would like to say to the minister that no one is accusing anyone of anything. I am simply asking the minister if he can assure this House and, therefore, table with this House how exactly the federal government, not the Bank of Nova Scotia, ensured that the safety concerns would be addressed. The minister has said he was assured of it. I am simply asking that he table with this House how his government arrived at those conclusions and on the basis of what information and will he table that information and how those conclusions were arrived at?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that all the relevant information be put before this House and be made public. That is what the government is assembling, cataloguing, cross referencing so members can understand it and get the answers to the questions they are asking.

In this particular instance, the nature of the contract will be in the public domain. She will be able to see what the contract says. The monthly compliance with the regulations was not only adhered to but certified by the

independent mining engineers on behalf of the Bank of Nova Scotia. That too, I am sure, will be made available.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A final supplementary. As the minister mentioned, the Government of Nova Scotia is going to hold a full inquiry into this disaster. I would like to ask the minister if, on behalf of his government, he is prepared to give assurances in this House that his government will fully co-operate with that inquiry if asked, allow witnesses to be there, if asked, and to table all of the documents with that inquiry if asked. Is the federal government, in other words, prepared to be open with this House and also act as a full participant when requested in the inquiry in Nova Scotia so that everyone can know the full facts and have the full benefit of the information that the federal government has as well as any provincial authorities.

• (1430)

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Of course the government will, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and it is on the same subject matter.

On May 12 the minister of energy said: "We the cabinet were all aware of the mine having high methane deposits and with the new technology that there would have to be a learning curve."

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister if the cabinet's discussions on the so-called learning curve included the real possibility of spontaneous combustion and explosion in the Foord seam and, if so, how they possibly could have funded this project?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the government was aware, and every government everywhere I would hope is aware, that coal mining is a dangerous undertaking. In this area, all of Nova Scotia's coal mines, including Cape Breton and the mainland and so on, have had their share of problems in the past. They have all had problems with methane and they have virtually all had problems with methane explosions.

It was our job to make sure that when we gave the government loan insurance, we gave the government a guarantee that Curragh was in full compliance with provincial regulatory standards on health and safety and indeed they were.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is again for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The minister of energy indicated that officials of the department of industry expressed serious concerns about methane at the Westray project. Given the fact that the Foord seam has a history of fatal explosions that has cost the lives of 264 miners, what was the reason and what was the compelling information that the government had that led it to ignore its own department, to ignore history and fund this project?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, if we take ourselves back to the period when this was all being assessed, the primary questions being asked publicly within the legislature and here in Ottawa by those analysing it, were primarily business and economic questions. There were a few safety questions but they occurred very infrequently. As a matter of fact, Teresa MacNeil of the Devco board said that her memory was that the questions being discussed were questions of economics, not safety. To quote her: "We would all like to think today that we were all preaching safety. Safety was a factor but it was mentioned very infrequently."

In fact, even though that was the case, we put in place steps to make sure that the regime set down by the province for health and safety were complied with in every particular by the company and that it was monitored by independent mining consultants on a regular basis.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In a project overview by Westray in January 1990 the section on mining calls the risk of spontaneous combustion not clearly defined.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Did the government, in assessing the decision to fund the West-

ray project, accept Westray's evaluation of the risks of spontaneous combustion as not clearly defined, or did it seek an independent evaluation of these risks before deciding to fund this project? If so, will the minister make this assessment public?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, can you imagine a bank putting forward $100 million and not taking any interest at all in whether the whole future of the mine could be put into doubt by a spontaneous explosion?

Therefore, due diligence and very careful research would have to be done to make sure that the methane problems that exist in almost all mines were being properly regulated and that in fact is ensured by provincial authorities.

The provincial authorities have their health and safety regulations. Those had to be complied with. The Bank of Nova Scotia made sure they were complied with. Of course we, giving a guarantee for a portion of that loan, also made sure on a regular basis, through independent mining consultants, that those regulations were being complied with.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, in point of fact the risks of spontaneous combustion were clearly defined and well known to the government before its decision to fund the Westray project. On December 7, 1987 the government's own Crown corporation, Devco, warned in a memorandum that the Foord seam gives off large volumes of gas and has proven to be extremely liable to spontaneous combustion.

In the face of this clear warning, why did the government choose to provide $85 million in loan guarantees to the Westray project?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the truth is this. The Devco mine in Glace Bay, for example, not far from the hon. member's riding, has methane gas problems too. It had a tragedy in 1979. These things happen. It does not mean that you do not go ahead and see, under a proper regulatory environment that is constantly being monitored by independent mining consultants, that you do not make the investment.

This is what in fact happened. The investment went ahead. It was carefully monitored and accidents still happened. The judicial inquiry in Nova Scotia will help us to uncover that.

In so far as the hon. member is saying that methane gas problems do not exist in all mines, he knows that is not true. They exist in most mines. We have to make sure that the regulatory system put in place is complied with. We assured ourselves of that. How the accident occurred now will be the subject of that provincial inquiry.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources or the other minister that is answering for the government regarding the Westray disaster.

I want to state as a preface that I recognize the appropriate jurisdiction in matters of safety and health and so does my party.

However, considering the government's major investment, both financial and in terms of the government's credibility, which the government made in Curragh Resources, especially considering the Prime Minister's and other ministers' unusually active intervention in support of the Westray proposal, did the minister or his or other officials of the federal government directly or indirectly conduct any ongoing surveillance of safety conditions and operations at the Westray mine or was this treated in the same way as any other industrial operation?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I may have misunderstood the question. Did he say did members of Parliament or members of cabinet do the surveillance? This has to be done by experts, by independent mining experts.

In this particular contract, the Bank of Nova Scotia, wanting to protect its investment, made sure this was done on a monthly basis. It was done and we also ensured that it would be done because our guarantee was there.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I must say with all respect that the answer was a little picky. There is more than one way of conducting surveillance. One is to be in some close touch with provincial authorities whose job it is to investigate ongoing safety operations in the operation.

Did the federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources or other officials of the government undertake any ongoing contact or surveillance—never mind the exact term—with the appropriate provincial officials or with the provincial government to ensure that appropriate safety measures were being taken at this operation,

in light of this government's unusually active involvement in promoting this specific promoter?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, we of course relied on the surveillance primarily carried out by the independent mining consultants. I will try to find out if more surveillance was put in place besides that.

The hon. member is asking if there were members of Parliament, parliamentarians—

Some hon. members: No, no.

Mr. Hockin: —parliamentarians from that region who supported this project. The answer of course is yes. There was a regional economic development need in that part of Nova Scotia.

• (1440)

There were mayors, there were city councillors, there were all sorts of public leaders who very much supported this investment. This is not unnatural. This government supports regional economic development and just dozens and dozens of public people in that region supported this investment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Since the Prime Minister is in Washington today—I hope that it is not just to report to head office—in his absence, I would like the Deputy Prime Minister to tell me whether the Prime Minister told the President of the United States during lunch that the great majority of Canadians want to renegotiate the free trade agreement, or was he satisfied just with crumbs from the table?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, no.

The Prime Minister met with the President of the United States to talk about a number of outstanding issues, particularly trade irritants. The Prime Minister was very forceful and forthcoming over what we consider to be harassment by the United States concerning softwood lumber, Honda and other issues.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition should be pleased with the fact that the President has undertaken to personally become involved in these particular issues, and as well to use whatever influence he has with respect to Congress.

I should also remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the Prime Minister will be meeting with the heads of the Senate and the House of Representatives as well to talk about the respective trade issues that affect Canada and the United States, particularly our bilateral trading relationship.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we noted at the press conference that Murphy Brown got more attention than the Prime Minister for his representation to the President.

In the Saturday last *Toronto Star* a prominent member of the government said: "The Prime Minister recognizes that changes have to be made and we are in the process of making them before the next election".

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister if the government is changing the policy at long last and agreeing with the Canadian public that the free trade deal needs renegotiation, or was the Prime Minister just reporting to the President of the United States as a subsidiary reports to the head office?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that there are always things that can be improved in a trading agreement.

One of the reasons, of course, that we are in the North American free trade agreement discussions is that we believe through that vehicle we can make some changes that will be beneficial to Canada in the free trade agreement with the United States.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Today the Conference Board of Canada released its latest outlook for the Canadian economy. It concluded: "The current situation in Canada is grim—We are on the verge of recession". This means that this government's

economic policies, especially the last budget, have been a failure.

The Minister of Finance has already said that his budget has been wrong on growth, wrong on jobs and yesterday his department said that the numbers for the deficit for last year have also been wrong.

Why will the minister not admit that his budget has been a failure and bring in new policies that this time focus on economic growth and jobs before it is too late and before this country falls back into recession?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the forecast provided by the Conference Board of Canada is overly pessimistic.

There are a number of indicators that would prove otherwise. For example, real exports were up 3.7 per cent in the first quarter. The results flow from a strong increase in imports of 7.8 per cent in March, which indicates that there is a great deal of purchasing in the area of machinery and equipment, and this is a very positive indicator. Housing starts went up by 7 per cent; 14 per cent for single detached dwellings.

It is also important to point out, as Mr. Frank indicated in his report through the Conference Board of Canada, that "the central problem lies with declining real disposable income in Canada due to falling employment and rising taxes in many provincial budgets".

Obviously what has happened is that the stimulus we have provided in our February budget has been usurped and eroded by the actions of many provincial government budgets which have increased taxes, and that is something we did not do.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Today Patti Croft, an economist at Burns Fry Limited, said speaking about these export-import numbers: "I don't think it is indicative of an economic turnaround".

I do not see why the Minister of Finance tries to put the blame on the provinces for offloading on them the effects of his own cutbacks.

The Conference Board said: "We can put aside the hope that lower interest rates and inflation will rouse the consumer. Jobs are all that matter—With unemployment falling 110,000 in March and April, we cannot see much prospect for improvement over the short term".

Why will the Minister of Finance not recognize that this is a valid and damning indictment of his policies and bring in new policies that focus on growth and jobs and give Canadians hope and give Canadians confidence?

What is he waiting for? Surely he does not want another recession.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I was not trying to blame anybody else. I was simply quoting for the record the comments of Mr. James Frank when he said: "the central problem lies with the declining real disposable income in Canada due to falling employment and rising taxes by many provincial budgets".

Did the hon. member not read *The Globe and Mail* of Monday where the headline says: "Maz giveth and the provinces taketh away"? That is the problem.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, my question is for the acting Prime Minister.

The government is obviously determined to spread confusion on the constitutional issue. On one hand, the minister responsible boasts about the progress made at the negotiating table, and on the other, his colleague, the minister of health, says that there is nothing on the table for Quebec, "absolutely nothing for Quebec" are his exact words and that no transfer of powers has yet been discussed. An obvious question arises: Who is telling the truth, the minister of health or his colleague?

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the meeting is now going on in Montreal and another meeting will take place next week, with a known agenda. Of course, some questions take more time than others, but the whole agenda will be followed and the timetable will be respected.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): But, Mr. Speaker, the agenda is not known. It is the big unknown in Canada at this time.

The response indicates that the government does not know where it is going. First it suggests there is an agreement, then it threatens to hold a referendum as a stick. When will this government make up its mind? Are we to understand that May 31, the date mentioned yesterday, is the deadline for the effort now under way?

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, he says the agenda is not known, but I have in my notes here that they will discuss Senate reform and aboriginal issues on Wednesday and spend Thursday on the division of powers. Friday will be spent on all the points discussed and Senate reform as well.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, since the Minister of Finance quoted from the Conference Board's discussion of why there were problems in our economy, why the situation was grim, why did he not concentrate on the key point that Mr. Frank makes, the falling employment which exists in this country? In fact declining interest rates, as this report makes clear, have not spurred consumer spending. Business investment is going to be lower and unemployment is going to stay at 11 per cent until the end of 1992.

• (1450)

Does the Minister of Finance not recognize that it is time to bring in a new budget which shifts spending and puts spending behind an expansion of jobs in this country to get people back to work?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the report points out it is somewhat counterproductive if, on the one hand, the federal government moves to provide some tax relief, to provide some slack so that individual Canadians have more disposable income and to see on the other hand, that is taken up and in fact exceeded, particularly by the three NDP governments. They are the ones that have been the most guilty in this particular area. They not only sapped the tax breaks that we provided Canadians. They imposed further taxes, and that is the point he is making.

I am very concerned about the level of unemployment and the lack of employment. The budget did take some very major steps in trying to provide a more competitive environment in the manufacturing and processing sector, that particular sector which has been most hard hit. We have provided additional resources for training so that we can upgrade skills and improve the capability of our work force to meet the new demands that are out there. All these things are part and parcel of the budgetary provisions.

I recognize and I acknowledge, even in the budget, that the fourth quarter was slower than we expected and that could carry over into the first quarter. That is certainly not reason to abandon ship and start to do what the NDP wants to do: print money and hope the problem will go away.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, we have seen a government which on January first of this year increased taxes on Canadians $1.8 billion and then talked in the House of Commons about trying to reduce taxes. The unemployment insurance increases this government put through in terms of increased fees have done as much damage as anything across this country in terms of reducing consumer demand.

What is the Minister of Finance going to do in the face of this forecast that economic growth will only be one per cent when his budget was based on a forecast of 2.7 per cent, almost three times as much? That is what is causing the unemployment in this country; that is what the minister has to respond to.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, again not to belabour the point, the report clearly cites on at least three different occasions on two pages the impact of the provincial budgets, the impact of the increased taxes provided by provincial budgets. I am not making that up.

If the hon. member wants to accept this report, why does he not accept that element of it?

I indicated to him that I believe his forecasts of one per cent GDP for 1992 were overly pessimistic. I also indicated that because of the slowness in the fourth quarter and the extension into the first quarter of 1992 our target of 2.7 per cent may not be met. As a matter of fact, with Statistics Canada adjusting the figures for 1991 downward by .4 per cent, that immediately throws the 2.7 per cent figure out of kilter because it then becomes 2.3 per cent. We are looking at growth that will be less than that.

I have acknowledged that publicly and I acknowledge it here, but that is no reason to start out on a new policy course. The course that we are following is sound. There has been continuing monetary ease. There have been provisions for the manufacturing sector. There have been inducements—

Mr. Speaker: I think we are going to have to move on.

* * *

TOURISM

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

As we know, tourism is one of our major economic generators. This last weekend there were long lineups at the American border with many of our tourists being held up there.

Could the minister tell us what is being done to expedite the access of American tourists to Canada? This has been widely reported in the American press. What can we do to tell them that Canada is a good place to visit?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, it may come as a surprise to this House, because it is good news and that is very seldom reported, that cross-border shopping has decreased two consecutive months in a row. Between January and March there were 300,000 fewer one-day trips. I am not jumping up and down with joy yet, but if the trend continues I think we will see positive results.

As far as the specific question from the hon. member is concerned, we have not only brought greater efficiency to the border with new technology and systems to speed up the process. We in fact have opened up some nine special tourist lanes in nine locations nationally, three of them in British Columbia, which have increased tourism over the last few months.

Tourism is increasing. Cross-border shopping is decreasing. This is good news, and I hope the parliamentary press gallery will write about it one day.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Yesterday I urged the Canadian government to support the people of Thailand in their struggle for democracy. I am pleased to see that today the government has acted in response to our recommendations to cancel arms exports. However, that is not enough.

I want to ask the minister this: Will she clearly demonstrate her support for the democratic forces and immediately cancel direct aid and lines of credit for Thailand? Will she ask for an international inquiry into the events of the past few days?

[*English*]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, like all members of this House and all Canadians I am horrified by what has occurred in Thailand over the past few days.

I would like to report to the House that just in the last hour or so there have been some positive developments, including an amnesty by royal decree for all the people who have been arrested and a movement back toward democratic practices through the intervention of the king with the prime minister and with the leader of the opposition who had been on a hunger strike.

We are therefore a little more hopeful than I was even this morning, and I know that the House will be pleased to hear that.

Let me say in terms of the action we have taken that we have called in the Thai ambassador to Canada. We have asked our ambassador there to intervene with the prime minister. We are in regular touch with our ambassador and have asked for a report from him. We have called on the Thai government to institute a process of independent inquiry. We are monitoring

virtually minute by minute the situation and will take further action as we think it is required.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, we certainly welcome the news from the minister about events changing, but I think there are some important questions for the minister.

This government has said constantly that it ties direct assistance to the question of human rights. Why is it that in the past year we have increased our arms exports to Thailand and we have increased our direct aid to that country when we knew it had a repressive military regime?

I also want to ask the minister: as a major signal should we not put a freeze on that direct aid until we see that there is clear movement toward the re-establishment of a democratic government in that country, not just the amelioration of some conditions but the return of democracy?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the aid we give to Thailand is in support of democratic development. Much of it even though it is defined as government development actually is institutional. It goes to places like the Thailand Development Research Institute, an independent think tank for economic policy in support of democracy and good governance. There are projects for community development and for human resource development.

Those are very important projects in the current context. While we are prepared to take strong action on aid as it is required, we think that under these circumstances, certainly to date, these projects support the democratic process and are useful for the people of Thailand as they search for full democracy.

* * *

• (1500)

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the chairman of the standing committee on justice which is now studying the proposed firearms regulations.

I want to be sure that I will have the opportunity to discuss with the committee some problematic regulations. One such regulation is the requirement to load guns only where they may be lawfully discharged. The problem is that the police are not exempt.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the member could put his question.

Mr. Attewell: Will the committee be seriously looking at some of these harsh rules on gun collectors and others?

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid the question is out of order.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

In the context of the Rio conference it is very clear that the government has completely caved in on global warming. One hopes it will not on biodiversity.

I would like to ask a question about another crucial issue and that is the necessity of funding the less developed countries so that they can live up to the undertakings arrived at at Rio.

First question, did the Prime Minister press President Bush today to match the amount that the Japanese are prepared to commit to the global environmental facility?

Second, is the Canadian government prepared to commit new money to a facility in the amount called for annually by its own national round table on the environment?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the government has made both financial commitments and commitments in respect of the substance of the issues having to do with Rio. I certainly would not want the preamble to stand without denying that we have caved in on anything, be it biodiversity or climate change.

The Prime Minister has been in touch with the President on the issues that are coming up and on the need that the conference be a success. Indeed he has been instrumental in encouraging President Bush to attend along with other G-7 leaders.

As to the outcome of the conference, we will have to wait and see. There will be further discussions among all the G-7 leaders, not just the President and the Prime Minister, between now and then.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

PROCEEDINGS UNDER STANDING ORDER 38

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my point of order is with regard to yesterday. At 6 p.m., the Acting Speaker indicated to the House that there was a motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 which was deemed to have been moved and he acknowledged the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Earlier that day there were some discussions among House leaders concerning different travel motions for which consent was necessary and we had agreed to the substance of those motions.

My point of order is simply that these matters were raised at an inappropriate time, namely during the adjournment proceedings. I believe the rules are fairly clear on that. It ought not to have taken place yesterday during the adjournment proceedings. I hope in the future that this will not serve as a precedent for further motions seeking unanimous consent of the House, regardless of what the subject matter may be.

I want to indicate to the House that as far as the subject matter is concerned, we have agreed with those travel motions but it was an inappropriate time to raise those in adjournment proceedings.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to support my colleague's intervention. We in the New Democratic Party support the motions, but I would not like to see using that particular time of the day as a precedent for moving unanimous consent motions. Indeed, we support the points raised concerning yesterday.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order.

I am sure at least some members will recall, with reason, how I ranted and raged against the House during the debate on the war between Iraq and Kuwait, because of those surprise motions that could be presented any time of the day or night. Dissatisfied with what it could obtain directly, the government would wait until the member in question was absent from the House or until there was no quorum, to ask the unanimous consent of the House, and do so at any time of the day or night.

I think that members who are dedicated to the principles of the House of Commons and the spirit of harmony that should exist within these precincts, would like to see our standing orders make it sufficiently clear when, how and where unanimous consent can be requested, so that people are not taken unawares, and I am thinking more particularly of what happened last night.

I simply want to be on the record as reminding the House of what has happened before, and I would like to have the assurance that these surprise motions do not become the rule in this House.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the point of order.

I think it is clear that an exception was made yesterday evening. I just wanted to restate that it is the practice and the intent of the government to move such motions at the appropriate time during Routine Proceedings.

In perusing the record, it will be found that what was done was procedurally correct. I want to assure my hon. friends that it is not the intention of the government to establish a new practice or to depart from established practice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Chair has heard the point of order.

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 15 petitions.

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

* * *

BILL C-45

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-45, an act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods, with amendments.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

REFUGEES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to present to the House petitions signed by many of my constituents as well as constituents in the surrounding area.

These petitioners call upon the government to step up action on refugee cases while exercising compassion. Many of these refugees are suffering from personal and economic hardship as their future is undecided while they await the slow refugee processing.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present 25 signatures on a petition to the House of Commons.

• (1510)

The petitioners say that social and political conditions are unstable in many Third World countries, that thousands of refugees to Canada are trapped in a processing backlog and that many of these refugees are suffering from personal and economic hardships, their futures undecided as they await the slow refugee processing.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the government to step up action on refugee cases and exercise some compassion.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Scarborough—Rouge River.

Following up on the Citizen's Forum, the petitioners ask that the government ensure that a referendum on constitutional reform proposals is held and that it provide a mechanism for approving the constitutional proposals and some mechanism for a double majority.

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN PROJECT

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions to the House. The first petition is from a number of constituents from the Moose Jaw—Lake Centre riding and states that it is important to encourage all Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada.

Although Canadians are normally reserved people and control their patriotic feelings, the petitioners are very pleased to take part in the Proud to be Canadian Project which is sponsored by the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada.

The petitioners therefore pledge their support to protect Canada, as an opportunity to nurture a positive feeling and relationship with our heritage and our flag and to encourage stronger ties with all Canadians for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles and to promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

ADVERTISING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): My second petition, Mr. Speaker, is from a number of constituents from Elbow, Saskatchewan. They state that whereas the abuse of alcohol is seen as the cause of many of the social problems confronting our society, and whereas the advertising of alcoholic beverages on radio and television is seen to encourage the abuse of alcohol by young people and others, the undersigned, the petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to instruct the government to ban the advertising of alcoholic beverages on radio and television. They call on the government to act on this matter.

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN PROJECT

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first petition, deemed to be certified by the clerk of petitions under Standing Order 36, is signed by constituents of The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, all of whom reside in Paradise Hill or St. Walburg, Saskatchewan.

The petitioners state that it is appropriate to encourage all Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada. The petitioners were part of the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada's Proud to be Canadian Project which is taking place across Canada at this moment.

The petitioners thereby 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.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to be in Paradise Hill for this tour and the signing of that petition.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is again certified by the clerk of petitions under Standing Order 36 and is signed by members of The Battlefords—Meadow Lake constituency, almost all of whom reside in the city of North Battleford.

The petitioners are all concerned about the constitutional process presently taking place in Canada. They have reviewed the process by which Canada has undertaken to allow Canadians to participate in the process.

They call on the government to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people which is binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government. They also call upon a regional majority for Canadians in the counting process.

TAX REFORM

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the petitioners in this first petition call upon the government to bring forward real tax reform.

They want a simplification of the system. They note that if you have child care receipts you can get an income tax deduction, but if you choose to stay home and take care of your children you cannot. They deplore the fact that common law couples had their deductions changed and not to their advantage.

These petitioners call upon the government to bring about tax reform.

RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, in another instance, petitioners from my constituency ask that the Canadian Radio–Television and Telecommunications Commission monitor the use of foul and inappropriate language on radio and television in both the English and French languages. They feel it is counteractive and contradicts the efforts of parents in their home to rear their children. They want this monitored.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, finally I have petitioners from my constituency who call upon the government to ensure that there is quality education, training, retraining, research and development in our country. How else can you meet the challenges of globalization, enhance competitiveness and increase productivity.

They deplore the fact that there have been cuts to transfer payments, a 3 per cent tax on student loans, six months more interest on loans; tuition fees are increasing; student debt is increasing. They want the government to review all of this.

DRUG SEIZURES

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition collected by Ted Wray who is with the Oakdale Acres Ratepayers Association of my riding of York West.

He collected a number of petitions asking this government to amend the Narcotics Control Act so that the huge financial proceeds coming from drug seizures in metropolitan Toronto, where unfortunately drug abuse is rampant, be shared with local police officers and local organizations rather than having 100 per cent of those proceeds going back to the general revenue funds of the Government of Canada.

The aspect and the objective is that the organizations, local police forces and others who are on the leading edge of trying to combat drugs would be aided by some very much needed tools.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by numerous residents of Mountain, Ontario; Ottawa, Ontario; Nepean and other areas in the vicinity of Ottawa.

These petitioners join with countless others for whom I have filed petitions in a seemingly endless parade of objections to the high cost of gasoline in this area. My fear is that the petitions are falling on deaf ears because the replies I have seen to some of the previous ones from the government have been totally useless.

These particular petitioners object to the disparity and the high price of gas in the Ottawa area as opposed to other parts of Ontario. They call upon Parliament to urge the government to correct this injustice to Ottawa area motorists instead of filing a host of platitudes every time these petitioners file objections in this House, with the outrageous conduct of this government allowing them to be taken to the cleaners the way they have been for so long.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from my constituents who have expressed concern about two Canadian citizens, Christine Lamont and David Spencer, who in their opinion are suffering miscarriages of justice.

They are urging 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.

* * *

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, forthrightly and fully: Nos. 235 and 268.

[*Text*]

Question No. 235—**Mrs. Gaffney:**

Since January 1989, how much federal funding from all sources has been given to (*a*) the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and (*b*) Action Canada?

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) Since January 1989, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) has received a total of $1,315,000 in federal funding from the Secretary of State.

(b) No funding has been provided by the Department of the Secretary of State to Action Canada.

Question No. 268—**Mr. Proud:**

For the years 1990 and 1991, have any departments, agencies or crown corporations contributed funding to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and if so (*a*) which ones (*b*) in what amounts?

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 National Action Committee on the Status of Women has received funding from the Department of the Secretary of State for the fiscal years 1990–91 and 1991–92.

(b) In 1990–91, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women received $396,000 from the Department of the Secretary of State and in 1991–92, $300,000.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): 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. Paproski): 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.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government when I could expect a reply to the Notice of Motion for Production of Papers I tabled on February 26, 1992, as item P–13?

• (1520)

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the hon. member's question.

What I can say is that the papers in question are not in the control of the Government of Canada and that it would be appropriate for my hon. friend to address her question to the commission itself, that is the Commission on Reproductive Technology which I believe was the object of her question.

I would ask therefore that the question be transferred for debate if it is unacceptable to my hon. friend.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Transferred for debate.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

WESTRAY COAL MINE DISASTER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have an application pursuant to Standing Order 52. The Chair has received a letter from the hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke. It is very, very important. I would like to hear the hon. member's very short comment.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I and my colleagues in the New Democratic Party decided that an application for an emergency debate regarding the issues arising from the Westray coal disaster was important and was an issue requiring urgent consideration by the House.

First of all, yesterday Canada mourned the loss of 26 Nova Scotia miners killed in an industrial accident at the Westray coal mine. Today Canadians are seeking assurance from their governments, both federal and provincial, that this disaster could not have been prevented. They want to understand the circumstances underlying the operations of the mine and surrounding the accident.

The high level of public concern must be answered at this the earliest appropriate opportunity for this Parliament to discharge its responsibilities to both the dead and the living. The legitimate demand of Canadians for answers to their compelling questions, which have been covered widely in the media during the past week, were appropriately held at bay over this last week by agreement of all parties of this House. We did not feel that it was an appropriate time, and those demands for answers must now be met. A failure to meet that demand we feel can only further disappoint Canadians in a Parliament already suffering from considerable public disdain and disrespect.

The usual opportunities the House provides will not enable this assurance to be made in a timely manner. The business of the House in the last weeks before the summer recess is simply too crowded to provide for debate during regular hours, and that has been compounded by the addition of the referendum legislation just put before the House.

For that reason I respectfully submit that an emergency debate is the most appropriate means for this Parliament to discharge its responsibilities.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have listened to the hon. member and also we have looked over the letter and his proposition.

I regret at this time it does not meet the terms of the Standing Orders.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Tuesday, May 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, be now read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When debate ended, the hon. member had 10 minutes of questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint–Denis): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I listened very carefully, as I intend to do throughout a debate that is so important for the future of our country, to the comments made by my hon. friend, colleague and neighbour, who incidentally will celebrate his 25th anniversary as a parliamentarian next Friday, on May 29. He was elected to this House on May 29, 1967, and I thought we should mark this occasion. I listened carefully to what the hon. member had to say, and it brought back a host of memories of all the events around this constitutional question.

I keep thinking that if we had only ratified the Victoria charter—someday, we will have to write history as it is—we would not be here, rehashing the same subject more than 20 years later. Political observers should take another look at the Victoria charter, in light of the revelations by special advisers who had said, at the time, that Victoria was unacceptable.

I also keep thinking that if we had only ratified Meech Lake, we would not be here discussing the constitutional question once again. In other countries people are killing each other and burning cities and getting into fights about constitutional questions. In Canada, things are different. We talk and talk, and eventually, when we think people are really getting fed up, we finally find a solution, and that is what we will try to do.

I must say that my hon. colleague and friend very aptly expressed—and I speak as chairman of the caucus of Liberal senators and members from Quebec—the wishes of the Quebec caucus in Ottawa, when he said there should be spending limits. We discussed this at length, and I appreciate his emphasis on this point. He also said that this kind of referendum seemed to require a double majority, a majority across Canada and a majority in each of the regions, but, irrespective of the final debate and the ultimate decision made in this House, we will never tolerate imposing a decision on a majority of Quebecers who would be opposed to it. I would not tolerate that, and I know I have colleagues and friends in all parties who would agree this would be entirely unacceptable.

I also urge political observers, colleagues and friends—and I would appreciate the hon. member's comments—to remember that in 1978, just to show there is nothing new under the sun, on April 4, and I am proud to say my memory has not failed me, Marc Lalonde, then minister of state responsible for federal-provincial relations, tabled a referendum bill. Everybody knows Marc Lalonde and I have had a number of vigorous discussions. We often disagreed, but I must say that his presentation on the referendum bill, and I have a summary here of the main provisions of that bill, contains many elements that we also find in the bill before the House today.

In any case, I hope that whatever the tenor of discussions by the party leadership, the government will agree to accept amendments. I would appreciate it if the hon. member would tell us if we stand any chance of getting through to the responsible minister, who seems determined to argue:

[*English*]

"It's going to be my way or no way." I would like to tell him that it is going to be no way if he thinks it is going to be his way.

On a question of such dramatic importance for the future of our country, I would hope that the government would have the sagacity, the intelligence of accepting major amendments, when the time comes. I would suggest that we should go to committee, not a committee of the whole but I would prefer a committee of this House, to study exactly what this referendum is all about. I would not understand if the political parties did not participate. I could not accept personally if the political parties do not participate together in the drafting of the question. It is unacceptable. I know my colleague is an expert. I am sure he will vigorously defend that point of view expressed by us. He is our representative. We want to participate in the drafting, it should not only done by the government. There should definitely be a limit to the expenses, and there should be fairness for both points of view that will be expressed to Canadians.

• (1530)

I thank him for his views which he expressed yesterday. I trust he will be vigorous in his representation and I would like him to comment further on the few proposals that I just made.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Saint-Denis for his statement. In particular, I must say that it is quite appropriate to set spending limits for the yes and no sides. Without spending limits, the wealthier will obviously have more opportunity to put across their point of view and may be able to impose their opinion in such a way that the others will feel wronged in what must be as democratic an exercise as possible.

I find it rather strange that the government refuses to impose spending limits by arguing that under the charter, people cannot be forced to get together under a yes or no umbrella. I would tell those who say that Canada is too diverse to have such umbrella committees that Great Britain used such a procedure in the referendum on its joining the European Community.

When the House adjourned yesterday evening, I was talking about this referendum held in Great Britain. Before I was interrupted, I was going to say that the no camp in Great Britain contained ultra-Conservative unionists from Ulster and Trotskyist coal miners' unions, while the yes camp included the Labour Prime Minister and the English managerial class. Moreover, the yes side included some ministers in the Wilson cabinet and some ministers in the Wilson cabinet were on the no side.

That makes me think of the division of opinion now in the Conservative government. Some days, on seeing the minister of intergovermental affairs say one thing and the minister of health another, one wonders whether these two gentlemen are not preparing to be in different camps in the referendum that might soon be held in Canada. But just because the leader of the Reform Party and the leader of the Bloc Quebecois might be on the same side in the Canadian referendum does not mean that there should be no umbrella committees. On the contrary, I think that it is quite natural, in a referendum on a major issue, to find people of different allegiances on the same side. That was the case in the Quebec referendum.

We will recall that the present leader of the Liberal opposition stood with Camil Samson, leader of the Creditiste Party, and the then leader of the Conservative Party, who today is the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. These three people, of very different political stripes, were on the same platform, in the same camp, and that did not prevent the referendum from being held and running smoothly.

I bring up these things because it seems to me that the government is hiding behind the charter of rights in its desire not to set spending limits for the principal camps in a referendum. We think that spending limits are absolutely essential and that the government must understand and accept this. There will be no credible, fair, equitable and democratic referendum unless the spending of the groups that take part in it is limited.

[*English*]

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I listened yesterday to the debate with a good deal of interest. I was perhaps looking for some passion about our country and expecting to see in the House of Commons a sense of co-operation and accommodation in terms of dealing with this very important issue of legislation for a consultative referendum for Canadians.

Unfortunately I did not hear what I was looking for. Just a moment ago when my hon. colleague across the way asked a question of the member who spoke last yesterday I noted that he made some reference as to whether we should have spending controls on the legislation. The answer suggested that we should and that the government is somehow doing something wrong by not imposing these controls.

I have some things I would like to say about this, and I have some references I would like to make. However I would like to begin by quoting an article in *The Ottawa Sun* today by Michel Gratton.

In response to my colleague he said that the Liberals "obviously want a national plebiscite on the constitution". He also said:

> I can understand the opposition's frustration. They are not in control. It must be particularly hard for those Trudeau-era Grits who used to manipulate their adversaries in similar fashion. I don't remember Jean Chrétien consulting too many opposition members on constitutional matters.
>
> And I don't remember any of them complaining about "no spending limits" on referendum expenses when the Trudeau ministers surreptitiously poured millions into TV advertising to defeat René Levesque's plebiscite in 1980.

I think it ill behoves any of us to say that we have some answers that are rooted in the past or rooted in absolutes when history has proven otherwise.

What is important in this debate is that we examine all the issues carefully and thoughtfully, thinking not only of our own political concerns, our own regional concerns, or our own particular interests. We must examine the issues carefully and thoughtfully in terms of the interests of the country as a whole and at large.

On the question of the referendum and why we are doing what we are doing in terms of this legislation there are some very straightforward answers that require non-partisan and thoughtful debate in order to arrive at the right conclusion to serve the country as best as we can.

First, there seems to be confusion in the minds of many of our constituents, our audience out there, about why we should hold a referendum, why it is not binding and whether the Constitution can be amended by holding a referendum.

For those who may be a little concerned or a little confused about this matter we cannot amend the Constitution through a referendum. It takes 11 governments, the Parliament of Canada and the legislatures of all 10 provinces, to amend the Constitution. That is the only way it can be done. It can be seven out of ten of those provinces with 50 per cent of the population or some other combination including unanimous consent.

That is what is in the Constitution. The referendum allows us merely to consult with the Canadian public, to get a sense of the direction in which Canadians would like to see us go. It is a reference to the public to ensure that the decisions we are taking in this very important matter, which is of such profound importance to the country, are decisions that are supported by the population in general. We have heard many questions about whether or not the Constitution should have a decision pending on the double minority, majority in all four regions, or a majority in any particular region or any particular province. My answer to that is that if the referendum cannot ultimately amend the Constitution, if it is not binding on the government—and it cannot be because of the way in which the Constitution was amended in 1982—then all the referendum is designed to do is provide a reference point for the decision-makers in the country. Once we have consulted with the country then we will have the kind of direction we need in order to take the next step.

• (1540)

It might be said by some opposition members that this does not demonstrate the kind of leadership that government should be taking on an issue like this. On a question such as this one we need to have as much support for the ultimate decision as we possibly can.

This is not just a question of an election bill, it is not just a question of a budget bill or a matter or policy that affects us in a small way. This is the question of the future of our country. I think that all Canadians are interested in that outcome, regardless of whether the Constitution can be amended by other than the provincial ministers and the Parliament of Canada.

This allows us to consult with Canadians to get their sense of our direction and where we are going. It provides us with the kind of information we need to plot the course of action and take us to the next step so that we can do what everybody wants, which is keep the country together. There is no shame in that. There is no shame in doing absolutely everything that is within our power to keep the country intact.

The other question that continues to arise concerns why there is no limit on the amount of money that can be spent in talking about this question, and saying that people should vote yes or people should vote no. I personally do not know, and I do not understand emotionally or intellectually why anyone would want to do anything to limit the right of individual Canadians to express their opinions on this particular and very important issue.

It seems to me that even if we did not have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that is very specific on freedom of speech, as Canadians we would want to have that ability to speak loudly and clearly and to be heard as well as we possibly could. In fact, it does say in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which was passed in 1982, under fundamental freedoms in section 2(b): "Everyone has the fundamental freedom: (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication".

That guarantees that Canadians can say what they like to say or what they feel that they must say to help us keep this wonderful country together. It helps to ensure that a referendum will allow for the greatest expression of opinion and provide the best possible sense of direction for the first ministers. It is they who ultimately must come to grips with the problem and help us amend the Constitution in a way that will give Quebec a sense of having a home within Canada and allow it to feel free enough to be able to express itself in the manner that an individual province and the individuals within that prov-

ince have the right to do in this particular country of ours, which is a great democracy.

We hear comments about fairness. It is not fair if we do not limit the spending. It is not fair if we do not reduce the amount that can be said on either side of the question. I do not understand that myself.

It seems to me that in this country we have some fundamental obligations, some responsibility as citizens. Whether we are members of the political system, members of the public at large, or members of the media or the business community our first duty is to our country and to ensuring that this great Confederation of ours remains intact.

To do that we must provide an atmosphere in which all the partners in Confederation can feel that they have a home which they belong in, and which they stay in because it provides some warmth, some comfort and some hope for the future for them. It is not something that we can force upon the members of the federation.

If we had a unitary country, I suppose none of this would be happening. It would all be so simple because we would not have to deal with 10 unitary states which have come together in a federation.

But in fact, that is not what we have. We have a great federation made up of 11 partners and two, almost three, territories at this time, that have a sense of individuality. That is appropriate in a country of 27 million people spread thinly across 25 million square miles.

It is difficult to keep a country like this together. The only way we can do it is by allowing each of the members of the federation, each of the partners in this country to have a sense of its own individuality, to express itself according to what is appropriate for its own needs and for its own place in our history and in our country. That is true of British Columbia, it is true of Manitoba, and it is also true of Quebec.

We have come to the pass where some members of the federation feel alienated, feel left out. They feel that somehow the country is not giving them what they thought they were going to get when they first came to Confederation. Therefore, we must rethink our approach to doing things, take a step back, take another look and ask whether there is some better way.

First of all, we have to know that the country wants to stay together. When the committee I co-chaired with Senator Beaudoin, which travelled across the country over the last few months, had completed its deliberations and tabled its report, a poll was conducted by Environics for the Council on Canadian Unity.

It was very clear to us from the results of that poll that, in fact, the one thing a large majority of Canadians can agree on is that they want this country to stay together because 71 per cent of them supported what was in the report. I would be quite surprised if 71 per cent of them actually had all the details of what was in the report at their fingertips.

Even more encouraging about that Environics poll was the fact that 65 per cent of Quebecers supported what was in the report. That tells me also that there is a large sense of wanting to remain in Canada, of wanting to belong to something greater that will lend strength to all parts of Quebec as well as the rest of Canada.

A referendum will allow us to get a sense of direction from every corner of the country, from each of the individual parts. However, we have to be extremely careful that we manage this referendum in a way that will not create alienation in any of the parts.

It would be unfortunate if we were to isolate any part of the federation by drawing very hard lines in the sand saying that there must be a majority here and there must be a majority there so that there is a binding decision. That is not the exercise.

The exercise is to consult, to think and then to determine the next step in a thoughtful way that does what it can to use the information we obtain by holding the referendum to bind the country together rather than use it in a way that might ultimately have just the opposite effect.

I want to say again that the Constitution cannot be amended by holding a referendum. The only way the Constitution can be amended is through the consent of the legislatures of the country, of the 10 provinces and the Parliament of Canada.

In the case of most of the issues that are on the table right now and later between the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs and the first ministers, most of those issues can be settled by seven provinces with 50 per cent of the population and the Parliament of Canada

consenting. One or two issues, such as amending the amending formula itself, require unanimous consent.

It is important that all members of this House and all people in Canada understand that if a referendum is held, it is a matter of reference. It is a matter of governments and all members of Parliament seeking direction to do one thing and that is to keep the country together. In spite of our own particular political stripe or particular partisan bent, we are all bound together by that same, individual, single goal. If we do not keep this country together, there will not be a Parliament, a referendum, or podiums for people to take partisan positions.

• (1550)

As the debate continues, I hope all members of Parliament will put their country first, put their partisan and personal interests aside just for a moment. Members should work toward a solution that will keep the country together, give all parts of the federation a sense of participation that will avoid any kind of divisive action that would alienate any more parts of the country. I appreciate the opportunity to say these few words today.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): I have a question for my colleague, the former chair of our parliamentary committee. It seems only a few days ago we were doing this in the committee, over that five or six month period.

I would like to ask her about the idea people have that in this bill there should be the concept of regional majorities. I know she was not on the amending formula committee which was co-chaired by her friend the senator and the member for Edmonton Southwest.

In that particular committee we had a unanimous report in terms of a consultative referendum. In that referendum wording we said we should have a double majority. We said that if there is a referendum: "The referendum should require a national majority and a majority in each of the four regions: Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic, and the west".

How would we interpret the results of a referendum if indeed we do not have that in the bill? Would she agree for example that before we proceed with amending the Constitution we would have to have the support of the population of Quebec? If she agrees to that, would she not also agree that we would have to have the support of western Canadians, Ontarians, or Atlantic Canadians?

I have always been of the view that before we can change the Constitution we have to have the support of an overwhelming majority of Canadians. It is not just an ordinary law; it is a very special document, it is the basic law of the country.

If we do not have the four regional vetoes in there in terms of a double majority, what advice would she have as to how we should interpret the results of that referendum?

There are all kinds of results. I would not want to speculate what they might be. I know the Prime Minister may be making a statement later as to how he would interpret the results of the referendum, but I want to know what advice she may have for the House as to how we should interpret those results?

Mrs. Dobbie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for the question. It is a valid one.

I do not think it is really a question of deciding at this point in time how we would interpret the results of the referendum or try to predetermine what we might actually see when a referendum is held.

It is very important, as I said before, to be flexible enough in terms of the consultation process with the public to allow for that determination to take place when we see the results.

Right now, if we draw hard lines in the sand and take positions and say that we must have a majority in Quebec, we must have a majority in Ontario, we must have a majority from the regions, then we are already asking for resistance and that will reduce the impact and the overall importance of this consultation process we are going through.

If we must go through it, it is extremely important that we be very careful that we do not do it in a way that will create some sense of alienation or some sense of isolation in any of the individual parts of the federation.

The hon. member mentioned he was on the Beaudoin-Edwards committee. I know he played a very important role there. There was unanimous consent about the regional vetoes and the double majority. But he will also recall that met with a very sharp rejection by those regions. Therefore, it is one of the questions we have to answer and one of the reasons we have to go so carefully.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the hon. member's riding and mine are separated only by the Assiniboine River. I always take note of what the hon. member says. I certainly share her love of country and support her patriotic remarks on behalf of this great country.

I am wondering whether the remarks she made this afternoon are perhaps better suited for the referendum debate itself, if we ever get to that, if the government does call a referendum, and we have to debate exactly what the question is. I say that only because I think that the previous speaker, at least today, should be concerned more with the mechanics of the referendum.

That brings me to the issue of a double majority. Our party believes strongly in a double majority provision in any referendum.

Let me attack it from this perspective. We are all minorities. One way or another, we are all minorities. There are only 295 members of Parliament in Canada and as a body of people, we are a minority in Canada. I come from the province of Manitoba, as does the hon. member for Winnipeg South. In the context of Canada, we are a minority. The people of Quebec are a minority in the context of Canada. Canadians, even though there are 27 million, are a minority in the context of the whole continent. When it comes to North Americans, we are a minority.

I raise that because one of the strong arguments against referenda for a long, long time has been the fear that referenda can be used by majorities to trample on the rights of minorities. That has always been the concern of having referenda. I can relate to that argument. I always fear when people talk about referenda that the instrument can be used by the majority to trample on minorities.

With that concern and with that fear, it leads me and my colleagues on this side of the House to support a double majority. That is the very provision in a referendum that will protect minorities in this country.

We in the west are a minority. We do not want a majority of Canadians to gang up on us when it comes to reshaping the Constitution. I am quite sure that Quebecers feel the same way. They do not want Ontarians or people from Atlantic Canada or the west ganging up on them.

So how do we protect Quebecers? How do we protect people from western Canada? How do we protect people from Ontario? Even though there are nine million, in the context of the country they are a minority. I cannot think of a better way to protect minorities in this country in a referendum than to incorporate a double majority provision.

I would like my hon. friend from Winnipeg South to comment on that.

Mrs. Dobbie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and my neighbour for his very good question. There is nothing to say that ultimately, when we see the results of the referendum, it may not be one of the considerations.

Obviously it is in the government's interest to protect everybody in Canada and that is very difficult. That is one of the reasons we have been so reluctant to enter into this whole issue of having a referendum. Clearly there are some downsides to it and it is still a big if.

What we are presenting here today is the ability to hold a referendum. It does not carry with it a guarantee that that is what will happen. By happy chance, if we can come to a consensus, which is really the only fair way that protects all minorities, about how to keep this country together, then a referendum need not be held. If one were held it would only be a matter of rubber-stamping what had already been achieved through consensus.

I respect and appreciate the hon. member's question. It is a difficult one. That is why it is so important not to draw too many hard lines or tight rules around how we will or might interpret the results of a referendum, if indeed we absolutely have to have one at some point in time.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear the government has failed to consider the impact of its decision to ask the House to adopt this bill and its decision to hold a Canadian referendum in circumstances the government may be said to have created.

Today, May 20, is the 12th anniversary of the 1980 referendum in Quebec.

• (1600)

My point is that we know what a referendum is like, and we know how traumatic it can be. We have seen the consequences and we are keenly aware of the political and democratic requisites for the referendum process. It so happens that the referendum that may be held as soon as the bill before the House is passed does not meet these criteria, Mr. Speaker. It does not meet the criteria for political legitimacy, because to us in Quebec, it is not legitimate. And as for being democratic, as far as Canada is concerned, it is not.

When I say it is not legitimate, I mean that the motives behind the government's action are patently suspect and extremely negative. It is painfully obvious that its real purpose is to do an end run around the referendum Quebec is about to call itself. After two years of dilatory measures, of successive failures of initiatives like the Spicer commission that turned into a regular circus, the proposals tabled on September 24, 1991, which were practically stillborn, the Beaudoin–Dobbie report which has now been shelved after only a few weeks, it seems as though this government all of a sudden wanted to prevent Quebec from holding its own referendum.

Why? It so happens that for the past two years a major movement has been growing and taking shape in Quebec, leading to the rebirth of the sovereignist movement. Whether we like it or not, Mr. Speaker, at the heart of the Canadian malaise and our political landscape, the major issue is Quebec's sovereignty. We can talk until the cows come home, we can waste our time on contitutional commas and semi-colons, we can use increasingly convoluted formulas to dilute the distinct identity of Quebec, but basically, we are just trying to evade the real issue. The real issue is: Will Quebec become sovereign, yes or no? In any case, that is what Quebecers have on their minds. I am not saying everyone will say yes, but in Quebec there are a lot of people who think Quebec should become sovereign and who want to be able to answer a question dealing with this particular subject. And this led to a commission of inquiry known as the Bélanger–Campeau commission, which sat for nearly one year. Three members of this House sat on the commission, and I was one of those members. This commission, whose members represented all activity sectors in Quebec, including labour, business, communities and all political parties, reached certain conclusions. Of course it could not reach a consensus on sovereignty or federalism, but there was one conclusion on which we all agreed and that was the enormous cost to all of us, in Quebec and Canada, as a result of the uncertainty in this country, an economic cost that is impossible to assess, a financial cost as well as a social cost and political cost.

Our society is not preparing for the major challenges of the future. While the world is busy building and rebuilding, Quebec and Canada are playing these introspective games. We have an education system that has to be renewed. We have to develop new technologies. We must redesign our national fabric, in Canada and Quebec, and meanwhile we are wasting our time on an endless discussion which contributes nothing to this debate. Why? Because some people, and these are mostly politicians or governments, do not want Quebecers to say what they want. But until Quebecers have voted in a Quebec referendum held under the auspices of the State of Quebec, by answering a question that deals with sovereignty, and until a decision is made, nothing will be settled.

Anything done by this government under siege, which is trying to use a referendum as an election platform and wrapping itself in the Canadian flag to save its own skin, will be useless. It is not getting us anywhere, and since this referendum is not legitimate because it does not answer the real question, because it will not resolve the real problems, the Bloc Quebecois will never feel bound by the results. Never. We will just be back to square one.

We are well aware that this referendum which the present government is preparing to hold is also an act of impotence, an admission that its own efforts have failed. This government had promised to make an offer to Quebec. Quebecers know that the political situation may produce an offer of renewal or lead to sovereignty. The Bélanger–Campeau commission concluded that Quebecers, like Canadians, by the way, had two options: sovereignty for Quebec or thoroughly renewed federalism. Supposing federalism can be renewed and that an offer might still come from the federal and provincial governments, the Government of Quebec created a parliamentary committee to study any offers that might come and would be binding on the federal and provincial governments.

This government had the obligation to make an offer, but it failed every time it tried to come up with one. So when the government tells us now that it will hold a referendum, what is it saying? It is telling us to forget about offers. Forget about the discussions going on in Montreal today and that have been going on throughout the country for some time. This government has two strategies. There is the strategy of the minister responsible for the issue, which is to try to come up with an agreement, and the strategy of the Prime Minister, who has concluded that the negotiations would fail.

By preparing to hold a referendum, Mr. Speaker, he is telling us: "The current negotiations are a farce. I know that my minister responsible is a naive man who is wasting his time and wasting the country's time. In fact, this country needs something to stir up the electorate, so that I can then hold an election on the basis of a yes vote that I will get on a phoney question." That is what is going on, Mr. Speaker. Let us be logical and open our eyes.

While we are wasting our time on what is supposedly a referendum debate, we are just discussing a life buoy that this government, which is dangerously adrift, wants thrown to it.

We in the Bloc Quebecois will not go along and take as hypocritical a stand as some others. I was there the other day when the Leader of the Official Opposition tore his shirt on learning that the bill would be tabled. He denounced its undemocratic character and added shortly afterward that he would vote for the bill, even without amendment, regardless. What inconsistency. That shows the government's tricks and the opposition's inconsistency. Inconsistency is a kind word; why not use another word that is in the dictionary, but I do not know if it is parliamentary: "hypocrisy". This same Leader of the Opposition tells us—and the hon. member just reminded him—that we should use the democratic rules provided in Quebec's legislation, rules that he speaks of with admiration today, rules that allow fairness in public funding for both sides. What a wonderful law. What a wonderful democratic requirement Quebec has. We should apply it to the federal government. But that same Leader of the Opposition, who was a minister in the Liberal government during the 1980 referendum that we are celebrating today, was determined to systematically violate Quebec's democratic legislation by tipping the scales with money and unlimited federal spending.

This makes me draw a parallel with the present bill. When I just said—and this is my second point—that this bill is not democratic, I believe that the argument may apply to all of Canada. I am a sovereigntist, but not because I believe that the federal government or the federal state is undemocratic. I am one of those who believe that, whatever the future of Quebec, whatever path it takes, it must maintain the democratic institutions that we have lived with for over a hundred years. I am one of those who are generally proud of the democratic tradition under which Canada operates, despite its shortcomings and weaknesses that we denounce from time to time but that in general do not break the continuity of this country's democracy.

I say that this referendum is an infringement on Canadian democracy and if ever a referendum were held in such conditions, it will be a scar on Canada's history and sully a very fine tradition that will always be an inspiration to Quebec. Why do I say that? It is, for example, because of the issue of unlimited spendings.

• (1610)

In every country of the world, at least in democratic countries and especially in ours, there is a requirement when an election is held, because it is an important decision, to put a ceiling on expenses and to ensure that one party will not be able to spend more than another. It is an old rule that has always prevailed. Elections have been held in Canada since the charter of rights came into effect. Nobody ever disputed that rule and I am convinced—this is a legal opinion which is worth what the others are worth and probably less—that the Supreme Court will never allow the law of the jungle to prevail, it will never substitute the power of money for the power of citizens when what is at stake is an issue as important as the future of a country.

Yet the government tells us that there will be no ceiling on expenses. Today I heard in the hallway—I do not know if it is worth anything, I have not seen the text—that the government leader intends to impose a very strict limit on the expenses of each committee, but that he would not limit the number of committees. This is a joke. This is the kind of amendment to be expected from this government. I can just see them show up tomorrow and tell us that they are generous and that they have listened to the voice of democracy. Mr. Speaker, they will come and tell us that they have

decided to impose a limit on the expenses of the committees. However, they will not limit the number of committees. There can be as many committees as there are Canadians. This is another joke by this government.

What is more serious, even though it often goes unnoticed, is the fact that the government itself, in its management of public resources, will not be subjected to any spending limit regarding the referendum. In other words, ministers will travel in Challenger aircrafts, civil servants will criss-cross the country during the referendum campaign, and they will be able to do just about anything with the government's money, the taxpayers' money, to influence the outcome of this exercise. Officially, it might be true that no party in this House will have access to public funds, but in fact one party will have such access.

This legislation enables the government and the government party, namely the Conservative Party, to use without any restriction, as that government likes to do given the deficit that we have, the public funds, the taxpayers' money, to come out a winner.

Mr. Speaker, if this is the kind of country in which Canadians want to live, the kind of referendum that they want to hold, and the kind of public administration that they want, fine, but us Quebecers say no and this referendum is null and void even before it is held. I can tell you that we will fight it everywhere in Quebec; we will challenge not only the question, but also the admissibility of the referendum, its anti-democratic character, and we will ask the people to vote against such an anti-democratic measure. I can assure you that there will be federalists from Quebec who will vote against the question because they feel that this intervention is shameful, unacceptable, and it goes against their idea of a fair and equitable society.

I have one last point regarding the content of this legislation. It is the issue of majority. Mr. Speaker, we all know that the motto of Quebec is "Je me souviens" and there is a date in the recent history of Quebec as well as in the recent history of Canada that nobody talks about; I am referring to 1942. Let us not forget that the conscription in 1942 was one event that tore the country. The general feeling of Quebecers then, which has been transmitted from generation to generation since, is that Quebec was the victim of steamroller tactics in 1942. The federal government then used the Canadian majority to bury the Quebec minority, even if our province was opposed to the conscription.

Consequently, we all believed that this government, when it would resort to a referendum and pass the required legislation, would allow for a double majority. I believe several members of the government said so before, to free themselves from the syndrome of 42, the conscription syndrome. But no, Mr. Speaker, there is no end to their excesses because they are in a state of utter confusion and helplessness.

Now, there will be only one majority. Some will claim, on the evening of the referendum, that Canada has decided that yes we had to go ahead by approving the empty question that Canadians will be asked, even if Quebec is a minority as regards the result of that referendum. Indeed, the legislation does not officially provide for any other interpretation than the global result for the whole country.

There is already in there a negation of the principle of the existence of the Quebec people. There is a fundamental negation of the right of Quebec to self-determination, which is a principle that last year, in August, this government mocked when, for publicity reasons, the few thousand militants that had gathered in Toronto to boast about having recognized the right of Quebec to self-determination, walked singing "O Canada" and hugging each other. This is the same party today that tables a bill which negates, in its essence and foundation, the principle that it recognized in Toronto last year.

We can only conclude, regarding this government, that a verdict will be necessary. There is of course an artificial majority here, which does not reflect in any way, as we know, what people in Quebec and in Canada think. The verdict will be a general election. Those people across the floor are all about to be evaluated by the population. That is why they wait as long as they can, that is why they will go to the very end of the five-year period provided by the Constitution. That is why they do not dare come before the population; that is why they hide behind an artificial situation which prevents them from getting the

sentence that they deserve. Mr. Speaker, we are ready. A decision will have to be made.

My second and last conclusion concerns the Government of Quebec. We have in Quebec a government whose premier has, because of historical continuity, the obligation of preserving the fundamental prerogatives of the state of Quebec. The first responsibility of the Premier of Quebec is not to be a party leader or to try to regain power or to remain in power: It is to ensure that the fundamental rights of Quebecers and of the Quebec nation are preserved. The first of those fundamental rights is of course the right to decide in Quebec, Quebec's future.

This same premier ratified the report of the Bélanger–Campeau commission which says that there must be a legislation requiring the government to hold a referendum on sovereignty in October 1992 at the latest. The same premier had the National Assembly pass a bill that contains precisely that conclusion and that requirement. We must demand from that premier, and this is what we expect from him, that he does not watch the federal parade at a time when the presence of the state of Quebec is required in a fundamental and essential way.

Therefore, we believe that if English–speaking Canadians want a referendum, which is legitimate, to define the kind of country that they want, the kind of offers that they would like to make to Quebec, so be it. It is totally legitimate, provided it is done in a democratic way. But at the same time, the central issue must be resolved and it must be resolved only by the logical decision–makers, the legitimate decision–makers, namely the people of Quebec. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, the steamroller is put into action once again.

I promise you that a great number of members of the Bloc Quebecois will be here, maybe a little farther from the curtain than we are now, with more seats, to again defend the cause of Quebec and to resume a debate that costs a lot to everybody, solves nothing and only makes the situation worse. I call upon realism, I call upon political courage, I call upon the need to make the real decision, which is to decide whether Quebec will or will not be a sovereign state. Leave it to the people of Quebec to decide.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the member for Lac–Saint–Jean a question.

Once upon a time, there was another Quebec separatist who was a democrat. His name was René Lévesque. I heard the speech of the hon. member for Lac–Saint–Jean who claims to favour a referendum within Quebec, but not a referendum across the country. Does the hon. member favour democracy in Quebec but not across Canada? That is my question.

• (1620)

Mr. Bouchard (Lac–Saint–Jean): Mr. Speaker, the decision Quebecers will be asked to make in the referendum is complex, but one of its elements is quite straightforward. Is Quebec a sovereign nation whose aspirations will be embodied in a sovereign state? That is a fundamental question that cannot be left up to others to decide. Outsiders cannot decide whether or not Quebec will be sovereign. According to the basic principles of democracy, this referendum, which will determine the future of the people of Quebec, must be held under the auspices of the state of Quebec. It only stands to reason. We must not forget that the word democracy contains the word "demos", the Greek word for "people". Democracy is power exercised by the people, which is as it should be. The power at issue here is the power to determine the future of a people, in this case, the people of Quebec.

Basically, the hon. member and I disagree, not on the concept of democracy but on the identity of the people in question. My hon. friend believes there is one people, the Canadian people, while I believe there are two peoples, who will not go their separate ways because they hate each other but because they are fundamentally different, because they have entirely different concepts of what their future should be and of their collective values, political structures and the kind of government they want.

My hon. friend believes that the federal system is a good system for governing this entity called Canada. I say they cannot be administered together, because the people of Quebec want a weak central government and a strong state of Quebec. My hon. friend believes that under a federal system, the central government must be able to govern, and he is right. But it so happens that since we are two peoples, there is one too many in Canada. Or there is one missing, depending on one's

perception. To us, what is missing is the Quebec nation, which we must create.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member for Lac-Saint-Jean has to do with our responsibility as members of Parliament who, when we come to this Chamber, are given a mandate to speak for Canada.

I do not speak just for Toronto. I do not speak here for Ontario. We try to the best of our ability when we are here not just to speak for our own ridings, but we try to work on behalf of the whole country.

When the member was giving his speech, he talked about the fact that the government would be using taxpayers' resources to try and keep this country together.

Does the member think it is wrong for those of us who want to keep the country together, even though we may have a different view of the direction of the country? Does he not think it is our responsibility and duty to the best of our ability to try and keep this country together? If we did not do that, our constituents would wonder what we are doing in this room.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I think with my hon. friend that in a normal federal system when the members are elected in their ridings they must abide by a fundamental duty of protecting the integrity of the country. He is right on that.

We were elected in Quebec. We were elected—that was my case—in a situation where we thought that the Meech Lake Accord would be ratified and that, basing our hopes on this, it would be possible after that, because there would be a climate of generosity and tolerance, to strike a new deal defining the different responsibilities and attributions of Quebec and Canada within the federation.

Meech failed. Meech was rejected and it changed everything. It showed that there were fundamental differences in this country. It showed that a member coming from a Quebec riding would be always obliged to defend Quebec first. It showed that we could not be here as sovereignists forever, that we must be here only the time it takes to achieve sovereignty, that there would be members acting as members in the House of Commons who would have to defend the country, their country which would be English Canada, and that we would be or other people would be in the parliament of Quebec.

It is a very particular juncture, a transitional juncture where we have to resolve the crisis. We happen to be here. We will seek an additional mandate to come back here with a large number of people, believe me, to complete the job we have undertaken, which is to apply a political solution to a political problem.

Whatever you say, you might wish this to be a unique country, one country, Canada, but it happens that it is two countries, two political entities. We Quebecers feel that we are a people. We have different views of the kind of government we need to be governed, and we think that it can only be achieved through sovereignty and two political structures: neighbours acting in the fulfilment of their aspirations remembering that they have geographical, economic and historical bounds.

Personally I think that we will always be friendly countries, that we are doomed to be friendly to achieve some kind of agreement on the common things we have to do together, but first it goes through sovereignty of Quebec and then maybe something would be possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned the Toronto convention, where it seems that the Conservative Party first recognized Quebec's right to self-determination. I would simply remind him that in Toronto, our party just reiterated Quebec's right to self-determination, since that right had been recognized in 1980. I think that he should remember it, because at that time he was working for the other side on the Quebec referendum. I also took part in the Quebec referendum.

Mrs. Venne: On what side?

Mr. Ferland: I was on the no side, and I have never been ashamed of it.

Mr. Lapierre: It's been quite a change.

Mr. Ferland: Mr. Speaker, he said in his speech that the referendum was undemocratic. I have a lot of trouble understanding someone saying that a referendum is

undemocratic when it is Canada-wide, but that the Quebec referendum was democratic.

I think that holding a referendum in Canada in no way takes away the right of French-speaking Canadians who live in Quebec to express themselves on the federal government's offers. I think that there is nothing wrong, reprehensible or undemocratic about that and it in no way takes away the Quebec government's right to use Bill 150, which we respect.

So I do not see how my friend opposite can say to us today— He should remember, Mr. Speaker, that not so long ago, he represented Canada in Paris and was proud of it. He said that Canada was the greatest defender of rights and freedoms in the world and an example to follow. Today he tells us in front of everyone here in this House that holding a national referendum is undemocratic. I would like him to explain that to me.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I do not have time to answer the very vicious personal attacks to which I am accustomed. I already did so and will do so at the appropriate time and place, but I want to return to the essential point—

Mr. Lapierre: Well, it's very hard to get through to the hon. member.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): —which challenged the use of the term "undemocratic" that I used to describe the bill and a referendum that would be held in the context of the circumstances he mentioned.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is elementary. As sure as can be, this bill is undemocratic. It is not undemocratic because it asks Quebecers to vote; it is illegitimate, which is even worse.

• (1630)

It is undemocratic because it contains no spending limit and will let our friends opposite go and see business people, engineers, architects, banks, big companies, government suppliers to contribute in order to influence the debate and load the dice. Let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, that in the Quebec referendum, which my colleague just mentioned, the Government of Quebec gave the federalist side a million dollars and the sovereigntist side a million dollars. Will this government dare to do the same? We know very well that it will not. It has the impudence and the indecency—A member from Quebec in this House has the nerve to accuse Quebec of not being democratic when it set an example for Canada and the federal government, which it should follow today, of respecting both sides.

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc Quebecois and member for Lac-Saint-Jean was just saying that, on this day, 12 years ago, on May 20 1980, the people of Quebec were voting in the Quebec referendum. I was listening earlier, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member for Portneuf who stated he was on the no side. So was I, along with the Chrétiens, Mulroneys and Ryans. I was indeed, and I was looking forward to this renewed federalism which rejected Quebec in 1981. Today, I wonder and I would like to put the question to the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean. Nearly two years have gone by since the failure of Meech, on June 23, 1990. In a month or so, two years will have been spent in this House debating the issue and striking committees to try and resolve the constitutional deadlock we are in. I would like to ask the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean about the statement the Minister of Labour made the other day to the effect that a Canada-wide referendum would have no legal value. Would that not tend to prove that the government is afraid of the results of such a referendum? Would it not tend to prove also that it is only a diversionary tactic aimed at confusing people, especially the people of Quebec?

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I think the question is relevant and stresses the blatant vagueness of the referendum because they are trying to have it both ways. That is the kind of language we have grown accustomed to with this government. I am not as good at it as I was two years ago. At any rate, it is obvious that this government is talking from both sides of its mouth. On the one hand, it is telling us that the referendum will change absolutely nothing, that it will be meaningless. On the other hand, when the results will be out, it will want to base its future course of action on these results. I think that it fools no one, and I thank the hon. member for this great question.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to bring to the attention of the House that we are now, under Standing Order 74, in the 10-minute period with no questions or comments.

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, today's debate represents one of the most important principles of a democracy. We are here to debate the framework within which the people of Canada will be able to decide their future. Canadians must be able to chart their own course. They must be able to be completely certain that their wishes, as expressed in a national referendum, will be respected.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we must recognize the fact that the Constitution belongs to the Canadian people. It does not belong to politicians or bureaucrats. We must give Canadians a chance to have the last word on any proposal for constitutional reform.

A Canadian referendum would give Canadian citizens outside Quebec a chance to say yes to Quebec and give Quebecers a chance to say yes to Canada. All Canadians must be able to say yes, not just those who live in Quebec or in provinces that plan to hold their own referendums.

[*English*]

We must trust the people of Canada. We must give them final say on any new constitutional agreement. That is why I welcome any legislation that will enable the people of Canada to do so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the bill gives the government the right to decide whether it is appropriate to hold a referendum, while the Liberal Party believes it is essential for Canadians to approve the proposals for constitutional reform in a referendum.

[*English*]

When Canadians go to the polls to express how they feel about the Constitution, they must have a sense that they will be listened to. They have to believe that the ballot they cast represents a real and fundamental contribution to the future of this nation. To do anything less I believe is a betrayal of the democratic process.

I understand that there are entrenched legal and constitutional mechanisms for the amendment of the Constitution. I know that in order to change some clauses of the Constitution we need to have the co-operation of the federal government and seven out of ten provinces representing at least 50 per cent of the population and absolute unanimity for others. Despite these facts, we have to recognize that a Constitution has to represent the people that it is intended to govern.

If we want to address the problems that our society does face, we have to put the debate over distinct societies, Senate seats and various clauses and permutations to an end. I know that the people of Canada will take advantage of a national referendum to put this issue to rest.

The process that the government has put into place is flawed. I believe that the largest and most fundamental flaw is that the government is not committed to respect the results of the referendum. Not only must its commitment respect the wishes of the entire nation; it must take into account the regional divisions of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Proposals for constitutional reform should not only require the approval of the people of Canada as a whole, but should also be supported by a majority of the population in each of Canada's major regions, including Quebec. The Prime Minister, however, has refused to promise to give up any constitutional agreement that did not receive the support of all Canada's regions.

[*English*]

We are a federation. We have prided ourselves on balancing the interests of different regions of this country. This must be reflected in this legislation. I hope the government will consider certain amendments that will make the process morally binding at least on the leaders of this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we must avoid even the remotest chance that any part of our country might be excluded from the constitutional renewal process.

The referendum legislation must recognize that each region in our country should be comfortable with the new constitutional proposals.

[*English*]

We are not here to accommodate the interests of a few. We are here to make sure that all Canadians, no matter where they live, feel that they are part of the process and are part of the solution. If we are to reach a true national reconciliation, all parts of Canada must be

satisfied that their interests are protected in the new Constitution.

Another one of the glaring flaws in this legislation is the fact that there are no spending limits. What in effect this bill enables governments to do is spend unlimited amounts of public tax dollars on the positions they take. The potential exists that taxpayers could be financing both sides of the referendum question with an unlimited amount of money.

During the last federal election Canadians were bombarded with propaganda from third parties on the merits of the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Millions of dollars were spent by big business while few could afford to meet this advertising onslaught. We need to set maximum spending limits and targets so that this exercise is truly democratic.

I know that some members opposite will say that they cannot limit the amount of money that third parties spend during things like referenda. They feel they will be challenged before the Supreme Court on the constitutionality of the legislation. They are afraid that the judges of the Supreme Court would see such a limitation as a violation of the free speech provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. No one is saying that we must prevent organizations or individuals from expressing how they feel about a potential referendum question.

• (1640)

The first section of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms says quite explicitly that government can set limits to these rights as long as they are reasonable in a free and democratic society.

I believe that by setting these types of limits on spending, we will be contributing to the democratic process rather than detracting from it. Bill C–81 should facilitate a fair and open debate over the future of Canada and enable the people of this country to have their say through a referendum that will, at the very least, be morally binding on the government.

This bill must stipulate that all regions of the country must have a say in how the constitutional issue will be resolved. That means we need a truly national referendum. I know, for example, in my province of Quebec we will be having a referendum in the coming months. I am also aware that several other provinces have expressed an interest in holding referendums on the Constitution. What will this patchwork result in? No one really knows. But the Canadian people also have the right to respond to a national question. They have the right to express themselves on a question that is the same in Charlottetown, Halifax, Saint–Laurent, Sudbury or Calgary.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there is no clause providing that the government shall consult the opposition parties on the wording of the referendum question. The government has offered only three days of debate in the House on the wording of the question. This would enable the opposition parties to suggest amendments but would exclude them from the drafting process.

This bill should include a provision that the question must be approved by a majority of at least two–thirds of the House before it is put before the Canadian people. We in the Liberal Party believe that Canada needs a referendum in which Canadians will be able to determine the future of our country by answering a question that is clear and specific.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no questions or comments. Debate.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C–81, the referendum legislation which the government has proposed. I rise with some sorrow because the government has deliberately introduced legislation that is flawed.

The government knows that there is a lot of will in this country to have a national referendum on the Constitution. I for one have a lot of concerns with regard to a national referendum because I believe that there is always the danger that minorities may be ignored when it comes to a national referendum, that they may not be fully protected.

But even with those reservations I was willing to give the government a chance. I believe there are some mechanisms that can be put in place to ensure that minorities are protected and at the same time allow for both national and regional participation by the citizens of this nation.

When I came back yesterday morning to the House and read the legislation, I was appalled with what the government has done. The government has not simply introduced legislation that enables Canadian citizens to have a referendum on the Constitution, it has deliber-

ately taken a number of clauses that allow it to manipulate that whole electoral process.

At the present time, Mr. Speaker, I serve on a committee that is meeting in another room in this building where we are discussing changes to the elections act. We are having those discussions after the royal commission, set up by the Prime Minister, spent $18 million listening to Canadians, studying and researching how we conduct elections in this country, how we finance elections in this country, and what limitations can be put on spending during election processes in this country.

When I look at this legislation I see that the government has taken its agenda on electoral reform. It has ignored what the Lortie royal commission has done. It has deliberately gone against the basic tenets of the royal commission.

The royal commission talked about very severe spending limits for third party advertising. This government has made that wide open. The royal commission talked about an almost all-inclusive definition of election expenses to make sure the public knows what is being spent by those who are for a candidate, those who are against a candidate, those who are for a party, those who are against a party or, in this case, those who are for a referendum question or those who are against a referendum question.

What we see here is not what the Lortie royal commission promoted. What we see here is even weaker than the present electoral law of this country. The government has not only gone in the opposite direction of Lortie. It has managed to weaken the present clauses that we have in this country.

This legislation is cynical. It speaks of a government being driven by its own agenda, its own electoral campaign, and not by any real concerns for the future of this nation.

When I rose today I said: "I rise to speak in sorrow". I mean that. This legislation could have been much better written. It could have been written so that all members of this House, with the possible exception of a few, could have been proud of that legislation. We could have all felt like participants in the wording of the question. We could have all gone out across the country and said that the referendum was fair and why Canada was worth saving. It would not matter to us who our allies were. They could be Liberals. They could be Conservatives. We would be out there working for the future of our nation.

The previous Liberal member who spoke said that she would support any referendum legislation. I cannot give this Prime Minister a blank cheque. I cannot support this legislation as it is written. The government has spent $18 million listening to Canadians on electoral reform, on why it is necessary to have electoral fairness. This legislation goes against that very concept. The government says that it cannot limit spending or restrict the number of groups that would participate because it might received a charter challenge. That was one of the issues the Lortie royal commission looked at. It believed—and its advice was sought as well—that our Constitution allowed reasonable limits.

At this time I have proposed a number of things I do not have time to go into. We have prepared proposals for the government House leader on how they could clean up this legislation, on how we could have reasonable limits on spending and on how we could ensure federal and provincial governments do not overspend and still respect the charter. However we say there should be expenditure limits based on the voters.

We believe provincial and federal governments should be limited in the amount they can spend. We believe we can make the limits real by taking the Lortie commission recommendation and ensuring there is no co-ordination, no pooling of efforts on the referendum question, and by saying that no group can belong to more that one referendum committee.

There are ways to ensure the charter, to ensure spending by public, to allow it to spend money, but at the same time to ensure we have a fair system. We have made recommendations in a number of other areas.

I realize that my time to speak is very limited and I do have an amendment to offer this House. Before I make that amendment, I would ask the government to seriously consider what it has presented to this House and consider the fact that the Canadian public is very cynical about politicians in general, but especially about this government.

• (1650)

When they see this legislation, if it is not amended, and when they see large corporations spending multi-millions of dollars and doing a lot of things behind the scenes that are not going to be reported, and that is what happens under this legislation, which I said is weaker than the present election laws of this country, Canadians will become more cynical about this nation. It will cost us the votes of the people who believe in a strong and united country because they cannot support the Prime Minister, they cannot support the government and they cannot support a cynical process.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

This House declines to give second reading to Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, the principles of which are objectionable in that the bill fails to:

(a) specifically provide for limits on campaign spending by individuals, organizations and governments;

(b) require that the results of the referendum are interpreted to ensure support and participation from all regions of Canada; and

(c) apply rules of campaigning to the governments of Canada, the provinces and territories.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will take the hon. member's amendment under advisement and rule on it a little later today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, why referendum legislation today? Why is the government tabling such a legislation before the House? First of all, we must go back a little in our history. In 1980, there was a referendum in Quebec, in which people said they agreed to a renewed Canadian federalism by ultimately saying yes to the possibility of a renewal of our country. Then, in 1982, there were discussions where, once again, Quebec found itself isolated and could not respond positively to the proposal it received at the time.

Later, in 1987, the Prime Minister succeeded in getting the agreement of the ten premiers on what is called the Meech Lake Accord, that is the five conditions put forward by Quebec so that it could say yes to the Constitution of Canada.

During the three years that followed, some premiers opposed the accord and our government, through our Prime Minister, succeeded once again in getting the premiers to sign it. A few months later, the same premiers did not honour their commitment, so that the Meech Lake Accord failed and Quebec found itself isolated once again. Then, despite some difficulties at that time, our government set up some committees: the Spicer commission, and then, the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee, which was supposed to analyse the constitutional amending formula and which did an in-depth analysis of the referendum issue.

Then there was the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, which also dealt with the referendum issue and which was somewhat saying that the government should hold at its discretion a referendum in case of a deadlock or in order to get a national consensus. But meanwhile, since the tabling of the Beaudoin-Dobbie report, there have been ongoing constitutional discussions between the first ministers or their representatives, and we might indeed end up with a deadlock during the next few weeks.

If in fact we cannot reach an agreement at the table and if we cannot obtain resolutions from each of the legislatures in order to renew our federalism, what shall we do? Shall we let the country go to pieces or shall we ultimately risk consulting the people? I think that in such a context, if there is an impasse, before Canada is divided we should go to the people. Even if the only legal way to amend the Constitution of Canada is to obtain resolutions from the different legislatures, a national referendum through which the Canadian people could express its opinion would have a tremendous impact. Given that situation, a piece of legislation on referendums seems absolutely necessary to me, even mandatory, since we must recognize that the possibility of an impasse really exists.

Mr. Speaker, what is our role as members of Parliament in such a context and how are we to analyse this bill? What are the really important values? Justice and the values of our democracy of course.

In 1898, a referendum was held in Canada on the issue of prohibition. At that time, the Quebec vote was diametrically apposed to that of the rest of Canada. In 1942, there was another referendum, a plebiscite on conscription, and again Quebecers expressed an opinion quite different from that of the other Canadians. Nonetheless, two years later, the Prime Minister decided to

introduce a bill to force everybody into accepting the conscription.

That is why today, for this bill, I spoke of the importance of the double majority. Why am I talking about the double majority? The Beaudoin–Edwards committee examined this question extensively and declared: "We recommend that a federal law be enacted to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal whether to confirm the existence of a national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolutions. The referendum should require a national majority and a majority in each of the four regions—Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the west".

Even if the referendum is a consultative one—and I understand my colleagues for suggesting that perhaps it might not be necessary to entrench the double majority in a bill—I maintain it would be better to mention it in a bill to make it clear that there should be a double majority, whether in the four regional divisions or in Quebec, precisely to prevent a repetition of what happened in 1942.

My second point is the question of how fair it is to limit expenses. Experts say that, under section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (aside from freedom of association) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication" and that these rights make it difficult to put a ceiling on expenses in the event of a referendum.

I am not a lawyer, but I had the opportunity to sit on the Beaudoin–Edwards and Beaudoin–Dobbie committees where the issue of the charter was reviewed at length. Another section of the charter states that: "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." In that context, I think that this particular section is as important as section 2 and that we should really seek to put a ceiling on expenses to prevent potential abuse.

As members of Parliament, there are things we can do when a bill is tabled by our government. We can try to make it better. That is why I still do not rule out the possibility of tabling amendments to our bill over the next couple of hours to ensure it is as fair as possible and in keeping with our rules of democracy. That is the context in which I intend to table, in a matter of hours, these amendments to the referendum legislation.

• (1700)

I have another important point to make and it is that we need a referendum act. If indeed a deadlock were reached, not having such an act could definitely be more detrimental to this country and all the values we want to uphold. We need that piece of legislation. And, in that context, I will work at improving it, using my position as a member of Parliament to make the bill better. After that, we will see.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. The Chair has examined the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Churchill and finds it in order. Debate, the hon. member for Saint–Léonard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint–Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take part in this debate at second reading on Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

It is unfortunate that every time this government proposes something, it is on a rush–rush basis. It has been almost two years now, so the government could be much further ahead, it had ample time to introduce a bill on referendums that we, on this side, have long demanded. The government always claimed it was not necessary, it was difficult.

Now that we finally have a bill, the government is telling us that we have to pass it as quickly as possible, because otherwise it will be impossible to hold a referendum this fall. I would like, first of all, to point out to the House the fact that the Leader of the Opposition said on April 21, 1991, and I quote: "We need a process, a constitutional framework based on principles which will allow us to resolve the actual impasse quickly and equitably for Quebec and Canada as a whole." In that same speech he was proposing an approach while, as I said, the government was still dragging its feet. In order for this approach to succeed the federal government had

to hold a referendum. At that time we would have liked this referendum to be held at the beginning of 1992, in the spring, but the government now proposes fall 1992.

We support in principle the concept of a referendum but not in the way proposed by the government. Today the government wants us to pass a bill allowing for referendums, but it tells us that it might not use it. I do not understand. If we come to a constitutional agreement with the provinces, why not let the people of Canada have their say? In my opinion, the referendum should not be used only when there is no agreement, it has to be used as well when there is one, so that the question is settled once and for all.

When the Canadian Constitution was patriated in 1981–82, if we had had a referendum act, where we would have asked Canadians and Quebecers for direction on the matter, I am sure that in Quebec and in every other province the people would have voted yes and the issue would have been settled once and for all. The then premier in Quebec would have had no other choice but to accept the people's verdict, and that would have been the end of it. Whereas, we now have to go through that all over again.

What I am concerned about at this time is that even if the federal government and seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population came to an agreement, if we do not hold a referendum, some groups in Quebec would not accept the proposals, and we would have to start all over again. Also, if we were to amend the Constitution with a referendum based on the bill before the House, some groups in Quebec would still challenge the results since this not very democratic legislation is so lacking.

So we have not solved the problem, even with a referendum to be held pursuant to this bill. It is very important for me and for my colleagues in the opposition, that the government amends this bill. I was glad to hear the previous speaker, the hon. member for Jonquière, say that as a member of the government, he would be proposing some amendments. I hope he will be able to convince his colleagues on his side to amend this bill right away, so we can vote for it in a democratic fashion.

Mr. Speaker, why do we always have to start from scratch? Yesterday, when he introduced his bill, the leader of the government in the House of Commons quoted a 1978 report which has never been approved. However, in 1981, Quebec went through such an experience, they held a referendum and passed some bills. Why not use that model? In 1980, I was involved in the referendum campaign, as the majority of politically active people in Quebec. I joined the no campaign, because I was opposed to sovereignty association. We won, but that did not stop the people on the other side of the issue from feeling betrayed, since they did not have the same opportunities. The same spending limits, the same rules applied. So, why should we fear such a form of democracy?

Since democracy is very important to the Canadian and the Quebec people, why not have a bill allowing everyone, from every political stripe and every region of the country, to feel free to speak their minds during the referendum campaign. That way, when we got the results, we would know where we stand. It is incumbent on the premiers and the Prime Minister of Canada, on the Parliament of Canada and the provincial legislatures to amend the Constitution. I do not think any politician in this country would dare ignore the will the people choose to freely express, according to democratic principles.

Unfortunately time is running out. There are just a few months left, because one way or the other, you have to bear this in mind, Mr. Speaker, if the federal government continues to lose whatever precious time we have, Quebec will decide on its own. If we do not establish some democratic rules, I fear we will not only lose the referendum, but also our country, a beautiful country everyone envies and we can stand to lose because we are stuck with this piece of legislation.

I do hope the government will agree to study the issue of double majority because it is very important. Quebecers must feel that their vote will count. If they are refused, most Quebecers will vote no, and we will start all over. But if they are accepted, it is settled. We can solve the constitutional issue and turn to economic problems.

• (1710)

So it is important for the double majority to be part of this referendum bill. The whole issue of election rules is important, Mr. Speaker. It is unacceptable not to have spending limits in a democratic society. I also find it unacceptable that there are no groups. The government is not required to report and it can spend as much as it wants. I especially think that when a government represents a political party, it is dangerous for the democratic process.

As for the whole subject of election rules, Mr. Speaker, we spent $19 million on the Lortie commission. We have a referendum bill so that people can express their opinions. Although it is not an election, why does this bill not include the Lortie Commission's recommendations, after $19 million of the taxpayers' money was spent on it?

So I ask the government and government members to put pressure on the House leader, who is piloting this bill, and on the whole cabinet to present us with amendments as soon as possible or a new bill that will respect the basic principles of democracy. That means a double majority, spending limits, more equitable election rules that are in tune with our time and not an election law from 20 or 30 years ago.

You are telling me that my time is up. I hope that my colleagues on the government side, like one who got up—I hope that others will talk to their minister so that this bill is completely changed.

[*English*]

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the Parliament of Canada finally has a plebiscite bill before it for debate. We have waited a year and now we have it.

My father, who was in the Canadian army during World War II, taught me an expression which they often used in the army. It was: "Hurry up and then wait". The parliamentary version of this is the other way around. Here we have to wait and then hurry up. We are now being asked to hurry up and get this legislation approved in a very short time.

It is important that we deal with this legislation in Parliament and hear argument about amendments and how it can be improved. The government House leader indicated last Friday that he would be open to debate and amendments. As recently as today he indicated that he is planning some amendments himself and is discussing these with other parties in the House.

This bill is important because it is enabling legislation that will permit the men and women of Canada to be participants in the process of constitutional change. We have the bill and now we can work on improving it.

We should take into account that the last time Parliament debated legislation for a plebiscite was a decade or more ago, when the government of Prime Minister Trudeau felt that the same approach was necessary. Another time before that a plebiscite actually was held, that was half a century ago in 1942.

If we very briefly look at some of the things that are different this time around we can see that we are making changes in our democratic society. I will give three examples. First, compared with 1942 the franchise is broader now. It includes people as young as age 18 and it includes, because of the 1960 changes in the election law thanks to the Diefenbaker government, Canadian Indians, Inuit and Dukhobors, it includes people who had been excluded. We are going into this plebiscite with a broader franchise.

Second, unlike the plebiscite 50 years ago we are seeing disclosure of the sources of funds that are being contributed to the process. These were unheard of ideas half a century ago in Canadian electoral law.

My third example concerns the equitable distribution of broadcasting time. These again are new ideas that reflect our revolution as a democratic society. However, what more needs to be said about the 1992 plebiscite bill?

First, the title itself, referring to referendums, is a misnomer because the spokesman for the government refers to it as a plebiscite. It is a non-binding vote. Yet we have a bill that will have to be amended to change the title from referendum to plebiscite.

Last Friday I was told that this was not possible, that the government had received legal advice that you could not use such a name. Today I understand that there will be an amendment to change it. That is good. It makes me doubt a little bit more the authenticity and depth of the legal advice which the government might be relying on in this bill. If it has that problem with the title of the bill then I am more concerned about the kind and quality of the legal advice it is getting with respect to the charter

arguments, which get to the more profound dimensions of this legislation.

The fact that we have enabling legislation before the House is very important because in a mature democracy there surely must be on the statute books the enabling rules that will permit a direct vote by the people when Parliament decides it is important to allow the Canadian people to share with us the risk of decision making, and to live with the consequences of making that decision.

Seven of our provinces have such legislation. Both of the territories do. It is more than high time that we in the Parliament of Canada put permanently on our statute book this kind of enabling legislation. Which makes me think that we should amend the provision of the statute that puts a three-year sunset clause on this bill. What is the magic about 36 months? Why should this enabling legislation disappear after 36 months?

As a very minimum we should instead put in the legislation the kind of provision we find in the Lobbyist Registration Act saying that after a certain period of time a committee of Parliament will consider Parliament's experience with it and come back before Parliament with recommendations on what kind of changes might be warranted in the act.

We are a long way yet from getting the kind of legislation that I would like to see, so that we would have in the Constitution an entrenched requirement that any amendments to our Constitution would require ratification by a popular vote. That is no radical idea, certainly not for a parliamentary democracy. Our Australian cousins have been doing that since the year 1900. They have found that on 32 trips to the polls to amend their Constitution, eight times the electors have approved the amendment and the rest they have turned down.

In a parliamentary democracy if you cannot persuade a majority of the people that the amendments you want to make to the Constitution should be made then I do not think that you have a political right or a legal right, or a moral right, to change the Constitution. Ultimately in a democracy our system rests upon the consent of the governed, not their coercion but their consent. The whole elaborate superstructure—our Parliament, our courts, our police, our financial institutions, all of our organizations—has its place in our society because the Canadian people consent to this system and agree that is how it should operate.

We must be sure that the Canadian people are partners with us in any changes that will be made to the Constitution. It is my hope that our minister and others who are negotiating in Montreal today, and next week in Toronto and so on, can come before us all with a package of amendments that will modernize the Constitution and renew Confederation. Then we will have a chance under this legislation to go before the Canadian people and let them express their verdict on the question at the polls following a good campaign on the issue.

As for the value of having enabling legislation, I might just mention as a footnote that in 1914 Prime Minister Borden had great difficulties with the Canadian Senate. He decided in 1914 that it was time for Senate reform. He wanted to go to the people to get a mandate in a plebiscite for that kind of Senate reform. However, as he prepared for that he discovered that there was no enabling legislation in the country. By the time the Privy Council drafted it and it was ready to be brought before Parliament we were into World War I and that whole issue was off the agenda.

There have been many times in this country when our leaders—especially the veteran mature prime ministers who have been in office for some years, be they Laurier, Borden, Mackenzie King, Trudeau or Mulroney—have come to the conclusion that there is something important in the way our system functions requiring that the people be directly involved in expressing their verdict at the ballot box in a direct vote, as a plebiscite.

• (1720)

Therefore, we come again to write yet another line or two in this long chapter of the Canadian quest to get direct legislation that will permit a vote.

I do not agree that this is the best bill we could have. That is why I will be working with others to support the amendments that are being proposed; amendments that would see the sensible structure, as we have in the referendum bill in Quebec, of two umbrella organizations. These organizing structures do not force people to participate in a certain way but enable a fair division of broadcasting time, a fair presentation of both sides of the issue, a fair allocation of funds and a responsible limiting of expenditures in accordance with the norms that have developed over the past two or three decades in Canada to ensure that our political processes, be they elections or plebiscites, are not a rich person's game. Canadians have an intelligence that should be addressed on these

issues rather than simply being bombarded by the group that can spend the most money.

There are many ways in which the legislation can be improved. I am here in Parliament with my colleagues to work for those amendments and to see that this legislation is improved. I am certainly glad to be supporting it because this is a day that many of us have waited a long time to see.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to stand in the House today to address the federal referendum legislation.

At the outset I would like to say that there are a couple of principles that are particularly important whenever one considers legislation of this type, particularly one that is so important to the future of Canada and all Canadians.

We must check the principles against this particular legislation in order to ensure that it addresses the legitimate needs of this country and its people.

I think most colleagues would agree that the Constitution belongs to the people, not to the politicians and not to the bureaucrats. Canadians should have the final say on any constitutional reform package. On that measure the proposed legislation falls short.

As well, I believe that our national referendum should allow Canadians to say yes to each other. All Canadians should have the same opportunity, the same chance to express their views on the same question or questions, not only some Canadians and not only some Canadians in a series of provincial referendum questions.

I want to remind my colleagues, as well as listeners, that it was the Liberal Party of Canada under the leadership of the hon. member for Beauséjour who first proposed a national referendum to get us out of this constitutional impasse a little more than a year ago. It was part of his nine point plan to bring about some sort of constitutional resolution in our country.

Canadians are disappointed that it has taken the government some time to get its act together. They recall that this kind of legislation had been promised in the throne speech of May 1991 and the government backed away from that promise shortly thereafter. It was promised again in November and the government backed away again. Finally it has come forward. That is a good sign and I hope that it is something that works out well for all of us.

I was surprised right from the beginning as a member of two constitutional committees, the Beaudoin–Edwards constitutional committee and the Beaudoin–Dobbie constitutional committee, that the NDP has not been supportive of a national referendum. At most it has given lukewarm support, if any at all. I am surprised at that particular position because it seems to me that the legislation has a lot of merit which the NDP has not considered as deeply as it might have.

I want to commend the government for finally having come forward with referendum legislation to permit Canadians to say yes to each other.

However, I still have many concerns and here are some of them. The referendum is still only optional. That breeds uncertainty and causes some considerable anxiety: will it happen, will it not, when, where, et cetera?

It has no spending limits. I recognize there are certain difficulties with spending limits, but at the same time and with all due respect some limits could have been established among fair players.

I am surprised that it would appear we are looking at a majority of Canadians and not a second majority, a majority of the four or five large regions of Canada would have to say yes.

I would have liked to have seen as well a commitment from the Prime Minister and his government to withdraw any constitutional agreement if it did not receive support from the majority of all regions of Canada, quite apart from the over–all majority.

Perhaps my greatest concern is with respect to the question, deciding upon the question. Clearly there has to be consultation. Clearly the government has to approach this with an openness of spirit and a commitment to consult and to come forward with the best

question or questions that will get the support of all parties.

If it were not to do that I fear it would get into serious difficulties, and we know what the potential price is if that were to occur.

[*Translation*]

What also bothers me, is that there are quite a few questions for which there are still no answers. I mentioned this earlier, but it bears repeating because I think this is very important. Will there be a referendum, yes or no? If so, where? Across the country, in certain provinces or regions? We do not know the answer. And of course, when? We do not have the answer to that either. I think all this tends to create a feeling of uncertainty that is not well received by most Canadians.

[*English*]

Will all Canadians throughout this great land be able to vote on the referendum?

[*Translation*]

We do not know that either.

[*English*]

Will it be a vote on the same questions? Or, will the provincial and territorial questions, if there are some, somehow be able to replace those that would be posed in a national referendum? What is the question? What are the questions?

[*Translation*]

Yes, what is the question and what will the questions be? To me, that is the crux of this debate.

[*English*]

Another element which is closely related and equally important is: How will it be drawn up? Will the government simply come forward and say: "Here it is"? Or, will the government consult with the various parties in the House and with other Canadians in order to ensure that it is as sensitive, as comprehensive and as meaningful as it might be?

I will take this opportunity to make certain suggestions. If somehow after this exercise, assuming there is a referendum for the whole of the country, we have not addressed the aboriginal question of self-government, we are in serious difficulty.

[*Translation*]

If we have not addressed the distinct society Quebec wants, we are in serious trouble.

[*English*]

We cannot avoid the question of the veto. That question must be addressed and there are a number of proposed solutions. One is clearly found in the Beaudoin-Edwards constitutional committee report where there is a proposed approach to having a majority in regions and it is defined therein.

We must also sort out either on the referendum question or elsewhere the whole question of division of powers. We cannot continue to have the dysfunctionality that we now have and the difficulties that it causes. Very often it is unclear what level of government delivers what services for its people.

[*Translation*]

So the division of powers is one of the essential issues.

[*English*]

I would also suggest we need to address in a very sensitive way one group that often feels left out of any constitutional discussions and debate on perhaps the Canada clause. It is those Canadians who have come from other lands, those Canadians who are of ancestry other than aboriginal, English or French. There is a wonderful opportunity, if it is done correctly and with sensitivity, to ensure they feel they are a full, significant and meaningful partner in this country.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

In concluding, I have a few short comments to make. We have a unique opportunity to try and settle the constitutional question once and for all, to find a solution that will not please all Canadians but the majority of Canadians, so that we can get on with the major challenges facing our country today: the economic situation, unemployment, poverty, the fact that so many people have to go to food banks. It seems to me this is a golden opportunity to try and settle the matter and start doing something about the recession in this country.

[*English*]

It is a great opportunity for Canada and for Canadians. If this proposed referendum is used sensitively, I think it can finally bring constitutional peace to our great nation. If used improperly, however, it could be the end of our great country. It could create a lot of divisions. I am not just talking about the division between the rest of

Canada and Quebec, I am talking divisions within the whole of the country.

Therefore, I urge the government to listen and listen very carefully to the people of Canada, to listen to the various political parties to see what it is that they have to offer, to make sure that this particular initiative is one that bears very positive fruit. I urge the government as well to co-operate with all parties. This is a time to rise above partisanship. This is a time to do what is right for Canada and for all Canadians.

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, as I begin I would like to repeat what my colleagues have already stated. This legislation is a precautionary measure. No decision to hold a referendum has been made. At the present time there is no federal legislation to permit a referendum. This legislation would make a referendum possible.

In February 1992 the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee report stated: "We recommend that a federal law be enacted to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal".

Canadians from across our country spoke to the committee and recommended that a referendum be considered. Many Canadians are pleased that the government is listening to Canadians and following the advice of the committee, the advice that was endorsed by all major parties.

Legislation must be in place to allow a referendum before the Chief Electoral Officer can begin to make preparations to hold a referendum. It is estimated that three months are needed for such preparations. That is to say, if this legislation were to be passed by mid-June, then the Chief Electoral Officer would be able to have everything ready for a referendum no sooner than mid-September.

The government is simply looking ahead, seeing that there may be a decision to hold a federal referendum and saying if this decision is the one taken, then let us be ready.

I would also like at this time to reassure all Canadians that this legislation would only apply to a referendum called by the federal government and would not in any way affect the right of provinces to hold their own referenda if they choose to do so.

Canadians know that the referendum our government is considering is a referendum on constitutional reform. As the Beaudoin-Dobbie report noted, one of the most positive results of the patriation process is the degree of interest expressed by the people of Canada in their Constitution.

Since 1982 the people of Canada have insisted on being involved in all aspects of constitutional change. I believe this characteristic of Canadians is one of our strengths as a nation.

There are many forms that public involvement can take and a federal referendum should not, at this stage, be ruled out.

As a member of Parliament from western Canada, it is appropriate that I remind my colleagues from central Canada that Canadians living in the west have felt excluded from decision-making in the past. The huge population concentrated in the centre of our country seems not to always hear the suggestions or concerns from the west. Whenever anyone feels that his thoughts and ideas are not being heard it is frustrating. The more significant the issue, the more irritation is felt at being ignored or overlooked.

Historically there have been 44 advisory referenda or plebiscites held in Canadian provinces. Of these 44, 31 have been held in the four western provinces. So it is not surprising that many westerners believe that a referendum might be helpful. It is important to western Canadians and I believe to all Canadians that suggestions from all regions of our country be considered.

This government is doing that. This legislation says clearly we are seriously considering a referendum. If we decide that a referendum is the appropriate tool to use we will be ready and able to use it.

There are five possible ways to amend the Constitution of Canada. These five possibilities have been in place since the patriation of the Constitution in 1982. The general procedure in section 38 of the Constitution Act requires the consent of Parliament and seven of the provinces with 50 per cent of the population. This section of the amending formula is the one that the government is planning to use during this cycle of constitutional reform.

Some Canadians are wondering why the government can use this less stringent section of the amending formula when it was necessary to have all 10 provinces verify the Meech Lake Accord. The answer is that the Meech Lake Accord contained an amendment to the amending formula itself so it needed unanimity to be accepted.

The current proposal is not expected to include any amendments to the amending formula. Therefore, the current proposal is expected to need the approval of Parliament and the approval of seven provinces with 50 per cent of the population.

Some people wonder if there are safeguards to assure that the referendum is fair. This bill does not change any safeguards for fairness that are already established under Canadian law. The Canada Elections Act would provide the basic framework for the referendum and this includes practical aspects such as the qualifications of voters, et cetera.

The wording of the question posed in a referendum must be voted on and approved by both the House and the Senate. So there is no possibility, nor is there any wish on the government side, that this be a secretive process. If the government does decide to hold a referendum, a referendum proclamation must be issued within 45 days following the approval of the question that is to be put to the Canadian people.

• (1740)

Any federal referendum call today must be consistent with the Canadian charter of rights and fundamental freedoms. The advice we have suggests that limits on spending on umbrella committees, for the yes or the no sides, are not expected to meet the requirements of the charter and therefore are not included in the legislation.

In order for everyone to be aware of the major participants in a referendum campaign, groups which intend to participate in the referendum in a major way—that is anyone who intends to spend more than $5,000—must register and disclose all expenses and contributions, including the names of the contributors of over $250.

Some people have asked why the government is not required to register in the same way other campaign participants are if it spends on this campaign. The registration requirements in the bill are intended to make sure the public knows who is spending significant amounts of money to present their views. Government spending is already visible and governments are accountable to the public for all their spending.

There are other safeguards to ensure fairness. It is necessary that the referendum campaign be at least 36 days long and that gives everyone an opportunity to present his views. Free broadcasting time will be allocated equally to both sides of the question. There is no provision in the legislation for public funds to be given to those campaigning. There will be equal opportunity for all sides of the issue to purchase additional time in the media. It is also worth noting that there is a sunset clause included. That simply means in three years this legislation will cease to exist.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that the purpose of the legislation is to be ready to hold a referendum if the government wishes to do so. The government is listening to the Canadian people and wants them to continue their involvement in the constitutional process. There is strong regional support for a referendum on proposed constitutional change. The government is responding to this recommendation and is seriously considering the possibility. Finally, a federal referendum would be a fair referendum.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity this afternoon to make a few comments on Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

The first comment I would like to make concerns the title of the bill itself. It is my understanding from repeated comments by the Prime Minister and other members of the government that we are not going to have a referendum, if there is a vote at all. They keep talking about a plebiscite and it certainly piques my curiosity when we have a bill come before the House that refers to a referendum. I am not aware it even refers to the word "plebiscite" any place in the bill.

I am pleased the government has finally brought forward and introduced legislation. I can only say it is a start. I am certain the constituents in my riding of Prince Edward—Hastings are pleased because we in Prince Edward—Hastings, and we in the Liberal Party, have been calling on the government now for well over a year to come forward with some sort of enabling legislation.

At the present time Canadians are seeking direction. However, when we look at the legislation, it is noticeable that the government continues to act as though it thinks there is only one voice that Canadians need to hear and that is the government's voice. It thinks it is the voice of an infallible ruler.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. There is a debate going on in this part of this House. I would appreciate it if the gentlemen who wish to talk or discuss something would go behind the curtain.

Mr. Vanclief: Mr. Speaker, I began to wonder on which side of the House the debate was going on but I did check and my microphone was on and theirs was not.

I repeat that the government seems to think that it has the complete and only right to speak on behalf of Canadians on this issue. We know the folly of this notion because this is the same government that is jamming legislation down the throats of Canadians and has been for a number of years now. It is the same government that continues to lose its credibility with the Canadian public.

I do praise the government for bringing forward the legislation, but I fault the government for the quality of it. The government has unashamedly pronounced on the form of this legislation, reserving for itself the authority to determine the question, and that at a later date without any consultation. This, in spite of assurances over the past number of months from the highest ranks of the government benches, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs and the Prime Minister, that opposition parties and the Canadian public would have input in the legislation.

I remind Canadians again, that did not happen. The bill was presented to the opposition parties. There was not any discussion whatsoever and it was presented as we see it here today.

The government has not only failed to consult on enabling legislation to conduct a plebiscite or referendum which I repeat should have happened, was promised to happen but it does not seem to realize that this is an issue of our nation's destiny. We must make it very clear to the Canadian public and to Parliament there may not be a vote at all, so let us not be naive enough to think that just because the legislation is there it is going to be used.

The reasons for that simply evade me. Why? I recognize as well as anyone the potential for divisiveness that a national referendum would hold but such a risk must be taken when the contrast to not doing it is the risk of not holding a vote at all.

My colleague from Cape Breton—East Richmond put it appropriately in the House yesterday. He said that Canadians:

> —are an intelligent and educated people and they usually demonstrate a remarkable sophistication in their political behaviour. The Canadian population of 1992 is as well prepared as a whole as any group of officials, elected or not, to make the decision on the basic structure of its government. It is unreasonable and unconscionable to suggest otherwise.

So I state again that the government has an obligation to conduct a vote.

This description definitely applies to the constituents in Prince Edward—Hastings riding who have regularly challenged me on every facet of the constitutional debate with insights that quite honestly continue to educate me well beyond the understanding of these issues that comes from many of the presentations and speeches I have heard in the House.

There are reasons why a referendum or a plebiscite must be held on this government's final constitutional package. A national vote would go a very long way toward addressing the public's cynicism, a cynicism which arose after the collapse of the Meech Lake proposals in the wake of the political engineering and the closed door negotiations that took place at that time.

Second, the final say in the matter rightfully belongs to the Canadian public. Third, a referendum will finally allow us as a country to put this matter to bed once and for all.

I do not believe that a referendum should be an option. It should be an obligation and it should be mandatory for the government to conduct one. In fact, a referendum should be mandatory before any future government proceeds to revise the Constitution of this country. The people must not be excluded from the process of changing the way they are governed.

The Constitution was created for people, not for politicians and bureaucrats, and being their property it is also their sole right to permit such changes. If a referendum is going to be held, it should go well beyond what Bill C–81 is proposing at the present time. As has been stated even by government members in the House here today, it needs to be fixed, it needs to be improved. The vote must be held nation–wide, giving every citizen in all regions of the country an opportunity to express

their opinion on the same question or questions. I repeat, every citizen in all regions.

• (1750)

The results in order to carry any weight in the government's consideration of whether or not to proceed must reflect the clear majority of the will of the nation and the will of the nation as a whole, as well as the feeling and the will of each region. This will provide a clear demonstration of our collective will to remain united as a country, while at the same time preventing any misinterpretation, claiming the imposition of a constitutional arrangement by any portion of the nation on another portion of the nation.

Further on the issue of conducting a fair vote, this legislation must be amended to make the process transparent and equitable for all sides of the issue. I am glad to learn that there is some indication by the House leader today in an announcement that there will be some changes introduced and amendments introduced that will provide some spending limits on the registered committees.

We must ensure that the losing side will not be allowed to claim the vote was bought by the rich and the powerful. This means that both sides must somehow be limited in their over-all expenditures.

The government House leader said last week in the House and again this week in the House that he is open to amendments and changes to improve the bill. I hope we can take him and the government at their word. It needs some improvement. It needs to be changed. We must take the present Bill C-81 and fix it and make it better.

This is the challenge before us as a Parliament, it is the challenge before us as a country. I know that if the will and the desire is there, we can rise and meet that challenge.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak at second reading of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada. It is very easy to support in principle the idea of a constitutional referendum. As my colleagues who have spoken before me have indicated, the principle of a referendum on constitutional matters is one that we support.

Now our challenge as parliamentarians is to look at the specifics. The specifics are very important in terms of defining what it is that we are setting out to do.

We all support the principle of hockey, if I might use it as an example. The rules in hockey have always been carefully outlined and understood by all the participants because the rules have been defined and upheld by a group with responsibilities, a group which for the most part has the respect of all the participants in that hockey game. Of course, I speak of the referees and the league itself which have set the rules.

Not your favourite team, Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton Oilers, not the Toronto Maple Leafs and certainly not the Vancouver Canucks or the Montreal Canadiens would step on the ice in a Stanley Cup final game without a referee. They certainly would not step on the ice without a set of rules. Not all of their skill, their determination, their energy or their emotion would help any of those teams succeed in their chosen goal and victory without division or discord if those rules were not understood, agreed upon and enforced with the co-operation of all of the players.

We are not playing hockey and the future of Canada is not a game. But as a country in crisis we are skating on very thin ice. We want to play the game. We want to enjoy the game. We want to enjoy our country with all its diversity, its history, its people and, more important, we want to enjoy its future, but discord and division is threatening our enjoyment of that future.

A national referendum in these exceptional circumstances is one way to ensure public participation in the decision-making process that will once again help us to enjoy our country, to enjoy the game and put the referee back on the ice in the most important game of the year.

When I speak to my constituents, the support for a referendum is almost universal. In fact, for most of my constituents the outline of how it is put together and run is somewhat secondary. For the most part they take it for granted that when a referendum is called, the rules will be in place and all you need is a question and they will help to provide the answer.

Mr. Speaker, you know from your own election experience that it is not that easy. Our task as parliamentarians is to provide the rules and make those rules acceptable not only here in the House of Commons, but to people right across Canada. Unless those rules are accepted by all the participants before the game begins, the results of that game may be held in suspect.

My colleagues from Yorkton—Melville and Churchill who spoke earlier outlined some of the matters of concern that they have and I share about this referendum bill. Those concerns are so great that they throw doubt on our ability to accept the principles laid down by this legislation. Therefore, we suspect that Canadians would not be well served if these are the only rules they have to play by. Those concerns, as outlined, include the fact that there are no spending limits, that cabinet alone can trigger the timing of the referendum; that the question to be asked will eventually be decided by government despite the discussion about parliamentary vote; there is no awaiting the results to ensure that the regions feel included in this whole process. That latter concern is my main concern at this moment.

The current constitutional debate in western Canada focuses primarily on the reform of the Senate. Why? Canadians feel left out of the process and, in fact, feel left out of the country because the decisions made in the populated centres of Canada, the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, are often made at the expense of the rest of the country because of that large population base in the centre of Canada.

Western Canadians feel let down by the House of Commons which is accountable to the population centres of the country. Therefore, they want a Senate that is more accountable to the regions and that serves as the hub of most of the argument we hear, not only in the coffee shops but in the forums and reviews brought before the Spicer commission and others.

Now we have a referendum bill which does exactly what western Canadians fear most. That is, leave in the hands of the voters of central Canada the powers of decision-making within constitutional reform. We have to get out of this way of thinking. We have to write the rules that will ensure that western Canadians are not again ignored in this process. There must be a way to ensure that the interpretation of the results of this non-binding referendum ensures that the government weighs the views of western Canadians well.

My colleague, the member for Yorkton—Melville, said yesterday in this House and I quote: "I think that it should not be possible to change the Constitution of Canada without the massive support of Canadians. If there were a national referendum on the federal government's major proposals like those in the report that the parliamentary committee published two months ago, and western Canadians were opposed, I think it should be out of the question to change our Constitution without western Canada's support".

I could not have said it better. The member for Yorkton—Melville outlined what I hear on the streets of my constituency daily in that very brief comment.

In an article in *The Ottawa Citizen* published May 17, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, a referendum expert and a member of the government party said, and I quote: "If we call ourselves a democracy, we must not be afraid to use democratic procedures". Well, we are in the process of defining one of those democratic procedures and we are in the process of establishing the rules that will guide that democratic procedure.

In the spirit of co-operation which comes from my personal desire to rebuild a fragile Canadian Constitution, I urge the government to put its partisan desires aside and create a more acceptable, fair and equitable procedure to ensure that we have a strong referendum should it become necessary to do so. The Constitution, as has been said, does belong to the people of Canada, not the politicians. Therefore, is it asking too much that we create a referendum process that will over time help to rebuild this country and this nation? Is it too much to ask that Canadians are able to truly participate in the democratic decision-making process in this unique and unusual and most exceptional period of time, at a time when Canadians are more cynical about government than at any other time in our history? Is it too much to ask that government take the time to build an all-inclusive process that will help to rebuild respect for participatory democracy inside a united Canada? Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that is too much to ask. In fact, I consider it a very minimum.

• (1800)

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, the bill now before us could be an important factor in resolving some vital decisions at this stage in the political history of our nation. That is one reason why I am particularly gratified to have an opportunity to participate in this debate.

Like many other members here, I am sure, I have heard from a number of my constituents who expressed interest in the idea that they and all other Canadians could have some direct influence upon the decisions that are to be made about our Constitution. In fact, I have received some petitions signed by several hundred residents of Durham constituency. The wording of these petitions should be noted. They request a referendum in which the Canadian people could vote to accept or to reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government, with the result to be binding on Parliament.

While one can understand the reasoning behind that wording and even sympathize with it, the circumstances we are dealing with here do not permit such a final and binding public decision. I believe it would be useful and helpful to spend a few moments explaining why.

To begin with, I would suggest that it would be immensely helpful if all of us involved in this debate would use precise language when describing the type of vote that is proposed. In saying that, I must add an important qualifier; that I am only referring to those of us who speak in English. My capability in the other official language is such that I would not attempt to comment on the fine nuances. However, in the English language there are two words that do describe the type of popular vote proposed here. One is referendum, the other is plebiscite.

There is a difference in the meaning of these two words, a distinction that may seem subtle but that is also very important. Throughout much of the discussion the two words "referendum" and "plebiscite" have been used as though they were interchangeable and synonymous, which they are not. I fear that this could well be confusing and even misleading.

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines plebiscite as, and I quote: "In modern politics a direct vote of the whole of the electors of a state to decide a question of public importance; also, by extension, a public expression with or without binding force of the wishes or opinion of a community". The same *Oxford Dictionary* gives this definition for referendum: "The act, practice or principle—of submitting the direct decision of a question at issue to the whole body of voters". In fact, a plebiscite is an expression of opinion by the people, with or without binding force; while in a referendum the voters are asked to make a direct and final decision.

It is extremely important for all Canadians to know and understand, if such a vote should prove necessary, that what they are being asked for is an expression of their opinion in a plebiscite. I understand that the government will bring forward an amendment to clarify the title and the language around this bill. Whether it is binding or not, that expression of opinion obviously would be a very significant consultative procedure. Elected politicians in our form of parliamentary democracy could only ignore the outcome at their own peril.

However, the vote in that plebiscite cannot decide the matter finally. For constitutional reasons it cannot be binding upon this Parliament or upon the legislatures of various provinces. There is a very simple reason for that, something that we do not have the power to change unilaterally. The formula for making constitutional amendments is enshrined in the Constitution itself. That formula, adopted by the federal government and the provinces in 1982, requires that any amendments to the Constitution must have the approval of at least seven provinces representing no less than 50 per cent of Canada's total population.

There is nothing this government or this Parliament can do to alter that without the agreement of the provinces. That obviously would be virtually impossible amidst the current ongoing constitutional negotiations. This Parliament has no power to tell the provinces what they must do on constitutional amendments.

These are very important considerations. While I have dwelt on them at some length, I believe it is essential that all Canadians have a clear understanding of exactly what we are doing with this legislation and why. There is some consensus that public dissatisfaction over the outcome of the Meech Lake negotiations was due as much to the process followed as to the actual content of the agreement. People felt that crucial decisions were being made about their future and that they were closed out of the discussions.

To be fair to all politicians involved in the Meech Lake discussions, the process was not their fault. They had to use the only procedure that was then available to them. However, today and in the future Canada's people must also have a part in that process.

I recognize that there could well be a requirement for a constitutional plebiscite within the coming months. However I also believe that this form of public consultation, be it through a plebiscite or a referendum, should only be used on rare occasions when needed to settle the most contentious issues.

One reason that I suggest such restriction is the tremendous expense involved. It is estimated that the cost of holding any plebiscite would exceed $100 million, and this is at a time when all of us are deeply concerned about government expenditures and reducing the deficit and national debt.

Any such vote on any contentious and emotional issue carries the risk of being very divisive and it could accentuate the existing divisions within our country. I am told by those who voted in the 1942 conscription plebiscite that is exactly what happened then; communities, provinces, religious and language groups became pitted against each other. To this day in my area there are families who still bear the emotional scars of that conscription plebiscite.

All of us have heard about the family members in Quebec who took opposing sides in the 1980 sovereignty referendum and who still, 12 years later, have not been able to reconcile or heal those fractures.

We must do all we can to ensure that Canadians understand that this legislation is a necessary precautionary measure, that it will permit the federal government to consult all Canadians if that will bring the current round of constitutional negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Richardson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 26(1) I would move that this House continue to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment for the continuation of second reading of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

• (1810)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Unless we have unanimous consent it cannot be done under a point of order. Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that it cannot be done under a point of order, it has to be done during debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons is currently examining Bill C-81, legislation that will enable the federal government to hold a national referendum on the Canadian Constitution.

The Canadian experience in that field has not been successful. The current Constitution does not provide for a binding referendum. Consequently, our referendum will only be consultative.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order please. Could I have just a little order? I would like to hear the hon. member's speech.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, since Confederation, Canada used the consultative referendum approach twice: the first time in 1898 on the prohibition issue, and the second time in 1942 on the conscription issue. That last experience left a bitter feeling among a lot of Canadians. On the other hand, in the current political context, where people want to take a more active part in the debate, instead of leaving the decision to the elected representatives, the referendum approach deserves serious consideration.

Mr. Speaker, it is a change of policy for me who used to oppose referendums, but since this government has destroyed or has almost finished destroying the people's trust in politicians, I think that, today, we must let the people decide on such important issues as the future of our country.

In so doing, we will have to pursue the objective of a new Constitution that will preserve the linguistic duality, the regional interests and the national unity. That is why

on April 21, 1991, the Liberal leader was the first to suggest the idea of a national referendum by proposing a nine-point action plan, including a national referendum with a double majority.

For the Liberal caucus, it is clear that all Canadians must be consulted and, consequently, be able to express themselves on the same issues in all parts of the country. It is clear that in addition to a national majority, the constitutional amendment proposal must be approved by every region of the country. The Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the western provinces and the territories would thus have a veto. In that way, the double majority protects regional interests against an imposed national will.

If one of the regions decided to reject the proposal, the federal government should not follow through with its constitutional amendment project as presented.

Liberals regret that the Conservative government did not include this double majority provision in the bill before the House. Also, in order to keep this referendum from being divisive, the government must ensure that it has an appropriate set of rules since, as was noted by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, and I quote: "Such a mechanism can easily fall into the hands of wealthy interest groups."

That is why the Liberal caucus believes it is important to limit spending by both the yes and the no sides. We believe that a referendum must take place in all fairness. We favour umbrella committees and a reasonable spending limit by each side of the issue.

Canadians do not want the result to be bought; they want it to be well deserved. Unfortunately, the Conservative government's Bill C-81 contains no spending ceiling.

Announced a year ago in the Speech from the Throne on May 13, 1991, the legislation on a national referendum was presented to the House a year later. The referendum process is off to a bad start. Let us be honest: the Conservative government had promised to consult the opposition parties. It did not consult us. It informed the House leaders of its plan—that is all.

I suspect that the government's intention with this bill is to set up a mechanism for calling a snap federal election. At least that is what clause 38 of the bill leads us to believe. It says that no enumeration shall be required if an election is called within a year of the referendum date. Furthermore, no clause in the bill says that the government must consult the opposition parties on the wording of the referendum question.

The government has proposed only three days of parliamentary debate on the wording of the question, thus restricting, in my view, the right of members of this House to speak on the question. Nevertheless, it is important for members to ensure that their constituents are perfectly aware of what they will be asked to vote on. The government's failure to consult here is a bad omen for what this referendum campaign has in store for us.

We Liberals, Mr. Speaker, think that any constitutional change at this time should be approved by all Canadians and all regions of this country, not only one province, but all regions. Canada's future depends on the choice that we will have to make. We think that the final decision must belong to the people directly.

[*English*]

While I may support holding a referendum in principle there are a number of aspects of this bill which concern me. One of these aspects is the absence of spending limits on referendum expenditures. There are no spending limits in Bill C-81. The only provisions are that groups spending more than $5,000 on a referendum campaign must be registered and contributions over $250 must be declared.

Without a ceiling on spending by various groups during a referendum campaign the process will be flawed because the amount of money a group has to spend will become more important than the free democratic expression of Canadians.

Canadians do not want a result that has been bought. They want a result that is fair and deserved. The question of spending limits is a question of fairness, not of freedom.

We have only to look at the example of the last election to show us the dangers inherent in the absence of spending limits. The report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing notes: "Third parties, including individuals, corporations, labour unions and other groups spent more than $4.7 million on advertising for the 1988 campaign—most of the money

was spent on the issue of free trade—four times as much money was spent to promote free trade as to oppose it".

We do not want to repeat the experience of the 1988 election, particularly when the unity of our country, Canada, is at sake. The referendum campaign must not become a free-for-all with those with the biggest wallets dominating the debate. The government may argue that spending limits contravene the right of freedom of expression as guaranteed by section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We can look at the Alberta court decision in 1984, brought on by the challenge from the National Citizens' Coalition. This decision found that the relevant section of the Canada Elections Act on spending limits on a third party was an unjustified restriction on freedom of expression.

The federal government decided not to act on this decision by the Alberta court. Furthermore, Elections Canada decided not to enforce the law, even though the court decision was not binding outside of Alberta. The result of these decisions, as the report of the electoral reform notes, was to destroy:

• (1820)

> —the overall effectiveness of the legislative framework for promoting fairness in the exercise of freedom of expression and of democratic rights during Canadian elections—Without fairness, we may continue to have a "free" society, but we would certainly diminish the "democratic character of our society".

However, the charter does provide for reasonable limits on the freedoms guaranteed by the charter.

In the exceptional case of a referendum, it seems to me we should carefully examine the danger of uncontrolled spending by various groups versus a reasonable limit on freedom of expression.

If the government hesitates to go to court on this matter, why not refer—and the government can do it—this matter to the Supreme Court of Canada for a decision on whether spending limits contravene the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If the government was concerned about democracy it could have done so. It had the time to do so in the last year, it could have done so earlier.

In conclusion, I want to quote from an opinion by Professor E. P. Mendes, Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario.

> I would suggest the appropriate standard is that laid down by Justice Sopinka in the R. *v.* Butler decision that Parliament is entitled to have a "reasonable apprehension of harm" resulting from the dangers which the legislation is attempting to avoid. It would be quite easy for the government to have proved in an appeal from Justice Medhurst's decision that there is a reasonable apprehension of harm resulting from unlimited spending during elections or referendums.
>
> Perhaps the reasons why the government did not appeal Justice Medhurst's decision and why they do not wish to put spending limits in any referendum legislation have nothing to do with Charter of Rights and Freedoms or with law at all.

I claim that Professor Mendes' decision is something of which we should take note.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to enter into this debate. I welcome the opportunity to say a few remarks on this potential plebiscite or referendum facing our nation.

Before I say anything on the bill, I would like to praise the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, a truly democratic Conservative, for a long time a voice in the wilderness, someone who has been promoting referendums, plebiscites, and more direct democracy. I think a lot of praise is due my colleague.

I would also like to thank the federal government and the Prime Minister, for considering the referendum, the plebiscite legislation. It is a big step for the government to be considering this kind of a method of solving some of our nation's problems.

I would like particularly to take this opportunity to say thank you as well on behalf of my constituents to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. He is trying to do his best for Canada. He is in his 20th year in federal politics. Twenty years is a long time to serve your country. There have not been all that many wins. There have been a lot of difficulties and failures along the way for anyone in public life that long. I would just like to pass along my thanks to him.

He is doing something for Canada, and most of the people in this Chamber are doing something for Canada too. The people who are here right now to debate this bill are doing something for Canada. The people here care enough to make sure the right legislation is going to be in place to ensure the future of our country.

A few moments ago those watching this debate could not hear but there are a few people in this Chamber who are taking exception to some of the remarks I am

making. They are members of a political party that has been an obstruction to this country.

It is tough to sit in this Chamber sometimes and look across and see a few members who do not share a vision of Canada but who view this nation as being broken, battered, bloodied and knocked down in the world stage, from being a modern country that most people in the world die to live in to some Third World country which would have an economy just a fraction of the size that it is today.

Maybe that is a good thing. Maybe it is a good thing there are separatists in this Chamber now. Maybe that will help wake up a few people. Maybe the whole referendum and plebiscite situation will in the end be good. It may take people and shake them by the shoulders and say to them that your country is at risk. Your country is at risk because there are people who sit in the federal House of Commons, in Parliament, who want the destruction of this country. I think if some of my constituents are wakened by that it will have been a worth-while, useful exercise.

In terms of referendum or plebiscite or whatever we are going to call it I would just like to say, based on the feedback from my constituents of Halton—Peel, that this is something they very much want. It is very much the kind of thing they have been asking for, that is a direct mechanism to become involved in what has turned into an all too long constitutional debate.

As with everything else there are good things and bad things about direct democracy. There are risks and rewards, plebiscites and referenda. I think back to the Meech Lake accord experience. The polls showed us after Meech Lake failed that roughly 70 per cent of Canadians did not agree with Meech. However, the same poll showed us that about 73 per cent of Canadians did not know what was in the Meech Lake package. Had there been a referendum, direct democracy, a plebiscite on the failure of the Meech Lake accord or the success of it, it would have failed. Circumstances led to that failing anyway.

There were other influences at play during the time the Meech Lake accord was being discussed. A lot of my constituents were probably turned off the whole package by Quebec's language laws and changes to those laws which were brought in around the same time and which a lot of people confused with what was in the Meech Lake accord.

It is ironic now that my constituents may see the day coming before long when they are asked to vote in a plebiscite on something that essentially may ratify what was in the Meech Lake accord that most people did not understand and rejected.

The question could be asked whether this is the right time for a plebiscite or a referendum. Maybe it is the right time after the Spicer commission, after the Beaudoin–Edwards report on constitutional change, after the Dobbie–Beaudoin report on the specifics of how our country may be renewed, after all those constitutional conferences that hopscotched across the country ever week, after the "ordinary Canadians" were involved in this whole process and after all the weekly meetings of bureaucrats and the meeting now in Montreal. After all these steps maybe it is time to test the waters of democracy, to take the risk, to take the gamble, to take the leap of faith.

We will likely have one more step and that may be a first ministers' conference in perhaps a week or two or three. We do not know that. The first ministers will obviously be trying to come up with a negotiated settlement. At that point the referendum or plebiscite future will be cast in stone. We will know whether we will have one in order to break a logjam or whether we will have one in order to ratify an agreement that has been negotiated by our first ministers.

In any case, there are important rules for all of us in this campaign. Individual members of Parliament have an obligation, a responsibility to use their offices and their resources to make sure their constituents know what they will be voting on. There is nothing more important than public education in this whole thing. Whether you agree that Canada should be saved and remodelled or whether you agree that Canada should be split, divided and broken, whatever you think, you should know what you are voting on. Members of Parliament from all sides have to use their offices to make sure we are telling people the truth.

Government has a role. Federal and provincial governments all have a role in making sure that the issues are understood if and when this plebiscite arrives. We all have a responsibility to make sure that the propaganda, the empty rhetoric, the lies, the untruths and the misrepresentation of those who want to destroy Canada are fully explained, are dissected and are shown to people.

I noticed in a newspaper article yesterday that the bill we are debating now, and I will read the sentence, "was greeted in the Commons with howls of dismay from the opposition and the threat of court action from the Bloc Quebecois". If the Bloc Quebecois is so worried, so scared, so frightened of this particular legislation that it is willing to take the government to court, we might be on the right track here. We might be doing the right thing if the separatists who sit in this Chamber are so mortified at the idea of going to their own people for a choice. We are probably on the right track.

• (1830)

The referendum, the plebiscite campaign marks the beginning of the battle for Canada. Let us make no mistake about it. The stakes are that big.

The weapon in the battle for Canada this time—it is not like the Battle of Britain, it is not like the other battles we have seen, it is not weapons and artillery, planes or bullets. We have one weapon in the battle for Canada, and it is the truth. We want to tell the truth to Canadians about what is going on.

In Quebec right now the leader of the Block Quebecois and the leader of the Parti Quebecois are going around that province telling people: "You can be independent, you can go from Canada, you can leave Canada and all you do is say that you are no longer part of Canada and you are no longer subject to their laws".

They are also telling them in Quebec: "You can take a hike from Canada and you can still use a Canadian passport. You will still be protected by the Canadian military, you can use the Canadian dollar, you can have access to the Canadian economy and you can even have the Queen". They are telling them all this stuff.

They do not want to hear it. They are so afraid that right now somebody in Montreal is listening to this debate.

What will happen if they take a hike from Canada? It is gone. Canada is finished. There are people in my riding who are not going to let the separatists think they can take a walk from Canada and still have the Bank of Canada setting low interest rates and taking care of monetary policies. There are people in my riding who say there is no way their tax dollars, $12 billion a year, is going to go for the Canadian military to protect—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I would like the hon. member for Shefford to take his seat or else go behind the door. Please. The hon. member for Halton—Peel has the floor.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): There are other people who are separatist from the rest of Canada as well. I will give these guys a break right now.

There are people who are separatists from other regions of Canada. There is Preston Manning and the Reform Party. Do you know what Preston Manning is saying? It is interesting that the House leader for the Bloc Quebecois is giving me a hard time. He is one of the biggest fans that Preston Manning's got. Do you know why? Preston Manning says: "Let Quebec go and determine itself".

Mr. Lapierre: Self-determination.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): That is right. Preston Manning says: "Give Quebec the right of self-determination. Let Quebec define itself and if it leaves that's fine. Let the rest of Canada define itself. Perhaps there is an economic union between the two of them". It sounds an awful lot like what we are hearing from the Bloc Quebecois.

When you think about it, Preston Manning and the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean have the same goals, to sever Canada and to become princes of their own little fiefdoms. For the rest of us in the Chamber, no way.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to speak in favour of the concept of Bill C-81, the referendum legislation.

We in the Official Opposition agree with the idea of a referendum. In fact we have been calling for a referendum for over a year. When our leader presented his nine point plan back in April of 1991, a referendum was one of the main points.

We believe that the Constitution belongs to the people, not to the politicians, not to the government, not to the bureaucrats, but to the people.

The Constitution differs from other laws because it is the basic law of the land. It is the Constitution which gives the Parliament of Canada authority, as well as the federal government and provincial governments. We believe that all Canadians should be consulted and that

they should have a final say in this constitutional reform package.

This government has been flip-flopping for more than a year on the question of a constitutional referendum. In the throne speech of May 1991 it promised referendum legislation. In the early fall of that year it backed away from the promise and then by November the referendum was back on again. Then it was off again.

Now we have legislation before us, Bill C-81. However, this legislation does not say that a referendum will be held, it says that a referendum may be held. In other words, it does not require the government to hold one. I believe that is the fundamental flaw in this legislation.

A referendum is the only way to give real legitimacy to the constitutional reform package. The people of Canada will no longer accept backroom deals. We had the Meech Lake round, and as we heard the Prime Minister admit and say, he rolled the dice. Canadians want a chance to say yes to each other and yes to Canada.

A second flaw in this bill, and I believe it is a major flaw, is that it ignores the principle of regional majorities. I believe there must be a double majority. In other words, there must be a majority of Canadians who vote for the constitutional reform package, but on top of that there must be a majority in the different regions of Canada.

This bill does not require that. It does not require that there be a majority in each region. It does not require that each region must agree with or support the constitutional proposal. I think that regional majorities are important. If we had a referendum and a region of Canada, such as the western part of Canada, voted against the constitutional package then I do not think we should proceed.

I believe that there should be a double majority, that across Canada the majority of Canadians agree but there also should be a majority in each region. Otherwise, for the government to push ahead would cause disunity and division within the country.

A third weakness in this legislation that we have before us is in the process of writing the question that Canadians would be asked. It is very important what the question is, how it is worded and how it is put.

In the past in Canada the three political parties have worked together on many matters of great national importance, This certainly happened during the 1981-82 constitutional process as well as during the 1987-88 constitutional process. There is no reason why all three parties should not be actively involved in writing the referendum question.

Yet this is a government that has failed to consult the opposition on the legislation we have before us today. It promised that it would consult the opposition. It promised that its members would consult us. Yet all the government did was inform us as to what would be in this legislation.

Furthermore, this legislation does not provide for any consultation on the question that would be in the referendum with opposition parties.

• (1840)

I think that is wrong. The other parties should be consulted. The question should not be worked out exclusively by the government. The government proposes only three days of debate on this very crucial referendum question. Three days. Unless the debate is extended it would mean that only 25 per cent of the members in this House of Commons would be able to speak on this question.

On top of that, the opposition members would not be allowed to propose any substantial changes. They could make only minor amendments to the legislation.

That is another thing that is wrong with this. In such an important matter only 25 per cent of the members of this House will have the opportunity to take part, and the 25 per cent who can speak would not be allowed to make any meaningful amendments to the question.

There is no reason, no reason at all, for the government not to consult the opposition on this important issue.

Finally, the referendum fails to address significant proposed changes to the Canadian Elections Act that were recommended by the royal commission. One concerns spending limits. I certainly am one who feels that there must be spending limits, otherwise people with the money will be able to hire the best PR people and the best organizers, and then maybe it will be money that will change the results. It is important that we have limits

because it is only with limits that Canadians will perceive this referendum as being fair.

If it is perceived as being unfair by Canadians then the losing side will say: "Well, it was manipulated, it was bought". I feel very strongly that there must be spending limits.

I know that my time is running out. However, I want to repeat that I support the concept of a referendum. I feel that the referendum must be mandatory, not optional as is provided for in this legislation; it must include the principle of regional majorities or it is not fair, and there must be spending limits.

I have other concerns as well. However, in the limited time that I have those were the three points I wanted to mention.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, 12 years ago to the day, following the referendum in Quebec, I was standing there with the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister, Claude Ryan and all the others that had supported the no campaign. We were promised a renewed federalism. In 1982 with the patriation of the Constitution, English Canada got a renewed federalism, but Quebec was left on the sideline.

Following the election of the Liberal Party of Quebec in 1985, one of the first issues discussed at the National Assembly had to do with finding a common ground to allow Quebec to reintegrate the Canadian Federation with dignity.

That resulted in the Meech Lake accord, which had been ratified by ten premiers as well as the Prime Minister of the country. We know the outcome of this sad story: on June 23 1990, the Meech Lake accord died. Since then, we have spent practically two years talking about the Constitution in this House, while industries close down, thousands of people lose their jobs, our young people experience problems, and our old people are looking for security. We in this House try to destroy rather than build. Mr. Speaker, contrary to those who might claim that this destruction is caused by the Bloc Quebecois members, it is English Canada that has simply refused to allow Quebec to reintegrate the Canadian Constitution.

Now we are debating Bill C-81. This is a fraud; it is a diversion to create confusion, given the fact that it will be an empty consultive process that will cost Canadians and Quebecers some $110 million. This is ridiculous. It is ridiculous because it has no legal value. This referendum will not change anything; it will not solve any problems because people representing the government have told us that they do not want to hold a referendum; it is just in case.

We found that out today at the federal-provincial constitutional conference that is being held in Montreal. They waited to be in Montreal to create a common front of five anglophone provinces asking for an elected, equal and effective Senate. We know that Quebec is against that, as is Ontario, but what is worse is the fact that the same English provinces are telling Quebec that there will be no right of veto for Quebec or a distinct society as described in the Beaudoin-Dobbie report.

This is a far cry from the Meech Lake Accord, from the five small conditions that would have enabled Quebec to reintegrate the Canadian Constitution. However, Quebec is no longer interested in that stuff. We no longer talk about language, culture and the civil code. This is no longer what Quebec seeks. Indeed, the Liberal Party of Quebec approved the Allaire report during its congress in 1991. That report recommended 24 powers for Quebec: a major decentralization. On the other hand, Canada precisely wants to keep a strong central government. That is where the problem lies. We understand that in Quebec. We do not want to keep English Canada from continuing to have a strong central government. We agree on that. But we are also agree that Quebec wants to decentralize to the point of forming a country. The country that is missing within this Canada is the state of Quebec, next to it. We want friendly relations and exchanges. But from a political point of view, Quebec wants to choose its own laws. And that is the fundamental principle that the members of the Bloc Quebecois stand up for on this side of the House. We want to protect the higher interests of Quebec.

• (1850)

A while ago I was listening to some members who were calling us separatists. Maybe they should look at themselves in a mirror, Mr. Speaker. They are the ones who refused us access to the Canadian Constitution. As a matter of fact, we should remind the hon. members who accuse us, members of the Bloc Quebecois, of being illegitimate, that all the Quebec members in this House

are illegitimate since we do not belong to the Canadian federation, being left out in 1990.

Before passing such judgment, maybe members on the government side should look at themselves. When polls for the last two years or so give them 13 per cent, one wonders whether even their own family members are going to vote for them. We worry about that, because this could split families, recreate all over again the situation we experienced in the eighties with the referendum.

In the interest of English Canada as well as Quebec, we should pay more attention to the referendum which should be held in Quebec before October 26, 1992. Let Quebecers decide their own political future. We should wait until that referendum. We respected the result in 1980, so why all the tricks now, especially within a bill which allows unlimited spending. There is no Yes umbrella organisation and no No umbrella organisation.

We learned today on the 6 o'clock news that the government might propose amendments to, precisely, limit spending—

An hon. member: A fraud.

Mr. Rocheleau: An umbrella committee will not be able to spend more that $10 million. That is one committee, but you can have any number of them. It is farcical, Mr. Speaker, it is the rape of democracy.

We consider it unfortunate that hon. members from Quebec should be willing to go along with that. One wonders whether it is not simply a way for this government, which is in trouble and does not find support in the population, to use public funds in a referendum, since it will be able to spend at will. By the way, you might have noticed that on TV, every evening, every day, during intermissions, during hockey games, "O Canada" is being sung about every five minutes.

In the interest of Canada and Quebec, I hope that opposition members, and indeed the Conservative members from Quebec, will refuse to venture into something which could have dire consequences for the future of Canada as well as of Quebec.

[*English*]

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly on this bill. This is a piece of legislation that has attracted a lot of attention.

I think, though, the important thing to do is not so much to focus on the piece of legislation but to recognize what this legislation does, once passed through this House. It will give the government the power to hold a plebiscite or a referendum to consult the people of Canada on the future constitutional agreements that we reach and the arrangement that we collectively come to, if it should be decided that referendum is important or that referendum is necessary.

We should consider this on a number of levels. Perhaps the most important is the role that the Canadian public can play in expressing its views on the Constitution. The second clearly would be the role that a referendum could play in ensuring that this country stays together, to break a deadlock and to confirm a consensus that may be there.

We would be fooling ourselves entirely if we did not recognize that a referendum, whether or not we like it, rightly or wrongly has some inherent difficulties and some inherent dangers as my friends and colleagues from Quebec well know. As anybody familiar with the recent history of Newfoundland and Labrador will know, a referendum hangs on. It stays. The wounds that it creates are long term and very serious.

We should recognize that perhaps the most important debate in this House should a referendum become necessary will be the debate surrounding what form the question will take and what it will be. The debate over the last two days has been very fruitful and it is important that it continue.

Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 26(1), I move:

That this House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the continuation of second reading of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

And more than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2), the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

Mr. Winegard: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. An agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or Standing Order 78(2) with respect to an allocation of time to the second reading of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

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 allocating a specified number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at that stage of the bill.

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on behalf of the constituents of Cardigan, Prince Edward Island, for a very short period of time on Bill C-81, the referendum legislation.

My constituents, like all Canadians, welcome the decision of the government to pass referendum legislation. However, Canadians regret that it took the government so long to understand exactly what the people of Canada truly want.

On April 21, 1991, the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada gave a speech in Montreal on the Constitution. In that speech he called for a national referendum on the Constitution. Indeed, the government picked up on the idea and mentioned in the throne speech last May that it would seek a way to consult Canadians on this important issue.

Unfortunately it has taken the government a full year to act on its promise. Unfortunately I guess my time is up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired. I know it would have been a great speech.

It being seven 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*]

SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE ACT

COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act (CSIS Act) to authorize the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC) to review the operations of the Communications Security Establishment (CSE).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to address this item of Private Members' Business which I consider a most important issue. I understand that other members of this House feel the same way.

The motion asks for the government to amend the Security Intelligence Service Act to authorize the Security Intelligence Review Committee to review the business affairs of CSE, the Communications Security Establishment.

This issue has been floating around this House for a couple of years now with virtually no adequate material response on the part of the government.

The first thing I want to do is describe the agency which, for all intents and purposes, is unchecked or unmonitored by Parliament or other external agencies within government.

This particular agency has a budget of about $250 million. I say "about" because no one in this House knows what the budget is other than, perhaps, two or three ministers who sit on the Privy Council Committee on Security and Intelligence.

The second thing we know is that it has about 850 employees, about, but we are not sure. We are also advised that approximately 1,100 Department of National Defence employees work in the endeavour.

What is the endeavour? It is twofold. The Communications Security Establishment provides information, advice and consultation to government departments on the security of their communications. That is internal-external security so that when communications are made

in any mode, they are secure and, hopefully, unmonitored by parties who might want to monitor them.

The second role, and this is the one I speak mostly to this evening, is that of signals intelligence gathering. This $250 million a year agency gathers communications signals, basically out of the air, not just in Canada but elsewhere in the world from its bases wherever it has access. We do not know where all those bases are for the same reason we were not told the budget or the number of employees or a lot of other things the agency does. We do know where the agency's office is located and we do know who the head of the agency is.

Before I go further I would like to give some credit, although I am a little sheepish about doing it. I have to give some credit to *The Globe and Mail*, not to the government, for investing a lot of time and hours in researching this Communications Security Establishment. Its series of articles on this by Mr. Peter Moon was quite a good series and provided yours truly with basically the only blueprint, the only collected set of information about this particular agency. That, I suggest to Canadians, should be an insult to them; not the good work of *The Globe and Mail* but the fact that Canada's Parliament does not have this information and cannot get it.

Why is Parliament interested? Let us review quickly the role of Parliament. In essence, there are books written about the role of Parliament but it boils down to a couple of basics. One of them is that the Crown, the government, does not tax the people without the consent of Parliament and, second, it does not spend the people's money without the consent of Parliament.

Parliament does other things in that role. That includes legislating, that is passing the laws that authorize the spending. Parliament also monitors government. Parliament is separate from government. It monitors in its committees and other processes what government does on behalf of Canada's citizens.

I want to point out that CSE, notwithstanding all the things that it does, bears no relation to any of those functions because there is no statute governing CSE. There is no statutory law that describes what CSE is or what it does. We will get into a bit more detail later as to what CSE does. As well, there is no law or instrument that sets out the mandate for CSE. No one really knows precisely what CSE is mandated to do.

I am saying this from the floor of Parliament, whose job it is to know what government is doing. There is no specific accountability for its spending. I cannot determine what kind of money it spends. The $250 million figure that I just bounced before the House I think came from *The Globe and Mail* study because I cannot get it in any of the committees. It is simply not there.

For all the other reasons we have just discussed, there is no monitoring because CSE sits out there beyond the reach of most of the parliamentary scrutiny devices and monitoring devices. The bottom line is that there is no accountability by this agency for what it does and for what it spends. That is an unfortunate circumstance. I am hopeful that the process here in Parliament, which includes the debate on this motion, will provide a solution that is acceptable to the security and intelligence framework that we have in this country and which is acceptable to Parliament.

I have no doubt that the taxpayers, the people who pay the bills, are of the view that Parliament has to satisfy itself. We here in this House, all of the members, have to assure ourselves on behalf of our electors that this agency is operating within a law—there is not a law now—and that it is spending properly our tax dollars.

This signals intelligence gathering began during the last war. As far as I can ascertain, it was not until the year 1975 that there was any legal reference to it in government records. It is a pretty pitiful list of references. There is a series of three statutory orders which are expressed or articulated as subsidiary legislation of other statutes. I think one is the Treasury Board, another is the Financial Administration Act and the other is the Public Service Employment Act, all basically exempting this particular agency, which had come into being, from any scrutiny under those agencies.

Just so that you know this is non-partisan, the government that did that was a Liberal government in 1975. There has basically been no change. It could have been any government. The environment in the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s was I think very much different in terms of civil liberties than the environment is today. I

hope it is different in relation to government accountability.

One of the problems at CSE, one of the reasons why we find it difficult in Parliament to monitor it, is that the government, probably not by design but just by historical evolution, has permitted the agency's existence to divide into two separate pieces. They are as follows:

The agency in 1975 was moved from the National Research Council where it must have been a "project" for many years. It moved to the Department of National Defence and it exists there today as a section of the Department of National Defence. Presumably, there is a colonel or a general who, I believe, is unnamed who has administrative responsibility for this. That is, financial and administrative responsibility lies with the Department of National Defence.

• (1910)

However, who controls the policy and operations—and the real word here is operations—the day-to-day functioning, the things it does? The answer to that is the Privy Council Office. The Privy Council Office is basically the Prime Minister's Office. It is the office of public servants who run the Prime Minister's function in this country.

As far as I know, the Privy Council Office does not account to any parliamentary committee, especially in terms of operations which they call top secret, top secret umbra—we will not go into too much jargon here—or simply secret.

Little guys like us in this House of Commons probably would never get within a hundred feet of that secret or top secret information, most of which we do not have to get close to anyway. But when we are monitoring we have to have the ability to find out what is going on.

What is my concern about CSE? What is our concern in Parliament? Is it just a spending and monitoring issue? No, it is not. In particular, this agency has the comprehensive ability to eavesdrop anywhere it wants. I am talking about total comprehensive eavesdropping, principally based on eavesdropping of electromagnetic signals or transmissions.

Anything that moves and creates a pattern is ascertainable by this agency, by its net. It has an intelligence-gathering net. There is an additional wrinkle in this which I will get to later. But all electronic signals, everything that moves in Canada, is trappable, receivable, nettable. All phone conversations, all fax machine transmissions, all radio frequencies, even those that are encoded and encrypted, are trapped or trappable within the net used world-wide by CSE and its brother or sister components in other countries.

This is going on right now. They could be listening to me right now, quite possibly. They certainly could. This is certainly carried on with our internal monitoring system. Now they probably do not want to listen to me, but they might be. They have a net that is capable of doing that. They have a net world-wide capable of picking up this information and screening it through one of only three CRAY supercomputers in this country. That is a very expensive piece of machinery, but it basically is able to analyze all of these signals and, I suppose, to read them using key words, and to draw out those which it wishes to retain. It puts them into its own coded retaining language. These are then submitted to further analysis in Canada, the U.K., the U.S.A., Australia, or in other countries.

That is what they are capable of doing. That is why we are concerned that this agency is not monitored.

I want to mention the problem of reciprocal exchange agreements between CSE and other countries. The United States National Security Agency is perfectly capable of listening to what I am saying now. If it wants to listen, it does it. It has satellite transmission capability as well as satellite networks and earth transmission networks, and CSE is a part of it. It is not illegal. It is listening from up in space or some place else. It is doing it from Buffalo. It does not matter.

If it is listening, and it is capable of doing it, it takes the data to Maryland or West Virginia to the National Security Agency where it is coded. If Canada wants that information, CSE can get it. It runs it through the super computer checking for key words. It sees somebody is talking about CSE. All of that can happen. The Austra-

lians can do it, the British can do it. It is that trading, that subcontracting capability that we are not able to monitor.

We do not know whether data that we are using in Canada is obtained legally, illegally in other countries, whether it is eavesdropping, whether it is a breach of Canadian statutes, U.K. statues, Australian statutes, French statutes. They are getting the data and they are using it, we think for a good purpose. We know it is for a good purpose. It is for our national security. That covers a lot of territory.

Now that we know it is out there and the capability is there, all of our privacy is therefore at risk. We are not monitoring in this country.

What has Parliament said about this? A couple of years ago Parliament did a five-year review of the CSIS statute, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. I served on that committee, as did two or three other members in this House here now. They are here because they are concerned about it. They had a number of things to say about this.

First, they wanted to note the capability and they ended up by making a recommendation. Even though CSE was not part of CSIS, it gives data information to CSIS. That was confirmed. The committee recommended that Parliament formally establish the CSE by statute, which does not exist now, and second, establish the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which already exists to oversee CSIS, as the body responsible for monitoring, reviewing and reporting to Parliament on the activities of CSE concerning its compliance with the laws of Canada. That was the recommended solution.

The recommendation was not adopted. I want to refer to the government's response to that report. It admitted the problem. I do not accept the statement that "a broad accountability system for CSIS is in place". I am not going to go through the details. It is not there. I am telling this House as a member that the accountability is not there.

Even if there is some Public Service accountability, which I am not familiar with, there certainly is not in this House. "Nevertheless, such an accountability system can always be improved and the government has been considering providing the Minister of National Defence with some additional capacity for review of CSE. Once the decision is taken—", et cetera. There is no mention of Parliament, no mention of parliamentary accountability.

The Security Intelligence Review Committee made reference to it in its 1991 report. The former chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, Mr. Ron Atkey, stated recently in an interview: "We need a system that will provide some accountability and some assurance to you as a private citizen that you are not being abused". To date, we do not have that.

The government's response to that committee was inadequate. It did nothing. Members were so dissatisfied with the response of that report that from all sides they created a parliamentary subcommittee to deal with national security.

Someone has said that CSE is accountable to the general law. That is true, but they are in the same area that the RCMP was in 15 years ago. Mounties who were sworn to uphold the law broke the law with the barn burning incident some 15 years ago.

If the Mounties were able to break the law, if they fell into that trap, how much more likely is it that civilians not sworn in the same way would also break the law? I am not accusing anybody. It is a problem. I want to encourage this House to adopt this motion. I want to make Canadians aware this is a matter of very serious and important unfinished business, and that a statute and legislation are necessary.

• (1920)

Canadians must have this degree of accountability. They should insist upon it. I am hoping the House will adopt this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion concerning the role of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, also known as the SIRC within the national security system.

In 1984, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIC) Act and the Security Offences Act established a new legislative framework to govern Canada's national security system.

The new legislation was designed to create a balanced and accountable system for the protection of Canada's national security interests and the preservation of the democratic way of life of its people. It provided the main legislative framework for the national security system, assigning security intelligence to CSIS, and confirmed

the security enforcement and the protective security mandate of the RCMP.

Embodied in the legislation was a set of interlocking principles to shape and guide the operation of the system and each principle can be associated with one of its major participants.

The legislation incorporated a clear mandate and strict controls of the activities of the new service. The inclusion of ministerial oversight and sophisticated review mechanisms ensured that the service would be effective and that the rights of individuals would be respected. Balance was a distinguishing feature of the legislation.

The need to protect national security was balanced by respect for individual rights and freedoms. The need to provide the service with sufficient powers to produce effective security intelligence was balanced by statutory controls and policy direction.

The need for CSIS to employ certain intrusive techniques was balanced by the requirement for prior authorization by a minister of the Crown and the Federal Court. The need for secrecy was balanced by ministerial accountability and informed independent review.

The national security system assigned specific and distinct mandates to CSIS and the RCMP. The service's primary mandate is to be found in two provisions of the CSIS act: the definition of "threats to the security of Canada", and the description of the service's duty to collect, analyse and retain information and intelligence on "threats to the security of Canada".

In order to fulfill its mandate the service undertakes counter-terrorism and counter-intelligence investigations of various types and duration.

The CSIS mandate is conditioned by the limits and controls specified in the act, by ministerial directions, and by the service's own operational policies and procedures. Certain powers employed by the service are subject to the requirement to obtain a judicial warrant.

In view of the complexity of CSIS activities and the importance of securing public confidence in the integrity of the system, the CSIS act provides for an independent external review body, the SIRC, reporting to Parliament through the Solicitor General on the activities of the service. The act also establishes the function of the inspector general to conduct independent internal reviews of the service for the Solicitor General

Like other government departments and agencies, CSIS is required to pursue its objectives with full respect for the law including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Legislation governing the creation of a security intelligence agency has a special need for a policy framework, if there is to be public confidence in how the agency operates. Ministerial direction helps to ensure that the Solicitor General, who is accountable to Parliament, is the linchpin in the legal and policy framework.

The principles of ministerial control and accountability are central to Canadian parliamentary democracy. The *CSIS Act* ensured that the minister would have full knowledge and power of direction over the policies, operations and management of CSIS and also supplies the minister with the means to control and guide the service.

The function of the inspector general forms an integral part of the over-all accountability process. The CSIS Act established the inspector general's reporting role to the minister.

The terms of the act assign the inspector general a review and a monitoring function with respect to CSIS, and no information other than cabinet confidences may be withheld on any grounds.

By serving the minister directly, the inspector general maintains a measure of distance from the minister's policy and operational advisors in the ministry secretariat.

Canadian are protected by limitations in the CSIS mandate and the scope of prescribed activities of the service, by the conditions of the warrant process and the complaint and review processes provided in the act.

In the performance of its duties and functions, CSIS has no authority to counter or deter threats to the security of Canada. Furthermore, information is to be collected only to the extent that it is "strictly necessary". Investigations are to be initiated only when suspicions are based on "reasonable grounds", and the investigations themselves are to be conducted in a reasonable manner.

The definition of threats to the security of Canada excludes lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless carried on in conjuction with any of the activities referred to in the CSIS act.

Judicial authorization is required for the exercise of the most intrusive powers of CSIS and is granted only after a rigorous internal process of approval is completed, including consultation with the Deputy Solicitor General and the approval of the Solicitor General.

The Solicitor General conveys his views to the service through written ministerial directions and his intentions through the approval processes, for example in approving warrant applications, and in regular meetings with the director.

Assistance to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of National Defence in the collection of foreign intelligence excludes investigation of Canadian citizens and permanent residents and corporations, and must occur within Canada.

The director of CSIS is required by law to report on illegal activity of any member of the service in the performance of his duties.

This represents a brief discussion of the system governing Canada's national security. A recent review by the special committee found that it is basically sound, has served the nation well and should be preserved.

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to the role of SIRC, which is an innovative and important component of the national security system established by the CSIS act.

Responsibility for this independent external review function was given to the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), a non-partisan committee of privy councillors which reports to Parliament through the Solicitor General.

SIRS'S review role is a cornerstone of the accountability framework established by the CSIS act. SIRC has a mandate to review the propriety of CSIS activities, with emphasis on the delicate balance between national security and individual freedoms.

Given SIRC's importance as presently constituted, the government does not agree with the proposed statutory amendment which would expand SIRC's role. In the government's view, it would have the effect of either diffusing SIRC's functions with respect to CSIS or diminishing ministerial accountability.

The SIRC, created in large part to act as Parliament's surrogate in the sensitive area of security intelligence, consists of five part-time members who are privy councillors but must not be sitting members of either the House of Commons or the Senate, and is assisted by a small staff of researchers.

• (1930)

The members of SIRC see their part-time status as a great advantage which assists them in maintaining their independence and objectivity. By retaining their chosen career as their main professional activity, they avoid becoming captives of the system.

Finally, through daily accountability in the House of Commons, supplementary and main estimates process, standing committee hearings, special committees (terrorism), the subcommittee on national security, the tabling of SIRC and other special reports, and parliamentary review of the legislation, Parliament is the ultimate review body.

Mr. Speaker, this illustrates that the CSIS act, which created SIRC's review role, was well thought out. The special committee, when it reviewed its provisions and operation, found the CSIS act basically sound. As presently constituted, SIRC well serves its intended purpose.

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, we indeed live in strange times. Just last week in the United Kingdom the British Prime Minister admitted that MI-6 actually existed when it was in fact founded over a century ago.

The motion we have before us relates to a Canadian institution, the Communications Security Establishment, which has been in existence for about half a century, perhaps not under that name. Parliament still has absolutely no control over that body, and for all practical purposes it does not exist either. In fact, we do not have anything in the estimates, they are hidden in the Department of National Defence estimates.

I just had the ordeal of listening for 15 minutes to a speech that had absolutely no relevance to this motion. A speech on CSIS and SIRC was relevant to the debates of spring of 1984, but of absolutely no relevance to the debate this evening. I do not think the parliamentary secretary even made a passing reference to CSE. She certainly said nothing about its operations.

I want to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, for bringing forward this motion this evening because I think it is very timely. It is timely not only because it concerns a highly secretive information-gathering agency which has no parliamentary responsibility. It is about the accountability of a secret organization. That is what we are discussing and debating tonight.

In 1992, when Canada is not at war with anyone and no one is plotting war on Canada, we have a secret agency that can listen in on virtually any kind of electronic transmission anywhere in Canada, indeed anywhere in continental North America. We do not even know how far it goes beyond continental North America.

The Communications Security Establishment, which originated some 50 years ago in the National Research Council, I think it was part of its communications directorate, has remained under the cloak of secrecy ever since. The reason it has is because it is a secret organization and therefore it is involved in secret activity. That secret activity is listening in on all the electronic communications of foreign embassies in Ottawa or consulates in Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver or wherever they happen to be. It listens in on all kinds of government traffic. It is also responsible for the security of government information and government documents. It is really the security agency for Parliament Hill, and perhaps I should say for cabinet, the Privy Council Office and the office of the Prime Minister.

I would not object to that if it was simply a security agency of government to protect information within the Government of Canada from foreign eavesdropping. If that were its only activity, I would not be standing up this evening and demanding greater accountability because I can understand that part of its operations.

Every prudent government in the world has that kind of security or at least attempts to have that kind of security. I am not denigrating the capability or the expertise of CSE. I have no way of doing that because I do not know anything about it. As a parliamentarian I am not allowed to know anything about CSE. I am precluded not by law or statute but by some arrangement within the PCO. On that part of it I simply have to stand back and ask like any other citizen: "I have no right to know, therefore what can I do?"

I can stand here on my feet tonight and verbally blast away at the government and say: "Look, that part of CSE's operation may be acceptable in its secrecy, but the other activities of CSE, that is the electronic eavesdropping on foreign embassies, the electronic eavesdropping on citizens, not necessarily of this country but in the United States, for example"—and I will get to that in a moment—"and CSE's ability to tap into sources south of the border with respect to electronic eavesdropping in Canada should be scrutinized".

Now the member who moved this motion said earlier that it has the capability, and I agree with this, of listening in on virtually every fax machine transmission, every telephone call, every cellular telephone communication. Anything of an electronic nature can be tapped into.

We are told by the minister and by his senior personnel in the Solicitor General's office that CSE does not operate in any illegal manner, that is it does not collect information in this country on Canadian citizens in an illegal manner, in a manner contrary to the Criminal Code of Canada. I will accept that argument because the National Security Agency in the United States assures American congressmen and senators that it does not eavesdrop on American citizens contrary to their Bill of Rights.

But there is no law in North America prohibiting NSA from getting in touch with the CSE in Canada and saying: "I want you to keep track electronically of so-and-so resident in South Dakota or Alabama". CSE can do that and pass on information to the NSA, therefore circumventing any American law. The National Security Agency, buddy-buddy that is with the CSE, can do exactly the same thing and eavesdrop on Canadian citizens, contrary to Canadian law but circumventing that law.

That is the part of CSE that disturbs me. That is the part of CSE that I would like to know a little more about. I would like to know whether or not in fact the sourcing of its information, whether or not it comes from the Americans, the British or the Australians, is done in a manner that is in accordance with our rights here in this country, with our Criminal Code and with our charter. That is what I want to know.

As far as I can determine there are no legislative safeguards. There are no oversight safeguards. There is no committee or subcommittee of this House that has any jurisdiction over CSE. We cannot put a question on CSE in this House in Question Period either to the Solicitor General or to the Minister of National Defence. He will get up and answer that because of the national security involved with that agency he is unable to answer the member's question. We cannot put questions in committee. We can ask the Minister of National Defence to appear but we know ahead of time that he or she will not answer questions on the CSE.

This motion, if passed or adopted, would mandate SIRC to have the same oversight power or responsibility with respect to CSE as it has with CSIS, but SIRC does not have that mandate. The government will not give SIRC that mandate.

We need a couple of things here. I agree with the motion completely. The Security Intelligence Review Committee should include the Communications Security Establishment as part of its mandate. It should be the citizens' oversight committee for CSE just as it is for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

• (1940)

But I would go further than that. I would mandate CSE's existence by statute. I would bring in a bill. It would be thoroughly debated in this House at all stages. It would go to a committee. The special committee has already looked at this at least in part, but now we could devote our entire resources to CSE. We would come up with a bill just as we did with CSIS. Therefore it would be statutorily established instead of tucked away somewhere by tradition, by some kind of secret arrangement within the Privy Council Office for only the eyes and ears of only two, three or four top public servants to have any control over or any counsel over the operations of CSE.

We live in a democracy. We are not at war. We are under no stress. Surely CSE should come under parliamentary mandate. It should be statutorily established by an act of Parliament. SIRC, as stated in this motion, should have the right to oversee its operations as a citizens' committee watch-dog on the Communications Security Establishment.

I see my time is up.

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in this debate. As a member of the special committee that studied CSIS with my other friends who are in the House, I did agree and sign the report that said that CSE should have its own legislated mandate and that SIRC should be mandated to oversee CSE.

My friends from Scarborough—Rouge River and Brant have gone into detail on the Communications Security Establishment and what we know. Certainly the minister has primary responsibility. That is our system as it exists today. In that regard the CSE is apparently under the Department of National Defence. The Minister of National Defence would have authority over that particular agency and a reporting function to Parliament in that regard.

I would like to say there is no indication that anybody's civil liberties have been offended by CSE. Therefore, why are we bringing this particular matter forward? Why was this motion brought forward? We saw, as was indicated in the early 1980s, that the RCMP security establishment, sworn to uphold the law, did run afoul of the law in regard to national security matters.

As a result it was decided that the security service would be made a civilian agency. It would be given its own legislative mandate. Certain checks would be put in place in order to defend the civil liberties of Canadians. Those were outlined very well by the parliamentary secretary and included SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, as well as the inspector general.

We found in our review of CSIS that these organizations have functioned well and have protected the civil liberties of Canadians. We looked at other areas of the security establishment in this country. We understand there is security apparatus within the Department of External Affairs, within the transport department and with CSE, to name a few.

To make sure that the civil liberties of Canadians were protected and that we did not have any incidents where those civil liberties were offended and as a result there would a great uproar in Parliament, it was decided by the committee that we would recommend that CSE be given its own legislative mandate and, since SIRC had worked so well in overseeing CSIS, that SIRC be mandated to oversee CSE as well.

CSIS in the act, as was pointed out by the parliamentary secretary, has its own legislative mandate in regard to threats to the security of Canada. Surely the CSE could be given a similar legislative mandate as a standard by which it can be judged in its picking up of the various electromagnetic signals and which it would take into consideration.

It is my belief that there are memorandums of understanding between CSIS and CSE, so there is some exchange of information. Obviously the memorandum itself is secret and should remain so, but the mere fact of a memorandum of understanding indicates that there is an agreement as to what information will be turned over to CSIS in certain circumstances.

It is not out of the question for people who have the responsibility, as we do here in Parliament, to want to know what that information is. We should be able to get at that particular information. We should know in general terms what the budget of the organization is so that we can fulfil our oversight function, and also so that we can ensure that the civil liberties of Canadians are protected.

Our first choice would have been a model similar to the United States. When we were doing our study on CSIS we found that in the United States all the security intelligence agencies are overseen by two congressional committees, one of the Senate and one of the House of Representatives. They have access to all the information in regard to all the security establishments in the United States, including their NSA.

We in Canada did not go that route in overseeing our security intelligence service. We decided we would do it through the Security Intelligence Review Committee, made up of Privy Council members who were mandated to actually take the place of Parliament because it is a secret organization. Obviously it is important to the security of our country. They were to take the place of Parliament, and that is why the Privy Councillors were put in this particular position.

We on the committee accept that concept. We found that it was working well. As was mentioned, the Security Intelligence Review Committee does look at what CSIS does. It delves into various matters to ensure that the civil liberties of Canadians are protected, and we can see that in its annual report. Obviously that has an effect on CSIS and it makes sure that the civil liberties of Canadians are taken care of and are not abused.

Our thinking on the committee was that we should put all the security intelligence apparatus under some form of oversight, that includes the other ones I mentioned and would be found in the report.

We feel there was a reaction in the early 1980s to what had gone on in the RCMP security service. CSIS was established and the model is working. Now in a time when we do not have a great crisis we should look at our entire security establishment and establish oversight in the other areas as well.

CSE is an organization shrouded in a great deal of secrecy, rightfully so. However, what is occurring there? There are no indications that there have ever been any civil liberties that have been abused by this particular organization, but we do not know. As members of Parliament we would like to be reassured that no aspect of our security intelligence apparatus in this country is offending any of the civil liberties of Canadians.

SIRC has worked well in terms of the oversight of CSIS. We suggested that it be given additional responsibility and its oversight be extended to CSE. I can understand the argument that SIRC has worked well on a part-time basis. One of the things we were concerned about in our study was that SIRC had not been co-opted by CSIS. We found no indication of that.

One of the reasons we felt that had occurred was because of the part-time nature of its oversight function. If it is felt that this would be too much of a burden for SIRC and would take away from the part-time nature of its job then why not create another body similar to SIRC to oversee CSE. Privy Councillors can do the job in this case also.

My personal preference would be to put that entire oversight function within a parliamentary committee. We have done that to a certain extent with the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General which we have formed.

• (1950)

If we are going to proceed on the basis of the SIRC model, which has worked well, I would urge that we go ahead with a legislative mandate for CSE, set out what it is that it is collecting and in what terms, such as threats to the security of Canada, a similar definition as is put in the CSIS Act that we could compare it against and make sure that is what this particular organization is collecting.

There may be an argument that it cannot get the co-operation of the National Security Agency in the United States. We heard that one from CSIS when SIRC was established. SIRC went to the United States and found that once the initial barriers were broken down, it could co-operate and the Americans were satisfied with the security intelligence agency.

In conclusion, I would support a legislative mandate for CSE. I would like to see SIRC or a SIRC-like body set up in order to protect the civil liberties of Canadians in regard to CSE but not only in CSE, in every aspect of the security apparatus here in Canada.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak on this particular motion. I had the pleasure of serving on the review committee that studied CSIS.

The motion of my colleague for Scarborough—Rouge River is an excellent one and really gets to the heart of the matter. He is being very skilful in what he is doing because all of these spy agencies, if you can use that terminology, should be included under a review or oversight function. He is starting with CSE which is the more serious one and which does not even have a parliamentary mandate. I am sure as time goes along and after the government sees the wisdom of this motion and enacts it, we will see other agencies fall within the ambit of a review agency such as SIRC.

On that review committee of which I had the pleasure to serve, we had a recommendation. I believe it is recommendation 87. I quote: "The committee recommends that Parliament formally establish CSE by statute and establish SIRC as the body responsible for monitoring, reviewing and reporting to Parliament on the activities of CSE concerning its compliance with the laws of Canada".

That was an excellent recommendation but the government chose not to deal with that particular recommendation. There were a number of recommendations in our report that the government refused to deal with. It only adopted one or one and a half recommendations which is unfortunate. Ron Atkey, who was the chairman of SIRC, gave a very interesting radio interview in March 1991 in which he talked about the recommendations which we came up with as parliamentarians and submitted to Parliament. I again quote because it is illustrative of what is going on here:

> None of these recommendations were earth shattering. Why were they rejected? The explanation may relate as much to the malaise in our parliamentary system. It seems there is simply not the time and inclination to debate important legislation in a non-partisan way these days. It is also clear that the government wanted to avoid at any cost the commitment to introduce legislative changes. How convenient for CSIS which really never wanted to limit itself to investigating terrorism and espionage.

This little part is really illustrative.

> And wasn't this just super for the Communications Security Establishment, that huge vacuum cleaner in the sky which has frightening capacity to invade the privacy of Canadians in a variety of ways but which has no legal mandate and which is not accountable to anyone except to the Department of National Defence and the Privy Council Office, the principal users of the data gathered.

That is very illustrative. There is the head of SIRC as he then was saying this is a very serious situation. This was a simple recommendation which came forward in our study. It is the same recommendation which the member for Scarborough—Rouge River is putting forward to Parliament again. That is to put some oversight, some control, some protection on the privacy of individuals. CSE is aptly described as the huge vacuum cleaner in the sky which is scooping up information all over the place. And we have no control over it, no say as to what is going to happen.

Both Mr. Atkey and Mr. Jean-Jacques Blais are no longer on SIRC, but when they were, they made some comments. There was an article in *The Globe and Mail* in June, 1991. I quote again from Jean-Jacques Blais who said: "My knowledge of the Communications Security Establishment was very superficial indeed when I was minister of defence." Then later on he says: "—and I am sure that the minister of defence today has no better knowledge relating to CSE than the Solicitor General had prior to the establishment of the review process."

So, here we are again, looking at two people who had an intimate knowledge of what is going on with CSE and an intimate knowledge of over-all data collection, and as a lot of people call it, the spy agencies that are here in Canada. They all say that they know nothing about what is going on with CSE. There is no parliamentary mandate; it was established by an Order in Council. It is not overseen by Parliament or by SIRC.

Now everyone knows the review committee said that in addition to SIRC there should also be a parliamentary review involved. We went so far as to see a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General established for that purpose.

I am sure everyone realizes there is a lot of work in these committees. We do not set these committees up frivolously. We do not set them up just to have another name or a title. This particular committee that did the review and the subcommittee that is working now are hard-working committees designed, quite frankly, to protect Canadian privacy. That has to be something that is fundamental to this country.

Right now in private conversations in homes or businesses or in any organization, that huge vacuum cleaner in the sky could be scooping all of that information up and utilizing it some day, putting it in a file or a data bank and storing it away so that some day that could be used against someone. That is fundamentally wrong. The idea of having a spy agency doing all of the things that have to be done, the idea of data collection in order to protect Canada is absolutely essential.

We are into all kinds of arrangements with a number of countries in sharing information and protecting one another. There is nothing wrong with that. But as Canadians we have to be satisfied. I feel I have to be satisfied as a parliamentarian that these agencies are not carrying out any abuses, and that the work they are doing is the proper work.

That is where SIRC comes in. It can do in private that type of research and report to Parliament and say: "Yes, CSE is functioning properly. No, it has not taken any intrusive steps without proper reasons and without going before the proper organizations or courts to get the necessary permission to carry out these intrusions." All those sorts of things would then be laid before Parliament and we would have an opportunity to look at them and decide that we need not worry, everything is working fine.

Instead we have a situation in which we have an organization without a parliamentary mandate, without being overseen by Parliament or SIRC, now functioning in our Canadian society and continuing to monitor everything that we are saying. As a former great leader of the Liberal Party said, it is "interfering in what is going on in the bedrooms of the nation".

Quite frankly, I can tell by the look on your face, Mr. Speaker, that is a concern to you and it is a concern to us on this side. That is why my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River is bringing forward this motion which will see the necessary protection to Canadian privacy if it is adopted.

I hope that the government will see the benefit of an all-party committee's recommendation that this be done. I heard my colleague opposite talk about the same types of things that we are talking about on this side. It is unanimous among parliamentarians. We need the executive branch to deal with this and make sure that Canadians are protected.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): 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.

[*Translation*]

It being eight o'clock, the House stands adjourned until ten a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 8 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 21, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*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 seven petitions.

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

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

38TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 38th report of the Standing Committee on House Management.

Pursuant to Standing Order 113(1) this report is deemed adopted when laid upon the table.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture entitled *The Path to Sustainable Agriculture*.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response within 150 days.

FINANCE

13TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Clément Couture (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Finance on Bill C-75, an act to amend the Excise Act and the Income Tax Act.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many residents of Nepean, Gloucester, in my riding of Ottawa Centre, as well as many constituents from other ridings in the national capital region. These constituents are very upset about the disparity between gas prices in the national capital region and those in other parts of Ontario.

These petitioners are calling on Parliament to urge the government to correct this injustice.

THE CONSTITUTION

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to deliver a petition as well. It is signed by several constituents in western Canada who claim that Parliament should enact legislation, which we are doing right now, except there is a difference because these people are asking that a referendum of the people be binding upon Parliament.

These people have every right and responsibility as Canadians to make sure that any referendum which may be held would be binding upon Parliament. I submit this respectfully.

• (1010)

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition that has been certified correct according to form and content under Standing Order 36.

This petition adds to the total number of signatures I have in my office; 1,132 people have signed this. The petition calls upon Parliament to reconsider a decision made by the provincial court of Alberta which ruled that the rights of aboriginal people include the right to hunt for profit on private land.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to support an appeal of this court decision and conclude an agreement with Canada's treaty Indians regarding sound wildlife management practices and restrict native rights to hunt, fish and gather for personal consumption needs and prohibit the sale for profit, wildlife meat or parts obtained by treaty rights.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which I wish to enter into the House today to make Parliament aware of the fact that a large number of constituents in the federal riding of Peterborough have asked that the government consider legislation providing for a referendum of the people to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the Government of Canada.

I am pleased to present this petition with pages of signatures, all in support of a referendum on constitutional changes.

* * *

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. 240 and 301.

[*Text*]

Question No. 240—**Mrs. Feltham:**

With respect to the Canada 125 Corporation (*a*) how will the federal funds be allocated (*b*) will any part of the federal allocation be used for salaries or bonuses?

Hon. Robert R. de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): In so far as the Canada 125 Corporation is concerned the answer is as follows:

(a) Maximum allocation by activity

Projects:	$34.6 million
Communications:	$10.8 million
Marketing:	$1.5 million
Administration:	$3.1 million
TOTAL:	$50.0 million

(b) Of the $50 million, $4.8 million will be used for salaries.

Question No. 301—**Mr. Butland:**

With respect to the inserts included with new Government of Canada cheques released in April 1992 (*a*) what was the cost of (i) designing (ii) producing (iii) printing (*b*) what companies or individuals were paid for this work (i) when were they paid (ii) by whom were they paid (*c*) how many inserts were produced?

Hon. Paul Wyatt Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): With respect to the inserts included with new Government of Canada cheques released in April 1992:

(a)(i)(ii) the insert was designed and produced using internal SSC resources. Consequently no additional cost outside the government was incurred;

(iii) the cost of printing the new cheque insert was a approximately $170,000;

(b) St. Joseph Printing Limited was paid by Supply and Services Canada during March 1992 for printing these inserts;

(c) approximately 22 million inserts were produced

[*English*]

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

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REFERENDUM ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING STAGE OF BILL C-81

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) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, not more than one additional day be allotted to the further consideration of second reading stage; and

That, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Business on such day, 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 shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 144*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Bernier
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bourgault
Browes
Cardiff
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Danis
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Domm
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Koury
Larrivée
Lewis
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Merrithew
Monteith
Nicholson
Paproski
Porter
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Andre
Belsher
Bertrand
Blenkarn
Brightwell
Cadieux
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Collins
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Fontaine
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Langlois
Layton
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Masse
McDermid
McLean
Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Plourde
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vien
Weiner
White
Winegard—116

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Callbeck
Clancy
Crawford
Duceppe
Flis
Fulton
Gérin
Guarnieri
Harvard
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
Maheu
Marleau
McGuire
Mills
Murphy
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Prud'homme
Riis
Rompkey
Simmons
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Volpe
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—81
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Butland
Catterall
Comuzzi
de Jong
Ferguson
Foster
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harb
Heap
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Lapierre
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee
MacLellan
Manley
McCurdy
Milliken
Mitchell
Nowlan
Pagtakhan
Parker
Plamondon
Rideout
Rodriguez
Samson
Speller
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne
Waddell
Wappel

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Members

nil/aucun

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Wednesday, May 20, consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Murphy (p. 10955).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Cardigan has eight minutes remaining in his speech.

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, once again I rise to speak on Bill C–81, the referendum legislation. Yesterday evening I indicated how pleased the people of Cardigan, Prince Edward Island, and I were that this legislation was finally brought forward.

It is unfortunate the legislation was not brought forward sooner so that the government would not have had to bring in allocation time or closure. With this we do not permit all members to indicate how they feel about the legislation. This is not acceptable to the people of Canada, but being they have the majority they can do what the like for now.

Now that we have the bill in front of us we must take a look at it and see what the government's proposition is. From what I can see there are several problems with the legislation and with the question as to whether the government really intends to have a national vote.

The bill allows the government to call a vote in one or more provinces. The government has said this to avoid the confusion of having two constitutional votes in the same province. However, having some Canadians vote on different questions at different times could be a disaster.

The point of a vote is for Canadians to reach a conclusion on a single issue. It would be like Alberta voting yes or no whether to buy a Ford car, P.E.I. voting yes or no if it should buy a Chrysler, and Quebec voting yes or no if it should buy a car from General Motors. Instead all Canadians should get together and vote whether or not we want a car at all, whether or not we want the Constitution or we want this country to remain together or not.

Separate votes on separate questions would only serve to confuse Canadians about the results. To avoid the confusion, all Canadians should vote on the same day, on the same question. To do anything else would leave this important question unresolved.

The bill would also allow the government to worm its way out of a national vote altogether. The referendum legislation itself is not binding, let alone the results. Clause 3 of the bill indicates that the Governor in Council may call for a referendum. I feel the government should be required to hold a vote on the Constitution, not only this time but any time the Constitution is to be amended in the future. As it stands now the government has put a sunset clause in the bill, killing it three years after it has passed. That would allow this or any future government to make amendments to the Constitution without first consulting Canadians.

• (1100)

The government has said no to spending limits in the legislation. Anybody, any corporation or any lobby group, can spend however much they want. This is unfair because during the last federal election Canadians saw the result of unrestricted third party advertising and spending. Is it fair for Canadians if certain well funded, special interest groups are allowed to hijack the national agenda? Spending limits must be included to ensure the fairness of the whole process.

For spending limits to be truly effective people must be organized into logical groups. The Liberal Party has called on the government to organize participants under two umbrella groups. Such umbrella groups would not only ease the imposition of spending limits, they would require Canadians to work together in a spirit of compromise and co–operation.

While nobody expects the constitutional deal to be perfect, there should be something in it for everybody to support. Umbrella groups would force Canadians to come forward to reveal their true colours. By having umbrella groups Canadians will have to decide if they are in favour of national unity or if they are against it.

Canadians want to vote on the Constitution and they want their Constitution to reflect all parts of the country. A Constitution that does not have the support of the majority of people in each region is useless. What is the point of a Constitution that the people of Atlantic Canada disagree with? What is the point of a Constitution if the people of Quebec feel that it is being shoved down their throats?

If the federal government does not agree to the principle of regional vetoes people will view the process as being irrelevant, and that is the last thing we want.

A referendum is the ultimate form of consultation. Members in this party hope that the government will be more forthcoming in consulting Canadians than it has been in consulting the opposition parties.

From this side it seems that the Prime Minister's idea of consulting is deciding what he is going to do and then telling us about it later.

It has been a year since the government first mentioned the possibility of a national referendum. Instead of starting the legislative process back then it has waited until the last minute before throwing this bill together. The result is a bill of holes that could jeopardize the success of the entire round of constitutional negotiations.

Liberal members want to be constructive. We criticize the government's bill in the hope of making it better for Canadians. We realize the government has the majority and it will probably have the last say. But in the interest of fairness and in the interest of all Canadians who want to keep this country together please listen to what we have to say.

There are ways to improve the bill. All 27 million people in this country want to reach a settlement of our Constitution and a national referendum is the way.

I certainly believe, as I have indicated, that the opposition parties must be consulted more to come up with the proper question. I believe we must have a double majority, that is regional majorities and a total majority over all. It could be financed if people were given tax credits for donations made to either yes or no in the referendum. I believe that the sunset clause should be removed because this means the legislation dies within three years. Now is the time to bring the Constitution to the people and every time we wish to make a change it should be brought to the people.

You are aware, Mr. Speaker, of the disastrous result of the last federal election campaign. We ended with a government which was elected to a large extent by third party spending. We are now experiencing the results of the agenda of that government.

Let us not go through the same mess with this constitutional referendum. Let us control third party spending and be sure that we have a fair result. Of course, as I indicated before, it must be national. The referendum also should be mandatory. The only way it can be of any success is to have a referendum and let the people have a say and then if each region and the majority vote yes, possibly we can put this constitutional issue to rest for a good period of time. Hopefully that will be the result.

If the government will accept a few of the recommendations from the opposition and the people in general then, hopefully, we will come up with success.

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada. It might be a surprise to all Canadians that someone is going to stand up and speak positively about the referendum. I have heard an awful lot of rhetoric from members in the House about people being positive about a referendum but then making a lot of negative comment. It is something the government has talked about for a period of time.

I recall an excerpt from the throne speech of May 1991 which said:

> In September, my government will refer its proposals to a joint parliamentary committee that will be established to consult with Canadians.
>
> After receipt and consideration of the committee's report, my government will propose a plan for a renewed Canada. You will be asked to approve enabling legislation to provide for greater participation of Canadian men and women in constitutional change.

Also I would like to read an excerpt from the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee report of February 1992:

> We recommend that a federal law be enacted to enable the federal government, if deemed appropriate by the Government of Canada, to enable the federal government at its discretion, to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal, either to confirm the existence of a national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolutions.

The legislation as put forward is a precautionary measure in the mind of the government because of the negotiations that are taking place. As was noted on April 14 of this year by the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs when he spoke about the consultative process, he said:

> If at the end of May, there is not a substantial consensus on the Canada round we would intend to go to Parliament with a federal proposal which we hope would secure the support of the two opposition parties. If that support were not there, we would proceed alone. Parliamentary approval of that package might be followed by a national plebiscite, whose purpose would be to secure the agreement of the people of Canada, in effect, to reach around those premiers who did not agree.

Carrying on with that particular objective, the Prime Minister was quoted in *The Toronto Star* on April 9, 1992 as saying:

> My position is: If the provincial premiers cannot agree on constitutional proposals that would be put to the people, then the federal government, with the other federalist parties in the House of Commons, brings forward proposals and causes these proposals to be put to the people.

I think that all Canadians would want the federal government to be in a position of moving forward with a referendum in what I guess would really be considered a plebiscite to let them have their say.

• (1110)

The over-all objective is to ensure that there is every means of success in this Canada round. I know that is also the intent and in the minds of most other members of Parliament in this House, I am sure all except those who want to break up Canada. Certainly we would want to have a referendum that will not interfere with any right of any province to hold its own referendum. That is certainly the intent of this legislation. It must be characterized by fairness so that all points of view are expressed and considered, and the element of fairness must be there when we go to the people with a referendum.

Certainly it is a serious step and it must not be taken lightly. It is a very serious step and I think all members of this House would agree with that. The current process of the Canada round has been long. It has been somewhat painful at times. Nonetheless, it has been an important journey for Canada as we have carried on with these consultations.

As the House will recall, first there was the citizens' forum, next there was the Beaudoin—Edwards committee on the amending formula, then there was the Beaudoin—Dobbie review of the federal government's constitutional proposals, and a series of national conferences that followed. Now under way and nearing completion is the multilateral process involving the federal government, nine provincial governments, two territories, and leaders of the major aboriginal groups. Whatever other successes we have had, whatever this consultative exercise may yield, it will eliminate the possibility of anyone ever daring to impose a contrived sense of what Canada is.

Resolving the constitutional issue in a positive, modern way is what we all would like to see happen. National referendums, of course, have been held only a few times in Canada, and certainly a number of times in the provinces. There have been two national referendums, as we know, the first of course being in 1898 and one in 1942 on conscription. Certainly national referendums are something that in very important cases like this clearly are needed.

It should be noted that through the years individual members of Parliament have brought forward private members' legislation in connection with holding referendums and they have not been very successful in doing that. Most recently, in the fall of 1989, the member from Etobicoke brought forward a private member's bill, Bill C-257. Certainly he has carried on in his mind that holding a referendum or plebiscite is something for which there should be legislation in place. We should commend the member from Etobicoke for his foresight and his action in that area.

In a recent article written by the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore he wrote: "I emphasize that not every issue has to be put to the people. The main work of enacting laws, resolving issues and debating public concerns must continue in our elected and deliberative legislative bodies. Direct voting in a referendum or plebiscite is such a special democratic device that it ought not to be trivialized or overused. Perhaps every decade or maybe once in the life of each Parliament, one or two topics of overriding national importance should be subjected to the fullest expression of popular opinion".

It goes on in another line: "Plebiscites can help in our self-definition as Canadians". Certainly a lot of us would agree with the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important piece of legislation and support it with some changes that may take place in the committee and ensuing days.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address this legislation which has been introduced to provide, and not to assure, the holding of not a referendum, but a plebiscite on the constitutional questions.

The proposal that there should be a plebiscite has been defended on democratic grounds. I think that all Canadians should be cautioned about that argument as presented by a government which has again added to its record of having limited debate more than any other government in history. Let us not look to the government's commitment to democracy as the premise on which we have before us a proposal for a plebiscite.

My party has agreed to support at second reading this legislation in the hope that there will be abundant amendments to it to make it acceptable and to make the process work more effectively and more democratically.

I think that in our enthusiasm for a plebiscite on an issue as complicated as the Constitution some caution should be sounded as to whether this plebiscite and this legislation really will perform in the interests of the two key issues on which it is based, one being Canadian unity and the other that a referendum is the soundest reflection of a functioning democracy.

We have to reflect on the two national referendums that this country has held, one in 1898 on prohibition and the other in 1942 on conscription. I think that all Canadians and this House should be conscious of the fact that the questions that were put then were relatively simple. If one looks at one of the key plebiscites held in this country, namely the referendum of 1980 in Quebec which was on a constitutional issue, that again was a relatively simple question.

We are not dealing with a simple question here. We are dealing with a very complex question. We are dealing with a whole host of constitutional changes. I think it is edifying to reflect on the process as it has occurred so far which points to the extraordinary complexity of the issues with which we have to deal.

This process really began with that 1980 referendum in Quebec which demonstrates clearly that referendums do not resolve constitutional problems. The reason why we are here today is that the 1980 referendum in Quebec did not resolve the constitutional issue with respect to Quebec. It is 12 years later and we propose another referendum.

More important is that we look at how the immediate process began. That began with a whole host of proposals by the government for constitutional reform, a set of proposals that was never really adequately understood by Canadians but which then became the subject of a special joint committee of this Parliament and as well five conferences on the Constitution.

I participated in all of that. The process involved was one in which people had to commit themselves quite thoroughly to understanding every element in the process. We know that the proposals of the government were changed dramatically by the hearing process of that committee as well as the conferences. Out of those conferences came the proposal for a social covenant and the proposal for a reformed Senate quite different from what was proposed originally by the government.

• (1120)

I do know during that process there was a great deal of difficulty in understanding such questions as distinct society, concurrency and interdelegation.

Yet we may propose to put a question of yes or no to the people on proposals having to do with the Constitution that are part of this long evolutionary process. But it is key in all of this to know that we do not know what will be the outcome of the present first ministers' consultations, what will be put to the people and how well the people understand on what they are voting.

Who will determine the message that is received by the people to which they will answer yes or no? It will come I am sure from the same people who communicated the message about the free trade agreement which was essentially a yes or no question in the last election.

Could anybody seriously argue that the people of this country were given an opportunity by the press and the powerbrokers in this country who declared themselves on one side of the issue in their dominance of communication and explanation? Do we really believe that Canadian people ever were given an opportunity to understand what was at issue then and what is going to happen here?

They are going to talk about the status of Quebec, the aboriginal peoples, the division of powers, the charter, a whole host of things. People will be dependent on the public press unless there are some dramatic changes in how this thing is carried out.

Very few confederated nations have successfully held referenda. We have had the example of Australia that has had 32; only 8 were approved. We say that the referendum is in the interests of Canadian unity. Would anybody suggest the 1898 referendum lead to a conclusion that was in the interests of Canadian unity? Would anybody suggest that the 1942 referendum lead to an outcome that was in the interests of Canadian unity?

We have two premises on which we are going to base this referendum. We have no clear message that this process can contribute to democracy, if we understand democracy to be based on informed consent of the electorate. On the other hand, we have problems on the record wherever such referenda have occurred on complicated issues of this sort about whether in fact it will contribute to Canadian unity.

Let me say this: With respect to the issue of Canadian unity there is the question of where minorities fit into the equation. In previous plebiscites it has been the Quebec minority that has been scotched.

I represent a section of this country which the politicians have thoroughly ignored. Our status in this country in terms of citizenship is an unequal citizenship. I am supposed to depend and those whom I represent are supposed to depend on what government says, on what the party says, what the media says, and what the powerbrokers say about the appropriateness of this Constitution.

But will people know that 30 per cent of the population are not to be included in these constitutional proposals? Is that democracy? Is it democracy that questions that are going to be put to the Canadian people ignore 30 per cent of the people, and will they know that?

There has been almost a conspiracy by our political leaders and the media to help shut out some. If there was going to be any prospect of fairness in this plebiscite, if we are going to assure ourselves it is going to contribute to Canadian unity or the democratic process, then there had better be significant changes in the character of the process that is going to be enforced when this plebiscite takes place.

There had better be serious examination of the question of spending limits, not only of the total expenditures but also who spends and what provisions will ensure that regional minorities or demographic minorities will have a fair shake in all of this. If we are not careful about that this will not contribute to Canadian unity.

What regulations and rules will apply to ensure that Canadians are adequately informed? Every line, every dotted *i* and crossed *t* in that Constitution, must be understood by them and explained to them so that their decision will be on the basis of informed consent in a democratic process that is all too often organized to deny to the people informed consent.

I hope people will understand that the record of referenda and plebiscites in the United States has certainly not been in the interests of democracy. It has been in the interests of those who have the money and who can shape opinions by denying information, denying analysis and denying to the people an understanding of where they are in the process.

If we are going to have a plebiscite and that plebiscite is to be in the interests of either Canadian unity or democracy then there had better be substantive changes in this legislation. Otherwise it will fail democracy; it will fail Canadian unity. A most dangerous outcome could result to the future of Canada if care is not taken.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the debate on Bill C-81 and say that it certainly is time the government has adopted at least my party's position on holding a referendum on any future constitutional amendments.

I also would like to say that I appreciate and commend the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for his efforts over the years on referendum legislation. I know that he has worked tirelessly on this and I know that he is pleased that this is at least happening.

It is also high time that the Prime Minister responded to over 40,000 letters which I personally delivered to his office last month. They were sent to me by concerned Canadians demanding that the government conduct a binding national referendum on any future constitutional package.

The Prime Minister's office claimed it received only approximately 10,000 such letters. I will leave it to the Canadian people to decide who is telling the truth and perhaps who is not.

At any rate, I am pleased to see the government so interested in direct democracy and consultation of the Canadian public and they say that a leopard can never change its spots. However, enthusiastic as I am about the prospects of a national vote on the Constitution, I nevertheless hold some serious reservations about the government's sincerity in doing so and the contents of the bill itself.

Before I go on let me make my position completely clear. While I support the general direction the government has taken in tabling referendum legislation, this does not necessarily mean that either I or my party will support the final question proposed by the federal government.

Only if the question is truly national in scope and adheres to the principle of equality of all provinces, and only if the question allows for a yes or no response to the final package as a whole, might I or my party support a referendum question on any future constitutional amendments.

One would assume that if the government were truly serious about soliciting the will of the Canadian public it would give this legislation all the force that a real referendum requires. That is, this bill should be more than just an advisory mechanism for the government's own use. Rather the results of any vote should be binding on this House.

I realize that a binding mechanism would necessitate an amendment under section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which would require the unanimous consent of all provincial legislatures. This does not prevent the government from adopting a simple motion that states that the House would adhere to the results of such a vote.

It is a simple matter. If the government considers itself a democratic entity it should have no problem in complying with such a simple request. By strict definition this bill provides only for a plebiscite, not a referendum.

Canadians are not simply asking that the government listen to them and then pat them on the head and tell them to go away. They want a real opportunity to express their feelings on the most important document in this country. Instead, the government has chosen to deny Canadians their fundamental rights in a free and democratic society by once again shutting them out of the process.

Yes, the government will let them vote on some sort of manipulated question. But what good is all this if the government can then turn around and reject the results or, worse yet, twist the results to its own satisfaction simply for the purpose of partisan gain?

I submit that this is the only intention of the government in the first place. This toothless bill is simply an attempt by the government to make itself appear more democratic when in reality perhaps democracy is the farthest thing from its mind.

This fact is expressed in the comments of the government House leader himself who has said recently that he would prefer not to have a referendum at all. The same House leader has termed this legislation: "A weapon to be used only if the various premiers and other leaders involved in this process do not comply with the government's own constitutional vision".

• (1130)

In the final analysis a constitutional referendum, if the government chooses even to conduct one at all, will be meaningless and subject to the whims and political gamesmanship of this Tory government.

I fear that perhaps the government is more concerned about achieving a deal than it is about achieving true unity. I hate to think that the government would be obsessed with a short-term patchwork truce rather than working without artificial deadlines and crises toward a long-term cohesive solution which will celebrate the true equality of all provinces and all citizens.

I therefore restate my belief that if Bill C-81 is to advance the cause of democracy in this country it must be amended in order that a national referendum must be conducted on any final constitutional package. In addition, a motion must be proposed that the results of such a referendum be binding on this or any other future government.

A further question I would have for the government would be why this bill does not provide for a truly national vote. Why has the government allowed for the possibility of asking different questions in different regions or provinces, or for the possibility of conducting the vote in only specific provinces or regions while omitting others? Bill C-81 could enable the government to propose a question or questions nationally or in one or more provinces. What is the government's rationale for this move?

Perhaps the government believes on the one hand that the views of the residents of particular provinces or regions are more important than those who live in other provinces or regions. On the other hand the government may want to use this provision as a strong arm tactic or weapon to pressure reluctant but principled premiers into succumbing to the will of the federal government.

Still yet another possibility is that the government would like to hold a separate referendum in the provinces outside Quebec so that English and French Canada may be denied the opportunity for an intelligent and meaningful dialogue with each other on the country's constitutional aspirations. Whatever its reasons the government has erred on this count.

If members on the other side of the House believe in the equality of all citizens regardless of where they live in this great country they will do the right thing and conduct this proposed referendum on a national scale.

As an extension, if the government wants to show Canadians that it believes in the equality of all provinces it will hold any constitutional referendum in each and every province.

I am not sure whether the government believes in the equality of all provinces but this is certainly a prime opportunity to show Canadians where they stand on this question.

It is essential on important matters such as constitutional amendments that a national referendum be paramount over advisory provincial referenda. One question should be asked everywhere at the same time, not a set of different questions extending over a period of time.

As a protection of regional interests, approval of the amendment should require a majority vote in at least two-thirds of the provinces and a majority of all votes cast nation-wide.

The current amending formula provides for the most fair and equitable protection of regional interests. It did not just pop up out of nowhere. It was arrived at after years of deliberation and academic argument. Thus far it has allowed for a fair expression of regional interests.

I cannot see much value in tinkering now in order to apply some special regional vote to this upcoming particular set of amendments.

The four-region concept being talked about has been thrown around before in constitutional deliberations. It was inevitably rejected because it did not recognize the equality of the provinces. The government must now acknowledge the equality and ensure that any future amendments require the seven and fifty formula for approval.

Finally I come to the issue of the referendum question itself. The government has given no indication in Bill C-81 what the question might look like or how it might even be arrived at.

The government House leader has said it is possible to have more than one question. Perhaps it is this government's intention to submit a myriad of questions to the electorate in order to obtain a nebulous body of results from which the government can then pick and choose its desired conclusion.

In this case the government may not only take the referendum as an advisory one, but it may also manipulate and interpret the results for purely partisan reasons. What guarantee do we have that in Bill C-81 the government will not just do this, ignoring the whole purpose of a referendum which is to elicit the will of the people, not of the government?

I am also concerned about the provisions that would allow us only three days of debate when it comes time to draft the wording of this question. I cannot imagine why the government would want to invoke closure before the debate has even begun, unless of course it is not interested in what anyone else has to say or what the results might be. I am sure there are at least some democrats over there who would be interested in what others have to say about a proposed question. If the government wants to act unilaterally on this one it

should think again because it looks like it could use all the help it can get.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this bill today. I would also like to compliment the member from Etobicoke who introduced his own bill on referenda. I had the pleasure of seconding his bill when he introduced it.

In 1867 Canada was created by its people. Now 125 years later I am proud to see that the government will give people a final and concrete say in how their country should be rebuilt. This is truly a Canada round of constitutional negotiations.

The government is committed to ensuring public participation in the renewal of our Constitution. By tabling this legislation to enable a referendum on constitutional reform our government has reinforced this commitment.

Constitutional reform must be open, must be public, and must be transparent. We must provide every opportunity for the ideas of Canadians to be heard. It is not enough to have Canadians involved in the debate; they must also have a stake in it and they must also vote on it. Our government also must listen.

In the summer of 1991 I sent out a survey on the Constitution to every household in my riding. My constituents told me that they wanted to participate in constitutional renewal. Sixty-six per cent said they want to be involved in creating and reviewing constitutional amendments through constituent assemblies and public hearings.

Our government has responded to these demands by providing Canadians with opportunities to be heard at every turn. First there was the Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future in November of 1990. The forum was created to get Canadians from all across the country talking to each other about the values and characteristics which define this great country and which define us as Canadians.

Then there was the Beaudoin-Edwards special joint Committee on the process for amending the Constitution of Canada. It asked Canadians how our Constitution should be amended and who should be involved in the amending process. The Beaudoin-Dobbie committee toured the country to ask Canadians to discuss and improve upon the set of 28 proposals which had been tabled by the right hon. Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

The federal government, nine provincial governments, two territorial governments, and leaders of the four major aboriginal groups have now entered into discussions. There have been consultations and multilateral negotiations.

I hope that these groups and leaders will come to some sort of consensus on a constitutional package which will be truly national in scope, a truly national round.

My constituents told me that not only did they want to be involved in creating the constitutional proposals but that they wanted to be involved in a national referendum. Sixty-three per cent said it was important that our government hold a national referendum to improve any constitutional amendments.

I am happy to see the government move in that direction. I am an advocate of referenda when necessary on national issues. Referenda in the past have been used in different countries and different states to involve people in debate, to make the trade-offs in their own minds on issues, to get more fully involved in discussing what is at issue, what ramifications issues have, how it would affect them personally and how it would affect their country. In this way they become emotionally involved. It is less easy for citizens to say they do not like a proposal or to criticize it in a facile way when they have a personal stake in it.

It is very important that the Government of Canada consult with people. That is not to say that governments should use referenda at every turn on every matter or allow referenda to be used on issues that are not of national importance.

• (1140)

We do have elected representatives; we do have a court system. It is almost tragic that the more people seek to go to the courts, the more they want referenda, the less effective our political system may be in the future. This is something we must consider because we must have an effective political system to resolve matters in a democratic way to protect the interests of individual Canadians of every background.

I want to stress two points. First, I am personally not in favour of spending limits. I believe these are restrictions on freedom of speech. However the government has indicated it would have spending limits similar to that of a national election. That might be a compromise in the interests of equality and fairness so I am prepared to go along with it.

In my view this freedom on spending should be extended to broadcasting. If people want to buy broadcast time to air their views on an issue they should be able to do it.

I would like to read a quote of U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist who examined this issue and wrote in a judgment dated June 18, 1986:

> To restrict political spending is much like allowing a speaker into a public hall to express his views while denying him an amplifying system.

In a modern democracy we must be able to spend money to do things like direct mailings and reach out to a lot of people. People lead very busy lives. It is not as it once was where people would have a lot of say without spending the money.

We must not muzzle the free voices of our nation. Canadians are mature enough to make their own judgments. Canadians can see through who is spending money and what they are saying. Canadians are mature people. They can make their own judgments. What we do need and where we should concentrate, if we are speaking about spending limits, is on disclosure. I am pleased to see the government has tough disclosure rules on this issue.

On the subject of freedom and involvement I would also like to quote John Stuart Mill:

> The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it.

Once again that reinforces the notion of freedom of speech and public discussion.

I applaud our government for moving in this democratic direction, yet Canadian legislatures must make sure this bill is fair. We are doing that by having our disclosure rules and other rules.

This legislation puts in place a Canada round and we want to achieve success in a Canada round. This legislation does not mean that a referendum will be held but is enabling legislation so if at a certain time the government decides to hold a referendum it can decide with consultation on a national question.

I will close by saying I endorse this legislation. I am prepared to make a compromise on the spending limits although I believe we should have increased disclosure rather than spending limits. People want to know where a message is coming from. We acknowledge that in order to get a message out or a point of view across, people or committees need to spend money and that is perfectly legitimate.

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C-81, as it is the means by which Canadians will be consulted on the amendments to the Constitution of Canada.

On numerous occasions the Liberal Party has stressed the importance of having within the Canadian Constitution the ability and the right to go to the people. Logic dictates that if one province has the opportunity to express its views on its constitutional future, so should all other provinces.

I believe the pinnacle of our democratic system is the holding of a referendum. It is a process which gives Canadians the opportunity to express their views on their future. My colleagues and I are very pleased to see this process being utilized as it was proposed by the Leader of the Opposition in April 1991. The simple fact of the matter is that all Canadian citizens participating in a national referendum will be brought closer together.

I totally agree with the concept of a national referendum but Bill C-81 is flawed. This bill contains absolutely no provision for capping spending limits. These should apply to either side of the referendum question. The proposed bill should provide for a yes and no umbrella committee that would follow realistic spending limits. In other words, no corporation, no financially powerful individual, no group or political party can buy the Constitution of Canada because it is not for sale.

Furthermore the polls indicate that Canadians want a referendum. At this point in time, I believe that the Canadian people deserve a fair and honest question. This would enable each and every Canadian to express their views on this matter once and for all. The wording of the question is the key, the key to a new life for this magnificent country of ours.

That is why I strongly believe that total co-operation is required in this House. If we are unable to reach an agreement on the question we will be setting a terrible example for our fellow citizens. As members of Parliament, we must show Canadians that we are able to deal with this matter expeditiously and professionally. I say expeditiously because Canadians are fed up with this bickering over the Constitution and want the matter resolved as soon as possible so that we can all get on with our lives.

Unfortunately we are off to a bad start. The opposition parties have not been consulted at all on this bill. Our House leader was only briefed. If this government was genuinely concerned about our Constitution and the future of this country, it would have put Canadians and Canada's interests first and politics last. Our country should be first and foremost in our hearts and in our minds because the issue at hand transcends partisanship; it goes far beyond political expediency. The unity of our country is at stake.

The bill does not provide for a double majority. A fair referendum should not only have a majority of votes at the end of tabulation, but it should also have a majority in the five regions of the country. I believe there should be a majority in Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada, western Canada, and northern Canada. This would better serve the concept of a fair and realistic referendum as no one or two regions of Canada would impose its will on another region.

We have to come out of this constitutional exercise better off than when we entered into it. Therefore, we must have a national majority and a regional majority. Furthermore, once the referendum results are in all premiers should acknowledge the results and comply with the will of their people.

Once again this referendum must be understood by all and to be fair at all stages of the process. It must be unquestionably fair. The days of major decision making behind closed doors without a mandate are over. The people will no longer accept this. I believe Canadians are tired of hearing about the Constitution and would rather talk about the economy as it is extremely important. We must all realize that this matter has to be resolved once and for all.

We are going through very difficult economic times. The risks are high but we cannot allow this wonderful country of ours to perish because of the negative vote. In my view it would be disastrous.

The final decision will be rendered by the people and not by governments or politicians. We will get our marching orders directly from the people and the decision should be very clear and should give government clear direction also.

• (1150)

To conclude I would like to say once again that the Liberal Party fully supports and endorses the concept of a referendum on constitutional proposals. The Canadian people must be given the opportunity to express their views. After all, this country belongs to them.

However, as I have previously indicated, we require some changes to this bill. The government must allow amendments to be adopted. Without these amendments I am very concerned about the outcome of the referendum and I hope that the governing party will see the light and take down these political barriers.

There have to be firm limits on spending to allow this to be a fair choice for the country. The limits would create an atmosphere which would be more likely to result in a fair decision. This bill should allow for a national and regional majority.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to participate, even for this short period of time, in the debate on Bill C-81. I must say, as other speakers have said, that in a referendum bill that is supposed to pull the country together and be a unifying force we certainly got off to a very bad start to have the government invoke time allocation this morning after just two and half days of debate on what for me is a most important bill and the question that will come from this bill, this Parliament is going to have to decide.

Those were two and a half short days and it does not auger well for the mood of the country and/or any debate on what finally is going to be in a constitutional package, let alone a referendum question when we get to that. I could speak for the whole 10 minutes on the ramrod, jack-boot method of the government House leader in forcing this bill through when we do not even know what the constitutional package is and there are no deadlines

out there that have to be met. This should have had a full airing.

Every member who wanted to participate should have been able to speak. Instead we are cut off at the pass with this allocation of time with all questions to be put tonight by five o'clock. That is totally wrong and does not breed the goodwill and non-partisan, bipartisan atmosphere that is going to be so necessary if some of the wounds of this country are to be healed.

Last night I was in my riding at a very inspirational meeting, an adventure spring citizenship festival. Mainstreet Canada was there: fire chiefs, police chiefs, municipal leaders and 300 to 400 Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, all reaffirming their faith in Canada, getting certificates of citizenship. I would like every member of Parliament to get to some of those citizenship festivals to get in touch with the pulse of the real people rather than just hearing ourselves talk in this chamber where sometimes we lose touch with the real people. I could do a whole speech on that citizenship festival last night and on the faith of those basic people, the taxpayers of Canada and the youth of Canada who are going to be the leaders of tomorrow, and how they feel about Canada.

In this Chamber with this Bill C-81 and the mechanical debate we have had up until today, and now with the allocation of time order that is going to cut us off tonight, it certainly does not give you much inspiration to talk about the nation in the way the founders talked about this nation and helped to bring us together.

In my very short time left, I want to be very clear that on Bill C-81, in terms of the principle of a referendum, I certainly have said for some time that this government especially, in view of the Constitution and especially this government's credibility with the people, it is fundamental that there is some reference to the people to approve whatever constitutional package comes forward from the constitutional discussions and/or the question that is going to be framed in this House.

This bill does not even go part way. The constitutional referendum should be a binding referendum. It should be national in scope and it should be a single question, yes or no. I do support those in this House who have very real fears about the reason for this bill at the present time which does not even meet any of those tests.

It can be very manipulative, have different questions in different parts of the country and have some referendum questions that are not going to be put to other provinces. If that happens it is going to be most divisive indeed. For members over there, including the member from Etobicoke who has certainly led the way in the academic research on referendums and plebiscites, I find it passing strange that some members on the government side do not appreciate from their history that in effect if we are going to have a referendum it has to be a single question, it has to be national in scope and has to be binding.

The specious argument of government is that a referendum cannot amend the Constitution. We know that but it certainly can have a motion to bind the result of whatever the people decide in this Parliament. This Parliament is one of the eight parliaments together, the national Parliament and seven parliaments representing 50 per cent of the people, that can amend the Constitution.

There is no reason at all for this hokery-pokery and specious reasoning. There is no reason to say we are not going to put a binding clause on a referendum bill because this Parliament does not amend the Constitution by itself. It certainly could be restricted in what it did if there were a proper referendum question.

It is passing strange to me, and I am afraid we are heading down to another Meech Lake fiasco of imposing artificial deadlines, when I hear the intergovernmental minister talking at these different constitutional conferences that we are certainly making progress here. I actually do not even have to turn up the sound on television any more to realize that in effect some of this so-called progress is maybe some progress, but the real questions have not be decided.

What I have one of the greatest fears about is that frankly the constitutional fatigue has set in and in effect there is going to be a charade or a mirage at the end of the day that we resurrect a form of Meech and then put off the real serious questions and decisions on Senate reform and the inherent right of the aboriginals for self-government, whatever that means, let alone the division of powers. I am very concerned that in the heat of the summer with constitutional fatigue with the looseness of this referendum bill, a very bad question or questions could be put to the Canadian people that will

not pull this country together but will make further stress and strain on the country.

In terms of time we are talking about a nation that has been here for 125 years. It was only 10 years ago in 1982 that we got the Constitution back to this country so that we could amend it. Many people can complain about the then Prime Minister. I sat in the opposition then and the then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, may have had many things that people could complain about. However, one reason I voted for the Constitution bill was that it at least brought it back to this country so that Canadians finally could try to amend it and change it.

That was just 10 years ago after 115 years that the Constitution was stuck in England. Goodness gracious, we only got our own citizenship in this country 80 years after the country was formed in 1947 and we only got our flag in 1965, 98 years after the country was formed. With those three little demarcation dates in history, the Constitution only came back here in 1982. The act of citizenship came in 1947. Finally we had the flag, which took over 40 years through all parliamentary committees, going from the Union Jack, to having official colours red and white, and then finally having the ensign. Finally after 40 some years of different parliamentary debate and different parliamentary committees, we finally raised the flag on February 15, 1965 just outside these Parliament Buildings.

With that perspective in terms of history, let us not box ourselves in to artificial deadlines that are going to do more to rip this country apart than to bring it together.

As far as I am concerned, in the closing moments that I have I could give you Pat's panacea for political problems in this country. It would be to abolish the Senate, in effect to make sure that the character of the distinctive culture, language and civil code of Quebec is recognized and implemented through proper law, and in effect fix the term of Parliament so that while the Prime Minister might be able to call elections within the fixed term, that a certain time, a certain fixed date, an election is held if he did not call for the fixed term. You would not be able to play around with all of the dates and the manoeuvring and the political manipulation that you have and the bad legislation and all the weird things that happen as you get closer with the Prime Minister deciding where he sits in the polls.

• (1200)

That is a forlorn hope at this time of our constitutional discussion but anyone who thinks we are coming up with a constitutional package from the constitutional conferences that are going along today, no matter how sincere is whistling Dixie when they have not even got to Senate reform. They have not defined what self-government and the aboriginal inherent right is, let alone the division of powers.

We are going to be faced with a question that we do not even know. The worst thing about this bill, in conclusion, is the three-day limit imposed in this bill on the bill that is going to define the question. That question is going to be the question that makes or breaks Canada. It is the question that is going to decide if we have a Canada. I have never yet seen in my history of 20-odd years as a member that as you debate one bill you already impose closure on the bill that is going to follow, that is, the question bill.

That is not the way to build a consensus and that is not the way to build the non-partisan attitude that we need if we are going to have a greater Canada which we can have if we have the right leadership.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join in this very important debate. I was saddened, as were most of the members on this side of the House, including the previous speaker, by the fact that we had to have closure this morning.

We have a most important debate and we are trying to give a message to Canadians that we want to open up the constitutional debate but in the process of talking about opening up the debate, we close it down.

These contradictions are not lost on the voters and the people who are trying to right many wrongs in this country.

This is a little bit of a transformation for me to be standing up and supporting a referendum. I must say that as a university professor teaching political science for 15 years before I became a member of Parliament, I spent a long time thinking about questions such as referenda and plebiscites and the democratization of our process.

For many years I thought that the use of the referendum would be too simplistic but I began to believe more and more that Canada has got itself into a trap of thinking that the only deals that really could be made, that really counted, or that would last are deals made among the elite groups of the country. There is a whole academic body of literature about making deals this way, elite accommodation for those of you who follow these academic issues.

It became quite apparent in the 1970s and 1980s that the deals being made by these elite have not been respected in the Canadian political body. Through the emergence of fringe parties, through the emergence of protest votes and tax revolts, Canadians have sought many ways to express their frustration with the system.

I concluded it was about time that Parliament began to take leadership on the fundamental question of how to democratize society.

The Meech Lake accord, which failed two years ago, failed in part because a small group thought that the solution it had thought about and worked hard at should be accepted automatically by the rest of the country. The ensuing public debate was one of the more divisive debates we have had on the Constitution or any other issue in this country.

Part of what we are doing on the constitutional debate is a healing process. We are trying to find ways in which the different regions can be accommodated, the different provincial interests can be accommodated, and the bottom line that the Canadian taxpayer, the people living in this country, feel that in the end there is a package we can put behind us and move on to more important issues.

The deal has to be accepted widely.

The referendum offers the possibility of opening up the doors and saying to people that here is the question that Parliament has thought about and put in front of you and what we want you to do is indicate that you support or disapprove what has been done.

There is a risk because we want to make sure that Canadians see the country continue. Whenever you have a plebiscite or a referendum on an issue of such importance there is a risk. However, the risk of not putting a question out is greater.

There is the risk of having people sitting at home saying: "There they go again. They never ask me my opinion. I do not know what they are doing. I do not know what the Constitution is". This is one of those rare opportunities when we can say: "You are part of the process. Here is what all the negotiations have led to. Here is the package. We want your approval. If you do not approve it, we start over again and we form a package that is acceptable to you".

That is a very fundamental shift away from traditional parliamentary democracy. The fact that this legislation is flawed is very important to consider because its acceptance will mark in the development of our parliamentary history the time in which we moved away from this Chamber as the place of final resolution of issues into a more broadly defined consensus and voting process.

It will not be something that evolves on every issue, but I think that the acceptance of the referendum here for the first time in many years across the country is an acknowledgement that the process must change to accommodate people. I look forward to participating in that change and to putting my support behind those who wish to have a referendum.

The Liberal Party worked at this issue since the failure of the Meech Lake accord and realized that only through broad based support could a new constitutional deal be accepted. That is why in the nine points that we introduced into the debate in April 1991 we had the referendum front and centre. It has taken a while for the deal makers to see the need to include others.

The introduction of this legislation was greatly welcomed by our party because we have been waiting for a chance to have Canadians express their views. I would particularly like to use this opportunity to thank the member from Etobicoke who spent long years—we were colleagues in Carleton University many years ago—seeing his ideas develop and emerge, and seeing him take a perspective. Very gently and gradually through research and persuasion, he has had the House of Commons turn to his idea in the end and say: "Yes, you were on the right track long before the rest of us. Thank you very much for presenting us with an option".

I think it is a valuable experience for every one of us to know that it is through the pushing of good ideas that we can, in fact, persuade Parliament to change its processes.

There are some fundamental flaws in this legislation that are going to cause a great deal of difficulty. I would like to bring them to the attention of the House. We have four concerns from this side of the House with this piece of legislation.

First, there is the fact that the referendum is still only an option. The proposed legislation would still leave it up to the government to decide whether to hold a referendum at all. We believe that legitimacy in the constitutional package will come from a referendum, therefore a referendum must be held.

Second, there should be spending limits. We do not want to see an endless amount of money spent by the federal government or by other parties unknown to Canadian taxpayers. We do not want to see the participation of groups as we did during the last election when there were people campaigning for the pro–free trade vote. They were able to pile millions of dollars into the coffers of the governing party, causing them to win the election. We do not want that sort of feeling hanging over a referendum.

Third, we would like to see regional majorities. If people in one region of this country do not agree with the deal we do not want them to feel that they have been imposed upon by others. We want to make sure that each region is in agreement with the essential points in the package as they will affect each region differently. Those of us from the west are particularly sensitive to being cut off, to having a deal signed over us and leaving us in the same constitutionally weak position that we have been in since Confederation.

Last, who decides the question? We want a straightforward and open parliamentary process through which representatives from all parties have an opportunity to work on the question. The ownership of the question is with Parliament and not with the government. People must feel that everyone has contributed to it, that it has not been decided at a cabinet meeting which then comes in and uses its majority to push a question through. It has been an all–party meeting. Everybody would have had a chance to look at it to make sure it is fair in both languages. It should be fair to all the different regions.

These are the central points that we want to put forward. We are hoping that the government understands the fundamental flaws in this legislation and that it is able to change them. This has been a very, very important debate. I only wish the government had not decided to close it down so quickly because Canadians do want to know about the new referendum.

• (1210)

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the bill that is before the House. The bill will establish a procedure to hold a national referendum on a constitutional issue or amendment that may be worked out in the weeks or months ahead. I do so with full confidence that it is entirely appropriate for this Parliament to provide for legislation to consult the people of Canada on important constitutional changes because the Constitution of Canada is the property of the people of Canada and must ultimately be decided by and have its legitimacy based upon the consent of the people of Canada.

Our party has been at the forefront of calling for a new constitutional consultative process. We all saw the disaster of the process used in Meech Lake and before it in the 1981–82 round of constitutional changes. Back in 1981–82 the province of Quebec was ultimately left out of the national consensus, fostering further grievances which have led us to the situation we are in today where we have a whole range of truly important national issues besetting this country and we are required, because of the failure of governments back in 1981–82 to include Quebec, to deal with yet again the grievances of Quebec in respect of constitutional matters and because of other failures, including the failure of the Meech Lake process, the grievances of others across Canada and particularly the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Once again we are in a constitutional debate and discussion, a matter of great frustration to this Parliament and of course a great frustration to the Canadian people. The issue is now before us. We have to deal with it and it is appropriate that we should provide, as this bill does, a mechanism for consulting the Canadian people in the process.

The Meech Lake process really left out the people of Canada. It was on that fundamental ground that it failed. In its failure, it has come close to driving this country apart. One of the results of the failure is a divide in fundamental perception about the understanding of what this country is. Many people in Quebec who until then felt themselves to be welcome and part of Canada saw the failure of Meech Lake as a rejection of francophone Quebec. In the rest of Canada, Meech Lake was seen as a failure of constitutional process, a failure of consultation and in no way was seen as a rejection of Quebec. In that divided perception are the seeds of the division that we are now in this country working to repair.

All members of this House, perhaps with a few minor exceptions, want the current process to work. I believe that the overwhelming majority of people in Canada want the current process to work. If it is to work we have to establish the possibility of genuine consultation with the people of Canada, and this bill seeks to provide it.

As I said, our party has called for an opening up of the constitutional process. We thoroughly supported the idea that the two parliamentary committees, the first known as the Edwards–Beaudoin committee looking at an amending formula, have a wide process of consultation with the Canadian people, and that took place. We supported the establishment of the Beaudoin–Dobbie commission. We were gravely disappointed at the difficulties it had at the beginning in establishing an effective consultative process with Canada and we have pressed from the beginning for a constituent assembly.

We were pleased to see the government ultimately accept the wisdom of that approach and agree to these five conferences across Canada which have contributed enormously to the improvement of the atmosphere, improvement of the process, and are offering us now some genuine hope we can settle the constitutional issue at least for the time being and get on with the other issues of the day.

The referendum bill we have before us authorizes the government, if it deems it appropriate in the public interest, to call for a referendum. It then provides a process for approaching Parliament for approval of a question to be put to the people of Canada and establishes the procedures under which the referendum is to be held.

We have some concerns with the details of the bill. We have been assured in part by the statements made by the government in the last 24 hours that it is ready to consider sympathetically amendments which we hope will allay the concerns we have. On that basis I have no difficulty in voting to support this bill because I believe it is important the people of Canada be given the possibility of being consulted on constitutional amendments.

In the remaining moments I have I want to address a couple of specific concerns which I think the Canadian people should be aware of as we proceed down the path of national referenda.

I think we should ensure that referenda only be used in constitutional issues. We do not want to move to a system of governance that they have, for example, in the state of California where referenda can be forced by special interest groups on virtually any question and it ultimately ends up where, in the nature of our society, the rich can control the results. In a referenda on an issue which affects the powerful in any country the powerful will have an undue influence in the result.

That happens within our parliamentary system as well and we should not be naive about that, but there are risks in allowing in our mass media age every issue to be handled by the process of referenda. On the other hand we should be clear that it is appropriate in the case of a constitutional amendment for us to consult the Canadian people.

This bill does not of course provide that any constitutional amendment must automatically go to a national referendum, but rather it is: "In the public interest to obtain by means of a referendum the opinion of the electors on any question relating to the Constitution of Canada". The cabinet or the government can set the process in motion.

The two committees of this House that looked at the proposition of a referendum suggested it should be narrowed to situations where it was helpful to determine whether there was a national consensus. I suspect, certainly in the current round of negotiations, when this bill is passed that the government cannot escape the conclusion that the offer that is to be put together to use that language, the constitutional package that comes out of these rounds of discussion, will have to be in some fashion or other put to the people of Canada for their views.

It should be noted the bill does not provide the details of a question, it does not settle the timing of a question, and it is going to be important that that be worked out in committee.

I hope the committee that is considering this bill will look at amendments to the bill which will not just leave it to the government alone.

• (1220)

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C–81.

I support the principle of this bill and I emphasize the principle of the bill because I see flaws in it. I would like to discuss those flaws and my concerns in a moment.

It is clear Canadians want to be consulted on the matter of constitutional change. They want a say in the reshaping of our fundamental laws and we in the Liberal Party believe Canadians deserve nothing less. That is why we support a national referendum. After all the Constitution is not owned by politicians; it belongs to the people of Canada.

People are saying they do not want another Meech Lake. No more secret, late night meetings; Canadians must be full partners in the process.

I want to get to some of the reservations I have about this bill because I believe, as do my colleagues on this side of House, that the bill can be improved considerably. We sincerely hope that the government will consider amendments very seriously at the committee stage examination of this bill.

It is unfortunate that we are discussing this bill now. There has been an unfortunate delay concerning referendum legislation. After all our leader proposed a referendum one year ago. There have been all kinds of signals from across Canada, including signals from a couple of parliamentary committees, for the need of having a referendum tied to any constitutional change.

Unfortunately the government sat on its hands and did nothing. Now at this very late hour, when there is what you might call a bit of panic in the country, we have Bill C–81 before us. It is really unfortunate that the government did not bring forward this legislation, if not months ago certainly weeks ago.

Let us take a look at some of the other concerns that we have on this side of the House. This legislation, Bill C–81, provides for a referendum but only on an optional basis. In other words it does not make a referendum mandatory before proceeding to any constitutional change. I believe that is unfortunate.

We know that the Constitution does not require referenda before changes are made. I am aware of that. We can certainly have legislation in this House that ties our hands, that binds parliamentarians to having a referendum and observing its results before we proceed toward constitutional change. It is very unfortunate that this legislation provides for a referendum but only as an option. There is also the question of the question. There is nothing in this bill that sets out the question. There is nothing in this bill that provides us as parliamentarians with a full role in the determination of what the question is. From my reading of this bill, the question will be left to the determination of the government. Again that is very unfortunate.

If we are going to have fairness in the process, if we are going to have Canadians supporting the process, then Canadians will want to see full participation of all parliamentarians, not just the government. It is unfortunate that the mechanism for determining the framing of the question, determining the timing of the question is not written into the legislation.

One of the gravest concerns I have is the lack of provision in the bill for a double majority. I want to touch on that in some detail because we all know that referenda raise fears. Referenda can be very divisive.

We have had a couple of national referenda, or we might call them plebiscites, in this country in the past. They have been referred to. There was one in the 19th century having to do with prohibition. There was the famous one in 1942 relating to conscription. In both cases the plebiscites or the referenda succeeded but they were divisive because, in effect, they produced a result of having one part of the country saying no and another part of the country saying yes. That by definition is divisive. We do not want to face that possibility in another referendum relating to constitutional change.

A double majority which in effect demands that the referendum succeed in all four regions of the country will eliminate that fear of great division. We all know that Quebecers see themselves as a minority in Canada. Certainly they see themselves as a minority in North America and they do not want to see their rights and their aspirations and their hopes trampled upon and dashed by the majority.

The same thing is felt in western Canada, the region I come from. Western Canadians see this as a Canada round and they feel that they have a stake in any constitutional change, but they want to be consulted directly. They want a say in this and the full say they are asking for can only be obtained if there is a double majority. After all, there is a possibility that the question may be written in such a way that westerners will take one viewpoint, they will take one opinion on the question, whereas other Canadians, from Ontario, Atlantic Canada or Quebec will take another view.

Therefore it seems to me for a referendum to truly succeed, to truly have validity, to truly have credibility, there must be what we call a provision for a double majority. It must succeed in the west. It must succeed in Ontario. It must succeed in Quebec. It must succeed in Atlantic Canada.

According to news reports I have heard in the last 24 hours, the government is not prepared to amend the legislation before us in such a way as to provide for a double majority. I think that would be a mistake and I hope the government will reconsider its position with respect to double majority and look at this again very seriously. Canadians are demanding that kind of protection and that kind of insurance.

The other concern I have has to do with spending limits. Again, based on news reports, apparently the House leader of the government is entertaining some different thoughts and is, perhaps, prepared to amend the legislation to put some control on spending limits. I think it is absolutely essential that there be spending limits.

To have the legislation seen as being fair there has to be spending limits. If the sky is the limit there is naturally favouritism toward the rich, toward people with money. People with money in a process where the sky is the limit will have no constraints, none whatsoever. They will be able to spend anything, all the money that they would want, while ordinary people of ordinary means will be constrained by their limited finances.

• (1230)

I believe it will make people feel that they have been treated unfairly, that the legislation has been essentially unfair and so spending limits are absolutely essential. Again I would urge the government to look at that.

We support the principle of the bill but it needs a lot of work.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, at this very moment, while we are discussing Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, the Canadian constitutional circus caravan is parked in Montreal, we see the actors going around in circles without getting anywhere on the substance of the issues.

We get the impression that only one thing is moving and that is the caravan itself which travels from city to city across Canada, spending millions of dollars just to realize, time and time again, it has reached an impasse.

Five Canadian provinces chose Montreal to take a joint stand on making a Triple–E Senate an absolute–condition for any constitutional agreement. That is where we are now, with all our efforts to bring Quebec back into the Constitution with honour and enthusiasm.

Quebec's minimum demands have been rejected: no veto, no assurances on Supreme Court appointments. As for the fundamental issue of Quebec's development instruments to be discussed during the second round, there has been no time yet to consider the matter, although the deadline is only two weeks away.

What are the consequences for Quebec? As far as constitutional guarantees are concerned, Quebec has no assurances that in the long run it will be able to maintain its influence within our federal institutions. As far as the division of powers is concerned we are denied the tools we need to maintain our identity and provide for our development. These results were entirely predictable and inevitable when we consider the events in this country that led to the demise of Meech Lake.

That is why we founded the Bloc Quebecois. We were elected to defend the higher interests of Quebec and to enable Quebecers to pursue the affirmation of their identity and development, both individually and collectively. The current talks are headed for an impasse because the basic realities of Quebec are not recognized by the other provinces and the federal government.

Yesterday I listened to members opposite talk about the Canadian nation without any reference to the principle of two founding nations which formed the very basis of Confederation in 1867 but was never observed. They are making pretty speeches today but they want us to be a large ethnic group within an anglophone Canadian nation. The answer is clear: never.

They accuse us of wanting to divide a country that does not recognize us and never did, a country that for decades prohibited French schools in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta; a country that hanged Louis Riel, imposed the War Measures Act, imposed conscription and now wants to impose a referendum thereby conscripting democracy. The sole purpose of this referendum is to short-circuit the mechanism by which the people of Quebec will exercise their right to self-determination. Its funding and spending regulations are worthy of a banana republic.

Today, on the third day of this debate, they are imposing closure, to end debate as we have discussed it enough here. The constitutional circus can go on for weeks or months but here three days of debate is enough and closure is imposed.

The Quebec people are proud and polite. We will all be there to answer no, thanks: No to the federal strait-jacket, no to continuing the constitutional circus on which we are wasting our energies. We will exercise our right to self-determination with honour and enthusiasm. We will repatriate all our taxes. We will assert our right to make all our laws. We will negotiate our international agreements ourselves. We will soon become a sovereign country, a normal people that will take its place in the family of nations.

The federal government is a giant with feet of clay, an overindebted giant, in debt here and abroad, a divided giant, unable to have policies that correspond to the real country. It still has the power to waste our time. It still has the power to waste hundreds of millions on phony consultations, a referendum that will cost the government $100 million but solve nothing at all. But it does not have the power to force us to keep silent. It does not have the power to force us to belittle ourselves and deny who we are. The referendum tactic will not divert us from our essential objective: affirming and developing our people, the Quebecois, and soon our country, Quebec.

In closing, I would like to call on all my colleagues elected in Quebec. It is clear; we all know that the present negotiations are on the wrong track as long as the Quebec people are not recognized as such. Faced with this impasse, the federal government is now preparing to push something through and these people are being sucked in. After refusing it they partly accept it and now they tell us in the corridors: "We are ready to hold a referendum, but we think that it will not happen. We won't need it. We shouldn't need it. We would prefer not to use it, but we are preparing legislation anyway. We will pass the bill anyway. We are cutting off debate today".

I would call on the hon. members for Champlain, Gaspé, Matapédia and Abitibi to reflect on the consequences of what they are doing. It is clear now that we are about to make fundamental decisions for the future of Quebecers. I hope that when the time comes we will all be together to make a positive decision which will ensure that we can pursue our own development, look after the real problems, create jobs, take our own place on the international scene in a world of global markets, give our children a future in French in Quebec, make our institutions from now on depend on our own decisions and not be subject to another majority which can impose constitutional changes on us, which can impose fundamental changes without our consent. No self-respecting people would agree any longer to be denied within a federal structure. This is an essential condition for new negotiations and any possible agreement on a whole series of normal relationships with the rest of Canada. First and foremost, they must recognize us for what we are: a people with a brilliant future.

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, we are embarking on a discussion of probably the most important piece of legislation that we have brought before this House, legislation that will enable us to express our point of view on the constitutional changes that we want to bring to our country, on helping us implement a new vision for Canada, whether we are living in Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia or anywhere else within our wonderful country.

In a sense I regret very much that we have cut short the debate on this vitally important piece of legislation. I would sincerely hope that it was undertaken by the government with the expectation that by sending this to legislative committee the very important changes needed to make this a fair, open and workable piece of legislation will be undertaken there.

What is important to know is that the Constitution belongs to all of the people, not just to the bureaucrats and the politicians. All Canadians should have a final say on any constitutional reform package. This is not a foreign idea. This is something that has been undertaken in other countries around the world. This is an undertaking that we have done here in Canada. We know from the experience that we have had in the referenda in the past that the key, the vital and the important undertaking must be that this referendum be fair and acceptable to not only my people who live in Quebec but to Canadians everywhere else.

I do not see that it is a very difficult circumstance to realize that as a wife, mother and daughter I have a love for all this part of my immediate family. It is not difficult to extend it to the larger family, but we share this love in different ways. Where I have a sense of participation and belonging as a Montrealer and as a Quebecer, I do as well concern myself with what is going on in my larger country.

All Canadians want to have the opportunity to say this is right for me, this is how I feel as a Canadian and I have a sense of pride and belonging. Lord only knows that the rest of the world sees this as the most marvellous country. They see us as a bunch of little quarrelling children who have to find out how we want to play the rules of the game.

That national referendum which the Leader of the Opposition suggested as far back as April of 1991—and this government has finally agreed, as has the opposition, that this is a good way to go—really has to be right. I lived through the referendum in Quebec and I will tell you that it can be very divisive. Because it can be divisive and because there is heated passion about this, whether you are living in Quebec or in British Columbia or in Newfoundland for that matter, we all have a point of view. In the end we can all see how wonderful this country is.

In order to have that national referendum we first have to have the question right. There are a number of things wrong with the way this bill has been presented. I would sincerely hope that we will in the end fix those problems because they are fixable. The fixables that need to be attended to are the spending limits. The spending limits must be addressed because you cannot have the perception that any part of this country bought the election. It cannot be seen as belonging to the rich and powerful. It cannot be seen as belonging to either business or labour or interest groups. It has to be perceived as belonging to everyone with equal access to the opportunity to present their point of view so that when the point of view is expressed no one can be seen or act as a poor loser.

Second, there should be something done about some form of umbrella committees. Having worked in Quebec I can tell you that was a very effective way to use our energies and express our point of view.

The question of regional majorities comes very much to the heart of the matter as to whether we will be preceived to have been fair. We have put together a workable referendum procedure and it is transparent. There are no regulations in this piece of legislation.

We have no idea how a majority is going to be defined. We know there is not a provision for a double majority in there. Not only does it have to be perceived as being fair and right and acceptable for all Canadians as individuals, but we also have to see it as fair in our collective sense, in the regions in which we live.

Where in the past there have been differences, no one wants anyone to be able to go back and say, "you did not listen to me. You were not fair".

We wanted to be fair. We want Quebec to know that we are welcome as Quebecers within Canada, and Canada has to know that Quebecers welcome the oppor-

tunity to participate in their own way within this wonderful country.

I could go along and say that if we do not consult all three parties we, in our own actions right here, become too partisan. We need a mechanism whereby the actual question has to be defined and it should be defined by all parties, first in a small committee in which it can be examined and made sure that it is properly weighted and easily understood. Everybody will know what the question means so that when we go into the debate on the issues we know clearly what we are talking about.

It is perhaps not germane to the issue but this House is well aware that in the last few weeks and over the last few years the Canadian Parliament and Canadian parliamentarians have been helping the European parliaments establish themselves.

I looked after the Hungarian group this time. Last time it was those who came from the Ukraine. The Hungarians asked all kinds of questions on how you run a democracy. How did they get a democracy? They had referenda. They expressed a point of view. They chose a way to live.

Now they have to learn how to apply that way to live.

What could be better than to come here? We are a democracy. We do have differences of opinion. We do exchange in a logical and, I hope, intelligent approach in the bigger picture, not to mention distinct society. We are distinct and some of us are more distinct than others, never mind language. What is so terrible if you speak one language, two languages, three languages, four is even better.

We may or may not reform the Senate, but for goodness' sake the bottom line is that this country is too precious and too well perceived by everyone around the world, by those who are knocking to get a visa to come in here, who want to immigrate to Canada. We are having an argument. Let us settle it once and for all. Let us learn how to respect our differences, never mind tolerate them. Let us respect them. Let us rejoice in them.

The diversity of this country is the strength. Our unity is what is important and also in the long run that Canadian people recognize how lucky they are and they will express their will to live together. We have to have a proper mechanism.

As this bill goes to committee to be adjusted, to be fixed in a sense so that it will be on a proper open and fair procedure, I hope that good judgment on the part of this government will recognize the very serious responsibility it has and meet the concerns of all sides and many of the backbenchers, even on the government side, particularly around spending limits, advertising procedures and regional double majorities. The whole process needs to be tightened up.

As a Quebecer, as an Yvette, I do not want to have to see the breaking up of family ties and the bitterness that stays for much too long. This question is one we can discuss in an agreeable way. We do not have to be disagreeable. We can exchange on these differences but give us the mechanism and the tools to do it fairly, openly, tolerantly. It should always be perceived as such.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to speak, even if only for 10 minutes, on Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

• (1250)

This is a complicated bill. There are many details in it and there are also many flaws in it. The biggest flaw probably has been the lack of consultation between the government and the parties, that is, the consultation which broke down just in the last stage of the process when this bill was being drafted and when certain matters were overlooked. They were presumably not left out deliberately.

My NDP colleagues have touched on several of those already and I wish to concentrate on only three. The first flaw that I wish to mention is the lack of the double majority principle. This was the principle that was agreed to by all parties unanimously in the report that was tabled last June from Beaudoin–Edwards.

I quote from *Hansard*, page 10848:

> We recommend that a federal law be enacted to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal whether to confirm the existence of a national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolution.

This is the next part that I wish particularly to point out to the people of Canada. It was agreed further that:

> The referendum should require a national majority and a majority each in the four regions—Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the west.

The government party in the discussions agreed to that principle but has not written it into this referendum. There has been some suggestion that there might be a declaration by the Prime Minister but that would not have the force of law.

I am very concerned that in our country, as wide as it is with so many different peoples in it, we should not allow for some of them having reason to feel that they have been trampled or steamrolled over.

This is true for the west, it is true for the Atlantic, it is true for Ontario but I am especially concerned for Quebec. I have only lived there for five years. I have lived most of my life in Ontario but two of my children have lived at least half their lives in Quebec and expect to live there for the rest of their lives.

It should not be forgotten that perhaps the most critical time for Canada's independence prior to the struggle we have over the trade agreements with the United States was back in 1776 when the rebels in the thirteen colonies thought they would easily liberate Quebec from Britain which had conquered it. The people of Quebec said no and they had good reason to say no.

There was an agreement that under Sir Guy Carleton, the governor, Quebec would have its own language, its own religion, its own civil law and generally speaking its own culture. In other words, though I do not think the term was used, Quebec should be a distinct society.

That was the deal. Quebec delivered on its side of the deal and therefore Canada was brought into being and we still have a country independent of the United States, more or less. There should not be any suggestion that the other parts of Canada wish to renege on that deal without which Canada would not have come into existence.

If, in this referendum, we seem to be rejecting the right of Quebec to a majority in control of the outcome of the referendum along with a majority for the Atlantic, a majority for Ontario—I am not particularly worried for Ontario—and a majority for the west which is very important to many of my friends in the west and especially for many of the aboriginal peoples who live in the western provinces and the Northwest Territories, there should be a majority for each of those regions.

Therefore, the referendum may not be seen as a victory of some regions over one or two other regions. They have to be recognized not just in the vote, the possible outcome, but in the way the structure of the referendum is to be interpreted.

The second matter which I wish to note is that 30 per cent of Canadians have had the experience of being designated as different, as being often ignored, because they are racially or ethnically distinct from the majority, particularly those who are racially distinct.

We thought we would never have a race riot in Canada. We had one in Toronto a couple of weeks ago. We saw the bitterness in Canada's major metropolitan cities between certain racial or ethnic minorities and the governments of those cities, including their police forces. The bitterness is something that has caused us all great concern and we should not appear to be overlooking those. Until this date the government has refused the request of those minorities to include in its proposals, or to agree in its proposals, an amendment to section 27, the multiculturalism section.

Those groups representing the 30 per cent have asked that we should add that the section requires also the promotion of racial and ethnic equality. Without that, that being denied as it has been until this day, the people of this 30 per cent are not at all sure they are being included as equals if we will not guarantee it in our charter.

Therefore I would hope before the question is worded there will be some consideration given to that 30 per cent of the people of Canada.

The final matter I am concerned with, and it has been spoken to by some of my colleagues, is there must be effective equality in principle in the funding arrangements. There are only going to be two sides, yes and no. There may be many opinions on the yes side, many opinions on the no side, variations of yes or no, but it comes down to putting your "x" in one box or in the other.

If the rich are allowed to use all the force of their dollars on one side of this equation it will be a sick joke and it will be seen as a sick joke by the large majority of the people of Canada. It would be divisive to allow the rich to buy this referendum according to whichever side suits it.

It would be seen as a surrender of constitutional power to the power of the dollar, that is to the power of millions and billions of dollars. Most Canadians who are excluded from the prime ownership of the means of production in Canada have only their individual vote and a relatively trifling amount of money with which to make a campaign of this sort. It is important that this referendum should be so constructed that it is clear the primacy is given to one person, one vote, rather than to one dollar, one vote, because we know where the huge billions of dollars are concentrated in this country.

These are three amendments I sincerely hope will be adopted in the committee meetings over the next week. It is our caucus' intention to vote in favour of this in second reading but only because we hope the government will listen to reason and adopt amendments such as these in order to make the referendum a fair one for all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 1 p.m. I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m., 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

[*Translation*]

MEDIC-ALERT FOUNDATION

Mr. Yvon Côté (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Canadian Medic-Alert Foundation has proclaimed May to be Medic-Alert Month.

The Canadian Medic-Alert Foundation is a non-profit organization that has been dedicated to protecting Canadians for the past 30 years. It now has nearly 700,000 members and some 42,000 Canadians join every year.

People join for three main reasons: diabetes, allergy to penicillin and allergy to sulfadrugs. Health professionals have access day and night to a telephone service where they can obtain information to ensure that patients receive proper care. Medic-Alert never fails in this task.

I am therefore very pleased to point out this special day and month, to pay tribute to this excellent organization, and to express my support for Medic-Alert publicly.

* * *

[*English*]

CFB DOWNSVIEW

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Simple fairness demands that Marcel Masse, the Minister of National Defence, either justify or reverse his decision to close the supply depot at CFB Toronto Downsview in my riding and move its function to Montreal, a move which will cost an admitted 330 direct jobs and maybe more.

The minister claims that efficiency and effectiveness justify the change, but a secret government study made public shows that this solution is, in fact, more costly. The minister calls the study outdated and I ask the minister to prove it.

The minister clearly wants to give priority to building up his own region. He has said as much. But to use his cabinet muscle and national responsibility to impose more expensive solutions on the military is surely an abuse of power. If he cannot justify his decision, he must reverse it.

He must reply to the demands of chairman Alan Tonks of metro Toronto council who has written to him on this subject.

* * *

CANADA FITWEEK

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Fitweek is May 22 to May 31. The first day of activities of Canada's Fitweek is Sneaker Day, May 22. That is the day when all Canadians are encouraged to wear their sneakers at home, to work, to school, or anywhere in their communities.

Over 540,000 people are going to participate. There is going to be a walk around the grounds of Parliament Hill for staffers on that day.

I would like to invite all members of this House to participate by wearing their sneakers and by getting involved in local activities.

Sneaker Day is a partnership of Fitness and Amateur Sport and the provincial and territorial governments.

Canada's Fitweek is the ideal time to enjoy the fun and ease of physical activity and to celebrate active living.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOUVERAINETÉ QUÉBEC INC.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, last night in Montreal, I had an opportunity to meet at least 125 company presidents who have decided to create a corporation called Souveraineté Québec Inc.

I was very pleased to learn that finally a group of business people has decided to screw up its courage, despite threats concerning federal government contracts, of course, and to get together to create a force to show Quebecers that business people can succeed in a sovereign Quebec and create a more prosperous, equitable and just society and more jobs.

That is what they said last night and they will tour Quebec to promote Souveraineté Québec Inc. I wish them much success.

* * *

[*English*]

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN PROJECT

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, across our great nation service clubs and the people in them are truly unsung heroes. No finer example of this fact can be found than the efforts of the Kinsmen and Kinette clubs across Canada, and especially in Dorchester, Ontario.

The Proud to be Canadian tour which is circulating peace tower flags for signature in communities from coast to coast is testimony to the Kinsmen and Kinette pride and dedication to Canada.

Yesterday, the Dorchester and area Kinsmen and Kinettes organized a highly successful Proud to be Canadian event with over 600 people demonstrating their love and commitment for our country by signing a Canadian peace tower flag.

Congratulations to Dorchester, the Kinsmen and Kinettes, and especially all of those citizens for rekindling our pride in being Canadian.

* * *

AIDS

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): I will address this statement to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Four years ago, the federal Centre for AIDS began work on a special document "Ending the Isolation: HIV Infection in the Second Decade". This is a study on mental health needs of people infected with AIDS, as well as the victims and their families. There are no adequate words to describe their agony and pain nor the mental anguish of their families and friends.

More than six months ago, the minister promised this document would soon be released. He said: "It is in final production and should soon be on my desk".

I ask the minister to explain why this document is still in his hands and not in the hands of the people who desperately need it. If he really is committed to the social aspects of this disease, I urge him to immediately release this report.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA FITWEEK

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the hon. member for Calgary Southwest in drawing the attention of the House of Commons Fitweek, which will run from May 22 to May 31.

The first day, May 22, is Sneaker Day, when all Canadians are asked to wear sneakers at home, at work, at school, or anywhere else in their community. Some 540,000 people are expected to be wearing sneakers on that day. All Hill employees will be invited for a walk around Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to do their share by wearing their sneakers and taking part in local activities. Sneaker Day is a joint effort of Fitness and Amateur Sport and the provincial and territorial governments.

Canada FitWeek is an ideal opportunity to experience the pleasure of taking part in physical activity and at the same time promote the benefits of active living.

* * *

[*English*]

LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, the time has come for Canada to take the initiative and ratify the Law of the Sea Convention. I believe that by signing Canada will send a clear signal to the world that international law is the way to protect our common economies and environment.

We will be the 53rd nation to ratify and we need 60 to bring the treaty into force. Canada needs to assume the leadership and open the floodgates. Others will follow.

We all know the sorry state of our cod stocks, the overfishing, the pillage of our oceans. Here is the legal mechanism that will enhance our sovereignty and lead to a stable, peaceful legal order to resolve fishery problems and issues of ocean ecology and economy.

I do not need to remind this House of the seriousness of Arctic contamination or the savage interception of our west coast salmon on the high seas. Provisions in the Law of the Sea Convention will protect our Arctic from pollution. It will also protect our west coast salmon. Let us delay no longer. Future generations will thank us.

Thanks go to the World Federalists of Canada who, with others, have pushed long and hard for Canada to fulfil our basic international obligation.

* * *

KAON PROJECT

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed with the recent political manoeuvring by the B.C. provincial Minister of Finance, Mr. Glen Clark, who has attempted to discredit the federal government's commitment to the KAON project in British Columbia.

The facts are very clear. In September of last year the federal government through the Minister of Science, committed $236 million for the construction of this project as well as to provide for one-third of the operating costs, an offer that the province has not yet responded to.

By refusing to indicate what share of the operating costs the province is prepared to assume, and by refusing to supply information for the OECD science ministers meeting this weekend, Mr. Clark is jeopardizing the whole KAON project.

It is a shame that Mr. Clark has not spent as much time stating the province's commitment to KAON as he has attempting to discredit the federal government which remains committed to this project.

* * *

WESTRAY COAL MINE DISASTER

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, when the whistle blows in coal towns, everyone feels the fear. When the whistle blew for Westray, we held our breath. We watched. We waited. We prayed. We hoped against hope for a miracle that did not come.

But now we are angry and we are asking why. Why once again did the whistle blow in a Nova Scotia mining town and herald death? Why were jobs more important than safety? Why did the mine open against the advice of federal experts? Why in the knowledge that the Foord seam was the most dangerous on earth did both governments rush to finance and guarantee Westray? Why did coal miners have to take such risks?

Will this be the last disaster? Will it be the last time? Or will the people of Nova Scotia's coal towns still live in trepidation waiting yet again for the whistle to blow?

* * *

• (1410)

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, Statistics Canada was the bearer of good news for communities along the Canada-U.S. border, including my riding of Sarnia—Lambton.

Statistics Canada reported that same-day trips to the U.S. in March fell by 0.3 per cent. This represents the first monthly year-over-year decline in March since 1986.

What has contributed to this result? Factors like the decline in the value of our dollar, more aggressive retailing practices by our retailers, some rationalization of prices and greater enforcement by Canada Customs have no doubt had a part to play.

Are we looking at a trend? Is cross-border or same-day shopping running out of steam? To me, it is too early to tell. Yes, this is welcome news, but one month does not constitute a trend.

Like my local retailers, I will reserve judgement and will anxiously await reports from Statistics Canada in the ensuing months. I know we will all be working toward maintaining this important trend.

* * *

JOB TRAINING

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Immigration talks about living up to commitments already made on section 26 fee payers option funding.

The minister is not keeping his commitments to provide training. Thousands of workers who have spent hours in meetings with CEIC counsellors on planning and training programs, who have received verbal assurances that they will be able to go for training, are now being told in light of new restrictions to this training support program, they will not be able to receive funding.

Even though the minister constantly emphasizes the importance of training, his actions speak to the contrary.

I call upon the minister to reallocate funds from within the UI portfolio to provide for all the training needs of all unemployed workers.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Government of Canada would like the public to believe, Canada has not taken a leadership role on items at the earth summit such as climate change, biodiversity, post-summit funding, or the dumping of radioactive waste in the oceans.

Instead of caving in to pressures by the United States administration, the Canadian government should take the lead. With Japan and certain European nations it should pledge to negotiate after Rio the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent; ensure an agreement on biodiversity; protect the oceans from radioactive dumping; ratify the Law of the Sea; and take steps at home and abroad to establish sustainable fishery, forestry, agriculture, trade, energy and waste management practices for generations to come.

* * *

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS MONTH

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, May has been designated as Multiple Sclerosis Month by the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada to highlight the concerns of those who live with this disease, their families and their caregivers.

Multiple sclerosis is the most common disease of the central nervous system affecting young people in Canada.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada supports excellence in research into the cause, prevention, treatment and cure of MS through more than 100 local chapters in communities across the country. Volunteers provide valuable services to Canadians affected by this terribly debilitating disease.

I take the opportunity now of recognizing and saluting the volunteers and the members of the MS Society of Canada. I encourage my colleagues and all citizens to support the carnation fundraising campaign which supports the work of this most worth-while society.

* * *

OLDMAN RIVER DAM

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, reports are out that the Federal Environment Review Panel has recommended the Oldman River Dam in southern Alberta be shut down.

We are told that the panel's report said the Alberta government did not do enough to protect fish habitat and preserve the lands of the Peigan Band.

The provincial government is not the only government that stands condemned. The federal government failed to do a proper environmental assessment in the first place. It has damaged the credibility of the environmental process and has compromised many Albertans on both sides of the issue.

Now the minister has sat on the report for over a week. He owes it to all Canadians to tell them what his intentions are. What is he going to do about the report's findings and recommendations?

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed with last Friday's determination by the United States Department of Commerce that Canadian stumpage charges constitute countervailable subsidies.

Further and even more astonishing is the inclusion of Canadian log export controls as a countervailable subsidy.

This determination of log export controls as a countervailable subsidy comes despite the fact that the United States has the same kind of export controls on its logs.

Canada is taking this determination to a binding binational review panel under the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Our Prime Minister was forceful in bringing this issue to the attention of President Bush. The Prime Minister did not mince his words and appropriately called this move harassment.

I am encouraged by the strong position taken by the Prime Minister and look forward to a positive and a fair conclusion to this protectionist determination. As a fair trader, we will turn our anger and frustration into action and we will be successful.

* * *

SALMON FISHERY

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, a month and a half ago, the hon. member for Skeena warned the minister of fisheries that the United States had served notice at our embassy in Washington that it will now violate the Canada–U.S. salmon treaty, that it had overfished Fraser River bound sockeye by 510,000 last year, and it intends to do it again this year.

American fisheries and processors have formed a coalition and have mounted a huge "Salmon for Washington" campaign. This group's demands on the Pacific salmon treaty renegotiation is over 9 million additional sockeye enter U.S. ports annually.

This means at least 5,000 new American jobs at the expense of Canadian fishers. The impact on the Fraser River salmon fishery and Canadian workers will be devastating. The minister must give us his assurance that he will be tough minded in renegotiating a treaty, and he must assure us that he will not allow U.S. fisheries to violate the existing treaty.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

TRADE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw the Prime Minister in Washington. He tried to be firm and decisive. However, at no time did we hear the president of the United States say that his Department of Commerce would drop trade actions in connection with Honda, magnesium and softwood lumber.

If no real progress was made yesterday in Washington, would the Acting Prime Minister not agree that the Prime Minister's conference in Washington was merely an exercise in public relations?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the best way of answering and responding to the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is to quote from the press conference that was held by the Prime Minister and President Bush when President Bush stated: "I told the Prime Minister who forcefully presented Canada's case that I would work with our administration to see that these disputes receive the proper high level consideration before they go to some form of action".

I think that is a pretty clear indication of the intention of the President to take action as a result of the very vigorous representations that the Prime Minister made.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, words and words.

We are used to the Prime Minister stretching the truth when he is in Canada. There is a little bit of blarney all around, but we thought that when he is in the United States representing Canada he would act as a Prime Minister representing Canada abroad.

Yesterday on a TV program in the United States the Prime Minister, talking about his political opponents, said that they "do not like the United States, do not like trading with the United States and want to build a great wall of China around Canada".

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister: Is it because we are standing for Canadians and the interests of Canada that we in Canada are opposed to the Americans?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think what Canadians are really asking, particularly the Leader of the Opposition and his party, is to stand for something.

We do not know what they stand for. One day they are for free trade and the next day they are against free trade. One day they are for the GST and the next day they are against the GST. That kind of confusion will get the Leader of the Opposition nowhere.

When you go representing the country internationally, as he is aware I am sure, you have to stand for something and you have to represent the principles that we, as a government, stand for.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government talks about standing for Canada. They should realize that in the last poll only 4 per cent of Canadians agreed with their position on the free trade agreement.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1420)

Mr. Chrétien: When will this government understand that friendship is friendship but business is business? Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell Canadians that he will ask the Prime Minister to apologize because he treated them as anti-American just because 96 per cent of Canadians do not agree with the Holy Ghost, the Prime Minister of Canada, when he is abroad?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition can talk about all the puffery but the facts are still very clear. Merchandise exports to the United States have gone up by 12.3 per cent since the implementation of the free trade agreement. In March we achieved a record level of $117.4 billion in exports to the U.S. on an annualized basis.

In terms of merchandise imports, again demonstrating the strength of the Canadian economy, imports rose by 6.2 per cent. Quite frankly, the over-all aggregate trade with the United States is in fact increasing. That is the only trading area where trade is increasing with Canada. It is decreasing in other areas, increasing with the United States, which again demonstrates the importance of the free trade agreement.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was wrong yesterday. Canadians like Americans. What they do not like is this government.

The U.S. entered the recession six months after we did. It has already come out of the recession while we remain mired deep in the soup. The Americans have created 947,000 jobs since November. We have lost 141,000 in the same period.

How, given the difference in prospects between our two countries which is unprecedented in recent history, can this government continue with an economic program that has failed so miserably to create jobs and to give Canadians hope?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the hon. member has recognized that Canada is a trading nation, thus we trade to survive. Our growth and our prosperity will come through trade. That is why I am encouraged, as I am sure he should be encouraged, that our trade with the United States has risen by 12.3 per cent since the free trade agreement came into effect.

As a matter of fact, in March we recorded $117.4 billion worth of export sales to the United States on an annualized basis. In the budget we took steps to improve the competitiveness of our manufacturing and processing sector. We took steps to improve the competitive environment, the investment environment, so we can be more competitive, so we can take advantage of these new trading opportunities. We are all encouraged by the fact

the United States economy is in fact strengthening and that is positive news for Canada.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the same minister. The minister's mantra is as inaccurate as it is boring.

[*Translation*]

According to the Conference Board of Canada, this country is going through its longest period of economic stagnation in 30 years. Last week, I met former employees of Sidbec; two weeks ago, it was former textile workers; a month ago, former workers in the pulp and paper industry. All these people are in their fifties and have been laid off for good. I will ask the minister the question they asked me: Where will we find jobs in the future?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have acknowledged on many occasions in the House the difficult period that Canada is going through, and Canada is not alone.

The hon. member will know the anticipated growth for all the OECD nations is something in the order of 1.6 per cent or 1.7 per cent for 1992, which is hardly robust. They also indicated the high levels of unemployment will persist in all the industrialized countries, I think something like 30 million unemployed people, and that is a challenge for all governments, including this one. It also is compounded by the fact we are going through a structural change in terms of our economy.

As I indicated in the House yesterday, I find the Conference Board of Canada's projections overly pessimistic. I think that view is shared by the business community, at least in Ottawa. I quote from *The Ottawa Sun* today: "Area businessmen said they were surprised and angry at the board's latest economic forecast". They said that messages like the one the Conference Board is sending out contribute to consumer pessimism rather than confidence.

I think there are a number of positive indicators which indicate that the economy is strengthening. It is not robust. It is not as robust as the hon. member would like to see it, nor is it as robust as I would like to see it. I think he would agree with me that the fundamentals are right. Interest rates have fallen again today. Inflation is at an all-time low. So we have the framework and the basis for sustainable growth and price stability.

That is what we are trying to achieve.

[*Translation*]

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

The Conference Board of Canada predicted today that the growth rate of the Canadian economy would be the worst of the G-7 countries and our unemployment rate the highest and one of the worst in the western world. Nevertheless, in the midst of all this bad news, many jobless Canadians are now receiving letters from the federal government, letters like this one, telling them that they will no longer have funds during the waiting period necessary to obtain training under section 26 of the act.

Will the federal government provide the necessary funds for this program so that the unemployed can have the training they need to get a job?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should recognize and admit that the additional funds provided under section 26 of the Unemployment Insurance Act throughout the country, and especially in Ontario, have tripled this year.

It is true that unemployed Canadians ask for this additional training so that they can hold new jobs with greater skills. Do not believe that we are insensitive to this demand.

But I would ask the hon. member to consider that the federal government alone provides 76 per cent of all the funds to train Canadian workers. The provinces want jurisdiction over worker training, but they spend only 24 per cent of all the funds allocated for this purpose in Canada.

We are now looking at our own budget in Employment and Immigration to see how we can accommodate the increased demand from workers—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt you. The hon. member for Yukon.

[*English*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, this is the government that has created the level of unemployment that we have and refuses now to help those people who want to have training so they can get a job. This government refuses to put additional funds into a program that works, one that helps sustain Canadians. That is a responsibility that this government should be undertaking.

I would like to ask the minister of revenue this. The minister of employment has said that it is a question of budgetary funds. I would like to make a suggestion to the minister of revenue as to where he might find some of those funds.

Twenty-one years ago the former Liberal government introduced measures to provide a tax-free holiday on private trusts for some of Canada's wealthier citizens. Some estimates have put the total value of $70 billion on those private trusts.

As the minister knows, that tax-free holiday is about to end. In view of the need that we have for further training and in view of the needs we have in Canada now, will the minister tell this House that he will not allow this tax-free holiday to continue for Canada's wealthier citizens and put that money to use to train some of the unemployed and those who need the funds for their future.

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, you know I am getting a little sick and tired from the New Democrats going on and on and on—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jelinek: —about tax-free holidays which do not exist, about the fact that large corporations are not taxed, about the fact that the tax system is unfair.

This government has been bringing in tax reform, broadening the corporate tax base, bringing in more corporations to pay further taxes, closing loopholes left, right and centre that the Liberals opened up under the Leader of the Opposition when he was finance minister, and bringing in accelerated tax collections. One thing we will not do is take away the incentive for Canadian businesses to continue to expand and create jobs and opportunities for Canadians.

• (1430)

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Revenue.

Hospitals are closing across the country and food banks are opening across the country. I have simply suggested to the minister that he has the opportunity to close a tax loophole on the private trusts of Canada's wealthiest Canadians, where the wealthiest Canadians can put in funds that are not taxed. They have had a 21-year tax holiday.

Will the minister stand here and say that he is prepared to close this tax loophole on Canada's wealthiest citizens to provide the services needed for those many Canadians who are in need at this time?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, those loopholes were closed two years ago. Those corporations were put on a taxable basis and the hon. member knows that.

* * *

WESTRAY COAL MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada was intimately involved in seeing that the Westray coal mine received $85 million in loan guarantees and $8 million into interest buy-downs.

Yesterday in Washington the Prime Minister, when asked whether or not he was aware of the serious safety problems plaguing the Westray project previous to federal funding approval, stated: "Of course not, of course not."

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Who should Canadians believe, the Prime Minister or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who informed this House that all of the cabinet was aware of the safety problems at the Westray coal mine?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague, the member of Parliament for Central Nova, back to the House. I think he would like to know that yesterday the questions on this subject were responsible and not very partisan, out of respect for what his constituents are going through.

In answer to my hon. friend's question, the Prime Minister made it clear that this particular mine is regulated as to its safety and health regimes by the

province. Because of that, the province is going to be conducting a thorough judicial inquiry and we are going to co-operate with that inquiry.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, in 1987-88 at a time when Devco had excess capacity, the national government supplied $85 million in loan guarantees to a private company to compete against its own national Crown corporation. Furthermore, the company had a sweetheart deal, known and supported by Ottawa, to guarantee that company $14 million a year for 15 years whether the coal was mined or not.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Why did the Prime Minister choose to reward his political friends instead of abiding by safety and sound public policy reasons?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, this government believes in regional economic development. We have stood by projects which will lead to regional economic development especially in regions that have high unemployment.

We are very proud of that record. We have been able to encourage regional economic development in various parts of Nova Scotia. What we cannot do is simply say that the coal business is just for Cape Breton. We cannot say that. I do not think the hon. member means to suggest that.

What we did with this particular arrangement was to help guarantee a loan that the Bank of Nova Scotia put in place for the Westray mine. The loan was guaranteed by the federal government for 85 per cent of the losses. Our involvement was purely financial, but we went beyond that.

We made sure the contract with Westray that the Bank of Nova Scotia was putting in place included periodic reports on the compliance of all the regulations of the province in order to satisfy ourselves that the contract would ensure that the provincial regime for safety and health was in place. We received regular reports that this was the case. Therefore it is quite appropriate that questions on this will be handled by a provincial judicial inquiry.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the minister for small business has just said and he said seven times yesterday that the government depended on mining consultants to do studies to determine if the safety regulations were being complied with.

Evidently the government has placed a great deal of confidence in these consultants' reports. Will the minister make these reports public today?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be open with Parliament. Those reports will be forthcoming. We are assembling the documentation and the information to bring to the House and, of course, we will comply with the requests from the judicial inquiry.

I would like my hon. friend to know, however, that the regulation of health and safety is a provincial matter. It has a regime in place to do that. It is not the federal government's responsibility, even though we informed ourselves on a regular basis that this contract was in compliance.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister said that the government gave an $85 million guarantee to Curragh Resources on the basis of these consultant reports that the safety requirements would be complied with and that they would be available.

It is not the responsibility of the Bank of Nova Scotia to look after the safety of the miners. The minister said these reports were complied with. Evidently they are with the government. There is no reason why we cannot have those reports today. Either they exist with the federal government or they do not. If they do, make them public today.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): My hon. friend has just asked a supplementary without listening to my answer.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hockin: My answer was very clear. Those particular reports will be tabled and made public. We will co-operate fully with the House. But he must remember that the province of Nova Scotia has the day-to-day responsibility for health and safety. This is why there is a judicial inquiry and that is also why we as a government will be co-operating with that judicial inquiry.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and concerns the Westray affair.

The Deputy Prime Minister will be aware of yesterday's report that the shredders have been busy at the office of Westray Coal. Further to these reports, I have a copy here of a Westray Coal interoffice memo on security procedures which instructs all employees on shredding procedures and use of cellular phones.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Considering the seriousness of this tragic matter and the need for all information to be both secure and available for scrutiny by both the Nova Scotia inquiry and this Parliament, can the Deputy Prime Minister assure us that the RCMP has been instructed to seize and secure all Westray files and are these files now so secured?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that he is quoting, at best, hearsay comments from the leader of the NDP in Nova Scotia when he talks about shredders. He does not know if that is true or not. But he should know that question should quite properly be asked by the leader of the NDP in the Nova Scotia legislature.

As a participant in a financial transaction, we guaranteed a loan. On a monthly basis we fulfilled our concern that the health and safety requirements were being followed. That is the federal government's role. The role now is for the judicial inquiry to inquire into the kinds of questions he is asking.

Mr. Speaker: Before the hon. member asks the next question, I listened very carefully to that one and the answer when the minister responded. I want hon. members to keep in mind—and the hon. member is pursuing a serious matter—that the administration of justice is a provincial matter. I think that if there are further questions to the federal government as to why it has not or has done something with respect to the RCMP it may very well be out of order.

I caution the hon. member, but of course I will hear his question.

• (1440)

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I fully accept the comments you have just made, but I would also point out to the government that when it makes a major investment and guarantees 85 per cent of a $100 million loan in a project which ends up sacrificing the lives of 26 Nova Scotia miners, there is no limit to public responsibility.

I would be quite happy to table the document to which I have referred. Further to that I have a question for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism.

Yesterday the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism told the House that the federal government was relying on mine inspections done for the Bank of Nova Scotia for its information on safety. Our latest information is that Associated Mining Consultants did not do comprehensive mine inspections but rather relied on safety inspections done by Westray itself.

Can the minister confirm this and will he table in this House all of the inspection reports he claimed the federal government received from the Bank of Nova Scotia, which to remind the minister, was covered to the tune of 85 per cent of any loans extended to Westray under the provisions of this cosy deal with the federal government?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend characterizes the loan to Westray as a cosy deal. The federal government has also made a very substantial loan to Cominco in his riding. It is also a mine. Does he call that a cosy deal as well?

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism.

Yesterday the minister stated in this House: "We would not have put our Westray guarantee in place unless there was compliance with the health and safety requirements of the two departments which were going to administer it for the province, for the Government of Nova Scotia". We know that the government's own agency, Devco, told it Westray was not safe.

What specific assurances did the province of Nova Scotia provide to convince his government to disregard the concerns of its own Crown corporation as to the safety of this project?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is perpetrating an exaggerated fiction from what Devco said in 1987. What Devco did, and let us be blunt about this, was analyse the impact of Westray on its market share in the coal business. Of course it was concerned that some of its market share of Nova Scotia Power business could be taken by Westray.

Therefore, Cape Breton members of Parliament were very concerned about this and so were Devco employees. This was outlined in great detail in the Devco report. There were a few very brief references, just a few sentences, concerning possible safety concerns. But as Teresa MacNeil, who was the chairman of Devco, said at the time, the over-all thrust of the report was about business, about market share, about economics and there was only the briefest reference to safety. Of course the safety concerns expressed were to be dealt with when the mine was put in place.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is for the same minister.

Yesterday the minister told this House that the concerns we had originally with Westray were basically business and economics. But on both counts, safety and economics, Devco told the government: "Don't do it".

I ask the minister again, given the safety concerns, given the economics, why did the government fund this project?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): The federal government gave a loan guarantee to a bank loan which helped fund the project. In fact, it is a loan guarantee on the Bank of Nova Scotia bank loan, plus an interest buy-down that we put forward. That is what the federal government did.

Why did we do it? The answer is very clear. It was for regional economic development. There was high unemployment in the member for Central Nova's riding, there is high unemployment in the Stellarton area. There is a long history of a productive seam of coal. They wanted to participate in the production of coal for NSPC as well as for other customers. This was an opportunity to create 240 direct jobs and of course a multiplier of two or three or four times that.

It was done for regional economic development reasons and it was a very stimulating addition to the region's economy.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism.

For most of yesterday the minister, in reviewing the *Hansard*, spent the day telling the House that safety was the responsibility of the Bank of Nova Scotia. He spent most of today suggesting that safety was only the responsibility of the provincial government.

I want to remind the minister that the Bank of Nova Scotia had at risk exactly $15 million. The Government of Canada in financial terms had at risk $85 million. But the coal miners had at risk either their future prosperity or their very health and safety—tragically, in the case of 26 miners, their lives. Those miners counted upon governments, federal and provincial, because they did not have a union, to ensure that this project was safe, to ensure that given the history of the Foord seam it could be mined safely.

What did this minister and this government do to ensure that when it put $85 million into reopening the mine, a mine that could not have reopened otherwise, that the operation would be safe? What was done?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, to ask the same question as all previous members have with a higher decibel of sound does not make it a different question. The question is the same and the answer is the same.

We guaranteed the loan and, when we did, we satisfied ourselves that the provincial regime for the regulation of health and safety would be in place and indeed the provincial regime across all regulations that affect a mine would be in place.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, that answer is not acceptable.

I want the minister to understand that everybody in Canada knows, and in particular those in Atlantic Canada, that this mine could not have opened without the direct involvement of the federal government. Everybody knows there were large question marks about this mine and many people strongly recommended against it,

but it was opened anyway with $85 million of federal loan guarantees.

It is quite reasonable, rational and fair to ask this minister: What did the government do to assure itself that the mine was not only economic but that it was safe for miners to go down into? Those miners had only governments to depend upon before they went down into that pit. What did this government do?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I said yesterday. When you are a bank—

Mr. Tobin: You are not a bank; you are a politician.

Mr. Hockin: —and you put forward $100 million you have depositors' money on the line. You are going to make sure that the mine is not going to be closed because of some explosion or that the mine is not going to be functioning because of some tragedy. So the bank made sure that the safety and health regulations—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister is answering a question and I am sure that members would wish him to continue.

An hon. member: No, he is not.

Mr. Speaker: He may not be giving the answer somebody wants but he is on his feet answering the question, and I know that hon. members would give him the courtesy to complete his answer.

Mr. Hockin: The first thing is that the bank wants to protect its investment and it cannot protect its investment unless it is complying with all regulations put in place by the province. Part of those regulations are health and safety. We as the federal government wanted to make sure that this was also the case so we received on a regular basis the reports from independent mining consultants—they are virtually monthly reports—to make sure this was the case. This is what the federal government should do.

We cannot supersede the provincial regime for health and safety. The provincial regime is there, but we can do what we can under our contractual arrangement with the bank to which we were giving the loan guarantee.

TRADE

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has labelled President Bush as a father of free trade. Canadians reject the deal and the parents.

There are 70 American steel trade actions pending against numerous countries, including Canada.

• (1450)

The Canadian steel industry is depressed. Canada is a fair trader. The American share of our market has increased from 7.3 per cent to 16.3 per cent since 1988 and the free trade agreement.

Was steel on the agenda yesterday as indicated and, if so, did the Prime Minister come away with any assurances for Canadian steel producers?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, we have been in constant touch with the Canadian steel industry about a supposed charge against the Canadian steel industry. We have not got that.

What the Prime Minister told Mr. Bush yesterday, one of the very important things he told Mr. Bush, was that Canada's exports to the United States today are at an all-time high thanks to the free trade agreement despite its problems.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the minister has been speaking to the steel industry; he would not get the information that he has received.

The issue will test yet again the credibility of the Prime Minister. He spoke yesterday of American trade harassment and unfairness that is hurting Canada. President Bush said: "We have agreed today to be sure that some of these disputes can be avoided".

Given the fact that these trade actions are imminent, this is a test case. Could the minister ensure us that this is a top trade priority and the Prime Minister will report to the House as soon as possible that any American trade action against Canada is off?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the Canadian steel industry will be doing with the support of the Government of Canada if there is a dispute lodged against steel

is to ensure that the Canadian steel industry responds in kind, and we will launch an unfair trade practice against the United States.

* * *

HOG INDUSTRY

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture.

As the minister well knows, one of the longest running trade disputes between Canada and the United States is the dispute over American duties on Canadian hogs.

Yesterday the FTA binational dispute settlement panel ruled that the American commerce department's justification for duties on Canadian hogs was inadequate. I have had calls from producers asking me just how optimistic they should be, given this ruling.

What will this ruling mean to the Canadian hog industry and future trade between Canada and the United States?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is right in drawing to the attention of the House the ruling by the binational panel which was established under the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

That panel has said that the department of commerce in the United States was not, in its mind at this time, able to justify the amount of countervail that it has applied to Canadian hogs. It has given it 60 days to justify that.

The other important part is that it shows that Canada alone, of all the countries in the world, because of the free trade agreement has a binational panel impartial to rule against the political machinations of the department of commerce in the United States.

I take it as being optimistic that it was not able to justify its countervail, and we believe that we will again prevail in this case.

* * *

WESTRAY COAL MINE

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism whose best defence of the Westray deal so far is: "The bankers made me do it".

I want to ask him to tell the House not what the bank did or what the bank's interests were in this matter but what did the government do to protect the real risk here, some human lives.

Why does he not, just for his own good and the government's, quit this Pontius Pilate act and tell us—

Mr. Speaker: I want to make it very clear that in a 45–minute Question Period every question can be on this matter, but questions are going to have to be put in such a way that is appropriate with the decorum of the House.

The hon. member will complete his question and do it properly. I am sure he will.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, the government's own agency told the minister, told the government, that this was not a safe undertaking.

Why was that advice ignored, I ask the minister? Was the urge here to be in sync with the political agenda of the provincial Tory regime three days before an election? Was it because the Prime Minister intervened in this matter, as the premier said, that this went ahead despite advice to the contrary?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, in fact the report from Devco to which he refers argued that this would be a bad idea for economic and business reasons for Devco and for Cape Breton coal mining. That was not a surprise to anybody because in fact it is true that the Westray activity would take some market share from Devco.

There was a very fleeting reference to safety but it was not a major part of the report.

This was three years before the Westray mine even began. Of course the very general and brief references to safety were more than accommodated by the construction of this mine and the procedures put in place.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about fleeting references to safety. Is he telling us that those references, however fleeting, were dismissed as not being central to the government's concern?

What was the government's concern here? Was it to satisfy some political debts in Nova Scotia, or was it to ensure that not only was work put in place but that safe work was put in place and that lives were protected?

Does the minister see that as one of his priorities in his present position?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, of course safety considerations are paramount. It just was not mentioned very much in the Devco report of 1987. That is the point.

The province has a regime in place that must be followed by this particular mine.

What the hon. member is trying to do is to drag in all sorts of other extraneous political concerns, and I would remind him what the Reverend Angus MacLeod said two days ago. He said: "Let us put aside unnecessary controversy. It is not a time to try to score points for any side. Let us allow the judicial process to proceed".

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for whoever is responding for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Today our Prime Minister in speaking at Johns Hopkins University says: "Rarely in history has there been such a victory for an idea, the idea of democracy".

Despite the fact that he acknowledges that history will judge us by our response to the challenge, we see in the former state of Yugoslavia where new states are struggling to achieve democracy that the process is falling apart.

Only a token cell of 100 UN peacekeepers are able to remain in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, because of unjustified violence. Yet Canada maintains diplomatic relations with Belgrade and refuses by action to convey its condemnation of the current violence in Bosnia.

For the sake of over one million refugees and our peacekeepers, will the government address this issue today to take the necessary action to signal that we cannot allow any further deterioration in Yugoslavia?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, this question has been answered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs just a few days ago.

It is entirely inaccurate to say that Canada has not taken any action. We have taken measures against Serbia. We have supported the temporary suspension of Yugoslavia from the CSCE. We have not accepted the Serbian claim to the continuing state of the old Yugoslavia. We have restricted trade measures on Serbia.

We have not recalled our ambassador for the reasons the Secretary of State for External Affairs said several days ago, and they have not changed. We need someone on the scene who can report to us and who can carry out our instructions and our concerns.

We are greatly concerned at the events in Yugoslavia. We are doing everything that could be expected of a liberal democracy to assist in that situation, including sending peace troops over to a situation where there is not even peace to enforce.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, a year ago our Prime Minister signed a convention on the rights of the child promising "to take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children affected by armed conflict".

A hundred thousand of the innocent victims in Bosnia today are children under three years of age.

What is Canada doing to ensure that the required humanitarian assistance is reaching these innocent victims?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, we together with every other civilized country of the world are doing all we can to exert pressure on Serbia in connection with the women and children held hostage by Serb gunmen the last two days in Sarajevo.

• (1500)

On May 20 the Canadian chief of staff of our UN peacekeeping force said: "To impose peace in Bosnia would require a military force equal to that used in the war against Iraq".

What is the hon. member opposite suggesting, that these kinds of measures be taken? What is her solution? What more does she want us to do than to exercise our support, with every other civilized country, to try to

persuade the Serbians to act in a civilized manner in connection with Bosnia.

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PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period the Minister for Science was heard by a number of my caucus colleagues, including myself, to say: "Don't be such a hypocrite". As you know, Mr. Speaker, the use of the word hypocrite has been banned since 1958.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has the floor on a question of privilege.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, by far a more offensive word that I did not repeat and I will not repeat was used in this House. The minister himself knows what he said and what we all heard is an obscenity and we ask that the minister withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has raised on a question of privilege an alleged comment by the hon. minister. Perhaps if the minister wishes to reply I will hear it.

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, out of respect for you and this House, I withdraw.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what kind of double standard we have here. The Prime Minister of Canada has been known to use the same language and was not obliged to withdraw. I would like—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The matter has been raised. There was more than just the word hypocrite alleged. The hon. minister has withdrawn and that is the end of it.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put my regular weekly question to the government House leader. In asking this question I beg the opportunity to ask him how we might facilitate the business of the House in subsequent proceedings when we return, but I am wondering if he could indicate what the business will be for tomorrow.

Second, the government House leader did in fact share information with us concerning amendments to Bill C–81. Will we now have an opportunity to see the written legal opinions in order to consider them at length?

Finally, as the House leader knows, I wrote to him on May 13, 1992 with regard to documents surrounding the Westray incident and I am wondering if he could indicate to the House when these documents will be tabled.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, today, to our disappointment, we had to move time allocation on second reading of Bill C–81, the referendum enabling legislation. That will be the business for today.

The hon. member is barking from his seat, apparently not interested in this report. If he can talk his colleagues into being quiet I will try to continue.

On Friday the government will call Bill C–59, the National Parks Act. It is my understanding there is an agreement among the parties to proceed with all three stages. We will also deal with Bill C–41, the Energy Efficiency Act, for debate at report stage and Bill C–45, Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, for debate at report stage and third reading.

The House is adjourned next week. For the week of June 1, the priority will be to complete Bill C–81. As the hon. member knows, if this is not done expeditiously, this important tool to keep the country together will not be available for use.

Mr. Nowlan: I am surprised. Tear, tear.

Mr. Lapierre: Never, never. You are a bullshit.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. Will the hon. member please withdraw that statement.

Mr. Lapierre: You are full of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will not recognize the hon. member for the rest of the day.

Mr. Andre: The hon. member for Shefford's respect for democracy is plainly obvious and his concern for the country, of course, we know.

I expect that in future votes on this issue we will make a distinction between the votes of the Bloc Quebecois and the votes of the opposition parties.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that a very high priority of the government, because of the timing, is Bill C–80 dealing with the Children's Special Allowance Act. It needs to be passed in order for it to come into effect.

In terms of the question of the Westray documents, as my colleague the Minister of State for Small Businesses has indicated, all the materials are being collected. I can assure the hon. member that all those materials will be presented just as soon as they have been collated.

He will understand that whenever documents involve other parties, we need to get their agreement to table them. There is no difficulty getting the agreement but it is a process that takes some time. It is being worked on expeditiously and I expect we will be able to present those documents to the House and have them available for other parties very soon.

The legal opinions are by way of letter to the deputy minister of justice who asked for these for support. The deputy minister of justice will be available for participation before the committee and will have these with him. In the meantime, I am certainly prepared to have members who are interested come to my office and read the document there, that is no problem. I hope they understand that the nature of the correspondence is such that I cannot distribute it broadly.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I would like two clarifications, one from my hon. friend the government House leader. As a result of the motion passed earlier today, Bill C–81 will pass second reading later today and will then be referred to a committee.

I wonder if my hon. friend would indicate whether the government would be open to the consideration of televising that committee since the House of Commons will not be sitting next week.

I would also like to confirm a point that the government House leader made a week or two ago that during the committee period of this bill because it is so important to the future of Canada, there would be a willingness on the part of the government to consider amendments that normally may be considered beyond the scope of the legislation.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I am hoping there is recognition of the necessity for dispatch and the necessity to have a clear indication for the Chief Electoral Officer of the intent, if not the final completion, of the bill and that necessitates acting very quickly. I anticipate that the committee will be meeting this afternoon, perhaps tomorrow morning, and speaking as one potential witness, perhaps Saturday and Sunday. Frankly I believe there is no benefit to the ultimate goal of Canadian unity to try and schedule ourselves around the interests of a viewing audience.

That being said, I will wait to hear what the committee recommends in respect of how they might proceed.

• (1510)

In terms of amendments, as I have indicated privately in meetings we have had, yes, we are prepared to look at amendments that are appropriate and improve the bill but I am hesitant to say amendments that go beyond the scope of the bill. The hon. member can understand my concern.

This is, very simply, enabling legislation, it is not–binding, it is not compulsory. It is nothing but enabling legislation for a plebiscite. Hence I cannot immediately respond positively to the suggestion we use it to amend some other acts that really do not have anything to do with what we are trying to accomplish in this bill. With that qualifier I will certainly listen to any suggestions.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, is the government House leader indicating it would be up to the committee to decide whether or not it would be appropriate to televise the proceedings? After all, I think we all agree the people of Canada would like to view the deliberations around this important issue.

Mr. Andre: I will say this. I wish a camera were trained on some of the deliberations around this issue and the people of Canada might not have the same favourable impression that sometimes we think they have. As I indicated, that is up to the committee to decide.

Let us not suggest this is going to be a theatrical event for the television cameras. Remember what is at issue, remember what is at stake, and let us deal with it in a businesslike fashion rather than for the benefit of our audience.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootney West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period I referred to a document, an interoffice memorandum for Westray Coal entitled *Security Procedures* and I would be pleased to table that document for the House and I now so do.

Further to the question of tabling—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): A private member cannot table a document unless he has unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise two points on House business. I have refrained from speaking on the referendum issue.

There is a suggestion from the member for Kamloops which I understand, although I do not necessarily agree with the urgency and the dispatch that the government House leader mentions. We have all the government members around here under the Whip and I understand that because I have had nine requests to pair just today.

Why does the government House leader not have Committee of the Whole tomorrow on the bill and if there is a problem with voting in terms of second, third, or fourth reading, at least get rid of the bill and then have the final bill when we come back.

I do not see the problem with votes tomorrow. If we are really going to send it to a committee, forget about television. If you are really going to bludgeon it through the committee, which I sort of think is the intent in view of the allocation order today, let us have the fight tomorrow on the clauses. Quite frankly I am a member that will vote for the bill but I have a real problem with several of the clauses and the government is eventually going to have its say.

I throw that out in terms of House business as far as the referendum bill is concerned. Everything used to be done in Committee of the Whole with fair dispatch when I came here many years ago.

My second question is the perennial one concerning the merchant marine. I know the government House leader has been trying. I am suggesting that if he cannot get a little more finite in the answer today with this week coming up, I will be on the government House leader with all the other little problems he has as a bird dog in heat.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, that is a terrifying proposal.

In view of that threat, the bill will get beyond the Notice Paper the first week of June when we are back. The Department of Justice indicates it should have completed its drafting and I will be putting it on the Notice Paper June 1 and treating it will depend on agreements in the House. As I have indicated, we are anxious to proceed with it and I hope we can do that very quickly.

In terms of the Committee of the Whole, indeed that suggestion has been made and discussed. Unfortunately it requires a special order of this House. We were not able to secure agreement in that regard so we cannot proceed that way. I agree with the hon. member it would have been a better way to proceed.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I want to have the attention of the House leader who may be busy looking somewhere else in his impatience.

That is exactly the problem that we are going through at the moment. He is impatient. I, along with many colleagues, the member for Kingston and the Islands, the member for Churchill and many Conservative members, his own colleagues, work very dutifully on the committee of electoral reform. We have done so because we thought that we should work that way with patience with each other. He is so impatient that we are not sure—I am still on the same point—if it is worth at all sitting on any committee.

Many amendments are already ready. I want to be on record because I will not to be a member of the referendum but I certainly will attend. Many amendments are ready. Why do it behind the curtains? They are ready and they have been accepted at the committee on electoral reform. They would be ready immediately to be acceptable. Could we have the assurance of the House leader that at least a lot of freedom would be left to the members to accept very good amendments which

already have been accepted at the committee on electoral reform which you are expecting sometime in June.

At least if we have a public understanding, a public acceptance by you that everybody is impatient and defending Canada is absolutely important, nobody on this side will take any lesson from anybody as to the importance of preserving Canada. I assure you of that.

We would like to have some assurance that at least the committee will not function as a *rouleau compresseur* as we say in French. The minister, with patience, should just get up once in his lifetime and give the assurance to the House that nobody is going to be bullied. We do not accept to be bullied.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, you do not know how much I look forward to these lectures by the hon. member for Saint-Denis on decorum and behaviour. I especially like the part in which he talks about my being arrogant.

I wonder if the hon. members of the Liberal party would give me a chance to answer their colleague who asked for an answer.

On the question of electoral reform and the changes, as the hon. member has suggested, all members of the committee from all parties are working together to get changes to the Elections Act. As I have indicated to our members, and I presume similar indications from the other parties, a package of amendments which would be agreeable to the political parties in terms of amending the Elections Act is something that I as House leader would schedule and treat with dispatch to change the Elections Act. If these were possible to do, it would not preclude the Chief Electoral Officer's implementing them before the next election.

The hon. member keeps heckling me.

Mr. Prud'homme: I am not heckling.

Mr. Andre: I wish he would allow me to answer his question before he stands up and interrupts me.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, he may be heckled by some, but he knows that I have too much respect for the institution and for him as a responsible man.

I am not heckling. I am trying to get some answers. He knows that already these have been accepted by the committee. He knows that we know that most of these amendments will be acceptable to the Chief Electoral Officer.

• (1520)

I do not like these secrets going around all the time. These are facts that he knows and he knows we know, so why should he beat around the bush all the time?

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order as the hon. member from the Liberal caucus.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. It is my mistake. I thought the hon. government House leader had finished his answer. The hon. government House leader has the floor and then I will recognize the hon. member for Churchill.

Mr. Andre: The hon. member is sincere and he does want to hear the answer. The answer is that I am certainly agreeable to any amendments to the Elections Act which are agreeable to all sides of the House that we can put in place that the Chief Electoral Officer could implement in a way that would not cause the delay of a referendum or a plebiscite or an election.

However, what we are talking about in terms of the plebiscite legislation allowing the plebiscite to be held if a decision is taken on the basis of the Elections Act. If it is prudent to amend the Elections Act so that it could be implemented immediately, then let us by all means do that. Let us not confuse the two and attempt to use the enabling legislation for a plebiscite as a circuitous route to amend the Elections Act because they are quite different.

That is the only point I would make. It would be out of order and as far as I am concerned a total confusion to what the intent of Bill C-81 is, namely to use Bill C-81 to try to amend the Elections act. Amendments to the Elections Act to improve it in accordance with the recommendations of Lortie that have been agreed to by all sides of the House are certainly something I would be

in favour of and welcome and would proceed with expeditiously.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, again, without trying to create a long debate at this point, the government House leader should know that the Chief Electoral Officer was before the House committee yesterday. He indicated that he did not believe he could deal with further amendments to the Elections Act at the same time as he had to deal with the referendum legislation, in other words a number of clauses which are not controversial, including who gets to vote on election day. Right now we have a lot of urban voters left off voters' lists. It is a problem in each and every election. There are a lot of recommendations that could be put in place to make sure that people are able to vote on the referendum.

The only way those clauses will be in place for a referendum is if the government allows amendments which will be on the scope of the referendum bill in committee. If the government does not allow those amendments, those people will be denied the right to vote on the referendum and on Canada's future.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the plebiscite will be implemented, if we have one, using the rules of the Canada Elections Act. We can through the plebiscite legislation change some of those rules as they would apply in respect of a plebiscite. That is agreed and I am not adverse to entertaining amendments in that regard.

One has to recognize that does not change the Elections Act. We would have presumably the Chief Electoral Officer who, if he is being prudent, has to prepare for two different events, a plebiscite and a general election. He would have to prepare on the basis of two different rules, one that would apply in an election and one that would apply in a plebiscite. If that is no problem, I am not adverse to it.

Rather than go into all these details, which we could have done if we had agreed to Committee of the Whole, but the hon. member was one of those who was opposed to it, we should let these kinds of discussions go on at committee. We can discuss them. I have said publicly on several occasions now I am not adverse to amendments that will improve the act and let us leave it at that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would just like to remind hon. members that we have been on this weekly question for 20 minutes. May I remind the House that the bill this afternoon is under time allocation and time is of the essence. I will recognize the hon. member for Kamloops on that point of order.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, to the government House leader, he referred to the business tomorrow being Bill C–59, the parks legislation, and indicated that there was, after discussions with the parties, a willingness to proceed through all stages.

I simply want to indicate that is the case with our party, assuming that the minister is here to respond to questions and so on during Committee of the Whole.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the hon. member for Shefford rising to retract the remark that he made during Question Period?

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I want to know which one you are talking about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not think I should repeat it. The hon. member knows. If the hon. member would like to retract his remarks and also the member for Richelieu, whom I listened to distinctly. If you will both please as honourable gentlemen retract the statements you made.

Mr. Lapierre: I would like to know which rules are guiding this place. When the Prime Minister calls me a hypocrite it is okay. When somebody else does it it is not okay.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope; and the amendment of Mr. Murphy (p.10955).

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the hon. member retracting his statement? The hon. member said "bullshit" in the House and so did the hon. member for Richelieu. Would they both please retract that statement?

Mr. Lapierre: I was not talking about you at all.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: May I have the floor, Mr. Speaker? I believe you referred to my using unparliamentary language. It was not directed to the Chair, nor to the member speaking on the other side of the House but was part of a private discussion here on our benches. However, if the Chair was disturbed by what it heard, I shall of course withdraw immediately, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, if it is the same word, I can withdraw the term I applied to the leader.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to take a few minutes to speak to Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums or consultation on the Constitution of Canada.

This bill is an historic event, because its purpose is to help us reach a national consensus on the constitutional question. Let us consider the objectives of this bill. Clearly it is important to have legislation that allows this consultation to be conducted as effectively as possible.

The referendum process must guarantee the validity of the results while minimizing obstacles to the electoral process. The bill meets that objective by drawing on legislation that has already stood the test of time, the Canada Elections Act, and by making an independent party, in this case the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, responsible for the referendum process.

The bill's other main objective, which will be the subject of my speech today, is the fairness of the referendum campaign. Clearly, if the campaign on the referendum question is not fair, it will deprive the response to this question of any legitimacy it might have and make this an exercise in futility. Fairness is essential to the campaign and must be reflected in the enabling legislation.

Fairness is a concept that is sometimes difficult to define but is always easy to recognize.

To our mind, a fair process is one that is not biased and involves equal opportunity. Of course the key to fairness is playing by the rules.

• (1530)

Bill C–81 covers all these aspects, for instance in its provisions on registration. No person or group other than a registered referendum committee shall incur referendum expenses during a referendum period that in the aggregate exceed $5,000.

This means that although all Canadians are urged to take part in the referendum and no one is obliged to do so through a co–ordinating committee any person who intends to spend more than $5,000 must register with the Chief Electoral Officer. This process, described in section 13 of the bill, is very straightforward.

The bill also contains provisions to ensure the fairness of the actual registration process. The Chief Electoral Officer shall examine applications for registration in the order in which they are received. There are provisions to prevent any confusion arising from the name of a referendum committee, as a result of similarities between the names of various committees or between the name of a committee and a federal or provincial party.

The rules for registration reflect two essential aspects of the referendum process: the obligation to report and transparency. The obligation to report sums of money over and above a certain amount spent by these committees is reflected in the provisions concerning auditors, chief agents and the keeping of books and records. Reporting includes providing detailed records of expenses incurred, contributions received and any other type of expenses.

Transparency is guaranteed by provisions in the bill that require disclosure of any contribution over $250 received from individuals, companies, unions, political parties or other groups.

Registered referendum committees and those who contibute to these committees will know in advance that contributions and expenses beyond a certain level will be made public.

These provisions are fair and do not restrict the participation of Canadians nor the expression of their point of view. However, they also make it possible for Canadians to know who is providing financial backing and guarantee that no one will be able to influence secretly the results of the referendum through massive contributions and spending. They are important because they ensure the public has confidence in the results.

I would now like to comment on an aspect of the bill I think is admirable and extremely fair. Free broadcast time will be available to both sides, so they can send their message to the public, at no additional expense, during prime time. Three hours during prime time will be allocated equally among registered referendum committees on both sides.

A broadcast arbitrator, an impartial officer appointed under the Canada Elections Act, will allocate the time available to registered referendum committees on both sides which applied for registration before the 27th day before a polling day and indicated that they wished to be considered for the allocation of free broadcast time.

As a guide to the broadcast arbitrator, the bill provides certain criteria. The arbitrator shall consider whether the allocation of broadcast time would be equitable, having regard to the different views expressed on the referendum question. The arbitrator shall consider the public interest and fairness,in the manner broadcasting time is allocated to the referendum committees.

Furthermore, fairness is included among the factors the broadcasting arbitrator must consider when determining the broadcasting time to be allocated to the referendum committees.

Section 24(4)(b) of the bill provides that the arbitrator shall take into account the fact that any broadcasting time shall "—be made available fairly throughout prime time".

On the same topic, I think it is also important to note that the bill requires names of any person or group making referendum advertisements to be indicated when the messages are broadcast.

All the measures I mentioned as part of this bill are intended to reflect and, in fact, achieve fairness and thus allow Canadians who wish to take part in this referendum, if it is ever held, to make a free and informed choice.

[*English*]

Bill C-81 is a law that will entitle the government to hold a referendum or plebiscite or a general consultation throughout Canada on the question of the renewal of the Constitution.

This bill is a straightforward bill. It is a bill that should enable the government to have consultation. It is a bill that is important in the process of constitutional renewal and I feel that it is important for the House, important for all members of Parliament to support it at this time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on the government's referendum bill this afternoon.

I think it was on May 13 last year that parliamentarians and all Canadians found out in the Speech from the Throne that we would have a referendum bill. I must tell you that it is unfortunate that a year went by, more precisely, a year and two days, before the House was even presented with that bill. Nevertheless, I must say that I intend to support it on second reading. Why? First of all, the hon. member for Beauséjour in a speech that he made in April 1991 was the first leader of a national party to call for a referendum to ratify a future constitutional agreement. I take the opportunity to congratulate the hon. member for Beauséjour, the Leader of the Official Opposition, on the initiative he took at that time.

[*English*]

I must say that more than one Canadian at the time was asking: "Why are you as a parliamentarian, why is your leader, and why is your party asking for this referendum?"

Our position remains the same. We are in 1992 and Canadians expect in this modern age to be consulted as to the ratification of a constitutional deal. It is the right thing to do. Our parliamentary system has evolved to such a stage that this is what is expected of all of us.

Of course some are going to ask: "Isn't that scary?" Well, probably the Magna Carta was scary at one time but we have evolved beyond that.

Democracy was scary at one time. Giving the right to vote to those who did not have a right to vote previously might have been scary to some at one time, giving the right to vote to people who did not own property for instance, and so on.

Maybe all those things were scary to whomever at some point but our system has evolved, our system has changed, and we have now the institutions that we all know so well. One of the things that we now need in this constitutional debate is a referendum.

It was the Statute of Westminster of 1931 that gave this country its independence. It was on that day that we started to debate in Canada how to repatriate and amend the Canadian Constitution. It took 51 years in the great Canadian compromise before we could repatriate the Constitution. Unfortunately, even though all federal political parties at the time in 1982 were in favour of it, even though 74 Quebec federal MPs were in favour of the repatriation of the Constitution, because there was a separatist government in that province at the time the Constitution was not ratified by one province and therefore a certain political legitimacy to the whole process has been questioned since.

[*Translation*]

Today we have an opportunity to equip ourselves with a tool so that Canadians can express their opinion on the constitutional issue. The tool, of course, is a referendum.

• (1540)

As most hon. members already know, I was born in Quebec and spent much of my life in another province. I am a francophone in a heavily English speaking province. That is why it is important to remember that a referendum must not only express the will of the majority but also the will of the regions of our country, so as to avoid what some might call the tyranny of the majority.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition, in his wisdom, as well as the hon. member for Papineau and all my colleagues, have asked the government to make the voice of each region count in the referendum. In other words, my colleagues in the Liberal Party and I are in favour of the double majority principle; this means that for the Constitution to pass, it must receive a majority of at least 51 per cent throughout Canada. In addition, a proposed Constitution must have a majority in each of the major regions of Canada, the four regions designated in the British North America Act of 1867 and after. Some may say that there should be five regions instead of four, and so on. We could debate that at some point. At the present time, four regions are recognized. Let us hope that the constitutional agreement which I hope we will have soon between the federal government and all the provincial governments will not only be a unanimous agreement among them but will later receive majority approval in all provinces. There would be no need to ask whether there were a majority in all regions if we already had a majority in all provinces. But still we should have a guarantee of at least a regional majority. In any case, I would hope for more. Once we have that majority in all parts of the country, the various federal and provincial legislatures could pass the Constitution Act. I am sure that we could then put the whole constitutional issue behind us and concentrate as Canadians on making our country prosperous and improving the welfare of Canadians who gave us the honour and the privilege of asking us to represent them in this illustrious assembly.

[*English*]

Therefore, what I and my colleagues would like are a number of amendments to this bill in order to ensure such things as a majority for regions, to ensure that the question that will be posed later would be an exact referendum question, such that it is the appropriate one, to ensure that there is a limit on expenditures and, of course, to make the referendum compulsory upon an agreement occurring.

Of course, it is not necessary to have a referendum if there is no agreement among the first ministers. There will not be a question to put, but what I personally want and I am sure all of my colleagues want is an agreement between the first ministers. We want assurance that that agreement would go to a referendum, not a referendum if necessary but not necessarily a referendum. That is not acceptable in 1992.

We need more than that. We need assurances. Canadians really expect us to give them those kinds of assurances.

[*Translation*]

I took a survey of my riding last year. I even tabled a copy of the survey I had taken of the people of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell in this House when we had the big constitutional debate. Some 500 people in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell took part. I shared the survey results with all hon. members. I even wrote a letter to all members of the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee, which dealt with the whole issue. I did that so hon. members and this House would have not only the opinions of committee members and of interest groups that appeared before the parliamentary committee but of the people of my riding or in any case a sampling of my constituents. I must tell you that our people in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell really participated and I want to congratulate them on that.

In conclusion, I would express the wish in this House today that all hon. members will vote for this bill on second reading and I would also hope that the government will be flexible and take account of the constructive amendments from the Official Opposition in this House. I hope that we will then be able to support this bill on final reading. But what I want more is to have a referendum passed by all Canadians so that we can finally unite our country.

[*English*]

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate as, indeed, other hon. members have. I want to raise several matters that perhaps have not been raised sufficiently in the context of what I think is a very important augmentation to our democratic system.

The very fact that Canada has not relied over its 125-year history on the use of plebiscites and referenda must tell us something. In fact, even though we know that back in the 1970s Mr. Trudeau's government introduced legislation that would have allowed for a referendum, it did not in fact get approved.

Private members, including our own member for Toronto—Lakeshore, have proposed similar legislation and, of course, it was promised as one of the items in the Speech from the Throne a year ago. All of this indicates that we are on the edge of something that is in effect a significant departure from our normal traditions in this country, certainly nationally and even provincially.

While there have been instances over the last 125 years of plebiscites and referenda, they have not been used with any consistency. Anybody who has lived in other countries like Switzerland will know that referenda and plebiscites become almost a way of life when individual cantons on weekends will be invited to vote on just about every question from whether there is going be a park installed, the garbage will be picked up or anything else that might affect some kind of local condition.

However, that has not been a part of our political tradition. In fact I would have to say speaking in this House this afternoon that if I had been asked at any time prior to the last several years whether I thought referenda and plebiscites made any kind of sense for our democratic system, I would have said categorically "no". I do not know whether this is evidence of either old age or the willingness to change one's mind, but I have now become convinced that answer is no longer sufficient or acceptable. I am convinced for several reasons.

First, I want to say that as a member of two of the committees that have dealt with the Constitution in the last few years, the Charest committee several years ago and more recently Beaudoin—Edwards, there has been one message that has been there from start to finish and that is that on matters with respect to the Constitution of this country, it is no longer sufficient that heads of government or elected representatives by themselves make fundamental decisions about the nature of our Constitution.

I think we should acknowledge the fact that this is a significant departure from a previous era. In fact, I can remember no time during my time here as a member since the mid-1960s when there was any great public outcry or concern to be consulted.

First Ministers Conferences, conferences on the Constitution actually from the 1930s were held with frequency and abandon but never was there a clear-cut call for a ratification by some kind of public means.

However, since the Meech decision in 1987, the underlying message of the body politic in this country is: "We want to be consulted. We want to have some final say". Why is that? I think the reasons really flow from the events of the early 1980s. I believe that something fundamental happened to Canada when we patriated our Constitution and accepted a charter of rights.

For the first time in our history for more than 100 years, we said that this Constitution of ours, this charter of ours now belonged to Canadians, not to parliamentarians, not to heads of government, not to provincial premiers, parties and municipalities, but to Canadians.

• (1550)

Therefore, the underlying weakness if I can put it this way, of pretty well all the constitutional agreements that have gone on since then was the belief that governments by themselves could then make significant decisions. Too much criticism has focused in some ways on the substance of what went wrong with Meech and too little on the process.

The lesson we have learned is that Canadians must and will be consulted. I say frankly that I am not really too concerned as to whether or not we find such unanimity in the country in the next month, that there will be no need for a referendum. That is because I believe in the final analysis, and this will be the happiest of stories, that if there is an agreement by first ministers, heads of territorial governments and aboriginal leaders on a constitutional package, it may still be important and significant that Canadians from coast to coast to coast say Amen to that package.

What I am concerned about is that we provide the process for Canadians to participate in an understandable, fair and reasonable fashion. That is not going to be an easy exercise.

I want to caution members on all sides that we tried to establish or design so restrictive a piece of referendum machinery that it fundamentally will fail even before it gets used. I do not even, at this stage, feel very happy with the word referendum. It smacks too much of some kind of absolute, binding decision coming from the body politic.

I think the first time out we should back off a little bit and think of it more as a plebiscite, more as a means to do something with Canadians that will allow them to take greater ownership both for the present constitutional package and indeed for the whole ongoing process.

I am not one of those who believe that we are going to resolve all of these constitutional issues this week, this month or this year. Nobody should inflate the expectations to that point.

There are several critical aspects that must be resolved having to do with finally letting Quebecers feel a full part of this Constitution, resolving some of the regional tensions particularly with respect to institutions in the Senate for our friends in western and eastern Canada, and ultimately providing real justice for the aboriginal people.

How all of that gets defined in a package will be important. But let us not put a strait-jacket on the process because we are doing something, in my view, that has not been done before. In that instance, we have to maintain some kind of flexibility and freedom in the final legislation that is being devised.

I welcome its introduction here. I welcome the support from members on all sides. I hope we can keep that sense of flexibility and freedom to achieve what is our ultimate purpose. That purpose is to allow Canadians to come to some point of real consensus this year, in 1992, about our Constitution and about our country.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up where my friend who holds the neighbouring riding of Rosedale left off.

I too agree that this is a whole new journey for each and everyone of us. We would have to say that there is one exception here. That is the member of Parliament for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. He should feel very proud today of the fact that he has worked from the very beginning to develop a package which would ultimately end up as a piece of national legislation. It is so rare that a sole member of Parliament has the capacity and the skill to do that. He deserves a lot of credit.

I also have to remind the House that my leader a year ago brought up with force this idea of getting into a plebiscite discussion or referendum debate. I share the view of my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who said: "I wish we had a little bit more time than three or four days to iron this thing out".

I am going to approach this from a totally different point of view in my community.

Even though this is called an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, I am going to title the exercise in my community the "Campaign for Canada".

Really what this legislation is all about is making sure that ultimately, at the end of this exercise this nation stays whole, that we are able to somehow crush the separatist, divisive forces that exist, not just in the province of Quebec, there are some of those forces that exist in other regions.

It is our responsibility as national members of Parliament to make sure that the next 90 days of our lives are ones where all of us, no matter what political stripe, are campaigning for Canada.

In my riding I will make sure that this legislation is handed around for everyone to read it. We will understand what it is all about.

I would like to make a couple of recommendations to the Chief Electoral Officer. One is in the process of setting up for this plebiscite that he make sure he has the resources to get everyone enumerated. I am sure the member for Rosedale would share this point of view. In my riding in downtown Toronto close to one-third—maybe that is a little high—but well over 25 per cent of Canadian citizens were not enumerated in the last election. That kind of thing cannot happen.

There is an opportunity for us here. There is not a partisan contest going on. We must make sure that every Canadian who is eligible to participate in this plebiscite is properly enumerated. I would counsel the Chief Electoral Officer to please make sure that he has the necessary resources to do that.

Of course, I support the amendments that my party is promoting having to do with making sure that we have a guideline on spending limits. We do not want another situation like the last election where an organization such as the Business Council on National Issues went out as a third-party advertiser and literally bought full-page ads promoting its point of view on the free trade agreement.

If it had not been for my leader's debating skills at that time, the right hon. John Turner, I am sure that I probably would not even be standing here. Those third-party advertisements in print and in radio especially were very forceful and put a lot of confusion into the marketplace.

Of course, the other thing has to do with the double majority. We must make sure that we are sensitive to every region in this country.

We in the Liberal Party have a very strong view that we have a double majority. There is no possibility of one particular region of the country imposing its will, or three or four regions ganging up and imposing their will on another region.

I want to go back to the exercise. In my particular riding even though we have limited resources—we are not the government—I have rented a tour bus for the next 60 days. It is the kind of tour bus seen outside here when students come to visit Parliament Hill. It is not a new one; it is old. It cost us about $3,000 for two months. We painted on the side of it "Campaign for Canada".

We also put on it "Mobile Riding Office". In the baggage or luggage compartment we have put our Government of Canada material. It is information and facts about Canada, about our regions, about various services and programs that the Government of Canada provides for citizens.

What we aim to do during this referendum period is to go around to every part of our community. We will go right to the seniors' homes and park there for a day. Then each and every one of the senior citizens in that home can have any questions answered or obtain any updated material on the Government of Canada or facts about this plebiscite.

• (1600)

We will do the same thing with the local collegiates. Sometimes the hours of school do not coincide with our static constituency office, the permanent constituency office, but our mobile office will pull right into the collegiates.

That is the kind of thing constituents want to see right now. They want to see some excitement in this country. Rather than sitting back letting the constituents come to us, we are going to be on the road going to them.

We can put a spirit of campaigning for Canada into this referendum rather than just focusing on the substance, on the *i* dotting and the *t* crossing.

Going back to the comments of my friend from Rosedale, consider the process of getting everyone involved. Everyone then feels a part of it. They feel that they have been brought up to date on all the aspects of the proposals and thoughts that various groups have in terms of amending our Constitution or things that we should be doing to galvanize the will of this country.

That will be the process the committee in our riding will use. We will have the "Campaign for Canada" bus and we will have it operating seven days a week. As time goes on, if it has enough appeal, we may even attract or influence other colleagues to do the same thing if it works well for us. We have to get Canadians excited again. We have to get Canadians feeling good.

If there is one thing that I feel positive about in terms of this legislation, it is that this is not going to be a situation where the Conservative operation is running with a particular point of view and the Liberal operation with another.

There is one campaign once this enabling legislation is put through. It is a campaign for Canada. It is a campaign to blow out of this place anyone who wants to divide, split, or harm the economic fabric, the social fabric of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this referendum legislation. I hope this can be an experience where we galvanize as one force and have a profound effect on the spirit of all Canadians.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise and speak this afternoon on this referendum legislation.

Like the rest of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, I agree with the concept of consulting with the people. Therefore, we agree with the concept of a referendum in principle, if the concept of a referendum is to consult with the people, to hear their ideas, but also to consult with them so they may have the opportunity to influence the decision-making of their government. It is a method of ensuring that they are heard and heard clearly where they stand on constitutional issues.

The constitutional debates in this country in the last three years particularly have been such that they have driven people apart instead of pulling them together. They have created distrust in their governments and in their politicians instead of giving them more confidence that there is leadership. I am hoping that the concept of a referendum can be used in a manner that not only enhances the feeling for Canada but the feeling that Canadians have a stake and a say in their country.

Prior to being elected I was involved in senior management in a number of organizations. Often we had to make decisions that affected employees. We could go through a consultation process with the employees, but we found out very quickly that we had to be clear with them as to what was the process: were we there to hear their ideas but still make the decision, were we there to receive their direction and incorporate it into our decision, or were we there simply to try to convince them of our position? If we were not open and honest with our employees, the consultation process could backfire. It could do more harm than good, and we could end up with employees who were angry, disgruntled and felt that they had been manipulated.

There is great danger in this referendum bill that that is what will happen with the Canadian public. If the referendum goes forward and Canadians feel that it has not been fair, that it has not been open, that it has not been an honest process on which they were consulted or on which they were allowed to make a decision, they are going to be disillusioned and angry.

I am concerned that this referendum process has had a very rocky start when one judges it against the concept of fairness, honesty and openness. We have had a last minute introduction in the House and now an insistence by the government that it be pushed through without proper opportunity to debate or to take a look at it. It is only reluctantly that it has even agreed to allow it to go to committee next week.

We have had the government withholding legal opinions that it says is the basis for its spending decisions. There is no openness or a sharing of trying to involve all members of the House.

The House leader stood this afternoon to try to make sure he was not backed into a corner where the committee would be televised. Those are the various things that make Canadians wonder whether this referendum is in fact a method of true consultation or if it is just another attempt by this government and a cynical Prime Minister to manipulate the public.

There are three or four specific points about which my colleagues in the NDP have made motions and that must be changed in this legislation if it is to be viewed by the Canadian public as being an open, fair and honest process.

There must be spending limits on the campaign. Average Canadians will not accept the fact that their voice will not be equal to the voice of the wealthy and the powerful. They will not accept the fact that because they do not have hundreds and thousands of dollars to spend they are not equal to the wealthy, to the multinational corporations, to big business and big organizations. Therefore there must be spending limits.

• (1610)

The average Canadian wants to know this referendum is not going to be bought but it is going to be honestly debated on an equal footing.

There must be an interpretation of the results of the referendum that every Canadian knows is fair and honest. They must know that before they start participating. They must understand if we in western Canada vote yes it has some significance. We not going to be simply ignored by the Prime Minister. Those in Atlantic Canada have the same commitment as do those in central Canada and Quebec. All Canadians in every region must support this interpretation.

There must a feeling of fairness and openness in the drafting of the question. That is why we are insisting on an all–party committee that jointly drafts the question. If Canadians feel this is another one of the manipulations of the Prime Minister and if he puts a question they do not believe is a fair, open and honest question, the backlash against this government and against Canada could do irreparable harm. In fact, it could destroy Canada at the very opportunity when we have a chance to unite the country.

Dealing with the whole question of the campaign, it must be viewed by Canadians as fair. We should take the opportunity to incorporate some of the proposals made by the electoral reform commission and properly define electoral expenses so that people cannot do polling that is not considered an expense, so that people cannot use volunteers, slick advertisers and marketing people and say they are not an election expense, so that there is a proper enumeration, particularly in my riding of Surrey North which is the fastest growing riding in Canada with 10,000 additional households. People must be assured that it is fair.

In closing let me say that we support the idea of a referendum. Unless it is a fair, honest and open referendum it is going to destroy Canada rather than unite Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that I could not give the hon. member more time. That is what happens in this place when you are having fun.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, I am telling you nothing new when I say that Canadians and Quebecers no longer have any confidence in this government. Because they no longer believe in this government, they will not play this phony game that is being proposed to them to solve the constitutional problem.

I recall that two years ago that I no longer believed in this government. I no longer had any confidence in the ability of this government to act honestly, openly and credibly and I gladly and proudly quit the Conservative caucus.

I left it because, as I told you then, this government had lied to the people since 1984 by saying, for example, that it would reduce the deficit to zero, when in fact it doubled it and that it would solve the constitutional problem in a way that Quebec could come back with honour and enthusiasm. Obviously that was false. It broke that commitment in May or June 1990, although it had said that it would make a very big effort, not just any effort, a very great effort to make all our institutions more democratic. I honestly took it at its word. I believed that the government was telling the truth.

In August 1988, just before the election campaign, the Prime Minister said: that he supported the principle of popular financing for political parties. He added: "The example of Quebec, where citizens finance political parties, is good for democracy and it is the way it should be." Four days before the election, on November 17, 1988, the big headline of the day on the front page of *La Presse* was: Mulroney promises popular financing of political parties. He said: "It is unthinkable to finance an election," and the same goes for a referendum, "with big corporations and unions to the detriment of ordinary citizens, because it unbalances the whole process". The promises he made from 1984 to 1988 got him 63 seats from Quebec in the 1988 election, including my seat in Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead.

I call that electoral manipulation, actual election fraud and dishonest. Today they are trying to go even further than that by holding a phoney referendum based on a phoney bill. The process that has been going on here for three days is a monumental farce. They want to silence all hon. members by having less than 10 hours of debate on something as important as a referendum on the future of Canada and Quebec.

That is unacceptable. This lack of will, fair play and honesty towards all the citizens of Canada and Quebec is of course the reason why Canadians no longer trust this government today. Quebecers no longer believe in it. Less than 15 per cent of the people today believe this government because it lies to them every day. It is a government that says absolutely anything.

Nevertheless, I remind you that just in terms of the democratic process, the Prime Minister, as I told you, promised popular financing on November 15, 1988. A general convention of more than 1,000 Conservative Party members voted unanimously in favour of it on March 25, 1988. The by-election won by the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean in June 1988 was another obvious demonstration of the popular financing that Prime Minister Mulroney still approved of throughout the 1988 election campaign.

At the first proposed public consultation since the 1988 general election, a referendum, how can the government suggest that companies will be able to form as many committees as they want and give as much money as they want and, even worse, that some funds will never be accounted for, that there will be no disclosure and that none of the fundamental rules of the electoral process recognized in all civilized, democratic countries will apply? How could we have reached such a point in Canada today?

Are we so afraid of talking about the real issues? The real issue today is the constitutional problem. The real issue is the future of Quebec, because Quebec wants to be sovereign. Is Canada prepared to use any completely undemocratic means to try to come up with something else and think that Canadians and Quebecers will go along with it? It is utterly impossible! It is unthinkable.

Personally I am not against a referendum bill. It would be normal for a government to have that kind of tool, to follow very well established democratic rules that correspond pretty closely to those that apply in an election. But holding a referendum only on the Constitution is a different story. Passing special legislation to hold a referendum on the Constitution is a lie and a joke. That basically is what offends me.

If the government had tabled a referendum-bill, based on democratic principles, that could be applied to the Constitution or other qestions, eventually, like the legislation we have in Quebec, with some nice, clear-cut rules, an umbrella committee for the yes side, and another one for the no side, a ceiling on contributions, no union or corporate contributions, complete disclosure of all donors and a number of other democratic measures, of course I would have supported it. I think, however, that Quebecers should realize what this government is trying to do.

By the way, I see only one Quebec member of the Progressive Conservative Party in the House right now, one out of 54 or 55. I can tell that particular member that there are no —

• (1620)

Mr. Weiner: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think it is entirely uncalled for to mention the presence or absence of members of this House. There is nothing wrong, either way. However the hon. member just said there was only one Quebec member in the House, but I also happen to be a member from Quebec.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has been around here for a long time and he realizes that he should not be saying who is in the House and who is not in the House. There are television cameras outside. There are committees meeting. I will recognize the hon. member for Mégantic-Compton—Stanstead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: After the next election we will not have to count to see how many Conservative members are left in the House. There will not be any left, and that will take care of that. I suppose it would be the same, whether they come from Quebec or Alberta. I am just joking. I do not know that much about Alberta. In any case, we will take care of Quebec.

The important thing today is to talk about why Quebec refused to join the rest of Canada to deal with the constitutional question. We have to remember what happened in 1981 when tactics were used that led to some very serious problems, and then from 1987 to 1990, we had Meech Lake, which fell through. We should remember that the biggest problem was the general attitude in English Canada.

Everything started in the fall of 1989 with New Brunswick. Mr. MacKenna started it. Remember Sault St. Marie and how people trampled the Quebec flag. Remember Clyde Wells, Filmon and Carstairs. And above all, remember Mulroney's attitude in this debate. Basically, that is what we have to deal with. We don't need a referendum on the Constitution.

Quebec asked for an agreement that would allow it to live like the society it is. Let us see some proposals, not just another strategy. The Mulroney government promised to table offers that would be satisfactory to Quebec. It should stop beating around the bush and table those offers. It should stop this endless series of committees. Do you not think we are fed up, Mr. Speaker? We had Charest, and after that Beaudoin–Edwards, Dobbie–Castonguay and then Beaudoin–Dobbie. We had government committees, we had the Spicer commission, we had the PC caucus from Quebec which made two or three futile attempts. We had constitutional conferences. We had ministers conferences. We had first ministers conferences. And thousands of officials wasting their time discussing the Constitution, at our expense. And the result was zilch. Today they want us to believe that a Canadian referendum with patently antidemocratic rules will make the difference.

We must realize that we cannot deal with the real problems today because we are still stuck with the constitutional question. If we had resolved the constitutional question two years ago, we would have had all this time to talk about the recession, the decline in our standard of living, the rising deficit, taxes, unemployment, school dropouts, and the monumental failure of this government to run the country. Instead of that two years after —

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has now expired.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, this debate is a serious one. I am sorry that the time is so limited and I am sorry that the government has reverted to its usual technique of using closure in debate on a matter as important as this.

The government was urged by the Official Opposition to bring this bill in months and months and months ago. This has been a policy of this party for some time. The government made a promise, through the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, to introduce this bill months and months and months ago. Instead, it dilly-dallied and shilly-shallied and gave a lot of mumbo-jumbo, broke its promise to the opposition and held it up. Now it brings it in. Last Friday it was introduced and it is screaming and ranting that if we do not pass it right away we are going to somehow damage the fabric of this country. It is saying that we have to pass this bill, flawed as it is, and get on with it.

I take strong exception to this disgraceful approach of the government to the House. The debate can go on in a Tory caucus and once it is settled there the rest of us are supposed to bow down and worship and just accept whatever the government passes out. I will not do so.

I object to the government's dealings in this matter. It is wrong.

I want to look at what the government House leader said the other day in his speech and it was clearly wrong. He said: "The Canada Elections Act legislation, which enjoys the great respect and confidence of Canadians throughout the country, would provide the basic framework under which any referendum would be held. The Chief Electoral Officer would have the same responsibility for the conduct of a referendum as he has for the conduct of a general election". In other words, the government House leader was suggesting that somehow this bill and the Canada Elections Act are one and the same. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let us look at the changes the government made in the Canada Elections Act to determine the bona fides of what the government House leader was saying because somehow he was suggesting that he was being above-board and honest with Canadians in his dealings on this bill. I suggest exactly the opposite is so. What he did was

say that this is just like the Canada Elections Act when it is not.

Let us look at the insidious changes that are proposed. First of all, the method of appointment of enumerators for the enumeration of the people under the Canada Elections Act is that each of the parties that came first and second in the previous campaign appoints one enumerator in all urban polls so that there are representatives of both parties going door to door to select the names of the persons to go on the electors' list.

This bill changes it for the referendum. What does it change it to? It changes it to the appointment of the enumerators by the returning office. Who appointed all the returning officers? Almost every position in Canada has been filled by a Conservative appointee. Everyone knows that Tory hacks have been given the job. I am not saying that is wrong. I am just saying that is the fact. Those people are all being asked now to appoint all the enumerators, not the usual pattern of one from each party. That is what is going on.

Then, get this. If that is not pernicious enough, the list that is drawn up for this referendum campaign will then be used in the general election by section 38 of the bill. In other words, there will not be an enumeration during the general election. The enumeration done by a pile of Tories during the referendum campaign would be used in the general election.

I admit that the government House leader has recanted from this nonsense and has agreed that he will make some changes in the bill to reflect this fact. I am pleased to hear it because it is an absolute scandal. Never before, in years and years of electoral history in this country, have we had an enumeration conducted by one party. It has always been done by two and that is the way it should be done in this case.

The government House leader had the gall to stand in the House and say that somehow this bill was fair and equitable and it is not. It is manifestly unfair.

That is not the only thing. The current Canada Elections Act provides that—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am a little confused. The hon. member seems to be speaking against the bill, but his leader said he would support it. I would like to know whether he intends to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry, but that is not a point of order.

Mr. Milliken: I hope that is not taken off my speaking time.

[*English*]

As I was saying, under the current Canada Elections Act, deputy returning officers are appointed by the returning officer. The DRO then appoints poll clerks. For some time we have been trying to get a change in this and we are on the verge of getting one through the committee that is working on electoral reform so that there are representatives of both parties appointed to work the polls to make sure that it is done fairly.

• (1630)

The government members appear to co-operate on this. Was it in this bill to make that change? No, it was not. The returning officer will make the appointments as has been done under the current Canada Elections Act. If this bill was fair and above board, why was that change not included in the bill?

Mr. Mills: It was a mistake.

Mr. Milliken: Under the terms of this bill, the Chief Electoral Officer is given power to make regulations to give effect to the bill and to make necessary adjustments with the Canada Elections Act. Listen to what the government House leader had to say when he introduced this. He said the Chief Electoral Officer:

> would be responsible for making the regulations under the Referendum Act to adapt the Canada Elections Act process to a referendum just as he has the responsibility for making the regulations to adapt the Canada Elections Act to a general election.

He has no such power to make regulations. That statement was patently false. There is absolutely no power in the Chief Electoral Officer to make any regulations under the Canada Elections Act for any

purpose. Here the government House leader, who supposedly knows about these matters, made this outrageously wrong statement in his introductory remarks.

Here we have unprecedented powers being given to an officer of Parliament who will be left to run a referendum campaign receiving advice from the minister to whom he has to account. He has to account to someone for some purposes to a minister. Who will tell him how to run the election? No doubt this minister will. He is well-known to be arrogant and a bully. He will bully the Chief Electoral Officer. This should not happen. This power should not be granted without some checks and balances and the proper check is to have the regulations brought to this House.

What happens? The bill says you do not have to bring them for scrutiny under the regulations act. Take a look at the bill. I urge hon. members to read this bill. That needs to be adjusted.

The government commissioned a report on elections in this country that cost some $18 million. The report dealt with issues such as who has the right to vote in elections. There are several outstanding charter claims on this very issue that have been litigated in the courts and that are currently outstanding.

One of them is the right of inmates and prisoners to vote. That issue is still unresolved. It is waiting to go to the Supreme Court of Canada. Two high courts of appeal decisions have given inmates the right to vote. You would have thought that in dealing with legislation in a referendum, the government would have brought these forward and said we have to deal with these now because all these people currently have a right to vote. The act is completely silent on this issue.

Where is the leadership? Where is the thought? After spending $18 million you would think it could come up with some ideas, put them in the bill and try to deal with it. We have a committee working on it but the evidence we now have is that committee cannot get anywhere because the Chief Electoral Officer could not implement changes in the Canada Elections Act while he is having to deal with the referendum.

It has to be dealt with in this bill. The government must have known that when it introduced the bill last Friday and it failed to deal with the issues.

These are serious omissions. This bill has been introduced by a government that does not know what it is doing. We always have said that and it is made manifest by the very flawed nature of this piece of legislation. While we may end up supporting the thing because it has to be done, we all recognize that, the fact is we are going to be pressing for some very significant changes in committee.

I hope that hon. members on the other side will support the very sensible changes. I see a member who will support it. I am sure the minister of homelessness will do his best to do so as well.

I urge him in cabinet to get after his colleagues and say: "Fix this bill. Do not introduce such trash in the House. Get it right the first time so that it is something close to what we as Canadian legislators can expect from a government which is expected to show leadership and which has had years and years to draft this bill".

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the hon. member for Ottawa Centre—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 Edmonton Southeast—Canada Assistance Plan; the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex—Beef industry; the hon. member for Victoria—National Defence; and the hon. member for Algoma—Denison Mines.

[*English*]

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House to discuss the bill that deals with the question of the referendum.

It was our leader, who in last years called on the government to introduce legislation that would deal with the question of referenda. At that time, he promised the government to go full out, he as well as every member of his caucus, in order to defend the interests of Canada and the unity of Canada.

At that time, the Leader of the Opposition called on the government to move on this issue on a non-partisan basis. He called on the government at the time to take the approach of consultation with the opposition.

Unfortunately, while the government dragged its feet before it introduced the bill that would deal with the question of referenda, it did not really go through the proper consultations, as my colleague from Kingston and the Islands has raised so eloquently, about the different flaws that existed in the legislation. If the government had taken the time to do the consultation with the opposition, I am sure many of those issues would have been resolved prior to the introduction of the bill.

Having said that, I will be supporting the bill, as my colleague from Kingston and the Islands indicated, with reluctance. Simply put, it is because no one wants to be put in a corner and blackmailed that if you do not support the legislation you are working against the unity of Canada.

In our caucus and in our party we support the idea as well as the principle of consultation with Canadians. Our leader has in the past promoted, still is and will always be promoting the question and the issue of consultation with Canadians.

In my riding I have many distinguished constituents who have been working tirelessly on this question of the Constitution and the question of consultation with Canadians. In particular, I would like to mention one of the outstanding leaders in the community, Gail Stewart, and her group of constituents who lately produced a newsletter called "O Canada: Dare to Dream, Shaping Our Future Together".

This organization is a non-partisan, apolitical organization with one purpose in mind and that is to save and preserve Canada as we know it today. Here is what it has written in its latest edition, March 25, 1992, volume 1, No. 3:

> It's not too late to change the debate. It's difficult to think clearly about the constitutional debate. There are so many proposed amendments, so little time to consider them, so much going on behind closed doors, so much at stake.
>
> Also, the debate is taking place in a global setting where ecological and environmental problems threaten our future. These realities must surely bear on the shaping of a constitution, yet they have been overlooked.
>
> The process is changing—let's take the next step: instead of negotiating, why not work together?

I want to congratulate my colleague from Kingston and the Islands who specifically was stressing the question of working together and the point of working together with all sides of this House, with those who believe in a United Canada, those who believe in a fair Canada.

I want to spend a few minutes putting my own feelings on this issue. It is a feeling which is echoed so eloquently by my constituents in their latest bulletin. We have to start looking out to see our position on the international scene, rather than focusing on issues that are local. We have to focus on issues that unite us, rather than focusing on the issues that divide us.

There is nothing wrong with having a constitutional debate, a constitutional discussion. It is extremely important for any nation to have those kinds of debates providing at the end we come out of those debates united, as one force and as one unit.

While this year we will be celebrating Canada's 125th birthday, my constituents and I echo the sentiment that we have to put more emphasis on this issue and as well we have to recognize the fact that Canada did not start only 125 years ago. Canada started over 10,000 years ago with our native Canadians.

• (1640)

Those elements which were echoed so eloquently by many Canadians across the land must be recognized not only in our Constitution but as well in our daily lives.

We have to focus on a common history in order to talk about a common future. Your Honour probably knows that if you study history in British Columbia nowadays, you might not be reading the same material as a student who is studying in Nova Scotia, in Newfoundland, in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada. We do not have as yet a common basis so that every Canadian will learn the same things when it comes to the history of this country.

Citizenship—and I see the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism here—is not taught as widely as it should taught be in Canada. We are not putting enough emphasis on teaching Canadians about what it is to be Canadian. The whole debate on division of powers has to be changed so that we can talk more about the division of responsibilities. When we get to the point where we start talking about responsibilities rather than talking about powers, the debate and the tone of the debate will change tremendously.

While it is extremely important to build on the good things we have, we have to look ahead and see our place in the world. If we look at Canada as it is right now and at the latest survey of the United Nations, we find that Canada has been identified as the number one country in the world in which to live and raise a family.

There is nothing wrong with that. It is something that every single Canadian in every part of our country has to be proud of. It is my wish that one day every Canadian will have the chance not only to visit every part of Canada and to see how magnificent this land is, but also to go abroad for one week or for one day, as a matter of fact, and I would challenge them to tell me that there is any place, anywhere in any part of the world, they could identify as home other than Canada.

I know this because I have travelled from one country to the next and I know that we live in the best country in the world in which to raise a family. I say it and I knew it even before the United Nations came up with their survey because I like many other Canadians immigrated to this land, to this country, because we knew then, we know now and we will always know that the opportunities available to us in Canada would never be available to anyone anywhere else in the world.

For example, when I came to this land I was illiterate—I did not speak French or English—and I was able to build a future. I was able to bring my family and was able to build a future. I look around me and I ask: Where else in the world would I as an immigrant be given the same opportunities I have been given in Canada? Nowhere. I am sure my colleagues from Kingston and the Islands, Calgary and Edmonton would agree with me that this is a land of opportunity.

Why we want to turn around and screw it up, why we want to turn around and sell out the best nation on earth, is beyond me.

I can only speak for my constituents on this issue, but I am not interested in seeing money being distributed to anybody who has anything but the interests of a united, fair and equitable Canada at heart.

I will be supporting the bill with reluctance because there are many technical components in it that have to be addressed. It is my hope that with the expertise of many members of our caucus, in particular the member for Kingston and the Islands, the House leader will sit down with the member as well as members from the other political parties to iron out those difficulties so we can come up with something that everybody will be proud of.

On a final note, the government has to keep in mind one thing. This is an issue on which every member of this House who believes in Canada has to work collectively on. It must remain a non-partisan issue in our minds. We cannot play partisan politics on this issue. Otherwise we will lose a lot.

The Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the New Democratic Party and the Prime Minister have to share the same platform so that they can promote Canada, the unity of Canada. As well, every member of this House has to be given the opportunity to do the same. We must because it is out duty and responsibility to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 4.45 o'clock p.m., pursuant to 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 every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

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. Paproski): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

Government Orders

(Division No. 145)

YEAS

Members

Angus
Brewin
Duceppe
Gérin
Karpoff
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
McLaughlin
Murphy
Parker
Riis
Samson
Taylor
Venne
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—29

Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
de Jong
Fulton
Heap
Kristiansen
Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Mitchell
Nystrom
Plamondon
Rodriguez
Stupich
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Waddell

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Andre
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Bernier
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bourgault
Browes
Callbeck
Catterall
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Clifford
Comuzzi
Corbeil
Côté
Crawford
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dionne
Domm
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Fontaine
Fretz
Gauthier
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Holtmann
Horning
Hughes
James
Joncas
Jourdenais
Kempling
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Larrivée
Lee
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Maheu
Marin
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Mazankowski

Anderson
Assad
Bélair
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Boudria
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Danis
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dingwall
Dobbie
Dorin
Edwards
Ferguson
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gibeau
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday
Harvard
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hudon
Jacques
Johnson
Jordan
Kaplan
Keyes
Langlois
Layton
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacLellan
Marchi
Marleau
Masse
McDermid

McGuire
McLean
Milliken
Mitges
Moore
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Parent
Phinney
Porter
Prud'homme
Reimer
Richardson
Rompkey
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vien
Wenman
Wilbee
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—157

McKnight
Mifflin
Mills
Monteith
Nicholson
Oberle
Pagtakhan
Peterson
Plourde
Proud
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Simmons
Soetens
Stewart
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vanclief
Weiner
White
Winegard

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Members

nil/aucun

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[*Translation*]

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.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

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

(Division No. 146)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Andre
Assad
Bélair
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Boudria
Brewin
Browes
Callbeck
Catterall

Anderson
Angus
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Bernier
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick

Champagne (Champlain)	Charest
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Clifford	Cole
Comuzzi	Cooper
Corbeil	Corbett
Côté	Couture
Crawford	Danis
Darling	DeBlois
de Cotret	de Jong
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dingwall	Dionne
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Fee
Ferguson	Ferland
Flis	Fontaine
Foster	Fretz
Fulton	Gaffney
Gauthier	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gray (Windsor West)
Greene	Grey (Beaver River)
Guarnieri	Halliday
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Heap	Hicks
Hockin	Holtmann
Horner	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jacques	James
Johnson	Joncas
Jordan	Jourdenais
Kaplan	Karpoff
Kempling	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Kristiansen
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)	Langlois
Laporte	Larrivée
Layton	Lee
Littlechild	Loiselle
Lopez	MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
MacLellan	Marchi
Marin	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Masse
Mazankowski	McDermid
McGuire	McKnight
McLaughlin	McLean
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills	Mitchell
Mitges	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Nowlan	Nystrom
Oberle	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parent	Parker
Peterson	Phinney
Plourde	Porter
Proud	Prud'homme
Reid	Reimer
Ricard	Richardson
Riis	Robitaille
Rodriguez	Rompkey
Roy-Arcelin	Samson
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Simmons
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stewart
Stupich	Tardif
Taylor	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt	Vanclief
Vien	Waddell
Weiner	Wenman
White	Wilbee
Winegard	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—177	

NAYS

Members

Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Duceppe
Gérin	Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Murphy
Plamondon	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne—9	

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Members

nil/aucun

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 5.25 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*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

COMPENSATION FOR ATLANTIC CANADIANS

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should implement immediate compensation to address the plight of those Atlantic Canadians affected by the reduction in northern cod who will have lost their jobs but who are unable to qualify for unemployment insurance.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the motion today to discuss—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. Hon. members, please, we are in private members' hour. The hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception has the floor.

Mr. Mifflin: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As much as I appreciate being recognized and being able to speak, I hate it when I have to get up following a vote because it takes about five minutes for things to settle down.

I hope the impact of what I have to say is important enough that members will pay attention. It is a problem with a human face on it. It is a problem that I consider

my top priority as the member of Parliament for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception and God knows, I have others both as a member representing a constituency and as a federal member with all the other problems we have in this country.

I am very pleased that I am allowed to bring this to the attention of the House. It will point out a number of Canadian families, in this case in Newfoundland, who are, to use an expression, one that is well used and perhaps sometimes not well understood, in dire straits, in desperate conditions, close to having no hope, despair, despondency, lack of respect for themselves, demoralization.

These are harsh words. For the people who I represent here today these are harsh times. It requires some harsh measures.

I do not know what it is I have to do as their link between what they need and what they cannot get. God knows, I have tried enough in this House to get the attention of the ministers responsible. I have written letters, I have presented motions, I have made statements under Standing Order 31, I have asked questions, I have had meetings. I have not been able to achieve what it is I want.

I am at the point where this is a personal wish, a personal thing. It is personal because I consider I am very close to the people who are in need. They live close to where my home town is. Because of that perhaps I know them better on an individual basis than I would if my riding was in another part of Canada.

• (1730)

It is an area that has been affected by an action taken by the government. My motion is, again, to remind the House:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should implement immediate compensation—

That is immediate compensation.

> —to address the plight of those Atlantic Canadians affected by the reduction in northern cod who will have lost their jobs but who are unable to qualify for unemployment insurance.

I am referring to the fishing industry. The federal government is responsible for managing the fishing industry, and those people involved are affected by the actions in this management area by the government. It is my thesis, and I am joined by many in making the conclusion, that therefore the government is responsible for the plight of the people involved and for taking measures to rectify the situation.

I am referring to the plant workers. This morning there were a total of 70 families who were affected. They are on the Bonavista Peninsula. The plant is the FPI plant in Port Union, Newfoundland. The immediate areas affected are Catalina, Bonavista, Melrose, Elliston, Newman's Cove, Amherst Cove, Birchy Cove, Port Rexton, Trinity and about 70 communities.

As you get further from the tip of the peninsula, the communities are affected less. It goes as far as Clarenville, which is 100-odd kilometres away from the plant itself, which is the distribution centre for the area. It is suffering businesswise because of the decision.

The processing plant, because of the northern cod reduction, was shut down on February 21. It is three months since this has happened. I want to go through very briefly the chronology of what has been involved. I will stick to the action that I have been involved in but I know other members, particularly members from Newfoundland and other members from Atlantic Canada, have been equally persistent for their constituents in areas where this has happened to them.

We will hear some of these examples this afternoon. The plant closed on February 21. I understand that it takes time to develop a compensation program. I understand that, but how long does one have to wait for compensation? We are three months into this now. While I asked the first question two days before the plant closed, I did not really expect to have somebody waiting with a compensation package.

The response of the minister of the day, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, ended up by saying: "We are ready to help and do what is possible to alleviate the problem and we will keep on doing this". That gave me some hope.

The day the plant closed, I directed a similar question to the minister of fisheries and asked him about a compensation package. The minister responded: "When we have established exactly what the consequences of this decision are, if there is need for any additional assistance programs it will be forthcoming".

Later in that response, the minister said: "When we know later in the year exactly what the effects are, other programs if necessary will be put into place".

My hopes were still up on February 21. On March 17, having heard nothing from either of the ministers involved, I then went on the offensive again and spoke in this House for four minutes on the necessity, the pressing need for compensation for those involved.

I discussed the life of a plant worker, a fisherman, and an operator. I talked about the kind of salaries that we were looking at and the difficulty they were experiencing then, one month into the lack of compensation. These are people who last year were employed or were covered by unemployment insurance, or were covered by an emergency response program.

This year because the plant closed earlier with very little notice, they had only two or three weeks of work. Through no fault of their own, they could not qualify. As of February 21 they were using their savings, capitalizing on what food they had stored—a roast of moose, some saltfish—and that was one month into the desolate situation that I am describing.

Now, a processing plant operator does not make a lot of money. The average income in my riding is $23,000. That was the latest figure I had. The average in Newfoundland is $32,000 and the average in Canada is $46,000. These workers make anywhere from, depending on their seniority and the kind of bonuses they get, $17,000 to $23,000 a year. If my research serves me correctly, that is pretty close to the poverty level in Canada. So you do not start out with very much. If you have to go on unemployment insurance, if you are covered by unemployment insurance, your income can range from $14,000 a year to $19,000 a year. That still is not a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, as you know.

In this case, at one month—where I left you in my presentation in the House—these people had no compensation, no visible source of income.

The next date I want to bring to your attention is April 27. In the meantime I have met with officials. On March 16 I met with the director general of unemployment insurance, or the regional director in St. John's for employment and immigration, and I discussed this problem with him to see what solutions may be forthcoming, along with other problems of course. On April 27 I found it necessary, because I had no response from the government, to make another statement in the House of Commons in this regard. In the meantime I wrote to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I have yet to receive a reply.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, if you can follow the chronology, on April 27 at about that time, I was in my riding and I visited some of the families and spoke with some of the people involved, and actually went and ate, had meals, with some of the families. I do not think they would be ashamed because of the circumstances which caused me to rise to my feet and talk in public about this for me to tell you that they get up in the morning and they have no jobs to go to. Their breakfast is a cup of coffee, a cup of tea, in some cases maybe a glass of cold water, home made bread made from purchased flour, ingredients that are still within some range or left over from the days when they had work, sometimes without butter, some partridge berry jam that was picked the year before. Their kids go to school, they come home for lunch and it may be bread, maybe butter, maybe a can of beans put on the stove and boiled, shared with the family. The kids go back to school, they come back from school and for supper, maybe there is some meat left over. There may be some more canned food left. This is one day into the second month of this situation that I am trying to put a human face on.

In the second month their pickups are being repossessed, their cars are being repossessed. They are not brand-new cars. They are not big cars. In some cases they are 10, 12 years old, but they still have payments to make because they cannot afford to pay cash for these vehicles.

I am asking the government to put a human face on these families which need compensation because of a management decision, albeit necessary, by the government of the day, which happens to be on that side of the House. On May 8, which was not too long ago, I found it necessary two and a half months into this difficult situation to ask the Minister of Employment and Immigration about this. Although he was not here at the time, I was pleased that he was represented by the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration. I was beginning to take some hope from the sympathetic look and response she started to give, but I lost hope when she said:

• (1740)

> We could, of course, look for a way out in conjunction with the private sector. A variety of programs exist within the department, as we have said time and again, to help workers find new placement and to help companies forced to proceed to massive layoffs carry out studies and assess what the future holds for them.

What good does that do? I spoke to some of the families involved after that intervention and they could not believe their eyes or their ears.

The minister went on to say in response to my supplementary question:

> It is important to sit down with the employer and the worker and figure out precisely what their needs are for the future.

I can tell you what their needs are for the future. I have been telling this House and the government since February 19 what their needs are. Their needs are some money, some income, some subsistence to put bread and butter and something a little more than bread and butter which the average Canadian has become accustomed to, on their table. I do not think that is an unreasonable request. I do not think I am asking for very much. I do not think it is very difficult for the government to find this money. I do not care where it gets it. I know it is strapped for money.

We are talking about $2 million or maybe less. The only recourse for these people other than to have me get up and plead their case, and others who will plead when I sit down, is to apply for social services. I am saying that all Canadians, not just Newfoundlanders, have respect. They do not like to apply for social assistance. When they are strapped, they have no alternative.

Social services pays them $7,200 a year maximum for a family and that is about one-third the average income in my riding, one-quarter the average income in Newfoundland and one seventh the average income in Canada. Most of them have not done that yet, because they have self respect. Some of them have had to do it.

I am hoping that within a couple of days, tomorrow, Friday, the end of this week, there will be some compassion and benevolence. I do not like to use those words. I do not like to beg. I am not used to begging. The people I represent are not used to begging. They have not begged me but they have asked me, implored me. They are desperate and I am close to desperate also. I am not saying this to take credit for the effort but I do not know where else to go.

On May 8, when I finished speaking in this House and got the response to my question, I then wrote to the minister. I said: "This is a serious situation. It needs immediate response". It is now May 21 and I have not even had a phone call. No response. I do not know where to go. If I thought doing a handstand in this House, other than provoking the leader to ask me to behave in a more responsible parliamentary manner, if I thought that would get some action from the government, I would do it. I know you would not agree with that, but when a person is desperate they resort to desperate means. I would bring my guitar and sing a song if I thought that would help.

An hon. member: You can do it.

Mr. Mifflin: The Speaker says I can do it. His background I guess in athletics would probably want him to see me do it.

Having been challenged, I am not sure it is the kind of thing I would want to do anyway.

The point I am making is what can I do to get attention? I am not looking for media attention. I am not looking for attention from anybody. I want action. I want some results. I want somebody from that side of the House to say: "We believe you have a problem. We believe those 70 families on the Bonavista Peninsula have a problem because the government reduced the northern cod quota, because there was not much there to begin with because the foreigners all caught it, because the government has not the political will to do something about it. It needs to take some action".

I do not mean action of the Rio conference at which there are 30,000 people and 75 heads of state and the thing goes on for a week or so. The last time that was tried was down in Dartmouth a week ago with no results. They say you have to go to the countries. The countries say you have to go to the European Community.

We are not going to make too many points with that crowd that way.

Until we see some political will to do something that will cause the northern cod to increase, to have a quota that is reasonable that will allow the plant to open, which is what these people want and is what I want, let us have a bit of compassion.

I know there are members enough for that. I do not name them because I do not operate that way. I have spoken to members on that side of the House. They understand where I am coming from. They would like to do something and I will ask those members to go to their ministers and tell them the situation, how desperate it is, and that a member of Parliament is pleading their case and is looking for compassion, benevolence, help. I will put any name to it and accept it as long as the compensation is there.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand here this afternoon and be able to participate in this debate that has been initiated by my friend from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, the neighbouring constituency to mine in that part of Conception Bay where the ridings come together.

It would be trite for me to say unfortunate, but the particular situation that my friend talks about is exactly that. It is a situation that unfortunately to some extent we are all confronted with one way or the other. Those we are most familiar with have been affected the most by the decisions as he says, albeit necessary, that have had to be taken to properly manage our fisheries so that in the future we have a resource that is of value to all of the families and the communities that he talks of; not only the community of Catalina and those communities in that area, but the communities that exist all through Atlantic Canada, through Quebec and different parts of the country.

He talks about compassion and benevolence. While he seeks compassion and benevolence he would be the first to agree that he is not saying they are lacking. I do not have that many fishermen in my constituency; about 300. I see exactly the same situation that he sees.

The minister of fisheries has about 1,200 fishermen in his constituency. He has seen the fish plant in the town of Trepassey with upward of 800 people close down. He has seen a number of other smaller plants in his constituency close down.

There is not a man I have met in politics, and granted I have been associated with him for well over 17 years in politics, who has more compassion and inclination for benevolence as a personal commitment. It is the way he conducts his life.

• (1750)

As minister of fisheries it has been damn difficult for him. He is someone who we all agree has displayed a commitment to try to make it better within the constraints of the capacities of science and within the constraints of the fiscal capacity of the government.

Just last week the minister met with the fishermen and the union from the south coast in St. John's. Not completely satisfied with the results, he has dispatched his senior fisheries advisor to go to the south coast to personally do an assessment of what is happening. That reflects the type of commitment that the minister of fisheries has in dealing with these things.

He was in Grand Banks two weeks ago and met with the community. I talked to the mayor of Grand Banks 10 days ago. He was delighted with the visit. The minister has been able to save a number of fish plants except the one in his own riding, the one in Trepassey. He and I share responsibility for the city of St. John's. He has worked very hard to try and save that fish plant in St. John's.

How do you approach these things? As members in this House know, the government has taken a multi-faceted approach. We talked about dealing with the overfishing problem. We have had many debates in this House and a number of the members I see here participated with me and with other members in an effort to bring some focus to this issue and that process is ongoing.

We must clearly deal better with our capacity in science and that is something that a considerable amount of resources have been expended on. We are finally involving those people to participate in the resource so that there is a resource there that is predictable, that is definable and that we can better manage. The whole concept of underutilized species product development diversification is another that we have expanded into in which there is much more work going on in small communities in Newfoundland and Labrador to big market development and promotions through Asia and Europe, something that we all benefit from.

What does it matter if we do not have fish? It does not at lot. We must act to make sure that we have fish down the road. There have been a number of communities through Atlantic Canada and into Quebec that have been affected by a lack of fish and the inability to catch fish because limits have been put in place. What happens

to them, as my friend from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception asks? What are they supposed to do?

We all know there has been an investment of almost $600 million to deal with fisheries adjustment in Atlantic Canada. It has taken on a number of combinations and permutations. One of the initiatives that is underway now that I think is particularly important and would be endorsed by all of the members of this House is the task force on incomes and adjustment that is being headed by Richard Cashin, the President of the Newfoundland Fishermen's Food and Allied Workers Union in St. John's. Forty-five million dollars have been set aside for pilot projects in this area.

The approach here is to take this on in two phases. The first phase would be an interim assessment of the resource, the industry and those employed in it. The second phase would be to prepare for the minister and the government a set of recommendations on an adjustment strategy and recommend communities in the region that can and will be helped.

There have been a whole series of short-term measures and emergency responses to particular problems like the one that my friend has spoken about. There have been programs for catch failure. There have been programs designed to respond to ice conditions. There have been very specific programs put in place to provide for training for those people who have been laid off from fish plants.

In my own constituency of St. John's East in the community of Belle Island we have been able to develop a heavy equipment program. That has come from the commitment of the faculty of the community college there and of the community.

The great advantage is that we have been able to solve two or three problems at once. Most of the people who have gone through that program have been plant workers who had been laid off in closed fish plants.

We get the benefit of the heavy equipment program on Belle Isle, the community with a 70 per cent unemployment rate, a community that was abandoned in 1965. Now we are beginning to see some real initiatives there. At the same time, we are training plant workers who have been laid off.

It is the community-based approach that has evolved from the old IAS strategy supported through Community Futures, that has developed as we have committees in place to bring together, not only the training needs and employment opportunities, but the economic diversification opportunities.

For the last three years we have seen and I am directly familiar with emergency response programs. For instance, in the community of Cupids we were finally able to open up a channel and put some cribbing into a small boat basin, a pond as we call it. We have that facility but more important, last year we had a number of people who were able to get employment through that program.

We have seen it in other communities. I use it only as an example of good work and creative responses.

There are people who do not always get taken up. There are safety nets which we hope will deal with these. So many have been taken care of. In times of hardship and difficulty the likes of which many of us have never seen before and have only heard about, the concern that my friend expresses on behalf of his constituents is one that all of us feel.

Frankly, be they fishermen or be they farmers or people laid off in manufacturing industries, in communities that depend on the manufacturing sector, the compassion that he talks about and that he displays is one that many of us have and share. That is why we have evolved the programs that we have. That is why so many of these things have been put into place. That is why the government continues to respond in many different ways to make sure that we have a fishery in the future that can support our communities and our individuals.

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, do I have 10 minutes or are we only going until six o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We just go until six o'clock on Standing Orders. I regret it is only after supply motion that we could take the whole hour.

Mr. Cadieux: Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to an allocation of time for the committee stage of Bill C-8l, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

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 that stage of the bill.

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on this matter on behalf of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Mifflin: Mr. Speaker, you said it ended at six o'clock. We have a couple of minutes left. On a subject of this importance I would have thought that we would have gone right to the wire, even if it ended at six o'clock. I see that with three minutes to go we are into other subjects.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Your colleague has just raised another point of order.

Mr. Samson: Mr. Speaker, I will have to be brief.

In view of the importance of this motion, it is imperative that we look at the reality.

• (1800)

The reality is there are a number of people, a number of families, in dire straits, in dire need. It is not time to talk about training programs, it is not time to talk about anything else. It is time to talk about the need. These people do not qualify for training programs. They do not qualify for unemployment insurance. What they are looking for is some emergency assistance.

The government has seen fit to find emergency funds in other areas of the country for other reasons. It found funds for the gulf war, a very important issue.

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

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, the minister made the point that the parties could not agree on a Standing Order with respect to debate and therefore he is moving this motion under Standing Orders 78(1) and 78(2).

I am told that nobody on behalf of the government consulted with anybody in the Official Opposition, so it seems to stretch credulity to get up and say agreement could not be reached when the minister with a straight face never even bothered to speak to anybody on this.

Mr. Speaker: This is not a debatable motion.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, after that performance it certainly makes all of us over here wonder what kind of people we are dealing with on the government side.

On April 8 I asked the Minister of Finance if he could possibly see his way through to ending the benign indifference with which he has treated the provinces, his fiscal partners in this country. There does not seem to be any such thing as a have province at the moment.

The current recession has affected every single province adversely. Ontario, which was long known as a prosperous economic engine of Canada, has been dealt extremely punishing blows by a combination of high real interest rates and an uncompetitive exchange rate in the Canada–U.S Free Trade Agreement.

In my own province of Alberta about 80,000 people in the oil and gas industry have lost their jobs since 1986, largely because of unprofitable conditions in the industry. About half of the industry work force is now out of the industry.

Those conditions have been exacerbated by Ottawa's obsession with monetary policy, a deflationary direction that has been continued by the current Minister of Finance with the result that 110,000 of our fellow citizens have lost their jobs in March and April alone this year.

The oil and gas industry is the engine of growth in our province, the province which is also the home of the finance minister. Currently there are 432 drilling rigs available in Alberta but only 132 of them are in use, leaving 300 idle. A firm's rigs utilization to break even should be at about 55 per cent and 65 per cent to secure a reasonable rate of return.

Statistics Canada estimates that the oil and gas companies will cut capital spending by 14 per cent this year and $5.7 billion in 1981 to $4.98 billion. The biggest cut will occur in the exploration and development drilling which will fall 17 per cent from 1991 levels to about $1.9 billion.

These are statistics which the government says translate somehow into afterward picture. I can guarantee those people opposite that these facts indicate no such thing. They mean that 46,000 people are unemployed in my city of Edmonton. There are 28 per cent more people living below the poverty line this year than last year.

It means 98,000 food hampers were distributed to men, women and children in Edmonton last year. The Canada Assistance Program is a shared cost fiscal agreement between the federal government and the provinces. In the 1990 federal budget the government decided the so-called have provinces should be limited to a 5 per cent increase annually in their entitlements under CAP until 1992.

The 1991 federal budget extended this unilateral action until 1995. This type of fiscal terrorism is just one way the current government is sowing the seeds of division in our country.

I said that the minister is playing shell games with provincial transfer payments and I repeat the allegation today. Can the minister or his agents give this House an indication as to what concrete steps they have taken to co-operate with Ontario, B.C., and Alberta in order to come to a reasonable agreement on increases in CAP transfers? If no such assurances are given, can we assume this government is presiding over the destruction of federal-provincial fiscal relationship? Have they no sense of responsibility, no sense of Canadians as a national family, no ability to see Canada as a single great nation?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the government is very much aware of the fact that the slowing down has deeply affected some Canadians. However, the social safety net in Canada, which includes the federal unemployment insurance program as well as the various welfare programs cost-shared by the two levels of government, is especially aimed at helping Canadians through such hard times.

The federal government has clearly increased the amount of assistance provided through these programs, and that has helped make the situation easier to bear.

[*English*]

The total amount of federal UI program benefits going to unemployed Canadians has grown at an average rate of 8.8 per cent per year. Furthermore, the federal share of social assistance payments to the needy has gone up from $4 billion in 1984–85 to $6.6 billion in 1991–92.

Federal expenditures in these two programs will grow by 10 per cent, which means that in 1993 the funds available will grow by $2.3 billion over 1991–92 to help the needy and unemployed through these programs.

In putting a ceiling on payments under the Canada Assistance Plan, we are simply asking the three fiscally stronger provinces, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, to help contain the federal share of welfare costs to increases of 5 per cent per year.

The federal deficit control plan is already making its impact on the Canadian economy in the form of lower inflation rates and lower interest rates.

In conclusion, this government believes that the best income security for Canadians is a job. Our record speaks for itself. Since 1984 over 1.3 million jobs have been created. The number of persons living in low income as defined by Statistics Canada dropped from 4.4 million in 1984 to 3.8 million in 1990.

An effective healthy economy that provides jobs for Canadians will mean that fewer and fewer Canadians will depend upon welfare and UI.

BEEF INDUSTRY

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, May 6, I asked the Minister of Agriculture why Canadian consumers are not being informed that the imported beef they are buying in Canada may well be cheap, tough U.S. cow beef. This is no roll beef or ungraded beef coming in mainly from the United States.

On April 12, 1989, I first raised this issue in the House during Question Period. At that time one million pounds of this product per week were coming into Canada. The minister at the time responded that there must be a need for this product or it would not be coming in. Two years later it was not one million pounds per week but it was 3 million pounds a week coming into Canada.

During this time five beef packing plants closed in Ontario and others across Canada, and the Ontario and Quebec feed lot industry is put under further pressure.

Finally in March 1991, after two years of pressure the minister responded: "I have instructed my officials", to take the necessary steps to require the United States, whether with graded or ungraded beef, to identify it for consumers. We believe Canadian consumers have the right to know the exact grade and origin of their beef, and we are going to ensure that happens". That was in March 1991.

The regulations have been changed but they only require the container to be marked as ungraded and not the meat. This is a fraud because Canadian consumers still will not know the grade of product they are buying.

Further to this in his answer on May 6 the minister stated that Canada is working with the United States to harmonize our inspection systems. This is clearly unacceptable.

As was shown on ABC *Prime Time Live* on April 30, the United States streamlined inspection system is a disaster. The plants have their own inspectors and carcasses that have fallen on the floor or are contaminated with faeces are allowed to pass after they wash off the faeces. These conditions are deplorable and are even worse in the poultry industry according to media reports from within the United States.

I ask this government again: Will it ensure Canadian consumers and producers that our health and inspection standards will never be compromised, and that we place the health of our people first and foremost; that it will bring in regulations that will require that all imported meat must be clearly marked with the Canadian grade equivalent and the country of origin in a manner that is clearly visible to Canadian consumers.

Finally, I am appalled that in the midst of all these pressures some of the few remaining feed lot operators are still waiting for their third and fourth quarter payments for 1991 under the tripartite stabilization program. How can our Canadian producers compete under such conditions?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to my hon. colleague's concerns.

On April 5, 1992 a regulatory amendment became effective requiring imported beef to be clearly identified with the grade of the exporting country if the product was graded or to be marked ungraded if that were the case. In essence, all beef entering Canada must now have this labelling requirement clearly indicated. This regulatory amendment is enforced at all federally registered establishments in Canada.

• (1810)

The requirement for beef grade identification at the consumer level is one that is within the jurisdiction of our colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs of Canada. It is my understanding that retail guidelines have been issued by my hon. colleague to ensure that labelling and advertising requirements relating to beef are clearly understood by all sectors of the Canadian meat retail industry.

In addition, Agriculture Canada will be participating in a meeting with officials from industry and C&CAC, as well as the Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food, to determine what action can be taken at the provincial level to further inform the consumer of the considerable progress that has been made in regard to better informing the Canadian consumer.

Continued efforts by both the department and all those affected will assist the consumer in making an informed choice when selecting beef at the supermarket. Under no circumstances will the Canadian government allow our inspection system or the quality of our products to be compromised in any way. We know that prime time television on April 30 did a program which was somewhat sensationalistic, and inaccurate statements were made on that segment about the U.S. beef industry. It is damaging to the meat industry whether it be in Canada or in the United States, and it did not serve the Canadian producers of beef in any way.

Mr. Milliken: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no points of order heard during the late show.

Adjournment Debate

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I will proceed on this point and try not to intervene in your difference of opinion with the member from Kingston.

On March 9, 1992 I asked a question of the Prime Minister, which was eventually answered by the Associate Minister of National Defence, on the issue of a new version of Star Wars, this one going under the unlikely and implausible name of GPALS which stands for Global Protection Against Limited Strikes, once again an acronym designed to lull the public into thinking that what we are talking about here is something benign.

What we really have here is the American space military complex coming up with another version of the Strategic Defence Initiative, an idea touted by President Reagan, an idea which was at the time bizarre and expensive, and which is now being recognized as a bizarre, expensive and gross waste of human and financial resources.

The SDI proposal, the Star Wars proposal, depended on having an enemy, and the enemy was the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has now collapsed so the same industry has to come up with another idea in order to keep itself going, in order to suck public funds primarily out of the American taxpayer, but as well out of the world economy, and they are coming to Canada to try to sell this project to the Canadian government.

The project finds a new enemy; this time, fortunately, they have Saddam Hussein and they have the example of the Scud missiles. So they come forward touting this idea that maybe we should invest billions of dollars in trying to set up a space based defence against ballistic missiles, not coming from the Soviet Union across the pole or elsewhere to North America, but they conjure up the idea of ballistic missiles coming from places like Libya or Iraq to cities in North America. They build on the fear that was generated during the gulf war of scud missiles, a fear generated by Saddam Hussein and now being exploited by the purveyors of this bizarre idea.

I call on the government to ensure that while it seeks information about this, it is made clear right at the outset that Canada is not going to spend one dollar of Canadian taxpayers' money on this bizarre scheme; second, that we recognize it will not provide an ounce of protection against scud missiles or ballistic missiles; third, that it is a breach of the anti-ballistic missile treaty in which Canada and the international community has a critical stake; fourth, that because it involves putting weapons in space it goes directly counter to Canadian policy promoted at the United Nations.

Whatever information we seek about this bizarre proposal, we make it clear at the outset that we will have nothing to do with it and we urge the American government to have nothing to do with it, and we make that plea on behalf of the Canadian people.

In 1985 the external affairs and defence committee came out against Star Wars. It should not be necessary for us to do that again, and I call on the government to make clear its opposition to this ludicrous proposal.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we all know that while attention to the cold war is quickly fading, the recent gulf war demonstrated the real threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems.

In response to this concern, the Prime Minister outlined Canadian initiatives in a speech in Washington this morning. This speech in turn followed upon an exhaustive program outlined by the Prime Minister and the SSEA in other speeches in February 1991.

It is in this broad context that the ballistic missile defence must be considered. While recognizing the need to respond to threats Canada also wishes to ensure that any proposal in the area of ballistic missile defence is stabilizing in nature.

We therefore welcome the fact that the U.S.A. 1991 missile defence act prudently stipulates that the initial U.S.A. BMD system should not contravene the United States anti-ballistic missile treaty with the former U.S.S.R. or authorize the deployment of weapons in space.

Moreover we have welcomed the broad co-operative approach the United States government has taken, particularly the ongoing U.S.A.-Russia dialogue and the program of consultation taking place with other interested countries.

This is all taking place against the historic co-operation between the United States and Russia in reducing their nuclear arsenals. We hope all these activities will permit new co-operative approaches to common security.

Beyond these general points, Canada has not taken a decision regarding possible participation in the proposed U.S.A. BMD programs. We have indicated our willingness to engage in consultations with the United States concerning the details of the American proposal and its implications for Canada.

The views of other countries will also be of interest and this process is likely to take some time. Canada has long enjoyed a close bilateral defence relationship with the United States, particularly in NORAD, and ballistic missile defence is not a NORAD function.

Any changes to NORAD's mandate would have to be the subject of negotiations between the United States and Canadian governments and neither side has indicated any intention to reopen the agreement which, under its present terms, was renewed for five years in May 1991.

DENISON MINES

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, on March 10 I put a question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration because at that time we had received an announcement that Denison Mines in Elliot Lake would be laying off 1,000 workers during the ensuing few weeks.

This represents a tremendous blow to this community of some 13,000 people. Over 80 per cent of the mining labour force has been laid off in the last two and a half years. Earlier in 1990 there were some 2,400 people laid off at the two operating mines, Denison and Rio Algom in that community.

I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration what action would be taken because the government has been providing very substantial funding for the 2,400 who had been laid off previously. I am told that in the 1991-92 fiscal year some $2.3 million had been provided for adjustment and training of workers who had been laid off.

I have been advised by the Community Futures officer, Mr. Craege McQuarrie, last evening that their estimates now will be only some $600,000. What the government should be doing is increasing the last year's funding by some 50 per cent rather than cutting it by 75 per cent as seems to be the case.

The minister was quite forthcoming in his response in the House. He said: "I know this is a serious blow to that community and I am ready to work with the hon. member and officials of my department are ready to sit down with those people to see how we can help them adjust to the situation in question". I hope this evening the parliamentary secretary will be able to come forward and say yes, the minister was not talking through his hat. The minister meant what he said in the House on March 10. He is committed to providing the additional funding that will be required for training, for not only pre-vocational training at the high school level, for the literacy training at the elementary level, but also for the community college courses and the skill courses.

This is a community with many thousands of men and women who require this kind of training and upgrading. The government talks about providing increased training and adjustment funds but, there have been serious cutbacks. We only have to listen to Question Period to know that there have been serious cutbacks.

We want the government to live up to the commitment that the minister made in the House a few weeks ago and say that it will provide these additional training allowances and support programs to help adjust the lives of these miners who were laid off at Denison Mines and Rio Algom Mines during this past couple of years.

It is not only important that the funds be provided but that they be provided in a flexible way so that people can receive the assistance they need and get it in an orderly way so it does not turn their personal lives into turmoil, as has occurred in many cases in the past.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, Employment and Immigration Canada offers a wide range of programs and services to assist unemployed individuals in the Elliot Lake area.

These programs and services have proven very successful throughout the country in helping unemployed individuals and communities facing economic difficulties.

Through the Canadian Jobs Strategy, Employment and Immigration Canada provided the Elliot Lake region with more than $8 million in assistance in 1989-90 and another $8 million was budgeted in 1991-92.

Last year the Canada Employment Centre staff was increased in Elliot Lake to provide additional counselling services in the areas of training and mobility to meet the needs of the laid-off workers at Denison Mines.

There are several programs and committees in place now to deal with the recent lay-offs at Denison Mines. The joint consultative committee is up and running, the Community Futures Program is already in place and a Canada Employment and Immigration Centre joint planning group made up of regional Canada Employment Centres and adjustment services staff has been established.

In addition, a community training co-ordination committee was established to priorize needs and to make decisions as to training purchases. Obviously the tripling of the fee payer program funding in Ontario by $125 million will benefit unemployed workers in Elliot Lake who need retraining. EIC is providing assistance to the Elliot Lake area and, as in the past, we will help the laid-off workers adjust to this difficult situation.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.24 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 22, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL PARKS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Tom Hockin (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Natural Resources envelope.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, the bill which is before us today is an important one. Hon. members will discover it is a bill which will be well received as it reflects important partnerships we are developing with aboriginal peoples.

This bill is divided into two major purposes. First of all, the bill will deal with Environment Canada's responsibility for the fulfilment of Treaty No. 8 obligations, flowing from the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan land claim settlement of 1986.

In that settlement Canada, Alberta and the band agreed that additional entitlements under the treaty would include provision of some 12,000 acres of land for Indian reserve purposes and $26.6 million compensation.

Environment Canada's specific role in the settlement concerns Wood Buffalo National Park which straddles the boundary of Alberta and the Northwest Territories. This park, the second largest in the world, overlays the approximately three million acre traditional hunting grounds of the Cree. Following a settlement it was necessary to prepare a complex boundary survey of this area of the park for insertion in the National Parks Act.

While I must point out that the area will remain subject to the National Parks Act, this bill confirms the right of the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan to hunting, fishing, trapping and cultural pursuits in their traditional lands within the park.

• (1010)

The bill confirms not only rights to wilderness, it also excises the small community of Peace Point from within the park boundary to enable its establishment as an Indian reserve. This is being done as part of the claims settlement in recognition of the understandable wish of the Cree of Peace Point to greater control over their own affairs.

The final element of the bill affecting Wood Buffalo is the formal establishment of a wildlife advisory board. This board, which has been operating informally but effectively for several years, enables the Cree to participate meaningfully in decision making which directly affects their way of life.

It is indicative of the kinds of partnerships which must be established with native people to ensure that Canada's wilderness values are enriched and the ethics of wilderness protection are shared among all Canadians.

Therefore in this bill we are formally recognizing the long-standing relationship and affinity of the Cree to lands which, by agreement, remain under the protection of the National Parks Act. Moreover we are helping to perpetuate a tradition for caring for the land from which all Canadians can learn.

In 1983 UNESCO declared Wood Buffalo National Park a world heritage site. It was largely because of the contributions of native peoples for the continued protection of this marvellous part of Canada that this international honour was accorded.

The second purpose of this bill concerns a matter with which all members will be familiar. In fact it was the subject of an all-party resolution made in this House in 1987. I am speaking of course of the establishment of the National Park Reserve in the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia, along with the authorization of a unique management agreement with the Council of the Haïda Nation.

On July 1, 1987 the Prime Minister and the premier of British Columbia signed a memorandum of understanding which committed the two governments to negotiate an agreement to establish a national marine park in the South Moresby area of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

On July 12, 1988 the two governments signed a formal memorandum of agreement setting out specific commitments regarding the parks and related initiatives.

Signing of that agreement was the culmination of a 13-year struggle by the Haïda and environmentalists, supported by church organizations and others, both nationally and internationally, to protect the area from logging and mining.

In 1985 the Haïda and their supporters blockaded logging on Lyell Island leading to the arrest of 72 Haïda, including elders, and focusing national and international attention on South Moresby. Agreement to protect South Moresby was greeted by Canadians as one of the most important environmental accomplishments of the government in its first term.

Setting aside the park reserve will protect internationally significant heritage resources. Parts of the area were not glaciated during the last ice age, resulting in the evolution of unique plants and animals—hence the area's common description as the Canadian Galapagos. Moreover, South Moresby represents a rich cultural heritage.

The abandoned Haïda village of Ninstints, for example, was designated by UNESCO in 1981 as a world heritage site for its array of totems and other cultural remains; two other village sites in the vicinity have been declared of national historical significance. In recognition of these factors, the name Gwaii Haanas Archipelago National Park Reserve has been selected, meaning "islands of wonder and beauty".

The federal-provincial agreement sets the boundaries of the 147,000 hectare national park reserve. The boundaries of the national marine park reserve, however, will not be finalized before an assessment of the mineral and energy resource potential of the area, and a decision by the federal and provincial ministers this December. Therefore, Bill C-59 deals only with the land reserve.

Since the beginning of the initiative to set aside the national park reserve it has been evident that an understanding with the Haïda would be needed to ensure the effective management of the area. An all-party resolution of the House of Commons on May 14, 1987 stated "that the House confirms its intention to ensure the continued participation of the Haïda people in matters affecting South Moresby".

Moreover, in his remarks at the signing of the MOU in 1987 with the province the Prime Minister stated: "South Moresby is more than an ecological treasure. It is also the spiritual heart of "Haïda Gwaii", the homeland of the Haïda. The Haïda community will be involved in a meaningful way in park planning, development and operation".

Therefore Environment Canada began discussions with the Haïda in 1987 regarding a mechanism for co-operation in the management of the archipelago and the continuation of traditional Haïda activities.

As a result of these commitments the Haïda did not oppose the idea of a national park reserve which would stop the logging and at the same time not prejudice their position on ownership.

For this reason and in keeping with past practice elsewhere, a reserve for a national park will be set aside pending resolutions of outstanding disputes over rights, titles, interests in and to the area.

Formal negotiations with the Haïda on co-operation with the management of the archipelago began early in 1988.

Unfortunately, talks have broken off from time to time giving the differing views of the parties on sovereignty over the lands. However, eventually the parties agreed to set out their different views in the areas of dispute and to concentrate on those issues where there was agreement, principally the protection and conservation of the unique ecology of the area and the continuation of the Haïda culture and activities within it.

With that deadlock broken, the negotiations led to a draft agreement in April 1990. The agreement was subsequently ratified by the Haïda in a referendum held by the Council of the Haïda Nation on May 19, 1990. The principal components of the agreement are as follows:

(a) The agreement will be between the Government of Canada represented by the Minister of the Environment and the Council of the Haïda Nation represented by its vice-president.

(b) The document contains parallel statements which set out the Haïda and Government of Canada's divergent positions regarding sovereignty, title and ownership to the land included within the national park reserve, as well as the definition, i.e., citizenship of those Haïda to whom the agreement will apply.

By way of explanation, under their definition, the Haïda Nation includes persons of Haïda ancestry living in the United States, whereas Canada maintains that its responsibility under the agreement can only be for those Haïda to whom subsection 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982 applies.

(c) The parties agree that long-term protective measures are essential to safeguard the area and that the highest standards of protection should be applied. The parties also agree to contribute to the continuity of Haïda culture.

(d) An archipelago management board will be set up to examine all initiatives and undertakings relating to park reserve planning, operation and management. The board will have equal representation by Canada and the Haïda, and will be co-chaired. The board will operate on a consensus basis.

(e) The Haïda will continue specified cultural and traditional renewable resource harvesting activities with few exceptions, e.g., trees for ceremonial or artistic purposes intended for public display; resource harvesting will be on a non-commercial basis.

The National Parks Act will be amended by this bill to permit these activities by authorizing the Governor in Council to enact appropriate regulations following review by the archipelago management board in accordance with the consensus decision-making process.

(f) There is an explicit statement that the agreement shall not constitute a land claims agreement or treaty within the meaning of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, nor shall it be construed as creating, affirming, recognizing or denying any aboriginal or treaty right.

Also it is stated that: "Nothing in the agreement shall fetter or limit, or be deemed to fetter or limit, in any manner the rights, jurisdiction, authority, obligations or responsibilities of either party or their representatives, except to the extent of the requirement that all reasonable efforts must have been made to reach consensus".

(g) Commitments are made to encourage Haïda employment with the Canadian Parks Service and other economic opportunities associated with the national park reserve.

(h) There is a commitment to negotiate a further agreement with the Haïda for the national marine park reserve before it is established.

When this agreement was accepted in principle by the Haïda Nation through their referendum two years ago, co-operation between the Canadian Parks Service and the Haïda began on the ground. A contract is in place with the Council of the Haïda Nation for the operation of an interim archipelago management board to deal with priority issues until the agreement actually comes into force.

However, real authorities are extremely limited in the absence of legislation and the Haïda remain cautious about the nature of formal relations in the absence of a signed agreement.

In conclusion, the proposed amendments to the National Parks Act would provide for setting aside lands in the Gwaii Haanas archipelago as a reserve for a national park; enable the Governor in Council to authorize the Minister of the Environment to sign an agreement with the Council of the Haïda Nation respecting the management and operation of the park reserve; provide authorities required to implement the agreement as it relates to traditional renewable resource harvesting and Haïda cultural practices; and in addition, implement provisions of the 1986 Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan Specific Land Claim which affects Wood Buffalo National Park, by establishing a wildlife advisory board with authority to propose regulations within the band's traditional hunting grounds and excising an existing community from the park for an Indian reserve.

As I mentioned earlier, both the Gwaii Haanas and Wood Buffalo proposals reflect partnerships with aboriginal peoples.

• (1020)

As such they are indicative of co-operative land management regimes which will greatly benefit Canada's internationally renowned national park systems.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, basically, the purpose of Bill C-59 is to amend the National Parks Act to bring it into line with the two agreements concluded with two native peoples, or should I say, three.

[*English*]

First, the act we are debating here today allows for the creation of a wildlife advisory board for Wood Buffalo National Park. It does so with the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan. It allows for traditional aboriginal hunting activities within the park as negotiated in the 1986 Cree Chipewyan Specific Land Claim.

We support this and we would like to congratulate all those on the aboriginal side who were involved for their patience and their perseverance.

Second, the act permits the establishment of the Gwaii Haanas South Moresby National Park Reserve under the National Parks Act as established by the British Columbia Canada Agreement.

Some time ago we, the Liberal Party, supported the all-party motion on South Moresby in the House. Even more specifically, I am proud to say it was a Liberal government that drew the line in the map which first indicated federal interest in South Moresby.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that because of a previous commitment my colleague, the hon. member for Davenport, cannot be here. As Minister of the Environment, he was the person who took the lead on this. Indeed, it is a tribute to his vision that we are here today.

The act we are in the process of debating authorizes the Minister of the Environment to enter into an agreement with the Council of the Haïda Nation respecting the shared management and operation of the park. This agreement was ratified by the Haïda Nation in a May 19, 1990 referendum. It is clear that occasionally referendums can work.

Let me highlight some parts of this agreement. The Haïda will be authorized to carry on specific cultural and traditional renewable resource harvesting activities. Commitments are made to encourage Haïda employment with the Canadian Parks Service and other economic opportunities associated with a national park reserve.

Following the aforementioned agreement, legislation was also required to authorize cultural activities and traditional renewable resource harvesting activities since harvesting of plants and animals is contrary to the National Parks Act unless specific amendments permit it. That is what Bill C-59 is all about.

Earlier on, the Haïda Nation was concerned with the wording of the bill when it was introduced for first reading in February. I have been informed they are now satisfied and that is crucial, as far as my party is concerned, with the amendments that have been proposed by the government. The final act will now reflect the agreement that was reached some years ago.

We can only deplore that it has taken so long to bring forth this bill and to fulfil the agreement that was reached with the Haïda Nation and with the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan.

In these circumstances my party will support the bill as amended. My colleague later on will be expressing his views and other views from a slightly different perspective on this bill but within the context of our support.

I point out to the House how ironic it is that we stand up here giving all-party support to this bill on the day after the government announced its decision in the case of the Oldman dam.

The Oldman dam demonstrates the desperate need in this country for us to come up with a way and a policy of dealing with the environment and all aboriginal Canadians that is fair, by sitting down and discussing and negotiating, not by imposing, not by ducking and weaving and not by turning our backs on our very clear and strong fiduciary relationship.

Yesterday, this government, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Transport after having hidden, camouflaged and kept away from the Canadian people for over a week the review panel's report on the Oldman dam, finally brought it forth in a way that does not do the government credit. At the same time that they brought it forth, they clearly rejected the number one recommendation of the panel report. At the same time as they brought it forth, they refused to give us the full report until it was far too late and we had to make do with a summary.

The way in which this government has dealt with the Oldman dam, its refusal to put into place the means of mitigation, its refusal to deal with the illegal activity of the Alberta government, its refusal to deal honestly and fairly and squarely with the Peigan Band does not stand the government, or indeed the democratic process in this country, in good stead.

So, while my party rises today to support Bill C–59, while we are delighted that this is what we have in front of us, I must say that I do wish this country could come to the point where it deals with all aboriginal peoples on the same basis.

Let the agreement with the Cree of Fort Chipewyan and the Haïda stand as the model that we would look to. Let us hope that never again will we have a black mark on our history such as that which occurred yesterday in the case of the Oldman dam.

Madam Speaker, we support this bill as amended.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C–59. It is a piece of legislation that has taken a long time to get here.

As someone who is often highly partisan in debate in this House, it is an occasion on which I do not feel there is any need to be partisan at all. We have heard from the Liberal member from LaSalle—Émard. We have heard from the minister's parliamentary secretary.

In relation to Gwaii Haanas, it is worth reflecting for a moment on a number of extremely non–partisan and highly Canadian events that have taken place.

This Chamber just more than five years ago passed the unanimous resolution to work with the Haïda Nation in setting aside South Moresby. The former Minister of the Environment, Tom McMillan, worked extraordinarily hard to make it become a reality. Canada's present Prime Minister did an extraordinarily good job in negotiating with the then premier of British Columbia, Bill Vander Zalm, and with the president of the Council of Haïda Nations, Miles Richardson, in bringing together the three levels of government: Canada, British Columbia and the Haïda Nation, and setting aside an area that more than three million Canadians had expressed interest in having set aside.

The Prime Minister's office received several hundred thousand letters from Quebec, Ontario, the western provinces, the territories and the maritimes. Support from all over the world was focused on this unique area, which, as other members have made clear, was recognized by the United Nations more than a decade ago in terms of Ninstints, a very small area down off the southern tip of the archipelago.

• (1030)

It really is a remarkable area, often called the Canadian Galapagos, that missed the last glaciation. It was one of the most heavily inhabited areas of the whole west coast of North America until very recent times. There were communities of several thousand throughout the Gwaii Haanas archipelago which regrettably were wiped out. The Haïda nation was almost entirely wiped out by measles and smallpox just 100 years ago.

It is significant that such an agreement was ultimately reached. I think it is probably the crowning environmental achievement of the present Prime Minister. I hope the present Minister of Environment will very soon find the opportunity to potlatch in relation to Gwaii Haanas, in relation to what is often called South Moresby National Park Reserve. It is very important that this matter be ultimately brought not only into being but also into a co–operative understanding between the two principal nations now involved: Canada and the Council of the Haïda Nation.

It is a tribute today to the minister and to those officials who have worked hard behind the scenes to get wording that has been found to be co–operatively acceptable between the Council of the Haïda Nation and Canada. It is also a tribute to the elders, to the chiefs, to Miles Richardson, to Guujaw and others who worked so long right until I understand one of the officials received a call from Miles this morning. I spoke to him at five this morning.

It is a piece of legislation that should be passed today. I am sure there are many members who want to speak on it, but the importance of passing it so that the agreement can in fact come into being should not be overlooked by any members of this House.

As many will remember, the agreement involved a substantial amount of money, $106 million, from Western Diversification. It is interesting that the forest companies have now been compensated. The loggers that were affected have been compensated. Over $12 million in just one part of the agreement has been spent for reforestation in a replacement fund for those areas removed from forest tenure. Regrettably, almost all of that has been spent off the Queen Charlotte Islands, not in Gwaii Haanas, not in areas that had been harvested, but rather in other areas of the tree farm licence.

It is urgently important that this be passed now. I understand there is goodwill in the House to get through as much of this bill as we can today so that it can go on to the other place for passage.

I have reviewed the wording that has been worked out between the Council of the Haïda Nation and officials of Justice Department and Environment Canada. I understand it is acceptable on all sides so that an appropriate amendment could take place today so that this can be put in place.

There should be no misunderstanding. The Council of the Haïda Nation went to great lengths more than two years ago in a binding referendum. An agreement was passed in relation to what we are doing today. That referendum agreement is running out of time. May 5 was the deadline that only by the grace of the Haïda has been extended to allow this debate to take place and for this bill to be passed.

The area is cherished by so many Canadians as a symbol. It may be an area that they will never get to, but it is an area that they recognize the importance of. It may well be withdrawn from this process if this legislation does not proceed.

There are other parts of the agreement that the government must now work very hard to get moving because the Government of Canada is in fact in violation of a number of areas of the 1987 agreement. In fact, it has been for some time, not only in terms of the actual expenditure schedules, but also in terms of other parts of the agreement.

There is an anticipation that $44 million will be transferred to the Gwaii trust. It was a promise made by the Prime Minister of Canada that funds would be made available and efforts would be made to redevelop the economy of the Queen Charlotte Islands from basically, a logging and forest based economy to one of world-class tourism. That has been a hollow promise so far. There is $6 million in the aid base for the visitor reception centres and for Gwaii Haanas for the summer, but the $44 million is still awaited. Sandspit has waited a long time for the Minister of Fisheries to live up to the small craft harbour agreement that was promised by Minister Siddon from British Columbia more than five years ago.

I agree that the price tag of $9 million sounds high and it may well be that the minister or ministers could involve themselves in finding some better economic engine for Moresby for the Sandspit area. There has been little political will exercised to get that going. I am certainly hopeful that after such a long, long road on this most important issue and one that has been most honourably pursued by the government, I must say, on almost all occasions that it will now be done this year.

Having said that, I just want to say again that the wording as proposed in the clause 1, page 2 amendments under the title: "Reserve for a National Park on the Gwaii Haanas Archipelago" has been reviewed. I spoke to the president of the Haïda nation this morning and confirmed that this wording is acceptable to the Haïda nation in order to implement. This is enabling legislation to allow for the agreement reached within the Haïda nation to be put into play.

The second part of this piece of legislation is in relation to Wood Buffalo National Park. As I am sure you are aware, Madam Speaker, the Minister of the Environment earlier this week had justice officials move forward with a consent judgment in the courts to halt logging in perpetuity in Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada's largest national park, a park similar to the Queen Charlotte Islands, similar to Gwaii Haanas and Ninstints as a world heritage site 10 years ago.

Part of this legislation, in terms of being an amendment to the National Parks Act, implements the 1986 Fort Chip as it is often called, Fort Chipewyan the full name, the Cree Band from there, their specific land claim which involves a two-square mile reserve inside the park boundaries. That will be excised from the park. I understand later today, if we complete the legislation, it will be transferred for a split second to the province of Alberta and a split second later it will be transferred to Canada where it will come under the protection of the Indian Act and revert to the ownership and obvious existing occupancy of the Fort Chip people.

The payment in terms of the specific claim includes $26.6 million and the transfer of 4,969 hectares of land outside the park. It also establishes what I consider to be a very important intergovernment instrument, which is a wildlife advisory board, which will provide for the permanent establishment of a board with four members appointed by the Cree Band, three by the Minister of the Environment with the superintendent of the parks sitting as an *ex officio* non-voting member. That board will establish a permit system for hunting, trapping, fishing of all various species to monitor any harvesting that goes on within about one-fifth of the park, an area of 8,869 square kilometres of the 44,800 square kilometres of the park.

Therefore, there will be an area within the park that has been recognized as the traditional hunting ground of these aboriginal people. This wildlife management board will have a process for identifying sustainable harvest levels of species that have been traditionally harvested. There will be an identified, designated membership of Cree hunters, trappers and fishers who will be operating within that area. This board will manage this traditional harvesting in a sustainable fashion within the largest of Canada's national parks systems. It is something that I think has encouraged debate among many conservation and wildlife groups in this country. I think it is now well enough understood that this nation was founded on three nations: the aboriginal people, who were the original occupants of Canada; the French; and the English. It is that ultimate recognition which is now recognized constitutionally that is being recognized in part through the legislation we are dealing with today.

• (1040)

I understand there have been both consultations and discussions with Fort Chipewyan and with the Cree. They not only support what has happened in terms of the specific land claim which occurred almost six years ago but also the legislation that we have today, which is to implement the wildlife management board, the territory that it will include, the permitting structure and the excise of this particular reserve land.

Within the schedules of this legislation one finds the description of the Gwaii Haanas Archipelago. In my consultations with officials and the parliamentary secretary this morning, I understand that this is the precise restatement of the designation and definition of lands in what is now often referred to as South Moresby, but now legislatively will be referred to as the Gwaii Haanas Archipelago. It is what is found in the 1987 agreement struck between the three nations almost five years ago and is therefore for legal purposes not to change any boundaries, so there should not be any concern that this legislation in schedule VI is in any way to add to or to subtract from what was agreed to after a very long and protracted and thankfully happy debate of many years ago.

My colleague from LaSalle—Émard touch on one other point that I think is worthy of the attention of the House today because of the way it occurred yesterday. That is in relation to the panel decision on the Oldman dam. This has been an extraordinarily long and hard fought environmental issue that has probably attracted the greatest focus other than the *Grande Baleine* project in the province of Quebec.

The issues are ones that are deeply felt in Alberta and in fact all across the country. A very small group of Albertans principally took this matter all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. On January 23 of this year there was a unanimous ruling on most points from the highest court in Canada that there is an affirmative regulatory duty of federal ministers of the Crown in relation to projects such as the Oldman River dam and in particular, is binding on the Minister of Transport in his role with the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

In four months the Minister of Transport never lived up to the orders of the Supreme Court of Canada. Yesterday, regrettably, after the long awaited court ordered panel review of the Oldman River Dam, in the secrecy and darkness of the offices of the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Transport they made a secretive decision to reject the conclusion reached by the expert panel, which is to decommission the dam.

Regrettably, I think the decision made by the ministers in secrecy yesterday, without ever letting the public see the panel report, will be the undoing of environmental assessment and Bill C-13 as it was passed and as it is presently before the other place.

The reason I say that is that there will no longer in my view be good reason for Canadians of good faith, aboriginal, environmental, conservation, engineering oriented or whatever to participate in a process where they know an anti-democratic and undemocratic end awaits them. In that process before the expert advice was ever made public so that the public could reflect upon it, two ministers, neither of whom claimed any engineering expertise, any hydrological expertise, any wildlife conservation expertise, any fisheries expertise, any aboriginal rights expertise, any archaeological expertise, no expertise at all, other than straight political chicanery, decided against the expert advice, five to one, of professional engineers, professional experts who heard hundreds of hours of evidence.

They reviewed over 126 written submissions, made probably one of the most difficult decisions of conscience they could possibly make in their own home province, which was to decommission a dam that had cost almost $500 million, had been to the highest court in Canada, had existed illegally contrary to the basic fundamental moral and legal tenets of that province and this country since its inception and went against it.

I predict, regrettably, that the Cree and others in Quebec will probably withdraw from the environmental assessment process of the Grande Baleine. I predict that many groups will withdraw should an EARP now proceed in relation to Kemano II in British Columbia. I suspect that the Tetzlaff brothers in the province of Saskatchewan are as appalled as anyone in this country that it could happen again in another province by the same ministers in relation to the same issues.

It is absolutely appalling on the brink of the earth summit in Rio that a minister from this country, who is going to be Canada's lead minister in Rio, would have taken such an anti-democratic, anti-environmental view of a project. The panelists made it absolutely clear that the economic benefits of the Oldman River dam were massively outweighed by the negative implications on aboriginal people, the Peigan people.

Milton Born with a Tooth was here speaking yesterday about his feelings on this issue. I can understand the emotional tenor that he brings to this debate after being so callously treated by the justice system and by the ministers responsible.

The issue is one of credibility of this institution if this institution is going to pass into law, new law to go beyond the 1984 cabinet guidelines order and expect Canadians in good faith to enter a process of compromise, to enter a process of assessment, to appear before an expert panel that would weigh as it did in this case the economic benefits for irrigation, for farmers in southern Alberta and for communities such as the Lethbridge water district and others in southern Alberta.

They weighed that, the cost of the dam, the cost of decommissioning against the phenomenal dangers of mercury poisoning for the fish in three river systems as a result of the empoundment of the water. All of the negative impacts on forest ecology, sacred sites, archeological sites were weighed. They came to one principled conclusion because 22 of their 23 recommendations dealt with mitigation issues that have never been dealt with by Alberta, and I predict never will be.

They have never been dealt with by Canada, and I predict never will be. Regrettably, the decision made by the Minister of Transport and the Minister of the Environment yesterday will stand as the darkest, blackest, sleaziest decision that was ever made on an environmental issue by a panel.

Therefore on Bill C-59, I am honoured that we finally have an opportunity to do this honourable thing today, prior to the referendum time running out with the Haïda in terms of Gwaii Haanas and also for Canada's largest national park, Wood Buffalo National Park, now that logging has halted and the rights of the First Nations, the aboriginal people, the Cree are recognized and passed in this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the hon. member on having convinced the government to take this new initiative in his riding, which is not easy. In fact, we as members from Quebec approve of this government initiative, which was a joint effort.

I would also like to take this opportunity, at a time when we are right in the middle of a referendum debate, to make certain points and ask the hon. member to comment and perhaps explain his party's position on the points I intend to raise, including the fact that Quebec has far fewer national parks than the rest of Canada.

• (1050)

I would like to ask him whether he happens to know what percentage of national parks are located in Quebec, what the value is of the various national parks outside Quebec and those inside Quebec, and the consequences this may have.

While I was listening to the hon. member's speech, which was brilliant, and while I was listening to the parliamentary secretary to the minister, because the minister is off somewhere else while we are having this debate—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has been in the House for a number of years and I fail to see why he insists on commenting on the presence or absence of a member or minister in this House. I think there is really no excuse for that, since the Minister of State for the Environment and the parliamentary secretary are both in the House. I think this is an inappropriate attempt to make a fuss.

I will let the hon. member finish his question and give the hon. member for Skeena a chance to respond.

The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead.

Mr. Gérin: You are perfectly right, Madam Speaker. It is Friday and after a rather long week during which the government has been playing its procedural tricks, we overlooked certain rules. You are right and I am looking forward to seeing the minister in the House, in order to ask him some very specific questions.

Meanwhile, you are perfectly right, and I will put my question to the hon. member. If, as expected, Quebec's sovereignty becomes a fact, and I think it will, because those federal offers will never be made, I would like to ask him whether he agrees that the national park to be created in his riding or the territories that will be created and which have a certain value, should remain the property of British Columbia, and that this should be absolutely clear? Does he agree that the various assets located in the territory of the province of Quebec should remain, after Quebec has become sovereign, the property, in no uncertain terms, of the province of Quebec, without any obligation to pay compensation of any kind?

I would appreciate an answer to these two questions. And I again wish to congratulate him on this auspicious occasion. I have known the hon. member for a number of years. I know he has always had a passionate interest in the environment. He has been a member of practically every committee on the environment and has worked very hard. As a member of this House he is very dedicated to his province, to environmental issues and to his riding. He is an example to all members of this House.

[*English*]

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend for the question. The issue that he raised first, in terms of the amount of land designated as what are called national parks in the province of Quebec, is a shame to this country. Less than one-third of 1 per cent of the land in the province of Quebec is designated as a national park.

I have looked into it a bit, and it has long puzzled me why so little effort has been made at the national level to achieve the kind of co-operation that there should have been over a long period of time for the designation of lands. Frankly, a considerable amount of the existing friction between the First Nations in Quebec, the Government of Canada, and the Government of Quebec is related to the lack of serious attention paid by Canada and the Government of Quebec to issues of title, in terms of First Nations, but also in terms of lands to be designated as parks.

Not only is this true of areas set aside and designated as national parks in Quebec, but as well Quebec has the second lowest level of all the provinces in terms of areas of provincial significance protected within the provincial parks system.

If we were to achieve what this House unanimously voted for just one year ago in June—a motion that I made and which was ultimately remade by the Minister of the Environment and the member for LaSalle—Émard—to set aside 12 per cent of Canada by the year 2000 our greatest single challenge would be in Quebec, despite having a Prime Minister from Quebec for 24 of the past 25 years. There has been no serious action to designate the areas of incredible beauty and incredible national, regional, and world-wide significance in that enormous and beautiful province.

I am glad my friend raised the issue of referenda because it is something that all members of this House should understand today. In May 1990 a national referendum was held on the issue of Gwaii Haanas among the Haïda nation. This was a difficult and divisive vote, one that pitted elders and ancient family traditions one against the other in relation to the designation of this area. It was an emotional and deeply rooted spiritual battle as deeply wounding and as deeply painful as the one presently going on in this country.

Referenda, for all of the good that can come from them, also carry inherent dangers because of the nature of the wording of a question on a very difficult issue. It is a challenge not easily met in the present legislation because it could pit one region against another, one province against another, one part of the country against another, and there is unlimited funding. There are major questions about the referendum process that I do not think have been seriously addressed by this House in the vault and pressure of time allocation and strangulation which the government has chosen on the referenda legislation.

On the issue of property that is designated as parks, national or provincial, I often remind myself when I look in my children's faces, and I encourage you to do the same, that property and lands belong to no one. Time will always pass it on to another generation.

Our greatest challenge in this country at this time is to remember that Quebec will never move anywhere. The geography, the land, the trees, the people, all of that will always remain there. That is why I was proud to be a member of the New Democratic Party when we voted as a party for the right of self-determination for Quebec.

I am proud of that. If the people of Quebec choose that road I will always be proud to be in Quebec, to be in this country, to be on this land and to be on this planet.

In terms of land for parks, as to whether it ever reverts to Ottawa or British Columbia, we will be hearing about our greatest single challenge if we listen to what is going on during this lead up to the earth summit, which is a few weeks from now.

People like Dr. Caldicott are telling us that we are into the last of a decade. Dr. Caldicott predicts that if we do not change what we are doing within the next eight years the major biological systems of this planet will collapse. The atmosphere will collapse, and the oceans of the world will collapse in terms of their productivity.

Our greatest challenge in this Chamber should be to find ways to protect 12 per cent of Canada, to find ways to get out of the fossil energy trap. The fossil energy consumption of this planet is the great trap. If you burn a gallon of gasoline it weighs eight pounds, then after it is burned you have 20 pounds of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

When you drive in a car you must think that it takes a large tree a whole year to take back out of the atmosphere the gallon of gasoline you burned as you drove 30 miles. We move blindly onward with all the crazy debates we have in this House about referenda, about what is happening with the Westray mine, and all these other things.

They are certainly important, but this Chamber so rarely pays attention to the great things we can do. One great, tiny thing we can do is viewed by every Canadian. Remember that several hundred thousand Quebecers wrote to this Chamber about South Moresby, about Gwaii Haanas to plead with this Chamber to set it aside. Three million letters came in. Some of the strongest support in Canada came from Quebec. I urge that this bill be passed.

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being eleven o'clock, we will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31. The hon. member for Bruce—Grey.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

SKOPJE

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Madam Speaker, the Skopje republic, formerly part of Yugoslavia, cannot count on recognition unless it abandons the name of Macedonia to which it has no ethnic, cultural or historical birthright.

There is only one Macedonia and that Macedonia is Greek. Skopje's insistence to include the word Macedonia in its name can only lead to instability and uncertainty and a point of friction for the whole Balkan area. At some point it could become very dangerous.

Skopjans should take an official stand on the issue and propose a new name for their state which does not include the name Macedonia.

In point of fact, the inclusion of the name Macedonia in the country of Skopje only traces back to the Second World War. Before then it was known as Santzakio Skopje and after the First World War as the province of Vardari.

Therefore, I call upon the government to hold back any recognition of Skopje until that country decrees that it will not use the name Macedonia.

* * *

NUCLEAR TESTING

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, I find it rather sad and interesting that the Secretary of State for External Affairs remains strangely silent after the Chinese government detonated a 1,000 kiloton nuclear bomb underground yesterday.

The sheer magnitude of the blast, the largest underground nuclear test ever conducted by the Chinese, is totally inappropriate in 1992.

This morning, I contacted the Chinese Ambassador and asked why China feels it is still necessary to prepare for war at a time when the risk of external threat has been reduced to its lowest point in 50 years. The Ambassador explained to me and I quote: "China is in favour of a complete prohibition of nuclear testing and the thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons".

The problem, the Ambassador explains, is that the other established nuclear powers also continue to test their weapons underground.

That is why it does not matter which country is toying with nuclear might. Canada must condemn all nuclear testing once and for all.

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK POULIN

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Madam Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to a young hockey player from my riding, Patrick Poulin, of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. He has been a stand–out performer on the St. Hyacinthe Lasers and earned attention from the Hartford Whalers professional team.

That is why Patrick Poulin was duly recognized for his outstanding potential at the 10th anniversary Vanier Quebec sports and cultural gala, chaired by the likable Guy Lafleur, a well–known figure from professional hockey. During this ceremony, I was proud to note once again the tremendous potential of tomorrow's generation.

As members of this House, we must continue to recognize the determination and talent shown by our young people.

Therefore I am pleased to belong to a government that believes in today's youth and gives them all they need to develop fully. In that way, our society will be privileged to have among it other young people of the same calibre as Patrick Poulin.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Madam Speaker, the government members have been going into a feeding frenzy over some tongue–in–cheek remarks of mine that were reported in the *Hamilton Spectator* a few weeks ago.

If they had read the article with more care, they would have noted that I said these comments were not New Democratic policy. They never have been and they never will be.

I spent much more of my time in Hamilton speaking on the serious topic of unemployment and the thousands of people who must apply for welfare for the first time in their lives as their UI benefits are either delayed or exhausted.

The government's economic policy is much more ludicrous than anything I could ever suggest. It is creating unemployment through high interest rates, a high dollar, free trade and the GST.

Why will members on the other side of the House not stop harping on one throw-away comment of mine and instead, pay some attention to the serious matters that confront Canadians.

* * *

CANCER TREATMENT

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House an issue that the Minister of National Health and Welfare is aware of and is doing nothing about.

Cancer patients require many forms of treatment and most should have this treatment within a two-week period. Some hospitals in Ontario have had to wait-list cancer patients beyond the two-week period. This situation is not acceptable.

The federal government has cut back in transfer payments for the provinces in the area of health care resulting in insufficient funding to our hospitals and cancer centres. It affects our hospitals that do not have enough radiology equipment nor enough technologists to run the equipment.

There are risks to the patients, to the caregivers, to the cancer centres, and to our health care system. I find it absolutely deplorable that consideration is being given by some centres to send patients into the U.S. for treatment, at what cost to our health care system and to the patient.

I ask the minister of health to immediately review these serious ramifications to his government's budget decisions. I have mentioned only one health care area. How many others are there?

* * *

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Madam Speaker, those of us who are fortunate often tend to forget that 13 per cent of Canadians in total, including 39 per cent of those who are 65 years of age or older, are disabled.

For this reason the establishment of June 1 to June 7, 1992 as National Access Awareness Week is exceedingly important, particularly in light of the fact that its purpose is to challenge all Canadians to create and support equal access which will enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of life.

Whether it be a question of access to the workplace, to government offices, or to movie theatres, which can be a particular source of some difficulty, those with disabilities have rights which all too often have been ignored.

We have an obligation, both moral and otherwise, to ensure that this very basic need is met.

I congratulate those who are responsible for the implementation of National Access Awareness Week as they are doing their part to enhance national awareness on this important issue.

Madam Speaker, it is now up to the rest of us to ensure that concerns do indeed lead to action.

* * *

TAMMY DE SILVA

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I want to draw to the attention of the House the case of Mrs. Tammy De Silva, a disabled woman from Winnipeg, who was abducted in February, 1992 by five Americans, including her estranged husband and two Chicago police officers.

Charges are to be laid momentarily by the Winnipeg police department and a Canada-wide warrant is to be issued. But this action is not enough.

I urge the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of State for External Affairs to ensure that extradition charges will be laid immediately against these five individuals in order to protect the rights of Canadians at home.

Without a true effort to bring these individuals to answer charges in the Canadian courts, a signal will be sent to foreigners who violate our sovereignty. It will be open season on Canadians.

This government must not allow our sovereignty to be eroded. I ask it to defend the rights of Tammy De Silva and all Canadians.

INTERNATIONAL HEART HEALTH CONFERENCE

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, the International Heart Health Conference will be held in Victoria from May 24 to May 28. The theme of the conference is "Bridging the Gap: Science and Policy in Action".

Organized jointly by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Health and Welfare Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Health, and co-sponsored by the World Health Organization, it is expected to attract 600 national and international delegates and feature Victoria declaration on heart health.

This conference will showcase the accomplishments of the Canadian heart health initiative in which all provincial departments of health are working together with Health and Welfare Canada to implement a national approach to the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease.

This conference is a landmark for cardiovascular disease prevention in Canada. It will set the future direction for policy and research agendas in heart health beyond the year 2000.

* * *

REFUGEES

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is misleading Canadians about its refugee determination program. The rate of acceptance of refugee candidates in Canada has been cut to 54 per cent for the past half year.

This was done by narrowing the legalistic interpretation of the word "refugee" and by harshly rejecting most humanitarian and compassionate claims that would have been accepted a year ago.

The government defends the program by saying that Canada accepts a higher proportion of claimants than any other country. That is not true.

Britain protects a far higher proportion than Canada. In 1989, Britain gave protection to 37 per cent of claimants under refugee status and 47 per cent under exceptional leave which leads to permanent residence. That is 80 per cent of claimants protected.

Canada needs to amend our system by giving full right of appeal against the many mistaken IRB decisions and by establishing clear rules and procedures for protection on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

* * *

SILKEN LAUMANN

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, millions of Canadians were dismayed to learn this week that Silken Laumann, a leader in Canada's quest for Olympic gold in Barcelona, suffered severe injuries in a rowing accident in Germany. Silken captured the hearts of Canadians at the 1991 world championships where she placed first in the single scull event. It was the first time a Canadian has ever brought that title home.

• (1110)

This achievement is just one of a long list of impressive accomplishments by Silken Laumann. She has served as a continuing source of fierce Canadian pride in international competition. Her dedication to the sport of rowing has provided inspiration for many young Canadian athletes.

Despite her serious injuries, her courageous spirit remains unbroken. Canadians are sure to see her return to the sport of rowing with a renewed vigour and a brilliant future.

I ask all members of this House to join me in expressing our best hopes and wishes for Silken's speedy recovery.

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[*Translation*]

MACEDONIA

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Madam Speaker, the hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs is preparing to visit Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. I strongly hope that she will be able to impress her Turkish colleagues and convince them that the time has come for Turkey to withdraw its occupation troops from Cyprus, where our Canadian troops have served so long with such style, intelligence, courage and patience under the aegis of the United Nations peacekeeping forces.

I also hope that she will have an opportunity during her visit to Greece to note the historical attachment of Greece to Macedonia's history. Macedonia has always been and will always be Greek. As they say, "*Makidonia i Hellas*."

Finally, no new geographical entity that is about to become a country can usurp the name "Macedonia" to obtain diplomatic recognition. The minister must reassure her Greek colleagues that Canada will not recognize this former Yugoslav entity if they use the word "Yugoslav".

To conclude, I ask her to offer our friends in Cyprus, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, our best wishes for them together to make Cyprus an earthly paradise.

* * *

[*English*]

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, this month, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is marking its 75th anniversary.

The duties of the War Graves Commission are to mark and maintain the graves of members of the Commonwealth forces killed in the two world wars.

Members of the House who have been on overseas pilgrimages can testify how well the commission fulfils these duties. So too can the many Canadians who each year visit the graves of loved ones. They can return home with the consolation of knowing that the graves of those who were killed far from Canada are being tended by caring hands.

Along with Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, India and South Africa, Canada shares the cost of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is money being well used.

I congratulate the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on 75 years of faithful service.

* * *

SILKEN LAUMANN

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I join with the hon. member for London—Middlesex in calling on the House to pay tribute to Silken Laumann.

Last Saturday, Silken was very seriously injured and possibly deprived of an opportunity to achieve that highest goal of athletes, an Olympic gold medal, in her event.

Silken trains and lives in Victoria. We are all very proud of her and wish her a quick and speedy recovery.

However, I have a concern about the highly unusual circumstances of this injury. She was injured when a German shell crashed into her. Her leg broke causing her great pain and difficulty.

The government should conduct a Canadian investigation to ensure that this was not an act of deliberate sabotage of this very fine Canadian athlete or was otherwise not a product of gross negligence by the organizers of that event.

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[*Translation*]

ALLERGY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Gaby Larrivée (Joliette): Madam Speaker, let me bring to the attention of the House that the Allergy and Asthma Information Association has proclaimed May as Allergy Awareness Month.

The incidence of allergies is on the rise. Furthermore, the association estimates that about a third of Canadians suffer from some form of allergy. Allergies can strike at any age. They cost the health system hundreds of millions of dollars a year, which explains their great importance, and cause over 500 deaths a year, due mainly to asthma.

This year, emphasis will be put on hay fever. To survive the allergy season, the association recommends being well informed and avoiding allergens.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to pay tribute to this organization and I publicly support Allergy Awareness Month.

I would also like to point out the efforts of the Lanaudière community health department and especially Dr. Suzanne Fortin.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, but time is up. The hon. member for Longueuil now has the floor.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, in 1989, I made a study of research and development contracts awarded by the federal government in the provinces. I found that at the time, the federal government spent $1.2 billion more in Ontario than in Quebec.

The government appointed a departmental committee to analyse the problem. Today, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources sent me some information. I noticed that 20 businesses were subsidized across Canada but none from Quebec.

My conclusion is, of course, that there have been no changes in policy to benefit Quebec. The government talks about technology and prosperity, but as far as developing prosperity and technology is concerned, Quebec apparently does not exist.

There have been no changes in the past three years, and the situation is still the same.

* * *

[*English*]

RETAIL SALES

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, retail sales figures came out this week and they indicate a decrease of .04 per cent for March. This follows two months of no growth.

Bargain Harolds, Jack Frasers, George Richards, Marks and Spencer are all retailers which are either out of business or experiencing difficulty. Today's statistics give retailers little reason for optimism. This government's dogmatic policy of relying on low inflation and low interest rates is not enough.

When is this government going to do something to stop the haemorrhaging of the retail sector? When will the government take some solid action to get our stagnant economy moving again?

The government must realize that an infrastructure program would not only be a much-needed boost to the economy, but it would also be a much-needed investment in our long-term competitiveness.

How many more retail businesses and retail jobs will be lost before this government takes some action?

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

WESTRAY COAL MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. On Wednesday, May 20, 1992 in *Hansard* the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism, when asked questions in regard to the role of the Government of Canada on safety issues at the Westray coal mine said:

> In fact, that regime was being complied with regularly in all its particulars by the mine and confirmed by the Bank of Nova Scotia which regularly monitored it month by month through independent mining consultants.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether or not he stands by that statement by the hon. minister?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, we have a statement from the independent mining consultant who is quoted in *The Daily News* of Halifax and I will quote:

> "I will concur that as late as March, I believe we had confirmed independently with the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and (Natural Resources) that they (Curragh) were in complete compliance with the current statutes, and that answer was provided and passed on to the bank," he said.
>
> McCandlish said his firm's primary role was to monitor the levels and cost of coal production.

He also assured that the mine was in compliance with provincial regulations. This is his statement yesterday.

As you know, Madam Speaker, as the federal government we have no responsibility over provincial regulations. Provincial regulations are to be monitored and regulated by the province, but we did receive these regular reports from the independent mining consultants, as you can see from this quote, as late as March.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, that is rather strange because the consulting firm, which was hired by the Bank of Nova Scotia to monitor the loan agreement, says it was not asked to conduct independent safety inspections at the Westray mine and in fact, the Associated Mining Consultants was reported to have said in the newspapers today: "We didn't independently check any safety conditions".

My question for the minister is this. Will the minister now come clean with the House of Commons and tell us exactly what has transpired in this particular incident? Were there safety reports? If there were, where are they?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows, and he has been told this the last three days, and he knows it without being told, that the whole regime for regulating provincial compliance with safety regulations is put in place by the province. The judicial inquiry will inquire into all those questions.

• (1120)

The federal government's role was a very limited one. We simply guaranteed a loan. We assured ourselves that we received certificates of compliance from the bank, which received them from the independent mining consultants on a monthly basis, that the mine was complying with provincial statutes. That is something we asked for and we got them on a regular basis, to show that they were in compliance with provincial statutes. These were certificates which we received on a regular basis.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, on Wednesday and Thursday of this week this minister said in this House repeatedly, almost 11 or 12 times, that he had independent reports in regard to safety which the government was getting through the auspices of the Bank of Nova Scotia. We now have a senior official who has said; "We did not independently check any safety conditions".

Why does this minister not come clean and produce those documents so that all members of Parliament, and the general public, will have all of the knowledge in regard to the safety conditions at the Westray coal mine?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): We have made it clear that we are assembling all the documentation and will be bringing it before the House and before the public. The documentation is voluminous. It is into the thousands of pages but we are making good progress with that and we will be bringing forward all this documentation very shortly.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, the minister stood in his place and no fewer than seven times yesterday and seven times the day before said that the government received "independent mining consultant reports about safety at Westray". We are now being told that they did not receive these independent mining reports.

He also said and I quote: "We informed ourselves on a regular basis that this contract was in compliance". He is now saying that this was not done.

He said that the $85 million loan guarantee was given on the basis that safety would be maintained. We now see that the government did not care one bit about the safety of the Westray mine.

Why did the government say it received the independent consultants' reports when it did not? Even more reprehensible, why did the government try to give the impression that it did receive them when it did not?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Well, Madam Speaker, even more reprehensible is the hon. member's allegation that the federal government did not receive certificates of compliance from independent mining consultants month by month. We did receive such documents and those are going to be laid before the House together with all the documentation on this issue.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, what the minister said was "independent consultants' reports", over and over again. This is what the minister said yesterday, and I quote him once again: "The Prime Minister made it clear that this particular mine is regulated as to its safety and health regimes." But when the Prime Minister was asked in Washington whether anyone raised safety issues with him, he said: "Of course not, of course not."

I want to ask the minister which is the correct version, or did the minister make a mistake about that, too?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): I am surprised at the hon. member, Madam Speaker, because he is purposely confusing two things.

The Prime Minister was asked in Washington about a Devco report of 1987 and whether the question of safety was raised. He said it was briefly raised in the Devco report. Devco, of course, was concerned about Westray because it might have taken some of Devco's market share. There was a brief reference to safety, but this was three years before the mine was even started. When the mine was put in place it accommodated those safety concerns.

What the Prime Minister was talking about is that this is over-all an economic or business decision for the Government of Canada and not a safety decision. In fact, the Devco report of 1987 emphasized almost entirely nothing but business questions. That is what he was talking about.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OLDMAN DAM

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Experts appointed by this government just spent over a year examining the impact of the Oldman River dam project. After hearing witnesses and other experts, their conclusion is that the dam should not be used, but the government has rejected their conclusion.

I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. How can the public be expected to trust a government that talks about protecting the environment but simply refuses to listen to its own experts?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I think the leader of the New Democratic Party should give the public the correct information. In the report submitted yesterday, the commission recommended that if its first option was not acceptable, the dam could be maintained, provided certain recommendations were implemented. The government responded favourably to 22 of the 23 recommendations contained in the report. I think this shows the government is anxious to protect the interests of all concerned.

[*English*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister.

The report says, and I quote: "The dam should be decommissioned". That was the panel's first recommendation: decommission the dam. This recommendation was made very clearly in this report as their first preference.

My question for the minister is this. This group of experts, chosen by this government, have stated that the consequences of the project impose substantial environmental, social and economic costs and particularly is critical of the unfair treatment of the Peigan Band, of the serious environmental consequences and the minimal economic returns. Why has the minister and his government chosen to ignore the primary recommendation of the panel of experts chosen by this government itself?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the truth is in the report itself. I do not know if the leader of the NDP has had a chance to read the report. For her information I will refer her to page 6 where the panel, first of all, mentioned that it has examined the possibility of recommending the dismantling of the dam.

It states: "An extreme option for resolving the problem would be to dismantle the dam. The panel thinks that this would be an inappropriate use of government funds."

It goes on to say: "The panel's preferred recommendation is to decommission the dam by opening the low-level diversion tunnels and permitting unimpeded flow of the river. However, the panel recognizes that this option may cause insurmountable inter-jurisdictional difficulties. Consequently the panel also presents a secondary set of recommendations directed toward minimizing the environmental and social economic impacts of the dam if it were to be operated".

We have accepted that recommendation with the 22 other recommendations contained in this report.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

The report clearly says that the panel concludes, and I quote: "that environmental, social and economic costs of the project are not balanced by corresponding benefits and finds that as presently configured the project is unacceptable". No matter how the minister wants to

portray this, this government has chosen to ignore a panel of experts.

I ask the minister again, why would the public have any faith in any environmental process that this government undertakes when it refuses to listen to its own hand–picked experts? What confidence can he expect the public to have, whether it is aboriginal people or other groups, in the process of this government?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, again I believe this is a perfect case of selective interpretation of a report. Again on page 6 of the same report, the panel's "less preferred second recommendation is offered because the proponent has shown some efforts at mitigation and because acceptance of the first recommendation may lead to insurmountable inter–jurisdictional conflicts".

• (1130)

The chairman of the panel said on national TV last night that this is a recommendation that is pragmatic because it is enforceable as the other would probably not be enforceable.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

The premier of Nova Scotia has publicly stated that he asked the Prime Minister of Canada to intervene to keep the Westray proposal alive. The premier said: "There is no question I expressed my concerns to the Prime Minister. There is no question that I made representations to him".

There is no question that the Prime Minister of Canada himself was intimately involved in the approval of this project. I ask the Deputy Prime Minister: what was the Prime Minister's role? What did the Prime Minister of Canada do to see this project through?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is overlooking the fact that public spokesmen, leaders at the municipal level, provincial level, members of Parliament, many people were interested in economic development in that part of Nova Scotia.

Stellarton area had high unemployment. The whole region of Central Nova had high unemployment. We believe in regional economic development and so does the province. This particular project, which was going to contribute directly 240 jobs and a multiplier that could be two, three or four times that is a very, very important regional economic development instrument.

Therefore, many municipal leaders, many wardens and mayors came forward and supported this project. It is not unusual that they do because of the economic strength that this particular project could bring to the region.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is again to the Deputy Prime Minister.

We are not talking about a municipal politician. We are not talking about company representatives. We are talking about the involvement of the Prime Minister of Canada in the approval of this project.

Wednesday, May 20 in the Nova Scotia legislature, Premier Donald Cameron stated: "What the Prime Minister did after I spoke to him, you would have to ask him. I cannot answer for the Prime Minister".

In the absence of the Prime Minister, I once again ask the Deputy Prime Minister: what was the response? What role did the Prime Minister of Canada play in the Westray mine decision?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, the hon. gentleman does not like the fact that there was a mine begun in Pictou country. He is not alone. There are a number of people from Cape Breton who felt the same way.

Let me tell you who agreed with the development of this particular regional economic development project: Hank Dunnewold, the warden of the municipality of Pictou County.

There was Barry Trenholm, mayor of the town of Trenton; Ronald Marks, mayor of the town of Stellarton, and in a letter to the Prime Minister: D. Hugh MacGregor, chairman of the Pictou County Research and Development Commission; Dan Currie, mayor of the township of Pictou; Clarence Porter, ex–mayor of the town of Stellarton; Mary Daley, mayor of the town of Westphal; J. H. MacLean, mayor of the town of New Glasgow.

This was a very supported project by municipal leaders in that area.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, the minister can skate all he wants. The Prime Minister had an intimate involvement in this project.

I want to put a question to the Deputy Prime Minister. Given that intimate involvement by the Prime Minister, he must have known that this was the most dangerous coal seam in North America. Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell us about the people whom the Prime Minister so quickly embraced, what was the extent of their experience in driving an underground coal mine, in operating an underground coal mine?

Did the Prime Minister even have that information before he decided to fast track the project?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I notice the hon. member is wearing running shoes today. If he calls three years fast tracking, then he is a pretty slow runner.

This project in fact took over three years to put in place. Thousands and thousands of pages of documentation and contractual agreements had to be worked through. It frankly took a considerable amount of time to put in place to the acceptability of the province and of course to Westray, the banks and ourselves a proper contractual arrangement for the beginning of this mine.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, the minister makes my point beautifully for me. Sure it took three years but I put it to him that he should check. It took a lot less than three years after the premier called the Prime Minister.

The Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism is having an awful time getting his lines straight on this one. Everything he has said so far has been contradicted by respected, knowledgeable people, people in the know, responsible people.

The Deputy Prime Minister this morning, given now a total I think of eight opportunities, just sits there. I want to ask him: why the stonewalling on this one?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I cannot think of one instance in the last three days where anything I have said has been contradicted by anybody in the know.

We have allegations from hon. members opposite but allegations are not clear refutations, they are just allegations. Yesterday, in fact, we had a statement from the independent mining consultants confirming still further what I have already said.

What the hon. member should know, if he has got concerns about this tragedy and we all do, is he must direct his attention to the commission of inquiry in Nova Scotia where all of these matters will be looked at properly. I have made it clear we are going to be not only open with that commission of inquiry but co-operative as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the next member it would be helpful if members would make an effort and not impute motives at this time.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism.

In April 1991, Alan Craven, an engineering consultant for Associated Mining Consultants and the Bank of Nova Scotia, said:

> That the construction of the Westray coal mine was one of the most rapid he had ever seen. It is extremely fast to achieve an underground mine in 10 months. Normally you are talking years instead of months.

Considering the excessive speed of this mine construction raised by this consultant in April 1991, a year ago, and in view of the federal government's and the minister of energy's awareness as early as 1988 that this coal seam was a high-risk venture in terms of safety, why did the federal government not exercise greater direct scrutiny over safety developments rather than relying on the loans office of the Bank of Nova Scotia to do its job for it?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, we have no jurisdiction over matters of that sort. This is a provincial jurisdiction.

Yesterday we had a major constitutional discussion between the provinces and the federal government. Different levels of government have different levels of responsibility.

The monitoring, inspecting, all of that was the responsibility of two departments, the Department of Labour and the Department of Mines and Energy in the province of Nova Scotia. Therefore something went wrong. The hon. member is quite right. Something went wrong. What went wrong? The commission of inquiry in Nova Scotia is going to help us find out what that is.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, the minister has obviously been in office too long. He has forgotten how to ask questions. That is all he had to do.

The minister has made repeated references to receiving regular safety reports from his independent mining consultants or the consultants of the Bank of Nova Scotia. In today's Halifax *The Daily News*, Keith McCandlish, who is a geologist with Associated Mining Consultants in Calgary, said his firm wrote 18 reports for the bank between August 1990 and May 1992. As a courtesy he said: "Five of them were passed along to the federal Department of Industry, Science and Technology as a courtesy. Our function was not to monitor safety on a direct basis".

Who is telling the truth here? The minister or the consultants who performed and reported the inspections? Come clean.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I can help the hon. member with his question if he will listen carefully.

The job of the independent mining consultants was to make sure we received on a regular basis certificates of compliance, that we knew that this mine and that Curragh were complying with provincial statutes and regulations.

• (1140)

That was part of the monthly certifications we received from the independent mining consultants. In fact it was confirmed today in the very quotation that the hon. member makes. The day to day inspections of this mine was the job of the province of Nova Scotia through its inspectors, through its two government departments. That is what the committee of inquiry is looking into.

TRADE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

We all heard the President of the United States say yesterday that he was just a phone call away from the Prime Minister on trade disputes.

I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister: did the phone go dead on Honda? Did the phone go dead on softwood lumber? Did the phone go dead on magnesium? Why is it that the only thing the Prime Minister came away with from Washington was a ringing endorsement from Dan Quayle?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I think if my hon. friend read the press reports in Washington as well as here, she would understand that the Prime Minister had a very effective meeting with the President of the United States. The matter of the trade disputes that are there between us is going to be handled very effectively in the future.

We have had some difficulties. That is one of the reasons why the Prime Minister has raised these matters with the President. The conclusion we have seen from this meeting is that those matters will be handled more effectively in the future by the United States.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I did hear the press reports and I heard the President and the Prime Minister being compared to the fathers of free trade.

For my part, I would like to say that if they are the fathers of free trade, I would rather be the child of Murphy Brown.

[*Translation*]

I have not heard the Prime Minister state that the American government will abandon its action on Honda automobiles, that it will abandon its action on softwood lumber, that it will abandon its action on magnesium.

What did the Prime Minister really accomplish in Washington during his visit? Was it nothing else but a photo opportunity?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, this was not, as my hon. friend has alleged, a publicity stunt.

At the luncheon meeting the Prime Minister had with the President in attendance were the Secretary of State, Jim Baker, and the U.S. trade representative, Carla Hills, two key people in the management of the relationship between the United States and Canada.

These matters, the ones she has referred to, have been discussed. But there is a certain element of process that must be followed in these matters, whether we are managing them or whether the United States is managing them.

What has become very clear as a result of the meeting between the President and the Prime Minister is that the attention of the President and the senior members of his cabinet will be engaged at all times in the management of these issues.

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CANADA–U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance in the Conservative Government of Manitoba said that the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement is a failure, the cause of massive unemployment and that the federal government deliberately misled Canadians in 1988 in selling the free trade agreement as a panacea.

I want to ask the Minister for International Trade instead of spending time cavorting with Dan Quayle, should not this government be listening to the serious condemnation being made by senior ministers of its own party about the failure of the free trade deal? Will it not understand that it is now time to renegotiate that deal?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I think that if my hon. friend looked at the facts he would see that last Wednesday, or was it Thursday of this week, there was an announcement of trade statistics which demonstrated that exports to the United States were at record levels.

We have seen an increase in exports to the United States of some 5 per cent at a time when the United States is in a recession. We have been increasing our market share during that same period because exports into the United States from other countries have been declining. This demonstrates that companies in Canada are competitive and that the increased exports are being translated into increased jobs in Canada at a time when we are going through a difficult time in our economy.

An hon. member: When?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): My hon friend asks: "When". If he could add he would see that there is an increase of $5 billion to $6 billion in exports from Canada into the United States. That translates into some 75,000 or 80,000 jobs.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, the minister talks about facts. Well, these are the facts. Since the signing of the free trade agreement Canada's industrial production has declined substantially relative to every other G–7 country. That is from his own agency, Statistics Canada.

Another fact is that Canada has lost 23 per cent of its manufacturing jobs compared to 6 per cent in the United States. The toughest fact of all is that there are a million and a half Canadians unemployed.

If the Minister of Finance in the province of Manitoba, a good Tory, can understand the drastic decline of Canadian production as a result of the free trade agreement, why can't this minister and why can't he start doing the honest thing by listening to Canadians and renegotiating the deal?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, let me just draw my friend's attention to the Peter Cook column in today's edition of *The Globe and Mail* where he comments on this very point. Let me quote one thing: "Under Mr. Chrétien we would have a prostrate Canada pleading its case".

My hon. friend says: "Yes, we are going to go down there beating ourselves on the chest and we are going to renegotiate that deal". What is the hon. member going to give up? Renegotiation is not a one–way street. If he is going to ask the United States to give up something, what is he going to offer in return?

Let me just quote two figures. Since January 1989 merchandise exports are up 12.3 per cent. Since the implementation of the FTA merchandise imports from the United States are up 6.2 per cent.

Who has been the winner? Canada has been the winner.

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TOBACCO

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Revenue.

A study released today in the British medical journal, *The Lancet*, shows that 250 million of the world's population will die from tobacco smoke. In Canada this will be 48,000 persons a year, our largest single cause of death by far.

Yet since April, when the government caved in to the tobacco manufacturers and removed the export tax on cigarettes, cigarette exports are up 37 per cent and cigarette tobacco exports are up 450 per cent according to Statistics Canada.

Since fully 80 per cent of these exports are smuggled back into Canada, how can the government still claim that its new cigarette smuggling policy is more effective than the export tax it replaced?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, the government continues to be committed to the national strategy for reduced tobacco use. We in this government do not need to take a lesson from anybody, least of all from the hon. member, to reduce tobacco product smoking in this country, particularly for young people.

Mr. Karpoff: You caved in.

Mr. Jelinek: Our policy continues to be anti-smoking. We will continue to do everything and lead the world in that regard.

As far as the specific question is concerned, the hon. member says we caved in to the tobacco manufacturers. He knows full well that it was the other way around, that we have been trying for years to get the tobacco manufacturers to the table to give us the things that would allow our law enforcement officers to track exported tobacco products so that we could ascertain who the smugglers are, get to the root of the problem, and make sure that we will reduce smuggling and therefore reduce smoking of tobacco products in this country.

He is right that 80 per cent of cigarettes exported are smuggled back into Canada. That is why we have taken these positive steps with tobacco manufacturers. The co-operation is going to lead toward the reduction of tobacco-smuggled products into Canada.

• (1150)

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The minister knows that these dramatic increases in cigarette smuggling undermine Canadian small business, cost the federal and provincial government substantial revenues, and threaten the Canadian anti-smoking effort.

In light of the extensive investigation by *The Toronto* Globe and Mail which appeared today, why does the minister still claim, as he did in April, that this government did not cave in to the tobacco lobbyists? Why do friends of the Prime Minister, such as Bill Neville, have such a negative influence on Canadian health policy?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, the hon. member just cannot get it through his thick head that the agreement—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sure everyone would appreciate it if the hon. minister would find another way of expressing himself.

Mr. Jelinek: The hon. member just cannot seem to understand that the agreement we have reached with the tobacco manufacturers, in conjunction with the RCMP and other law enforcement organizations, is going to go a long way toward the elimination or reduction of smuggling tobacco products into Canada.

This is not a smoking issue. It is not even a health issue at this time. We are committed to reduced tobacco smoking in this country. What we have to do is put a major dent in the amount of tobacco that is smuggled back into Canada.

What we agreed with the tobacco manufacturers will allow law enforcement officers, agencies and Revenue Canada to do exactly that for the benefit of all Canadians.

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, Pearson International Airport in Toronto handles one-third of Canada's airline passenger traffic and 40 per cent of its international and national air freight.

Modern, efficient facilities are required, not just for Torontonians but for those in my city and indeed dozens of other communities. The government has recognized this. It has announced plans to build three new runways and to have the private sector modernize and manage terminals 1 and 2.

I would like to ask the Minister of Transport to reaffirm the government's commitments. Specifically will the minister assure the House, subject to the report of the environmental panel, that the three new runways will continue to be a high priority and that the competition to redevelop terminals 1 and 2 with a promise of thousands of badly needed construction jobs at no cost to the Canadian taxpayer will move forward?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that the member has asked this question. It gives me the opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to making sure that the future success of Pearson International Airport continues to grow. It is the same concern we have with all airports in Canada.

We are awaiting the report of the EARP panel on the runways and decisions will have to be made at that time. In the meantime I would like to reassure the member that the future of Pearson airport is in good hands.

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CANADA POST

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post. Yesterday Canada Post announced the elimination of over 200 jobs in 85 communities across Canada.

Why does it make sense to the minister to eliminate jobs in small town Canada and send mail hundreds of miles away to be sorted, only to be returned to a few blocks from where it started?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the hon. member's party along with every other party in the House said to Canada Post in 1981 when we made it a Crown corporation: "Go out and act like a business. Look at new technologies, improve your efficiency and improve service". That is what Canada Post is doing.

If the hon. member thinks that Canada Post should go back to sorting by hand and using the distribution techniques that were quite proper 40 or 50 years ago, he is alone in that view. In my view we should be applauding Canada Post for being a leader in Canada in seeking efficiency, improved delivery and at a cost that is second to only one in the rest of the world.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): No, Madam Speaker, I do not intend to applaud Canada Post for firing hundreds of workers. If the minister wants to do that, so be it.

[*Translation*]

I wish to ask a question to the minister. According to section 60 of the Financial Administration Act, he and this government have the authority to give instructions to Canada Post. Is he willing, today, to give such an instruction to Canada Post in order to stop all cuts pending an independent evaluation of the new system, which I predict will be ludicrous?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is misinforming the House when he says that employees are being fired. The employees are not being fired. He knows that. Positions are being affected. That is different.

Mr. Boudria: Oh.

Mr. Andre: If the hon. member would stop barracking from his seat, I could answer him.

The reality is that Canada Post has the most generous job security program of any company in the country. The hon. member knows that. No one will be fired. No individual is going to be displaced or financially disadvantaged.

What will happen is Canada Post will continue to make progress on its efficiency, on its delivery service, on its on-time delivery, and will continue to be a major contributor to the economic growth of this country.

The hon. member knows that. At some point in time I hope he will show the political fairness to acknowledge that.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The government's ducking and weaving on the issue of the Oldman dam has caused farmers in southern Alberta great pain, the taxpayers of the country unnecessary costs, and it has shredded whatever credibility this government might have had left in terms of protection of the environment.

Recommendation No. 5 of the review panel's report deals with the failure to mitigate environmental consequences and the need to reach agreement with the Peigan band.

Does the government accept recommendation No. 5? If not, why not? If it does, how can it allow any build-up of water behind the dam until both conditions have been resolved satisfactorily?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I was hoping that the member for LaSalle-Émard would have understood the answer to a preceding question put by the leader of the NPD and which was on the same subject.

The commission presented its report yesterday, and I do not know if the member has had the opportunity to take a look at it. The report recommends, among other things, the introduction of dress and agreement measures between the parties in order to maintain the dam open. The report contains 23 recommendations. We have rejected one, the very first one in fact, which would have the effect of eliminating all together the use of the dam. All other recommendations were retained, and we will ensure that they are implemented. That shows our interest in the environment.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the federal environment minister placed all the blame for the mess at Oldman on the lack of co-operation from the Government of Alberta. At the same time the minister who has just answered, the Minister of Transport, said that the federal government rejected the review panel's prime recommendation because, he alluded, the federal government was afraid to do battle with Alberta.

If the federal government is not prepared to stand up for its own jurisdiction in cases where it publicly condemns the illegal actions of a provincial proponent, when in Heaven's name is it prepared to act?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I hope this attempt on the part of the member for LaSalle—Émard to mislead people is unintentional because, in fact what the commission says, what it recommends is to close down the dam by opening internal diversion tunnels, and to let the river flow freely.

However, the commission, and not the government, recognizes that this option can create enormous jurisdictional conflicts. Consequently, the commission presents a second set of recommendations in order to minimize the social, economic, and environmental impact if the dam is operated. We have accepted this recommendation along with the 20 others which are part of this excellent report.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will have a single question from the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre and a single question from the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, in view of the unavailability of the Minister of Agriculture, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Saskatchewan farm families have debt problems unlike those in any other province, yet the agricultural minister said Wednesday that he would instruct the Farm Credit Corporation not to obey any legislation by the province of Saskatchewan that would require lending institutions to lease foreclosed land back to the original owner for six years.

This is a recommendation that was made by a committee of lenders, academics and farmers, including the Saskatchewan credit unions, the Canadian Bankers Association and FCC itself. There has been no complaint by either the banks or the credit unions. Why is the government playing politics?

Is this the position of the federal government and if it is, why is it refusing to protect farm families from foreclosure?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I want to indicate to the hon. member that the present Farm Debt Review Board has worked well for the last five years. It is a plan that is set up for all producers and farmers across Canada facing difficulty. To offer one province a different program would not be fair to the producers in the rest of Canada.

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THE DISABLED

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the status of disabled persons. It concerns his omnibus bill, Bill C-78.

Disability groups were expecting this omnibus bill to contain amendments to the Immigration Act, Broadcast Act and the Evidence Act. It does not.

More than anything Canadians with disabilities are looking for timetables, deadlines and enforcement mechanisms in this bill. Instead they get promises of more review, more consultation and more delay.

Would the minister at least agree to develop some timetables for accessibility in such key areas as transportation?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Madam Speaker, my colleague opposite well knows that first, the contents of the bill were derived largely from the consultations that we had with the community.

Second, the community is very favourable to the bill. Third, the community required a number of minor amendments that we are looking at right now and to which I will most likely agree. We expect to be able to go forward.

On the specific issue of immigration that the member raised, it was felt that from a technical point of view it was more expeditious to deal with that in the upcoming review of the Immigration Act which should be tabled in this House very shortly. We have a commitment to that effect.

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PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

Madam Deputy Speaker: I wish to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Reuben Meade, Chief Minister of Montserrat.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I also wish to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Bohdan Horyn, Member of the Ukrainian Parliament and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): With due respect, Madam Speaker, today the government side of the House had, I believe, at least two questioners. We had one question allowed on this side of the House today. I am concerned because we are here to represent our constituents. I had a very important question for the Minister of Environment. Do we have to sit on the opposition side of the House to ask a question of the government?

During Question Period today each and every one of the opposition members had supplementals, at our expense, and in some cases they were not deserved.

Madam Speaker, I am attempting to represent my constituents and when I am not allowed to get on my feet and ask the question I feel it is a violation of my privileges as a member of this House. This has occurred more than once.

Madam Speaker, if you consistently go through that list, as you do every day, you will find that we are not getting our fair share of questions on this side of the House. In many cases what we have to say, the questions that we ask, are just as important as the questions asked by opposition members in this House.

An hon. member: More important.

Mr. Thompson: I believe that this whole process has to be reviewed, giving members on this side of the House equal opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker. When I sat on that side, almost in the same seat, and I had a question for a minister, I just went up to the minister and asked him. I suggest the hon. member do the same.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, we asked to be allowed to put a question today. We had come to an agreement with the Chair giving us the opportunity to ask three questions per week, but we managed only one this week, and we were not allowed one today on a subject as important as research and development where Quebec is totally neglected by the federal government as far as technology and prosperity is concerned.

Madam Speaker, I think you are not being fair or you are unaware of our agreement and you should talk to the Speaker who will confirm that we have been given the opportunity to ask three questions each week. I think this is unfair to the Bloc Quebecois.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point to support certainly one part of the member's contention, not all of it but one part of it. I too for the last couple of weeks have been trying to find the Minister of the Environment in order to ask him a question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I see that we have now had something from each side of the House, on what was not a question of privilege. The hon. member who raised the question did not see fit to wait and see what I would say about it, and of course it was not a question of privilege. I realize that it is sometimes frustrating, but there are only 45 minutes during Question Period and today we had 19 questions. I think it is a fair number of questions.

[*Translation*]

As to the remark made by the hon. member for Longueuil, I would ask him to rephrase it in a way which does not question the fairness of the Chair. I do not think that anyone, at this time—not me anyway—can be accused of being unfair toward the hon. member. He was recognized for a Standing Order 31 statement this morning and, as he can see, other members also wished to ask questions, but it was impossible to recognize everybody in the 45 minutes we had.

I would appreciate it if the hon. member would admit that he did not really mean what he said, then we could go on with the rest of Routine Proceedings.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, I did not say you had been unfair to me or to the Bloc Quebecois. I said you should ask the Speaker, the supreme authority in this House, about our agreement giving us the opportunity to ask three questions per week. We were allowed only one this week. I asked whether you had been properly informed by your boss, the Speaker of the House.

I repeat, this week the Bloc Quebecois was not treated fairly, but I am not accusing you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. member for this clarification. However, I think he should also realize that the Chair cannot do everything and can only recognize one member at a time in the 45 minutes reserved for Question Period.

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 section 36(8) of the Standing Orders, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 16 petitions.

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

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Next are ministerial statements.

Mr. Gérin: There is not a single minister. They all left.

• (1210)

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead is saying things which are out of place in the House. He knows it perfectly well; he admitted it himself barely an hour ago. I hope he will regain his memory and remember that alluding to who is

or is not in the House is contrary to our rules. The hon. member for Shefford has the floor.

Mr. Jean Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I know that one is not supposed to mention that a given minister is not in the House. But I thought it was customary to be able to say that there was no minister present in the House since there should always be at least one or two of them. That is what this is all about and I would like you to give me some clarification on this point, Madam Speaker. I have always been under the impression that there should be one or two government members present in the House in order to prove that the House is not sitting just for the fun of it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not think that under normal circumstances the House sits just for the fun of it. I think that it is when we get bogged down in slightly touchy and tedious issues that we give the impression that that is the case.

Mr. Gérin: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, on a point of order.

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I have been listening to your comments regarding my case. I also listened to the remarks made by my friend, the member for Shefford, as well as your answer to him. Nonetheless, I would like to have some more definite clarification from the Chair. Do the Standing Orders of the House allow sitting when there is no minister of the Crown present in this Chamber? That is exactly what I would like to know.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Yes. We will now go on to presentation of committee reports. The hon. member for Terrebonne.

* * *

BILL C-46

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 35, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-46, an act respecting contraventions of federal enactments, with amendments.

* * *

[*English*]

BILL C-26

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee 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, with amendments.

* * *

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

FIFTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations on Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof, with amendments.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Madam Speaker, I have a very important point of order to raise regarding Bill C-22. As you no doubt realize, Bill C-22 is an act to enact the Wage Claim Payment Act, to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof. It was introduced in the House of Commons on June 13, 1991.

On November 5, 1991 Bill C-22 received second reading and was referred to the Standing Committee for Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations for clause by clause consideration. After having covered 28 clauses of the bill, the committee broke on December 3, 1991 on the basis that an amendment

introduced by the parliamentary secretary was out of order.

Five months later, on May 5, 1992 the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs appeared before the standing committee and said that he was severing the Wage Claim Payment Act part of the bill. The committee then went back and negated the 28 clauses we had already previously agreed to and then proceeded to vote down the remaining clauses that dealt with the Wage Claim Payment Act which was a major principle of Bill C-22.

The main principles of Bill C-22, as approved at second reading, are to establish a wage protection plan and to include insolvency.

I submit that the committee did not narrow the principle; it changed the principle. It is no longer Bill C-22 that we are dealing with but Bill C-11, so to speak. The House as a whole, all of us, agreed on the major principles of this bill, sent it to committee and the committee wiped out one of those major principles.

I would like to cite Beauchesne's, and make other citations, which I think will help you, Madam Speaker, in your deliberations on this question. I quote *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, Sixth Edition, citation 684, page 204:

> 684.(1) The time for moving an Instruction is immediately after the committal of the bill, or, subsequently, as an independent motion.

It goes on:

> If the bill has been partly considered in committee—

I wish to emphasize:

> If the bill has been partly considered in committee, it is not competent to propose an Instruction.

As I said, it had been partly considered. We were up to 28 clauses at the time that it was severed.

No instruction had been given at the end of second reading nor prior to committee stage. In other words, the committee received no instruction from the House to empower it to change the principle of the bill.

Another citation from Beauchesne's reinforces this citation. It is citation 689 on page 205:

> 689.(1) A committee is bound by the decision of the House, given on second reading, in favour of the principle of the bill, and should not, therefore, amend the bill in a manner destructive of this principle.

I want to emphasize that the committee had approved the first 28 clauses of the bill, and that following the appearance of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs on May 5, a full five months later, when he announced that he was eliminating one of the two main principles of the bill, namely the Wage Claim Payment Act, the government members proceeded to go back to the 28 clauses that were approved and then voted against them.

I would also like to quote Joseph Redlicks' *Procedure of the House of Commons: A Study of its History and Present Form*, A.M.S. Press, 1909, New York, Volume III, page 95: "It is not proper to ignore the transformation of a bill by committee into what is really a new bill".

I submit that we are dealing with a new bill. To continue the quotation: "The correct course to adopt in such an event is to withdraw the bill and to introduce the measure as altered by the committee as a new bill beginning again with the first reading".

I look to Beauchesne's as the primary determinant of questions of procedure. I fully understand that Erskine May is often cited, but it reflects predominantly the British House of Commons while Beauchesne's is written by Canadians for the Canadian Parliament.

I believe sincerely that this bill is illegitimate. It is a bastard bill. That is what it says in Beauchesne's, which is based on Canadian practice and precedents, and it should have a final say in matters when there is a difference of opinion with Erskine May.

I submit that Bill C-22 reported out of committee is out of order and should be withdrawn and reintroduced for first reading.

Madam Speaker, I submit to you this information most humbly and I ask you to consider it seriously.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, it is not a matter of whether one agrees or disagrees with wage earner protection.

I do personally, but I submit that the point of order made is not valid. First, the committee can legitimately remove clauses from the bill if it so wishes, which it did.

What was out of order was an attempt by the government to introduce amendments which were against the original purpose of the bill, and the chairman of the committee ruled on that some time ago as he had to according to our rules. That part was done.

Finally, even if the committee had amended a clause I submit to you that that should have been raised as a point at the committee rather than here.

• (1220)

However, as much as I would like to see a wage earner protection plan I do not think that the point that is being raised today is valid. Clauses were removed from the bill, narrowing the scope of the bill. In other words the bill covered several items and it now covers one item less. However desirable or undesirable that particular move is it is certainly not out of order.

Further, hundreds of thousands of jobs are at stake if we do not get a new bankruptcy law. I do not want to see any more workers lose their jobs in the depths of this recession. We need to help workers immediately. I do not want to see this delayed any further, notwithstanding my great desire, and that of my colleague from Dartmouth, to have the wage earner protection plan which I certainly hope the government will introduce at the earliest opportunity.

Coming back to the point of order, I submit that particular one is not one. The purpose of the bill was not changed, unless one considers narrowing the scope of the bill as being a change. Narrowing the scope of the bill is perfectly within our rules.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the arguments of my two colleagues and, just like you, witnessed the vote on second reading of Bill C–22. You know that after the report tabled a few minutes ago, you would not recognize Bill C–22. It has been changed to such an extent that you will think it is a different one. Bill C–22 was stripped of all its content. We are all aware. We all heard the speeches during second reading and particularly that of the consumer and corporate affairs minister talking about the wage claim fund.

That wage claim fund is fundamental to the bill. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I think that when you examine the report presented to you by the chairman of the committee today, you will realize, as we did, that the committee has completely modified the content of the bill by removing its major element. I therefore think, as does my colleague from Chambly, that this bill should have been tabled again in the House because the government backed down on the fundamental intent and the very principles of the bill.

An hon. member: Twenty–eight sections.

Mr. Lapierre: Twenty–eight sections were removed between the second reading, where we all agreed, and the tabling of the report. So, Madam Speaker, I think that the essence and the principles have been modified, exactly what my friend the member for Terrebonne does not understand, essence and principles. Obviously, once you have read the chairman's report you will send him back to the drawing board because this House cannot be victimized by such a travesty of a bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to intervene on this point of order, having had a little to do with its early history in a previous capacity.

I thought the hon. member for Chambly stated his argument in very colourful fashion by calling this a bastard bill. Actually it is intravenous feeding of the bill rather than a bastard bill. I do not find his citation of Beauchesne's, page 204, citation 684, to be pertinent to the issue before us at this particular moment.

I would rather go to citation 689(2), which my hon. friend also referred to, which states:

> A committee may negative every clause and substitute new clauses, if relevant to the bill as read a second time.

I submit that the negativing and substitution are relevant to the bill as read a second time.

My hon. friend depreciates the value of Erskine May because of its jurisdiction, but I think it is appropriate to add that Erskine May states on page 486, paragraph 2 that: "Notwithstanding the rule which forbids the moving of an amendment which is destructive to the principle of the bill, there is nothing to prevent the committee from negativing a clause or clauses, the omission of which may nullify or destroy the bill and reporting the bill as amended to the House".

The committee did not consider amendments in regard to the point raised by the hon. member. The committee simply rejected certain clauses of the bill. Committees can approve or reject clauses of the bill. I would ask the hon. member whether he is proposing in objecting to the report of the committee that committees should not have the power to approve or disapprove of clauses.

With reference to the intervention of my hon. friend for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, I appreciate his sagacity, his knowledge of this issue, and the wisdom of the points he makes. I appreciate the generosity of his comments.

The hon. member for Shefford suggested that the bill as reported is empty of all substance. The wage earners of this country, the unsecured creditors of this country, and the farmers and fishermen of this country, who will be protected by this bill as amended do not regard it as being empty of all substance.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I want to say that the ultimate objective of Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act dating back to 1949, as we all know, was to create a fund for wage claims. That was the whole philosophy behind this bill.

At present, according to the report the chairman of the legislative committee on Bill C-22 just tabled, the philosophy of the bill has been totally changed. As far as I know, legislative committees have never been allowed to change the philosophy on which bills are based.

I remember very clearly when we were studying the firearms bill in committee, I was proposing amendments for every section and was told the changes were out of order because they altered the philosophy of the legislation.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to say that I totally support the hon. member for Chambly and I also ask that the bill in its present form be withdrawn.

[*English*]

Mr. Edmonston: Madam Speaker, I would like to respond very briefly.

The hon. member from the government side mentioned that it seemed as if I were questioning the ability of a committee to make changes to the different clauses or the different sections in a proposed bill. Of course I am not saying that, Madam Speaker, and I am sure you did not understand me to say that.

What I am saying here, and I feel that it is important it be emphasized, is that when we are talking about a major principle of a major piece of legislation and we are talking about a Canadian citation which is often used in this House, Beauchesne's, I believe we are talking about jurisprudence. I have always been told in court that it is better to use Canadian jurisprudence rather than American or English.

What I tried to do by citing Beauchesne's at two different intervals was to show clearly that Beauchesne's was on the side of bringing in a new bill.

I believe there is a question of balance of convenience. I am sure you understand that whenever someone goes before a court and tries to have an extraordinary action accepted by a judge has to be shown as in the case of injunction, a balance of convenience.

Let us look at the balance of convenience with the government here. We are simply saying bring in the bill and respect Parliament. We do not want any more bastard bills that affect the legitimacy of what we are doing.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I want to thank the hon. members for Chambly, Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Shefford and Saint-Hubert as well as the parliamentary secretary to the leader of the Government who brought my attention to these issues.

I will take the matter under advisement for a little while and get back to the House as soon as possible.

* * *

[*English*]

BILL C-58

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-58, an act to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act and other acts in consequence thereof, without amendment, in both official languages.

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

• (1230)

Mr. Edmonston: Madam Speaker, now I am seeking the floor because it is with great pride that I wish to present a private member's bill dealing with amending the Financial Administration Act. It is a private member's bill which essentially allows Canadian citizens to sue on behalf of the government any contractors which have been hired by the government and who do not serve or deliver the product—

Madam Deputy Speaker: We were not advised that the hon. member would move his bill today. I would like to put it to the House and then allow the hon. member to tell us what it is about so that we are within the rules.

* * *

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–347, an act to amend the Financial Administration Act.

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

Mr. Edmonston: Madam Speaker, I will try to be very brief.

It is essentially an act to amend the Financial Administration Act in order to allow Canadian citizens to sue directly contractors and suppliers of the federal government that have given the federal government less than was agreed to, have abused the government or have defrauded the government.

This flows from legislation which originally came from the United States during its civil war where many of the suppliers of that time were ripping off the government. They found out that the government was incapable of suing them in every instance. It actually gave citizens the right to sue and have a part of whatever they received in judgment in favour of them as plaintiffs.

This is very important because it gives citizens the right to sue suppliers to receive part of the money of which they feel that the government was cheated.

I hope that we get to this bill later this year.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Mr. Edmonston 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.

* * *

MAIN ESTIMATES

EXTENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF TREASURY BOARD ESTIMATES

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4)(a), the following motion in the name of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is deemed adopted.

Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4)(a), consideration of Treasury Board votes 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 and 20 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993 by the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations, be extended beyond May 31, 1992.

* * *

PETITIONS

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, today I wish to present two petitions signed by a number of people in Windsor, Ontario.

These 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.

VIOLENT CRIME

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Madam Speaker, I wish to present three petitions also signed by a number of people in the Windsor, Ontario area.

These petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation establishing mandatory minimum sentences for all violent crimes. These minimum sentences would apply uniformly to all regions of Canada.

These petitions have been examined by the clerk and have been duly certified pursuant to our rules.

[*Translation*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, today it is my duty to table five petitions, part of a series of petitions I have tabled in this House concern-

ing the Court Challenges Program, a program which, as you know, made it possible for individuals and minority groups to have their constitutional rights, as they relate to language and equality rights, clarified before the courts.

Madam Speaker, your petitioners maintain that the Court Challenges Program was, and should still be an essential instrument in the evolution of our constitutional rights and that all Canadians must be given equal access, whatever their income, to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Your petitioners want Parliament to consider re-instating the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

LAW OF THE SEA

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to have the opportunity today to present to the House petitions from over 4,000 Canadians relating to the Canadian ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the House that the oceans cover 70 per cent of the earth's surface; that the Law of the Sea Convention was open for signature in 1982; and that the report of the World Commission on the Environment and Development, known as the Brundtland commission, states that the most significant initial action that nations can take in the interests of the oceans' threatened life support systems is to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the Government of Canada to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention without delay, no later than June of this year, and to mobilize Canadian diplomatic resources to encourage other nations, particularly developed nations, to ratify this important international treaty.

In presenting these to the House, I would like to pay particular thanks to the World Federalists of Canada who have co-ordinated this national signature and letter gathering campaign. I will present all of those to the House that are in the proper form and those that are letter or correspondence or other petitions I will present directly to the minister.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam Speaker, I have a petition from various communities in my riding; Lansdowne, Mallorytown, Rockport, Gananoque, Frankville, Toledo. They are petitioning the government to make sure that any amended Canadian Constitution has been approved by the Canadian people before it is altered in any way.

BILL C-289

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I have a petition signed by dozens of people in the Hamilton-Stoney Creek area. The first signature is that of the secretary of the Legion in my riding, Cora Ring.

The petitioners are calling upon the members of Parliament to support Bill C-289, the Remembrance Day Act, to ensure that Remembrance Day continues to be observed. Remembrance Day is a solemn day for remembering the dead and those who fought in the two world wars and in Korea.

Certainly I know that there are hundreds of other Hamiltonians who join with me in supporting this petition.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition that is mainly directed to the Department of Labour and was sent by the Postal Workers Union in Sorel. Your petitioners have some questions about the validity of collective agreements and about the constant changes taking place at the Canada Post Corporation, which may threaten their jobs or force them to move to another region.

This petition was signed by all members of Local 408 in Sorel. Once again, your petitioners are opposed to any special legislation and any changes being made in their collective agreement before it expires.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I assume the petition was certified in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House?

Mr. Plamondon: Yes, as far as I know.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Madam Speaker, I have a petition I would like to present. It was sent by women in my own and other Bloc Quebecois ridings, who request that the goods and services tax be removed

from items for female hygiene such as tampons and sanitary pads. I realize this is not something we often talk about in this House, but just the same, it is my duty to table this petition for these women who want to see the goods and services tax removed from sanitary pads in this country, and I think that is quite reasonable, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I assume the hon. member, who is herself a member of the legal profession, can give the House the assurance that she had her petition certified in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Mrs. Venne: As far as I know, Madam Speaker, my petition is entirely in order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member.

• (1240)

[*English*]

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, this petition is hereby certified correct as to form and context by the clerk of petitions.

I am presenting this petition on behalf of 136 real estate professionals who represent nine different offices. These petitioners are calling upon Parliament to include property rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

* * *

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, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 241, 258, 276, 305 and 309.

[*Text*]

Question No. 241—**Mrs. Feltham:**

With respect to the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement (*a*) how many jobs have been created as a direct result of the agreement (*b*) how many jobs have been lost as a direct result of the agreement?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): The Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement will have positive effects on the Canadian economy over the long term. At this stage, it is too early to come to any conclusions about the effects both positive and negative that the Free Trade Agreement has had on the labour market in Canada.

Job losses over the past year should not be attributed to the free trade agreement. It is only one of several factors including wage rates, business cycles and the value of the Canadian dollar which influence employment patterns in Canada.

There have been encouraging economic developments. In 1991, Canada sold $15 billion more in goods than it imported from the United States. In the three years since the free trade agreement was signed, merchandise exports to the United States have increased by an average of 5 per cent over 1988.

While there have been positive developments, some workers may be adversely affected by structural adjustments taking place. These individuals can be and have been assisted by the wide range of general labour market programs we have in place.

Question No. 258—**Mr. Karpoff:**

As of March 16, 1992, has the PMO received any cards, letters or petitions or other forms of written or electronic communications concerning pending changes to the Patent Act and generic drugs and if so (*a*) how many (*b*) how many signatures did they contain (*c*) how many signatures favoured increased patent protection for pharmaceuticals (*d*) how many signatures opposed increases in pharmaceutical prices?

Mr. Leonard Gustafson (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): The following is in response to Mr. Karpoff's question of March 17, 1992:

a) As of March 16, 1992 the PMO had received 4,177 cards, 28 letters, 147 signatures on petitions and 34 other forms of written or electronic communications concerning pending changes to the Patent Act;

b) The total number of signatures contained within the above documents was 4,386;

c) Of the total number of signatures received, 10 favoured increased patent protection for pharmaceuticals; and

d) Of the total number of signatures received, 4,376 opposed increases in pharmaceutical prices.

Question No. 276—**Mr. Robinson:**

With respect to the court cases of (*a*) Veysey vs the commissioner of Corrections (*b*) Egan and Nesbit vs the Minister of Justice (*c*) Mossop vs the Minister of Justice (*d*) Haig and Birch vs the Minister of Justice (*e*) Canadian Committee against Customs Censorship vs the Minister of Justice, in each case, what was the (i) number of hours spent by Department of Justice lawyers preparing the case (ii) number of hours spent by Department of Justice lawyers arguing the case (iii) estimated cost incurred by the government at each level of litigation (iv) cost of any private sector lawyers or consultants in preparing the case?

Mr. Robert D. Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):

(i) It is not possible to provide the number of person-hours expended by various justice lawyers in the several departments involved in these cases. All cases except Veysey are still before the courts, either at trial or on appeal.

(ii) The estimated number of hours spent by justice counsel arguing these cases:

Veysey	–	6
Egan	–	18
Mossop	–	12
Haig	–	12
Cdn. Cttee. (Glad Day Bookshop)	–	24

(iii) Disbursements paid by the government:

Veysey	–	$ 50.00
Egan	–	9,555.31
Mossop	–	1,264.64
Haig	–	780.86
Cdn. Cttee. (Glad Day Bookshop)	–	1,234.80

(iv)

No agents were appointed	–	nil
Costs of consultants	–	$16,585.95

Question No. 305—**Mr. Karygiannis:**

With respect to *The State of Canada's Environment*, 1991 edition (*a*) what was the total cost incurred in the designing, printing and binding of this publication (*b*) what is the breakdown of these costs (*c*) what would have been the costs incurred in the designing, printing and binding of a similar paperback edition?

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): (*a*) The total cost incurred by Environment Canada in the designing, including word processing, typesetting and graphics, printing and binding of *The State of Canada's Environment*, 1991 edition, was $334,969.67.

(*b*) The breakdown of these costs was:
Design: $155,364.37
Printing and binding: $179,605.30

(*c*) Because of the size of the report which was nearly 750 pages in English and over 800 pages in French, a hard cover format was chosen to substantially increase its durability and shelflife. This was strongly recommended by Canada Communication Group, our co-publisher; Banfield-Seguin Ltd., the designer; and the printers, D.W. Friesen and Sons Ltd.

Nevertheless, in response to your question, the cost incurred in the designing, printing and binding of a similar paperback edition would have been $290,969.67, a reduction of $44,000.

Question No. 309—**Mr. Jordan:**

Of Canada's total exports to the U.S. in the first quarter of 1992, what percentage is from companies that are either partially or totally controlled by Americans?

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): By the minister responsible for Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada reports:

Statistics Canada does not have the necessary data to relate U.S. ownership of exporting companies to exports on a current basis. Obtaining this information would represent a considerable increase in paperwork for businesses and a very costly set of surveys.

[*English*]

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

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

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL PARKS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Charest that Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Natural Resources envelope.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks act. Obviously, we are all aware of the significance and importance of this bill that has come up this Friday and which the government wants to rush through. Nevertheless, we want to exercise our rights as members. Although the government regularly denies our existence, we want to show that we do exist and that we intend to participate fully in the debate.

We want to participate in the debate so much, that we bitterly regret not being members, for example, of the legislative committee on Bill C-81 concerning referendums. Of course, today we want to show the government its insensitivity, given the presence of some members who do not belong to the usual club. Therefore, I want to talk today about the National Parks Act, not only about what this bill contains but especially about what it does not contain.

Madam Speaker, you no doubt know that the lack of Canadian national parks in Quebec is now legendary. My colleague from Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead just obtained figures showing that it is a third of one per cent.

Mr. Gérin: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead on a point of order.

Mr. Gérin: I invoke Standing Order 29(3), Madam Speaker.

And the count having been taken:

Madam Deputy Speaker: We have a quorum. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Shefford.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I am very glad that my colleagues came to hear my excellent speech. I wanted to talk to you about the National Parks Act and the obvious lack of co-operation now between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec. I know that the Minister of State for the Environment will tell us in her speech later on about the mandate of her department, particularly as regards the administration of the National Parks Act.

Everybody is well aware of the issue of the Saguenay marine park and I know that if my colleague and leader, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, was here today, he would have stressed the importance of this issue, given all the efforts and the work he did. I know that the parliamentary secretary will provide us, maybe in a speech later on at the report stage or at third reading, with the details regarding the Saguenay marine park.

The agreement in principle on the establishment of the Saguenay marine park was reached two years ago. Although some work has been done since, the most important decisions still have not been made. Indeed, unlike Bill C-59 which we are now debating, we still know nothing about the area of the park, although the minister said he was open to proposals to the effect that it be larger than originally planned. Nothing is happening with this project. The minister is in the last months of his mandate and one would have thought that he would have wanted to finalize this project before retiring. Last February, Quebec Minister Blackburn raised the possibility of a 1200 square kilometres park.

It is obvious that if the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean would still be the Minister of the Environment, Bill C-59 would not only include prescriptions for Wood Buffalo National Park, but would also provide the details of the boundaries of the Saguenay marine park.

The Minister of the Environment is in a hurry today. He wants us to pass this bill, but he has not done his homework regarding the Saguenay marine park. This situation compels us to intervene. In a release, the minister said regarding the master plan, that he still hoped to implement it with the co-operation of all the stakeholders. In fact, some kind of harmonization committee was set up and the last information that we have is to the effect that following the tabling of the progress report, the committee members were confident that the development of the management plan could start. That was in March, but the plan has yet to be completed and we are very concerned.

Obviously we would have liked the Minister of the Environment to tell us about his timetable regarding the Saguenay marine park. Obviously we would have liked to have in this bill the legal prescriptions, the provisions for the legal creation of the marine park. Right now, this

marine park exists only on paper. Nothing in this House recognizes a legal reality and, in fact, the real creation of the Saguenay marine park. I know that the minister or his parliamentary secretary will later try to explain this major omission. If you bother to come before this House to table a bill on national parks, obviously it should include all the details regarding the Saguenay marine park. We can only regret this omission.

I would also like to know what is happening with the work of the harmonization committee. Harmonization is fine as long as it leads to something. There is talk of an amount of $493,000 in capital projects regarding the land part of the Saguenay park, but we would like to get more details on the project.

One of the most substantial elements of the creation of the Saguenay marine park, as well as Moresby, is the boundaries. The bill that we are debating today is very specific about this aspect. For instance, looking at schedule V and schedule VI, there is a detailed description. Therefore, the necessary work has been done and one of our colleagues from the New Democratic Party, who worked hard on that project, told us earlier how he, the minister and others worked to reach a successful conclusion to that project.

• (1250)

In any case, I know why the bill does not give us any details on the Saguenay marine park. It does not because no agreement could be reached on who was going to administer the park. Some people think administration of the park should be handed over to a management company.

Madam Speaker, I know you share our concern about the Saguenay marine park. Of course I do not want to spend all my time talking about this marine park, although it is a major omission, and if it were not for the intrinsic value of this particular bill, we would have to vote against it. However, our leader, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, initiated the plans for Bill C-59 and worked very hard to prepare what we now have today, a bill that settles some centuries old problems. That is why we intend to support Bill C-59. We are sorry more information was not available beforehand.

Personally, I was astonished when I heard the leader of the government in the House announce rather pompously yesterday that an agreement had been reached by all parties, that everybody agreed and that the bill would be expedited through the House. They always forget, unfortunately, because they would prefer to pretend we do not exist. Yesterday, the leader of the government again forgot we existed when he pompously announced everything would be over in a matter of minutes. He thought our conscientious members would rubber-stamp this bill.

Madam Speaker, you and the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell are aware we are usually prepared to co-operate, but there are limits. At this very moment, while we are here in our seats waiting for the referendum legislation we intend to fight, we know that Parliament has once again formed a committee while ignoring the representations in this House.

I have no crystal ball like the former Prime Minister Mackenzie King, but I predict that after the general election there will be so many of us in this House that our presence will indeed be felt. Maybe at that point the government in power will have the courtesy to invite our contribution to the debate.

I will get back to the referendum bill, because that is probably the worst sticking point. The government has decided to form a committee on Bill C-81. The only members opposed to the principle of the bill in the House yesterday, 197 to 7, the real opposition, the opposition's opposition, were us and we have no seat on this committee.

Mr. Gérin: It's a farce.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I remind the hon. member for Shefford that we are discussing Bill C-59.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I was getting there. I was just going to say that I hope the committee that will consider Bill C-59 will have a few members of the Bloc Quebecois at the table who will be able to discuss the case of the Saguenay marine park. I am sure that even the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, our own leader, would like to raise some questions with the committee, because as its spiritual father, he is very much aware of the importance of the Saguenay marine park.

There are a number of questions we would like to ask, both on this important committee and the other committee on the referendum bill. We want to express our views wherever we can. I know that my colleagues are all anxious to talk about Bill C–59, its contents, what it does not include, and especially the questions that they have.

If tomorrow morning British Columbia voted for self–determination, how would the assets be split? What would happen to the park that we are creating today? Would it be federal property? Would B.C. have to pay a fee to the federal State? What would happen? This is more or less the kinds of questions that were examined by the Commission on the political and constitutional future of Quebec, more commonly called the Bélanger–Campeau commission.

I know that you followed the work of the commission with great interest, but there is one aspect that is directly linked to Bill C–59, and that is the division of assets. I believe that it is a legitimate question, at a time when we are establishing new federal territories, to wonder what would happen if a province opted for sovereignty, whether it is British Columbia or Quebec.

Let us take the example of Quebec. This applies very well to Quebec because there are already four national parks that we will have to deal with, including the Mingan Islands, Forillon Park and a few other ones. We will have to look at those in due time. Some experts from the Bélanger–Campeau Commission said that in the case of Quebec—which is what concerns us with Bill C–59—the share of the province in the federal non–financial assets would be equivalent to the ratio between the value of those assets in the territory of Quebec and the value of the over–all non–financial federal assets in Canada and around the world.

The incomplete and imprecise information regarding the over–all value of the non–financial assets of the federal government does not enable us to quantify accurately those federal non–financial assets on the Quebec territory. But there is no doubt that the National Parks Act covers several of those assets.

To solve this important issue, they used the data provided by the Canadian Tax Foundation on the grants in lieu of property taxes that are distributed to municipalities by the federal government. I am convinced that my colleague from the NDP is concerned about the grants in lieu of taxes which will be distributed for instance to B.C. following the passing of Bill C–59 that we support.

Indeed, even if Government of Canada properties are not subject to municipal property taxes, in some cases, the federal government has agreed to give grants in lieu of taxes, as though the federal properties were taxable. There is of course no specific detail in this bill regarding the estimated value of the new park that we are establishing. We have exactly the same problem: What is the value of the Forillon Park? What is the true value of other parks such as this one?

Madam Speaker, I had a list of some assets that you would certainly have liked to consider, but unfortunately I do not have all those data. I can share with you the data of the Treasury Board of Canada, which concern us, and which were used by the Canadian Tax Foundation. The Quebec share of the grants in lieu of taxes paid by the Government of Canada and received by the municipalities in Quebec represent some 18 per cent of the total distributed to municipalities across Canada. In the basic scenario, this data is used to get an idea of the proportion of federal non–financial assets in Quebec.

Consequently—and this is of interest to us—the undeveloped, for instance the national parks that are certainly not established yet, are not the object of grants in lieu taxes. Such is the case and the Bélanger–Campeau report precisely dealt with national parks. This surprises me. It is especially the case for the 35 national parks, of which only three are in Quebec. Three out of thirty–five. That is why there is a major omission in Bill C–59.

• (1300)

Therefore, the 18 per cent figure seems high. The alternative models will use other percentages.

Just imagine the importance of such a bill in the case of state successions. Just think that because Quebec was penalised compared to the rest of the country under the National Parks Act, the 18 per cent usually withheld cannot apply in the assessment of grants in lieu of taxes for national parks because such grants are not available when national parks are not built.

An hon. member: And no tax is levied on them.

Mr. Lapierre: You are right; no tax is paid. My colleague who was a minister in Quebec was concerned about the fact that the federal government does not pay taxes on national parks. Therefore, I know he will want to explain further, later on, all the mathematical formulae that allow the federal government to get away with not paying.

Now, I will not keep on talking about the accumulated deficit. I know it is of particular interest to my colleague, the member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead. We have a good sense of humour here, Madam Speaker. My colleague for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell will certainly wish to add his knowledge to this debate because, as you know, the frontier towns between Quebec and Ontario will—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time is up. Are there any other questions or comments? We will hear the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): I listened extremely carefully to the member for Shefford. I took note of some of his remarks and I would like to ask him a couple of questions. For instance, he said that the member for Lac-Saint-Jean was the father, albeit a spiritual one, of a marine park idea in the Saguenay River. If I understood him correctly, he also said that if the member for Lac-Saint-Jean had remained the environment minister, everything would have been complete. The work would be finished. You will understand, Madam Speaker, that I am asking myself a few questions. First of all, does it mean that the member for Shefford is blaming the member for Lac-Saint-Jean for quitting his job as minister? I am curious to know the answer to this.

Second, if the Saguenay Park, the marine park, is, and I quote, a federal enclave, does it mean that the Bloc Quebecois member, who wants Quebec to go its own separate way, supports federal enclaves? It seems that he does since he said that if his leader had remained the environment minister, a job he claims he should not have quit, he would have completed the task which consisted of creating a federal enclave.

Mr. Plamondon: That has nothing to do with the issue in question, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Boudria: But, Madam Speaker, I am asking questions regarding the member's statement and I have quotes right here.

I also noticed that the member said that there were penalties and that Quebec was, and I quote, penalized with regard to grants in lieu of taxes for national parks. Well, if that is the case, how can he explain that he congratulated the member for Lac-Saint-Jean for being the spiritual father of a project which, according to him, penalizes Quebec?

Well then, I would like him to reconcile all of these ideas which he described earlier because there will be a lot of Canadian men and women quite concerned by the member's remarks and who will be surprised to hear, for example, a Bloc Quebecois member blaming another member for, first of all, saying that he was not present in the House today. I myself would not have said such a thing and, in view of the fact that I hold the member for Lac-Saint-Jean in high esteem, I would have never mentioned it, but the member for Shefford did. Anyway, those are the comments he made regarding the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

I would therefore like to know if he supports or not the fact that the member for Lac-Saint-Jean quit his job as environment minister and consequently abandoned the Saguenay marine park project? I would like answers to all these questions and I am quite sure that all the members opposite are also curious to know the answers to all these very relevant questions which flow directly from the remarks made by the member for Shefford.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I think that the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell paid tribute to the member for Lac-Saint-Jean for the work that he started when he was Minister of the Environment. Indeed, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean has always been loyal first and foremost to his constituents and to the province of Quebec, so much so that, when his government denied his loyalty toward Quebec, when this government decided to abandon Quebec, he even sacrificed his position as Minister of the Environment to defend Quebec before everything else.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lapierre: It is obvious that the member for Lac-Saint-Jean would have carried out the marine park when, like many others, he believed the risk worth taking. But he was smart enough, with other colleagues from his caucus, to realize that his government was betraying the advocates of risk taking. At that time, he had the courage of his convictions, which is not the case with many other members of this House.

I am happy that the member for Lac-Saint-Jean took part in trying to re-establish some balance in the National Parks Act. I am very glad to see that the member for Sherbrooke, for example, is giving a national park to British Columbia, but he forgot where his government, where his power came from. He forgot those who elected him. He should have tackled head on the problems of the marine park of Saguenay, for example, and today we should be examining the two parks in this legislation.

When we talk about penalizing, I think that the greatest penalty that Quebec can get at this time is to have to bear with this government which claims to have power because it got 58 members elected. Unfortunately, it is turning its back to Quebec, which is not the case with the member for Lac-Saint-Jean who is in Sept-Îles preparing for the coming of the next group of Quebec members of Parliament to Ottawa.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member whether he is aware and is prepared to speak to those British Columbians who are presently watching this debate, in particular the Haïda people.

This is not a piece of legislation to give British Columbia a national park. I would hope that the member knows that. This is enabling legislation to allow an agreement to be implemented between the Haïda people and Canada.

This debate has been going on in this House for six years. The member has already expressed to me personally that the reason for holding up this piece of legislation, for holding up the debate, is to try to extort from the government a seat on the referendum committee that is presently meeting, which has eight members on it.

To hold the Haïda people hostage like this while claiming to be seeking some kind of just remedy for the Bloc Quebecois is unethical, immoral and unworthy of anyone who is elected to this Chamber. This is a First Nation that stood on the line to protect the land. The elder people were arrested and taken to jail.

They ultimately negotiated with two levels of government. They held a referendum in their nation on their land to protect their land. This small bill that is before the House is solely to enable an agreement to be put into place, an agreement that has been promised since 1987.

The members of the Bloc Quebecois know full well that they are attempting to extort something that is not provided for individual members, or in any formula to any collection of members known as a party.

I just would like to hear from the member as to why he thinks his rights in representing a view from his province override those of the Haïda people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: Question of privilege, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead on a question of privilege.

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, you told some Bloc Québécois members several times today that some words are not to be used. I just heard the word "extort" in reference to Bloc Quebecois members, and I ask you to act in the same way the New Democratic member who just spoke—as you have acted all day with Bloc Quebecois members.

• (1310)

You know very well that that word and several others he used before are unparliamentary. Accusing a Bloc Quebecois member or all Bloc Quebecois members of trying to extort, that, is of trying to use a bill to get something else, is an extremely serious attack, Madam Speaker, much more serious than using a word like "unfair" about the Speaker of the House. It is much more serious.

Yes, and you know it. We were elected to be here and we are debating a bill under consideration. We have had it before us for barely an hour and a quarter. The member himself said that the government has been preparing it for four years. We have had it in front of us for an hour and a quarter and he accuses us of trying to engage in extortion in order to obtain something else.

Well, I hope that you will ask him to apologize publicly, here in this House, and not just in any old way. Otherwise, expel that member, we do not need him. Basically, I know why he wants to rush it through. It is because the government is preparing a nice little trip to Rio and he will need the unanimous consent of the House. I tell him in advance that he will not get unanimous consent. They will stay here to do the work.

I am ready to sit all next week—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think that we are getting off the subject. What the hon. member for Skeena said, twice, is that he was quoting the hon. member.

Mr. Rocheleau: I never said that in my life.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not know who he was talking about, but he said that a member had admitted such a thing to him.

I cannot personally cast doubt on the word of the hon. member for Skeena. Perhaps the term used was—

Mr. Gérin: Impartiality.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Maybe the term used was not the best one and I am sure that the hon. member might want to rephrase it—while he still has the floor, because I will let him finish—or find a different word to express his opinion. But he told me that he was quoting someone.

As for the other terms mentioned, I think that when the hon. member sees the transcript of the debates, he will find that no one was attacked personally. A state of mind or attitude was mentioned, but there was no personal attack. Otherwise I would have made it a duty to call the hon. member's attention to it.

[*English*]

Would the hon. member for Skeena be kind enough to change his words to make sure that we do not have any unparliamentary language?

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, certainly when you review the "blues", if you find that the context and the way in which I used the word "extort" would lead you to believe that it is unparliamentary I would be glad to withdraw it.

What I was expressing was a direct conversation I had with the member who just spoke, who indicated that he was intending to hold up this legislation and keep it from passing, to try to use political blackmail to obtain a seat on the referendum committee, which is the same thing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: That is false. I never said that. What the member is saying is false. Madam Speaker, you see how unfairly you are acting in such situations.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I see no reason for the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead to accuse the Chair for the way I act—I take no responsibility for what a member might or might not say. I can assure the hon. member that I am doing my work as calmly and fairly as possible and I do not believe that insulting the Chair will make debate in this House easier or in any way contribute to decorum in this House. I do not believe that this kind of attack will raise the esteem in which Canadians throughout our country hold the House of Commons or raise its image.

I think that we are all adults and that we can debate situations without insulting each other. The period for questions and comments is now over. We will—

Mr. Gérin: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead. I imagine he is going to apologize.

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I am willing to apologize as much as you want and rephrase as you advise, if you feel offended. I was saying that debate in this House should be conducted in an impartial manner. If the Chair was offended by what I said—I see no reason why, but if she was—she should be able to imagine how I felt about what was said by the hon. member. I would ask her to be just as demanding of the hon. member for Skeena as she is of me. Put yourself in my shoes. The only way to maintain decorum in this House, the only way, is to treat all members the same way. What the hon. member said is unacceptable, and you know it.

I am asking you to ask him to withdraw. You asked him politely to rephrase, you did not order. He did, but seeing an opportunity he was at it again, using even stronger insults. When such a behaviour is tolerated, we come to a point where it is impossible to have the discussion we should be having.

This is my opinion. Do not take it personally. I know that someone should preside over our proceedings. We know that, and today it is you. I am glad to have you in the Chair, but in circumstances like these, I am asking you to be stricter, to show more authority so that debate can proceed in a noble and dignified manner to the satisfaction of all Quebecers, and indeed all Canadians.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his good advice. I will check the record of our exchange this afternoon and, if necessary, I will come back to the House.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The point of order has been dealt with. We are going to proceed with debate. The hon. member for Richelieu.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): In that case, Madam Speaker, I am delighted to take part in this debate. Like many other members, I looked forward to address this issue. I prepared a speech into which I put a lot of determination and a lot of research. My first words would have been for my NDP colleague in the opposition who spent five years fighting for a park in his riding.

But now, given what he just said about the Bloc Quebecois and other members, I want to congratulate him for the park, but not for the intentions he thinks we have but which never crossed our minds. Again, the Bloc Quebecois is here to stimulate serious and honest discussions, to reflect with the official opposition, our NDP colleagues and members of the government on what the government intends to do with the bills, including the one before the House today, Bill C-59.

Of course, on a Friday afternoon, at the end of the week, when we know we are not sitting next week and that we always have to deal with a lot of legislation in June, it is surprising to see that the government, after ignoring the issue for five years, wants to railroad such an important bill for the people of British Columbia, such an important bill for the Haïda nation who have been hoping for this legislation for five years now. It is surprising that the government wants to ram through this bill without proper consideration, as our House leader mentioned. Yes, we all applaud this park in British Columbia. It was a rightful demand. But why not reflect at the same time on a fairer division of parks in Canada?

Why are there only three parks in Quebec, but 35 throughout Canada?

• (1320)

Why is less than one-third of 1 per cent of Quebec's territory set aside for parks? For the sake of fairness, this should be 12 per cent. I think this bill should give us pause to reflect on the principle of fairness that should guide our thinking and the proceedings of this House, and which should inspire government in the proper distribution of public funds.

The park mentioned in this bill is the result of a five-year campaign by the Haïda, the people of British Columbia and the hon. member, who has been fighting for this for many years. At one time this government had the most effective Minister of the Environment that Canada ever had. I am referring to the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, who was sympathetic to these claims and insisted that this project be made operational and that the requisite administrative steps be taken so as to produce legislation as soon as possible. However, as soon as he left, his successors failed to sustain his enthusiasm, like this government which since 1984, and especially since its second term, has been fumbling around in a kind of bureaucratic fog.

This government has no idea what to do about the economic situation or social problems. It has not a clue how to spend taxpayers' money. This also applies to our national parks, because otherwise it would produce legislation that would reflect a political will to have more national parks. This government makes decisions after

the fact. It is incapable of finding real solutions to the real problems, which are plain as the nose on your face. In talking about the economy the only policy it has in this respect is to hope, as the Minister of Finance said, that interest rates will go down and that the dollar does not go up too fast. It is a policy of economic wishful thinking. That is what this government has to offer us in the economic sector.

As far as research is concerned, today the government published a small folder. Does it worry about fairness? Of course not. We read that 24 companies will have subsidies for technology and prosperity, but not a single one is from Quebec in this particular document. It is the same old story. This government does not understand what the situation is, does not understand there are two founding peoples, and it governs Quebec while blithely ignoring its concerns. The members who represent this province are sleeping on the job. They are satisfied with whispered promises. Their only hope is that in the next election, the political winds will be as favourable as they were before. They do not see the storm rising in front of them, a storm that will topple them, leaving not a single member from Quebec in this House.

They are fourth in the polls today. Why? Because during debate on this kind of legislation, not a single member ever rose to consider the issue of national fairness and what should be his province's share. Of course not. They are not here to defend those issues. They do not intervene. Do they have any particular reason to be or not to be in the House? I do not know. But they do not rise in this kind of debate. They did not rise in the debate on the environment legislation that took powers away from Quebec. They did not intervene in the debate on occupational training, although historically, Quebec has always had jurisdiction over occupational training. Normally, they should have protested, but they chose to remain silent, to abstain, which is typical of members who are part of a machine they do not control, who are part of a government that is not their government. They do not recognize themselves in this government. And instead of leaving and hoping, as we do, for a government that does represent the interests of Quebec, they prefer to abstain. Are they worried about their pensions? I do not know. Their personal interests? No idea. Are they naive? I wonder.

Maybe all these adjectives best describe this lack of debate from them, this failure to take a firm stand on and for Quebec. But no. They are silent as always. What fate do the voters have in store for them? The same fate as the Liberals in 1984. What did they get in 1984 after their mistake in 1982? They let the Constitution be repatriated in 1982 without saying a word, without Quebec's consent. They went dancing in front of Parliament with the Queen of England and the nine other premiers. They forgot about Quebec's interests. They forgot to take a stand. They forgot that they had been elected by Quebecers.

For that reason, they were sent home in 1984 in a landslide. The Liberal members, or rather former members, will recall that. That is the fate that awaits the Conservative members from Quebec. The same fate awaits them and they remain silent and let such important bills as today's be debated without saying a word, without thinking about what Quebec should demand as its share for national parks. Such an attitude is incomprehensible.

Look at the bill that preceded yesterday's debate. We are talking about a country's future. This government, in one day, decides that the debate will not even last the whole day. It imposes closure. Last night, the minister responsible threatened to limit debate again today on the committee studying the bill after second reading. It is already in a big rush to bring it up again in early June. It wants to get rid of a constitutional problem, thinking that a referendum would solve everything.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I know the hon. member gets carried away. But I would like you to call him to order so that he would address the bill before us. As far as the election is concerned, I think that his time will come and that it will be soon enough for him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): That is not a point of order. The hon. member for Richelieu can proceed and it would be appreciated if he would limit his comments to the current debate.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I will take heed of your sound advice.

I was about to tell my hon. colleague for Laval–Est that I am making a link between the defeat he can expect at the next election and the fact that no government member from Quebec is rising in this House to speak on such an issue. That, I say to the member for Laval–Est, is the link. Did I hear him speak about parks in Quebec? Did I hear him speak when we were dealing with job training and the sacred rights in education? Did I hear the hon. member for Laval–Est when the last throne speech mentioned two government proposals on environment and education, but he voted against the best interests of Quebec? That is the link to be made.

An hon. member: They did not speak either on the referendum legislation.

Mr. Plamondon: Not a word! They did not speak on the referendum legislation. There is a link between any legislation and the higher interests of Quebec. That is what I want to bring into the debate.

Of course, the NDP member who spoke on this bill is right. He is right to ask for something for his province. He stands up for the interests of British Columbia; he stands up for the interests of his constituents. He wants to get a park. Of course, he does his duty. I congratulate him for that, but less for the remarks he made about us. But where are the Quebec members to get their fair share? Will we be content with mere patronage, with a few thousand dollars spent in some riding as the Liberals did with a paint job for church basements just before the election? Not at all. That era is over for Quebec.

Quebec expects its members to stand up, to say white or black, not grey. Quebecers are fed up seeing their members in Ottawa sleeping, keeping quiet, abstaining from participating in debates, in major debates, be it on Bill C–59 or any other legislation. They are fed up not to hear from their members in their ridings.

It is the same thing for the member for Terrebonne. I was going around his riding the other day. How can he get that disconnected from the reality of his riding, not intervening as he does—

Mr. Lapierre: He is always away on a trip.

Mr. Plamondon: Travelling around the world, forgetting—

• (1330)

Mr. Robitaille: Mr. Speaker, during his passionate speech, the member for Richelieu mentioned the name of the hon. member for Terrebonne, and he was asking how—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): This is not a point of order, but I understand what the member for Richelieu is saying, because he generally uses quite colourful expressions, giving many examples here and there. I ask the hon. member to conclude his remarks, because his time is running out. I would ask the hon. member to speed up and resume debate. I think his remarks attract much attention and I would ask him to go on and conclude.

Mr. Rocheleau: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, in accordance with Standing Order 29(1) I call for a quorum count. What my colleague has to say is in fact very important.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): We have a quorum. If the hon. member for Richelieu wants to go on, I hope his colleagues who have great respect for him will let him conclude his remarks.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I hope I will be able to get back the time I lost because of points of order that were out of order. I would like to be able to sum up by showing the link between the whole referendum debate, this specific bill and the attitude of the members. I thank all members who came to the House to hear my speech. I knew they were courteous, but I am surprised to see such a crowd, even here in the House of Commons.

I was just about to raise more specifically the problem of national parks in terms of equity. Equity means equal distribution of them on the land or equal share among the public. Yet, a third of one per cent of the Quebec territory is national parks. Three national parks out of 35 are in Quebec, but the member for Terrebonne remains silent about such a blatant injustice, as well as the member for Laval. I discussed that matter with several members and they seemed absolutely oblivious to the circumstances. I do not know which method of torture is used to silence them like that, to frighten them, in order that they nod without thinking and always say yes. It is worse than a congregation.

The member for Laval wants to know how much time left I have. I have five minutes left. I will be glad to speak about you a little longer, if you wish. Do I still have the floor, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): Yes.

Mr. Plamondon: Thank you.

Mr. Della Noce: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member keeps talking about his colleagues. He talks about anything but the parks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): That is not a point of order. The member for Richelieu.

Mr. Plamondon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see that the truth hurts. The behaviour of the hon. member for Laval is a good illustration of that. Of course, some truths are difficult to hear. But it is my duty to repeat them, because I have been travelling for three months throughout Quebec, preparing for the next election where there will be candidates from the Bloc Quebecois. Often, people I—

Mr. Robitaille: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member for Richelieu just mentioned that he has been travelling throughout Quebec for three months. That is why he is never in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): That is not a point of order. I would ask the member for Richelieu to conclude. I think he is capable of ending his speech in a way acceptable to the members of the House and I think he will do just that.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly follow your good advice. But just to make a little digression before closing, I must say that I was travelling at my own expense and not at the government's, as the member did when he went to Japan or Europe.

So, Mr. Speaker, concerning Bill C-59, the distribution—

Mr. Robitaille: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the member for Terrebonne has no lesson to learn from the member for Richelieu.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): That is not a point of order. Would the hon. member for Richelieu please continue.

Mr. Plamondon: Thank you again. I find it too bad that members interrupt that way when we have to debate a serious important bill that concerns the future of fairness with respect to national parks. We have work to do. We members from Quebec, members of the Bloc Quebecois, are here to—

An hon. member: You are in Canada.

Mr. Plamondon: The member over there tells me that I am in Canada. As long as we pay taxes, we will try to get our share of the loot and the goodies, my friend. Then we will go when an agreement is signed. Who will defend that agreement, who will bring it about and settle it? The Bloc Quebecois members, not the silent ones who are on the government side today.

Mr. Rocheleau: Dummies.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I conclude on this bill by paying tribute once again to the member from British Columbia who worked very hard for five years to make that sleeping government understand the importance of this park. He really defends the interests of his province, British Columbia. He gets his province its due, as the members from Quebec who sit on the government side should do, but are not doing, so the Bloc members remind them. I would like to tell the Haïda nation that we fully support this bill, as we agree with their just land claims, although we have some questions about clause 8.4(3), for example, which refers to the Governor in Council. I think it gives too much power to the Governor in Council. After consulting the Cree council, I think that the Cree council should have full authority, now that it will become their territory, part of their nation. That is what I mean.

I conclude with the wish that this bill will be passed as soon as possible, since British Columbia is waiting for it. However, Bloc Quebecois members and Conservative members from Quebec are waiting too for a marine park and other parks in Quebec. They want their fair share, not just trips to Europe or Japan from time to time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): We are in the 10-minute period for questions and comments. The hon. member for Laval-Est.

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot say that I listened to the hon. member's speech with interest, because he was off topic. He was making political propaganda. He talked about the Bloc Quebecois. He talked about recommendations. If they are so popular, why could they not get 10 volunteers to take care of Voyageurs 92? I am also interested in this bill. I made some inquiries about the fairness aspect and I will quote my colleague: it is a matter of fairness, based either on territory or on population. He is right. However, there is something he does not know and which he ought to know. He should find out about this, because the Canadian government would like to have more parks in Quebec. I have a few questions for my hon. colleague, but I will not yield to him right away, because he probably thinks he knows the answer. Why are there not there more national parks in Quebec? Why does the Government of Quebec want to set aside more land for national parks? Why does Quebec penalize its population by not having more national parks? So why are the members of the Bloc Quebecois making such a fuss? Unfortunately, the people listening might even believe those stories.

The hon. member for Saint-Hubert is laughing. I do not think it is funny, because I do not treat my constituents like school children. I do not think it's funny, not at all, because I think Quebec deserves better. If we have only three or four parks, there must be a reason. And since this is the period for questions and comments, I have a question. Why do we not have more parks? And why does Quebec not want to set aside more land so we can have more national parks?

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, it will be easy for me to answer the hon. member. It is strange that government members should ask opposition members questions on how to do things.

• (1340)

But I want to remind the hon. member of one thing, they have been delaying the marine park for two years. It is not because of Quebec, but because of the federal government. And why is there not a park? He told us it is because Quebec is against it. That is not true. Canada, when it wanted to take a part of our territory was imposing unacceptable conditions. Quebec's territory, is sacred and has been defined since the land agreements. When a park is created on its territory it is quite normal to have administrative agreements.

Canada, under the arrogant Liberals in the past and under the arrogant Tories now, insists on doing paperwork instead of solving problems. This is the real reason.

The hon. member for Laval-Est put his finger on the problem when he asked that question. He asked the question, but of course he did not know the answer. He was given questions to ask. But to get the answers, why did he not go to the committee responsible for parks and ask why the matter of the Saguenay marine park was not settled? It was because civil servants were questionning commas, were engaged in useless constipating negotiations which led nowhere. Why was that? It was because the hon. members only asked questions without demanding anything, as the hon. member from British Columbia did.

What has the hon. member for British Columbia been doing for five years? He has been fighting like mad at the committee on environment. This is why he will get his park. I do not mean his personally, but a park for his province, his constituents. Meanwhile, in Quebec, we get documents in quadruplicate saying that if we had agreed on the length of the fish-tails or on water temperatures in Celsius, if the second town clerk or the deputy minister had been willing, then—and allow me, Mr. Speaker to answer fully to the question—we would have had a park. But no, we get only excuses. In Quebec we get documents in quadruplicate when what we want are real parks of the type they get in British Columbia. Here is something concrete to deal with, why do not you do it? The example of the other hon. member is the best we can give? It has taken him five years, but he has done it.

For that, I congratulate him. I know people in British Columbia will applaud him. They will say he, as a member of Parliament, fulfilled his duty to his riding, his constituents, his province. We should do the same for Quebec, but this is the rub. Instead of that, they have studies, discussions; they try to have federal-provincial agreements with conditions unacceptable to Quebec. Let me remind you of the park in Gaspé, where discussions

went on for five years because the conditions of the Liberal government at the time were unacceptable.

Today, the Conservative government uses the same tactics, the same language and the same officials—

Mr. Della Noce: Talk to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): The member for Laval-Est. Order please. This is the questions and comments period, but the member for Richelieu seems to be repeating a good part of the speech he gave a while ago.

Considering that we wish, on both sides of this House, to respect the periods of time allotted, if he has a question I will give the floor to the member for Terrebonne. The member for Richelieu will certainly be able to give, in his answer, sensible advice or judicious precisions on the content of his speech.

The hon. member for Terrebonne may ask a question.

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to be able to make a few comments regarding the remarks made by the flamboyant member for Richelieu.

As we were able to judge, it seems that the Plamondon family is artistically inclined, especially when it comes to show business. However, I would just like to make a few comments.

A moment ago, the member for Richelieu mentioned that the Bloc Quebecois members would go and get the marine park. It should not be forgotten that the man who was in charge of the Saguenay marine park project is the Bloc Quebecois leader who was environment minister at that time. So, if the matter is not settled today, let us not forget that it would have been possible for the then environment minister, the present Bloc Quebecois leader, to settle the matter.

Second of all, the Bloc Quebecois members are wondering if, as Quebec Tory members, we would go and get projects such as the marine park.

Through our presence in this Chamber, and it is easy to know when the member for Richelieu shows up here, just about once a month, we hardly ever see him here—Mr. Speaker, I am nearly finished.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): I think the hon. member for Terrebonne is well aware that we cannot mention which hon. members are present in the House and which are not.

Mr. Lapierre: Come on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): Would the hon. member for Shefford please let me finish. I think you have a lot of decorum in that respect.

Mr. Rocheleau: But he is insulting us quite a lot.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): I think the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer is in no position to give anyone a lesson. Therefore, I will say to the hon. member for Terrebonne that we must keep the decorum and proceed. This debate is extremely interesting and, for the benefit of all Canadians, we should put our personal squabbles aside and deal with the legislation that is before this House.

Mr. Robitaille: Mr. Speaker, I will respect the decorum, but contrary to my colleague from Richelieu, I will also comply with your requirements. I just wanted to stress the fact that the member for Richelieu is rising to talk about this issue for the first time since he became a member of this House.

My question is very simple. In his speech, the member seemed to imply or would have us believe that, when it comes to the creation of national parks, the federal government negotiates with Quebec according to different rules or using different approaches than those he applies when negotiating with British Columbia or any other province.

Is the member for Richelieu in a position to illustrate quite clearly how the federal government does in fact use a different method with Quebec as compared to all the other provinces?

Mr. Plamondon: First, I would like to say to my hon. friend that the bill he mentioned, when he said I did not intervene in this matter, was presented this morning. In fact, it was adopted at full speed all stages at once. This then is the first day of debate. So do not tell me I did not intervene.

Second, he spoke to our leader, during the first part of his speech, and said that it was the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean who started this debate, who first dealt with this matter when he was Minister of the Environment. After he left, you fell asleep, and the matter was put on the back burner.

Now, as for federal-provincial agreements, we are not interested in agreements, paragraphs and what have you. We want to talk about results obtained by preceding governments. Since the creation of the National Parks Committee, three parks were established in Quebec of a total of 35, the equivalent of 1 per cent of the province's territory. These are facts showing that members of Parliament and the Minister of Environment are not doing their job. The only time we spoke of creating a park in Quebec was when the member for Lac-Saint-Jean was Minister of the Environment. That is the only time we spoke of creating a park in Quebec. Maybe we will get it one of these days, thanks to the remarkable work done by the member for Lac-Saint-Jean when he was minister, because since then nothing has happened.

Mr. Speaker, how long do I have left? Two minutes, I believe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): The hon. member for Skeena wishes to put a question to the hon. member for Richelieu. He can do it as long as it is very short because there is really no time left. The member for Richelieu can also give a very brief answer after.

[*English*]

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know whether or not the member for Richelieu is aware that by holding up this legislation this afternoon, in light of the fact that a referendum took place on the Queen Charlotte Islands in the Haïda nation two years ago and that the Haïda nation is a sovereign nation that he is dealing with, if it is directly bearing on Bill C-59 and if this legislation is held up, not only will the Haïda withdraw from this enabling legislation for the agreement to effect Gwaii Haanas, but what these members have been talking about, particularly the member for Richelieu, this national park reserve, will no longer be a national park reserve. It is a national park reserve that was broadly supported by Canadians living in Quebec. It was broadly supported by Canadians in every province and both territories and this is a sovereign nation. If he reflected for a moment, he would see that the cause he claims to justly represent here in the House today is the one that is doing the most damage to another sovereign nation.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): The hon. member for Richelieu must give a very brief answer since the ten minute period has now elapsed.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the hon. member say that I am delaying the debate. I am participating in the debate as requested by my constituents and according to my mandate as a member of Parliament. I participate by bringing in my arguments, just like any other member. I have often been refused the right to speak. Pursuant to the rules, I have the right today to talk on this bill, which I support. In fact, I hope that it will be passed and I would even propose that the House obtain unanimous consent to sit on Monday, in order to carry on that debate and have this bill passed as quickly as possible according to the usual rules.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Champagne): The 10-minute period has now elapsed. Debate. The hon. member for Megantic—Compton—Stanstead.

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with some concern that I have been following the debate since this morning. The remarks made by the members from across are often disrespectful toward the members of the Bloc Quebecois, and I wish to remind you of a government motion moved on November 21, 1991 asking that this House recognize that it is the national forum for the consideration of issues and challenges facing all Canadians; that this House recognize that its members were elected by the people of Canada to represent them in a manner which demands that individual members respect one another and their democratic right to express differing opinions; that Canadians have expressed alarm at the

excessive partisanship and lack of decorum and civility too often in evidence in the House.

That is not all. I ask the hon. member for Laval to listen to me. That this House recognize that disruptive behaviour and verbal interruptions, including abusive language, leads to a depreciated view of and respect for the institution of Parliament and its members.

This motion was moved for a reason. It is because Canadians no longer believe in their institutions. Right now, the Mulroney government stands at about 12 or 13 per cent in the polls. Why? Why is this government's popularity so low? It is because this government and its members act irresponsibly and Canadians as well as Quebecers stopped believing in them more than two years ago.

I left this government about two years ago, almost to the day, and I suggest to the members across to read again—

[*English*]

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe we are debating Bill C–59. There are certain rules of relevance which are noted in Beauchesne and which are noted in the traditions of this House. I would hope that the member would at least make some attempt to at some point say something relevant in relation to the agreements we are talking about with the Cree of Wood Buffalo National Park and the Haïda people of Gwaii Haanas.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Standstead also got a very clear message. I would ask him, if he could, to make his remarks relevant to the second reading of the bill.

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I did listen to the hon. member for Skeena, but what I do not understand is why my comments are not relevant to the issue under study. That is what I do not understand, but anyway, I want to continue with my speech.

These interruptions are made with one purpose in mind. They are used to destabilize the speaker. They are used, at a specific time, to interrupt the thread of the speech so that, in the end, Canadians who are watching may believe the speaker was not very coherent. It is an old trick, a very old trick.

That is why the minister moved his motion in the House on November 21, 1991, asking members to put an end to such verbal interruptions which prevent a member to make a speech when all his or her attention is focused on it.

There is one thing I can tell you, Madam Speaker. I want people to recognize that I can have my own different view on this bill for various reasons. Let me give you one. Today, we heard a lot of talk mainly during speeches but also through points of order about the absolute necessity to pass this bill on second reading, in committee of the whole and on third reading today. I do not agree.

I may be ready to extend the sitting today in order to facilitate second reading. I would even be ready to come back on Monday to finish this item. I would be agreeable to that.

I have questions I want to ask about this bill and questions about links between this and other issues I am concerned about, but I do not think I can get answers today. I realize that the hon. member for Skeena is interested in having this bill passed unamended, but members of the Bloc Quebecois were not consulted about this procedure today.

Members of the Bloc Quebecois want to participate actively in discussions on the business of this House in order to be more efficient and more useful—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Fulton: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I was not consulted on the procedures affecting this piece of legislation either, but I believe there are certain rules of relevance. I know now that there are several thousand people in British Columbia watching this debate. It has been put on the CEN national network to make sure that

people tune in just to see how totally irrelevant and incompetent members of the Bloc Quebecois really are.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, now I understand why the hon. member for Skeena is making those frivolities.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead has the right to speak in this House. It is amazing, but each time someone else intervenes, the same rules no longer apply. Therefore, what I would like is that we let the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead make his speech, like we did for the hon. member for Skeena, who was allowed to conclude even though he attributed motives to several of us. We would ask that he shows toward the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead the same respect as we did in his case.

On top of that, I would like to present a motion. I move that the House sits next Monday. I ask for the unanimous consent of the House, Madam Speaker. If the hon. member for Skeena is serious, instead of being on holidays, he will be here with us next Monday to follow up on the debate. I therefore ask for the unanimous consent of the House and propose that the House sits on next Monday, despite its regular agenda. We are ready to give up our parliamentary recess to follow up on the debate. I therefore ask for the unanimous consent.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I believe the hon. member for Shefford, who has made it his duty these last few years to learn the procedure in its most subtle details, knows full well this is not the type of motion he can propose on a point of order, unless of course there is unanimous consent of the House. However, I have already heard some nays.

• (1400)

[*English*]

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The member for Shefford told me in the lobby with others present that he and the Bloc intended to hold up the passage of this piece of legislation to try to use political blackmail to get a seat on the referendum committee.

That is not how this House is supposed to operate. He is attempting to use my constituents as some kind of political fodder for some other kind of juvenile game he and the others are involved in.

At some point, I just call upon the members of the Bloc, such as the member for Shefford, to show some sense of decency, justice and honesty toward other Canadians. This Chamber is to serve the Haïda people. It is to serve the people of Quebec. It is not just to serve the petty self-interests of people like—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, I think we are now getting into a debate. It is not really a point of order and it is not productive either.

I can quite understand the deception which the hon. member for Skeena feels at this time. However, as long as we are proceeding with debate and we are not into totally dilatory motions, the Chair cannot and will not stop the debate. I would like us to keep on and try to debate the bill which is in front of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the hon. member for Skeena is making very serious allegations.

In fact, we do want to take part fully in this debate. It is obvious that the government House leader pretended to have unanimous consent in order to proceed at all three stages without consulting us.

What I said to the hon. member for Skeena is that if we do not exist for the referendum legislation, if we do not exist for consultations, we will show that we indeed exist for debate purposes. Consequently, we are happy to take part in this debate.

So I would like to ask the member for Skeena why he wants to apply closure, since he says that this bill is so important to him? No one has had the decency to consult us, not him, not the government, not the Minister of the Environment, nobody. They did not do their job.

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, I would like to add something to what my colleague from Shefford just said. The member for Skeena made allegations to the effect that we were trying to blackmail the government in an attempt to have a seat on the legislative committee on the referendum bill and that we would be trying again. He even mentioned the name of a member from the Bloc and the Bloc as a party. I am concerned and I want the member for Skeena to take back what he said.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Two opinions have been voiced in the House, one by the hon. member for Skeena and another one by the hon. members for Shefford and Saint-Hubert.

The Chair is not in a position not to believe either one, so it is a matter of debate. It is not a point of order. I think we should go on with the debate. The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead had the floor.

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I assume the time used for those points of order will not be counted in my 20 minutes. Would it be possible for you to tell me how much time I have left?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is right, that time will not be counted in his 20 minutes. So the hon. member has 12 minutes left.

Mr. Gérin: We cannot take a problem out of its context. I will ask the hon. member for Skeena to listen very carefully to what I have to say. I think that he is an intelligent man so he will understand that we cannot simply isolate a problem and do as if the rest of the world did not exist. I will give him two examples. He is upset today because we are using up the time. Would he be upset if they had done to him and his party what they have done to us on the referendum legislation, by imposing closure and making sure that the only opposition to this legislation had no member in the legislative committee, by denying most of the Bloc Quebecois members the opportunity to speak on this legislation and gagging them? Imagine his anger. It would be obvious.

My second point is this, Madam Speaker. There are a couple of small lakes too in your riding. There are many in mine. There is the Memphremagog Lake, the Massawippi Lake, the Megantic Lake, of course, just to name the major ones, but there are about fifteen lakes in my riding. There are many federal wharves on these lakes, under the management of the small craft harbour branch. Almost every community has some, maybe not in Laval or downtown Montreal, but there are wharfs in a rural riding like mine.

Well, this was at the time when the federal government was overly generous and was building wharfs here and there, and everybody was happy with that—

An hon. member: The time of the nerds.

Mr. Gérin: Yes, the time of the nerds. It was incredible. The wharfs were under federal management, and they had lots of public servants to manage them. It was not making any sense whatsoever. Those wharfs require much maintenance and much repair. Often after 20 or 30 years, they have to be totally rebuilt. Now, with increasing public deficits, there is no money left for that.

Mr. Della Noce: You have to tell people why.

Mr. Gérin: Just wait and see what I am getting at. The member for Laval-Est should pay attention. At some point, there was a policy to hand those wharfs over to municipalities. Then, the government was committing itself to do that. Here is what I am getting at: this whole policy has been put aside lately, last fall, at the hon. member for Yellowhead's request. It has been put aside until the constitutional issue is settled.

An hon. member: Come on. This is almost blackmail.

Mr. Plamondon: This has been confirmed to me by letter. You see what I am getting at?

[*English*]

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I draw your attention to the fact that the remarks of the hon. member are not germane to the legislation. I think you understand that he indeed has a responsibility to speak to the bill.

If the hon. member and his colleagues are as concerned about the legislation as they claim to be, then surely they would wish to discuss the legislation as proposed. By the way, it was not introduced into this House today. In fact, I believe it was introduced and given first reading on February 20.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: But, Madam Speaker, if, in the case of federal wharfs, we ask that all municipalities postpone any purchase or takeover, to their great displeasure, why could we not do the same for the establishment of a national park? Why do we treat Quebec differently from any other province?

I just mean to say that the member for Skeena is asking us today to consider one park separately and to ask ourselves if we are in favour of it. From that perspective, of course we are.

The member for Richelieu and the member for Shefford stated that this issue was too broad. Yes, we are in favour of that park, but we are also in favour of the marine park. So, why restrict the issue? Yes, we agree that municipal governments should take over federal wharfs and get a compensation from the federal government. But we are against the federal government delaying all of that until a constitutional agreement is reached. It is unacceptable.

• (1410)

If it is unacceptable for Quebec, it is also unacceptable for British Columbia. But the fact that it is done only in one province and not in others is particularly unacceptable. That is what this bill does and that is why I ask not to restrict the issue. It must absolutely be looked at in its entirety.

Earlier, the member for Shefford talked at length, among other things, about what would happen if one province or another became sovereign. Who would take charge of the costs? Who would pay for the debts and all those things? That is certainly an important issue.

Yesterday the government passed legislation on the referendum issue. That legislation affects such an important and fundamental issue which is the Constitution of our country. In all the speeches, I heard members talk about the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That legislation that was passed has no relation whatsoever with, for example, this bill under study or any other bill that it will table. Listen, the Constitution of the country and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms are fundamental issues. They underlie everything else. You cannot just take something like that and throw it at us. Today, because of this piece-work administration of many years by this government, we have a huge deficit, we have unemployment, we have a recession and all of that. The government's administration must absolutely be looked at as a whole.

[*English*]

Mr. MacDougall: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, we have a bill before this House and I think that the member should be speaking to the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I have sometimes the feeling I am speaking into deaf ears in this House, but Canadians and the Quebecers who are listening to us understand what I mean.

When it is explained to a Quebecer that we have three national parks in Quebec out of 35 there are not many who do not understand that. When they are told that there is one-third of one per cent of the area of Canadian national parks which is on Quebec's territory, there are not many Quebecers who do not understand that.

There is none so deaf as he who will not hear. That is for sure. As far as I am concerned, it is not with repeated interruptions that you are going to upset me or have me change my tune. It is not for that reason either that we are going to proceed at top speed or otherwise. I think there is a message to deliver, and the main point I wanted to make concerns the constitutional problem. In Quebec, they are delaying the settlement of many issues. In my riding alone, there are at least 10 issues which are important for the municipalities, dealing with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans about the matter of small boats. They are postponed with the excuse or the official reason that this situation will last as long as the constitutional matter is not settled.

Government acts like that for the wharfs. A wharf is a tiny bit of territory, sometimes 30 feet by 30 feet. We are not talking about a national park which extends over thousands and thousands of square. So, for a tiny area of 30 feet by 30 feet which is important for a municipality such as Lac Megantic, ir says the matter is completely settled, but it will be finalized when the constitutional problem is solved.

When we get to the park which is at issue in this bill, then it is okay to set aside hundreds of thousands of square. Because it is not in Quebec. But when we deal with, for example, the marine park, then we hit a brick wall because it is in Quebec. You think that I am against the creation of a reserve or a park in British Columbia? On the contrary, it pleases me. I am very happy for them.

I am very happy for the member who worked toward it. I am happy for the people of British Columbia. I would think that the provincial government was advised. But as a member for Quebec, I demand to be treated the same way, I resent being cajoled into giving my agreement, very rapidly, suddenly and at once, on a Friday afternoon when everybody knows that generally there is hardly anyone in this Chamber. On top of that, the day before, I was gagged on a most important question, which is perhaps at the root of the reason I am here in Ottawa with the Bloc Quebecois, I mean the Quebec sovereignty issue. I am gagged on an extremely important issue and then they try to cajole me from the other end of the country. Well, good for them. All I am asking for is fairness, as my colleague for Richelieu said, fairness. That is what it is all about, fairness. No need to make phone calls to Sept-Îles for that. No need at all. That is it, Madam Speaker.

I will now conclude since I know that I have very little time left. I will conclude somewhat like the member for Shefford a moment ago. Let us take the time to review this bill. Let us not rush it through. Let us look closely at the powers that will be conferred upon the Governor in Council, the powers that we will be giving the Governor in Council. Let us try to look at what will happen to this reserve in, say, 10 or 15 years. Let us try not to create another white elephant. Let us try to plan so as to avoid any horrendous problems in the future. We must never engage in piecemeal management. Let us try to look at the question as a whole.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Comments or questions? The hon. parliamentary secretary. The hon. member for Richelieu wants to raise a point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: I am positive, Madam Speaker, that three members from this side rose from their seats before the parliamentary secretary.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has been in this House since 1984. He knows that the normal procedure, after a speech, is to allow a question from someone from another political party. The member for Skeena and the parliamentary secretary rose at the same moment. As it is my prerogative to decide, I choose to recognize someone from another party at this time. I think it is fair and just according to the rules and customs of our House. The hon. parliamentary secretary, please.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, the hon. member and some of his colleagues have referred to the very appropriate role played by their now leader when he was Minister of the Environment, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Does the hon. member really believe that the position taken by himself and his colleagues today is consistent with that of their leader?

On May 4, 1990 the then Minister of the Environment wrote to Miles Richardson and said: "Together we have crafted a truly innovative and creative approach. I have made this one of my highest priorities and I have ensured that every effort was made to find accommodations, despite the complexities and the risks so that we could proceed quickly with the management of this spectacular natural area".

Later on he said: "During our meetings I felt that we shared the same strong desire to have the agreement ratified by the special Haïda assembly now scheduled for May 5 so we could move ahead in the spirit of co-operation that characterizes the agreement".

I would ask the hon. member whether the obstructive tactics they are displaying this afternoon in trying to prevent the passage of a very important bill is in any way consistent with the very appropriate flexibility and innovative spirit which their hon. leader was displaying in this particular communication of May 4, 1990.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I totally agree with the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

I do not know if you explained to him why the government tabled this bill for first reading on February 20, 1992? As far as I know, this is the end of May. What did the government do during these three months to prevent the passing of this bill? Why does it now want to rush it through in one day? What is the point of all this?

This colleague and I once sat on the same side of this House, and I respect him very much, but I just want to draw his attention to one thing. He is furious today because of what he thinks is a filibuster. Imagine how furious we are now that the government gagged us and denied us the right to sit on the legislative committee on the referendum bill. Could he help us? Yesterday, he voted to exclude us; he voted for the gag. We were alone; 177 against 9.

Why did he have that attitude yesterday and a different one today? Because the roles have changed? This is something I do not understand in the member's attitude.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, I would like to address a question to the member. He does not seem to have been listening with care to what I think has been a fairly carefully articulated history of the situation in relation to Gwaii Haanas. I would like to sum it up for him again and hear his views on it. I think Canadians who watch this debate or read this debate need to know what is really going on here.

As the parliamentary secretary has quite properly mentioned, the hon. member for Lac–Saint–Jean was the former Minister of the Environment. I had many meetings with him. Miles Richardson had many meetings with him. There was an intense period of negotiations. An agreement was ultimately put by referendum to the Haïda people of Haïda Gwaii in relation to the Gwaii Haanas archipelago question.

The referendum took place two years and seventeen days ago. The period for implementation of the referendum ran out on May 5 of this year. The legislation presently before us was brought before this House on February 20 of this year. It was only yesterday that the government House leader found an opportunity as I understand it, and that is up to him, to explain why that was possible. But I cancelled my travel arrangements to go to my constituency to make sure that this important piece of legislation was put in place.

It is enabling legislation. What it does is it enables Crown Canada to enter into an agreement with the sovereign Haïda nation for the joint administration of what is presently known as the South Moresby National Park Reserve.

The point I want to ask the member about is what one of his members said. I have raised this before and it has not been denied. There were others present when the member for Shefford said that he was planning along with the Bloc to hold this legislation up, not to allow it to pass today, knowing that there would not likely be an opportunity this month because the House is not sitting next week. This will violate the terms of agreement of the Haïda referendum.

There is a question the member must address as a member of Parliament, not as a member from Quebec. As a member of this House he serves all Canadians. He serves the members of the Haïda nation. Does he think this is appropriate in the last 40 minutes available for this bill probably before next September? It will mean the end of the national park reserve and the end of the agreement because the referendum has taken place and it is binding. Is this fair to the Haïda people who are watching this debate, for reasons that simply are not now deliverable? The government House leader is not in the House. He is not going to approve in the next 40 minutes a seat on the referendum committee; he is not going to do it. The only people being punished are the Haïda people. Does he understand that? Yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: It is really a shame that some get into petty politics like the member for Skeena just did.

It seems to me that the level of debate in this House could be raised a little. He is the one who gagged us yesterday. I mean the member for Skeena. I know he was here and voted to gag us, to gag the province of Quebec, to gag the Quebec interests. Today, he is insulted because it concerns British Columbia. Well, so be it. We are insulted as well when something concerns us Quebecers.

Tell me why they could use the constitutional problem as an excuse for not dealing with 10 harbours for small boats in my constituency but not when it comes to British Columbia? Tell me why. Give me a good reason for that.

Mr. Rocheleau: Is this on debate, Madam Speaker?

Madam Deputy Speaker: No, there are still three minutes left. I am very careful with the timing. The hon. member for Longueuil. Questions and comments.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): I listened to my colleague when he talked about small harbours. He was telling us how tough it was to have small harbours transferred from the federal to the municipal level, because the federal government thought the constitutional debate was not over yet.

Personally, what also concerns me is that we agree to create such an important park in British Columbia without knowing the outcome of the constitutional talks.

This is because Mr. Ovide Mercredi, chief of the Canadian nations, is negotiating full time for native self-determination in Canada and agreements concerning this park will have to be reached between the federal government, the park authorities and the natives. I am wondering why we are in such a hurry to pass this bill this afternoon and to establish this park.

There is something else we have to worry about. We will have to examine the assets and liabilities if Quebec ever becomes sovereign. In this period of frenzied constitutional talks, we will have to assess the assets and liabilities of Quebec, as well as everything that province invested in Canada over the last 125 years. Quebecers will have to get their hands on those assets in order to pay for whatever liabilities they will owe.

I do not think we should be in a hurry to pass this bill today. We should Wait, and that is the question I want to put to my colleague. We should wait until after October, that is not so far away, before settling the issue. Then, we will not have to think about dividing the assets and liabilities and understanding at the same time the real position of the natives, and especially of Ovide Mercredi, chief of the First Nations.

There is something wrong here. I felt it as soon as I learned that this bill was being debated today. There is something that does not quite fit, something I cannot quite figure out. Why are we in such a hurry?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the hon. member, since the question and comment period is over.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Hull–Aylmer.

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Madam Speaker, before I start, could we please follow Standing Order 29(3)? I would like hon. members to hear some of the remarks I have to make about this bill.

And the count having been taken:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. We have a quorum. Would the honorable member for Hull—Aylmer withdraw what he just said about one of his colleagues. I heard it very clearly and it is unacceptable in this Chamber. No one can be accused of lying.

• (1430)

Mr. Rocheleau: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Laval said I did not show up in the House for the whole week. That is a lie because I was here Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and I am here today.

Mr. Lapierre: Withdraw.

Mr. Rocheleau: Let him withdraw his words, and I will withdraw mine.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I believe there is another way to correct an hon. member when such a mistake is made. The hon. member knows full well that the word he used is unparliamentary. Even if someone makes a mistake, one can always point out to that person that a mistake has been made, without making accusations and using unparliamentary words in the House.

I would ask the hon. member I had recognized for debate, and whom I will recognize for debate after, to start by doing the honourable thing, that is to withdraw the unparliamentary words he pronounced, after which he will be able to continue.

Mr. Rocheleau: Madam Speaker, I wish to withdraw the words I said with respect to the hon. member for Laval, but I would like to say that he was not very kind to me, because I was here Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. I had an engagement yesterday, and I am back today to speak precisely on this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for doing the honourable thing and rectifying what could have left a false impression on the House.

I will now recognize him for debate.

Mr. Plamondon: We have gentlemen in our party.

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Madam Speaker, thank you for recognizing me on Bill C-59. I am not against this bill, but I have some concerns about it. We have been talking about it for a while and, indeed, it was given first reading some two months ago—

An hon. member: More like three months.

Mr. Rocheleau: —maybe more, three months. It was in February, but I do not remember the exact date. Then the government chose today, Friday, May 22, to shove this bill down our throats and have it read a second time, without amendments, passed at third reading and done with.

We could ask ourselves a few questions about our national parks, and indeed some were asked during this debate. It has been said that there are 35 national parks in Canada, including three in Quebec. The hon. member for Laval said that the reason we did not have any more in Quebec was because the province was unwilling to give some land to the federal government in order to set up national parks.

I would like to remind members that in the Ottawa area the Gatineau Park belongs to the federal government and is managed by the National Capital Commission. This is our backyard. We have special concerns and this brings me to ask a few questions on some parts of Bill C-59.

Section 8.5(4) says that the Governor in Council may make regulations respecting the carrying on of traditional renewable resource harvesting and aboriginal cultural activities on the reserve. The budget for the Gatineau Park, a park which has been in existence for years, has been cut over the years because of government spending restrictions. This brings me to ask a few questions.

When the government tables a concrete bill on national parks, I want to ask some questions and get some answers. Will the government recognize its responsibilities afterward? Will it accept those responsibilities? Will it provide the necessary funds that are requested?

I make a comparison between Bill C-59 and the Gatineau Park where, just a few years ago, an agreement was reached between the municipality of Lapêche, formerly Masham, and the National Capital Commission for the Gatineau Park regarding the access to Lac Philippe.

Agreements were reached through regulations to allow users to use the access road to Lac Philippe, that is the residents of the municipality of Masham. This year they want to charge a $5 fee everytime people use the road that goes to Lac Philippe.

Yet the regulations did not provide for a fee to property residents in the Lac Philippe area, who have always employed free access to the interior of Gatineau Park.

Bill C-59 provides no guarantee, and I have not heard anything today in the House confirming that the government will fulfil its commitments, accept its responsibilities and recognize the regulations that it proposes to make.

I use that as an example because we have a park in our area. Last year, the National Capital Commission wanted to close for the winter an important access road between Gamelin Boulevard and Taché Boulevard, on its property in the park. The NCC simply wanted to close access to citizens who use that road every day. I had to personally ask the Minister of Public Works, who is the minister responsible for the National Capital Commission, to allow citizens to have access to that very important road.

I am not opposed to this bill. On the contrary, it could suit the First Nations and it is obvious that the First Nations have been experiencing particular equity problems in Canada for many years. If they have been experiencing those problems it is because of the governments that were in power. It is not my fault.

I might add that they will experience more problems, because the government wants to force the passing of a bill like this on a Friday afternoon, go through second and third reading, and not allow any amendment. We cannot protect the parks that we are concerned about in Quebec. One wonders if this is not simply part of a constitutional package to please the aboriginal people so that they will be understanding and accept gracefully the constitutional offers and therefore allow for some solution.

If it was simply that, there would be no problem. We would have solved that minor issue a long time ago.

We referred to the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean when he was Minister of the Environment and dealt, among other things, with the Saguenay marine park.

• (1440)

In fact, it has been over two years now that the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean quit his job as a minister, and we are still waiting for the confirmation of those agreements concerning the marine park in Quebec. We, from the Bloc Quebecois, are not the ones who opposed that project, who put a spoke in the wheels. Not at all. Is it because this park would be in Quebec? Is it because it would be in a riding represented by a Pequiste member in the National Assembly that this government refuses to give its consent to these agreements, to initial them, Madam Speaker? These are all questions that we can ask ourselves, without being accused of wanting to block this bill. This week, we had Bill C-81 before us. Yet, although it was an important bill, because its purpose was to provide a Canada-wide referendum, our government applied closure. Today, we have Bill C-59 before the House—

Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Terrebonne just insulted me in this House. If you did not hear him, I will repeat what he said for you. He said that I spoke badly. This is not acceptable in this House. Therefore, I would like him to come back from behind the curtains, where he usely hides, to apologize.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I cannot interrupt or shout at a member that I do not hear. I think the hon. member can understand I did not hear a word. And I cannot act now since—

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member for Longueuil could wait for me to sit down before raising a point of order.

Mr. Robitaille: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Terrebonne.

Mr. Robitaille: Madam Speaker, as you can see, the member for Hull—Aylmer is hearing voices.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I will need 10 seconds to figure out what the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer just said.

Unfortunately, as I just told the hon. member, I did not personally hear any remark which would have been unparliamentary. Anyway, even if the words used in a comment or remark are not in Beauchesne, when an expression causes any trouble in the House, the member concerned is asked to apologize.

As for now, I did not hear any unparliamentary remarks. However, I can promise the member I will check the transcript of the debates. If in fact there are reasons to ask some members to take back their words, I commit myself to do so as soon as possible. I hope this will suit the hon. member for Hull-Aylmer, whom I recognize again.

Mr. Rocheleau: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I forgive the hon. member for Terrebonne for what he said about me. It is unfortunate. He simply wanted to stop me while I was raising points in this House, some points that I consider very important. I do not think that I hurt anybody's feelings when I tried to explain the problem that that bill raises in regard to other national parks. Furthermore, the Bloc Quebecois supports the bill. But we cannot accept to have a fast one pulled on us and be silenced.

We have so few opportunities to speak in this House that when we do have a chance, we ask questions. I would like to take, for instance, section 8.5(2) and 8.5(1).

We read:

> The description of Wood Buffalo National Park set out in Part I of Schedule I to the said Act is amended by adding thereto the following:
>
> > Saving and accepting thereout and therefrom all those lands lying within Peace Point Indian Reserve No. 222 as shown on plan 71 277 recorded in the Canada Lands Surveys Records at Ottawa, a copy of which is filed in the Land Titles Office at Edmonton.

It says together with all mines and minerals, the remainder containing about so many square kilometres. The question arises, whether prospecting rights are included in the rest of the territory. Such questions come to mind because in Gatineau Park, which is the responsi-

bility of the National Capital Commission, mineral exploration is prohibited.

Everything is prohibited. In the seventies we had snowmobile trails in the park which were a boon to the industry in Quebec, including companies like Bombardier. This particular use was prohibited. Two years ago people who wanted to use the park at no extra cost could no longer do so. I am referring to cross-country skiers, for instance, who now have to pay if they want to use the park in the winter. That is on the Quebec side.

On the Ontario side, people can skate on the Rideau Canal and it does not cost a cent, but it does on the Quebec side, where it is a federal park. Does this mean that after the regulations to Bill C-59 have been drawn up with the municipalities, they will simply block all these measures? Will they say that the government is no longer participating so you have to pay the whole shot?

Will the Haïda have to absorb the costs in the long run? Who is going to pay for maintenance, improvements and operating costs? It says here in the recommendation that His Excellency the Governor General recommends to the House of Commons the appropriation of public revenue under the circumstances, in the manner and for the purposes set out in a measure entitled "an Act to amend the National Parks Act".

There is an undertaking here to appropriate public moneys. If the government cuts, as has been the case in so many programs, in previous budgets and in this year's budget, for instance, $1 million in subsidies to the Outaouais Transport Commission were cut for transfers across the river between CTCRO and OC Transpo. Last week, the Minister of the Environment said that the transition period was over and the annual $1 million subsidy would no longer be paid. I am sorry but this was not a transitional measure. It was compensation, because in 1970, the city of Hull allowed the federal government to build federal buildings with fewer parking spaces in return for $1 million in compensation annually, to be applied to public transit.

Mr. Gérin: I did not know that.

Mr. Rocheleau: This year, the Minister of the Environment said: the transition period is over. It was not a transition .In Bill C-59, we see the kind of regulations the government might impose. Will he do what he did in Gatineau Park to the people in Lapêche? Will he do what he did to the cross-country skiers who use Gatineau Park in the winter, charging them $5 a day to use the ski trails?

An hon. member: That is a good point.

• (1450)

Will it simply remove these subsidies when the government no longer feels like paying because it is wasting too much money on other things? These are all questions that arise when we consider Bill C-59, and I am raising them now—

[*English*]

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, I have listened with care to the member and those members of the Bloc who spoke before him. In particular, this member has never said the word "Haïda", has never said "Haïda Gwaii", and has never mentioned "Gwaii Haanas". He has never mentioned anything to do with the legislation we are dealing with, and he is simply holding up a very important piece of legislation for some kind of personal political gain.

I think the rules of relevance should be used at this point.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, without denying the importance of the points some members want to raise this afternoon, I think that it would still be possible, if the House agreed, to pass this bill through all stages if we proceeded immediately. That means there are still about 10 minutes to do it, if the House agrees.

In his point of order, the hon. member for Skeena just raised the whole issue of relevance and the time would be right to raise it. Of course all hon. members have the right to express themselves, but, Madam Speaker, we must recognize that a native community is affected by this and I know something about it—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell was really turning it into a debate and not a question of procedure.

[*English*]

I also listened very carefully to the hon. member for Skeena, and I must tell him that I do have a very difficult problem at this time with the rule of relevancy.

As I usually do with all members in the House, whatever bill is in front of the House, I always try to give the member the benefit of the doubt and hope that somehow there will be, as shortly as possible, a link to the bill in front of the House.

The hon. member will know that occasionally members do stray from the subject of the bill to the point of irrelevancy. I do agree that today it is particularly difficult to follow at times.

Mr. Lapierre: Point of order, Madam Speaker. I know that the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and the member for Skeena are trying to portray the members of the Bloc Quebecois as trying to do something negative toward the Haïda people.

The House must realize that every one of these speeches has been in favour of the legislation, so there is nothing in the debate that is against anybody.

We share with the Haïda people the feeling of the tyranny of the majority. I know we could share together a lot frustrations, but we are not going to be—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is also getting into debate and this is not a point of order.

There are a little over two minutes remaining for the hon. member—

[*Translation*]

—for Hull—Aylmer.

Mr. Rocheleau: Madam Speaker, regrettably I must say that the member for Skeena is barely back in the House and he accuses me of not talking about Bill C-59. Throughout my speech, I compared the difficulties of the people out west with the situation in Gatineau Park, which the government had promised to subsidize and today is charging user fees. What I find regrettable in this House today, and I think you will agree with me, is the pushing through of a bill like this one. It is not because the Conservatives, the Liberals and the New Democrats are in agreement that they do not want to debate this legislation, but that the bill will *ipso facto* be rushed through like this in the House. Madam Speaker, you will have to accept the fact that, in this House, the Bloc Quebecois represents the higher interests of Quebec and I personally represent the interests of my constituency and constituents.

Quebec has not been a member of the Canadian federation since 1982. You are just as illegitimate as me.

In conclusion, I repeat again that we support this bill but that we fear this government. We fear that this government will not assume the responsibilities that are established in the bill and that once the legislation is passed, the regulations could be changed, which could result in major costs for the aboriginals and in particular the Haïdas.

It is in that context that I made my speech. If they pulled a fast one on us—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, the time of the hon. member is now up.

[*English*]

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Madam Speaker, because this is a very important issue, I would like to take just a moment to speak through you to the Haïda and to the Cree of Fort Chipewyan who are watching this debate. I would like to say to them that although I regret we have not been able to complete our task here this afternoon, which was indeed to pass the legislation in all stages, that all members of the House are supportive of the bill. I know when I say that I speak on behalf of the government and on behalf of—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately I must interrupt the hon. member. We will proceed with questions or comments.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, my comment arises out of the remarks just made by the parliamentary secretary and indeed by the remarks made earlier by the member for Shefford.

The procedures in this House must appear somewhat opaque if not strange to those who are watching. They certainly are to me. Not only are we dealing here with rules that are steeped in history, but there are many agendas that are being played out in this House at this time.

There is one thing that ought to be very clear, and I say this to the Fort Chipewyan Cree and to the people of the Haïda nation, and that is that all members in this House, without exception, support this bill. The parliamentary secretary has said it, the members of the Liberal opposition have done it, the member for Skeena has been very articulate and indeed the member for Shefford has expressed it on behalf of the Bloc.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin: We all support this bill and let the Chipewyan Cree and the people of the Haïda nation understand that very clearly. We are with them. We are one.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rocheleau: Madam Speaker, we confirm on this side, that is the same side as the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—

An hon. member: The Bloc Quebecois.

Mr. Rocheleau: The Bloc Quebecois confirms that it supports Bill C-59. But the government must not do to that nation what it does to the Quebec nation, that is to ridicule it in this House and wait at the last minute, on a Friday afternoon, to force the passing of a bill about which we have questions to ask. It is not we who call the shots here; it is the government which tabled its bill on a Friday afternoon.

An hon. member: Three months later!

Mr. Rocheleau: Yes, three months later.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being three o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1500)

[*English*]

REMEMBRANCE DAY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Wednesday, April 29, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth) that Bill C-289, an act to provide that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday in Public Service collective agreements, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak today on Bill C-289, an act to provide that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday in the Public Service collective agreements.

Before commenting on this bill I would like to take this opportunity to commend my hon. colleague, the member for Dartmouth, for bringing forth this legislation.

Given the long-standing relationship between the Canadian Armed Forces and Canadians in his riding I am sure that many of his constituents are very interested in the objective of Bill C-289.

Remembrance Day in Canada is observed every November 11. This date marks the anniversary of the end of the First World War. On each November 11 Canadians pause to remember those who fought and gave their lives for their country in time of war.

We specifically remember those who fought for Canada in both world wars and in the Korean war. For veterans Remembrance Day is a very special and important day that is full of symbolism and emotion. Veterans and families across Canada remember comrades and relatives who did not return from battles fought in the defence of what we in Canada are so blessed to enjoy today.

Given the significance of Remembrance Day, a number of Canadians across the country find it disturbing that as time passes there is a tendency for some in our society to place less emphasis upon remembering Canada's war dead.

There is no doubt that the pressures and concerns in our daily lives can at times be overwhelming. However, we must never get caught up in our day to day lives to the extent of taking for granted the many things we have here in Canada and the way in which they were preserved for us by others in times of great peril.

The things we continue to enjoy today as citizens of Canada did not come about without a price. The price previous generations paid for our freedom and our way of life today was not cheap. Many of us in this House remember the Second World War and the difficult period that Canada and her allies went through until they achieved victory. We should never forget those who

fought for Canada and never returned to enjoy the fruits of their victory.

Recently, many Canadians had the tragic opportunity to witness the destruction and horror of war as a result of the Persian Gulf conflict. While this war was short in duration compared to World War II live media coverage gave Canadians, and especially our youth, a vivid picture of war and the death it brings.

The concept of having a Remembrance Day holiday for every Canadian to remember the contributions and sacrifices their fellow Canadians made for our country should not be diminished in any way. However, as we have discovered, Remembrance Day is currently not considered a compulsory holiday for all employees of the federal government under the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

Bill C-289 seeks to correct this present situation. It will, if passed, ensure that Remembrance Day will become permanently entrenched as a statutory holiday for all non-essential federal public servants who have contracts negotiated under the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

However, there is some concern that Bill C-289 will not receive appropriate support from the government side. It is indeed hard to believe that there would be any question as to whether this bill would obtain the necessary support needed for it to be passed. Yet, unfortunately there is some doubt.

Recently I received a letter from Mr. John Lariviere, president of Royal Canadian Legion branch no. 357 in Finch, Ontario, which is located in my riding of Stormont—Dundas. In his letter, Mr. Lariviere writes that he has regretfully received word from Dominion Command that Bill C-289 is experiencing some difficulty in the House of Commons. He goes on to state that:

> Surely Canadian pride should warrant that one day to remember those who made the supreme sacrifice, is the least our country can do to honour their memory.

Mr. Lariviere also noted something which I am sure many Canadians will take very seriously.

In his opinion it appears strange that while our neighbours to the south accept the principle of remembrance as a basic fact of life Canada seems to be drifting in the opposite direction.

He concluded by stating that, and I quote:

> Our Prime Minister should recall his recent statements at Vimy Ridge and Dieppe and realize that now is the time to put those words into action.

I hope that members of the government will do just that and give their full support to Bill C-289.

I would like at this time to refer to another letter which was written by Mr. Jolleys, dominion president of the Royal Canadian Legion, to the Prime Minister on April 2, 1992. In this letter, Mr. Jolleys writes that the Government of Canada is attempting to block the process of Bill C-289, based on recommendations made to it by Treasury Board.

Apparently the Treasury Board has reservations regarding the impact this bill would have on future collective bargaining with Public Service unions. According to Mr. Jolleys, the Treasury Board seems to view the entrenchment of Remembrance Day in Public Service collective agreements as being tantamount to discarding a bargaining chip or a potentially negotiable benefit.

If the Treasury Board does indeed have such a view it would be one that is totally unacceptable to Canadians. As far as my colleagues in the Liberal Party and I are concerned the question of the observance or the non-observance of Remembrance Day should never be viewed as a question to be negotiated between labour and management in the federal Public Service. To do so would be an insult to Canada's war dead, their families and their memories. I am sure Canadians would not wish to see such a belittling of the day we set aside each year to honour those who served their country proudly and have fallen in battle.

Remembrance Day is currently a holiday for most federal public servants. However, it is not one for all public servants because it is not considered in some cases to be an automatic holiday. There are cases in which a holiday for Remembrance Day is currently a matter for negotiation. Bill C-289 seeks to correct this by ensuring that Remembrance Day will indeed be observed as a holiday by all employees of the federal government unless their work is deemed to be, as the bill states in clause 2:

essential for the public safety or public interest.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Canadian people would support the preservation of the honour and remembrance we bestow upon our country's war dead each November 11. However, I believe the federal government should, above all, be no less respectful.

By helping to pass Bill C–289 the government will prove beyond any doubt its commitment to the memory of Canadians who fought and gave their lives for their country.

In conclusion, I urge all members of this House to support Bill C–289. By passing this bill we will not only remove a very solemn day from the Public Service contract negotiating process, but more important we will be giving a clear signal that the federal government and this House of Commons will never forget the debt Canada owes to those who gave their lives for what we hold so dear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I would also like to speak to Bill C–289 and take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague, the member for Dartmouth, for having tabled it. I believe nobody in this House is opposed to the principle of the bill.

All members will agree that Remembrance Day is a very important holiday, quite deserving of our attention and consideration. However, we must admit that we can do nothing more to increase the people's understanding and consciousness of the the event we commemorate on that day. Unfortunately, the content of Bill C–289 offers nothing new. It only proposes to guarantee civil servants a holiday on that day, but they already have that through—

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like you to give me some information. I am told that the rules of the House provide that members will speak abundantly from the heart instead of inanely repeating a speech written by others. Does this rule still exist in our books?

Madam Deputy Speaker: You will recognize with me that that is indeed a somewhat archaic rule that existed. But I think that members are still allowed some notes to make it easier for them to express their views on a bill. The hon. member for Laval–Est.

Mr. Della Noce: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. member just said "abundantly from the heart". I do not know if he still has one, considering all the foolish things he said this afternoon. I think it is getting to be—

• (1510)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would appreciate if the hon. member for Laval–Est would make amends, withdraw comments which are not parliamentary and proceed with his speech.

Mr. Della Noce: Madam Speaker, I follow your suggestions and I withdraw. But I would like, if the hon. member will allow me, to continue reading from my notes. And if that bothers him, he will do as usual and just leave this House.

As I was saying earlier, this holiday is already in one collective agreement and is nothing new. So, if there is nothing new, we would legislate for the sake of legislating.

Parliament has already stated its position by accepting this Public Service Staff Relations Act. That act also says that statutory holidays must be negotiated between the employer and the bargaining agents, through a union for instance. I sincerely believe that legislation giving a holiday to people who already have it will have no impact whatsoever on the remembrance of those who took up arms or who gave their lives for our country.

Canadians will continue to respect Remembrance Day in their own way, through commemorative ceremonies, social events or family gatherings, or through personal gestures. For example, students learn about the importance of that day by participating in the ceremonies held at their schools and not simply by being out of school on that day. It should not be a holiday, but the memory of the good deeds that should mark that day as being a special one for each and every one of us.

Even if I respect the intent of my colleage, the member for Dartmouth, I do not agree with that bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this bill in support of my colleague, the hon. member for Dartmouth. We all know that Dartmouth is a historic and military place. It seems appropriate that the private member's bill would have originated with the member for Dartmouth at this time.

I congratulate him on his tenacity and determination because it seems that is often what it requires to get a private member's bill through the House of Commons. It received first reading way back in September and now we are looking for second reading on this bill, Bill C–289, the Remembrance Day Act.

I just want to refer to why I think we need this bill. Some would suggest that it is a bit repetitious and that we already have made provision for this. A lot of people probably do not know that choosing the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month was not just a coincidence. That was the when the armistice, as we used to refer to it, the cessation of hostilities of the First World War, occurred.

I remember very well in just about every town and village at the cenotaph there would be great crowds of people recognizing Armistice Day. After the Second World War it was decided to have remembrance of it coincide with that same day, as was the case after the Korean war.

A strange thing happened, in my opinion. I can only attribute it to the remoteness of war in the country. As people get older and memories fade, there has been less and less interest shown in the remembrance aspect of Armistice Day. I think that is the reason that my colleague is presenting the bill at this time. It seems appropriate that we do it now. If this generation does not do it, the likelihood of it ever being done would become more and more remote because memories fade and people fade. The thoughts of war, unpleasant as they are, must not be allowed to fade.

It is very difficult to impose respect or impose remembrance. It is impossible. You need something of this nature that will bring forward that kind of memory every once in a while, something that will jog our memories every once in a while. The difficulty that we have got ourselves into in this country is that this has become a negotiable item at salary negotiation time, and that means you can trade it off.

It can be in the contract or it can be traded off for something else. We think it is too important to be left to the whims of management as good as management's intentions might be. It should not be imposed on the Canadian people. There should be some provision and this legislation would provide for it. This must not be allowed to slip our memories.

It is in the collective agreements pursuant to the Public Service Staff Relations Act that we think it would be appropriate. Perhaps the federal government should take the initiative. That is what my colleague is trying to do with his private member's bill.

The veterans and members of the Legions across the country are dismayed to think that this is a negotiable item. There is nothing left to negotiate. To leave it to the whims of the negotiators would seem to put it in a very weak position.

The likelihood of its continuance in the next generation and the one after that would be very slim indeed at the rate that we are going now. So there is a degree of urgency to it. As people, battles and memories become more and more remote, that gives it even more urgency. The federal government, of all agencies, has a special responsibility to protect this memory of the fallen ones in the two world wars and the Korean war.

To remove Remembrance Day as a bargaining chip, that is exactly what my colleague is endeavouring to do. He does not want it left to where a decision could be made to trade it off for something else. The only way to prevent that from happening is to get it written into the contract in such a way that it remains there, that it cannot be removed, it must stay.

I am not criticizing. The negotiation process has to go on. But let it be remembered that this is not something that is negotiable. This is something that has already happened. It is a fact. All he is asking for in his private member's bill is to make sure that there is continuity.

A bargaining arrangement can run out or expire. That means we no longer remember. We no longer have an Armistice Day. We no longer have a Remembrance Day. Perhaps at a future time that would be negotiated back in. That lack of continuity it seems to me asks for trouble because the Remembrance Day aspect of it will very

soon be forgotten, if not by the present age group, certainly by the next generation.

That is all my colleague and I are asking. Give it some continuity. Give it some real meaning. Give it some real purpose. Take away the risk of it being an item to be bargained in or out.

This bill is an attempt at entrenchment. We want to entrench this so that it will be there for all time. No one can tamper with it as in the case of salary negotiations between any two bodies, the authority to recognize and impose this on all working groups. We are suggesting that those who are involved with the federal Public Service groups have some right to impose it or entrench it in order to make sure that it stays there for all time.

Let us make sure that November 11 will be observed by Canadians for time immemorial at least by some sectors of our society and will not be bartered away for some other benefit or someone else's benefit at some future time.

I want to congratulate my colleague for Dartmouth on his initiative in bringing forth the bill. I hope it will pass. I know that legionnaires around the country are watching very carefully and they too are hoping that it will get third reading and become law.

I want to congratulate my colleague on his initiative.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker I also want to take a few minutes this afternoon to mark my support for that legislation and furthermore, to congratulate the hon. member for Dartmouth for his initiative.

This act is to provide that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday in Public Service collective agreements. Canadian men and women who will read the House of Commons report or those who are watching us on television should not be under the impression that we want to establish a new holiday for anybody because that is not the case.

• (1520)

First of all, the bill provides that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday only in Public Service collective agreements. At this time, to my knowledge, Remembrance Day is already a holiday in all Public Service collective agreements.

However, the member for Darmouth, in his wisdom mentioned the fact that Remembrance Day could be used as a bargaining chip by the various parties negotiating a new collective agreement.

[*English*]

I do not think the day to remember our war dead should be utilized as a bargaining chip in a collective agreement by either party. It is not a matter of trying to give more holidays or less holidays to whomever. This is an occasion that we have to recognize officially that which we are already in essence doing but that which is also being threatened with undoing, namely the remembering of our Armistice Day.

Many people have spoken today about the fact that every year when all of us hon. members appear before the various cenotaphs in our constituencies the crowds are dwindling, there are fewer and fewer people. To a degree perhaps that is normal. Our veterans are getting older. Some of them are no longer with us and every year fewer of them are with us. Nevertheless, those of us who have our freedom because those others gave their lives should be more conscious of the tremendous contribution that they made for all of us.

Perhaps this is a good time to indicate to all our fellow Canadians, particularly at this time of difficulty in our national unity, that we should remember the tremendous contribution of those who have given their lives in the first, second or even the Korean war, as well those military people who have given their lives during peacetime. It is a day to recognize all those who made that valuable and priceless contribution of their own lives.

The hon. member for Dartmouth has indeed seized an important issue. It would be my hope that we could pass this bill unanimously. Merely to pass it on second reading, although in itself is a good thing, is not the be–all and end–all because the government ultimately has the decision power in terms of bringing back the bill for third reading. Even then proclamation is a decision of the government in any case afterward.

The point I am making is that we should be passing this bill today and that committee should be reporting the bill expeditiously. Actually it is the kind of bill that could easily be dealt with in committee of the whole. The bill should then be given third reading, and hopefully very soon we could incorporate in the statutes Bill C–289 as proposed by the member for Dartmouth.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Canadian legion members in the riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who, these last months, kindly sent me letters indicating their support for the bill tabled by the hon. member for Dartmouth. Legion members in my riding, like other members everywhere in Canada, are certainly following closely today's debate. They hope and are confident that we will not let them down nor forget them.

[*English*]

The challenge is up to us. Let us vote on this bill. Let us vote for it. Let us approve it unanimously this afternoon. Let us make sure it becomes law very quickly so that our veterans know that at least we do remember them and that we care. If we make this very important gesture, we make a small contribution toward raising the level of consciousness of Canadians generally in terms of the tremendous effort and the tremendous benefit that have been given to all of us by our war dead.

It was said long ago that if we do not remember our history we risk repeating it. If we do not want to repeat war, perhaps even for that reason alone the wisest thing we could do is remember the last ones we have had.

Many countries of this world are still in a state of war. I am thinking of the Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina and other parts of this world such as parts of the former Soviet Union where we are watching today tremendous violence and unrest. We are lucky in this country that we live in the peace that we do, notwithstanding our differences and, regrettably I must say, notwithstanding our difficulties right now on the national unity issue.

We cannot take that peace we have for granted. We must remember those who have given so much for our freedom. Today we have an opportunity to make but one small gesture to indicate that yes, it was a long time ago but we are still remembering and grateful for the contribution of our war veterans.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I too want to congratulate my hon. friend from Dartmouth on bringing forward this bill. I am not surprised, because during his time in the House of Commons he has shown that not only is he a knowledgeable member of Parliament but also a very assiduous one who takes his job seriously.

For him it must be a great deal of satisfaction because it is really only with a private member's bill that one experiences the kind of satisfaction only a member of Parliament can get. That is making some real, significant change in the country.

I think this is an important change. This bill may seem very simple, but I think it was Will Rogers who said: "There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come". This idea certainly has come of age. As a matter of fact, it should have come of age much earlier and I want to say why I think that is so. There is a need to remember.

My colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has just said those who forget the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. It is well for us to remember that now more than at any other time, perhaps because the cold war is over. People are thankful that it is over and there is a sense of relief. There is an inability at the same time to identify a threat and to put in place a security system to deal with that threat.

What really bothers me at the moment—and this is why I think it is so important to remember—is that we are struggling with a new security system and we have not found it. We hear talk about the interlocking security architecture of Europe. We hear about NATO, the CSCE, the western European union, the UN, but none of those organizations was able to solve the problem in Yugoslavia.

We see peacekeeping troops withdrawing from Yugoslavia. We see the Red Cross withdrawing from Yugoslavia. The irony here, if I am not mistaken and there may be somebody in the Chamber who can correct me if I am, is that I believe it was in what is now Yugoslavia the first shot was fired that started the First World War. If I am wrong there will be somebody either here or outside the Chamber who will correct me. The interesting irony is that Yugoslavia was the spot that started the First World War. Today again we see peacekeeping troops being withdrawn from Yugoslavia. That bothers me. This generation has gone through an experience that I have not. Young people have gone through the nuclear age with the threat of nuclear war. I did not have that experience. I remember going through the Second World War. I remember in St. John's, Newfoundland, as with Halifax which was a sea port, where we experienced the war. We had to darken our windows. We had black-outs. We heard the air raid sirens. We were threatened by aircraft and by naval ships. We experienced war, but

nothing like the nuclear threat that hung over the heads of the present generation.

• (1530)

The real problem is now that that threat is taken away, my worry is that we have not put a security system in place to deal with whatever threat is out there for the future. That is why it is so important to remember. I do not think that remembering can be an option. It is an absolute necessity and that is why this bill is important.

Remembrance cannot be a bargaining chip. We have got to remember. Only by making every effort to remember do we keep in mind the lessons of history and guard ourselves against repeating the mistakes that we have made in the past.

I have public servants in my riding. I think I can say on their behalf that they do not want to see this as a bargaining chip. They serve the same Queen as the veterans served in the Second World War, the First World War and the Korean war. The people who fought and died in those conflicts served the Queen. It is the same Queen that we serve here today and it is the same Queen that the public servants are working on behalf of.

I think it is important for them, maybe more than other people, and for us too, to think of that seriously and to therefore put in place legislation that protects their ability to make that effort at remembrance.

There really is no option for us today. We had to have this legislation. I am sure that the veterans across this country want it. It is very timely, too, in terms of my own province. July 1 which is Canada Day is in my province the anniversary of the battle of Baumont Hamel, which was an important one for us in the First World War. There was a Newfoundland regiment that served and many died in that particular battle. We are coming up very close to that event in history. Where I live, we certainly have not forgotten that.

I think it is extremely important now more than ever, now that the threat of nuclear war has receded and we think has been erased. I do not think it has been erased, but it has receded. There is a feeling that you want to put this out of your mind now. There is a sense of relief. The danger in that sense of relief is that it clouds your mind to remembrance of what precautions need to be taken.

I would like to quote, if I may, because I think it is important to us today, some lines that the Canadian legion uses often in its ceremonies. The lines are taken from a poem by Kipling called *Recessional*. It is instructive for us today to read those words in full because it expresses some of the reasons why we must not forget. The lines are well known and they go like this:

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The last verse is:

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And, guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!

We should bear in mind those words "lest we forget" today and the thoughts that come from that particular poem.

Now it is more important than ever that we remember what happened, because if we do not we can never guard against it happening again. That is why this bill is important, that is why this bill says that remembering is not an option. Remembering is something we have to do.

I congratulate my colleague for bringing it forward, and I hope that the House will approve it speedily.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Madam Speaker, I would like to take a few brief moments to speak in regard to this piece of legislation, Bill C-289.

I would like to speak as someone who is just having a regional office for veterans affairs located in my riding at Kirkland Lake, with 180 employees, but more for the veterans who served in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean war, in remembering those individuals who fought for the democracy that we are able to have here today.

As a result of the fact that those of us in this House have freedom of speech and the opportunity to serve our constituents and Canada, and in a time when our country is going through some difficult times, in a growing country and a different country, I think it is important for us to remember those who have served so well, those who lost their lives and contributed to the success and the future and the fortunes that we have in Canada.

I just want to say on behalf of the legions in Timiskaming and northern Ontario, and those in other parts of the country—we have received many letters in support of this piece of legislation—that I want to make clear that I believe we should be doing anything we can do to remember those who have served so well over the years for us.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Madam Deputy Speaker: 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:

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the division stands deferred until 6 p.m. Monday, June 1, 1992.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, did you say that the yeas had it?

Madam Deputy Speaker: As far as I am concerned, the yeas had it, but as more than five members had risen, a division has been called. If the hon. member reads *Hansard*, he will realize it.

It being 15.38 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, June 1, 1992, at 11 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 15.37 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 1, 1992

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

NUCLEAR POWERED VESSELS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should require the cessation of visits to harbours in the Victoria area of nuclear powered vessels or vessels that may be carrying nuclear weapons until a full public inquiry has been completed, including an environmental assessment.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise to ask the House to adopt this motion, a motion which calls for the government to require the cessation of visits to harbours in the Victoria area of nuclear powered vessels or vessels that may be carrying nuclear weapons until a full public inquiry has been completed including an environmental assessment.

This motion is of importance to the people in our area but it is also important, I believe, to the people of Canada because it represents a very important environmental issue and it represents a very important issue in terms of our national and international policies.

The effect of this motion could equally apply to other harbours in Canada and to other waters. However it is addressed in this way as I represent the Victoria area. I am familiar with the issues there. I wish to speak very specifically to the impact of these visits on the Victoria area and my recommendations to this House for dealing with the consequences of these visits.

• (1110)

I believe I speak for the overwhelming majority of people of the Victoria area. All MPs in the area are in support of this motion and of its intent. Eight of the ten local councils have called upon the federal government to have a moratorium on these visits until there has been a full environmental assessment.

Recently the British Columbia legislature voted 51 to 1 in favour of declaring British Columbia a nuclear weapons free zone. If I may read the motion, it endorses in effect the motion I have before the House. The motion was adopted on April 24, 1992 by a vote of 51 to 1 and therefore included not only members of the government party, the New Democratic Party, but Liberals and Social Credit as well. In fact only one Social Credit member voted against the resolution. It read as follows:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia declare British Columbia a nuclear weapons free zone; and be it further resolved that this Assembly calls on the Government of Canada to conduct a full public environmental review of the dangers involved by the presence of nuclear weaponed and nuclear powered vessels in British Columbia's harbours and waterways.

This all-party support for the resolution coincided with the passage of similar resolutions by the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, the territories of Yukon and the Northwest Territories, as well as hundreds of municipalities across Canada.

I would acknowledge there are some in our area who have concerns about this resolution. They are particularly supportive of the visits to the Victoria area by U.S., French and British vessels. They are concerned that this kind of resolution or approach will inhibit the visits of foreign vessels to our harbours. They wish to have the visits continue because they believe it is an act of friendliness to our neighbours. As well the commerce that our area enjoys as a result of these visits is something they wish to continue.

Let it be said that for my part—I believe my colleagues and the municipalities in the area agree—we too would like to see the visits continued but only after there has been a proper environmental assessment of the impact

of the visits and there is an agreement worked out that there will be no nuclear weapons on board the vessels coming into our area as a matter of national and provincial policy.

Last week I met with the chamber of commerce which represents these views. It has done an outstanding job in welcoming sailors, officers and crews of the vessels that have come into Victoria harbour. I frankly believe that an accommodation can be worked out with the chamber on these issues. It certainly joins in its concern for the environmental issue and for the public concerns arising around that issue.

As well, as I will point out later in the debate, there have been significant foreign policy changes in the United States which should lead this government toward taking some new and fresh steps to resolve this issue and these very vital concerns of the people in our area.

I have met with the Naval Officers Association of Vancouver Island. In fact I am a member of the association. It has sent correspondence and conducted a number of discussions with me. Many distinguished naval officers, including retired naval officers, are concerned with this issue and have raised a number of important considerations.

What it boils down to is that there are two issues confronting the Government of Canada on these visits. The first is an environmental issue. The second is an issue of national policy.

Let me deal with the environmental issue first. There can be no dispute whatever from the government that the consequences of an accident in an urban area such as Victoria, or any other urban harbour in Canada, would be absolutely catastrophic. There can be no doubt about that proposition. A serious nuclear accident in a built-up area such as Victoria would be absolutely catastrophic. There is no amount of emergency preparedness that could properly respond to such a crisis. As well more minor accidents can still have a very serious deleterious effect on the environment in our area.

Our area is asking the House to provide for an environmental assessment of visits of particularly nuclear powered vessels coming into our area, primarily those of the U.S. navy but also of the British and French navies, and to look at the consequences even of carrying nuclear weapons into the area.

Let us focus on the nuclear power for a minute. There have been those who have studied this issue carefully and have concluded that not only are the consequences of an accident serious but the potential risks are real. Over the lifetime of nuclear power there have been sufficient numbers of accidents around the world that the risk of an accident either minor or major is significant. There are others who have studied the issue who say that that is not correct.

It is the view in our area—I believe it ought to be supported by members of Parliament in this House—that given the consequences of an accident there should be no gambling on the risks and that those risks should be carefully and thoroughly examined by a public environmental assessment.

This is not a particularly radical view. It is in fact the view of the government agency charged with responsibility for deciding whether or not an environmental assessment is necessary. I draw the attention of the House to a memorandum prepared by the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office in August 1991. It was approved by the director general of operations, went to the government and was overruled by the government when it adopted an Order in Council waiving the necessity of environmental review.

Let me take this House through this memorandum. It states the issue:

> Whether to support National Defence's proposal to seek an Order in Council approval for this activity,—

That is, port visits by nuclear powered vessels. It continues:

> —rather than assess it in accordance with the EARP Guidelines Order.

The memorandum points out:

> The Deputy Minister of National Defence wrote, in February 1991, describing the sensitivity of this subject and suggesting the adoption of the above strategy to avoid the possibility of a public review.

The minister was asked to decide whether the initial assessment should be done by EARP, whether there should be a public review. DND persisted on the issue and FEARO, the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office, was considering whether or not Environment Canada had a different view.

It was clear that Environment Canada did in fact have a different view. It said:

> EARP clearly applies to the decision to authorize port visits by these vessels. The visits constitute a physical activity that is confined to a few ports located on the east and west coasts, an activity that lends itself readily to initial assessment.

DND has the authority to approve the visits and would be initiating authority under EARP. However, the government was concerned there would be legal challenges to the order. A request was going forward to the government in respect of Dixon Entrance, so that DND coupled that request with an over-riding request in respect of all visits of nuclear powered vessels to harbours.

• (1120)

FEARO has strongly recommended to external affairs that the results of the analysis done by others to respond to the public request be made available to the standing committee of the House of Commons on the environment. It should be recommended that external affairs conduct an assessment in accordance with cabinet procedures that officials provide advice on the assessment procedure and that DND is fully aware of it.

The recommendation goes on to say:

> National Defence's reluctance to conduct an initial assessment under the EARP needs to be questioned. It has come to our attention that the United States conducted an environmental review with extensive public involvement of an acoustic testing facility for nuclear submarines to be located at Behm Canal in Alaska, notwithstanding the obvious defence-related sensitivity of that facility. If such public consultation was possible for the United States in that situation, should it not be possible for Canada to do the same in this case, before National Defence takes its decision?

The memorandum goes on to say:

> While FEARO recognizes there is some risk that opponents could seek a court judgment, we believe that the Point Aconi judgment offers some precedent to allow the National Defence Department to mount a successful argument.
>
> The Order in Council approach is not risk-free—

It then concludes:

> We reiterate our opinion that EARP applies to the decision to authorize the port visits, and that National Defence is the initiating department.

The memorandum re-states firmly the view and recommends that the minister re-state firmly the view that it would be preferable to follow the process rather than to avoid it.

No pressing security argument has been advanced for avoiding a public environmental assessment review of this issue. If any government authority proposed to put on land a nuclear power plant, there would be the most comprehensive review of that decision. It would be done nationally, provincially and locally.

What excuse can be given to the citizens of any community when a nuclear power plant is brought in by sea, for avoiding an assessment of the environmental impact of that decision? There can be none.

If the government proposes to raise security as an argument, let the government propose procedures for the security aspects of the case to be determined in camera. Let there be appointed an independent assessor who will have the confidence of the community, the Department of National Defence, External Affairs, and so forth, who can make an environmental review of the impact of this decision.

Our community calls on the House to request the government to ensure that such a review takes place.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to another document that has come to my attention. As the House will know, the New Zealand government is reviewing its policy. As well the Senate of Australia is reviewing the issues in that part of the world. In the course of the inquiries there, a secret U.S. Navy document has come to light which instructs commanders that they do not necessarily need to contact all the relevant authorities like foreign governments when a nuclear powered vessel has an accident in a foreign port. This would violate the terms of the basic agreement between the United States and foreign governments, and I assume the terms of the agreement between Canada and the United States in respect of these visits.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary who will be speaking on behalf of the government to move quickly on this and to look into this particular document.

Let me conclude my remarks by addressing the second issue, which is the issue of national policy.

It is my view and I hope the view of this House—it is certainly the view of the B.C. legislature and 68 per cent of the people of British Columbia according to a recent public opinion survey—that Canada should be a nuclear weapons-free zone.

The government makes the argument that we are somehow protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella as part of our collective security arrangements with the United States and through NATO. So I may say do the Liberal opposition. The Liberals as well as the government make the case that these visits should continue and that nuclear weapons should be brought into Canada.

Let me say first that nuclear weapons provide no protection whatever against a nuclear attack. Even if there had been an argument once upon a time before the end of the cold war that the nuclear deterrent was in fact an effective deterrent against a Soviet nuclear attack on North America, that argument can no longer be made.

Clearly Russia, the successor state in this respect and to some extent the Ukraine and perhaps other states in that part of the world, present no strategic nuclear threat to Canada and the United States at this time.

A year ago the right hon. Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs when he was Secretary of State for External Affairs described the then Soviet Union as an ally and a friend of Canada. The case cannot be made that we are threatened today, and it certainly cannot be made that nuclear weapons in Victoria harbour present any deterrent to any potential assault.

In September there was a decisive change in U.S. government policy when President Bush announced the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from their naval forces. Today most of the vessels, if not all of the vessels, coming into Victoria harbour probably do not carry nuclear weapons.

Until now the Government of Canada has accepted the argument that the United States government will neither confirm nor deny whether it has nuclear weapons on board. If it is true that the sense of crisis has seriously diminished, as it has, then I call on the government, in light of the changing conditions since the end of the cold war, to renew its discussions with the United States and conclude a new agreement under which the United States will indicate clearly that there are no nuclear weapons on board any vessels coming into Victoria.

It is time to change our policy, to look afresh at these issues and to give the people of Victoria and the people of Canada the assurance that we have entered into a new day, that the environmental considerations will be paramount and that we will have new policies which reflect the reality of today, that we should be nuclear free not only in Canada, but throughout the world.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you presiding here this morning in the House.

If you have a sense of *déjà vu* with respect to this debate, it is because the hon. member for Victoria has raised this same issue previously. We had a debate following somewhat the same lines at least as far as his comments are concerned on February 18.

He raises two issues in his speech, one relating to safety of nuclear vessels coming into Canadian waters and the other the dimension of the environmental impact. I would like to deal with both of those. I know my colleague from Calgary Southwest is going to be dealing later with the broader collective security approach that we have with our allies. Perhaps the spokesman from the Liberal Party would also be dealing with that.

In fact, the first point that he made had to do with broad Canadian policy in this whole area. Of course Canadian policy, established by a previous government in 1967, has been one of allowing our allies to visit Canadian ports under certain terms and conditions. That policy has continued whichever party was in power. It is the policy of the Government of Canada. In fact it was renewed last October by Order in Council.

• (1130)

I want to speak about that because in the process of renewing this policy the government did undertake environmental impact studies. My interpretation of them, which may not surprise the House, is somewhat at variance with the interpretation of the member for the New Democratic Party.

Before getting to any of that, I would like to make very clear that when the member mentioned a document that he purports to be a secret U.S. naval document with respect to the non-reporting of accidents of nuclear powered vessels, I do take that seriously. I would ask the member for Victoria to table the document to which he referred. I would also indicate to him that upon it being tabled and seeing it I will investigate the matter and see what is being done in that area because this is a serious issue.

Certainly the government does not take that lightly, nor indeed does the government take lightly the question of the safety of nuclear propelled vessels or the environmental impact that they might have. That is why a study was conducted initially by the Department of National Defence prior to an extension of the government policy allowing allied nuclear powered vessels to visit Canadian ports.

After that was completed last year and it was determined by the government that the environmental consequences of these visits are insignificant, and second, that these visits pose no significant risk and hence can be safely accommodated, a review of this was done by Environment Canada at the invitation of DND and the Department of External Affairs.

That process has been referred to on several occasions by the member for Victoria. The results, I want to make it clear, are public. The memorandum he refers to in the House is a public document. There is no effort to hide information; indeed, it is the government's approach to be very open about this because the issues are significant.

The ability of the Canadian government to assess the environmental and safety impact of these vessels is based on a number of factors. First of all, our country has within it experts who are extremely knowledgeable in the philosophy, the principles and the practice of nuclear reactor safety. Canada has been in this field since its inception in the 1940s. Second, Canadian expertise with water reactor design, as well as safety analysis and accident characteristics gives us the ability to make assessments in this area and that expertise was brought to bear on the situation.

In the review there was a comparison of the risks posed by commercial power reactors and marine nuclear propulsion reactors. We looked at the historic record of what has happened over the past 40 years in operating these types of vessels. We made an assessment of the alleged accidents. A lot is said in the popular press and even by some members of Parliament, as we heard about 10 minutes ago, on the nature of these accidents. Sometimes as much heat as light is shed on the issue in the way that those are described.

The government also looked at the results of environmental monitoring that have been published in this field. There is a fairly extensive body of knowledge on that. There has been specific environmental monitoring of foreign vessel visits to Canadian ports. We also relied on the assurances given to us by our allies. That was part of the over-all process and it is again in that connection that I refer to the member and hope that he will table that document and I will be sure that everything is as we expect it to be. If it is not, then appropriate action would certainly be taken. Also, we have within the Department of National Defence a lot of people who are very knowledgeable about the nuclear propelled submarines because of the now defunct nuclear submarine acquisition program. A lot of skill and knowledge was built up there.

For all those reasons, the government concluded and subsequently validated by a review by Environment Canada that the policy of the Government of Canada begun in 1967 should be continued.

For practical reasons it is only the United States and the United Kingdom nuclear propelled vessels that visit Canadian designated ports. On the west coast these visits are accommodated at both Esquimalt and Nanoose.

I want to emphasize that nuclear propelled vessels of our allies are only permitted to visit these ports if they satisfy the strictest of nuclear safety criteria. Specifically, only nuclear propelled vessels which satisfy conditions established by the Government of Canada and by the Department of National Defence of Canada are permitted to visit our ports.

The record is public. The monitoring that is done by Canadian teams to detect any release of radioactivity is ongoing. This is the time, in the moments that remain for me, to try and place on record some of the facts that would help to shed light and indeed reassurance on this issue.

Since this policy of allowing foreign vessels of this type to visit our ports the safety record has indeed been excellent. In almost 40 years of visits by allied nuclear propelled vessels to over 150 different ports around the world, there has not been a single reactor accident nor have there been any other types of accidents with these

vessels which have had a detrimental effect on the environment.

Our Department of National Defence maintains well-trained nuclear emergency response teams at both CFB Comox and CFB Esquimalt to respond in the unlikely event that there ever would be an accident.

I should put on record as well that those teams are not just established for that narrow purpose. They also respond to any nuclear contamination that could occur from the multitude of nuclear material that is used daily in construction, educational, medical, or research activities.

Those teams have been used to assist the civilian or non-military activities at the request of regional authorities. There is a very well-trained nuclear emergency response team detachment at Nanoose. The department works with the local officials to co-ordinate those responses. We are continually evaluating the capacities and effectiveness of those teams.

The final point I would make, and the member has said this, is it is like having a nuclear reactor established in the community waiting for it to explode or something. There is a bit of intentional fear mongering going on there that creates public alarm.

Nuclear propelled vessels and their propulsion plants are designed to prevent a serious accident even in severe conditions at sea. They are built to withstand the rigours of combat and therefore to sustain being damaged.

The risk of loss of life associated by living in proximity to a commercial nuclear power plant for 50 years is comparable to smoking about one and a half cigarettes and the cancer or heart disease that can cause, or living for about two days in a large city and the lung cancer that can be caused by air pollution. There are comparative figures and data. There are a lot of statistics out on this but anyone can see that the relative risks have been assessed and the systems designed to prevent accidents from happening.

• (1140)

The final point I would make in concluding is that since last November 27 when the American President ordered the standing down of all of the U.S. tactical nuclear weapons and removing them from surface ships and submarines, I am advised that the U.S. navy advanced on that as well. While it continues to be, as the member said, the policy of that government neither to confirm nor deny whether its vessels are carrying nuclear weapons, clearly the announced policy since last September is to step down and remove those nuclear weapons.

There is not the cause for concern because the government has itself a strong concern with the safety of Canadians and the environment.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank both hon. members for a very good debate on this issue. The debate has given both sides of the issue, essentially the security side and the environmental side which I think has been done so well by my colleague, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

This question really is of a national proportion. May I say at the outset that I have not known the hon. member for Victoria for long but I do know the city of Victoria quite well. With the possible exception of St. John's, Newfoundland, it is probably one of the finer cities in Canada. I can appreciate where he is coming from in that perspective.

An hon. member: And Calgary.

Mr. Mifflin: There is Calgary and a few other cities of course.

I would like to put the issue in the proportion of the aspect of security and the totality of that aspect. I want to draw on your experience, Mr. Speaker, of the past, of the history of our country and where we have come from in the last few years.

One of the premises of my presentation this morning is the timing of the hon. member's motion. Now that peace and security are looking a little better than they did a few years ago, then perhaps this might be a good time to have a look at the proposal he puts in front of the House.

I would have to go back and say that the first goal of any country, of any municipality, or of any province is to look after its people. This would drum up a security policy that would take into consideration the hon. member's motion.

We have to put it in the perspective of where we have come from in the last 40 to 45 years. It is no revelation and it is no surprise to anybody here to say that in the last 40 to 45 years we have lived in a period of instability, challenge and a great threat to our security. How that is manifested I suppose is by the billions of dollars that Canada has spent, and other countries have spent against the challenge, the threat and the instability that faced us. It is a fair investment, I would say. It could have been plus 10 per cent, it could have been minus 10 per cent, we will never know.

The fact is that we took out an insurance policy on the country, an insurance policy on the continent, an insurance policy to make sure that I and my colleagues could be here speaking in this excellent model of democracy.

Is it time to change our feelings about instability, peace and security? Well, the conventional wisdom is that the end of the cold war has brought us to a point in time where we should consider these things.

Not long ago, I watched a television biography of a great hero of mine and I am sure of many in the House, the Hon. Winston Churchill. A lot of us recall his speech where he talked about the neck of the British Empire being wrung. It was delivered here, I am sure with much more eloquence and *élan* than I am delivering today. But it is appropriate to remember what he said. One of his expressions was "some chicken, some neck". Well, for those who would look at the end of the cold war as the end of our concerns with instability, challenge and security, I say to them: "Some peace, some security".

It is very difficult to pick up a newspaper today without reading about the difficulties taking place in the world. It is more difficult to read articles on the number of nuclear weapons that still exist.

As the hon. member said, this is not a question of fear mongering, but my hon. colleague the parliamentary secretary used some facts and figures. I will not quote, but there are roughly 25,000 nuclear weapons in the arsenals of both sides.

Again, I am not going to take the hon. member for Victoria out of context, but his thought was nuclear weapons are not needed to protect against nuclear weapons.

Well, if I am fighting an enemy that is 10 feet tall and packing two six-guns on his side and is driving one of these big-wheeled vehicles, I do not think I am going to take him on without the aid of a few friends. In those days it was called deterrence; today it is called hedging.

I will tell you why it is important to hedge. It takes a generation and a half to build up the kind of technology and security that we have in Canada. We cannot take on the world. In fact, we are the second largest country in the world and it has been shown that we cannot defend ourselves alone because of the number of people we have for the size of our country.

Therefore, we rely on a thing called collective alliance. While sometimes it may be difficult to understand this from some of the speeches that have been made in this House, our best neighbour is the United States. There are times when business is business and friendship is friendship. However when we really come down to the final points here, the point is if you belong to a collective alliance, if you belong to a collective defence club and you believe that there is still reason to have concern about peace, instability and danger and if you look at a weekend itinerary of what is happening in the world, then you would have to ask yourself the question, as laudable as the motion may seem superficially and, indeed, in some depth.

In the totality of what we as parliamentarians are expected to do and make decisions on, would it be wise at this time to make a decision that on the surface would seem to be reasonable on environmental assessment? Quite frankly, I do not think it is that unreasonable. It is a judgment call. I have no intention of degrading the motion of the hon. member or saying that it is absolutely out of the question.

What I am saying from where I stand, from the way I have been brought up and from the policies I revere is that perhaps the timing is wrong. The principle is fine but at this particular time in the history of our country I am not so sure it would be a wise move to support this judgment.

If I am allowed another minute or so, I want to go back and look at those past 45 years and what we stood for in Canada. Looking at our contribution to NATO, our contribution to peacekeeping, and our contribution to having the world the way it is today, we can be very proud of our achievements in our country.

• (1150)

While the hon. member's motion may be a move in a direction that the world may be heading somewhat

downstream—I am looking at the Rio conference and that kind of thing—I think perhaps the timing is a little early. At this particular point in time I suppose the view would be that the organization is there, we support it, you cannot have both sides, and I suppose I would have to say we would entertain the idea at some other time.

An hon. member: You sound like Mackenzie King.

Mr. Mifflin: No. I wish I could be perhaps more definite than the gentleman to whom you refer. I would say a good motion but the timing is somewhat perhaps to be achieved downstream.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today and speak on the motion by the hon. member for Victoria concerning nuclear powered and nuclear capable vessels off the west coast in particular.

While there has been a lot of public discussion on this subject, unfortunately not all of it has been truly well informed. In fact, many well-meaning Canadians are quite confused about the whole issue of these port visits. I do welcome the opportunity to clarify some of the facts.

Specifically, the motion calls for the cessation of visits to harbours in Victoria of nuclear powered vessels, or vessels that may be carrying nuclear weapons until a full public inquiry is done, also including an environmental assessment.

To understand why the government allows these specific port visits—I have to say under the very strictest of criteria, very strictest of guidelines—it is important to appreciate Canada's defence policy.

A lot of the public debate on the visits of what we call NPVs, nuclear propelled vessels, and the NCVs, nuclear capable vessels, ignores the fact that Canada welcomes these visits as a meaningful contribution to collective security. Indeed, much of Canada's history demonstrates the benefits of Canada's commitment to collective security.

I really believe the hon. member for Victoria would agree in the international arena the Canadian forces and its forerunners, the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Royal Canadian Air Force, acting in concert with our allies have played a notable, indeed a very honourable role, both in the establishment and the maintenance of peace in many widely separated areas of the world. This tradition continues today.

In addition to our continuing commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, we currently have personnel in the Red Sea enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq. We have 1,100 personnel in the Balkans with the European Communities monitoring mission and the United Nations protection force. We have personnel throughout the rest of the world in such places as Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, the Golan Heights, Kuwait, the Sinai and the western Sahara.

What I am talking about is best described in the April 1992 document *Defence Policy 1992*. On page 4 of this newly released document is a statement I would like to read:

> As a responsible member of the world community, Canada seeks the maintenance of a peaceful international order in which to pursue its own interests. Canadians do not and cannot look with equanimity on violent conflict anywhere in the world. It would not only be reprehensible in itself, but also corrosive to international order and to international stability.

More important, the document does make it clear that Canada maintains its commitment to defence and collective security, arms control and disarmament and the peaceful resolution of all disputes. Canada is a great country with a very small, a very modest armed force.

Again I refer to the *Defence Policy 1992*. In fulfilling our commitments, in conjunction with like-minded nations, we contribute to a safer and a more secure international environment. We are living in changing times. In only a short period of time we have all witnessed remarkable changes right around the world.

The cold war is over. Germany has been reunified. The former states of the Soviet Union have taken their place in the international community. Arms control regimes are in place to help contribute to a more secure world. Along with the changes there are challenges, and in particular the prospect of international instability is the subject of concern for all members of the international community.

Who of us would have thought that with the end of superpower confrontation Canadian forces personnel would be serving in and around the Persian Gulf? Canada's contribution in that region is an example of the benefits that we realized from collective security efforts.

Furthermore, Canada's success in the gulf was not derived only from the fact that we fielded extremely well trained and very good professional personnel but because we have much experience in operating in concert with our friends and with our allies.

The hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception has just made statements with regard to friends and collective alliance. This is the only way that we in Canada can have collective security efforts. Successive Canadian governments have recognized for years and years and decades there is absolutely no alternative to collective security.

We are blessed with one of the longest coastlines in the world. We are the second largest territory in the world. From a military perspective this is a major challenge. Added to the physical realities of our country is the fact that with our very modest small population and military resources Canada cannot defend unaided our national territory.

At the same time it should be remembered that there is no free ride. If Canada is going to derive benefits of alliance membership for our own security then Canada must and should be prepared to contribute in return. It is not surprising then that Canada works toward international peace and security in conjunction with those nations with which we share a very similar political principle, similar economic structures and similar social values.

Exchanges with our American friends are quite common, exchanges with their navy, their air force and their army personnel. They make regular visits to Canada. Other allies also visit Canada often using our spacious training facilities.

In this regard we have the British, the Dutch and the Germans. These flyers train out of Goose Bay, Labrador. German soldiers train at the Canadian Forces Base in Shilo, Manitoba. British personnel train at the Canadian Forces Base in Suffield and Wainright, Alberta.

This discussion would not be complete without highlighting Cold Lake, Alberta which indeed has its superb training facilities. The pilots of the CF-18s that played a major place in the Persian conflict some months ago trained in Cold Lake, Alberta.

It is an important part of our alliance in working together with our colleagues. It is not surprising that we do have visits of the NPVs and the NCVs, because we are all working together for peace and security in the country.

While I am pleased to participate today—and I know that security and environment are major factors—we all have to realize that Canada's major role in security policy and our commitment to defence and collective security are the only ways to go.

We are proud of what we have done. The world is not benign. We are moving toward better peace and security. Hopefully we can see that in the not too distant future.

• (1200)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I call Orders of the Day, the hon. member for Victoria has a one-page document which he wants tabled. In order to do that we would require unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We do not have unanimous consent.

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

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member just refused unanimous consent to my request. I should advise the House that I did provide the parliamentary secretary with a copy of the document which I had intended to table, so he has the document.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL PARKS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Friday, May 22, consideration of the motion of Mr. Charest that Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Natural Resources envelope.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act, as part of the debate on this bill. First of all, however, I want to say that according to the Projected Order of Business, we only have a ten-minute maximum, while according to me, we still have a 20-minute maximum plus 10 minutes for questions and comments. So I would appreciate it, if you would—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Yes, under the standing order. I regret that it does have that in today's procedure, but there are still two hours and nine minutes left as far as debate is concerned before we go into the 10-minute period.

Therefore the hon. member will have 20 minutes plus 10 and any other following members may have 20 minutes plus 10 until we complete the two hours and nine minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Last Friday, after my colleague from Hull—Aylmer finished his speech and we had started on questions and comments, there were still eight minutes left. I was about to intervene at that point. Could I use the eight minutes to make my comments now, or does the member in question have to be in the House?

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member must be in the House. I know it would have been a great question, but we will have to do it another time.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, we will now continue the debate on Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act, and in fact, I want to take advantage of this opportunity because I am not sure I will be given a chance when debate on the referendum legislation is resumed.

As you know, the Bloc Quebecois has seldom had a chance to express its views in many of the debates we have had, and that is why we insist on being able to speak in this particular debate. We want to take every available opportunity to express our views, and today is one of those opportunities.

During the debate on second reading of the referendum bill, the government imposed closure, and I would not be at all surprised if it did the same on third reading and even at the report stage. That is why I take this opportunity to rise in the House today.

As for the current debate, I would like to recall that when we were discussing this bill on Friday, during the last week the House was sitting, the hon. member for Skeena made some remarks that were far from obliging. I think that some day, at the Chair's request, the hon. member should withdraw those comments, because he said, and I quote:

> This debate has been going on in this House for six years. The member has already expressed to me personally—

And he was referring to one of our Bloc Quebecois members.

> —that the reason for holding up this piece of legislation, for holding up the debate, is to try to extort from the government a seat on the referendum committee—

Saying that we are extorting a place is incredible. It is our due. I think it goes without saying that we from Quebec are entitled to a seat on the legislative committee on the referendum bill. Calling that extortion is quite unthinkable.

I would also like to mention that the same member for Skeena told us members of the Bloc Quebecois that what we said was not relevant and that we were incompetent. Well. I never questioned that member's competence; I do not see why he would cast doubt on ours. Finally, I wanted the people to know that we are not fooled by such things.

Getting to the bill under consideration, I would like to talk about the famous Wood Buffalo Park, since it is one of those affected. I am looking here at the 1988-89 annual report from Environment Canada—

Mr. Lapierre: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Shefford on a point of order.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I find the speech by my colleague from Saint-Hubert so interesting that I think at least a quorum should be required so that many members can also benefit from hearing it.

Therefore I call for a quorum count, Mr. Speaker.

And the members having been counted:

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret there are enough members for a quorum.

[*Translation*]

We continue the debate with the hon. member.

Mrs. Venne: You are sorry that there is a quorum, Mr. Speaker. Well, I suppose that is a slip.

As I was saying, I would like to continue on one of the parks mentioned in this bill, namely Wood Buffalo Park. I think that hon. members and Canadians will be interested to know that there are falcons in this park. I think it is interesting to find out from the 1988-89 annual report what happened in this park. I will read you an excerpt. It says here, "A peregrine falcon recovery program continued on the Peace-Athabasca delta within the park." They are talking about Wood Buffalo Park.

> In 1988-89, 25 peregrine falcon chicks from seven nests hatched.

Mr. Lapierre: Oh?

Mrs. Venne: Yes, they did. I would really like the people to know what is going on in that park.

> Ten [of them] were foster chicks. The park, the Canadian Wildlife Service and Alberta Fish and Wildlife have been co-operating, over the past eight years, in research and management activities for the subspecies of peregrine falcon in northeastern Alberta, the only remaining boreal forest population of these birds.

I think that it is worth knowing what is going on in a park when we are considering making it a reserve. We should know what is going on in the park.

Of course, I would also like to tell you right away that I am for this bill. I think that Canadians should know that all members of the Bloc Quebecois who have spoken on this bill so far have said that they are in favour of it. Those who come after me will also say that of course we approve of this bill, but we are taking every opportunity we get to express ourselves in this House, including this one this morning.

So I continue on Wood Buffalo Park. I continue to quote the report:

> An interagency recovery plan was completed in October 1988. It includes basic chemical monitoring, fostering and release programs involving Wood Buffalo National Park's nesting pairs.
>
> The issue of bison disease within Wood Buffalo National Park—

There are also bison in that park and I think that we should mention it. So I continue:

> —and surrounding areas of Alberta and the Northwest Territories remained contentious.

• (1210)

In February 1989, the Minister of the Environment appointed a five-member environmental assessment panel to study the subject, as requested by the Minister of Agriculture. Technical and scientific data are being prepared for submission to the panel. Public hearings are expected in January 1990, with panel recommendations later in that year.

That is what the 1988-89 annual report of Environment Canada told us. Of course, that report also mentions other national parks in western Canada. We have another one in British Columbia, since the bill mentions the national park reserve on the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. So British Columbia has other national parks, including the S.S. Moyie. I can tell you that the 1988-89 report had this to say about it. A cost-sharing agreement was signed with the Kootenay Lake Historical Society and the village of Kaslo. The federal government's $175,000 helped to stabilize and protect the vessel, which upon retirement was the oldest Canadian-built paddle-wheeler in service. So a boat is part of the national parks. Note that I am new to this field, of course, but I would like to tell you that I find it rather surprising. Certainly it is understandable because this boat, which is now out of service, has been made into a historical monument and we ended up with a park. It is part of the national parks.

We also have the Brooks Aqueduct, which is a national park in Alberta. The Department of the Environment again in this case allocated $150,000 under a heritage protection agreement with the province of Alberta and the Eastern Irrigation District to construct visitor and interpretation facilities. So people will interpret the aqueduct. The Brooks Aqueduct was built of reinforced concrete between 1912 and 1914. You can now understand and realize that national parks are not just parks but also aqueducts and boats, and of course parks in some cases.

The Quebec region also has some, for example, the Lachine canal. It is classified as a park, but it is a canal. It is probably still there because of its historical character. A $10,000 five-year plan to decontaminate the Lachine canal began in 1988. Among other things, special containers will be built alongside the canal to hold the excavated material. This is all being done to clean up our environment so that it will be more pleasant.

I would also like to talk to you about another national park, South Moresby, in British Columbia. On July 12, 1988, Canada and British Columbia, which is part of Canada, I think—by Canada, I mean the federal government, since British Columbia is still part of Canada. It says here that Canada and British Columbia signed the first memorandum of agreement to establish a national park reserve called South Moresby and this agreement also involved regional economic development.

In all, the federal contribution totals $106 million over a period of eight years. Given these figures, allow me to make a short digression. Obviously, I am in favour of protecting the environment; we are all in favour of virtue, but those figures are quite striking when you think that women's groups, ask rather frequently the federal government for funding and their requests are rejected, not to mention that when we ask for a daycare program we are told to wait until next year, only to then find out that there is no longer going to be a daycare program.

I am now getting back to the national parks, but I wanted to make this digression because the situation is so striking. It is obvious that when women ask for pay equity, when we make requests of any kind to the government, those requests always come in second or third place.

The development work done for the park in 1988-89 is defined as follows: the CPS set up an office in North Vancouver which is primarily responsible for the implementation of the agreement. A new office was set up in the Queen Charlotte Islands; its mandate is to manage the Reserve for South Moresby National Park.

At various times during the year, officials from the CPS have negotiated with the Haïdas—as we know, the Haïdas are of course mentioned in the bill—in an attempt to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement on the planning, the management and the operation of the reserve for the national park.

The regional economic development program got under way with studies on the conditions necessary for the eventual development of a small craft harbour in Sandspit, the establishment of information and visitor centres in the city of Queen Charlotte and in Sandspit, as well as the setting up of a federal-provincial planning and coordinating committee.

This is what took place in South Moresby. I would also like to talk about the prairies, since we also have national parks in the prairies—

Mr. Lapierre: Indeed, Banff and the Rockies.

Mrs. Venne: Of course, everybody knows about Banff, but there are also other parks and I think it would be interesting to talk about those.

On September 23 1988, after five years of negotiations, the federal and Saskatchewan governments signed an agreement respecting the establishment of Grasslands National Park, that is in the south-west area of the province. This agreement replaced two federal-provincial agreements signed in 1981 concerning the creation of that park, as well as the development of oil and gas resources.

The proposed park will have an east and a west part totalling 906 square kilometres. Under the new agreement, an area of 336 square kilometres was designated as a mineral reserve for the Crown, so that oil and gas exploration are now prohibited activities on that land. I believe it is important to know what is going on in other provinces, and not only in Alberta and in British Columbia, as is now the case with Bill C-59.

Once the federal government—I am referring to Grasslands National Park—will have acquired all this land, the provincial authorities will transfer to it the management and the control of that land. This is yet another park that will be under federal jurisdiction. Of course, the provinces are always asked to give up the land, something of which the Bloc Quebecois does not necessarily approve.

I could also tell you about the Winter Garden theatre in Toronto.

• (1220)

In my four minutes left, I will try to say a few words about the Toronto area, which is rather interesting.

Mr. Lapierre: We could go there in the summer.

Mrs. Venne: Maybe, but remember, this is the Winter Garden.

Mr. Lapierre: However we can go there in the summer just the same.

Mrs. Venne: Maybe we should ask people from Toronto. I think so. I will tell you exactly what it is.

As part of a shared-cost agreement with the Ontario Heritage Foundation, the Department of the Environment has contributed $240,300 to be used in phase two of a project to restore the ornaments in this theatre. The agreement ensures that the world's best example of a theatre with a roof garden that is still intact will be protected. A historian will prepare a special paper on the history of the theatre. I think it would certainly be a very nice place to visit.

In concluding, since I only have a few minutes left, I will say a few words about Ellesmere Island in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Lapierre: That is really a lovely spot.

Mrs. Venne: Ellesmere Island National Park Reserve was formally established on September 6, 1988, when 37,775 square kilometres of northern Ellesmere Island were set aside. The park reserve protects a representative part of the Eastern High Arctic Glacier Natural Region and peacefully asserts Canada's sovereignty over the northernmost tip of the continent.

I think that is a rather poetic description.

Park administration facilities were constructed at Tanquary Fjord. I wish to conclude on that note—

Mr. Lapierre: So soon?

Mrs. Venne: I suppose it is a bit soon, because I could have given you all the details on the traditional hunting grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park, but unfortunately, I will have to refrain.

I also could have talked about the national park reserve in the Queen Charlotte Islands, and here again, I cannot describe all the attractions of this park which, I am sure, is absolutely enchanting. In concluding, I want to say that we are certainly in favour of this bill, but we insist on our right as members of the Bloc Quebecois to express our views. After all, that is what members are supposed to do when they are in the House.

Thank you for listening to me, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the hon. member for Saint-Hubert for her speech, and I think the Chair appreciated the information she was able to provide.

However, I am rather concerned about the fact that there are so many national parks across Canada but so very few in Quebec. The hon. member for Saint-Hubert mentioned the money spent on the various parks. I think this is one way for the Government of Canada to inject considerable amounts of money into the regions. However, I know there has always been a certain reluctance in Quebec because of territorial considerations.

I get the impression they often simply want excuses for dumping federal money in certain regions. I am sure there are many towns in Quebec that would have liked to get the kind of money that was spent on Gatineau Park and the Saguenay park reserve. I must say that over the years, the National Parks Act has not been beneficial to Quebec.

Considering that one-third of 1 per cent of the territory subject to the National Parks Act is located in Quebec, this legislation has been used to inject a lot of money everywhere else. Today we are being asked to spend about $300 million, the figure someone mentioned to me.

I am aware the hon. member for Saint-Hubert has read a number of reports, and perhaps she has something to say about the value represented by these parks, because in Quebec, when we are discussing Quebec's future and secession, we are all concerned about the way the assets will be divided. We know there are a few locations in Quebec like Forillon Park and the Mingan Archipelago. The hon. member told us that the Lachine canal—I did not know this—also comes under the National Parks Act.

There are a number of places that would have to be counted as part of our assets.

Payments in lieu of taxes are the usual procedure for office buildings, for instance. The federal government makes in lieu payments instead of paying property taxes. However, the problem is that there are no buildings in our national parks. There is no mathematical formula for calculating the value of these assets. I wonder whether we could decide to share the national parks and we could then get at least one-quarter of the value of all national parks. For instance, this is of course very symbolic. I realize this must sound rather funny, but the Rocky Mountains are so often used in advertising as a kind of flag waving. We have to ask some serious questions about the National Parks Act, which we support. Someone said Mount Royal, but I hardly think that comes under the legislation. No. It better not. It is clear that the hon. member for Saint-Hubert is concerned about the assets, and I would like to hear what she has to say.

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer my colleague from Shefford. There was certainly not much money spent in Quebec, since we have only three parks out of a total of 38 or 39, I believe. We have Grosse-Île, the Lachine Canal and Saint-André-de-Kamouraska. I talked previously about the Lachine Canal. I now talk about Saint-André-de-Kamouraska. As part of a national cost-sharing program regarding national historic sites, Environment Canada contributed $200,000 toward restoring the Saint-André church. It is a good example of Récollet style and parishioners as well as Industrial and Regional Development also contributed. It is quite outrageous that, to answer my friend, Quebec received only $200,000 for Saint-André-de-Kamouraska. For Grosse-Île, no amount is given here. It simply says that some buildings will be strengthened. We do not really know what happened at Grosse-Île. We know there was an agreement, signed in August 1988 by the federal Minister of Agriculture, to transfer this historic site to the National Park network, to commemorate immigration in Canada. I hope this answers the question of the hon. member for Shefford.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): I am very pleased to congratulate my colleague for her great speech on national parks as a whole. I would like to ask her if she is surprised by the fact, as she mentioned, that out of 35 parks only three are in Quebec, and those represent only one third of one per cent of the area of that province. Why is it, in her opinion, that the Quebec Conservative members across the floor remain silent on this issue? Is she not also surprised to see the conservative members, and I can see that the member for Trois-Rivières is completely oblivious to this debate, that not one member rose to call for a comprehensive study on all of our national parks, and not only on a specific one? So much the better. Of course we support this bill. It is marvelous, especially for the people of the Haida reserve, and we totally agree that it is their right to have this park. However, while we are debating this issue, why not also include all of the Canadian territory and consider a more equitable sharing of these resources, so that the money can be better allocated and so that each region can benefit from that money.

In that regard, we know that Quebec was treated unjustly. Therefore, why is it that the Conservative members from Quebec do not rise to ask that our province also get its share? They should ask that we take this opportunity to settle the case of the Saguenay park. We are prepared to give our agreement so that there is the unanimous consent required to pursue the debate a bit longer today and wrap up the three readings at the same time, if the government is prepared to include the Saguenay park. Why not take this opportunity to solve the issues that remain or that are still the object of negotiations with some provinces?

• (1230)

This of course should in no way delay the present bill, but it could be a remarkable way for the Quebec Conservative members to show that they have stayed with this government to protect Quebec's interests from within. Indeed, this is what they said when they decided to stay with the government. I can see that the member for Trois-Rivières is totally oblivious to this debate; he prefers to write a few letters and greeting cards rather than get involved in such historical and compelling issues for Quebec, so that this province can get its share of parks.

I therefore ask this question to the hon. member for Saint-Hubert: is she not surprised, after reading those documents and after the very elegant and comprehen-

sive explanation that she gave in her speech, that there are not more parks in Quebec? Also, how is it that the Quebec Conservative members prefer to remain silent rather than protect the interests of Quebec as they have always claimed to do, so that Quebec also gets its share of national parks and that the federal government stop pouring money on one side or the other of that province, while precisely forgetting this population of seven million people that also pay taxes and that are entitled to their fair share?

Could the hon. member for Saint-Hubert make a small comment? I presume that my colleague is just as surprised as I am to notice this absence, this silence on the part of the Conservative members regarding such an important debate.

Mrs. Venne: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the hon. member for Richelieu. As for the silence of the Conservative members from Quebec, I would just like to quote an article from *Le Quotidien*, the Chicoutimi newspaper, which shows how highly regarded the member for Jonquière is in his region, but he is still silent too. I quote: "He criticizes for reasons of form and image alone," says editorialist Claude Girard. Later on, he says, "Blackburn goes so far as to say that if he had heeded his constituents two years ago, he would have joined the Bloc Quebecois, but he finally preferred to listen to his leader's pleas instead of the will of those who had elected him."

In that same article, which I do not have with me, so I cannot continue to quote it, it is obvious, as is undeniably clear from the tone of it, that the only thing the member for Jonquière wants is to be seen. He often appears on TV. We in the Bloc like to see him too, but we often get a kick out of it: I must say that he does not contribute much to all the debates in which he does not participate or on which he has no opinion. Unfortunately, all he does is repeat what his leader told him.

As for the others, I must admit that after last year's Conservative Party convention, which I stormed out of, as you recall, because they just did not want to recognize the rights of an ordinary backbencher. That convention recognized Quebec's right to self-determination, as we recall. The member for Louis-Hébert was very pleased about that, but since then we have not heard from her. She was also against having a referendum bill. Now we see that she is all for it.

Every time we see Conservative members from Quebec changing their colours, we are no longer surprised to see them keep silent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Debate. The hon. member for Longueuil.

M. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak today on Bill C-59. I am also delighted to notice that, for the very first time since I have joined the Bloc Quebecois some two years ago, I have been recognized immediately after another member from the Bloc Quebecois in this House.

As you are aware, I tried over and over again to raise the rather important matter of the Canmet program, but I was not allowed to ask a question. I do not know why. After all, we were talking about technology and prosperity. I have leafed through the brochure received from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and noticed that, on the twenty or so projects listed in this leaflet, not a single one had been awarded in Quebec. By the way, the same is true, more or less, for national parks.

You are no doubt aware that only three of the 25 national parks in Canada are located in the province of Quebec. Such inequity is very nearly outrageous, when you see what little interest the federal government has shown for the province of Quebec, whether for parks or for science and technology projects. The same thing is happening almost in every case.

About parks, I must say that I am in favour of establishing parks, in so far as we can afford it of course. I am especially in favour of establishing parks equitably. I know why parks are necessary. First, our wildlife needs to be protected. We all know that this is important, at least in certain geographical areas of this great land. There are migratory birds and we have to earmark permanently a place for them, so they can go on travelling, surviving and living. That is why we need wildlife reserves such as parks to allow these birds to settle, feed and breed.

There are also animals that need protection. The problem often with wild animals accustomed to living in parks is that they are hardly protected at all when they wander in commercial or industrial areas, in big cities, in rural areas and so on. We absolutely need specific places where animals, our wildlife in particular, can live and survive.

The flora needs protection as well. Having been raised on a farm, I appreciate how important it is to have animals and to protect them as well as to have some contacts with animals, birds and nature. That is part of our culture, of our way of living and of our way of appreciating life. Nothing beats the beauty of animals living freely. When you look at animals living freely, you can recognize their specific character. In that sense, parks are a special place where wildlife and birds can live in total freedom and express themselves in all liberty, as I can do today in the House.

Of course, the quality of life is also in question here. If men and women have the possibility to live, to travel and visit national parks to see—

Mr. Lapierre: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Shefford, on a point of order.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is making an excellent speech, and deserves much more attention. That is why I call quorum, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, the member for Shefford gave his word last week that he would not be stonewalling this legislation. Today we see tactics that are counter productive to advancing this legislation and getting on with other business. I think that is as much a point of order as is his.

• (1240)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the hon. member asking for a quorum call?

Mr. Lapierre: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I did not hear him. I am sorry.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There being 21 members present, not including the occupant of the Chair, the debate shall accordingly continue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, personally I was a little—

[*English*]

Mr. Mills: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is the kind of hypocrisy I think the people of Canada are fed up with in this House. All morning the hon. member comes into this Chamber and after looking around if he does not see quite enough people to form a quorum, he requests a quorum call. Then 30 seconds later, he himself runs out of the room.

Is there not some way we can finish this debate so we can get on to other business?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I cannot accept that you do not ask my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood to withdraw his remarks. I have been following this debate all morning long, I even took part in it, and I do not need him to discipline us.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I think that is debate. If you want to discuss it, you can do so behind the curtains.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): We are lucky, Mr. Speaker, to have parks because sometimes in this House it is somewhat embarrassing—

Mr. Lapierre: Its a real zoo.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): People may think that we are not very free to express ourselves in such a place. Today, I am proud to be able to express myself. It is a rare occasion when we have time to do so since we are usually given very little time to speak our minds. We were given very little time to express our opinion on the referendum bill. Today, of course, we have the opportunity to talk about parks, which I greatly appreciate.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, in Quebec we would like to create a kind of a park, a very large park we would call Grand parc Grande-Baleine. For me and for many Quebecers, Grande-Baleine would become a great park, an extraordinary reservoir, the likes of which may never exist elsewhere in the world. We want to create this great park, Grande-Baleine, and at the same time generate energy and electricity. For the past 30 years we have

developed energy and electricity in Quebec, the cleanest, the least polluting form of energy possible. For me that is extremely important. One is always wondering what is going on in Quebec. We want to generate clean and non polluting energy and at the same time create a park we would call Grande-Baleine Park, which would generate a lot of electricity and would be an extraordinary body of water which could be stocked, thus creating a perfectly viable park, especially in terms of tourism, which would attract all kinds of people.

[*English*]

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. As you know, I am a new member in the House and I am not quite sure of the rules. It seems to me that if somebody is constantly demanding a quorum that the responsibility of that party is to keep the debate going. Is there a rule on that note that when a party leaves in the middle of a debate and causes a quorum to be lost that they are not chastised by the Speaker for their interruptions at other times?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I think at this time we will just carry on with debate. I can discuss that with the hon. member if he would like to come to the Chair.

Mr. Fulton: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I know there is a fair degree of latitude in terms of relevancy given by you and other Speakers during debate, but I am just wondering about the terms of relevancy here.

Bill C-59 deals with Gwaii Haanas, with the South Moresby National Park Reserve and the agreement thereto in relation to Wood Buffalo National Park which is in Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

We were given to believe through the media that there was a solemn commitment by members of the Bloc that they would not be blocking this legislation today and yet they are. I just wonder, if they are being totally irrelevant to the legislation perhaps they could at least take the time to explain why their word is of no value.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe the hon. member was getting back to the relevance of the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we, the members of the Bloc Quebecois, consider we have a right to speak just as much as the other members of this House. If we want to debate a bill, we have the right and the duty to do so. I cannot understand why our other colleagues are opposed to that.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I think we should get back to debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member for Skeena has anything to teach us concerning the way we speak and the words we use in our speeches. I do not feel I have the right to judge his speeches and I hope he will not judge mine.

The Canadian people, and particularly the people from Quebec since I always speak more specifically for Quebecers, should be the ones to decide if my declarations are intelligent and adequate and not the member for Skeena.

We always address the people of Canada when we speak in this House; that is why cameras are filming and broadcasting the speeches of the members of this House.

I was talking about the great park we were thinking of creating in Quebec, the park of Grande-Baleine which would play an important role in the production of energy, electrical energy, and which would at the same time promote tourism in Quebec while producing electrical energy, the cleanest form there is.

When you talk about parks, you necessarily talk about environment. I wonder why the creation of a park such as Grande-Baleine, an environmental site and a source of enormous quantities of clean energy, should give rise to so many comments and to such a commotion on the part of native lobbyists and others who state it will be very bad for the environment.

Having asked myself a number of questions on that subject, I came to more essential and more vital ones such as could it be that our competitors, important American and Canadian lobbyists, would try to prevent the development of hydro-electricity in Quebec in order to promote other forms of energy like the atomic energy the Canadian government is promoting so strongly, since it has large amounts of uranium it wants to sell, particularly in Ontario, and also—

[*English*]

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you rule on relevancy. I have now listened for another five minutes to the member. He shows no desire whatsoever to speak in relation to Gwaii Haanas. There has been a binding referendum that took place. The time clock ran out on that yesterday.

I think it would be helpful, since the leader of the Bloc Quebecois has personally committed to seeing this legislation pass, and as one of his other spokespersons last week said that this legislation would not be unduly held up, and since the members are obviously determined not to be relevant, surely the least we can do in this House is hold them to the rule of relevancy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have been listening very carefully to the hon. member. Since he has only about four or five minutes left, I would hope that he would get back to the bill. I will listen to the hon. member for Shefford but I am just going to say to the hon. member for Longueuil that I have been listening to his speech also and I think he should come back to the relevancy of the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, the member for Skeena keeps coming back on that subject each chance he gets to accuse us of trying to stop the bill. We are nine members here in this House and freedom of speech is fundamental to this Parliament. The reason why this Parliament sits is to give its members the opportunity to express themselves and I will not allow any one of those members to gag us. Mr. Speaker, and your function is precisely to make sure that we—

• (1250)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not know what happened as far as any arrangements outside this House are concerned. I do not feel that we should get into discussion in that respect. I would like to recognize the hon. member for Longueuil because he is losing his time as far as debate is concerned. I would like the hon. member for Longueuil to finish his speech.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, to answer the hon. member for Skeena, no agreement was made that I know of.

Mr. Lapierre: Exactly.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): There was no agreement and we can speak freely in this House. We simply felt that we should take the time to explain, for the benefit of the people of Quebec in particular, what is happening in British Columbia. The government wanted to ram this bill through, to go through first, second and third reading within a couple of hours on Friday, the week before last, and we had not even been informed of this bill.

We simply decided to rise in this House to try and understand better what is going on with parks. I do not think there was any deal.

We also wondered what the rush was with this bill, why it had to pass all three readings on the same day. We were seriously wondering. Personally, I wondered for example about the ongoing constitutional debates. We know that, in this particular case, the responsibility for managing the park would be shared by the natives, the provincial and the federal governments. So, we wondered what the big rush was to entrust the federal government with the management of this park without first making sure, for one thing, that Mr. Ovide Mercredi, the leader of the native people in Canada, was aware of what was brewing in this House.

Mr. Mercredi is trying to gain more power for the native people in Canada. Did he really know what was going on? I asked myself the question and I wondered what all the rush was. Was the idea to play a trick on Mr. Mercredi by passing a bill swiftly to throw a wrench in his bargaining efforts, as he is talking about the Constitution and wants to bring back certain powers? Do we indeed want to play a trick on him?

Tricks like those are being played on us here in the House of Commons. We asked ourselves if the government was doing the same thing with Mr. Ovide Mercredi and was trying to fool him. We told ourselves that there was no rush and asked ourselves if, during last week's break, we could perhaps do a little research to see if the federal government was trying to fool Mr. Ovide Mercredi. It is for these reasons, among others, that we decided to speak in this House.

Who will really manage that park? Who will really manage it? Will it be the federal government alone or the three levels, that is the federal government, the province and the Indians? I do not know. It seems that it will be the federal government alone. We know that, until now, the federal government was not able to manage its own affairs. It has now accumulated a debt of $450 billion—$450 thousand million—and is on its way to have another deficit of $32 billion. It now wants to rapidly establish a park and create commitments for the next 50 or 100 years, without knowing if we will be able to pay for that park. That too is a serious question that we should ask ourselves.

We ask a lot of questions like those. Is the federal government able to manage a park adequately? Should the Indians not manage it themselves? Would it be better if British Columbia or even a private company did it? Those are all serious questions that we must ask ourselves in order that when that park is actually established and we start pouring money into it, we will be able to afford it and manage it efficiently and adequately, at lower costs than we have had until now.

We know that presently the federal government is unable to manage its own affairs. It is demonstrating its inability to manage the nation's finances since the accumulated debt is now reaching $450 billion and the annual deficit is going to reach $32 billion again. This is why we decided to talk. We want 25 per cent of the moneys which come from Quebec to be spent wisely. Quebecers are contributing $25 billion to Ottawa in direct and indirect taxes, and some would like us to believe that Quebec is receiving presents from the federal government. It never did, the government is simply returning to Quebec the money it took from our pockets in taxes. The same is true for parks.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member for Longueuil. It seemed to me that toward the end of his speech he was asking a lot of interesting and constructive questions. He asked questions that we should all be concerned about concerning the Government of Canada and how we manage the parks of Canada, concerning the relationship of the Government of Canada to the parks of Canada versus the provincial relationship to the parks.

I was getting a strong sense from the member that he was speaking as he once did, as a strong federalist, rather than as he has been speaking in the last few months, which is—as most Canadians would know—as a separatist.

I am getting the sense that the separatist position of the Bloc Quebecois is taking a sudden shift. All of a sudden it is showing a great interest in Canada, her national parks, and the relationship between Canada and her national parks. Is there something new here? Is the Bloc shifting its position from that of a separatist party to that of a federalist party once again?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Absolutely not. Mr. Speaker, we are not in the process of changing our opinion. We are more and more attentive. Since we have decided to protect the interests of Quebec in Ottawa, we represent the citizens of Quebec here, we are more and more attentive to what the federal government does. As we know, Quebecers pay approximately $25 billion per year, that is 25,000 million dollars per year in taxes to Ottawa. Ottawa does not make gifts to Quebec. We are watchful because Quebecers pay about 26 per cent of all the taxes that the federal government spends recklessly. We are here precisely to keep an eye on how the taxes paid by Quebecers are spent in Ottawa.

The park that we are talking about will cost money and it will have to be managed by somebody. What I meant to say is that if it is managed by the federal government, and it has been demonstrated that the federal government is incapable of managing properly the taxes paid by Quebecers to Ottawa, within the Canadian Confederation, I say that one must wonder whether the private

sector could better manage that park and ensure that Quebecers do not have to pay as much taxes to Ottawa to support it. I am not against parks. On the contrary, I am in favour of them and I wish that there would be many more in Quebec, since it seems that only three out of thirty-five national parks are in that province. If I rise today it is because we ask ourselves a lot of questions as to why Quebec is so disadvantaged in that regard. We have been establishing parks in Canada for 100 years. Why is it that Quebec was put at such a disadvantage when its territory is so suited to the creation of parks?

• (1300)

We have mountains and beautiful lakes. We have everything that is needed. Why has Quebec been so neglected in the last 100 years as regards parks, when Quebecers have always paid much more than they have received? If Quebec had collected those $25 billion and spent that money according to its priorities, I am convinced that it would have established more parks than the federal has done in the last 100 years. That is why we are interested in parks. It is not because we are less separatists, but we believe that the sovereignty of Quebec will precisely enable us to create parks adequately and in accordance with the priorities of Quebec. No, it is still the federal government that decides for Quebec, according to federal priorities. Unfortunately, the federal priorities are not the same as the priorities of Quebec. In Quebec, we would like to have more parks. That is why we rise today and say so to the population of that province. We rise today because we only represent Quebec. And we are the only ones. Of course, there is not a single Conservative member, nor a Liberal, because they only look after their own small personal interest. They want to become parliamentary secretaries or even ministers. We are not interested in becoming parliamentary secretaries or ministers; in fact, we are not even interested in gaining total power. We are only interested in having the power to protect the interests of Quebec and watch how the taxes paid by Quebecers are spent for as long as it will take before we can fully manage our own affairs, collect all of our taxes, and spend them according to our own priorities.

We will conclude economic and defence arrangements with the rest of Canada. Of course we are open. Ideally, and I am answering to the hon. member, a strong and united Canada with a sovereign Quebec would be ideal. It would not be necessary for us to rise in this House to protect the interests of Quebec. Our province would collect all of our taxes and would negotiate with the rest of Canada to decide on the parks that should or should not be created. It is for those reasons that I am more and more sovereignist; it is because I think that we were not well served by the Canadian federation. This is a blatant example, because in the last 100 years, the federal government only established three parks in Quebec while it created 32 in the rest of the country. This is proof that Quebec did not get a fair treatment in this country.

It is for all those reasons that Quebecers want to collect their own taxes and manage their money according to their priorities. It is for those reasons that the majority of Quebecers, and francophones in particular, have decided to opt for a sovereign Quebec associated with a united Canada. That English Canada form a united and strong nation is great, but Quebec will spend its money according to its priorities, and both sides will benefit. In fact, I am convinced that both sides will do better. That is why the Bloc Quebecois has chosen this option.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, last week the member for Hull—Aylmer was interviewed by the press outside of this House about the tactics that had taken place that Friday during the debate on Bill C-59. He admitted that the Bloc Quebecois had been stonewalling Bill C-59. However, when asked whether that stonewalling was going to continue he indicated, on behalf of the Bloc Quebecois, that there would be no continued blocking of the bill.

I would like to ask the member why—

An hon. member: That is not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): He is asking a question.

I recognized the hon. member on a question or a comment. He is now putting a question to the hon. member.

Mr. Plamondon: He is reading a text.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): He can read a text, there is nothing wrong with reading a text. He wants to make sure that the quote is right.

The hon. member for Skeena has the floor.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member could take a moment to address this because there are a considerable number of Haida people and British Columbians who are watching this debate, as well as a considerable number of Albertans and residents of the Northwest Territories. They would like to know whether the word of members of the Bloc Quebecois given to the media in Canada can be trusted or not.

The headline says: "Bloc Quebecois won't block South Moresby Park bill any more, member promises".

I am just asking whether a promise made outside the House by a member of the Bloc is worth anything. Apparently, the Bloc's promises here in the House, and outside, are of questionable value.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the hon. member means by stonewalling or blocking. A few hours of debate in this House is nothing, compared to the many years this park will be in existence. I do not see why the hon. member for Skeena is in such a hurry. I do not see why he is so anxious to save a few hours' time, when we are discussing a bill to create a park that will cost several million dollars and will probably be in existence for the next 100 years.

Mr. Lapierre: Or even thousands of years.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Or even thousands of years, as the hon. member said. I do not see why he is so upset. We kept our promise. We are just saying we want to talk about this and make sure Quebecers get their fair share of what they contribute every day to the Canadian federation in the form of taxes, which adds up to about $25 million annually. If the Bloc Quebecois were not here to debate these points, I do not see who else would defend Quebecers as they should be defended in this Canadian Confederation.

And I do not see what he means by stonewalling.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the hon. member's time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate on Bill C-59 which concerns our national parks.

Very often we cannot speak in debates that concern Quebec, such as the debate on the constitutional proposals or on the referendum. That is why we believe we must take advantage of every opportunity we have to speak on other matters, especially when the government is trying to expedite bills through the House, which is the case for this bill and even more so for Bill C-81, the referendum legislation.

This debate on national parks is a typical example of the speed with which the federal government is able to deal with matters outside Quebec and its reluctance to deal with matters that concern Quebec, and I am thinking more particularly of the Saguenay marine park.

Mr. McDermid: That is not true.

Mr. Duceppe: I do not know whether we will sit on the committee on Bill C-59. The minister said that all parties agreed to support the bill, but he never bothered to consult the Bloc Quebecois. As far as the government is concerned, we do not exist. However, the government and hon. members opposite from Quebec are in for a rude awakening after the next election.

Our members did not sit on the committee on Bill C-81 concerning the referendum and Canada's and Quebec's constitutional future. Committees, as in the case of the committee on Bill C-59, are more or less private clubs from which we are excluded.

To get back to Bill C-59, a number of questions come to mind. For instance, if British Columbia were to become a sovereign state, following a democratic referendum called, need I say, by the authorities of British Columbia and not by the federal government with its anti-democratic manoeuvres, how would the assets be divided? Would this park be federal property? Would British Columbia have to pay certain rights to the federal State? These things must be considered, and that is what the Bélanger-Campeau commission did when it con-

sulted experts who came not just from Quebec but also from the rest of Canada, France and England. These experts told us that Quebec's share of non-financial federal assets would be equivalent to the ratio of the value of the assets located in Quebec territory to the value of all federal non-financial assets located in Canada and abroad, including embassies, consulates and the like.

• (1310)

We must also determine the real value of the national parks, because they have a value, even if it is hard to define in accounting terms, according to the federal government's own data, because they have not been built on. For example, what is Moresby Park worth or Forillon Park in Gaspé? That will have to be discussed when the time comes for Quebec and Canada to negotiate. We also know that federal government property is not subject to municipal property tax, so there must be some form of compensation. It exists in some cases. We know that Quebec receives only 18 per cent of this kind of compensation paid to municipalities.

I also repeat that Quebec has only three of the 35 national parks in Canada and that there is no compensation for national parks because, as we know, they are not built up but in their natural state.

How would one prepare that report I spoke of earlier on non-financial assets? The value of the national parks must be determined. We know in advance with absolute certainty—it is quite obvious—that Quebec contributes much more than it receives in this regard.

The relationship between the Haïda nation and the government authorities of British Columbia and Canada must also be specified. The governments should use the James Bay agreement between the Government of Quebec and the federal government and the Cree and Inuit nations as an example. Matthew CoonCome, the Cree Grand Chief, said in the State House in Maine: "As a people, we have the assurance of being able to preserve our way of life with respect to hunting, fishing, trapping and our language and culture. Under the agreement, we obtained what we never had before: full authority over education through the Cree school commission, over social and health services, over managing our lands, and a strong voice in approving new developments on our territory; rights that respect the resources of the land; rights that guarantee police protection and a judicial system adapted to our needs; guarantees that we can participate fully in developing sub-Arctic Quebec."

That is the kind of agreement that Quebec made with the Cree and that Matthew CoonCome, the Cree Grand Chief, talked about. I think it is important to mention it, because we know that British Columbia has the most land claims and that so far there have been almost no negotiations with the native people because these negotiations only began a year and a half ago, although I stand to be corrected on that.

We should also know whether creating that park will solve the land claims, if the inherent right of native self-government that we hear so much about in the present constitutional circus would accommodate such an agreement or whether the Supreme Court would have to decide in three years. In short, would this park still be part of British Columbia? Would it be a federal enclave or an independently governed native territory? Have provisions been made in this bill to tie it to the constitutional debate so that we can see beyond the few hours we have to discuss it?

We must deal with these issues and these questions are all unanswered right now. They might have a major impact in this time of constitutional discussion.

Despite what the member for Skeena said, we are in favour of creating this park.

There seems to be a problem when we are talking and when we want to talk, nobody wants us to do so. Make up your mind. As far as we are concerned we are quite ready to speak at some length and in great detail on the referendum issue, but nobody wants us to do so. Obviously, we will grab every opportunity possible but, as I said before, we will support the creation of this park. However, it is important to know how much it will cost Quebecers. We do not question the judiciousness of creating this park. We only want to try to figure out, in this area as in many others, how much is federalism costing Quebecers.

This park has its *raison d'être* and does not represent a totally frivolous expense, unlike the statue to honour the Queen of England which will cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. It seems totally unjustified, especially during a recession, to build a statue of Elizabeth II on a horse.

The national park example, in terms of investments, is an excellent one for any province. In Quebec, the question is different because of the issue of who has control over the territory. In this area we are clearly distinct. When you look at investments, you can see that Quebec only gets 18 per cent of research and development funds. We also know that with three parks out of 35, we get very little in that area also. As a matter of fact, there is an area where Quebec receives more from Ottawa than it gives, and that is unemployment insurance.

You do not build a country, you do not develop a society by relying on unemployment insurance payments. You build a society by investing in research and development, by investing in industries, by investing in tourism via, for example—it is a good one—national parks.

We will therefore support this project and I hope that the questions I asked will be answered, especially as far as asset splitting is concerned, so that Quebec and Canada can start negotiating in earnest the splitting of assets and liabilities once Quebecers have answered yes to a sovereignty referendum held in Quebec according to Bill 150 passed by the National Assembly which is the only legitimate authority to decide what the future of Quebec will be.

Mr. Plamondon: On point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Richelieu wants to raise a point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, if this is the question or comments period.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Yes, this is in fact the question or comments period. The hon. member for Richelieu has the floor.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): I am very pleased to participate in this debate and I very much appreciated the speech of my colleague, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who placed this debate in its proper perspective, that of a reflection we have to make on a greater equity in the distribution of resources and taxes levied by the federal government.

I find it surprising that we should want to speed up the debate on this issue as much as possible when we often take several months before passing ordinary bills. Last Friday, they tried to have it go through all three stages. I wonder why the member for Skeena is not rather going after the Tory government who neglected to table that bill. If we had been consulted a few months ago, or better still, if the government, in its respect for democracy, had—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I wish the hon. member would direct his questions and comments to the former speaker. I do not think there should be a debate here between the hon. member for Skeena and the hon. member for Richelieu. When members get up for a question or comment they should direct it to the former speaker not to another member in the Chamber.

The hon. member for Skeena, on a point of order.

• (1320)

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, just so the record is accurate, the bill itself was tabled on February 20, 1992. The Bloc had more than three months to read it so it could have a reasonable opportunity to participate fully and directly in this debate.

There were no discussions on this floor on Friday of somehow ramming this suddenly through the House. Discussions were held to see whether the debate could be speeded up so that the binding referenda that had already taken place with the Haida could be met by this House.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, the member for Skeena is now trying to tell the House that there was no deal between the three parties to speed it up.

The reality is that for the last few hours of debate on Friday last and today those members have been trying to stop us from speaking. The reality of the matter is that we have wanted to participate in that debate, and at the end of the day we are going to support the bill. I hope the member will be here to support it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The reality is that most of the members of the Bloc have been able to speak, so I would like to go back to questions and comments and recognize the hon. member for Richelieu.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take part in the debate by asking my colleague if he is surprised to hear the hon. member for Skeena, who is getting ready for his trip to Rio with nine of his colleagues, tell us today that we have not prepared for this debate? The member forgets that when he or his party was sitting on the committee presided by the Speaker of the House, they refused to give us research budgets to enable us to have researchers, to prepare ourselves and to welcome this bill, but with a much better understanding of its content. However, they were not there, they were not there to defend democracy.

When the New Democratic Party only had 11 members, and the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie will agree, that party was entitled to research budgets even if the required number is 12 members. When there were only six Creditistes, they were entitled to research budgets. However, because this is the Bloc Quebecois, which has nine members, we refuse to give it research budgets. We would need those budgets to prepare ourselves, and we do not have enough time. Consequently, we have to discuss things a little bit longer, but debates in a Parliament can sometimes take an extra day, and I think that the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie will agree on that. In fact, I notice that my colleague spent the whole weekend preparing his speech because he did not have researchers to help him and also because our party was not consulted regarding the ideal timetable to pass this very important bill. We were not consulted and now we are being blamed for not having been consulted. How can we understand those great Democrats?

I am surprised to see that because we take part in a debate that they tried to hide from us to speed up the passing of the bill on a Friday morning, with the three readings as well as the consent and the complicity of the three parties, all of a sudden they are surprised to see that we have things to say. We do this exercise in the name of Quebec and its higher interests, while the Conservative members are sleeping and hiding so as not to have to protect those interests. They act like good sheep after having been elected as the lions that would protect Quebec's interests.

The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie will agree that this is what is tragic. In fact, I think that this is precisely what the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie was saying in his speech. That is what his comments were about when he was referring to the historical aspect of this great debate that has been going on for several years between Quebec and Canada and that deals primarily with the sharing of monies collected by the federal government. The hon. member explained how Quebec does not get its fair share of those monies in spite of the fact that it is a contributor.

This debate will lead to the passing of an exceptional bill for the Haida nation that we admire a lot for the struggle that it has put up for many years in order to get this park. Indeed, this park represents a lot for the Haida nation. That is why I urge the members of the House to support this bill.

I hope that all the members of this House will vote in favour of this bill so that the Haida nation can be satisfied after so many claims, and so that this park can be managed and established in British Columbia. However, as my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie mentioned earlier, in the future we will have to ensure a more equitable allocation of public monies regarding national parks and Quebec will understand—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has made his comment. I wish he would ask his question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: I was just about to ask my question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie could tell me: Basically, after a debate like this one on parks, would Quebec not be better off relying only on its own elected representatives, its own government, instead of relying on conservative members of Parliament who are sitting there in silence while Quebec is not receiving its share of federal funds?

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I think that, indeed, the role of members of Parliament from any region in Canada is to stand up for their constituents. I admire the hon. member for Skeena for that, as he truly fulfils his duties in this House. He is here to protect the interests of the people in his riding.

It is the same thing for us from Quebec, at least for us in the Bloc Quebecois, because the others do not speak up too often. Essentially, we are in favour of this bill. Yet it would be worth while to let the people know how much it costs, how much shall be levied from that area, and I raise again the matter of assets and liabilities. So how can this be settled, because this is the kind of question this House will have to deal with when Quebec and Ottawa get down to bargaining, after all this circus is over.

I would also like to go back to the question of knowing about this bill being introduced and our being insufficiently prepared. I for one have the feeling of having asked questions that are yet to be answered. We would have been better able to prepare for this debate if we had been afforded actual research services. I can tell you that, under the minority government of the member for Yellowhead in 1979, the Socreds lead by Fabien Roy had one. They ensured a majority. The NDP also had one between 1962 and 1964, as the Equality Party does presently in Quebec, because they view democracy differently there. There is more fair play and the people from the Equality Party, though they are only three, get research services while we do not get any here.

It seems to me that we could follow this lead. As I said earlier, we could follow the lead in the case of deals with the Haidas. In considering the James Bay agreement, we should draw inspiration as to how this House functions from the way things are handled in the Quebec National Assembly which celebrated its 200th anniversary last week.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time for questions and comments has now expired. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 147*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Anderson
Angus	Arseneault
Atkinson	Attewell
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bélair
Berger	Bertrand
Bjornson	Blais
Blenkarn	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault	Boyer
Breaugh	Browes
Butland	Cadieux
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Collins	Comuzzi
Cooper	Crawford
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dick	Dionne
Dobbie	Domm
Duceppe	Duplessis
Edwards	Feltham
Ferguson	Ferland
Flis	Fontana
Fretz	Funk
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gardiner	Gauthier
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gray (Windsor West)	Halliday
Harb	Hawkes
Hicks	Hockin
Hogue	Holtmann
Horner	Hudon
James	Jelinek
Johnson	Jordan
Kempling	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Koury
Landry	Langlois
Lapierre	Layton
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	Lewis
MacAulay	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacLellan	MacWilliam
Maheu	Manley
Marchi	Marin
Marleau	Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McCurdy	McDermid
Mifflin	Mills
Monteith	Nault
Nowlan	Nunziata
Nystrom	Oberle
Ouellet	Parker
Phinney	Plamondon
Plourde	Prud'homme
Redway	Reid
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Riis
Saint-Julien	Samson

S. O. 31

Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Simmons
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tobin
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vézina
Volpe
Weiner
Assiniboia)
Worthy
Siddon
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Soetens
Speller
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Vanclief
Venne
Vincent
Walker
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Winegard
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—139

NAYS

Members

nil/aucun

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Natural Resources envelope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On a point of order, the hon. government whip.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering, with this kind of precedent on Monday morning, we could apply this vote to the government legislation for the balance of the week.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 2 p.m. the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

ROBERT CAMPBELL

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, on the last day of May, the riding of Egmont in Prince Edward Island, Canada, is the worse off because of the loss of a great parliamentarian, citizen and family man, Robert Erskine Campbell.

• (1400)

Known affectionately as "the great west wind", Bob was in the 30th year of his reign as MLA for 1st Prince. His death marks the end of an era.

Bob was a rare and extraordinary individual, a politician the likes of which we probably will not see again. He had a great feel for politics and an uncanny ability to reach people in situations. He established a reputation of electoral invincibility and it grew with the passage of time. His last majority was his largest.

A major reason for his success was his genuine concern for his fellow man. His political partisanship melted away very quickly when he saw someone in need.

Hundreds of people in western Prince Edward Island will attest to the fact that when times were tough and the chips were down Bob Campbell was there for them.

I had the privilege of working closely with Bob for the past 15 years. He was a great friend. His advice and support were instrumental in my personal electoral success in 1988. I will miss him dearly as will the members of the P.E.I. legislature, the people of his riding, and most of all his family.

Bob died the way he wanted, still a member of the legislature, still fighting for his constituents. His love of people and politics still burns strongly.

We offer our sympathy and support to his wife Georgie and family. They can be proud of Bob's legacy and proud that the country is much the richer for Bob's having been there and much the poorer for his passing on.

* * *

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, the fixed link to Prince Edward Island moved a major step forward when tenders came in well within the previously established financial guidelines at the May 27 tender opening.

The construction of the fixed link project will give the economy of the Atlantic region a major boost. A completed project will create new opportunities and help make Prince Edward Island much more competitive.

Compared to other maritime provinces P.E.I. has the lowest average income and the highest unemployment rate, in fact 37 per cent higher than Nova Scotia.

Both provinces are in the same region. Both have similar resources and work ethics. The difference is simply transportation.

As New Brunswick and Nova Scotia make every effort to improve their transportation systems. The fixed link will allow P.E.I. to move along with them.

The fixed link will provide new job opportunities and will allow the youth of Prince Edward Island to stay on the island and to support island traditions and the island way of life.

* * *

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, today is the first day of National Access Awareness Week. It is the time for us to reflect on how much still needs to be done to ensure equality for persons with disabilities in Canada.

This involves much more than just access to buildings. All Canadians are entitled to equal access to transportation, television, telephones and a wide range of other services that most of us take for granted.

Public attitudes and misconceptions can be the most difficult barriers that persons with disabilities must face in our society.

It is very sad that the government's omnibus legislation, Bill C-78, fails to address the problems of access adequately. The bill has been described as pathetic in *The Ottawa Citizen* and as a joke in *The Toronto Star*.

Canadians with disabilities have been waiting a long, long time for the federal government to take concrete action on important access issues. They are tired of waiting. They want action, not words, and they want it now.

I urge all Canadians to participate in National Access Awareness Week activities in their communities.

[*Translation*]

VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

Mr. Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, her little sister died a horrible death, a death no one can forget, a traumatizing experience. Today, instead of hiding away, of crying all by herself, Virginie Larivière, from Saint-Polycarpe, has decided to send the Canadian government a petition with more than one million signatures, urging Ottawa to legislate in order to progressively reduce violence on television. She wants the people in Quebec's and Canada's cities to ask her for more petitions. The Optimist Club from Saint-Polycarpe, is managing the donations for the petition.

To receive copies of the petition, you only have to write to Virginie Larivière, Box 263, Saint-Polycarpe (P.Q.) J0P 1X0.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to support Virginie's project.

[*English*]

* * *

TRIUMF-KAON

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is intentionally trying to scuttle British Columbia's TRIUMF-KAON project by setting new pre-conditions which are not acceptable.

The federal government's promise of $236 million for KAON was announced on the eve of last fall's provincial election. It is now clear the federal government never intended to honour this commitment.

Its actions on the international scene demanding that foreign governments now pay a minimum of one-third of the operating costs are designed to invite failure. Such actions threaten to embarrass both British Columbia and Canada and prove once again that this government cannot be trusted.

The B.C. government on the other hand has recently announced a new offer to pay a substantial portion of the operating costs in addition to the one-third share of capital costs for KAON.

If the federal government is not serious about funding world-class science at KAON then it should be honest and say so. At the very least it should commit the $236 million toward other worth-while scientific endeavours in British Columbia.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, Canadians of Greek origin hope the visit of our Secretary of State for External Affairs to Greece and Cyprus will contribute greatly to the solution of the Cyprus issue in accordance with resolutions of the United Nations.

The illegal Turkish occupation forces should be removed as soon as possible. This will enable the subsequent departure of UN peacekeeping forces.

While in Greece, we hope the minister takes the opportunity to hear the views of the Greek government on the Yugoslav crisis. Our government must do everything in its power to prevent further destabilization of the region.

Failure of the former Yugoslav Republic of Skopje to assure its ethnic groups their rights and adopt a name which is not linked to Hellenism threatens to increase the chaos in this turbulent region.

Canada should insist that prior to any recognition Skopje should drop the Greek name Macedonia and respect the culture and traditions of its various ethnic groups, as well as those of its neighbours.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, the world is moving to free trade. As tariffs to international trade come down it is necessary to address barriers to efficiency and development at home.

For years negotiations at GATT have been eliminating trade barriers and reducing tariffs between countries. Free trade between Canada and the U.S. came into effect on January 1, 1989.

In Europe, the European common countries have joined together to foster free trade. Australia and New Zealand have a free trade agreement.

Today, as trade barriers disappear around the world, there remains between provinces hundreds of impediments preventing the free movement of goods and services.

I urge the premiers of the provinces to convene a meeting to address this problem. The restrictions to free movement of goods and services between provinces is hindering economic growth in Canada. We need action now.

* * *

HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, in a bid to add perception to reality no less than four Conservative cabinet ministers, including their sidekick from Hamilton—Wentworth, met behind closed doors with Hamilton Mayor Bob Morrow and Hamilton—Wentworth Regional Chairman Reg Whynott last week to discuss local issues.

Incidentally no such meeting has ever taken place since the Tories were elected in the early 1980s.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism, the Minister for Science and the junior transport minister met with the two Hamilton area officials and pleaded their ignorance on such things as the Hamilton airport, the Hamilton Harbour Commission, and the beleaguered Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

Could the ministers have been apologizing? Or did this Tory tea party have anything to do with the timing of an election possibly?

Despite appearances, the foursome could not make up for almost a decade of truancy. A miffed Hamilton Mayor Bob Morrow summed up the feelings Hamiltonians have for the Conservative government's relationship with the city when he said: "It is unfortunate that after eight years in power this is the first meeting we had".

* * *

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, last September the federal government made 28 proposals for constitutional change. Since then there has been much public polling of what Canadians want to see in a renewed Canada.

Of all of this data I have seen none is more supportive than in the case of restoring the right to own property to Canadians. Almost 90 per cent of those polled want property rights entrenched in the Constitution. They want this right, first enshrined in 1215 in the Magna Carta and adopted by the United Nations in 1948, given back to Canadians as a fundamental reform.

As it now stands the west will likely get an elected Senate. Quebec will likely get distinct society status. The aboriginal people will likely get self-government.

Middle-class Canada wants something as well: the right to own property and to be fairly compensated when it is taken away, and the right to challenge politicians and bureaucrats when they pass laws affecting what people own.

I urge the federal government to hang tough in this issue and not to give into the bleatings from the left-wingers who do not think Canadians should be trusted to own property.

* * *

GRAIN INDUSTRY

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, Canada's grain industry is in a crisis once again. From prairie elevator to Thunder Bay to Port Cartier, Sept Iles and Baie Comeau our elevators are full.

At the same time when as many as 25 ships could be loading Canadian grain in Thunder Bay, this week only three will depart that seaway port. The problem is money.

While Canada has appropriately extended financial credit to Russia and other eastern European countries so they can buy our grain there is no money to pay to ship that very same grain.

• (1410)

In the past this government has quickly acted when labour-management disputes slowed or stopped grain movements. In the government's words they acted in the national interest.

On behalf of farmers, railroaders, grain handlers, weighers and inspectors, seafarers and the hungry people of eastern Europe, I call on the Government of Canada to act now to find some way to get our grain moving again. It is in the national interest.

* * *

SENIORS MONTH

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, June is Seniors Month in Canada, a month to commemorate the great things seniors have done for Canada as well as recognize the contributions seniors continue to make.

Government has an important role to play. The one thing seniors want more than anything else is independence. It is only through co-operation and support that true independence will be achieved. Seniors have the right to choose their own futures and they want government to support that right.

The Liberal Party is committed to seniors and their independence. We appreciate the talent and the experience of seniors and thank them for giving so much to this country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, at a press conference help in Rouyn-Noranda, Noranda Minerals Inc. announced, through the CEO for the Horne Smelter, that the company has reached, three years before the deadline, its objective of reducing by 70 per cent its SO_2 emissions and mineral dust compared to 1980.

At the same time, the CEO announced a financial commitment of $5 million for updating the equipment, in order to reduce SO_2 emissions by 90 per cent by the year 2000.

Since that means citizens from Rouyn-Noranda will be breathing 90 per cent fresher air in comparison with 1980, needless to say how such good news were welcome by the people. This is the result of the efforts of all those who campaigned for better air quality in our region.

As I have often said, we have to expose industries which are polluting, but we also have to encourage and congratulate those which take positive action.

So congratulations to the Horne Smelter for its environmental achievements.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, as our constitutional negotiators take a much needed break, we should offer our support and congratulations for their achievements to date.

I would also encourage them to keep working to find acceptable compromises that will keep Canada united.

Despite the fact that we are encouraged by the progress that is being made, it is important to remind all of the negotiators that the first level of government, the family, is not directly represented at these talks.

I urge all participants, federal, provincial and aboriginal, to recognize the importance of families in all our societies and communities. Families formed by men and women freely making commitments to each other, to their role in bringing children into the world and to successfully raising and nurturing children to adulthood, need to be fully recognized in our Constitution.

I urge the Prime Minister, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, the premiers and aboriginal leaders to ensure that the importance and the role of families are fully recognized.

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CANADA'S 125TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, throughout the last number of months the government has been encouraging Canadians to buy Canadian, to support Canadian entrepreneurs, manufacturers and retailers. The government is also spending money on ads encouraging people not to shop in the United States but to avoid cross-border shopping, to buy Canadian.

Yet all Canadians were shocked over the weekend to find out that in an effort to celebrate Canada's 125th birthday all sorts of paraphernalia—caps, tote bags and pencils—were purchased not in Canada but in the United States and in China.

On one hand the government says one thing and on the other hand purchases caps from China to help celebrate Canada's 125th birthday. We figure this is unacceptable. The government should do what it encourages other Canadians to do from time to time.

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, Sunday, May 31, was designated World No Tobacco Day by the World Health Organization.

The slogan for the day was: "Tobacco-Free Work Places: Safer and Healthier". Canada has already made giant strides toward achieving smoke-free work places for all employers and employees.

Leadership was provided in 1987 by federal government's provision for smoke-free work places under federal jurisdiction through the public service smoking policy. Many provincial and local governments and corporations have also taken similar action. By late 1991 the Canada Health Monitor Survey was able to report that only 37.6 per cent of Canadians over the age 15 had been exposed to tobacco.

Smoke in the workplace area is unacceptable and our goal is to see that all working Canadians are protected from this workplace hazard in striving for a tobacco free generation.

* * *

CORRECTIONS CANADA

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in 1990 the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women recommended the creation of a healing lodge which would serve as an incarceration option for federally sentenced women.

Last week the Solicitor General announced that, pursuant to the recommendations of the healing lodge planning committee, the healing lodge would be built near Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, in close proximity to the Nekaneet Band and the historic Cypress Hills. Central to the choice was the long history of peaceful interaction between the native and non-native community in the Maple Creek district, a relationship characterized by mutual respect and cordiality.

The building of the $7 million facility will create some 60 construction jobs and there will be 26 full-time employees and staff. Most important of all, the selection of the Maple Creek-Nekaneet site for the healing lodge is part of this government's ongoing commitment to respect the task force recommendations and thereby

better meet the objectives of the Canadian Corrections Service.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

JOB TRAINING

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister and his colleagues have been travelling the country in the last month talking about the need for Canada to be competitive and for Canadians to be trained and retrained. His colleague, the Minister of State for Small Businesses, came into the Hamilton area last week and said there were 300,000 jobs going begging for lack of proper training. However, if Canadians follow the government's advice and go down to their local Canada Employment Centre to apply for training, they are told there is no more money for training this year.

How can the minister square his claims that he is moving to make Canada more competitive with the reality that 1.5 million Canadians do not have access to training funds?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, last year some 630,000 Canadians benefited from training programs funded under federal programs. This year, with the changes we have made to the Unemployment Insurance Act, more will benefit. I hate to refer again to the strong opposition of her party to that modification. Today she stands in the House, and the Liberal Party, to complain about there is not being enough money for this developmental use of the UI program which they strongly opposed.

To me, it is inconsistent. Had they not delayed the implementation of Bill C–21 for 18 months, a lot more Canadians would have benefited from that money sooner. Right now, this year, the need of Canadians for training is recognized. Some $3.4 billion will be spent to train Canadians and that is more than last year.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, Canadians fully remember that one of the first acts of this government was to cut $700 million from training funds that were there under Liberal governments, so we do not need lessons from anybody about putting Canadians back to work.

[*Translation*]

It is the same old refrain we have heard from this government over and over again. What we want is an answer. The Prime Minister has promised us time and time again that Canada would have the best training and retraining programs in the world. How can they be the best when there is no more money to pay for them?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if I were to qualify the hon. member's statement I would be unparliamentary. I must inform the hon. member it is absolutely false to claim there are no more funds under the Unemployment Insurance Act or under programs financed from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to train Canadians. There are funds, but they must be managed throughout the year. This year, more Canadians will benefit in absolute numbers from federal training programs than last year.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the number of jobs in the retail trade have gone down for 21 straight months. Jobs in the food and beverage industry have fallen for 25 straight months. Jobs in construction have gone down for 27 straight months. Manufacturing jobs have fallen 28 months straight. The fact is that 1.5 million Canadians are out of work, and as we speak those Canadians do not have access to UI training funds.

My question is for the Prime Minister. What are these 1.5 million Canadians who desperately want to work supposed to do with no training funds?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, again I do not know what the hon. member is trying to do by saying in this House to Canadians that there are no training funds out there.

Throughout Canada this year $3.4 million will be spent. That is $300 million more than last year. How can she stand in this House and tell Canadians there is no training money?

If the Liberal Party is so concerned about training, why does it not start its campaign at the provincial level? Seventy-six per cent of all training funds in this country are spent by this level of government. Training and education are provincial matters which provinces should take seriously.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

I would like to ask the minister to confront the harsh reality. The minister has said there are 300,000 jobs that cannot be filled because Canadians do not have the proper skills. At the same time, thousands of Canadians are being denied access to the training that would enable them to fill those jobs. Obviously the system is not working.

How does the minister intend to fix it?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, how the government intends to fix it is to convince Canadians from coast to coast to coast that the matter of building a training culture in this country is not only a federal matter.

It is something that implicates all levels of government, business, labour, workers and individual Canadians. It is true that the demand for training at this time of high unemployment is resulting in pressures on the funds available. That is why the government increased the number of dollars to be spent to train unemployed Canadians.

If the argument is that we should borrow more or increase the deficit more, or raise taxes to do more than what we are already doing, we think and we suggest that instead, all levels of government that have a stake in the skills of our work force should get together and try to get a system that will work more efficiently.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, the point is that we cannot afford to have 1.5 million Canadians unemployed. It is simply not the way to use our human resources.

If the minister would like co-operation, it is going to be extremely difficult to get parties involved. The minister has cut $200 million from the Canadian Jobs Strategy and people will continue to be shut out of the process and training. He is denying them an opportunity for the future. How long must they wait before this government will act?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Again, Mr. Speaker, I have to confine myself to parliamentary language.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Valcourt: This party stands in the House today complaining about not enough funds going to training. For 18 months they, with their friends in the other place, prevented Canadians from benefiting from these hundreds of millions of dollars that we are spending to train unemployed Canadians.

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Statistics Canada has shown there are over 1.5 million Canadians out of work. There are 95,000 Canadians who have access to the training programs this minister is bragging about. That represents 6 per cent of unemployed people having access to training. Is the minister saying it acceptable for only 6 per cent of the unemployed have access to training? Is this acceptable to the minister?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): No, Mr. Speaker. One Canadian unemployed is one too many. That is why instead of trying to buy the illusion of prosperity which the Liberals and the socialists think we should keep on doing, we have decided to concentrate the funds of the UI program for training Canadians, which by the way that party opposed.

I said earlier last year 630,000 Canadians benefited from the training and support programs under UI and this year this will go up to 650,000 people. Maybe it is not the extent to which the hon. member would do it, but with the limited funds we have, this is what we have decided we will do as our priority.

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, unemployed people do not care where the money comes from or how people voted. The reality is they are out of work, they need training, and this minister goes on and on about the amount of money being spent when only 6 per cent have access to training. What is he going to do for those 94 per cent that do not have access to training?

Mr. McDermid: This guy wants to print money.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, maybe we could print some more money. Maybe we should print some more money.

Mr. Riis: Are you joking about this?

Mr. Valcourt: He is joking with the future of Canada by pretending we can print money.

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, obviously members on the other side do not listen any more than they do any other time. I clarified that situation a long time ago.

[*Translation*]

It is clear the minister has no idea of Canada's training needs. Ninety-four per cent of the unemployed have no access to training programs. What is the minister going to do to train those 94 per cent?

[*English*]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): I can quote the hon. member. When we borrow money to do a project that money has to be repaid. We are going in circles like a dog chasing its tail and not getting anywhere. Instead of borrowing money we create it. We do not have to pay it back. That is the philosophy of the socialists in Canada, it is not ours.

[*Translation*]

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Two weeks ago, at an international conference on the environment in Nairobi, the international community was supposed to approve the convention on biodiversity. By the end of the conference, the United States had managed to rid the text of all substance. However, a few days ago the Americans announced they would not sign the text they had already diluted.

Considering this total refusal by the United States to do anything at all, will Canada immediately initiate a campaign to revert to the original text of the convention, so as to provide better protection for the world's animal and vegetable species?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I indicated that we intend to sign the international convention on biodiversity and that we will also work very hard with our allies to bring about gradual improvements in the text.

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, the question I asked was whether Canada would push first to go back to the original text, which the Americans had diluted, now that the Americans have refused to sign the text on biodiversity.

The real question is that of the major conventions to be signed in Rio, the one on forestry has been shelved, climate change has been emptied of all content and as we have seen, biodiversity has been critically wounded. The reason is very clear. We are dealing with the selfishness of nations.

Not for a long time has there been an opportunity for Canada to play such a role on the world stage in such a crucial area.

In this, the decisive week, what new initiatives does the government propose to make among the many that have been suggested to infuse needed momentum back into the Rio process?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have just come from a meeting of some 400 to 500 young Canadians, some of whom will be going to Rio.

I dealt with some specifics as to the objectives of Canada for the Rio conference and the things that we can do, will do, and are in the process of doing to achieve the objectives articulated so eloquently by my hon. friend.

* * *

FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The earth summit is about to begin yet the government lacks the support of some key international players for its fisheries resolution. Last week the minister was in Washington and he hardly managed to get the time of day from the U.S. commerce secretary.

Now that we know and he knows that the Americans are going to scuttle the resolution at Rio, what contingency plan does the minister have in mind or has he thrown in the towel on this one?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I visited Washington last week on this subject. I met with the secretary of commerce and other officials from her department who are involved with fisheries and also with Congressman Studds who is the chairman of the House of Representatives sub-committee on fisheries and the environment. I had very good meetings down there.

The U.S. has given us considerable support with reference to our resolution which is going forward to the Rio de Janeiro meeting next week. In addition, the Prime Minister met with President Bush and reviewed the fisheries situation with him and with Secretary of State Baker.

The Americans are now fully familiar with the problems we are suffering from overfishing on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. They are also supportive. The secretary of commerce advised me that they will support our request that there be an international conference under the auspices of the UN on high seas fishing as soon as possible and will support our call for that to occur at Rio de Janeiro next week.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, the minister of course is skating a bit on this. The real question is: are the Americans going to support the resolution? I think he himself gave the answer publicly last week and the answer is no.

What action plan does the minister have in mind after Rio, assuming the resolution fails as he allowed it might? What does he plan after Rio to get action on the real issue, the stopping of this pillaging of fish resources off Newfoundland? How will fishermen and plant workers in his riding and in mine be any better off as a result of the summit in Rio next week?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, everyone interested in the fishery will be better off as a result of the summit in Rio next week because this issue will be front and centre at the largest conference ever held on the environment. Until several months ago, it was not even considered to be an important environmental issue. We now have this issue in its right context.

It is the European Community that claims to be very concerned about the environment and environmental issues, but is preventing our resolution, supported by 40 countries, from having a consensus so far. They are feeling the results of our campaign around the world in this connection. This is shown by the fact that many times in the last several days the Spaniards have announced that they are removing their fleet, even if temporarily, from the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

We are getting results. I hope that hon. members opposite who have been helpful for the most part would rejoice in the fact that there is some progress being made.

As far as what we are doing in the future, the Prime Minister is going to carry on this cause at the Munich summit of the G-7 powers in July. We will be carrying on our campaign at NAFO in September, and in many other fora during the coming months.

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SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Forestry.

Last week, legal counsel on behalf of the federal government wrote to the U.S. department of commerce asking for the exemption of Manitoba, Quebec and Saskatchewan from the softwood countervail dispute with the United States.

Can the minister tell the House the reasons for this move? Can he assure us that this move will not mean that the provinces of B.C., Alberta and Ontario will have to pay a higher price for yet another bad trade deal by this government?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, as my friend already knows, the Atlantic provinces have always been excluded from the countervail action. The new findings by the commerce department, which are disputed, also indicate that Quebec and two of the prairie provinces should no longer be included. In the case of Quebec, the duty that is imposed is less than .01 per cent.

This is nothing new. My hon. friend knows that we disagree with all aspects of the finding and that it is being fought and appealed to the binational panel, the establishment of which we have called for.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, from one bad deal to another. My question is for the Prime Minister.

This government has indicated that the North American free trade agreement would improve the status of Mexican workers and open a market of 85 million to Canadian manufacturers. I was in Mexico last week and these statements are simply not true.

Last week, the Mexican government, labour and business signed a work accord that may or may not increase productivity but did nothing to address the wages of grossly underpaid Mexican workers.

I want to ask the Prime Minister what specific Canadian products will the hundreds of thousands of exploited Maquiladora workers purchase when their present and potential earnings are $4.50 a day?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that there are discussions besides the NAFTA on labour, on environment, and on other issues.

The hon. member asks what Mexican products come up here and what we are going to do for Mexico.

Mr. Butland: No. What Canadian products?

Mr. Winegard: At the moment what we have, certainly in the automotive industry, is one-way trade with Mexico. For every car we can bring up here from Mexico, we have to send two and a half to offset this.

There is no doubt at all that we are in the NAFTA agreement because we want to have two-way trade with Mexico, not one-way trade with Mexico.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and it concerns the Westray mine.

One thing is crystal clear. If the government had listened to its own bureaucrats there would have been no federal financing, no mine would have been built, and 26 miners would not have lost their lives.

The premier of Nova Scotia has stated that when federal bureaucrats stalled the project he asked his political friend, the Prime Minister, to give the project a green light.

How could the Prime Minister possibly justify proceeding with the project on purely political grounds, overlooking the obvious safety concerns that were raised time and time again by his own bureaucrats?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the specious argument and the misleading statements of my hon. friend. I will say in regard to the fundamental nature of the question, that my role in this was no more nor less than in other cabinet decisions regarding financial assistance for regional development projects.

In this case, federal financial development assistance was provided because the development of the mine with its potential for some 240 direct jobs and 300 or 400 indirect jobs was viewed as a top priority by the Government of Nova Scotia and the people in Central Nova. The mayors, the wardens, trade union leaders, all of the people involved in Central Nova and throughout Pictou County made direct representations asking for financial assistance for what they viewed as an important instrument of regional economic development. After careful consideration, the government agreed to provide assistance as we do in many regional development programs across Canada.

• (1440)

If my hon. friend is in disagreement with that, perhaps he could say so. Those were the grounds on which the government made the decision.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my supplemental is for the Prime Minister. It concerns the same subject matter.

This was not a regular project. Canadians, Nova Scotians, but most particularly, the families of those 26 miners want to know what role politics played in the approval of this project.

The premier of Nova Scotia has stated that when this project was stalled he contacted the Prime Minister. He said that what the Prime Minister did in response will have to be asked of him.

I ask the Prime Minister: what was his response? What role did he play in overriding the numerous safety concerns of the federal bureaucrats which ultimately resulted in the financing of this ill-fated project?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I do not know why my hon. friends from the Liberal opposition would be applauding a question of this nature.

An hon. member: It is a good question.

Mr. Mulroney: No, it is not a good question. The suggestion is that the government would knowingly proceed with something that would jeopardize the well-being of people in the interests of regional economic expansion.

My hon. friend asked me what role I played in the decision-making process. I played exactly the same role as I played for example in the decision to proceed with de Havilland in downtown Toronto and when we decided to proceed with development programs in Hibernia in Newfoundland. I was involved in the decision-making process in exactly the same way and pursuant to the same criteria.

The government concluded on the basis of the evidence made available to it that this was in the interests of economic development in Nova Scotia and in Central Nova. Those were the grounds on which we proceeded.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question likewise is for the Prime Minister.

The government has said over and over again that it was satisfied with the safety conditions in the Westray mine because it was receiving monthly reports from an independent consultant. We now know that that simply was not true, that the person who was supposedly the independent consultant says he did not supply those reports, nor did his company. He merely passed along reports that the Government of Nova Scotia provided.

When will the Prime Minister stop the confusion and say what reports the government did or did not receive, if it received any? Evidently there were some reports in which the government says it put a great deal of faith. What we want is for those reports to be made public today.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had read the newspaper carefully two weeks ago, he would have a quotation from the very mining engineer he has been quoting. Mr. McCandlish said: "I will concur that as late as March I believe we had confirmed independently with the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and the Department of Natural Resources that they, Curragh, were in compliance with the current statutes. That answer was provided and passed on to the bank". He also said that his firm's primary role was to monitor the levels and cost of coal production.

These certificates of compliance were received on a regular basis, but the actual day-to-day monitoring and inspection of the mine was the responsibility of the province of Nova Scotia and those two departments. That is why a judicial inquiry has been established. My hon. friend knows that.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, there is a drastic erosion here of the government's position. Now it is telling us it was not concerned with safety in the Westray mine.

Without questioning what information the government had that said the safety conditions were poor in the Westray mine, surely the Prime Minister and the government must have received some information which said that there were no problems with safety in the mine. Surely information of that importance came from somewhere to the federal government before it gave the loan guarantee.

Did it come from Westray? Did it come from Curragh? Did it come from Donald Cameron? Did it come from some other source? Just tell us today where the government based its belief that there were safe conditions in that mine and make those reports public today.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can try as hard as he wishes to make this provincial jurisdiction federal jurisdiction.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Some hon. members: Come on.

An hon. member: Give us the detail.

Mr. Hockin: What the federal government did when it gave the loan guarantee was to make sure that on a regular basis all provincial statutes and regulations that affected the mine would be complied with.

We did that through receiving monthly certificates of compliance. That is what we received. That is what we relied on, but we cannot do independent inspections on our own. That was the job of the jurisdiction that was in charge, the Government of Nova Scotia.

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ABORIGINAL HEALING LODGE

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Aboriginal women and their supporters were pleased when the decision was made to close the Kingston prison for women and build an aboriginal healing lodge following the suicide death of three aboriginal women from northern Saskatchewan.

These tragic deaths were found to be the direct result of isolation from families and communities. Therefore people are shocked that Maple Creek was chosen as the site for this lodge since only one-half of 1 per cent of the native people in Saskatchewan live within 200 kilometres of the site.

Can the minister please explain how Maple Creek meets the basic criteria of being close to family and the support networks of incarcerated women?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite evident that aboriginal women would be satisfied with the selection of Maple Creek Nekaneet as the site for the healing lodge. It fulfils all the criteria that they were looking for in terms of being a culturally sensitive environment with running water, plenty of rural land, and a sensitive relationship between the native and non-native communities.

My friend specifically refers to it being equidistant. I remind my hon. friend that this is an aboriginal healing lodge for native women from all of Canada. We do find that there are more aboriginal women from the west and in particular from Saskatchewan and Alberta.

I think if my hon. friend checks the geographical distances from both Alberta and Saskatchewan, he will find that the appropriation is appropriate on that basis also.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I do not really care if the politics involved in making this decision came from the aboriginal community or came from partisan politics, or both.

The fact still remains that aboriginal women at Kingston died because of isolation from families and communities. The fundamental problem of isolation will not be solved by putting this healing lodge in a location where there are virtually no aboriginal people, where there is no transportation, where there are no support networks.

Therefore, will the Solicitor General please commit himself to a complete review of the selection process of the aboriginal healing lodge to make sure that another tragic mistake is not being made here?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we are closing the prison for women and we are doing it by establishing prisons for women right across Canada.

I can assure my hon. friend that there were no politics involved in this. I am looking for one winner and one winner only and that is the aboriginal women.

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INTEREST RATES

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Over the last few months Canadians have seen dramatic reductions in the level of interest rates charged by the banks. The prime is now 7.5 per cent and mortgages are in the 8 per cent range.

Consumers are paying from 16 per cent to an incredible 28 per cent interest on unpaid credit card balances, a spread now of up to 20 per cent compared with the primes.

My question is this: can the minister help Canadian consumers by telling the banks that if this rip-off does not end soon he will move to stop the credit card gouging?

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, yes, interest rates have dropped dramatically in recent months and I have already said, as my colleague is probably aware, that I met with the Canadian Bankers Association. I also met with the association of store owners who operate credit cards. Of course, the problem is that interest rates on the credit cards commonly used for everyday purchases have dropped appreciably. They are now around 16 or 17 per cent. I invite consumers to shop around for the best rates.

Department store credit card rates are still 28 per cent, which is very high. Often, people do not realize that when they buy with their department store credit cards, they keep outstanding balances on their accounts for months, although they could simply go to a branch of a bank or credit union and get a loan at 10 per cent, thus saving a lot of money in interest. I publish a quarterly report on interest rates to inform consumers. Through the forum that we have here, I ask them to do what I say: shop around and use the right payment method when they buy.

[*English*]

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TRANSITION HOUSES

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs. It refers to a transition house for Millbrook near Truro, Nova Scotia.

The transition house need is acknowledged. The funding is approved for the future, but the problem is the natives need the transition house right now.

Considering recent negative effects on the economy in the area, will the minister review this decision and find some way to fund this transition house this year instead of next year?

An hon. member: All transition houses.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester raises a question which is of concern to native women across Canada.

This government has taken special steps through the Project Haven Program and more recently the Next Step Program to provide transition houses such as the one I announced jointly with the New Brunswick government last Thursday in Fredericton.

I will look into the hon. member's request. I did announce some time ago that we would be building two new transition houses in the province of Nova Scotia. It is my understanding that the chiefs of Nova Scotia have opted to build the centre first at Whycocomagh Band on Cape Breton Island and the second project to proceed next year. However, I will review the matter further.

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WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In responding to questions regarding Westray, the Prime Minister said and I quote: "My role is no more nor less than other regional development projects".

The Prime Minister will know that the federal government's own Crown corporation, Devco, had written a devastating report pointing out the dramatic safety hazards of the foord seam at the Westray mine.

The Prime Minister will know that senior federal officials had expressed such reluctance, both with respect to the economics of this project and with respect to the safety of this project, that the premier of Nova Scotia felt compelled to call the Prime Minister personally to ask the Prime Minister to intervene to get this project back on the rails.

The question I ask and that Canadians are asking is what did the Prime Minister do that moved forward a project that seemed stuck in neutral prior to Don Cameron's phone call to the Prime Minister's office?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I frequently receive calls from provincial premiers with respect to major regional development projects in their provinces.

My hon. friend represents the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I can tell him I had many calls from the premier of Newfoundland seeking my support in regard to the Hibernia development project. This is not unusual. It is quite proper and appropriate that it proceed that way.

It was conducted in essentially the same way in regard to the regional economic development in Nova Scotia. The decision-making process follows cabinet committee and at the end of the day the government has to decide whether the expenditure of public funds is in the national interest in respect of development and employment-creating programs in Nova Scotia.

In Central Nova, unemployment was high throughout Pictou County. This was seen by everyone as an opportunity to provide long term and good paying jobs. We examined it objectively and we arrived at the conclusion we did.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the issue is not whether or not the Prime Minister of Canada ought to be concerned with regional development. The issue is whether or not the Prime Minister was concerned about safety after he talked to his friend Don Cameron.

What I am asking and what the people of Canada want to know, and I suspect in particular the people of Pictou County want to know, is about the miners who had no union and no other spokesperson and who were counting upon their governments to defend their interest. What action did the Prime Minister take to ensure himself that the concerns raised by Devco in 1988, the concerns raised by senior federal officials about safety in that mine in fact could be answered in a responsible fashion that would justify providing $85 million and opening that mine?

What action did the Prime Minister take to assure himself this was a proper investment and that that mine was safe? Did he take any action to ensure himself in that regard?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State has referred to documents that will be tabled in the House. There is a commission of inquiry established by the Government of Nova Scotia that will examine all questions relating to this tragedy. I am sure that the chairman of the royal commission will arrive at conclusions and will convey them to the public.

My hon. friend mentioned Devco in his first question. I draw to his attention that, for example, on February 24, 1979, an explosion occurred in the 12th south section of the No. 26 colliery operated by Devco.

The explosion resulted in the death of 12 employees and serious injury to another four employees. A commission of inquiry was struck. The commission concluded that the methane produced from the coal being cut was ignited by sparking from the sheer of steel picks, and that the primary cause of the explosion was the inadequacy of the wall face ventilation that did not prevent a minor ignition from developing into an explosion.

This was a mine owned and operated completely by the Government of Canada. The safety regulations were within federal jurisdiction, as I understand it. In spite of this—and in excess of $1.3 billion of federal money that had gone into Devco to provide for this—this tragedy occurred.

The coroners of the commission of inquiry concluded that it was methane induced, but I do not think that there was anybody in the House of Commons who rose to suggest that because of the approval of these public funds to develop the mine in Cape Breton, that there was any member of Parliament who was responsible for the safety provisions.

I ask my hon. friend to wait for the response from the commission of inquiry. I think he will be satisfied.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister cannot deny that his own appointee as president of the Cape Breton Development Corporation, one Derek Rance whom he worked with on a previous occasion, wrote a very extensive memo with regard to public policy reasons as to why they ought not to proceed with funding the Pictou mine and as well referred to safety.

The Prime Minister must also be aware that that same president had a telephone conversation with the minister responsible, the Minister of Public Works, indicating to him the safety concerns with regard to the foord seam in the Pictou county mine.

Furthermore, the minister of energy said on May 12:

> We the cabinet were all aware of the mine having high methane deposits and with the new technology that there would have to be a learning curve.

I ask the Prime Minister: what convincing evidence did he have in his possession that there were no safety problems at the Westray coal mine?

Speaker's Ruling

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, presumably the same convincing evidence that caused my hon. friend who just spoke to write an article in *The Halifax Chronicle Herald* on February 25, 1989, in respect of Westray where he said: "The mine poses a threat to the Cape Breton economy".

It is a very lengthy article in which he opposes the mine without the slightest reference to safety. He opposed it on economic grounds, and I have already indicated it was an economic decision.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Prime Minister.

I want to ask the Prime Minister if he could explain to the House what underground mining experience his dear friend, Mr. Clifford Frame, had. Would he indicate to the House the extent of this gentleman's and this company's underground coal mining experience, drilling tunnels and mining coal.

Would the Prime Minister indicate to the House as to that experience.

• (1500)

Mr. Speaker: The Prime Minister may wish to answer but I think that question is going way beyond the authority or responsibility of the government.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend says that it is very relevant, then I will be happy to oblige.

He asked me about information in regard to my dear friend, Clifford Frame. I met Clifford Frame the first time in my life in Central Nova last week.

[*Translation*]

* * *

MINERAL EXPLORATION

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Can the minister tell us or confirm today that in the discussions with the Government of Quebec to sign a Canada-Quebec mineral development agreement, Quebec will use part of it to support mineral exploration, especially assistance for prospecting and exploration and use of new exploration technologies in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Chapais-Chibougamau?

[*English*]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm points which my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare has said many times. We are negotiating with the province of Quebec for the purposes—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Epp: I can confirm that with my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, we are negotiating with the province of Quebec for the purpose of arriving at a new Mineral Development Agreement. In that MDA, we are exploring various issues as well as programs for specific regions so that we might encourage the mining industry in the province of Quebec.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Before commencing Routine Proceedings, I would like to take this opportunity to make a ruling with respect to Bill C-22.

The Chair wishes to announce that it is now prepared to rule on a point of order which was raised on Friday May 22, 1992 by the hon. member for Chambly in regard to the admissibility of a report by the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations on Bill C-22, an act to enact the Wage Claim Payment Act, to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof.

The hon. member for Chambly indicated that at a meeting of the committee on May 5, 1992, a series of clauses were deleted from the bill which made its provisions relating to the proposed Wage Claim Payment Act inoperable. He argued that this action went against the principle of the bill as adopted by the House at second reading, and that, consequently, the Standing Committee report is out of order.

[*Translation*]

There were a number of other submissions made on this point of order, and the Chair is appreciative of the comments offered by the hon. members for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Shefford, Saint-Hubert, and the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

After reviewing the submissions made, the Chair is now prepared to decide on the basic question relating to the amendments adopted by the Standing Committee.

[*English*]

In his presentation, the hon. member for Chambly contended that the House is now dealing with a new and substantially different bill since all provisions relating to the proposed Wage Claim Payment Act have been deleted. Quoting from citation 689(1) of Beauchesne's sixth edition, the hon. member supported his argument with the following passage:

> A committee is bound by the decision of the House, given on second reading, in favour of the principle of the bill, and should not, therefore, amend the bill in a manner destructive of this principle.

[*Translation*]

The logic behind this citation is to prevent the adoption of amendments which would result in a committee straying from the objectives of a bill and all that this may entail. Of course, a committee may not expand on the scope or nature of the bill, nor introduce important elements which were not present during the debate at second reading. There are several other restrictions placed on a committee. As I recently explained on April 28, 1992 in relation to a committee report on the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill C-54:

> A committee is restricted in its examination in a number of ways. It cannot infringe on the financial initiative of the Crown, it cannot go beyond the scope of the bill as passed at second reading, and it cannot reach back to the parent act to make further amendments not contemplated in the bill no matter how tempting this may be.

[*English*]

Further types of inadmissible amendments are listed in citations 698 to 706 of Beauchesne's sixth edition. Barring these, a committee is completely free to amend a bill in whatever manner it may choose, and to vote for or against any or all of the clauses in the bill as they are submitted for approval to the committee. As the 21st edition of Erskine May explains on page 486:

> —notwithstanding the rule which forbids the moving of an amendment which is destructive of the principle of a bill, there is nothing to prevent a committee from negating a clause or clauses, the omission of which may nullify or destroy the bill, and reporting the bill, as amended, to the House; a Committee may also negative every clause of which the bill is composed, and substitute for those clauses new clauses, if relevant to the bill as read a second time, and otherwise in order.

In the present case, the standing committee elected to delete several clauses of the bill, and in particular several clauses of the proposed Wage Claim Payment Act. In keeping with the explanation found in Erskine May and our own Canadian practices there is nothing which can be found objectionable with this procedure. Consequently, I find that the standing committee report is in order.

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 26 petitions.

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

* * *

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Madam Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of hon. members the fact that we are currently marking Canadian Environment Week, which in 1992 runs from today, June 1 to June 7.

This week gives Canadians an opportunity to ask themselves the question: "What can I do to help the environment?" In the spirit of Environment Week all Canadians, all levels of government and all sectors of society must stop and think about the ways in which they can contribute in preserving and protecting our magnificent country, Canada.

Environment Week is a Government of Canada initiative which funds projects across the country which demonstrate action and participation in Canadian com-

munities. One of the largest initiatives this year is a partnership that has been formed with the Canadian Urban Transit Association. It is offering an enviropass in over 40 cities in Canada to encourage Canadians to use public transportation as an environmentally friendly way to travel.

All of us are urged to make a contribution to Environment Week. For example, we can be vigilant when we are shopping and purchasing consumer products by selecting those products with the least packaging. We can minimize waste, recycle, compost or initiate household practices that will conserve water. The options are really endless.

This year Environment Week and its theme, "It's Up to All of Us", takes on global significance. As we work to improve the environmental state of this great country of Canada, the world's leaders are gathering in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, more commonly called the earth summit.

Canada has played a primary role in organizing this historic conference, and the Canadian delegation, which will be led by the Prime Minister, is providing leadership and solutions to tough economic and environmental concerns.

I invite all hon. members to participate in Environment Week, and their communities. As well, they can participate indirectly in the earth summit by signing the earth flag located at the entrance of the House of Commons today. Upon the signing of the flag it will be delivered to the earth summit in Brazil by Mr. Maury Mason of Earth Day Canada. This flag has already been signed by hundreds of thousands of families and individual Canadians demonstrating Canada's support for the earth summit. This morning the Prime Minister signed this flag.

• (1510)

It is time for all Canadians to make an extra effort to adapt and adopt environmentally responsible behaviour and to make it part of everyday life in the spirit of Environment Week and all year long.

I encourage all Canadians to join in our national environmental efforts this week and every week. I would like to leave the hon. members with a message, which is the earth pledge which states: "Recognizing that people's actions toward nature and each other are the source of growing damage to the environment and resources needed to meet human needs and to ensure survival and development I pledge to act to the best of my ability to help make the earth a secure and hospitable home for present and future generations".

That is an excellent pledge which I would ask all Canadians to make.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, today does mark the beginning of Environment Week, which takes place from June 1 to June 7. It is especially important this year as the whole world is looking to the world leaders gathering in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the earth summit.

The Rio summit may well be the most important international conference in the history of the world. It has the potential to be the turning point for our environment, resulting in a number of landmark conventions and declarations, and a new global era in the struggle to achieve sustainable development.

Environment Week should be used by the government and Canadians to look very closely at our commitment to saving our rapidly deteriorating environment and to take the necessary measures to halt and reverse the catastrophic impact our actions have had on our world.

The Prime Minister, on behalf of all Canadians, must show in Brazil that Canada is prepared to exercise the leadership it so readily claims. If other nations refuse to accept a convention on climate change with tough targets and timetables Canada must step forward and be the first to sign and invite others to follow.

If others fail to make financial commitments to accomplish agenda 21 then Canada must not fail. On issues of biodiversity, forests, water and poverty, Canada must clearly establish what we believe to be the right path to save the world for future generations and it must be prepared to have the courage to take the first step along that path.

[*Translation*]

Canada owes it to Canadians and to neighbouring countries to practice what it preaches on all environmental issues.

In matters of environmental protection, we cannot always wait for international agreements to be signed. To harmonize development and environment, Canada must implement effective preventive measures that can be accounted for in front of the whole world.

Environment Week is not a time to show off, but to act.

[*English*]

We all have a responsibility, but rather than putting the responsibility solely on individual Canadians we in this House must look to ourselves first and foremost. We must all make the protection of the world our first commitment to Canadians and to those generations to follow. If we as Canadians fail the world in Rio we have a great deal to answer for, and we cannot ask individual Canadians to do what we as their parliamentarians are not prepared to do.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak today on the beginning of Environment Week in Canada. It is particularly appropriate given the summit in Rio starting later this week.

The minister spoke very well about the need for individuals to do something during Environment Week here in Canada. I take the individual approach to the environment very seriously. I have promoted in my own constituency, as I know members of my caucus have, recycling programs for paper, cans and glass, as well as community clean-ups and other actions that individuals can take on their own.

Despite the fact that individual effort is so important and environment week helps to instil in the individual Canadian a desire to contribute what he or she can to the environment over-all, governments have a much more responsible role to play than encouraging people to recycle bottles and cans and glass and newspapers. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that the inter-governmental agreements that will, in fact, protect the environment from the harm that others can do while we are cleaning up our own backyard are promulgated so that we can stop the destruction of the earth.

As members know, we can burn ethanol in our cars in Canada, but as long as the hundreds of thousands of vehicles in the United States, in Los Angeles for example, are pumping out CO_2 emissions into the atmosphere, the efforts we make, as much as it makes us feel comfortable and good, are not going to eventually save the earth.

What we have is a challenge before us, and the conference in Rio is the test of that challenge. We have to reach agreements or the world is in dire jeopardy.

I quote from an excellent book that the round table on the environment and the economy put out earlier this year, called *Preserving Our World: A Consumer's Guide to the Brundtland Report* by Warner Troyer, in which Mr. Troyer quotes U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Every man has a right to swing his arms, but that right is circumscribed by the proximity of his neighbour's nose."

Well, the nose is awfully close as the large corporations are swinging their arms at the moment around the world.

The population growth in the world is reaching the point where we can soon no longer feed it. The world's population is projected to top six billion people this year and the carrying capacity for food in this world is estimated to reach about 7.5 billion people. The Brundtland commission report, which talked about the environment and the economy, the need for sustainable development, is very much tied to population growth in the world.

If stabilization of the population in the world is not reached until the year 2035, the total world population will settle at over 10 billion people, very close to the maximum food-carrying capacity that we have and by the year 2065—75 years from now—we could have a population of close to 15 billion people, which, unless something happens quickly, is going to see mass starvation on this planet.

As we know, the root cause of much of the environmental degradation in the world is poverty. Poverty is the greatest single enemy of the environment. The poor and the hungry destroy their environment to ensure their own individual survival. Theirs is an individual effort that is predicated upon the failures of governments to reach agreements that will improve the world's population's poor to a sustainable environment of their own.

I use the opportunity today to impress upon the Minister of the Environment and this government that Canada must take its leadership role seriously in the international community on environmental issues and use the conference in Rio de Janeiro to ensure that the

agreements are in place to ensure the protection of the earth.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, on the same point.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member knows full well that only the critics from the two official opposition parties can speak in reply to a ministerial statement.

[*English*]

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Hon. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34 I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the working group of the heads of delegation meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the CSCE group meeting in London, England, April 24, 1992.

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

39TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the 39th report of the Standing Committee on House Management regarding the selection of votable items among private members' business.

• (1520)

Pursuant to Standing Order 92(2), this report is deemed adopted when laid upon the table.

40TH AND 41ST REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Madam Speaker, while I am on my feet, I have the honour to present the 40th and the 41st reports of the Standing Committee on House Management.

Pursuant to Standing Order 113(1), these reports are deemed adopted when laid upon the table.

PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I have the duty to table today five petitions from Newfoundland, Ontario, British Columbia and New Brunswick.

The petitioners would like the Parliament of Canada to reinstate the Court Challenges Program. The Court Challenges Program was a very important program in that it made it possible for individuals and groups to have their constitutional rights clarified as those rights relate to language equality rights by the courts.

The petitioners maintain that the Court Challenges Program was and still should be an essential instrument in the evolution of our constitutional rights and that all Canadians must be given equal access, whatever their income, to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The petitioners want Parliament to reinstate the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms regardless of their means.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to present a number of petitions with hundred and hundreds of signatures from people from Kamloops, British Columbia and Chase, British Columbia.

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 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.

RIVER DIVERSION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, on an unrelated but a very important matter, petitioners from throughout British Columbia, again now totalling hundreds and hundreds of names, point out their opposition to any intention by anyone, private or public, to export fresh water from Canada, particularly fresh water from British Columbia through river diversion to the United States.

The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to urge the government to state categorically that it will not tolerate this type of resource sellout.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of presenting another petition, collected by Mr. George Chiavarolotti through his chiropractic office, to request the government to amend the Narcotics Control Act so that the financial proceeds from drug seizures, rather than being sent completely to the Government of Canada to be deposited in their general revenue fund, be shared instead with local police forces and local organizations which are trying to wage the battle on the streets on behalf of all of us.

I am hopeful that the Solicitor General will see the light of day and amend the Narcotics Control Act as hundreds upon hundreds of individuals from my riding of York West have recommended.

* * *

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. 244, 262, 263, 279, 280, 281 and 290.

[*Text*]

Question No. 244—**Mr. Young:**

Which departments and agencies are currently developing computerized information systems and, for each project not yet operating as intended, what was the original completion date, the revised completion date, the original cost estimate, the actual expenditure so far, and the revised cost estimate?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Please see reply to question no. 228 tabled this day.

Question No. 262—**Mr. Peterson:**

Since the tabling of the paper "Prosperity Through Competitiveness" (Prosperity Initiative), how many public consultations have been held, and what is the total number of non-staff participants who have attended these public consultations?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): The community talks consultations of the prosperity initiative took place between November 1991—March 1992. 186 Community talks took place in all regions and provinces. Some 7,500 Canadians participated in these local consultations.

Question No. 263—**Mr. Peterson:**

With respect to the Prosperity Initiative, up to March 17, 1992, (*a*) what is the total cost (*b*) how much money was spent on (i) public opinion polling (ii) public relations strategies (iii) media monitoring (iv) toll-free telephone services (*v*) advertising (*c*) how many people have been employed either on a full or part-time basis and what has been the total cost thereof (*d*) what are the names of all private consultants who have received contracts and what has been the total cost thereof (*e*) what is the projected budget?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Techonology and Minister for International Trade): (*a*) The closest date for which expenditures on the prosperity initiative are available is March 31, 1992. As of that date, operating expenditures were $7,096,913.

b)		Expenditures to March 31, 1992
(i)	Public opinion polling	$247,203
(ii)	Public relations strategies	$131,911
(iii)	Media monitoring	$38,627
(iv)	Toll-free telephone services	$108,600
(v)	Advertising	$378,891

(*c*) There have been 78 separate individuals employed either full or part time during the 1991-92 fiscal year of which 48 were public servants on secondment to the prosperity initiative and 30 were contract personnel. The total amount paid to these individuals up to March 31, 1992 was $2,405,609.

(*d*) The total value of contracts let with private consultants is $4,832,277. A list of these consultants is shown below. Of this amount $2,100,000 was for the costs of holding the community consultations, $378,891 was for the advertising associated with the community consultations and $247,203 was for public opinion polling.

(*e*) The projected budget of the prosperity initiative over the 1991-92 and 1992-93 fiscal years is $19.1 million.

Acart Graphic Services
William Alexander & Associates
Anderson Strategic Research

Angus Reid Group
Base Brown and Partners
W.A. Bonner
Calendrium Consulting
Canada Communications Group
Clarke & Associates
William James Colvin
Communication NL Plus
Computer Managed Information
Consulting and Auditing Canada
Cormex Research
Corporate Strategy Group
Don Cummer and Associates
David Eadie
Derek Ellis Consulting
EXOCOM
Fedeli Advertising
Foster Marks Advertising
Garret Patterson
George-Gordon Partners
Gervais Gagnon Frenette
Glynovations
Ian Hamilton Communications
Ideasign Communications Consultants
Insta-Sytems
Intersol Consulting Associates Ltd.
LGS
W.A. Lewis
Lian Public Affairs Consulting
Lumsden Media Strategies
Michael P. Martin and Associates
Mohr Marketing
MTT Media Tapes
Optima Research
Palmer Jarvis
Park Corner Communications
Paradigm Communications
Parson Associates
Marshall Perrin
Publitel Communications
Pamela Purves & Associates
Quantum Information Resources
Denis E. Racine
Serge Rivest Communications
Saga Communications
SK&A Strategic Communications
Stratcom Planning
Lisa Tenace
Dan Turner Creative
JL Viau
Westcar Group
Wordsmithing Plus

Question No. 279—**Ms. Callbeck:**

Has the government developed any policies or conducted studies regarding (*a*) the manner in which the operator of a fixed link between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick will be able to raise tolls, particularly regarding increases above the inflation rate (for example to recoup losses associated with operating the link one year through toll increases greater than inflation the following year) (*b*) cost overruns associated with a fixed link, particularly regarding whether the public would bear the extra costs (*c*) a situation in which the successful fixed link developer experiences financial difficulties part way through construction of the project, particularly regarding who would step in as financier (*d*) how the government would cope with interruptions in the operation of the link?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): (*a*) With regard to the bridge tolls, the proposal call states that, in the future, should the government require a level of insurance coverage from the developer which is over and above the levels prescribed in the development agreement with the winning consortium, the developer may apply for an adjustment to the toll rates to cover the difference in his cost of insurance. The final decision will rest with the government and the recovery may be spread over several years to minimize any impact.

Additionally, should the project proceed, the development agreement with the winning developer would recognize the concept of a minimum toll revenue which is derived from the toll revenue for the ferry service. If in any year the developer has a shortfall below the minimum, they will be entitled to a modification in subsequent years. Again, the government may determine the length of time to affect any recovery and minimize the impact. It must be stressed that there is a very strong expectation that the link would generate traffic levels higher than the ferry. It is therefore unlikely that the developer would ever see the toll revenues drop below the escalated amounts generated during the last year of ferry operation, thereby requesting an increase in the bridge tolls above the rate of inflation.

(*b*) & (*c*) Developers must demonstrate that they have the financial capability to carry out the project. They must finance the project themselves and be prepared to put the entire amount required for the construction of the bridge into a trust account, complemented by an additional level of security satisfactory to the government. Therefore, our purpose is to make sure that the developer has the resources to complete and undertake the project. Nevertheless, should anything happen to the developer that would prevent them from completing the project, the Crown would have access to the remainder of the trust funds and the security package, in order to complete the facility without using additional government funds.

(*d*) The government does not expect major interruptions in the service which the proposed bridge will provide. However, in the unlikely situation of such an event, the government would be required to maintain its obligation for a transportation link between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. Should the project proceed, Transport Canada will develop contingency plans which will be in place when the bridge becomes operational.

Question No. 280—**Ms. Callbeck:**

Is there a discrepancy between the government's estimated annual subsidy for Marine Atlantic and the figure provided by Marine Atlantic and, if so (*a*) what are the figures and the discrepancies (*b*) which of these amounts does the government intend to provide the operator of a fixed link between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): (*a*) & (*b*) The $40.5 million amount available for the subsidy is $35 million (1988 constant $) escalated to 1991 dollars, which represents the overall cost to the federal government maintaining the Borden–Tormentine ferry service, projected over the next 35 years. This amount includes capital expenditures, such as the purchase of new vessels, which are not assumed by Marine Atlantic and are not included in their subsidy. Certain adjustments have been factored into this amount which deal with such items as costs of administration by Public Works, compensation to the ferry workers and highway improvements. The Marine Atlantic subsidy amount cannot and should not be compared to the $40.5 million (1991 constant $) which is available for the fixed link subsidy.

Question No. 281—**Ms. Callbeck:**

With respect to the establishment of a fixed link between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, have any policies been developed concerning the developer's environmental management plan and, if so (*a*) what is the structure under which this plan would be communicated to the public (*b*) which non–developer parties, if any, would participate in such a structure?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Upon the selection of a bridge design, the successful consortium will be required to develop a comprehensive environmental management plan. This plan will demonstrate how the developer will effectively address the environmental impacts of the project and must be in place to ensure protection of the environment during all phases of development.

The successful developer's plan will be communicated to the public through public information sessions, at which time the plan would be explained in detail. The developer will then submit the plan to the environmental committee for final review and approval.

The environmental committee includes representatives of Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Coast Guard, Public Works Canada and of the three provincial departments of environment. Each member will have the full resources of their respective departments to ensure every aspect of environmental protection and mitigation has been addressed by the developer.

Question No. 290—**Mr. Fisher:**

What is the number, by province, of Co–operative Work Education Grants applied for in 1992, how many were awarded to each province and for what dollar amount?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): The number of Co–operative Education applications by province is:

Newfoundland	19	Ontario	59
Nova Scotia	4	Manitoba	15
Prince Edward Island	1	Saskatchewan	0
New Brunswick	17	Alberta	10
Quebec	36	British Columbia	16

Applications for funding are still under review. It is expected that this review process will be completed by the end of May 1992.

* * *

[*English*]

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): Madam Speaker, if Question No. 228 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 228 be deemed to have been made an order for return?

An hon. members: Yes.

An hon. member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will have to help the Chair at this point. Either we postpone the fact that No. 228 be answered, as there is no unanimous consent for the question to be made an Order for Return, or I can put the question to the House.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I believe that unanimous consent has been denied. Therefore I would be happy to arrange a postponement of the Order for Return.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary.

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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. John C. Crosbie (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 second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 11 minutes, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)*b*).

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on bill C–80, a most important bill indeed—and I hope that my colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois will be happy with it—as much for children in Quebec as for those throughout Canada. You will understand that Bill C–80 is intended to make all federal transfer payments for children across the country simpler and much, much fairer.

I think that any legislation that undertakes to simplify the handing out of money and simplify the taxation system should be passed as quickly as possible. Full child benefits will hopefully be adopted so that all children can benefit from them as soon as possible.

For some years now, the Government of Canada has been paying special attention to supporting children, making it in fact an ongoing priority. Remember when, in December, the right hon. Prime Minister looked into the United Nations convention which, as a matter of fact, dealt with the rights of the child and which he signed on behalf of Canada.

There is also the Brighter Futures program which, again, is aimed specifically at ensuring a brighter future for the children of Canada and for Canada.

• (1530)

Simplifying the tax system has been a priority for the Conservative government since 1984. When we consider the present system of child benefits and we look at Bill C–80, we realize that today, there are three different ways in which Canadian families receive payments for their dependent children. We all know family allowances, which have been around for 40 or 50 years. We are also familiar with the refundable tax credit and the child credit. These three programs allocate sums of money to families, for their children, at different periods throughout the year.

For many Canadian families this is a complex system. Do I get a cheque in January, March or June? How much will it be? Why am I or am I not eligible? Do I get half the maximum amount, three quarters or nothing at all? So this makes it a complex system, in addition to the other benefits families are entitled to: the goods and services tax credit, the child care expense deduction, parental or maternity benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act, as well as benefits funded by the federal government and delivered by the provinces.

There are seven or eight different programs to which all Canadian families are entitled. The purpose of Bill C–80 is to get rid of three of these programs and give more money through a single program. We are going to give more money. Over a five–year period, we are talking about an additional $2 billion or more. Consider the three programs that will be eliminated. Family allowances provide $35 per month; the annual credit, $71; the refundable credit, $601 annually; and, depending on the family's economic situation, an additional $213.

In future, there will no longer be three periods. There will no longer be three kinds of payments, and family income will replace individual income as the basis for calculating the benefit, to make the system fairer and more equitable. In one family, one spouse may have a fairly high income, while the other spouse may earn less; in another family, both spouses may be earning the same amount. This means that two families with the same total income do not necessarily receive the same amount in family allowances, child credit and refundable child tax credit.

Based on the family's income, the new system will be much fairer and far more equitable. Finally, since payments will be received regularly, low-income families will not be tempted to seek out discounters who often charged outrageous rates to advance the tax credits these families were to receive. By simplifying the system, we are giving families more money, as recommended by various groups in this country.

What does Bill C-80 provide? It provides $1,020 per child and per year, plus $213, if parents or spouses did not claim child care expenses, plus another $75, starting with the third child. This means that low-income families will receive $1,733 for the first child and $1,233 for each subsequent child. Clearly, this makes a big difference for low-income families. However, families with an income of more than $67,000 will receive no child benefits at all. I think it is only fair that high income families should not receive money from the federal government, since they are financially capable of raising their children.

We start at around $26,000. For a net income above $26,000—and I stress, a net income—the tax credit is gradually reduced to zero when the family income reaches $67,000. For a family income below $50,000 per year, the average increase—I say average—will be $250 per child, per year.

Bill C-80 is quite simple and represents an improvement over the current three programs. It provides for fiscal equity and fairness as well as adjustments for inflation. Eighty per cent of the increase resulting from this program will go to families with an income below $40,000.

It is worth stressing the reasons for passing this legislation without undue delays. I repeat, this legislation makes the Canadian fiscal system fairer, since it really targets low income families who need help raising their children. What is taken into consideration is the family income, not individual income.

It is also a system with more flexibility, and easier to administer, since Canadian families will not have to fill any forms. Calculations will be made automatically by the federal government, based on family income for the year 1991. We want the system in place by January 1, 1993. This means that on January 1, 1993, eligible families, the low income families, will receive a cheque based on their income tax returns for 1991, without having to fill out any kind of form and without having to apply for anything. The amount will be revised after six months, that is to say starting July 1, 1993.

To conclude, I think it is a big step forward for the Government of Canada, already judged number one by the UN, for what it did and continues to do for children and youth. I think we should congratulate the Prime Minister for his leadership in this regard, and for the record of his government over the last eight years. We did our best to simplify the fiscal system and make sure that it benefited low income families while leaving the higher income families to provide for their own children.

Therefore, I urge all members to let this bill pass without undue delays.

* * *

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

WAIVING OF 48 HOUR NOTICE

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions with the representatives of the two opposition parties in respect of the following motion. Pursuant to Standing Order 53(1) I move:

> That, in relation to Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, this House be permitted to waive the 48-hour notice required for the beginning of report stage.

Just by way of explanation, I would like to indicate that the matter of some urgency has to do with the fact that in order to be possible to hold a referendum or plebiscite it requires about three months of preparation time by the chief electoral officer. There is some urgency in getting this through.

There was great co-operation from hon. members last week. The committee met Monday and Tuesday for long hours and indeed Friday, Monday and Tuesday to get the legislation through committee. Hence, but for the fact that the House was adjourned the report would have been tabled and there would have been lots of notice. I do not think there can be any surprises in this instance. It really is a matter of some urgency that we have it on the table, and as I have indicated the two opposition parties have approved.

• (1540)

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. There is a one-hour debate with a maximum of 10 minutes for any member who wishes to intervene.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, once again this government just used an extraordinary procedure, with the blatant complicity of the other two parties in this House, in order to impose closure to parliamentarians.

We just saw a minister of the Crown come before the House and tell its members that the government does not even want to follow the normal rules, the standards rules of debate in this House, but wants to bypass those rules and eliminate the time allowed to members to familiarize themselves with amendments and prepare for debate. This government wants again to put the kibosh on the democratic right of this Parliament to examine properly and with total freedom the referendum bill.

Madam Speaker, you know as well as I that this referendum bill is the most illegitimate and anti-democratic legislation ever seen in the Parliament of a British regime. You know that this bill violates all the democratic rules, that the democratic values that have been so precious to Quebecers, for instance in the 1980s, are going to be violated by this legislation. This Parliament that claims to be a democratic institution now enables the government to steamroll a piece of legislation on the back of Quebec. Indeed, this referendum bill only has one enemy: Quebec. Consequently, we are now witnessing before a House that is certainly not full an outright violation of the prerogative and the freedom of Parliament to decide but also to debate. I know that the minister talks about the urgency of the matter. How come the minister says that it is urgent to pass the referendum act while his colleague, the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs is quite willing to postpone the process for several days? How come the government now wants to ignore the issue of Quebec at the constitutional table and impose an illegitimate and anti-democratic bill that is unworthy of this institution? I am convinced, and you only have to look at the precedents in Great Britain and at the National Assembly in Quebec, that never before has a government had the nerve to table such an antidemocratic piece of legislation. That is why, and I want the members of the government to know that, every time you act in that way you undermine the credibility of the process that you want to undertake. No Quebecer will feel bound by your illegitimate legislation. You can show whatever results you want. You can spend all the millions that you want, but none of us will feel bound by the results of a defective, unworthy and implausible piece of legislation.

When I see the leader of the government show up casually with the complicity of the Liberals and the New Democrats—the word Democrat should be withdrawn—there is no shame—

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I notice that there are not 20 members in this House. A quorum is not present.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have a quorum call.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Since we have a quorum, we shall resume debate. The hon. member for Shefford.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I thank you for filling up this place. I just wanted to say that Quebec is being bullied into accepting this most shameful bill. One day, each and every hon. member in this House will bitterly regret this debate and this bill on referendums.

This bill has been exposed throughout the country. It would not live up to the principles of the most ancient democracies. It looks like a bill passed by a banana republic. I hope hon. members will be ashamed, I hope Quebec members will be embarrassed to see that their government now wants to put the gag on debate, to ignore the usual democratic procedures in order to prevent Parliament from adequately studying and vigorously debating such an important bill.

I do not have to remind you that this bill will never pass the test with regards to justice and fairness. I do not have to remind you that this government is simply misusing Parliament, and there is a price which will have to be paid not only by the Conservatives, but also by their accomplices, the Liberals and the New Democrats, all of whom are joining forces to play a dirty trick on Quebec.

Thank God the Bloc Quebecois is here to expose such a disgraceful tactic. I hope some other members from Quebec will rise, all those who oppose a federal referendum which would be shameful and unfair.

This motion should never have found its way before Parliament. It violates the most fundamental rules of democracy. Consequently, I do hope we will not be the only ones to oppose the motion. We may have different views on the content, on the options available, on a society model, but we have one thing in common: the development of equal and fair democratic rules. Nothing in this bill deals with justice and fairness; the casualness shown by the government is a good example.

We have seen the leader of the government in the House of Commons come up suddenly with this motion, interrupting one of his colleagues to put a gag on debate.

• (1550)

The Parliament and the small club of old parties which can play all their little games here, but it is in the field that we will find the truth and settle their score. The price to pay for this violation of democracy and justice is enormous.

The marks of conscription haunted this Parliament for many years. The memories of that debate are nothing compared to what awaits members who are accomplices to such an arrogant and undemocratic action. Therefore, during the next few minutes, I dare hope that other Quebecers, at least the democratic ones, will find out that a crime against history is being committed here.

It is obvious that this motion should not be passed, that we cannot accept the way the government wants to steamroller it through. If federalists in this House are so self-confident, why are they scared of the debate? Why are they scared of the usual rules? What do they want to hide? What do they want to avoid?

It is obvious that what we are seeing here is a shady deal, a political operation with a single goal: to save the skin of the Prime Minister of Canada at all costs—

An hon. member: Even if it means to trample on Quebec.

Mr. Lapierre: —at all costs and to trample on Quebec with the federal steamroller.

That is what the government tried to do to us on a Monday afternoon. It will be a black Monday in the history of this Parliament and I hope that this government realizes the extent of its action. I hope that my Liberal friends who I thought were democratic—I see the hon. member for Saint-Denis and I am sure he will oppose Parliament preventing debate on the referendum bill, because he too knows that this referendum will not be valid if it is—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The ten-minute period is now over.

Mr. Mifflin: Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member with great interest. In my caucus, we had a lot of discussions about this issue.

[*English*]

With the background that I have it did not take a long discussion to understand how we would vote on this motion. We have heard a lot of speeches, and we are going to hear more on this motion.

I am going to make a short speech. We are going to go for the motion. We think it is right. We think it is proper.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Madam Speaker, the rhetoric of our colleagues from the Bloc notwithstanding, I really do not have much difficulty with this motion. It is asking the House to waive the normal 48 hours that are required for the beginning of report stage. It is not cutting back or reneging in any way on the ability to debate the issue of this motion.

Standing Order 53(1) states very simply that:

> In relation to any matter that the government considers to be of an urgent nature, a Minister of the Crown may, at any time when the Speaker is in the Chair, propose a motion to suspend any Standing or other Order of this House relating to the need for notice and to the hours and days of sitting.

My colleagues and I in the New Democratic Party have supported in principle the provisions of the enabling legislation for a non-binding referendum. This is an issue which is of an urgent nature. This is an issue which is of grave national concern.

Speaking on behalf of my colleagues, I want to say that we feel that, although we have some concerns about the details of the legislation, fundamentally the people of this country should be allowed to be heard in helping to determine the future of this land.

Although we have some specific problems with the bill, we have no concern about bringing that bill at this time back from report stage to debate some of the amendments, some of the recommendations and some of the proposed changes, hopefully to strengthen the legislation and to provide an opportunity for the people of Canada to have a voice in determining the future of this land.

We will be supporting this notice of motion by the government.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member for Shefford earlier today. I cannot figure out where he is coming from.

In my first year in this city back in 1980, I worked with the member for Shefford. At that time, he worked almost night and day seven days a week campaigning for Canada. He at that time was a very effective member in making sure that those of us who wanted to keep this country together had all of his energy and all of his support.

I also remember in 1984 when he was the minister responsible for fitness and amateur sport in this country. He travelled the country speaking on behalf of not just Quebec, but every region of this country. This was, of course, an Olympic year when he was very proud to speak about the athletes and the people who represented us in this country.

Today I listened to his speech and where he talked about a bill that is being put before this House, if I understood him correctly, he said that this bill was going to "skin" Quebec, this was going to be the rape of Quebec.

This is something that many of us have a tough time figuring out when we hear the Bloc Quebecois coming out with words like this. There are a lot of people in the province of Quebec who still believe in Canada.

Mr. Lapierre: Where are they today?

Mr. Mills: I am talking about the people of Quebec. There are a lot of federalists in the province of Quebec. It seems to me that when you talk about frustrating a referendum process, you almost insult the intelligence not only of the federalists but of all Quebecers.

It seems to me that your opposing this referendum process is sort of contradictory to what you have basically been proposing in this House since you have decided to become a separatist. Quite frankly, a lot of my constituents in Toronto have a difficult time with this Bloc Quebecois operation.

Mr. Lapierre: They have not seen anything yet.

Mr. Mills: We were elected to come to this Chamber. I do not just try to speak here for Toronto or for Ontario. I try to speak and try to make sure that we work on legislation that is for all regions of the country.

Why you want to work at dismantling this country is really beyond most Canadians' imagination. Why do you want to sort of systematically, like this morning, try to devise ways of frustrating this Parliament when there is so much economic pain out there and the pain in the economy is as important to the people of Quebec as it is to the people of Newfoundland, Toronto or wherever in this country?

The government has the right to put forward this 48-hour motion today. We in the Liberal Party have supported this. This is not a surprise attack.

• (1600)

I would ask the member to think back as to how and who elected him to the Parliament of Canada. They elected him when he first came here to speak for Canada, to speak for Quebec in Canada and he fought for Quebec in Canada for many years. All of a sudden he has become a turncoat. Why he has done this is beyond my imagination, but as far as I am concerned this is counterproductive and it is going nowhere.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Madam Speaker, I want to just add a few words under this rule 53(1). The rule was put in the Standing Orders for certain special reasons. Certainly if you are talking about the fate of the country and/or Constitution and referendum, and I cannot think of a much more important issue—and I think it is the first time it has been used under the Standing Orders—if there ever was a reason to use it, it is certainly when the state of the country and/or the Constitution is at play.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood. Without getting into a dog fight with other members individually here, I thought he made very good points. As he spoke I looked in the index. Of course as the hon. member for Shefford knows, he is still in the index as the Honourable Jean Lapierre. Perhaps he would like to correct the index at some time to eliminate the honourable which means that he was a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

On this issue, no one has been caught by surprise. There has been constitutional discussion *ad nauseam*. The country is absolutely fed up with the fact that we cannot seem to resolve something that is fundamental to every Canadian. Even though it does not excite every Canadian from day to day, it is fundamental. So it is time to come to grips with it.

I firmly believe that we should have this referendum legislation as a tool for the government to use in its way. I agree with the NDP. There are parts of the bill that personally I have some problems with. I may try to move an amendment or so if they are in order. I know this rule certainly speeds up the necessity to get your amendments before the table before time runs out. If there was ever a reason to use this, this is a reason where the national issue of the country is at stake.

When I stop to think of what the hon. minister of intergovernmental affairs has tried to do over months of constitutional discussions and then to read in the papers that the deadlock is on a dead Senate which should not even exist as far as I am concerned, an appointed body is an anachronism of history, to think that in effect that should be the stumbling block is something that I just cannot rationalize. I believe, when the time is proper, after consultations are over and after the first ministers and/or the phones are busy this week, and/or/if the negotiations continue on June 9, that the government should get the referendum bill in place. I would like to know if Canadians even want the Senate regardless of what state of reform. If you are going to reform it then okay, we get into all the arguments that everyone has written books about since I went to high school and certainly since I wrote my first political science paper on the Senate way back in 1950. There has not been a new thing said about Senate reform since then and even years before.

I think the fundamental question is, even in Alberta, to see if the public wants the Senate by putting it directly to the people. The leaders have had their chance to try to resolve the issues. In effect the political elite have been locked in rooms for days and weeks as the conferences have gone across the country from sea to sea and, as they have gone from sea to sea, they still have not come up with the consensus.

I say let us trust the people and put it to the people. This referendum bill allows separate amendments. I did not like that in the bill initially and frankly had some suspicions, but maybe the wisdom of some of the government advisers is obviously a lot better than mine. It may be that if we get this bill in place we could use it individually in different areas. Certainly there is one for the Senate.

I am going to conclude, having had a chance to speak on this motion. I may have more difficulty speaking in a tightly confined debate on the bill when we launch into it, I gather, tomorrow.

This will not be received with great favour and it may be misinterpreted in many parts I suppose, but I believe this whole question of inherent right of self-government of the aboriginals with the implication of a third level of government, federal, provincial, and aboriginal, is something the people should have a chance to decide, including the aboriginals of course, before we lock ourselves into a system that will be paralysed from A to Z.

Let us get on with the referendum bill. Let us try to resolve things by consultation, but I am afraid the consultations have produced so little. I quite understand some of the empathy of the Bloc Quebecois although obviously, I do not share its objectives. I do not think there is going to be the fundamental offer that is necessary from consultations.

Even in Quebec, it would be interesting to see what they think about the Senate. Certainly Quebec has a very real interest in the question of the aboriginals. We have already seen what the Cree in a united way have been able to do to affect certain parts of Quebec. Both of those questions should be put to the people where the political leaders have not been able to resolve them.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: It is to remind you, Madam Speaker, that I have been sitting here since 10 o'clock this morning and that I have asked the right to speak before the four previous speakers, two of whom were not—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Richelieu should appreciate the fact that whereas members from all sides of this House want to speak on this motion, as of now one member of his group has already had the opportunity to speak, as well as one other independent member. I think it is perfectly normal that members from other parties have the opportunity to express themselves, and he should leave it to the incumbent of the Chair to recognize the members for debate, that being its job. The hon. member for Churchill has the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Murphy: I voted against the government's bill in second reading because I feel it is a flawed piece of legislation.

I looked at it in terms of some of the major concerns that I have. I believe that the government made no attempt to resolve the issues that I have. I look at this legislation and believe that it does not provide for a fair referendum and I will go into that in a few minutes.

Having said that, I have no problem with the debate starting tomorrow. I think that the earlier we get into this debate, the more we discuss it, the more the public is aware of what is actually in the legislation, the better it is for all Canadians.

I believe that as Canadians see the legislation and hear the debate on the legislation they too will be concerned about that legislation.

I have had the opportunity, as have other members of this House, to read the report from the committee, to see the bill as it is reported. I have had the opportunity to prepare my amendments as are required under the rules of the House. Other members who may have concerns with that bill have had the same opportunity. Having said that, I have no problem with the motion to waive the 48-hour notice period for that.

As I did indicate earlier, the bill itself is not just a piece of legislation that enables a referendum. Unfortunately, it basically establishes a Conservative agenda for how elections should be run in this country.

It gets rid of any real spending limits. It allows outside interests with the biggest dollar to have the biggest bang.

In other words, if you take a look at this legislation and compare it with the normal election laws of this country, you see it is not the same. However if you take a look at this legislation and see how things are run south of the border in the United States, you see that what we are doing is Americanizing the electoral laws of this country.

We know there are no effective limits on spending in the United States. We see what has happened to their democracy as a result of that, where less than 50 per cent of the people vote for the election of the most powerful person on our globe, the President of the United States, where large amounts of money must be raised by each and every member of the House of Representatives. What has happened over the years is that people running for Congress actually have full-time staff paid for by Congress who go out and fund raise. That is what has happened to the American system.

• (1610)

A lot of us, as I said earlier, could support a fair referendum bill. I have to ask if aboriginal Canadians have concerns about this legislation, where are they going to find the dollars to go out and spend the $10 million that would be allowed under this legislation? If the women of Canada have concerns, where are they going to raise that money? They do not control the boardrooms of our nation yet.

What we have here is a piece of legislation which is not looking at fairness. It is not looking at how we should best bring this country together. What we have here is a way that people will feel they have been bought during the election campaign.

There are absolutely no limits on paid advertising, but who has the money to buy that? Not most individual Canadians. Not the homeless. Not the poor. Not the people who will be concerned on an individual basis. It will be the corporate elite of this land. Someone once said: "Well, that won't happen in this country. That would never happen in Canada." Take a look at the 1988 federal election. We know that those who supported free trade through their corporate organizations spent millions of dollars on that one issue.

We have no guarantees that we will not find a situation where all the money is spent on one side, and where a lot of that money will have nothing to do with the referendum, where a lot of that money will be spent not on the referendum or the Constitution but a lot of that money will be spent basically trying to pump up the fortunes of the Conservative Party of this country.

In other words, what we will have is a number of those corporations and organizations spending money not to defend the future of Canada but to do all they can to ensure the re-election of the Conservative Party as the government of this country. That is my concern.

An hon. member: Why would you vote for that? Why do you agree then?

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, the Bloc members know I voted against the legislation.

I have said I will fight it in this House and I have already written my referendum amendments as to why I want this changed. We want that debate in this House. At the end of that debate all members in this House will decide how they will vote. But as I have said, Canadians have to look at this legislation. Many of us want Canadians to have a say. That is why our leader has argued for constituent assemblies. We want our people to have a say in the future of this country.

But the legislation that is in front of this House is flawed. It sets up an unfair system and many Canadians will become much more cynical as a result of this legislation.

[*Translation*]

M. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Madam Speaker, I understand there have been consultations. I simply want to rise and say a few words. To make things perfectly clear for my friends from the Bloc Quebecois and from the party, I will reaffirm in this House what I have been saying all along and will always maintain: I speak as a French Canadian and I am proud to be a Quebecer and, as far as I am concerned, there is no contradiction in that. Aside from the consultations issue, I regret to see the House leader avail himself of this suspension rule to save a miserable 24 hours at the risk of poisoning the debate, while the wiser choice would be to apply one of the inscriptions carved in wood, above the Speaker's Chair in the Senate. I will read it in Latin and table the text to make sure it is understood in all three languages I will be using, namely Latin, because it was originally said in Latin, then in French, and you can go and look up how it translates into English. "*Nihil ordinatum est quod praecipitatur et properat*" said Seneca.

Mr. Plamondon: There you go.

Mr. Prud'homme: No horsing around, please! You did not understand a thing, but you will in a moment. I do not want to take sides for or against the Bloc Quebecois because this is a serious matter. If someone tries to make light of it, I will refrain from getting involved. This phrase means "nothing is well ordered that is hasty and

precipitate". If a vote is taken, I will vote against this Standing Order 53 that was just resorted to. I want to make myself clear; my vote is not dictated by the Bloc Quebecois. I can make up my own mind, thank you. I believe this is a debate that promises to be very difficult and could be potentially divisive—

[*English*]

—to this country. When I say I am a Canadian, I say I am a *Canadien français* and very proud to be a Quebecer. I hope this is well understood in this land of ours. I cannot give my consent to such a precipitous motion just to save a miserable 24 hours and risk poisoning the debate.

I assure you, I shall participate. We just completed the very complicated bill. I just received another bill which says "Confidential, Special Joint Committee on Conflict of Interest". We just received it and we are supposed to look into these documents tomorrow.

I am a serious member. I like to consult. I like to learn what I am doing here and exchange ideas. Therefore I am not ashamed. It is going to be difficult to get up now and say I disagree. I do not know what took place, therefore, I am allowed to say that I disagree.

[*Translation*]

I want you to know, Madam Speaker, that I am sorry. If the Bloc Quebecois called on the hon. member for Saint-Denis, my answer is: I am a French Canadian and a Quebecer and I will do everything I can in the interest of my own people. Everybody is talking about their people. Well, I will do my best to preserve the honour of my people.

In that sense, I cannot expect the Bloc Quebecois to say, when they rise again in this debate, as I hope they will. "Do like Prud'homme." Let every member take their responsibilities and let very speech be stamped with dignity and serious-mindedness, because this is a serious matter. I cannot understand.

[*English*]

I cannot understand people who do not understand the kind of country we live in. I am probably showing it to you now in the other official language that we could be different and remain Canadians.

[*Translation*]

I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that when you call in the members for the vote, I will vote against proceeding to a vote on this motion now.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I have listened with care to the interventions in this one-hour debate on the motion of the hon. government House leader concerning the use of Standing Order 53(1) in bringing forward the debate on Bill C-81. I should stress for the benefit of those who may have just caught up with the debate that this motion does nothing more than bring forward the debate on Bill C-81, which is a bill to establish the option of using a Canada-wide referendum in our nation.

It has been suggested by my friend from Shefford that this is a guillotine. It is absolutely nothing of the sort. He should welcome it because it is an opportunity to have the debate 24 hours earlier than would have normally been the case.

The legislative committee on Bill C-81, met on Friday, Monday and Tuesday of last week. This committee heard witnesses, heard the minister and spent a 14-hour day doing a detailed clause by clause study. I should point out that the government accepted a number of amendments that had been proposed by the opposition and embraced some of them to make a better bill out of what was originally introduced.

Our friend from Shefford says that this is a bastard, illegitimate law and is undemocratic legislation. His friend Rene Levesque would be spinning in his grave if he heard those words because Rene Levesque, that distinguished Quebec separatist, was above all a profound democrat. This is an opportunity—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Point of order, Madam Speaker. I will not have the members tarnish Rene Levesque's memory with such a shameful bill. They should—

[*English*]

An hon. member: You are the one who is tarnishing his name.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member knows this is not a point of order, but ideas being debated.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Obviously the Bloc has no willingness to listen to points made in debate. It resorts to emotion and rhetoric rather than listening to debate. The point I was simply making was that Rene Levesque, a man with whose views I profoundly disagreed on many subjects, was a democrat and this is democratic legislation. It provides to the people of Canada the opportunity to pronounce themselves on changes to their Constitution.

Our friend from Shefford suggested that we were afraid of debate and as a result introduced this motion. The contrary is the case. This debate has been brought forward in order to provide an opportunity for members of Parliament such as himself to participate in it.

Mr. Lapierre: You brought closure on second reading.

Mr. Edwards: This is not a closure motion. Check your rule books. The member has been here much longer than I have and he says this is a closure motion. It is absolutely nothing of the sort.

An hon. member: What is coming? What is your next move?

Mr. Edwards: My friends from Broadview—Greenwood and Annapolis Valley—Hants contributed very skilfully and constructively to this debate, as did my friend from Okanagan—Shuswap. However I found myself somewhat saddened by the intervention of my friend from Churchill who suggested that this was not a fair bill.

However, I do appreciate his point that he has no difficulty in proceeding tomorrow with the debate. It is appropriate to proceed with the debate but I must take issue with two other points he endeavoured to make.

My hon. friend said, and I believe it is an accurate quote, that: "People will feel they were bought". The Canadian people are too intelligent to be bought by anything. The Canadian people are well-informed, well-educated and are well able to make up their own minds about the issues before us.

The other point he makes, which I find somewhat absurd, is that this bill is designed to pump up the fortunes of the Conservative Party. I believe that is also a direct quotation. That statement comes from a member of a party that only three weeks ago was calling for a general election. I wonder why the change.

My hon. friend from Saint-Denis, whom I respect immensely and have great affection for, has made a point that is perhaps based on miscommunication. It concerns his suggestion that there was no discussion beforehand on this issue.

Mr. Prud'homme: I did not say that.

Mr. Edwards: Then I misunderstood, and I withdraw that.

There was discussion among the parties as to when it would be appropriate to bring this debate forward. There was agreement it would be appropriate to have the bill reported tomorrow. That is what we are debating at this time.

There is absolutely no thought of hastening the debate itself once the debate begins other than with the co-operation of members of this House. If the House favours that kind of co-operation then of course there would be haste. On the other hand, the point is—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I know the member just made an important comment by saying the debate will not be rushed and that it will not be restricted. Could he make the same statement in the form of a motion, or could we at least take note of it, so that the member remembers the formal commitment he just made in front of this House?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is well aware of our rules and he knows this is not a point of order. We will now hear the hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I appreciate your ruling but I will respond to the hon. member's point nonetheless.

He is seeking an undertaking from the government that there will not be undue haste in the debate of the bill. I will stand by what I have just said. If it is the will of the House that there be thorough debate there will be thorough debate. If it is not the will of the House then there will be a more compressed debate.

This is a vital issue to the future of our country. I can understand the panic by the Bloc Quebecois because it sees something happening out there, particularly in Quebec itself, which is sober second thought, the slogan of our own Senate.

There is sober second thought taking place in Quebec and throughout Canada as Canadians come alive to the questions that are before us. They look at the rosy prospect, the positive challenge that is put to us by a renewed and revitalized Canada.

In conclusion, I would say that the purpose of the motion put by my colleague, the government House leader, is to give us the opportunity to get to the report stage debate and ultimately third reading of Bill C–81, an act which would provide for the opportunity to consult the people of Canada on their future Constitution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Madam Speaker, first I would like to express my agreement with the comments of the Liberal member for Saint–Denis. There is at least one member of that party who had the guts, who dared to say how much this is undemocratic. We are not debating a motion, we are debating the very survival of democracy in this House. Historically, the British parliamentary system never allowed such abuse, such a bill on referendums as that announced in the Speech from the Throne. There was time enough to table it, we would have had ample time to debate it. No. We had to hide because we were afraid. Now we table the bill in a terrible rush, we allow almost no time for debate and not only that, we send it to the committee with restrictions. The period for tabling is limited to one day. The committee also had to work within certain limits. At the very moment when we must prepare ourselves and respect a deadline, and it is particularly difficult for the Bloc Quebecois to prepare for a quality debate because we have no researchers helping us, they once again try to gag us. This is a hold–up on democracy, in which Conservative are accomplices; they are Cains selling pottage of lentils to their brother. That is how bad it is. The Conservatives have become collaborators, just like the Nazis were, or like we saw in France during the Second World War. They have become collaborators.

• (1630)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Richelieu is making very serious accusations. I would ask him to immediately withdraw—

Mr. Plamondon: Which words, Madam Speaker?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think it is totally unacceptable to call members of this House Nazis, and I would ask the hon. member to immediately withdraw his words.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, my comments were not directed towards—and if that is how they were construed, I am sorry, I did not mean that to happen. All I said was that, under the Nazi regime—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will withdraw his comments immediately.

Mr. Plamondon: Let me finish, Madam Speaker. I withdraw them, all right. All I said was that the behaviour of Conservative members—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Please, I want the hon. member to unequivocally withdraw his comments now.

Mr. Plamondon: In that case, Madam Speaker, consider the word withdrawn. The whole thing is over. Let us not talk about it anymore.

I say that the members—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Will you withdraw your comments, please.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, for the third time I withdraw the word you wanted me to withdraw, the word "Nazi". Is that clear? It is withdrawn, let's forget about it. What I am saying is that the collaboration given by Quebec Conservative members in support for such a gag is unacceptable and is strangely reminiscent of the attitude of some collaborators during the last war. That is what I meant.

It is intolerable that democracy be ridiculed in such a manner. We behave like a banana republic. We have never seen, in any western democracy, such abuse of power, especially when we are talking about a bill without any spending limits, about an attempt to buy people's votes. There will not be any debate, just a

squandering of public money. Not from the nation's treasury, since there is nothing left in the till, but borrowed by the government. We are going to spend $200 million, $300 million, you name it, on the back of Quebecers, to buy their votes, and Conservative Quebec members stay silent.

The referendum in Quebec was mentioned earlier. It was used as an example the world over. In England, when they had a referendum to decide whether or not they should join the Common Market, they upheld the long British parliamentary tradition of democracy, when we are turning this debate into a sad joke.

It is intolerable that democracy be ridiculed like this. No "yes" side, no "no" side, unlimited spending, unlimited number of committees. On top of that, 39 departments will be wasting public money, with the Prime Minister in front, followed by an Official Opposition leader without support, and a party which calls itself democratic but goes along with such a thing. It is unacceptable, Madam Speaker, unacceptable.

I wonder how they manage to stay seated in this House, these silenced Quebec members, gagged by their own party. Judas, traitors to their nation. Unacceptable! It is unacceptable that such things should happen in this House, that we should, on top of limiting debate on the motion, already prepare a motion for closure at second reading, without allowing proper time to probe the core of the question, like we usually do during any regular debate on a given subject.

This morning, as well as the Friday before the adjournment, members were shocked by our interventions on Bill C-59, another bill the government wanted to pass in a hurry. All three parties are just drivelling away. There is no more opposition, only three parties conniving to hold up democracy and to spend millions of tax money to buy votes rather than have a real democratic debate with a "yes" side and a "no" side, with spending limits and start up funds, like any decent referendum.

An hon. member: It is because they have nothing on the table, it is because they have nothing.

Mr. Plamondon: You have nothing to offer, so you buy. A $450 billion deficit, it is not enough, let us waste another half a billion in unnecessary TV advertising to promote this great and beautifully divided country. Let us not stop there.

[*English*]

Mr. Mills: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I am having a little difficulty with this member's accusations. He has made some accusations in the last few minutes that those of us in this House of Commons who are trying to speak for Canada, who are trying to keep this country together, are traitors.

I think this is a valid point of order. It seems to me that when this room is dedicated to Canada and someone in it is trying to tear it apart that the real traitor is that group, not those of us who are trying to keep it together.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The danger in this type of debate, be it from the hon. member for Richelieu or the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood, is very scary and very apparent. If members of this House, depending on their different ideologies, start calling one another traitors to whatever ideology, we are getting into a very—

Mr. Mills: That is the term he used.

Madam Deputy Speaker The hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood is saying that this is the term that the hon. member for Richelieu used. While listening to the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood I am sure that when he reads the blues he will see that he was, in a way, certainly returning the term. This is very ugly and this House should refrain from using this type of language, and that includes each and every single member of this House.

There are two and a half minutes left.

[*Translation*]

I would ask the hon. member for Richelieu to please stick to parliamentary language. The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Plamondon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to tell the colleague who spoke before me that I was addressing my remarks to the Conservative members from Quebec, not to the—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member should know that his words are no more acceptable whether he addresses members from Ontario or Conservative members from Quebec. I would ask him to restrict himself to parliamentary language.

Mr. Plamondon: To have parliamentary language first we should have a parliamentary democracy, you are quite right about that, Madam Speaker. In a parliamentary democracy, you have debates, you do not have gagging, you do not have debates which are always interrupted.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is himself jeopardizing democracy at this very moment in this very Chamber. The hon. member would like us to believe that the motion—

Order, please. The hon. member would like us to believe that the motion now before the House is going to limit the possibility to have a debate for everybody; that is not the case and the hon. member knows it perfectly well. I would prefer that we continue to debate this motion during the minute and a half that we have left and that we do it properly. It is not democracy which is at stake in this House for now.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Shefford.

Mr. Lapierre: Since when is the Chair defending the government's decison as if she were the government House leader's assistant?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not think I defended anybody's opinion. If the hon. member would just listen for a minute, I only wanted the House to know exactly what Standing Order 53.(1) does. It was only a matter of information, just that since, as I was listening to the remarks by the member for Richelieu, I realized that he obviously did not understand where Standing Order 53 was taking us.

Unfortunately, time has now run out.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Richelieu on a point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: You told me that there were two and half minutes left but you used them up.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hour provided for in the Standing Orders has now expired. If the hon. member reads Standing Order 53(1), he will see that this is precisely what this section says.

It being 4.40 p.m., the hour provided for the motion now before the House has expired, pursuant to Standing Order 53(3). Accordingly, under this Standing Order, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put the question on that motion.

[*English*]

Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

[*Translation*]

And less than ten members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Since fewer than 10 members rose to oppose the motion, the motion is adopted pursuant to Standing Order 53(4).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I noticed that a quorum was not present when you made the decision. Therefore, the decision is not valid.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I believe that there were indeed 20 members present in the House. In any case, since the point of order was not raised before, the question was put to the House and 10 members did not rise to oppose the motion. Therefore, the motion is carried. Orders of the day.

* * *

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski that Bill C–80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the government's Bill C–80, which is a bill to amend the Income Tax and in fact do away with family allowances and set out a new pattern of child benefits.

Before dealing specifically with the legislation I would like to take this opportunity to review the way our party is approaching social policy as given to us by this government since 1984.

One academic writer has described it as social policy by stealth. I would just like to support that analysis. The way this government has sought to change the major pieces of legislation in this country governing social policy has been to do it through the back door, to do it in debates in which the Canadians following Parliament do not understand just how fundamental the changes being made are, as they are not being properly announced.

For example, who would have thought that Bill C–80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, in fact contained major changes in the way we treat children in this country? It was not brought in as a new policy dealing with child benefits. It was not brought in by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who is responsible for children in this country.

It was brought in by the Minister of Finance as a ways and means motion. It was brought in through the budget as a budgetary motion. It was not presented clearly to Canadians as an act to change the way we deal with children.

We can go back through several pieces of legislation, particularly in the last two years, in which the government has sought to change the fundamental way in which we built up the social security system in this country by moving through the back door.

Let me give three examples. The most famous example, used and perhaps decried by all the social policy committees across this country, was Bill C–69 which was the first act to cut back transfer payments to the provinces. That was a battle in which the groups opposed to these changes, the groups involved with the delivery of medicare services in the provinces, post–secondary education and social services, realized too late in the process, in fact this bill had gone to the Senate, how fundamental the changes were that were occurring to them.

In the second last budget, in 1991, the government presented changes along the same lines and called them very simply Bill C–20 and Bill C–32. These again were considered to be amendments to the fiscal arrangements act and were done in a very quiet way.

This time the government took this not to the social policy committee or the health committee but to the finance committee, which is the last place social policy groups are used to going to find out what changes are being made in dealing with things like medicare, post–secondary education and social assistance measures under the Canada Assistance Plan. All these measures were done quietly.

However, this time the groups were notified, not by the government or by the House of Commons but by the opposition, this party, to come out and share their views on the impact that Bill C–69 was already having on the system. Day after day, we heard these groups say: "Do you not realize what you are doing to the social fabric of this country? Do you not realize how much you are undermining people's confidence in government to help them?"

That is a very important message when groups—not fringe groups but groups representing doctors, nurses, practitioners of all kinds in the health care system, representing regional governments in this country, major actors responsible for hundreds of millions of dollars—come forward, not to whine as the the government would say but to say to people: "Listen, you have just done enough cutbacks and we need to be protected".

In this budget we see another change. It is dealing with child benefits. I did some research on this, this is not hyperbole. This white paper, entitled *The Child Benefit*, is the shortest white paper presented in the history of any government in Canada. The total amount of money it was dealing with was $4.5 billion. In 14 short pages the Government of Canada announced its most major changes to the way that we deal with children, $4.5 billion was summarized in graphs and a few cliches in 14 pages.

Since that was introduced in March of this year the government has laid low. It has not produced any subsequent documents. It has not prepared the public for any discussion. It has not announced anywhere that this is going to legislative committee for discussion. It is going to put us on hurry up because it needs these amendments made to the Income Tax Act soon, if they are going to take effect next year.

We see here not only a push on other fronts, which we find very difficult to deal with these days, but on the most basic of things. If done properly, and if people take the time to think of the consequences dealing with children, we could have a worth–while discussion in committee in this House and across the country. No, this government simply wants to get on with it and make these changes before Canadians wake up and realize what is happening to them.

One of the fundamentals of social policy in this country, particularly since the Second World War, is that the Canadian government should seek as many ways as possible to support family life. The number of vehicles available to the government to do that in a federal system are limited.

However, through gradual changes in family law and through changes right after the Second World War in some of the UI provisions, and also through the children's special allowances act and family allowances, we began to develop a system in which the Government of Canada said to each and every family: "We understand that what you are doing is very important for society. We cannot always give you a lot of money but we understand that no matter what your background, who you are, what your husband does, all these other things, we will give you a small amount of money each month to help out".

• (1650)

For some families that is a very real amount, $35 per child still buys a week's worth of groceries and basics, it still buys a few books, it still buys the occasional treat, it still alleviates some of the tensions between men, women and families, and it does not make a statement about income levels. It is very important that in the way in which we create social policies that we do not make statements on class and do not make the assumption that because one income-earner in a family is well-off that everyone else in the family is well-off. There are subtle ways to state that we understand that in your own private lives this small amount of money may be of some help to you.

The government has decided, through the continuation of a social policy by stealth, that the principle of reaching out to each family no longer applies. It will seek to target those families which it thinks need the most.

In some respects the targeting philosophy is very popular in this country. People are wondering in times of tight budgets and high deficits if targeting is not the proper strategy. Any political party worth its salt does not just look at the past policies but looks into the future and seeks to make sure that it is being as responsive as possible.

The underlying fault with so-called targeting is that it lets too many people off the hook. We do not often like to make these comparisons between Canada and the United States, the rhetoric of targeting, the rhetoric of cutbacks, the rhetoric of telling people they must do with less is strictly a part of the ideological thrust of the right in America. The price Americans are paying in their cities and among their youth is far greater than we ever want to pay. That is because the American strategy has always been to claim targeting, rather than the reality of reaching out to too few to be of help.

One test which we would like to apply in examining the child benefits package is to apply the litmus test of the government itself. The government's litmus test is two-fold. First, it is there to help the very poorest of families to withstand changes taking place in their lives, and second, those people who are not being helped do not really need the help.

Let us examine the first principle. The very poorest of Canadians either fall under the Indian Act and represent about 400,000 status Indians living on reserves across the country, the largest proportion of those are under 25 years old and a good many of those are under 18, or are covered by the Canadian Assistance Plan and are living on either provincial or municipal social assistance programs. That varies of course from province to province and city to city. It is hard to generalize from here all the characteristics of those systems.

This particular child benefits package deliberately does not speak to the question of those very poor families who are living on social assistance. It is deemed that there are measures in place to look after those people but the reality is that because of the cutbacks, legislated through Bills C-69, C-20 and C-32, the fundamentals of our system for dealing with poor families have been undermined.

If we examine the literature from the social sciences, certainly throughout the 20th century in North America and back to 19th century industrial England, the whole thesis is that to help the poor we need a basket of programs or a combination of programs to support them, not only through cash but in a number of other ways.

In Canada we have taken many different initiatives. However, we will just isolate three or four of them. First, we will deal with housing. This government has continued its cutbacks in social housing and co-operative

housing to the extent that this year CMHC has all but left the field.

Second, we will look at education. The cutbacks to these different programs, to education and training, is dramatic and the access of young people to training is almost nil.

Third is the question of nutrition and health care at a young age. Fundamental to healthy family life is a healthy community and healthy children.

When you undermine those basic principles, when you take away the support structures, and then come in at the end with a little bit of cash it is very deceptive.

One academic made a presentation to us that struck me, and I think will strike me for many years to come. She said that in her professional estimate the amount of money withdrawn from the health care system by measures of this government from 1984 to 1993, the end of the next fiscal year, is going to be as high as $43 billion.

If we examine those measures that I talked about before, at what is happening in medicare as it deals with children, in pre-natal care, what is happening in housing, and what is happening in education, we see that there is an emerging crisis here. When the government makes another announcement dealing with family benefits we must expect that the cash put on the table is somehow going to begin to compensate for what is taken away.

There is a theory among some social scientists, particularly among conservative economists, that the problem with the poor is that they do not have money. Therefore the simple solution is to give them money and the poverty will begin to end.

It is not so simple.

In a community in which roads are run down or property that people rent is not kept up, along with other little things which do not work, the cash presented by the federal government will have minimal impact in creating a healthy community.

As a result of the emergence of CAP and the strategy of this government that the welfare poor should be more subject to provincial assistance than to federal assistance the federal government made the decision that it would not change the benefits to the non-working poor, that is to say those people who do not have income as defined under the Income Tax Act.

That is a brutal blow. In fact it is not clear at this time whether the new benefits package which is paid monthly for the child will be given freely to these individuals without the province taking recourse because it represents such a substantial change in the way that the cash comes in.

If the federal government and the minister of health are seeking to change the way that people receive money the least he can do in negotiating with the provincial ministers of social services is to guarantee that the money he is providing for these people will not be used against them in the determination of provincial levels of social assistance.

Possibly that is difficult for the House to accept, but that question has not yet been publicly answered by any of the ministers across this country.

In terms of the test of helping out the very poorest there is no change in the position of these families. They will not receive any extra moneys.

The second question is whether the cut-off level is realistic. Are people going to begin to receive less money from the federal government at a level at which we sitting here think they can get by with?

As part of its strategy the government, and probably quite appropriately in this case, has been most generous with families earning between $20,000 and $30,000.

I want to stop here and point out one subtle change. Again this is where as an opposition critic I become furious with this government. If it is talking openly with people, how many Canadians realize that now the question no longer concerns individual income but family income?

How many people now realize that in order to obtain benefits under the child benefit process they must be able to show the income of both people?

The government has decided that if the family income is in excess of $30,000 a family should receive minimum assistance under this plan. The calculations, if you follow the child benefit package as presented in this in-depth 14-page report, are very difficult to follow. By most measures the average family with both spouses in the home working will receive an additional $4 a month if its family income is about $30,000. This continues right straight through to $50,000. Then once they get between $50,000 and $100,000 by a sliding scale, people begin to receive less.

• (1700)

Let us deal with the middle income families. The average family income in Canada according to Statistics Canada is about $51,000. That means that the government's cut-off point is below the average, which by definition means that the average family is going to receive little or no benefit.

I cannot think of any circumstances under which an extra $4 a month will fundamentally change the relationship between a family and a child. In what ways can a parent substantially change the way a child saves, a child buys clothes or a child is fed with $4 extra a month?

That is as insulting as the 37-cent increase given to seniors on their last senior citizens' cheque. That is the type of sleight of hand or social policy by stealth that this party wishes to challenge on the floor of the House of Commons as being unfair to most Canadians.

The government projects itself as being of great help to children. It has national press conferences. The minister was quick to tell me that he had been out to Winnipeg North Centre and understood and saw the poverty in my constituency.

Families are trying very hard, particularly families of new Canadians with incomes of $30,000 to $35,000 and families with two people working at the minimum wage and working overtime, which are not uncommon. How can we say to them that basically we think they make enough and do not need the help of the government? This is an important part of our society. The government is no longer willing to provide them with any increases that take into account the increased pressure that they are feeling.

As members of Parliament we would have to be deaf and dumb to say that we do not hear constantly from constituencies about how tough it is to make ends meet. Nobody has a nickel to spare.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I apologize. I must interrupt the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to listen to the speech of our colleague, but I would like others to benefit from it. I realize that we certainly do not have a quorum in this House. It is easy to see.

And the count having been taken:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Since we now have a quorum, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has the floor.

Mr. Walker: Madam Speaker, I am very happy that my colleague did call quorum on my behalf. I need an audience for such an important speech.

[*English*]

I would just like to continue with the analysis of low income families, particularly new Canadians. As I started to note, the message goes out from the government that if they are making $30,000 or $35,000 a year as a couple they can look after their children and do not need its help.

We can take that as a stark contrast with the recognition in Quebec, for example, of how fundamentally important support for children is at the outset and in the continuation. If we want to have a healthy society, we must give out the signal constantly that there is a government that cares. We would not use public relations to overcome the fact that we are not really spending any money.

In fact we on this side of the House could accept a policy framework which stated that due to the bankruptcy of the government all we can do at this time is give an extra $4 a month to people earning $40,000 a year but that as money comes in families are our first priority. That could be accepted.

They should not pretend something different. For example, officials proudly informed members of Parliament in a briefing that most Canadians would be receiving a higher monthly payment under this system than ever before. They failed to add in the concluding statement that most Canadian families would be receiving less annually. That is a diversionary tactic which just goes to the heart of the lack of credibility of the social policy of this government. As such, instead of stepping forward to help children, this government has in fact stepped back in a very dramatic fashion.

Let us not only consider what I have to say and what this party has to say. Let us stop and listen to what other people have said.

It is not as if all of a sudden the government, starting in January in preparation for its February budget, heard about child poverty. What happened to the national day care study which set out a very elaborate process for working toward day care? It has disappeared; it is forgotten. What about the Senate committee that worked for months on poverty and came out with several options for the government to consider? It is forgotten. What happened to the subcommittee on child poverty and its report just before Christmas with very specific recommendations dealing, for example, with prenatal care? It is forgotten.

The government has forgotten every major initiative it initiated and for which it sought public support for. It took a very minor step forward yet claimed it was looking after the basic income problems of children. I believe that is the type of disrespect for Canada and Canadians that people have begun to resent.

A number of groups has come forward but I would just like to deal with what one group said in its critique of the new child tax benefit in the 1992 budget. It was prepared by Ken Battle, president of the Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

We should not only be concerned with what we tried to do in the past through universal programs or with the present and what this government is doing, but we should look into the future. What is social policy for children going to look like in 1997? Let me quote: "Like the current child benefit system the new system will only be partially indexed, which means the benefits will fall steadily in value as the years go by. The federal government has already siphoned off an estimated $3.5 billion out of child care benefits for 1986 through 1991 by the physically powerful and politically invisible mechanisms of partial deindexation".

Ken Battle continues: "For example, a welfare couple with two children, one under seven and one between seven and seventeen, will get $2,253 from the new child tax benefit in 1993. By the year 2000 their benefit will have declined to $1,862, which is $391 or 17 per cent less than in 1993. Their cumulative loss of child benefits will amount to a hefty $1,532".

In other words, they start out with a system which is really tight now. They put in the deindexing provision, and gradually, gradually families find it more difficult. However, they wash their hands of it and say: "That was done many years ago", and they hope people forget about it.

We have reached a point where we should re-establish our commitment to certain fundamental beliefs. The Liberal Party of Canada built up the social policy network we have starting in the 1930s, continuing after World War II and through the 1950s and 1960s, and culminating in income security for seniors and medicare for the nation. This was a longstanding commitment. As a caucus and as a party we have recently reconfirmed these views.

I would like to quote from a recent motion of the Liberal Party: "The Liberals believe that Canada must remain a society committed to both greater economic opportunity and to social justice for all its people, and that to be productive members of the work force individual Canadians must be equipped with the necessary tools for life and work". It continues: "They must be healthy, well nourished, well educated and well trained to achieve their own economic success. We are committed to meeting these goals for Canadians".

• (1710)

If we want this generation, the hundreds of thousands of children and each of the age cohorts, to move in to a more productive life, we have to start with income support to the family which adds up to more than $4 a month. We have to provide pre-natal care. We have to make sure there is day care, particularly in our large cities. There is no reason we have to get ourselves into a corner by plastering the whole country with day care spaces and day care facilities when the need varies from one region to the other, but we have to start. This party has never, ever vacillated on support for national day care.

There are thousands upon thousands of families, particularly in the big cities, right across this country who cannot survive without two people working. They cannot have two people working unless they are sure their children are being looked after. Recent statistics indicate that the number of days women miss work every year is going up because in the end they are the ones responsible for their children. This is what happens when we do not have a proper system.

We have to make sure there are summer programs for them. In our city we could not get that because Challenge 92 was too small, an issue that is not discussed here. We have to make sure when we talk about training that it is not just UI based. Aboriginal youth and women returning to the work force for the first time in years must have access to these programs. We have to make sure of these things. We cannot take them for granted.

This program has dropped support from age 18 to age 17. What do students who are going to university do? They want people to be trained. They do not want them to be bankrupt. Yet the bill is totally silent on it. They take a small piece of the pie and try to parade it as being as big as possible.

In the meantime people start getting their cheques and are happy. This government hopes to keep them happy for six months before the election comes. However, the husband and wife will begin to compare what they are really getting out of it. When the major spouse's income, usually the man's, drops dramatically because of changes in the Income Tax Act and another cheque arrives for $200, $300 or $400 a month, people are going to be confused. At first they will think they are ahead. Then they will realize they have been subjected, at their own expense, to one of the biggest con jobs in social policy seen in Europe and in North America for many years to come.

This is the reason we call upon the government to take the initiative in the legislative committee which we are hopefully headed for very shortly. When we reach the legislative committee hopefully it is not only opposition members asking for different witnesses. Government members themselves should take the initiative. There are many questions left unanswered, but they should be put on the table now and the government should be asked to respond to the problem.

For example, let me refer to some of the questions which are unanswered in the legislation. First, is this new money or tinkering with forecasted growth?

The Conservative government's white paper on child benefits states: "Over the next five years the child tax benefit will provide almost $2.1 billion in increased child assistance". However, there is some doubt that this projected increase is new money but merely the five-year accumulative increase that would have occurred to the existing child benefits system. Preliminary estimates show that between 1986 and 1991 family allowances payments grew by approximately $275 million. For the same five-year period the refundable child tax credit grew by approximately $750 million.

The government should show the committee that the total growth forecast for the three existing child benefits exceeds or is not similar to the one being proposed in the new program.

Second, there is a number of constitutional implications. Both the current deal being discussed through the media and the report of the special joint committee on a renewed Canada contained many ideas on social policy. Is this legislation consistent with what is happening in Alberta and Quebec, or are they issues that need to be resolved before the legislation is passed?

Third, there is the erosion of child benefits. The proposed child benefit is indexed to increases in inflation less 3 per cent. This partial deindexation will cause the benefits to decrease steadily in value as the years go by. It was the process of partial indexation that allowed the Conservative government to take approximately $3.5 billion out of the child benefits system between 1986 and 1991.

How does this government intend to monitor and adjust the levels of benefit and the income threshold so that the value is not eroded over time by inflation?

Finally, we come to the major point of the discussion. At this time in every major city in this country we are facing a crisis, where youth are unemployed at the rate of at least 20 per cent, and where there are pockets of youth unemployment and student unemployment far higher than that. We have people between the ages of 16 and 25 making critical decisions which are destructive because of their lack of opportunity to do things positively. We have students and young people turned away from training programs because of a lack of funding. We have the group which most needs help finding that the national government has run out of cash to help them. You have to stop and think of that, what it means to say that you have run out of cash to help the young people.

My argument is that if this government took proper time to consult with Canadians and if it asked them for a priority, income support for children, for families, for youth would be the number one priority.

We take for granted the phenomenal progress we have made in dealing with the elderly in Canada from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s. Between housing programs, an effective medicare system, an effective community health-based system dealing with questions of nutrition, special programs like New Horizons, and basic income support programs, we could quite literally begin to think that we had dealt with the issue of the elderly.

Now we are faced with another social crisis, the strategic underpinnings of which are quite clear. Every child in this country deserves support. Every child in this country deserves an opportunity of a home, the opportunity to be fed, the opportunity to have an education, the opportunity to walk down the street without being faced with a gang, and the opportunity to make a choice of going to university or a community college without being bankrupted. When children sense that the people on top, the generation that has gone before them that has reaped so beautifully from a generous system, and I include myself here, when people like myself say: "No more, there's no money for you because we won't pay the taxes, we won't structure a government, we won't set priorities"—all these reasons—"we can't help you", then I say to you that that will be a sad day in this country. It will mark the beginning of the end of confidence in the government system among the very young.

It will start as soon as we begin to pick and choose among the families we want to help. I urge this government to use a legislative committee, not to ram through an amendment to the Income Tax Act of Canada, but to stop and to say: "All right, let's hear from some important groups, let's have the government members bring in some of these groups, let's have the opposition parties bring in some groups. Let's talk about what it costs to bring up a child nowadays; let's talk about what it costs to keep a child off the streets. Let's talk about the cost, and the Solicitor General can tell us about that, to have an aboriginal youth in a western Canadian prison, what it is costing the Government of Canada to set up aboriginal women's centres across this country because of past policies".

We say to ourselves: "Is this what we are going to be spending our money on for the next generation or are we going to systematically seek out a different way of doing things?"

As with any policy, does any one party have all the wisdom? The answer is no. The parliamentary system has tried to wrestle with the questions of child poverty for the last five years. We have had reports, we have had expert witnesses, and again and again we have walked away from the recommendations of these people.

This is our last chance. If the final product of this Parliament is going to be known as Bills C-69, C-20, C-32 and C-80 as the so-called building blocks for a new social policy in the country, I think we are going to have exactly the opposite effect.

• (1720)

In fact, we are going to end up with a system which is so demoralized, actualized, bankrupt of ideas and money, it is going to take us another generation to regain the confidence of the young people. I thank you for the opportunity to participate in this debate and I look forward to a lengthy discussion in legislative committee.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, it is with some resignation that I stand to debate the government's child benefits legislation. We see this at the end of a long line of attacks on Canada's social programs, in particular, attacks on Canada's poor children.

If we look back to November 29, 1989, we will remember this House voted unanimously for the resolution moved by the then leader of the New Democratic Party, that it 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. On that day the Prime Minister, every member of cabinet, and all of the members representing the government voted in favour of that motion to end child poverty by the year 2000.

On many occasions in the past the Prime Minister talked about social programs as a sacred trust, as programs which would be enhanced and maintained for all Canadians into the future.

Last December the Prime Minister signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which tied and bound Canada by international agreement to support children in Canada, to maintain them and provide for their needs. In that context, in signing that convention, the Prime Minister committed himself and his government to placing children as the first goal on Canada's resources, the first goal in good times and in bad times.

It may be we are in bad times. I think those millions of Canadians who are on welfare, the over one million Canadians who are unemployed, would agree that we are in bad times. The Prime Minister committed himself to provide for children in good times and in bad times. Now we see the implications of that. Actions quite clearly speak louder than words.

We are discussing today the government's plan to address or respond to the concerns of Canada's poor children. Critics have made it clear that the government is not fulfilling its obligations to Canada's children, to Canada's future. No social groups working in the field support the changes to the legislation, to child benefit programs which this government is proposing. All those organizations working on behalf of poor children, on behalf of the poor, who understand the poor, who live with them and work with them every day know there is a need for a major shift in government economic and social policy. This has been clear to the government over many years and the government continues in this same course, this course which has served the interests and concerns of Canada's poor so badly.

Lest we think things are not so bad, let us be clear about the numbers of people that we are dealing with here. Let us ask the question: Is Canada's economy working? It is not working for the over 863,000 children who are welfare recipients; 37.8 per cent of all welfare recipients are children.

It is not working for the 2.3 million welfare recipients in Canada, the 1.3 million unemployed in Canada, and it is not working for the over one million children in poverty in Canada. This economy, this country, is not working for millions and millions of Canadians.

Lest we think much is to be achieved by this child benefit proposal by the government, let us look at some of the things that have been said about it by analysts who are not tied to the government, nor tied to any other political party.

Ken Battle, who used to the director of the National Council on Welfare, the advisory agency to the government's own health and welfare department, said in response to these proposals that the working poor families are falling deeper and deeper below the poverty line. He said that the federal proposals are designed to pretend to fight child poverty while at the same time making sure that middle and some upper income families get larger benefits. He talked about partial indexation. As we know this program, as with so many government programs, will only be indexed to inflation over 3 per cent. He said that deindexation is a fiscally powerful and politically invisible mechanism that allows the government to siphon money from social programs.

Prior to the introduction of this legislation, Canada's average families have seen their social programs from this government reduced by about half of what they were seven years ago. Through various approaches this government has cut family benefits dramatically, as I say, to about half. It has killed the old income tax deduction for dependent children and brought in a tax credit which is worth far less, now just standing at $71 a child. It did not index benefits fully for inflation, as I said.

Year after year these benefits will continue to shrink as they have done for the last seven, eight, nine years. This means that the poor will remain poor. We are not solving that problem. Indeed, the minister responsible, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, has said that in spite of his government's and his own vote in favour of the resolution to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000 only two to three years ago, now that commitment to end child poverty is an unrealizable dream.

For the over one million children living in poverty, it is a necessity to get out of poverty, to break that poverty cycle. For the government minister responsible for the support for poor children to say that it is an unrealizable dream is to give up the fight before it has begun. Indeed, in order to deal with the problems that poor children face, the minister needs to fight tooth and nail against his own cabinet ministers to ensure that economic and

social policies are changed in this country to support those children.

During various briefings that have taken place, Department of National Health and Welfare officials have indicated that children whose family income is derived from social assistance and from unemployment insurance will be no better off under the new system than under the old. In other words, the poorest of Canada's children will not be addressed by these changes to child benefits.

For someone earning less than $10,000, the family income coming from child benefits will stay exactly the same as it was before. Not one extra penny is being added to the poorest of Canada's poor children. The only changes which take place add about $500 to families earning up to about $30,000. In other words, it is about $1.30 a day for poor families and lower income families in Canada.

That is not going to deal with the one million children who go to bed hungry at night. One dollar and twenty-five cents a day per family is not going to address that concern. Indeed, as the government's own officials have indicated, it is not even intended to deal with that problem. As I have said, the government itself is not even committed any longer to eliminating child poverty by the end of the decade.

In the process of introducing these changes, and an issue not mentioned once by the government spokesperson presenting this bill who, as has been noted, has a finance portfolio, not a health and welfare portfolio, we have had this bill introduced and presented not as a measure of welfare but as a measure of finance. Not once did the government spokesperson mention that this bill finally puts an end to universality.

The purpose behind universal family allowance, which is being dispensed with, ended in this legislation, is to recognize the important task of raising children by all families, regardless of their income levels. Yet this bill is saying to Canadian families that a large number of them are not to receive anything in recognition of their participation in raising children, in raising Canada's future. It is opposed by all groups working on behalf of children and families. It is the end of universality as is being produced here in this legislation.

• (1730)

Even if some families are going to be a little better off, and as I said some will be $1.25 a day better off, this government over the last few years has taken billions of dollars out of social programs and billions of dollars out of transfers to the provinces.

In my own province of Saskatchewan $518 million will not come to the province this year that otherwise would have. That $518 million is about the same size as the provincial deficit, in a small province with limited ability to raise tax dollars, with a small population, indeed a shrinking population. Here the government is taking $518 million out of the province of Saskatchewan and it is putting a few dollars back at the rate of $1.25 to lower income families.

It cannot be said to be progress when you take millions out and you put a few cents back. Many families in Saskatchewan and Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing do not have adequate resources to feed their families because they cannot get jobs. The unemployment rate is around 12 per cent. The government is telling those families they are not going to be better off; they are going to be worse off. They are not going to receive any assistance. They are going to be worse off in the end.

Let us look at one single instance. The government says that it is putting $400 million more into these child benefits, as I said, prorated to $1.25 a day per family, but it is taking $620 million out of social housing across the country. On that one item $220 million is lost to those Canadians at the low end of the economic earning capacity, who need some help to afford housing, to provide adequate housing for their families, housing which is too expensive for them in the private sector. Even on that one issue lower income Canadians are losing about $200 million; the difference between the cut to social housing and the extra money in the child benefits.

The federal unloading on to the provinces is costing Canadian families enormously and the federal government is just throwing a few cents their way in response to that. The federal support has been reduced considerably. Canadian families know that.

In spite of the attack on the resources of the provinces, there are some opportunities which have been taken. The three provinces with NDP governments, British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan, have all been able, in spite of the desperate financial situations they

have been in, to increase social assistance rates. They recognized the plight of Canadians living so far below the poverty line.

Let us look a little at what is wrong with what the government has done. It says that its new child benefits package is simpler, fairer and more generous, whereas in fact, as I have tried to show, it is none of these things.

First of all, it is not markedly simpler. There is a reduction of categories of sets of benefits from five to four, but this new system remains so complicated that the government, not individual families, will have to calculate the benefits.

As I have said, it is not fair. It does not provide to Canadian families with low incomes the ability to feed their children. It does not enable them to get out of the welfare trap, as the government tries to pretend it does.

What the government has done in this case is distinguish between the deserving poor and the undeserving poor. Whether or not children are poor is not a question of whether or not they are deserving. They do not become undeserving because they are members of a particular family or deserving because they are members of another family. Yet this government has decided that it would add $500 a year to working poor families, but not to families without the opportunity to work. With the costs of child care being anything upwards from $6,000 a year, the extra $500 clearly will not be of much assistance to those families.

It is said that the program is more generous. As I and the government's own officials have said, the poorest of Canada's poor children will be no better off at all under this program. Of course with deindexation, everyone who receives the benefits will become worse and worse off over time.

What did the government do to let Canadians know about its new child benefits package, even though it did not have much to work with? As I have said, the poorest will remain poor. It spent $500,000 on an advertising campaign to promote the new child benefits program. It spent $500,000, money which surely would have been better spent on feeding those hungry children.

What should we do instead? It is not enough just to criticize the woefully inadequate programs that the government puts forward. It is necessary to suggest some alternatives for the government, not that it will listen, it has not listened to any of the critics. So far it has not listened to those people who know how lower income Canadians have difficulty in getting by from day to day.

We must set the reduction of poverty as a realizable goal. We must fight for it. We must make sure that we work toward reducing poverty in Canada. Yet over the last 10 years, in the time that this government has been in office, there has been no decrease in the number of children living in poverty. That number is about the same as it was 10 years ago.

We have to get Canada working again. We have to place employment at the top of our list of priorities. We cannot continue to fight inflation by creating unemployment, as this government has done. We cannot continue to fight rising interest rates by creating unemployment. It is an immoral, unacceptable way of organizing our resources.

We have to put full employment strategies first. We have to make sure that we treat the creation of jobs as our number one priority. We have to also support that policy with adequate training programs, not for just 6 per cent of those people who are on unemployment insurance but for all Canadians so that they can become better trained and better able to cope with the needs of a modern economy.

We need a fair taxation system so that those who are richer and the corporations that make profits will pay their fair share of taxes. Canadians do not mind paying their fair share of taxes, but they do not like being treated unfairly. They do not like to see the Royal Bank or the big banks paying no taxation essentially, while their taxes are increased on a yearly basis. Every time the finance minister produces a budget, his hand goes into the pockets of ordinary Canadians. Yet tax loopholes for the rich and corporations continue to flourish. That is an unacceptable approach.

We have to try to stop poverty. This government has tended to allow poverty to take place and, indeed, through its economic policies to encourage poverty and then attempt to respond with band-aid solutions. We would be best off to invest in our children, to invest in our future and ensure that Canadian children do not

grow up in poverty and that they grow up with the basic necessities of life.

To summarize, we need full employment policies. To suggest as some on the other side would that this is impossible is only to close their eyes to countries across this world that have put employment first, to successful economies with low unemployment rates and low child poverty rates, too. For example, we could look to Norway as a country which could show us how to ensure our children do not live in poverty but are provided with the basic necessities of life. In Norway, the child poverty rate is 5 per cent. In Canada, we are dealing with one in six Canadian children living in poverty. There are examples to follow. There are other countries we can look to.

• (1740)

As I said, we need fair taxes so that we can find the revenue to provide for those who, for whatever reason, are unable to work. We need affordable, accessible, high quality, non-profit child care so that parents can go out to work. That is something the government has reneged upon only recently.

Canada's record among the industrialized countries in the world with regard to child poverty is better only than that of the United States. Only the United States is worse than we are. All other countries are better and it is time we looked to them for examples.

I will end on one rhetorical question. Do we not have the resources in this country to ensure that no children go to bed hungry? Surely we can organize our resources appropriately so that those children who will be our future have the resources they need, the food they need, the education they need. Can we not organize our resources so that can be done? Surely we can, if we have the political will.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, a point of order. We do not have a quorum.

And the count having been taken:

Madam Deputy Speaker: The quorum has been restored. Questions and comments.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to what was said by the previous speaker, and I would like to say that he made a very good speech in which he analysed the essential components of the family allowance policy. However, before that I also listened to the speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, and I was very disappointed that it was so simple, I would almost say simplistic, for a major debate on the universality of programs like family allowances.

I was surprised at his petty dollars and cents approach and his explanation that it was actually better for all concerned, when we know this entails an enormous loss in terms of vested rights many Canadian families have had for years.

Madam Speaker, I am sure that like me, you remember the universal family allowances program, a program that has benefited all Canadian families. Irrespective of income or marital status, this program was universal. Today, we are witnessing the end of the universality of family allowances, and you know as well as I do, Madam Speaker, that a program for the poor always ends up being a poor program. Every time we decide to change the rules of the game to give one group an advantage over another group, the losers are the people on the borderline.

The problem with this government proposal is that our tax system could be fairer. Members know as well as I do that those who earn more would normally pay more income tax and those who earn less would pay less. Consequently, things could be evened out at that level. However, they now want to decide arbitrarily, and this is supposed to be a measure by the Department of Finance, but basically, this marks the end of a truly universal program in this country. The government has done it again. It did exactly the same when it set a ceiling on old age security pensions, and today, in a matter of hours, another national institution, a program which the Prime Minister himself said was a sacred trust, will disappear.

I saw the Prime Minister with my own eyes at Patro Roc-Amadour in Quebec City, when he was on television, promising his mother I remember, it was the 1988 election campaign that he would never touch the universality of old age pensions. I know because some of my

colleagues were in that room and remember it very well. Again, he lied to us, and now family allowances are disappearing for all practical purposes.

I know that hon. members opposite would like to say that family policy is strictly an accounting operation. I know that we should have had a much more substantial debate before coming to that conclusion. Basically the whole Canadian social safety net which they are advertising, instead of spending money to have young girls sing "O Canada", that money could be much better spent to help children have school lunches or things like that. Obviously the government's priorities are misplaced and more and more we are forced to realize that this government's family policy is going nowhere.

After he solemnly promised a national child care program—I heard it too—the Minister of National Health and Welfare says it is out of the question. They went back on their word once more. Imagine, the major social programs about which Canada boasts around the world are being eroded one after another.

That is why when we see people traipsing around the world, trying to pretend to be virtuous, we should look at reality. We do not have to go very far. I am sure that in any primary school, you could find children who have not been fed because they are poor. The $1.04 a day under this program will certainly not be enough to feed them. It is not even enough for a bus ticket. We know very well that this program which the government would have us believe is an incentive and generous perpetuates child poverty. Even worse, it is just the beginning.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member knows very well that this period is for short comments and questions or comments on the previous speech and questions for the member who just spoke.

The hon. member has already been talking for over five minutes. Perhaps he could conclude with a question for his colleague.

The hon. member for Shefford.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, you guessed that I was coming to the questions, because that is just what I was about to do.

I wanted to ask my colleague if he does not find it indecent for a government to come with a bill like this without dealing with the fundamental issue in Canada and Quebec for taxpayers. I think removing the universality of social programs through the back door, using a Department of Finance that has a petty accountant's mentality—does the hon. member not find that dishonest? Is it not rather crooked of the government to have done it to old people and now do it to families? Is it not going back on its promises one by one? I think that the hon. member would have something to say about that.

[*English*]

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question. Clearly we share the same view regarding universality that the majority of Canadians share, and it is that we see the raising of children as a responsibility of all Canadian families. That should be recognized by the government on behalf of all Canadians.

After all, it will be those children who will pay the pensions for you, me, and everybody else and provide for our health care as they move into the work force and pay their taxes. If we do not respect them, if we do not honour them, if we do not recognize them then they are likely to be less prepared to provide us with pensions, health care and so on. Even in terms of self–interest it is a big mistake to attack universality.

Those programs of universal application of family benefits, the family allowance, some of that money goes into families which are a little wealthier. If we had a taxation system which responded well and in a progressive way, if we were taxed back much of that money, we would be able to recognize those families' contributions to the raising of children as something which is beneficial to Canada and we would be able to recover some of those moneys in terms of taxation.

• (1750)

By undermining universality and by increasingly turning our taxation system into a regressive system, we are undermining those roles on two accounts.

It is worth pointing out that all critics of social programs will tell you that once you remove universality you begin the process of removing the program altogether. That is what we are seeing here, the continual erosion over time, first of universality and now of social programs directed toward the poor.

It is also worth pointing out that by not encouraging those children of lower income families, by not ensuring that they attend school and can stay awake because they are well fed, we encourage a huge cost on our society. One study has suggested that the school drop-outs in one year, from 1989, will cost Canada $4 billion. There are suggestions that school drop-outs over a decade will cost $30 billion. Those are huge costs to society because we are not paying enough attention to our children.

Were it not for the government's refusal to look from the heart at these problems, to be compassionate and caring about the pain and suffering that its economic and social policies are causing Canada's low income children, perhaps it could look at it from an economic point of view, from a financial point of view, and see the huge costs that are being loaded on this country.

Madam Speaker, whether it be from economic or social reasons, it surely is necessary for this government to change its policies.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I consider it a great pleasure to support this legislation, Bill C-80, with regard to strengthening Canada's income assistance measures for children.

I have listened very carefully to some of my colleagues in the House and I just want to say at the very beginning that what we are talking about today is certainly a major change, I grant that; but it also is $2.1 billion in new money. This is new money that is going to the assistance of children. We are streamlining this system so it can be passed through to the families far more effectively. It is a lot fairer, it is a lot simpler and it is a lot more generous.

These really sweeping changes did not come about suddenly, they have been under review for years and years, both in the standing committees of this House and the other place down the hall. It was most interesting, if you chronologically go back, to note that the Prime Minister attended the United Nations meeting on the rights of the child and we ratified the Canadian position on children's rights on December 11, 1991.

Also, the standing committee on health and welfare had a report. I also would like to thank my colleague from Calgary North who through a great many meetings with various members of Parliament has gone through each and every area with regard to the benefits in assisting families, and we feel we have come up with a very good system.

When the Minister of Finance on February 25 brought in his annual budget for the present fiscal year, he tabled a white paper on the child benefit.

I noticed that some of my colleagues opposite were mentioning that there was no communication and no discussion with regard to the child benefit package with the agencies, various provinces and the Canada Assistance Plan people.

The department has sent out thousands of copies of the white paper to interested people and the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister of Finance have been talking to the provincial agencies right across Canada to review exactly what is in the benefit and looking for input.

I mentioned the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and I mentioned the budget that was brought down in February. I would also like to say that the Minister of National Health and Welfare brought down *Brighter Futures* a few weeks ago, which is a plan that deals specifically with children at risk.

We are all very worried about youngsters in poverty. We must be very careful to be fiscally responsible as well as socially responsible. In taking a strong look and in talking to people right across Canada we know that we must assist those who are high risk. That is indeed what the Minister of National Health and Welfare brought down.

He took the money, $500 million, and is utilizing it to target youngsters who are really at risk through prevention, through education, and through promotion. He is promoting through the various agencies, hospitals, clinics, and our aboriginal colleagues how to take care of oneself when one is pregnant, to cure the low birth weight of some new youngsters, and introduce more education for health protection gear for children's safety. We have also joined partnerships right across Canada. That is another element.

I am really glad to speak today because this tremendous change in our legislation represents the final one.

There were many areas of the old act that were causing us a great deal of concern. I would like to say that I believe that there is absolutely no doubt that the new child tax benefit put forward in the bill today is a significant advancement over the current system. In light of today's complex society, and we heard from the gentleman across the way that it is a complex society, the bill proposes enriched benefits which will be streamlined and be very responsive. It will better target the ones who need our help.

I did mention the two parliamentary committees and the member for Calgary North. The proposed benefit is going to be a single monthly payment for children under 18. It will generally be made to the mother. This new benefit is going to be based on family income reported in the most recent tax year. These single monthly payments will neither be taxed nor recovered at tax time. Those are two important changes so that families are going to keep in full what they receive.

There are two major components of the proposed tax benefit. The first is the basic monthly benefit that replaces family allowances, the dependent child credit and the refundable child tax credit. It includes extra benefits for children under the age of seven and also for children in large families.

The second major change is a new federally earned income supplement. This is very important. It is a federally earned income supplement that will increase the basic benefit by up to $500 per year for low-income working families with children. While we will maintain and increase our benefits for those people living on welfare we are going to give some added incentive to low-income working families. Today there needs to be an incentive for people to get out and work. It is most important.

The annual benefit is going to depend on family earnings, the number of children, and the age of the youngsters. It is going to prove to be a lot simpler and fairer.

• (1800)

The child tax credit will be made up of a base amount of $1,020 per year for each child with a $75 supplement for the third and subsequent children. The base amount is increased by a further $213 per year for each child under the age of seven if child care expenses are not claimed at the time.

The basic child tax benefit amount is going to be paid in full to all families with incomes up to $25,921. The benefit will gradually be reduced for those with incomes above that particular amount.

In addition, the $500 per year income supplement for the low-income working families is to be phased-in for families earning above $3,750. This supplement is going to reach its full and maximum benefit if family earnings are $10,000 or more. It will only be reduced when the family income exceeds $20,921.

It is very important and we can debate these things when it goes to the legislative committee. Let us look at what it means to the average Canadian family.

Under the new system a single mother with an income of $30,000 and two children over the age of seven would receive $153 a month in 1991. She will be better off by about $300 per year under our new system.

A mother with three children over the age of seven and a total family income of $22,000 in 1991 will be eligible for the basic amount of $261.25 plus an earned income supplement of $32.68 per month. Basically, this means she is going to receive $293.93 a month beginning January 1, 1993 and she is going to be better off by about $400 per year.

This new system is intrinsically a lot fairer. It is not based on individual income; it is based on family income. This is what Canadians have been telling us for years. It is targeted at those who need it the most. We have taken a look at the total system and we will target those people with lower and middle incomes. The assistance will be focused on the low and the middle income.

The child tax benefit will gradually be reduced with incomes above designated thresholds. Obviously the more money earned above a threshold, the benefit will slowly be reduced.

The entire benefit is going to be paid monthly, making it easier for families to budget. It will not be taxed and it will not be recouped at the year end. The benefit will be paid to the parent who needs it the most and it is a fundamental design of redoing the tax system.

I am not suggesting for one minute we are backing away from universality. What we have done here is become very fiscally responsible while being socially responsible. It is a new system which is more generous. It is $2.1 billion more generous than the current system over a five-year period.

The government has committed these new funds to assist families and it is going to assist over 2.4 million families. They are all going to have their benefits increased.

Some 2.4 million families are going to receive more benefits. Over two-thirds of those particular families have incomes under $50,000. No family below $50,000 is going to lose benefits.

Mr. Milliken: There is a whole bunch that won't get anything.

Mrs. Sparrow: The bill before us today underscores our commitment. The member for Kingston and the Islands does not seem to realize that some people at $50,000 a year with youngsters do need benefits, absolutely.

This is why out of the 2.4 million people whom we are helping with increased benefits nobody under $50,000 a year is going to lose. That is very important. The economic and fiscal statement starting in 1984 accompanying the agenda for economic renewal have been our key policies throughout the past five, six, seven, eight years.

The child and the elderly benefit consultations paper profiled a number of options for child benefits and it encouraged public participation. That is what we have taken into account, the public consideration.

In 1985, as I said, we had the parliamentary standing committee on health and welfare. We had another one that reported in December just past with regard to the social conditions and the poverty under which some youngsters in Canada and indeed some lower income families are living. We have taken into consideration all the recommendations that have been put forth.

We have to invest in our future, as my colleague from Saskatchewan mentioned. Children are our future. Day after day we see areas throughout Canada that need attention. I support many of my colleagues with regard to the need to attack poverty. It is very important.

The end result of an extensive review over the past five or six years and consolidation of the particular programs that we are putting into Bill C-80 today are of utmost importance to all Canadians. Once people see the system they will greatly appreciate it.

I thank the staff of both departments in charge of the implementation of the new program. We are working with finance as well as with health and welfare. It has been a monumental task that will be implemented only if this House along with the other House approves. It is going to mean the switching of some 3.7 million files in health and welfare for the new program.

The member mentioned that copies of the white paper had not been sent out. It was my colleague from Winnipeg who spoke earlier. I really want to assure him that information has gone out all across Canada dealing with this specific policy. In no way would we be implementing something that we did not have agreement on.

Poverty is a major issue. I know everyone in the House has heard the hon. minister address that specific issue. None of us should rest while there is one youngster living in poverty. We have also addressed the fiscal constraints we are living under. We have hard choices to make: to spend more money we could raise taxes, increase the deficit or cut other programs.

The Minister of Finance, as he so carefully worded it in his budget in February, made it extremely clear that it was through cuts in certain areas, in program expenditures, that he was able to recoup the $2.1 billion to put into this new child benefit package.

We have not increased the deficit for this. We have not increased taxes. Indeed what we have increased are the benefits to youngsters and we can all commend the Minister of Finance.

• (1810)

Some of us are well aware of the problems under the old system. There were delays in receiving the refundable child tax credit. Often families could not gain from any child tax benefit for a year. It was very inconvenient. Each benefit was delivered in an entirely different way, which meant that there were eligibility criteria for every particular program. This made it very difficult.

For the eight years I have been here—I am sure, Madam Speaker, you are well aware of this too—we have been told that there are certain higher income people who do not perhaps need the family allowance as much as the lower income people. We had inadequate targeting under the old system.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on all sides of the House at the legislative committee. I am sure there are some areas of the bill we can improve, but I am in support of Bill C-80.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being 6.11 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division at second reading stage of Bill C-289, an act to provide that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday in Public Service collective agreements.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

REMEMBRANCE DAY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Friday, May 22, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth) that Bill C-289, an act to provide that Remembrance Day be included as a holiday in Public Service collective agreements, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

• (1830)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Following the adoption of the twenty-fourth report of the Standing Committee on House Management on Wednesday, April 29, 1992, the division will be taken row by row starting with the mover and then proceeding with those in favour of the motion sitting on the same side of the House as the mover. Then those in favour of the motion sitting on the other side of the House will be called and those opposed to the motion will be called in the same order.

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

(Division No. 148)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Atkinson
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bélair
Bellemare	Berger
Bernier	Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Boudria
Breaugh	Brewin
Butland	Campbell (South West Nova)
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Casey
Catterall	Clancy
Comuzzi	Copps
Crawford	Desjardins
Dingwall	Duceppe
Duplessis	Fee
Ferguson	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Funk	Gardiner
Gauthier	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gray (Windsor West)	Guarnieri
Guilbault	Gustafson
Harb	Hughes
Johnson	Joncas
Jordan	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Koury	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Lapierre	Layton
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Littlechild
MacAulay	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan	MacWilliam
Maheu	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	McCurdy
McGuire	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Murphy	Nault
Nicholson	Nunziata
Parker	Plamondon
Plourde	Prud'homme
Riis	Rocheleau
Saint-Julien	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Speller
Taylor	Thompson
Vanclief	Van De Walle
Vézina	Vien
Volpe	Waddell
Walker	Weiner
Whittaker	Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—95

NAYS

Members

Bjornson	Blenkarn
Brightwell	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clifford
Cole	Cooper
Corbett	Couture
Danis	Della Noce
Dorin	Edwards
Epp	Ferland
Greene	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hudon
Jelinek	Jourdenais
Langlois	Lopez
Marin	McDermid
McLean	Oberle
Redway	Reimer
Ricard	Richardson
Shields	Siddon
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Tétreault
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vincent
Winegard	Worthy—46

PAIRED—MEMBERS

nil/aucun

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee of the Departmental envelope.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being 6.40 o'clock p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.40 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 2, 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): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 29 petitions.

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

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

REPORT OF CANADIAN GROUP

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): 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 Canadian Group of the Interparliamentary Union which represented Canada at the 87th Interparliamentary Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon, April 6 to 11, 1992.

• (1010)

There were four main issues debated at that conference: first, environment and development with special reference to the UNCED meeting forthcoming this week; second, the functioning of democracy with emphasis on economic development and the use of the peace dividend; third, the issue of AIDS; and, fourth and finally, a general debate on the political, economic and social situation in the world today.

FINANCE

14TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Finance on Bill C–74, an act to amend the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff, and the Excise Tax Act.

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

42ND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the 42nd report of the Standing Committee on House Management pursuant to Standing Order 114.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the report later this day.

* * *

BILL C–59

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin—Norfolk): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C–59, an act to amend the National Parks Act, with amendment.

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

* * *

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

CONCURRENCE IN 42ND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Madam Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 42nd report of the Standing Committee on House Management presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have leave to introduce the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave is not granted.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

PORT OF CHURCHILL

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, I have a petition signed by a number of Canadians from Churchill, Colonsay, Meacham, Viscount, Saskatoon, Ridgedale, Tisdale, Central Butte, Riverhurst, Lake Lenore, Tisdale and Richmond, B.C.

The petitioners support the use of the port of Churchill and basically urge the federal government to maximize the uses of the port with at least 3 per cent of Canada's annual grain shipments being shipped through the port of Churchill and to act immediately to maintain further development and promote the port to handle export in addition to grain.

While I have the floor, I should point out there is no grain committed to the port of Churchill at this time. It is time the federal government acted on this very important issue.

* * *

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): Madam Speaker, if Question No. 228 could be made an order for return, the return would be tabled immediately.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that question No. 228 be deemed to have been made an order for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent is withheld.

[*English*]

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

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, we have just refused to give our consent to what you asked. I would like to know now what the decision of the parliamentary secretary will be. Perhaps he will have to withdraw his motion.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As far as question No. 228 is concerned, consent having been withheld, it will not be made an order for return. All other questions will remain unanswered for today.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I would like to advise the House that it is my duty to report with respect to certain amendments that have been introduced relating to Bill C–81.

I also want to point out that a great number of these amendments came in yesterday. The table officers worked till early this morning. There has not been sufficient time for consultation which I regret but which I know hon. members will understand. I understand that there may be some comments after my ruling from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and I will hear those.

While that breaks from the usual practice, I think under the circumstances it is appropriate.

I am going to read the entire ruling. Then I will hear the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

There are 64 notices of motions standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage on Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

Motion No. 1 standing in the name of the hon. member for Churchill will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 2, 7, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55 and 59 standing in the name of the hon. member for Jonquière will be grouped for debate, with the vote on Motion No. 2 applied to Motions Nos. 7, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55 and 59.

[*English*]

Motion No. 3 standing in the name of the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 4, 5, 11 and 12 standing in the names of the hon. members for Annapolis Valley—Hants, Churchill and Papineau—Saint-Michel will be grouped for debate and voted upon as follows: (a) An affirmative vote on Motion 12 obviates the need for a vote on Motions 4 and 11 but requires a vote on Motion 5; (b) A negative vote on Motion 12 requires a vote on Motion 11; (c) The vote on Motion 11 will apply to Motion 4; (d) An affirmative vote on Motion 11 will obviate the need for a vote on Motion 5; (e) A negative vote on Motion 11 will necessitate a vote on Motion 5.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 6, 30, 37, 38, 46 and 49 standing in the names of the hon. members for Yorkton—Melville and Churchill will be grouped for debate but voted upon as follows:

(a) Motions Nos. 6 and 37 will be voted upon separately.

(b) The vote on Motion No. 30 will apply to Motion No. 49.

(c) The vote on Motion No. 38 will apply to Motion No. 46.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 8, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 47 standing in the names of the hon. members for Churchill and Yorkton—Melville will be grouped for debate but voted upon separately.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 9, 19, 36, 41, 48 and 57 standing in the names of the hon. members for Kingston and the Islands, Yorkton—Melville and Churchill will not be selected as they were moved, debated and negatived in the legislative committee which studied the bill.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 10, standing in the name of the hon. member for Jonquière will be debated and voted upon separately.

• (1020)

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 standing in the names of the hon. member for Churchill, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville will be grouped for debate, but voted upon as follows:

(a) An affirmative vote on Motion No. 13 will obviate the need to vote on Motion No. 14.

(b) A negative vote on Motion No. 13 requires a vote on Motion No. 14.

(c) An affirmative vote on Motion No. 16 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motions Nos. 15 and 17.

(d) A negative vote on Motion No. 16 requires a vote on Motion No. 15.

(e) The vote on Motion No. 15 will apply to Motion No. 17.

(f) Motion No. 18 will be voted upon separately.

Motion No. 20 standing in the name of the hon. member for Churchill will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motions Nos. 21, 22, 23 and 24 standing in the names of the hon. members for Yorkton—Melville, Kingston and the Islands and Churchill and of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will be grouped for debate and voted as follows:

(a) An affirmative vote on Motion No. 21 obviates the need for a vote on Motions Nos. 22 and 23.

(b) A negative vote on Motion No. 21 requires a vote on Motion No. 23.

(c) An affirmative vote on Motion No. 23 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motion No. 22.

(d) A negative vote on Motion No. 23 requires a vote on Motion No. 22.

(e) Motion No. 24 will be voted upon separately.

Motion No. 25 standing in the name of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 26 standing in the name of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader does not appear to affect any changes to the bill. As a consequence, it will not be selected.

Motion No. 27 standing in the name of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34, standing in the names of the hon. members for Annapolis Valley—Hants, Yorkton—Melville, Churchill, Jonquière and Papineau—Saint-Michel, cause the Chair some procedural difficulty. These motions appear to be going beyond the scope of the bill in dealing with the effect rather than the process of referendums. In my view these proposals exceed the principle established when the House gave second reading to the bill. In addition, Motions Nos. 32 and 34 were ruled out of order in the legislative committee which studied the bill. Regrettably, I must rule these motions out of order in accordance with Beauchesne's citation 698(1).

[*English*]

Motion No. 39 standing in the name of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 40 standing in the name of the hon. member for Churchill appears to infringe the royal recommendation in that it calls upon the government to expend public funds in order to assist the various committees. In this regard, I must rule the motion inadmissible, as it contravenes Beauchesne's citation 698(7).

Motion No. 52 standing in the name of the hon. member for Churchill will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 53 and 56 standing in the name of the hon. members for Papineau—Saint-Michel and Churchill will be grouped for debate but voted upon separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 58 standing in the name of the hon. member for Churchill will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 60 standing in the name of the hon. member for Churchill will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 61, 62 and 63 standing in the names of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and the hon. members for Yukon—Melville and Churchill will be grouped for debate and voted upon as follows: (a) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 61 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motions Nos. 62 and 63; (b) a negative vote on Motion No. 61 requires a vote on Motion No. 62; (c) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 62 obviates the need for a vote on Motion No. 63; (d) a negative vote on Motion No. 62 requires a vote on Motion No. 63.

[*English*]

Motion No. 64, standing in the name of the hon. member for Churchill will be debated and voted upon separately.

What I would usually do, and I am addressing my remarks to the House and of course the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, is propose Motion No. 1 to the House. I do so subject to hearing the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. If necessary I may reserve after argument and at that stage I would propose again that debate proceed on Motion No. 1 which should give the Chair a fair chance to give consideration to the remarks of the hon. member.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, of course I am interested in Your Honour's ruling. I can see that Your Honour spent some time on

this, or at least Your Honour's assistants spent a great deal of time on it.

I noticed the usual summary was not read at the end. I can understand why. I do not think it could have been much shorter than the ruling itself.

Notwithstanding that, I wanted to comment, Sir, on the ruling, and specifically Motion No. 34, standing in the name of the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel and the other similar motions concerning the effect of the referendum.

I realize that this motion was ruled out of order in committee and that that in itself might constitute grounds for Your Honour to rule it out of order here in the House, but I submit that the question of the effect of the referendum is fundamental to the consideration of this bill and it is one that needs to be addressed by this House and decided in this House.

The principal reason why the government has introduced this bill, and this reason has been the subject of debate both publicly and in this House over the last two or three years, was because of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord to allow for participation by Canadians in the writing of their own Constitution. The government engaged in a very extensive public relations program to involve Canadians in this process, starting with a royal commission, followed by extensive parliamentary hearings across the country on two occasions and has sought to involve Canadians in this process.

The purpose of this bill is to involve Canadians in the reform process and I note that the bill is entitled "an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada". I refer Your Honour to *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* and its definition of the word "referendum". It is defined as:

> —referring of political question to electorate for direct decision by general vote; vote thus taken.

In other words the purpose of a referendum, what a referendum is by definition, is a decision by the electorate on a question referred to the electorate. That is what a referendum is. This bill establishes a referendum procedure according to the title of the bill. Yet in substance there is no binding effect to the vote that is taken by a referendum held under this bill.

The amendments seek to give some binding effect, however limited—and I submit it is quite limited, but it is there—to the vote of the people in the referendum. It is a fundamental principle of a referendum that if you have one you are then bound by the result. It is a decision by the people, not a decision by somebody else. It is not for someone to interpret that decision and then make another decision. The decision is made by the people in the referendum.

What Motion No. 34, standing in the name of the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, says is that during the life of this Parliament, the Senate or the House of Commons shall not adopt any resolution authorizing a change in the Constitution where the amendment would be directly or indirectly contrary to the opinion expressed in this referendum by a majority of voters in Canada and in certain regions too. It deals with the majority vote of all Canadians.

• (1030)

It was suggested by the chairman of the committee, when he made a ruling on this issue in committee, that this imported some new notion on referendums into the bill. The argument was somehow made by the chairman in a way that frankly I could not understand that this made a change in the Canada Elections Act.

The referendum bill itself makes changes in the Canada Elections Act. It overrides it in certain particulars and it incorporates it by reference where it is silent on issues. The referendum is to be conducted in accordance with the practices set out in the Canada Elections Act. Clause 2(2) of the bill is the one that does it. It states:

> Unless a contrary intention appears, words and expressions used in this Act have the same meaning as in the Canada Elections Act.

There are other references in the bill that incorporate provisions of the Canada Elections Act.

With great respect, this amendment does not change in any way the effect of the Canada Elections Act. What will happen in this case is that results will be reported from the referendum vote on a constituency by constituency basis. The only reason that is being done is because the Canada Elections Act calls for reports on that basis and that is fine. In addition, there will be some additions made of those results on a constituency by constituency basis to provide for regional results to be released based on provincial results. I submit that it is done now anyway.

We frequently see in the press the tabulated results of the election added up to show the percentage of the vote obtained by each party on a national basis and on a provincial basis. Sometimes we see it even on a regional basis. Certainly we see it frequently on a provincial and national basis.

This is not a case of changing the reporting mechanism. This is a case of changing the application of the results by adding them up and putting them out in a different tabulation. However they will still be reported on a constituency by constituency basis for what that is worth.

The motion is not intended to alter the way in which the referendum will be conducted. It simply means that when a referendum has been held, when the people of Canada have expressed their will and pleasure with respect to the question put to them, the answer to that question will bind this government.

It will prevent it from proceeding with the resolution during this Parliament to change the Constitution in a way that is contrary to the expressed wishes of the people. It does not force the government to do anything, it forces it to refrain from doing certain things. It does not make the referendum totally binding but it does place some stricture on the government's freedom to act, depending on the answer given to the question that is put to the people.

That is the expressed title of the bill. That is what the government says in the title of the bill it has set out to do. It shows the word referendum. It was not the case of the government not using the other word. If it is a consultative process, the word is plebiscite. It could have used that word in the title but it chose to use referendum.

Apparently there is some problem in moving an amendment to this bill which makes this into something close to a referendum. I do not understand the problem. To me it is a fundamental issue. It has been a major public issue in Canada for a long time. It needs to be debated on the floor of this House.

The chairman of the committee in making his decision after some objections from some of the members of the committee said: "Mr. Ouellet, I can appreciate the political importance of this. It is a question that probably should be decided in the House".

I quite agree with the chairman of the committee. I submit that this amendment is very important. It allows for a debate on an issue that needs to be decided here. If it is ruled out of order and cannot be even discussed, then I think we have missed the most important aspect of what this bill was intended to do and that is to provide the people of Canada with a direct voice in the establishment of their new Constitution.

The whole question is optional. The bill only permits a referendum to be held. I submit that the question of the effect of the referendum, once held, is vital to the bill. It is fundamental to the bill. The title brings it in. The first clause brings in that vital importance. If we cannot move amendments that give teeth to that importance, that gives strength to the expressed intention of the government in using the word referendum, then I submit that the debate on the bill lacks substance, lacks importance and fails to deal with the cardinal issue that the people expect to be able to deal with if the question is put to them. That is, their votes will count for something instead of being another public opinion poll.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to the comments of my hon. friend. I know it is going to be a very interesting day if this is the beginning of it.

Before responding, I take the liberty, Mr. Speaker, to express my thanks to you and the table officers who laboured through the night to group these amendments and to rule on them. It is one of the more complex chores you have had to face and I appreciate what has been done.

My friend from Kingston and the Islands makes several points, the first of which, of course, relates to the dictionary definition of referendum. I am sure we will hear from others of a more scholarly bent on that subject as the debate progresses.

Very briefly, Sir, the word referendum has become common usage in Canada for a non-binding vote. That may not be precisely correct as to dictionary definition but it has become an acceptable part of our practice.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands referred as well to the regional implications of this particular Motion No. 34 that is before us for discussion. The issue before us is twofold: First, whether or not it is appropriate to bind the interpretation of the results of

the referendum; and second, if that is the case, whether it is appropriate to group them according to regions.

With reference to the first point, it is true that conventional election results in this country are first tabulated poll by poll and then constituency by constituency. Thereafter, of course, they are tallied as to numbers over all throughout the country for purposes of determining who would form the government. That is the practice with a conventional election.

When we come to a referendum, there is really quite a variety of interpretations that could be put on the results, but none of them ought to, in my submission, be binding.

First of all, it is moral suasion we are looking for in terms of the result of any referendum. It is to guide those who must amend the Constitution of the country. Under the Constitution, of course, it is up to this House and the other place and the legislatures of the 10 provinces to pronounce themselves on any constitutional amendments. That is the way the Constitution is written and that is the way it will be until it is appropriately amended, if it ever is, in section 41 and the other amending sections.

The basic thrust of this motion would be to have the results interpreted as to the various regions of the country, being the Atlantic region or the provinces of Ontario and Quebec as individual regions and western and northern Canada as a further region. This sort of interpretation, I gather, flows out of the original concept of the make-up of the Senate but bears no relevancy to the interpretation of a referendum result. It is true that it was recommended by the committee which I had the privilege of co-chairing, but within hours that recommendation was torn to shreds by at least two provinces of our country and, therefore, is a non-starter.

In conclusion, I would just simply say that what this bill is designed to do is to provide some guidance to this House, to the government and to the Senate as to what changes are acceptable to the Canadian people. It can be interpreted in a variety of ways. I submit, Sir, no legislation should hamper the interpretation of the result.

• (1040)

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I too wish to rise on the interpretation. I recognize the hard work that you, the clerks and others have done on this. I have two concerns.

The first one is with regard to Motion No. 31, standing in my name, which has been ruled out of order in that it goes beyond the scope of the bill. One of the concerns I have with regard to Motion No. 31 is that it does not bind the government. We are not, in this motion, binding the government. What we are giving is a clause explaining how the government would interpret the results of the referendum vote. In interpreting the results, it would have to look at the results nation-wide. It would have to look at them in each of the regions of Canada. It would also have to consider the vote by aboriginal Canadians. There is a reason for that.

Again, I want to stress the fact that we are not, in Motion No. 31, saying that it would be binding upon the government. What we are saying is that this is how it interprets it. What we were told in the press release and in the statements by the government that accompanied the original introduction of this bill was that some time during the process the Prime Minister would tell us how he was going to interpret the results. I do not think that is good enough for Canadians. They have a right to know what the rules of the game are. What better place to set the rules than the House of Commons itself as part of the legislation from day one.

It is very important that no region feel left out. I, along with a number of members of this House, come from western Canada. I think a referendum which passed in other parts of Canada but was defeated in the west would create a very strong regional antagonism within this country. The same thing would be true if Atlantic Canada were the only region of the country that voted against a referendum, or the province of Quebec, or Ontario.

As I mentioned earlier, we have also included aboriginal Canadians because a lot of the clauses will deal with aboriginal Canadians. In fact, because the nature of this bill now is such that it is open-ended, it could be used for any number of referendums in the future. We could have a referendum which was solely on the topic of aboriginal rights, aboriginal self-government and there would be

no tally of how the aboriginal Canadians in this country voted.

I would argue that this clause should be allowed to remain in effect. I would also like to remind this House of what the government House leader said and that is that he would allow amendments that went beyond the normal scope of the bill.

Mr. Edwards: If agreed upon.

Mr. Murphy: If agreed upon, that is true and that is exactly what we need now.

Mr. Milliken: If Harvie says yes.

Mr. Murphy: Is the government going to honour the word of the government House leader? Is he going to allow us to even present a motion to see if it is agreed upon?

There were members of this House who allowed this bill to go to committee on the basis of what the government House leader said, on the belief that there would be a number of clauses that could be addressed later on.

Mr. Lapierre: You were naive.

Mr. Murphy: Somebody said they were naive. That is a value judgment. There were members in this House who believed the government House leader when he said that when this bill went to committee and when it was dealt with at other stages that amendments would be allowed that went beyond the scope of the bill. This is one of those amendments that, strictly speaking, goes beyond the scope of the bill, but I think it is integral to the whole purpose of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, if you were to still rule that this was beyond the scope, I would then ask unanimous consent to have this motion called.

With regard to Motion No. 40, standing in my name as well, which calls for the government to establish funds to help those groups in Canada that do not have their own funding in order that they can participate in a referendum, I would make very similar arguments.

Unfortunately, one of the things this bill does is it lets money rule. If you have the money, you can spend up to $10 million and if that is not enough, you can form another group and it can spend another $10 million. If that is not enough—

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member for Churchill. I am listening very carefully to what he has to say and I will hear a few more members of course. I also ask the hon. member for Churchill to complete his remarks in an appropriate way.

I do want to caution members about getting beyond the procedural position that I have to determine, getting into substantive debate on the principle of the bill or other principles that may of course be of great importance to members or to the House.

I am bound to make a procedural decision, and I know the hon. member for Churchill would want to assist me in that.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I do not challenge your ruling and that is one of the difficulties.

I again refer to the government House leader's remarks. I will ask for unanimous consent later on for Motion No. 40 to be allowed to stand.

What I was trying to point out is that if we are going to set up a referendum system, especially with the very exorbitant limits that exist under this bill, certainly those groups, natives, women and others not having independent sources of funds should be able to receive some government funding. It will not necessarily be a large amount, but there should be some government funding so that they can have their input in a public debate.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief because, quite frankly, I want to associate myself almost entirely with the remarks of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, and in part with the initial remarks of the hon. member for Churchill. Therefore, I do not have to repeat everything.

I appreciate the Speaker's problem. I certainly also want to add my thanks to that of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and to compliment the staff in the Speaker's office and yourself, Your Honour, in getting these 64 amendments before us in some sort of order, along with all the problems presented in trying to rationalize some of these difficult points.

I am not going to get into the merits of the issue involved but rather look right at your ruling, Mr. Speaker. In mentioning the difficulty you had with Motions Nos. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34, quoting from your ruling, you felt that it was dealing with the effect rather than the process. As the member for Kingston and the Islands

mentioned, there is absolutely nothing in those amendments that affect the process of taking the referendum.

I go back to the bill and clause 3 which sets out very clearly that "where the Governor in Council considers that it is in the public interest to obtain by means of a referendum". I am not going to get into the semantics of referendum or plebiscite, but the bill is a referendum. Other people will be speaking about it and there is an amendment on the floor by the hon. member for Etobicoke about changing the whole name of the bill from referendum to plebiscite which will be debated.

That is fine, but just clause 3 itself. As a parliamentarian with years of experience, some of us who have seen the fundamental clauses—clause 3 is the fundamental clause—what does that say? That says that "where there is a matter of public interest, the referendum is going to obtain the opinion of electors". It goes on: "and direct that the opinion of electors be obtained by putting the question to the electors of Canada or one or more provinces".

All the amendments questioned in that paragraph of your ruling do is in effect the reflection of the opinion of electors. In effect, clause 3 does not restrict how that opinion is to be tallied; it is open-ended. I submit, as others have submitted, the fact that the amendments we are discussing here on this point segregate the tally. It has not affected a thing with taking the vote, but it segregates the result. It is not of such injury to the fundamental principle of the bill that it should be a rule.

In the straight parliamentary sense, as the member for Kingston and the Islands says, this is a fundamental question of the whole process. Surely if the government does not like the segregation of the votes on clause 3, the opinion of the electors, if it does not like to segregate them by province or in the nature of the aboriginal Canadians, then the government very well will turn the amendment down and vote for the bill as is presently tabled in the House. That is the whole nature of the debate.

• (1050)

To preclude that fundamental issue for debate by a procedural ruling, which your Honour has the grace and humility to admit causes you some procedural difficulty, flies in the face of the whole reason why we are here, with respect, Mr. Speaker.

Let us have the debate on all the issues here. Certainly one of the fundamental issues, whether you call it a plebiscite or referendum or opinion poll, is you have a bill trying to get the opinion of the electors of Canada. Certainly if you get the opinion of the electors of Canada, it is a very legitimate question for this Parliament to decide should it be an opinion that binds or restricts some action of the government, or should it just be like a polling result. That is legitimate. Obviously members of Parliament should be entitled to decide.

I must say, since my amendment also shares the same extension as some others that you have called into question, of including the aboriginal Canadians as an aggregate, you could have—and there is nothing in this bill to prevent it, as the hon. member for Churchill pointed out—a specific and, quite frankly, I think a very legitimate question. Not getting into the other questions that are going to be decided here tonight, I think a very legitimate question is whether we should even have a Senate. Let us leave that for the moment. Let us talk about the aboriginal Canadians. There is a very legitimate question that Canadians have not decided.

Perhaps some of the political leaders in the closed isolation of conference halls from coast to coast have recommended in principle, with no legal language, in effect what the inherent right of self-government means. That is a very legitimate question by itself. How would we dare have that if, in effect, the tally of the aboriginal Canadians who were so directly involved were not tallied?

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you giving me the time for this. I would submit in conclusion and summary that using, as I tried to do when I used to practise law, the very words of your opponent, and you are not the opponent, Mr. Speaker, but it is your judgment that we are having the opportunity and discretion through your

courtesy to comment on today because of the complexity of the issue, in effect using your own words, you say that it is dealing with the effect rather than the process.

I submit to you in the strongest terms that there is not one item of process affected in the amendments that you have challenged. Certainly if there was ever a reason to have the question before the House, this is a very proper question. Otherwise, there is an awful lot of wasted air that is going to be expressed on this whole issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, you mentioned this morning in your ruling that the amendments to the referendum bill relating to the double majority had caused you some procedural difficulty. You also said that, in fact, our motions were dealing with the effect rather than the process of referendums. You pointed out that they had been ruled out of order in the legislative committee.

If I remember correctly the operating rules for legislative committees, only members of the committee can table such amendments. I for one had drafted a number of amendments to the referendum bill and advised the legislative committee that I would be tabling the said amendments. I wanted the committee to be able to review them during its proceedings. However, because I was not a member of the committee, I was denied the right to formally table these amendments. That is when a member, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, suggested tabling them on my behalf, which was ruled out of order.

That being said, why have a referendum act? The answer is because a constitutional impasse is likely. Why did the government go to the trouble of setting up the Beaudoin-Edwards committee on the constitutional amendment formula and the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee on the constitutional process as a whole? We are in an impasse and Quebec has not yet signed the constitutional changes brought forward by Mr. Trudeau and his government in 1982. The truth of the matter is we have been in an impasse ever since and the failure of Meech just made matters worse.

Today, our government realizes that, should we fail to agree in the next few weeks, a referendum will be held in Quebec. There is a law in Quebec which says that a referendum could be held to ask people whether or not they want to pull out of Canada.

What are our responsibilities as parliamentarians and representatives of the Government of Canada? We must make some provisions to allow us, should the first ministers fail to agree, to ask the people of Canada to decide on the future of their country. It seems to me that Canadians should have their say before some premiers, because of their attitude, let the country split apart.

It is in this context that we are debating today a referendum bill which would, ultimately, give the Prime Minister the authority to go to the people if the provincial premiers fail to agree and refuse to present a resolution to their respective legislatures. All members in this House know it is only a consultation and cannot be binding on any government. The Canadian Constitution, since 1982, is very clear on the ways to change it, and referendums are not one of them.

If we have a Referendum Act with some rules, how is it going to work, to be perfectly fair from one end of the country to the other under our democratic system? It seems to me that it is fair and appropriate to ask the Speaker and this House that we indicate how the results will be interpreted.

In our history we had some instances, like the referendums of 1898 and 1942, where things were decided against the will of a province, Quebec, which voted no in both cases, since Parliament went along with the majority. Is it wise to fail again to provide for the effect of the referendum or how it must be interpreted?

I am going to give you an example. If we do not specify it, how are we going to tabulate the results? By province? Nationally? Who is going to decide? Let us assume a provincial premier had said: "I pledge that I will abide by the democratic decision of the people of my province." What would happen if, for example, the premier of Newfoundland had said that and people in that province would vote no? I will end on that.

Mr. Speaker: I understand the strength of the hon. member's arguments, but again, I think that his intervention, which is very smart and relevant to the issue, probably does not help the Speaker to solve a procedural matter.

I certainly appreciate the hon. member's fervour, and sympathize with him to a certain extent, particularly considering the importance of this issue for all Canadians. Again, I would ask each hon. member to be a little careful, particularly during the intervention, because my ruling is about a procedural matter.

Maybe the hon. member could conclude.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, Beauchesne's citation 698(1) reads as follows:

> 698. An amendment which is out of order on any of the following grounds cannot be put from the chair:
>
> (1) An amendment is out of order if it is irrelevant to the bill, beyond its scope or governed by or dependent upon amendments already negatived.

In your arguments, Mr. Speaker, you mention it is beyond its scope. Indeed, a referendum bill that has only a consultative value has a lot of moral weight. It is exactly in such a context that the referendum per se is significant. It produces an impact because it sends a message from coast to coast on one particular aspect of the Constitution and of the future of our country.

• (1100)

Let me go back to that example; we could face the same impasse as we did with Meech. A national referendum without a regional majority means that, for example, if you take one province only, if a premier says he is bound by the opinion expressed by the people of that one province, Quebec's veto is out. It would be impossible to obtain simply because one province would have voted against it. I think we would be wise to learn from our past experience in order to avoid another Meech.

That was also the opinion of an all-party parliamentary committee, the Beaudoin-Edwards committee, when it said: "In our opinion, the federal authorities would be well advised to table draft referendum legislation before Parliament. Referenda would be optional. Authorities could resort to this mechanism when they deem it necessary. In our opinion, given the heterogeneous nature of the country, the draft legislation should stipulate a double majority: a national majority and a majority in each of the four regions. Referenda would not amend the Constitution of Canada and the results would carry some political but no legal weight. The results would not be binding on the two levels of government, but would constitute an eloquent message".

It is in such a context, according to me, that we must establish the rules of interpretation of the referendum since they are part of the scope of the action we are about to take, if ever there is a constitutional impasse.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a small contribution to this morning's procedural debate. Like all my colleagues, I heard your ruling. I must say it bothers me when you say: "These motions appear to be going beyond the scope of the bill in dealing with the effect rather than the process of referendums".

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could convince you these amendments go to the very core of the referendum exercise and make it possible to interprete and analyse the results. If the Canada Elections Act were to say: Elections are held but results are not discussed; it does not matter who is elected; and the results are binding on no one, you would have a problem. At this point, I believe what will not be discussed in this House is the very essence of the bill. Instead of getting down to the nitty gritty, we are going to have a debate on externals.

Obviously, talking about how enumerators are appointed has no connection with the actual scope of this bill. If there can be no debate on the significance of the results, I insist this will be a futile exercise, as futile as the attempts of the hon. member for Jonquière to argue the benefits of a double majority. I have no desire to argue the merits of the amendments. The hon. member for Jonquière should have made those points in his own caucus or mentioned them to his leader. As far as the substance of the various amendments is concerned, I believe that preventing debate on these issues means preventing the House from doing its job. Whether we are for or against amendments proposed by our colleague, the hon. member for Churchill, or other members, I think by trying to avoid this debate we will get the kind of situation we had during the conscription crisis, and God knows these walls must be haunted by the ghosts of that debate.

If we do not discuss the fundamental issue of what this exercise means or how it could interpreted, the legislation becomes meaningless. Mr. Speaker, without wishing

to cast doubts upon your wisdom, which is proverbial, I know that provided there is unanimous consent, you would agree to let us discuss substantive issues.

I will argue not the merits but the general substance of these amendments and I move for unanimous consent to agree to a real debate on these fundamental issues.

[*English*]

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with other members who have thanked you and the officers of the House for having worked through the night to group these some 64 different amendments, bearing in mind that those are amendments that are in addition to the ones that we made last week in the legislative committee. It shows how much work is having to be done in such a short time as the result of important amendments being made to very important legislation for which we have waited quite a long time to have before the House.

So to you and others who have tried to bring order to this process, it is very helpful.

I would like to particularly direct comments to your interpretation with respect to Motions Nos. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, and 34, all of which have to do with the effect of the referendum.

As you have explained to us, these amendments, all having essentially the same purpose, to make the results of the direct vote by the Canadian people have some consequences, give you procedural difficulty. As you state, these motions appear to be going beyond the scope of the bill in dealing with the effect rather than the process of referendums.

That of course is a problem created as the member for Kingston and the Islands, the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants, the members for Jonquière and Churchill, and others have referred to with respect to the title of this bill and the word that appears throughout, mainly referendum.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader in addressing you on this point, Mr. Speaker, did draw attention to the fact as he stated it that the word referendum has come into common parlance or common usage in the country to mean any kind of direct vote.

Certainly at a couple of levels, at least in a couple of provinces, that is the case. The 1948 Referendum Act of Newfoundland contained nothing in its provisions that said what the results had to be, nothing to indicate that they would be binding or they would lead to anything, in fact is a plebiscite.

Indeed the excellent statute in the province of Quebec, *la Loi sur les référendums*, is a model of contemporary statute on this point but it, as well, uses the word "referendum" for what in the main are non-binding votes.

It is true that term has been used in a couple of provinces, but I submit to you for your consideration on this point the fact that it has never been confused in this place. The Parliament of Canada when passing the Prohibition Plebiscite Act, 1898, clearly envisaged the process and the consequences and used the word plebiscite.

Again, when Parliament passed the Dominion Plebiscite Act, 1942, it was the practice of Parliament to call the plebiscite by its name, plebiscite.

I submit that the procedural difficulties that you find flows from the ambiguity that has resulted with the government using the word referendum in an act which in substance only talks about a plebiscite.

I am not going to anticipate now the debate that will come later on my amendment No. 3, where I propose that we in fact change the title and the terms from referendum to plebiscite throughout which would certainly bring clarity if that is all that the substance of the bill is to be—

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if I may be able to assist the hon. member and other hon. members.

I am going to hear the remainder of this intervention which is not only very interesting but is of historic significance from a member who, I think it is common knowledge in this House, has spent a great deal of time on it. One of my difficulties here is that an argument as to whether or not this should be called a referendum or a plebiscite does not help me very much. If a statute calls it a referendum, spells out what its effect is, that is the statute and that is the way it is passed that is, of course, what we would have to accept no matter whether the word is referendum or some other word.

• (1110)

That takes nothing away from the general debate as to how the word should be used, but the fact is that in the proposed law which we are debating, while the word referendum has been used it also, at least in the form as presented to the House at the moment, does tie that word with certain implications. All I am saying is that a debate on the definition of the two words does not get me very far ahead procedurally.

Mr. Boyer: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your point and I understand your dilemma. Perhaps, your attention has been somewhat taken by another member. As I was saying on this very point, in addressing it, I did not look to anticipate now in addressing your ruling, Sir, the debate that will come later when we are dealing with Motion No. 3 standing in my name.

The point I was making and I will continue to conclude with is that the dilemma of a procedural nature that you face flows from where you say: "In my view, these proposals"—I am speaking of these six amendments—"exceed the principle established when the House gave second reading to the bill". It is from that interpretation that you invoke Beauchesne's citation 698(1). I think there is ambiguity as to what principle the House established in giving second reading. The bill that is before you and before this House at the present time uses the word referendum throughout.

On two previous occasions when Parliament enacted similar legislation in this area it chose, as a matter of principle, to call it plebiscite. There is ample Canadian evidence and historic fact in legislative history to show that when Parliament is dealing with a matter like this, words do have meaning and those are the meanings of the words.

Therefore, the interpretation you have given, which effectively rules out the possibility for debate here in the House of Commons as to the consequences of a process to involve the people in constitution making and constitution amending, I would invite you to reconsider, in light of the comments made by a number of members. If we cannot have this issue clearly addressed here on the floor of the House of Commons and resolved here, then where and when will it be resolved?

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise another amendment you have ruled on and which I did not have a chance to deal with earlier. It is my Motion No. 19. In your ruling you indicated it had been dealt with by the committee.

I will read my motion and I will also read the issue that was dealt with by the committee that I believe was substantially different and, therefore, my Motion No. 19 should be allowed to stand.

Motion No. 19 says it must be passed by an affirmative vote of 60 per cent of the members of the House, with or without amendments.

The motion that was defeated by the government in committee said: "Sixty per cent of the members of the House present and voting". My motion deliberately setting out a criteria which called for 60 per cent of the total membership of the House to vote for a referendum question, believing as I do that a referendum question should have the support of more than one political party in this House and there should be substantial support for that resolution before it is sent to the people of Canada. Therefore, I made the deliberate decision to make it 60 per cent of the total members of the House, not the motion that was defeated in committee which was 60 per cent of those who happened to be there when the vote takes place.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank all hon. members for their courtesy this morning in the interventions that they have made. Also, I ask the House's co-operation on future matters. Keep in mind that, as much as possible because of our consultative approaches, and trying to avoid having to argue these matters—I use the word argue in the best sense of that word—subsequent to the Speaker, the Chair is having to put the ruling to the House.

However, these matters in this particular case are, as I said at the beginning, brought to bear on us because of a great number of amendments that came in at the last minute. We did the best we could with them. I have indicated to the House that I shall take into account what has been presented to the Chair over the last hour and report back to the House as soon as possible.

I might say to the hon. member for Churchill that I will look particularly at the last point that he raised. I will think with great care on the first point that he raised as well.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I know there has been some extensive

debate with regard to the procedural arguments of some of the amendments which did come in late last night and there was not an opportunity for consultations. I do not wish to be long in my intervention, but concerning Motion No. 34 by my colleague, Mr. Ouellet, in terms of the effect of a referendum, I realize there had been some discussion at the committee stage with regard to this kind of amendment. I believe that there has been, and I stand to be corrected, a tradition and an understanding within this House that even if the amendment were defeated in committee or ruled out of order based on procedural grounds, the Chair could allow this amendment to go forward and to be adjudicated by the members after having a reasonable debate within the House if it were found to be of an exceptional significance.

The regional majorities, as contained in that particular motion, are of exceptional significance and ought to have the opportunity to be debated and to be heard by all members from whatever political stripe, regardless of their political allegiance to party or to non-party.

It is my understanding that Motion No. 34 is very germane to this debate on allowing the Government of Canada the power to have a referendum in order to consult with the people of Canada. It would be a grave mistake on the part of the Chair if members of this House were not given a full opportunity in the debate to discuss the contents of that particular motion which we believe, both at this time as well as in subsequent years, could play a major role in constitutional renewal and, more important, in uniting Canadians under a federal system.

I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity late in the morning to intervene on Motion No. 34. I would hope that the Chair would give this serious consideration in view of the exceptional significance that members in this House would associate with the regional majorities as contained in Motion No. 34.

Mr. Speaker: We have been at this for a long time and given the circumstances members would probably agree that the Chair has been generous. I am going to reserve on these matters raised and I will try to come back to the House as soon as possible.

In the meantime I will propose Motion No. 1 to the House and I will make every effort to get back to be of assistance to members, taking into account the usual exigencies of debate.

• (1120)

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, on a very short point of order. Several times it has been mentioned that these amendments came in in the last few minutes. All I am going to do is point out, as a point of order for the record, that they came in in the last few minutes and we all had to work overtime because of the invocation of that interesting rule 53(1) which cut off the normal time for preparing it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member raises an interesting point. However, the rule was applied and the House did decide.

I do ask the indulgence of the House to allow me to retire and reserve and come back to the House as soon as I can.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, nothing prevents me from turning to you since you are now replacing the Speaker. In view of the fact that the Speaker is reflecting on the amendments or suggestions made by hon. members about the different amendments that we could consider, could we obtain the consent of the House to await his answer so that we could debate this legislation knowing that we are speaking on the substance of the bill, not just on some procedural items? That is the point my hon. colleague from Shefford was raising a moment ago. That would have a major impact on the arguments we would like to bring forward in this rather important debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Speaker has listened carefully, as you would surely agree, to all the arguments expressed by hon. members concerning certain clauses of the bill. He has decided that nothing prevents the House from debating other clauses at this point and suggested that we propose Motion No. 1 to the House, which I will call immediately.

[*English*]

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-81 be amended by deleting the title and substituting the following therefor:

"An act to provide for a referendum on the Constitution of Canada".

He said: Madam Speaker, I raise this motion right off the top because it speaks to the concern many Canadians have with the bill.

Originally the government came up with the idea of having a bill that would allow for referendums over a three-year period. Later on, when this matter went to committee, it was further amended to say that at the end of three years a committee of the House and perhaps of the Senate would look at this matter and decide if we are going to have referendums from then on.

A lot of people have been convinced that we need a referendum on this particular constitutional situation that we find ourselves in at the present time. A lot of people believe that across this country. One of the reasons that we have this legislation going through the House and through committee stage with a fair amount of haste is that people believe this legislation must be in place in case we have a referendum or a plebiscite, whatever we decide to call it at the end of the day, in order to deal with the constitutional situation we face at this time.

I can agree with those sentiments, that we do need legislation in case a referendum is to take place. I do not see why in this legislation, which is being rushed through and pre-empts the work of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, should have a long life. Why should we say this legislation should be in place three years, six years, eight years, nine years ten years down the road?

If we need legislation to enable the Government of Canada and the Parliament of Canada to authorize the legislation this fall, let us pass legislation that does just that. Do not bind us for the next three, eight, nine ten years. The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore has a private member's bill calling for enabling legislation for the purposes of referendums and plebiscites.

That is the way we should go. We should have actual legislation establishing referendums and plebiscites if that is what the House decides. To use a piece of legislation which was introduced to deal with one specific situation and make it wide open for the future is unfair.

Spending limits, which are being addressed in this bill, are being done quickly on the assumption that we have to have something that is charter proof in case we have a referendum this fall. Why should we pass legislation now that says these same rules and regulations will be in effect for the next three, four, five or who knows how many years in the future?

That is my concern. If we want legislation authorizing a referendum, that is what this legislation should do. Do not make it wide open. Do not use this as a back-door approach to allow all sorts of other constitutional referendums in the future. I would think that we are going against the whole idea of setting up a special committee to look at electoral reform if we do that.

We are saying that this House has to rush the legislation in because of something that we have to do for this fall, and at the same time we are saying that legislation will stay in place potentially forever and a day.

If the government really wants legislation and really wants rules that are there for this fall's legislation, this fall's potential referendum, that is what the legislation should do. That is not what is happening at the present time.

I fear that what the House passes in haste now will come back to haunt us two or three years down the road. We do not know what type of constitutional issues will be facing us two or three years down the road. We do not know what the government of the day may decide to take to the people in order to have a constitutional amendment.

We do know that the government in its wisdom or lack thereof set up these rules for this referendum. If it wants to set up rules for future referendums, that should be a different piece of legislation and it should act accordingly.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I am in sympathy with the gist of what the member for Churchill has said regarding the importance of having on the statute books of the country in general enabling legislation for direct voting, just as seven of the provinces have.

His amendment here is focusing on the fact that he wants to see this simply for a one-time vote and not be kind of an uncertain, open possibility for succession of direct votes on constitutional amendments.

With respect to the last part of the member's comments to the House, I would invite his reconsideration of section 40 of the bill as it now reads. Following the amendments we made last week in legislative committee, which say this act comes into force and shall be reviewed and reported on, any recommended changes in the act by a committee of the House are designated for that purpose within three years from the act's coming into force.

It would be helpful for the members considering the remarks he has made to keep in mind that we now have created by the wording of section 40 the distinct reality that there will be, following a national plebiscite on the constitution, a parliamentary committee that will be struck to review the exercise and to make recommendations back here as to how and to what extent and what nature of changes ought to be made in the bill and in the act to make it perhaps the permanent legislation that he and I both have spoken in favour of.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I am very surprised that the hon. member for Churchill has moved this amendment.

I am surprised in one sense and, having witnessed the proceedings in the committee, I should not be. I thought the New Democratic Party would support referendums in principle and agree that referendums are very useful as means of consulting the people and giving the people an effective voice.

• (1130)

The public discussion that has taken place in Canada in the last period of time has focused on the need for the public to be directly involved in constitutional decision making.

We have had lots of consultation. Members of the New Democratic Party have served with our members and with members on the other side on parliamentary committees that have consulted extensively with Canadians. My over-all impression of the result of that consultation has been that Canadians say they want more voice in this.

We have announced that a referendum is a way to consult and allow Canadians a direct voice in decision making. We are prepared to push that as a means of ensuring that Canadians have a voice. We feel it is important that this be allowed for.

I do not know why the hon. member for Churchill would seek to restrict this procedure to a one time event. Perhaps the situation is that some members of Parliament are very distrustful of the general public and its ability to make rational decisions. I do not share that view. Members of this party generally do not share that view. We think there are issues the public is fully competent to make decisions on, major constitutional changes being one of them.

This bill does not require a referendum to be held. It is merely a machinery for one to be held if the government decides to proceed with a referendum. That is one of the criticisms we have made of this bill. One of the amendments we sought to introduce in committee was to force a referendum on this issue and that was defeated. That is one of the problems we face. We think it should be addressed in this bill, not something that is set up as a one time thing and then thrown out the window.

I hope the hon. member would reconsider his position. I hope members who are distrustful of the public and its ability to make intelligent and capable decisions would get over this mistrust and allow for this procedure to operate. It could be very effective. It allows for the participation the public is demanding in the Constitution amending process.

With regret I feel that I cannot support this amendment.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Madam Speaker, I too have concerns with the amendment, although when I first saw the bill I shared some of the views of the hon. member for Churchill.

Upon reflection and as the constitutional conferences have moved down to the stalemate they are presently in, I do see merit in the government having the machinery, as the member for Kingston and the Islands has said, to have a referendum process and maybe several referenda and/or single questions.

Without repeating everything that has already been said on setting up this whole machine, we know how difficult it is to get any bill through this House, especially a bill that touches so closely the very core of the country as a Constitution and a referendum or a plebiscite that is going to give an expression on the Constitution.

There is wisdom as a potential, as a piece of machinery that the government will have if the present stalemate is not resolved and a consensus comes up in a full-blown package from sea to sea. At the present time the odds on that are quite long. There will have to be decisions made.

I for one, as I have already expressed here yesterday on a procedural point, feel that the Canadian people can accept these questions. They all have been saturated with the issues for months now. The constitutional cavalcade has now come to a grinding halt. We are coming out of the conference rooms. It is time to let the people into the decision making.

I can see this bill giving potential power to the government to clarify some of the stumbling blocks that are perhaps presently preventing a consensus. Certainly a referendum on the very fact if we want a Senate and the very questionable referendum on if we want an undefined inherent right to aboriginal self-government are two things which we could not do with the amendment of my hon. friend for Churchill. It would be too restrictive. It would certainly be a waste of taxpayers' money to go through this procedure to set it up on one occasion and perhaps not have it there for other issues that might have to be resolved.

I too could not support this amendment.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Madam Speaker, I understand the purpose of the hon. member who moved this motion when he explains that he would like to restrict the title of the bill to a single application or use. This bill is so unacceptable and the rules for public consultation that go with it are so undemocratic that it should be used at most only once and then erased from the statute books of the Parliament of Canada.

In fact, I do not think that the hon. member's purpose can be achieved through his motion, since in any case, this bill cannot be legitimized just by changing the title. Changing the name will not change the unfairness and total unacceptability of this bill, which is illegitimate both in its principle and in its rules of operation. The principle of it is illegitimate for Quebec, of course. Many people do not know that for the past two years, a very broad movement has swept Quebec so that Quebecers can decide on the real issue which is at the heart of the political situation. The real issue which explains the political crisis that Canada is going through and is at its root is whether Quebec will be sovereign or not. That is the real question. People are trying to avoid it in all sorts of ways. Changing the title of a bill or restricting it to a single exercise will not hide reality.

The reality is that Quebec has determined, socially, politically and even judicially, to make a decision next October on its future sovereignty. The Quebec National Assembly even passed a law to this effect, which obliges the government to hold a referendum. Things are not going in a way that suggests that the Government of Quebec and Quebecers wanted to dodge the issue and avoid the deadline, as if they did not want to face reality and make a decision. On the contrary, everyone in Quebec is preparing for this referendum, which will be held under a Quebec law that has already existed for a dozen years. Bill 150, which the Quebec National Assembly passed in June 1991, requires holding the referendum soon.

It is obvious that this bill is meant to short-circuit the political decision that Quebec wants to make and substitute for the democratic rules of the Quebec Referendum Act totally unacceptable rules which are odious in many respects and which many members here, including government members, have denounced. Of course changing the title does nothing about that, especially since it would be strange to say using it only once is less serious than keeping it in the statutes of the Canadian Parliament, since it is to be used only once. What is it to be used for that one and only time? It is to be used to decide the future of Canada and the future of Quebec, as though that were not important, as though using this iniquitous, unacceptable law were futile and insignificant because it is for something as minor, trifling and unimportant as the future of a western country deciding Quebec's future.

I submit this motion has no real significance and does not alter the very basis of the discussion that we are to have today. As far as we are concerned, of course we will vote against it.

[*English*]

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I am looking at the title and the motion that has been brought forward, Motion No. 1, to change the title.

As far as I am concerned whether we have one referendum or many referendums it is a question of whether they are binding or not binding in the first place. Bill C-81 does not bind the Government of Canada. Therefore it is a motion that I cannot support.

On the other hand, I have been listening to the member for Lac-Saint-Jean and I agree with him that it is a fundamental problem. We have provinces that have referendum legislation. It has to be dealt with in that respect. The provinces have to decide what is good for them. Therefore from my point of view this bill is not good enough for Canada and it is not good enough for the provinces.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, after having listened to the arguments of the member for Churchill, I have strong reservations about his amendment. Essentially, his argument is that this legislation is unfair, sometimes antidemocratic and we should not keep it. Let us do a job once, since we are dealing with the issue of Quebec and the Constitution, but after that, let us make sure that it disappears from the Canadian political scene.

• (1140)

In other words, the House is told to do a dirty job quickly and then forget about it as soon as possible. Consequently, I find the member's argument to be very very dangerous, especially when we are discussing a bill that would have consequences, at least political ones, on the fundamental law of the land, that is the Constitution.

If there is one element with which we have to be very cautious, vigilant and democratic, it is precisely the fundamental law of the land. Just think, any country could make small violations of the democratic principle regarding its Constitution and then claim to act fairly regarding everything else. In fact, we are fundamentally undermining the credibility of the process.

As regards the other aspect, I believe that the member for Churchill should instead have proposed an amendment to change the name of this act and call it the Prime Minister's lifeline, or something similar. This would have been a much more appropriate title, because his proposal to call this legislation an act to provide for a referendum on the Constitution of Canada could, in my opinion, mislead Canadians. In fact, we all know that this referendum act has nothing to do with the Canadian Constitution.

We are all bound by the Constitution which provides that the only way that the Canadian Constitution can be amended is through resolutions before the legislated bodies. There is no other way. To make Canadians believe they are the ones who will amend the Constitution through a referendum is just a smoke screen.

Therefore, the foundation of this whole process is undermined because we know that it is strictly a futile political exercise from a constitutional point of view. More importantly it is a political rescue attempt for those who will want to use it and wrap themselves in the Canadian flag.

We should call a spade a spade. I sincerely regret we did not have more time to propose amendments, given the offhand manner used by the government to put an end to procedures. It is obvious that we could have proposed an amendment to rename the legislation an act to rescue the Prime Minister I believe this title would have been more appropriate and more eloquent.

Needless to say that when the member for Churchill asks us to support his amendment, he is not the least worried about the fact that this legislation has but one objective, namely to bypass the provincial premiers. It is fundamental in a federation such as ours; it is fundamental when you think about the initial agreement of this federation. This Parliament is the result of an agreement signed by two nations. Now the government wants to replace the agreement reached by those two nations with a kind of tyrannical power of the majority.

I am convinced our fathers never thought that one day this agreement between two nations, which was signed in good faith, would be replaced by a process such as this one. It is obvious the notion of equality for the various groups was very much in the mind of those who shaped our Constitution. It is obviously not acceptable to now try

to replace the clauses of this fundamental agreement by a phony referendum act.

I could also have suggested another title, which might be even more appropriate. That is an act on the big opinion poll. If you listen to the government spokespersons, they will tell you that this is only a consultative process. The one thing that those in this House who know something about polls can tell you is the fact that $100 million is a bit expensive for a big opinion poll.

Personally, I think that we could have passed a law providing for the hiring, for example, of Allan Gregg to conduct a national poll and find out what the population wants. This would have been a lot cheaper and I am convinced that the Prime Minister would have obtained all the results that he needs.

In this exercise aimed at trying to give a new definition to the act, the amendment proposed by the member for Churchill has little to do with reality. I would like to quote a colleague of the member for Churchill, who is supposedly a great champion of the principle according to which this legislation is unacceptable. I am talking about the member for Chambly. I will talk on his behalf since he is not taking part in this debate right now. He said that this exercise was an undemocratic fraud. I believe this could have made an interesting title, something like an act on the undemocratic fraud. Indeed, I think this could also have been a very appropriate title.

I think that would accurately describe the content of this bill, because any casual observer would notice something is not quite kosher here. Any democrat looking at this bill would say: "This legislation lets the government do just about anything". Any democrat who remembers what happened during the referendum in Quebec would say: "Good heavens, where is the yes committee and the no committee?" Questions, questions. The Chief Electoral Officer tells us there could be as many as 3,000 or 4,000 committees. There would be the yes, the no, the yes-no, the maybes, the maybe-yes, the maybe-nos. It is mind-boggling.

I am very concerned that no appropriate definition was found for this exercise. I am thinking of another title that could have been used, like "an act to sabotage the Quebec process". I think that would have accurately described the purpose of this bill. After all, a title is supposed to indicate to the person who reads it what the bill is all about.

In other words, I would have voted for an amendment like "an act to sabotage the Quebec process" or "an act to kneecap Quebec". I think my colleagues and I would have voted for that kind of title.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): We would have supported the title.

Mr. Lapierre: We would have voted for the title, obviously. I think the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was right to intervene, because you cannot be too careful around here. With a title like that, it would have been obvious what this legislation is trying to do.

Madam Speaker, I am sorry I will have to vote against the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Churchill. He should have consulted his colleague from Chambly, who is supposed to come back in a few days to take part in this debate. Thank God for the newspapers in this country, because now I know the hon. member for Chambly is against this legislation, and I would not have known if I had not read *La Presse* this morning. Incidentally, it was reported in *La Presse* that the hon. member for Chambly was asking all Quebec members to act as one block. My goodness, the hon. member for Chambly is starting to—

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): He is starting to get ideas.

Mr. Lapierre: —get ideas. I hope this is not an attempt at a merger however, he was asking for a block. I am sure the hon. member for Chambly included the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata, for instance, who I am sure feels a particular concern here. In any case, he was asking for a block against Bill C-81 on Canadian referendums because of—this is very important—apprehended antidemocratic jargon, and I am delighted to speak on his behalf.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Is that parliamentary?

Mr. Lapierre: Is apprehended jargon parliamentary? I think so. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, a veteran of these precincts—

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): He is nodding.

Mr. Lapierre: —and our own Jean-Marie Laurence, says it is quite all right.

According to *La Presse*, at a press conference to be held this morning—so that is why he isn't here, that's where he is.—Quebec's only NDP member will call on his Liberal and Conservative colleagues to put pressure on Prime Minister Mulroney. It does not say so in the article, but I think he had the hon. member for Jonquière in mind. I think he was counting on the hon. member for Jonquière to be a major influence on the Prime Minister of Canada.

This morning, the hon. member for Jonquière made an excellent speech for his caucus, but unfortunately his caucus was not here. It did not want to listen.

Now the hon. member for Chambly is in Montreal for this press conference while all this is going on in Ottawa. I realize he is missing out on something. I must say—

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is fascinating to hear this stream of consciousness, but I would ask the Chair's indulgence in applying the rules of relevance.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sure the hon. member will be very careful to confine has remarks to the various subjects before the House today. The hon. member has exactly seven seconds left.

• (1150)

3 **Mr. Lapierre:** Madam Speaker, I will use those seven seconds to say that I will vote against this amendment, be it regretfully.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, as much as I believe in Murphy's law, I must oppose his amendment. The effect of this amendment would be to change the word referendums to a referendum in the title. While that may seem minor in its implications, it is major in its effect.

Bill C-81 before us is enabling legislation which would permit one or more federal referendums. I am not sure whether it is what his party has in mind, but what the hon. member has in mind is a one-time bill permitting only one referendum.

The proposed change is not in keeping with the intent of the bill. In practical terms, it is conceivable that a referendum would take place and that the results of that referendum and other consultations might indicate certain changes in the constitutional proposals were called for. Then it would be appropriate, obviously, to hold a further referendum and the effect of my friend's amendment would be to forestall that.

The alternative, of course, would be the necessity of passing another bill to enable another referendum to take place. It would not be appropriate, once having had one referendum not to have another if there were substantial changes to the proposals. For that reason, I recommend voting against the amendment, as I will do.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, I just have a short response to the parliamentary secretary.

It seems to me from all the press clippings I have read and all the speeches I have heard from the Prime Minister and others, the intent was to have just one national referendum. All this motion does is make clear what the Prime Minister has been telling the people. There will be a national referendum and not two, three, four, five or six referendums, if a decision is made in this country to have a referendum in the first place.

If there is a positive decision to have a referendum, all the chats we have had and all the comments we have heard from the government across the way is to have that one referendum on the package which would take place right across the country. All this motion does is to make it very clear in the title of the bill that there shall be a referendum, singular, not referendums, plural.

The other point is that in the last 100 years in this country we have only had two national referendums. I would say, God help us if we need two in the next few months. I think the government should just put in the bill what it has always signalled to the country, that it is not planning on two or three referendums, it is planning

on one referendum if, indeed, there is even going to be one. That might not even happen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Madam Speaker, we are getting into an endless discussion. The first motion presented by the hon. member for Churchill, which would change the title of the bill and call it "an act to provide for a referendum on the Constitution of Canada" instead of "referendums", suggests the member for Churchill considers this bill to be undemocratic, unacceptable and just a strong-arm job that this government wants to do on Quebec by passing this bill. It is meant to be used only once.

You know, when I was in business, I had a men's clothing store, among other things. We dressed people. It makes me think today that they are trying to dress the referendum bill up to make it look better, but without changing its content or substance.

I find it quite simply odious for this House of Commons to want to disguise a bill with subtle changes in an attempt to convince a majority that all is well here in Canada.

My greatest regret in all this is that except for those who are the true representatives of Quebec and its higher interests, namely the members of the Bloc Quebecois, ably led by the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, except for them, this House would be prepared to pass an undemocratic, even outrageous referendum law with a minimum of consideration. Nevertheless, we know that the Government of Quebec used the Bélanger-Campeau Commission to consult throughout Quebec and find out what Quebecers in all parts of that future country wanted. The Government of Quebec passed Bill 150, setting October 26, 1992 as the deadline for Quebecers to be consulted on their political future, namely sovereignty.

Whether we are for renewed federalism or for Quebec sovereignty, I find it unfortunate today. I think the country's leaders should at least have the intellectual honesty to let this consultation proceed without being overshadowed. They should let it be fair and a benefit to all of society. That cannot happen on the basis of the way this discussion on Bill C-81 has begun.

Yesterday, we in the Bloc Quebecois opposed changing the filing deadlines. We knew that a 48-hour period was absolutely necessary for tabling amendments and in fact, the Speaker of the House told us at the beginning of this morning's sitting that 64 amendment motions had just been received. That is not a serious way to proceed, given the time and the context. I have not yet used up my ten minutes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No, no. I was just trying to get the attention of the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer to gently remind him to keep to the amendment now under consideration, instead of digressing on the substance of the bill.

I know that the hon. member likes to stick to the rules of the House. He would therefore like to keep in mind the rule of relevance and confine himself to the amendment now under consideration that was tabled in the House. I think that everyone would be very grateful.

The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer can continue.

Mr. Rocheleau: Madam Speaker, I will confine my comments to the motion moved by the hon. member for Churchill. I cannot help but remind you that 64 motions were put before us this morning and that we have not even had time to read all of them. The object of the first motion is to amend the title of the bill, as if we should be ashamed of saying there might be referendum bills or referendums from time to time, on different issues.

• (1200)

By changing the title, we can have it say anything we want, but it would only be a cover-up. Already yesterday, there was an agreement to shorten the delay during which these amendments could be tabled. One of our colleagues in the New Democratic Party, the hon. member for Chambly, urged all hon. members to vote against this bill, but I would have liked to have seen him here yesterday. If there had been ten of us, we could have blocked this legislation, which is the role of the official opposition. The only official opposition in this House comes from the Bloc Quebecois. Last night we had to sustain the scorn of the majority in this House, but had there been ten of us, we could have asked for the delays to be respected.

Today, the hon. member for Churchill is introducing a motion to change the title. Madam Speaker, I do not think members of the Bloc Quebecois can play these little games. We cannot accept amendments containing such subtleties and requiring explanation. What we are interested in doing in this House is to advise Quebecers they are getting a raw deal here. We want to get to the heart of the debate as soon as possible so that the Bloc Quebecois can shed some light on the situation. This is how we are going to do it. We will follow the principles of democracy, the rules of this House, while trying to advise Quebecers of the injustice being done with regards to a democracy which we, in Quebec, are respecting with our legislation, even with Bill 150. However, we do not want the federal government to interfere with the decision Quebecers will be asked to make.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Madam Speaker, I came to the conclusion, while reading this bill before becoming aware of the amendment tabled by the hon. member from Churchill, that it was undemocratic and illegitimate. After taking note of the proposed amendment, this bill still appears undemocratic and illegitimate.

An impression of constant improvisation pervades the government's entire constitutional process. To fully understand both the bill and the amendment thereto, one must stand back and get a comprehensive view of the government's actions since the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. We saw the Spicer commission, or the Spicer circus as some editorial writers called it, seeking guidance, without exaggeration, even in day care centres. The Beaudoin-Edwards committee was followed by the Castonguay-Dobbie committee, and then by the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, by a multitude of conferences attended by carefully selected participants, and later by special or standing committees, you name it. Finally this bill is illegitimate, because it has no legal basis. As an editorial writer suggested in *Le Soleil*, the referendum question could be: "do you like soft ice-cream?" This will bring us back, in the end, to the constitutional process which provides for ratification within three years, in each and every legislature; and some provinces—not only Quebec, but British Columbia also—are committed to hold referendums. This bill is illegitimate because Quebec at least acted with rigour, with the Bélanger-Campeau commission and Bill 150. Nobody has questioned the rigour, the seriousness, with which the Bélanger-Campeau commission carried out its work. One thing that emerged clearly from the Meech process was that Quebecers alone will decide their future. This will no longer be decided in Newfoundland or in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member be kind enough to talk strictly about the object of the debate right now, namely the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Churchill? There will be other amendments to look at and we will have plenty of time to discuss the bill as a whole. I would appreciate it.

Mr. Duceppe: You were in a position to appreciate it, Madam Speaker, since I—

Mr. Rocheleau: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, we are quite willing to follow the rules, but the House has to do the same. Therefore, I invoke Standing Order 29(3).

And the count having been taken:

Madam Deputy Speaker: I now recognize the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

Mr. Duceppe: Madam Speaker, if you check the transcripts you will certainly notice that I have been talking about the amendment since the beginning. I look at this amendment and I wonder about a referendum or referendums. Also, this legislation provides no spending limit other than $8.5 million per committee, but there can be an indefinite number of committees. Moreover, there is no framework legislation. Then this amendment goes precisely in that direction. This amendment says no act in practice, but a specific referendum.

In Quebec, there is what we call a framework legislation on referendums and the Bill 150 is based on that legislation. We have found a rigorous way of doing things. I would not support this amendment because the member should precisely require a framework legislation and see what the possibilities are. I imagine this amendment should be made with that objective in mind, but it is far from being the case. We should look at the possibili-

ties of holding referendums afterwards and passing laws that would precisely refer to a framework legislation.

Rather, the member says that there is no framework legislation, there is no need for one, but we can do a little special for Quebec. I believe that this is part of the hypocritical undemocratic tools that are often used in this whole constitutional process, whether it pleases some people or not. This is continually the case here.

I believe not only the amendment but the bill as a whole is unacceptable. It is somewhat futile and naive to act like little birds and at the same time be willing to swallow it all.

I thought that we would be the only ones to vote against this legislation and this amendment, but when I read the comments made by the member for Chambly, I realized that half of the NDP caucus was opposed to that bill. If the member for Chambly happens to vote in this House, he will hold the majority within his party. It will be 50 per cent plus 1.

The member also tells us that he would like a free vote so that members can vote according to their conscience. This implies that if it is not a free vote, it means some members vote unconsciously, unless the member no longer has a conscience, but this is what the member for Chambly said.

I believe this simple amendment changes absolutely nothing; it misses the issue, and it does not follow the democratic traditions regarding referendums. I might add those traditions are not followed in this House, based on the examples of 1898 and 1942. This is a far cry from democracy, as everyone has said, but I imagine that you do what you can when you do not have higher principles than that. However, there are other places in Canada, of which Quebec is still part, hopefully for as short a period as possible, where democratic procedures are followed. Besides, one of the government members used Quebec's referendum legislation to prepare a bill. I think we should take that into consideration. Our colleagues from Quebec, those who do not belong to the Bloc Quebecois but still seem to have roots in Quebec, should turn to the Quebec referendum legislation for inspiration. It is a parent legislation and not an occasional act, as the amendment seems to indicate.

• (1210)

I do not see why they want to change the title. There is more than meets the eye here, since they are really saying we do not need a parent legislation, only a special one, a quickie for Quebec. That is exactly what they are saying and that is precisely what they are suggesting. We will play a dirty trick on them, we will block the whole process in Quebec, and then we will crow, unanimously, over our victory in a huge poll prearranged for a federal election. The object, of course, is not to use one or many referendums to save Canada and to solve the Quebec issue. It is to save the Conservatives' skin, to save the Prime Minister. That is how things stand since Meech.

Ever since Meech, we have been going round in circles, creating commissions like the last one, the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee. No later than yesterday, Senator Beaudoin was saying that the Senate is unacceptable. He was the one chairing that funny committee, right? But as we often say in Quebec, even though we are laughing, it is not funny.

Unfortunately, this is where things stand right now. They are trying to amend this shameful legislation, to give it a new flavour, by saying there will not be bills on referendums but one bill on a referendum. We do not care a hoot about the rest of the principles. I will be voting against this amendment.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Madam Speaker, I wish to support my Bloc Quebecois colleagues and some NDP members who are fully opposed to the proposed amendment.

As my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie pointed out, the sole purpose of this amendment is to change the bill's title, but a very meaningful title nevertheless. The debate on Motion No. 1 must address the following question: do we want referendum framework legislation or only a referendum which can be carried out quickly to avoid getting our hands too dirty, while still allowing us, afterwards, to claim that we are great democrats and that we always abide by the great principles of democracy.

This amendment is dangerous, because it will make this is a specific action against a highly democratic and well thought-out process on the part of Quebec. This will, to begin with, hamper that process. Why not proceed as in any other democracy and, more specifically, as in England where a referendum was held to decide whether or not to join the Common Market. How did it

proceed? It adopted a referendum framework bill and then adapted it to the referendum on Britain's entry into the Common Market.

The initial preoccupation was to create a democratic process, one which would eliminate any doubt, inspired as it is by the same principles as the Quebec Referendum Act which restricts expenditures, provides for yes and no umbrella groups, and provides both sides with start-up funds. The country gave itself a referendum framework or legislation. Legislation inspires respect; it must be above suspicion and reflect, not the petty intentions of a government which is losing momentum, but principles emerging, in a parliamentary context, from our democratic past. In this sense, the British parliamentary system provided a model for the whole world, and justly so, as to the validity of and the principles which guide each debate and lead to a democratic vote, a vote on principles, often on framework legislation. Based on these principles, a specific action plan will be defined.

This amendment is contrary to time-honoured principles of the British parliamentary system in that its purpose is not to provide parent legislation to give everyone a chance to express views and serve democracy well. Heaven forbid. A little referendum would be much too embarrassing, a little referendum we are ashamed of and do not want to discuss.

As a matter of fact, this referendum has even been announced in the last throne speech. Instead of tabling the relevant piece of legislation within a few months after the throne speech, they concealed it, because some Conservative members from Quebec were ashamed and said: "We will never be able to sell that." The fact is they were ashamed. Today they are no longer ashamed.

Mr. Lapierre: Even the minister of state.

Mr. Plamondon: There are even ministers from Quebec who do not dare say a word, they put up with it. They too want the debate to come to an end as quickly as possible. They sit in silence and hide. Let me remind them of the fable of La Fontaine in which the ant asks the grasshopper: "What did you do in the spring?" "I was dancing." Come the next election, voters will ask them: "What did you do—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Not only would La Fontaine have a hard time recognizing his own tale, but I think that the hon. member has wandered considerably from the amendment before this House.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, knowing your talent for telling lovely stories, I will refrain from telling all of it and merely use the moral of the story. Let us not forget that, in the end, she who has danced all summer long found herself very needy.

The same thing will happen when election time comes. "What did you do, Conservatives members from Quebec when the debate was held, will we ask?" They will answer: "We were hiding." Then, people will answer back: "You can go and hide forever now." Their voters will hide them forever in a corner of their ridings because they did not stand up for the fundamental principle of democracy that there should be an omnibus bill on referenda instead of this mere scrap of legislation to deal with a temporary situation. In so doing, we feel ashamed because we know that we are interfering with the very principles that have lead to the careful consideration of the question by the Bélanger-Campeau commission during a year and a half in Quebec as well as with Bill 150 which will continue to guide our reflection in a very democratic context, under the "yes" or the "no" banner, with a ceiling on expenditures and restrictions on the number of speeches.

Instead of that, with this amendment here, we will put restrictions on this referendum just for the sake of pulling a fast one on Quebec and on democracy at the same time. Then they will go and hide, puffing out their chests and making meaningless speeches on democracy. They will even have commissions go and check if democracy exists in other countries, while it is being trampled on in this country, with time limits and a mock referendum that even banana republics would be ashamed of having. We are spoiling and bringing shame upon this honourable institution and the entire British parliamentary system at the same time.

I will strongly oppose this amendment which shows just how unfair, illegitimate and undemocratic this legislation is and how much of a blemish it will put on the reputation of the members of this House, especially those from Quebec, the Conservatives in particular who

did not speak up against such interference, a real hold-up on democracy.

That is how they will be remembered. You can laugh as this amendment goes through, but you will not laugh for long. You will be judged by the people and very severely. You are presently fourth in the polls and should another party be founded, you will then be fifth. That is what will happen to you. Keep on thinking about your pension and hoping for a limousine—

• (1220)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Could the hon. member respect the rules of this House and address the Chair please?

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, if you have a limousine, you certainly deserve it with all the patience we require from you in this House and also because of your good judgment and the excellent advice you constantly give us when we stray from the subject. However, you should not consider the Bloc Quebecois as the wolf among the sheep, quite the contrary. We are here to represent the vital energy of Quebec, to defend the higher interests of the beautiful Quebec nation. It is fortunate we are here because from the amendments proposed today, one can realise there was a collusion among the three parties to abstain from reflecting over Quebec's demands and interests. Nobody would have said a word, except maybe for the NDP member for Chambly, but he made his declarations in Montreal and not in this House. If he talks in Montreal, we have to wait and see him here, see how he will vote. Maybe there will be one more member thinking of the higher interests of Quebec instead of participating in that collusion.

The member for Jonquière whom I see on the other side is smiling because he brought some amendments; but he saw how his amendments were received. His work and reflection of many years were rejected flat out. Again in committee today, his documents were not even taken into account and he will probably yield like a sheep after having acted like a lion in front of the cameras. He will probably bow and vote with this government which is about to, Madam Speaker, with this referendum and even more so with this amendment—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I will say it very gently to the hon. member; his time is over.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Madam Speaker, today we are discussing a very important amendment to the referendum bill. We have to decide if we are going to call the bill an act to provide for a referendum on the Constitution of Canada or an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada. In any case, we cannot accept a bill which simply tries to ignore the will of Quebecers. We also realize that we are going through the same experience as in 1978, when the Trudeau government tabled Bill C-9 under almost the same circumstances as today. That was when Quebec decided to pass its own referendum bill. At that time, the federal government, which was Liberal, decided to table its bill which, ultimately, did not pass third reading stage, since an election was called before that. We can see full well the context is the same today. People in Ottawa are annoyed because there will be a referendum in Quebec. The pressure is mounting and the federal government finally decides to short-circuit what could happen in Quebec.

The Conservative government, which decided to table this bill, has no longer any legitimacy, as we know. We only have to look at the recent polls to fully realize why we have this bill. Yesterday, a Gallup poll mentioned leaders' popularity, and again, we saw that the Prime Minister's popularity had dropped to 16 per cent.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member puts me in an unbearable position. I think she must realize that at this point her remarks have absolutely no relevance to the amendment before the House. I would ask her to please stick to the content of that amendment. I think that throughout this morning, I have shown a lot of patience and clemency. There must be a limit and hon. members should stick to the content of the amendment which is before the House at this point.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I have been following the debate for some time now. At times it seems that the debate is not taking place between adversaries but rather that the Chair has decided to prevent our members from speaking.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have no doubt that the hon. member for Shefford will be kind enough to withdraw his comments.

The hon. member for Shefford is a veteran of the House of Commons and he is well aware of the rule of relevancy. He knows that I have already received several comments from other members asking me to make sure that it was followed today just as any other day. I have been extremely patient and forgiving and I really do not appreciate been told by the hon. member that I am the one who is preventing people from speaking. I would be grateful if he could withdraw his remarks.

I think the debate will be made easier for everyone if, during this long debate at report stage, one sticks to the particular issue being dealt with in any given amendment on which the House will have to vote.

I would request the hon. member to withdraw the remarks he made on my account.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, you acknowledged that I am a veteran. I thank you for that. However, the fact is—I do not mean this to be personal—since I have been sitting in this Chamber, as you know, when a member has the floor, he does not have to—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member be kind enough to immediately withdraw the totally unacceptable remarks he made on my account.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I can withdraw the remarks that you deem offending, but one thing is certain: you said that, at some other hon. members' request, you have decided to apply strictly the rule of relevancy. In fact, I think that the application of rules should not depend on government members or Bloc members. What matters is that your rulings be fair, and I am counting on you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I can assure the hon. member I will show, to the best of my knowledge, at all times, the utmost fairness. I think we also have to abide by the rules of this House, and the hon. member will no doubt wish to reread the clauses of our Standing Orders dealing with relevancy. Then he might help his colleagues to target their statements, which will allow us to work together, on all sides of this House, a lot more seriously.

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, I feel my remarks are quite in order. They relate directly to this amendment, and when we deal with an amendment, references to the legislation are inevitable.

I am sorry, but if you ask me to speak to an amendment without referring to the legislation, I can do so only with great difficulty. When I speak to an amendment I also speak to the legislation, and I point out what made the Tory government propose this legislation. That, to my mind, is part of the debate.

If we cannot say what motivated the Tory government to table a referendum legislation, I think we are missing the point altogether.

An hon. member: Absolutely.

Mrs. Venne: For my part, I think I have to deal with the substance of this legislation. The reason we have a referendum bill at this time is that the Tory government is at 16 per cent in the polls, and that is exactly why this legislation is now on the table.

We are now debating an amendment to change the title of the legislation, so that it provides for a referendum instead of referendums, but that is quite inappropriate. Anyway, what difference does it make if the legislation provides for a referendum instead of referendums? On that account, I am entitled to discuss this motion and I am entitled also to discuss the substance of this legislation. I cannot discuss one without the other. I am very sorry, but that is the way I see things. That is what I wished to explain.

I will go on by saying that we are now at a time where, rather than having to discuss a referendum bill, we should have an election. Normally, after four years, a government calls an election instead of proposing referendum legislation.

That is, in my view, the heart of the matter and I cannot ignore it. The government tries to bypass the issue, but it can fool no one, and it is my duty to denounce it.

I also wanted to stress that when those members brought in this referendum legislation, the government was not concerned with the interests of Quebecers, but only concerned with staying in power. It should be understood that those are the motives behind this legislation, and as a member of the Bloc, it is my duty today to condemn those motives.

• (1230)

Since we are discussing the title of the bill, I have a suggestion. I hope I will not be told I am off topic, because I would like to suggest the following title: "the cowards at Quebec's expense act". I think it would be an appropriate title. They are cowards because they are afraid to call an election and "at Quebec's expense" means they do not want Quebec to have its own referendum. They want to short circuit the process. I think that would be an appropriate title.

I could suggest another one: "An Act concerning an endangered party and artificial support systems to keep it alive".

An hon. member: Not bad.

Mrs. Venne: I think that would also be a good title to discuss. Of course, because of pressure to speed up the debate, there was not enough time to submit these amendments to the Chair, but I think they would have been very appropriate. If I had to choose, which would not be easy—I would take the cowards—more appropriate, considering the kind of government we have today.

In concluding, I want to say I will certainly vote against this amendment and against the bill. I say this because I think Tory members from Quebec should do the same. They should rise in the House and tell us what they think about this amendment—

An hon. member: They are hiding.

An hon. member: They do not think they are hiding.

Mrs. Venne: —what they think about the title and what they think about the bill. You say they do not think. Well, I certainly would not have dared to go that far. I would like to hear from them and I see the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. Perhaps he could rise in the House and tell us what he thinks of the referendum bill and this amendment.

To confirm what I have been saying, I would like to quote an article from the *Journal de Chicoutimi* which says, in referring to the hon. member for Jonquière: "—it is clear that when Jean-Pierre Blackburn bravely criticizes his government's policies, speaking up for Quebec's interests, Quebec is really the last of his concerns." Incidentally, we read this in a daily newspaper published in the riding of the hon. member for Jonquière. I admit I would not have felt very flattered if the same kind of article had appeared in my own riding, but I imagine the hon. member will respond in kind to this journalist who did not seem to appreciate him.

In other words, I expected that. If the hon. member for Jonquière wishes to speak, I would ask him to rise from his seat, since he seems to want the floor. My comments seem to have inspired him. If he really wants to speak, I suggest that he rise in the House, and we will be delighted to listen.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): I hope he will speak to the amendment.

Mrs. Venne: Yes, of course. We would like to hear him talk about the amendment, because this is so important. We know he could manage to be more relevant than the Bloc, because he has been a long-time member of various committees. I think he sat on all of them in turn. But finally, it would be—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but her time has now expired.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, perhaps you will allow me to tell the people who are making these comments that they had as much time as I did to table amendments to Bill C-81. They had just as much time, and furthermore, some of them were present at the legislative committee.

As far as defending the interests of Quebec is concerned, I think they should have—

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is debate. I am sorry but I must interrupt the hon. member.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, I understand why the hon. member for Churchill tabled an amendment to remind the government that the referendum bill should apply only to one referendum. I under-

stand because during the past two years, we have seen any number of committees travelling across Canada.

There was the Spicer commission which sort of failed. The member for Jonquière, who followed the exercise rather closely, mentioned this commission tabled a rather meaningless report. In any case, it would have been very hard for the government to hold a referendum based on such a report. I imagine that it would have been the first of a series of referendums. The government tables a bill on referendums probably because it intends to hold several of those.

I understand the member for Churchill is worried the government will not make a decision based on its past record. We know in the last ten years or so, and especially in the last two years, the government and the three main political parties in Canada cannot agree on how to renew this beautiful country, as they say.

There was the Beaudoin–Edwards committee, the Castonguay–Dobbie committee, which also failed and became the Beaudoin–Dobbie, and then there was the weekend committee. Each of those committees tabled reports that most of the time contradicted each other. Let us now look at what has been taking place in the last two or three months, with those 400 people going from one city to the next all across Canada. This is of course very good business for those hotels and cities, but it seems strange that a government with a $430 billion accumulated debt and a deficit of $32 billion this year can travel across the country and pay for the expenses, hotels and meals of 400 people, in order to discuss things that we already know.

We already know what Quebec wants, because Quebec has performed one of the most rigorous exercises in the history of Canada, namely the Bélanger–Campeau commission whose co–chairman, Mr. Campeau, is now going to travel through the province to gather business people and promote the sovereignty of Quebec. There was the Bélanger–Campeau commission, which was an unprecedented exercise. Six hundred briefs were received by the commission and at the same time, fifty–five experts did parallel studies. They demonstrated that it was necessary for Quebec to patriate almost every power in order to develop properly. English Canada is aware of this rigorous exercise that took place in Quebec. Why continue to travel across Canada in order to find out the opinion of Quebecers and of the rest of the country when we already know the answers?

Now we are undertaking yet another exercise called a referendum. Apparently, the Canadian government will spend more than $100 million to hold this non–binding referendum. All they want is to once again ask the Canadian population for its opinion. We have known that opinion for ten years already. Each year, month after month, the government says that it wants to know what Canadians think and what kind of Canada we should have. Once again, this government wants to ask Canadians that same question, this time through a referendum. We know very well this referendum is not legitimate. It will not change the Constitution because it has no legal value. We know that to make constitutional amendments, you need the approval of at least seven provinces representing at least 50 per cent of the population. Such changes must be ratified by the provincial governments.

This referendum is strictly a consultative referendum. The government will bother the Canadian population. It will spend at least another $100 million of taxpayers money while it is already in debt, to ask Canadians what they think of Canada. We need only ask the companies that specialize in polling. It would cost us barely $100,000 and we would have exactly the same results, without disturbing the people.

• (1240)

Mr. Rocheleau: Within 2 per cent.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): With proper polling, within 1 per cent.

I very well understand the hon. member for Churchill saying there could be only one referendum, because the government could also start another exercise over again; committee after committee, another Spicer commission, another Beaudoin–Dobbie, Castonguay–Dobbie, Beaudoin–Dobbie again, weekend committees and referendums and spend ten years talking and talking to come up in the end with what we already know now.

Madam Speaker, why would we continue with these exercises—

An hon. member: Futile exercises.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): —that are futile and hurt the economy of Canada and especially Quebec? We are here to defend Quebec's interests. This uncertainty makes

our Quebec premier uncertain himself. He goes back and forth because he does not know what the federal government will do. He is acting the same way, in order to have it both ways.

We in the Bloc Quebecois and I especially are against a referendum. The hon. member for Jonquière just said we too should have proposed amendments. I want to tell him we do not want amendments; we do not want a referendum, because we are fed up with spending Quebecers' money. We give the federal government $24.5 billion a year and it wastes our money. We will not let Canadians waste another $25 million on a referendum, or let Quebecers give the federal government another $25 million to hold a phony referendum, a sort of opinion poll, when we know that we could spend $25,000 in Quebec to do exactly the same thing and come up with the same results.

We are against this referendum. We find it outrageous and we are here to represent Quebec's interests. We say to Quebecers: Participate, but refuse to answers the false questions presented by this irresponsible government that does not want to defend the national interest. It says it is the country's future, but it does not want to defend the national interest. It wants to defend its own partisan interests.

That is what it wants to do. it wants to score points. The federal Liberal Party does the same thing. It is trying to score points, and so is the NDP. We do not want to score points. We want Quebecers to—

Mr. Rocheleau: We want to get out of here.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): —get out of all these endless discussions. We absolutely want Quebecers to be able one day to develop as they should and create the richest country in North America. That is what we want for Quebecers. We are tired of all this foolishness and nonsense.

I am against this referendum and I will work day and night if necessary to tell Quebecers not to get involved in it and waste our time and money. All we want is to build a prosperous Quebec to have a better quality of life. That is what we want.

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Madam Speaker, you will note that the Bloc Quebecois members regularly have the floor this morning. Since it is often difficult to do so when one wants to speak on bills, one can wonder. This morning, as if by magic, we all get to speak. We can all speak to an amendment because our colleagues across the way are silent. Except for the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, who regularly attempts to intervene, they do not consider this bill sufficiently important.

Some hon. members: He only speaks while sitting.

An hon. member: Ah, he has risen.

Mr. Hudon: Some say that I never speak, Madam Speaker. I would simply like to state that we are debating clause 1 and that I support the title.

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): Is the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry asking for several referendums? Is that why he supports the title?

An hon. member: He supports the title of parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): I think, Madam Speaker, we have reached the bottom, given the situation in Quebec, the context in which we have to make our decision, and the constitutional discussions where, for two years now, we have known that the government had promised to submit acceptable offers to Quebec. Now, they come up with a bill to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, and the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry tells us he supports the title.

Even one referendum in unacceptable, but now our colleague, a former nationalist, decides that, as far as he is concerned, the title should say referendums. Does the government want to hold one referendum after another, like it created one commission and one committee after another? I want to tell my hon. colleague that, unfortunately, many of those commissions and committees had all the time they needed in the last several months. Now time is running out. Soon there will be a deadline: the federal elections.

I do not quite understand the need to hold several referendums, costing $100 million in public money in organization expenses only, after we have had the Spicer commission. I see the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest and I want to mention the Beaudoin–Edwards commission, which all cost millions and millions of dollars. Now, we have the Constitutional caravan made up of 400 people travelling throughout Canada, from city

to city. They stop somewhere, go round in circles until they get tired, or one of them looks about ready to explode; that is when they decide it is time to move on. There, everything stopped. The minister in charge announced that great progress had been accomplished. The caravan left for another town, with 400 persons moving again. There it started all over, round and round and round. We were told there was progress. It seems we made progress on the native people issue.

It is really incredible that the federal government would accept to recognize the inherent right of native people and would declare that the courts would define that right in three years if no agreement is reached before that. On the other hand, that same government, that same constitutional committee would refuse, in the case to allow the distinct society clause to be used in the interpretation of the rights and powers which already exist in the Constitution. It is quite extraordinary. Now some members from Quebec want to support a bill on referendums in Canada which aims evidently at delaying the schedule because we know quite well this referendum will be unacceptable for the population of Quebec. The reply to this attempt to bypass the process already going on in Quebec will be a definite no.

The government had all the time it needed and the provinces had all the time required and they spent fortunes. It is easy to understand the cost of federalism. In Quebec, we had the Bélanger–Campeau commission which was very interesting, very relevant and entirely televised and the whole process cost approximately $5 million.

• (1250)

The cost of the constitutional commissions, committees and caravan greatly exceeds $100 million already. Of this, 23 per cent comes from our taxes. In reality it comes from borrowed money, of which 23 per cent is borrowed on our behalf because the deficit continues to increase.

That is very frustrating. The Government continues to spend our money, to borrow on our behalf, in order to finance a constitutional caravan which leads nowhere and does not meet its deadlines.

What is still more frustrating is to have to listen, every night on the *National*, as they repeat that no progress has been accomplished, that they are happy or unhappy, that they have made great progress but not enough.

Worse still is the use of borrowed funds to pay for commercials, even during the hockey play–offs. These broadcast slots, used for subliminal publicity boasting of Canada's greatness, cost a bundle. It is shameful.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): It is beautiful.

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): It is shameful. The member for Jonquière finds it beautiful. That is extraordinary.

Mr. Lapierre: Supposedly a great nationalist.

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): Yes, a great nationalist, even in his own riding.

I have here an editorial which appeared in his riding, and I quote: "Should one take these negative comments seriously—"

Madam Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member kindly restrain himself to the amendment before the House?

An hon. member: Say something about the editorial's title.

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): Madam Speaker, this article deals precisely with the referendum. It says how seriously we must address the issue. There is nothing unusual about an editorial writer questioning the seriousness of some of the comments members can make, particularly when they show up regularly on the news because they slightly disagree, or so it seems, with their government. For months now, those people have been making promises.

Not so long ago, just a few months ago, the idea of holding a referendum was considered unacceptable by them. Never was the federal government to hold a referendum in Quebec. That is what the Prime Minister himself was telling us not so long ago.

An hon. member: And the minister of state.

Mrs. Vézina: It is still unacceptable.

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): The Minister of State just said it is still unacceptable. Well, at one point, all those assertions will have to—

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I do not know if this will show up in *Hansard*, but I did hear the minister say that it is still unacceptable. Did she really say that?

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is not a point of order, as the hon. member knows.

The hon. member for Rosemont still has about 40 seconds.

An hon. member: Forty-two!

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): Madam Speaker, I think our House leader asked a pertinent question, and I can confirm that the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration indeed repeated that a referendum would be totally unacceptable, and we fully agree with that.

The government will soon have to take action to match its words. All Quebecers are wondering about it. They are wondering about the hon. member for Jonquière in his region, as is to be expected. It is right in the heart of the debate.

When we criticize or say that a referendum is unacceptable and we are presented with a referendum bill that refers to referendums—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member. His time is up.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to intervene in the debate now to bring up something quite basic.

The bill before us today allows the government to consult the people, if it sees fit to do so, as the title clearly says. It is an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

I am very surprised that our colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois did not even take the trouble to read clause 3 of the bill, which says very clearly the government can hold referendums or a referendum throughout the country or in one or more provinces.

Obviously, the proposed amendment that would limit the government's ability to consult all Canadians is certainly not one that we will support. We will not support it because it is obvious that the Government of Canada has the right to consult Canadians, just as the Government of Quebec has a referendum law and no one objects to the Government of Quebec consulting its people. The same thing happens in British Columbia. The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia passed a bill allowing the government of that province to hold a referendum and consult the people.

I wonder what kind of hypocrisy this is, this show that the Bloc Quebecois members are putting on to have us believe they are defending democracy.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, the hon. member will be surprised to learn that we share his position and that we are also against the amendment. I am sure that using a word like hypocrisy is not very appropriate. You know the Speaker already asked other hon. members to withdraw such an unparliamentary word. My ears are shocked to hear words like those. I suppose yours are too.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Chair is really concerned about the hon. member's ears. Maybe the hon. member would want to think about mine, because I have been here since 10 o'clock this morning.

The hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel may rise again.

Mr. Ouellet: Madam Speaker, clearly the Canadian government by providing for a means to consult the people on constitutional amendments, if it is deemed necessary, is doing something most democratic and most legitimate.

The Liberal Party of Canada and its leader have been demanding such a law for months and months. In this way, the government of Canada will be able to consult the people across Canada, or in some provinces only, if they would rather have it done by the federal government instead of the provincial government.

I believe that the principle of a law to permit the people to vote on major constitutional amendments is totally democratic and should be accepted by all members in this House.

If some hon. members have concerns about some aspects of the bill, I agree that we should discuss them, but systematic opposition, of the kind we have seen this morning from members of the Bloc Quebecois, to a Canadian referendum on constitutional proposals is out

of place and out of order in the context of the constitutional negotiations presently in progress.

This is a wrong debate to question the advisability of letting the government of Canada consult the people.

Obviously, the Bloc Quebecois is very concerned there might be a referendum on constitutional proposals which might be accepted by the people of Quebec. This would be the end of their role in Parliament. From that point of view I am not surprised they should object so strenuously to this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will be able to pursue his speech a little later.

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

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to bring to your attention and through you, to all Canadians, a memorable event that took place in Thunder Bay last Sunday.

Approximately two years ago, St. Anthony's Church was completely destroyed by fire. Last Sunday, the new St. Anthony's Church was dedicated by Bishop John O'Mara.

For over 75 years, St. Anthony's served as a centre of religious and cultural heritage for Italians who chose Canada and made it their home. More recently, it has embraced the Portuguese community who have also chosen Canada as their new home.

The community of St. Anthony's is an example that should guide us all in the faith for the future of Canadians, the hope for a united Canada and a love that we all share for Canada.

I would like to thank Father Ermete Nazzani, who gave us his leadership, Father Umberto Rizzi, who continues to give us his guidance, and Father Riccardo Bezzegato, who is now the pastor. They all deserve our gratitude for continuing to provide for the cultural and spiritual needs of our community.

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[*Translation*]

CHALLENGE 92

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, 188 summer jobs for students will be created in my riding as part of Challenge 92. One hundred twenty–four companies or organizations of Québec–Est have been chosen as promoters for the project, in exchange for a federal government contribution of approximately $238,187.

I would like to stress that since this program was introduced, more than 790 businesses of my riding have helped 1,290 students benefit from a unique and quality work experience, as well as allowing them to make some money, thanks to a federal investment of close to $2 millions.

We really want to help our young people and that is why our government never hesitates to invest its time, efforts and money.

* * *

[*English*]

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec City yesterday the Secretary–General of GATT, Arthur Dunkel, left the clear impression that there is hope for the supply management system in Canada. His words gave Canada's supply management agencies cause for believing there is a window of opportunity to continue seeking a clarification and strengthening of article XI so as to maintain our marketing system.

While Mr. Dunkel gave no firm commitment, he did suggest there was hope when he said that marketing

boards were still a question mark and that those involved must carefully examine how supply management functions and how this system can co-exist within a new GATT agreement.

The federal government must stay the course to ensure that the greatest possible pressure is applied to world leaders and key players in these negotiations. Canada cannot afford to lose its supply management system. Thousands of farm families, rural communities and agrifood industry workers depend on the system which provides the steady supply of good, wholesome dairy and poultry products for Canadian consumers.

I call on the Prime Minister and his government to see these negotiations through to the end so as to preserve this most stable part of our Canadian agricultural system.

* * *

THE SALMON

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the official opening of yet another Atlantic salmon season in many Canadian rivers.

The salmon has become a challenging symbol for our society in two important ways.

First, its very survival is a reflection of our commitment to conservation. Once a resource that was available in abundance, the salmon is now a fragile species that tests our environmental will and discipline to the extreme.

Second, the salmon is a dynamic issue in developing new relations which aboriginal self-government will bring among Canadians. It is one resource where native rights have been established as a priority but where sharing with all citizens remains an essential goal.

In both respects, let us resolve to meet the challenge which the salmon symbolizes with care, with sensitivity and with effective management.

* * *

HAITI

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada ought to condemn publicly the barbarous action of the United States in returning to its 1981 practice of forcing Haitian boat people refugees to return to persecution in Haiti. After all, we condemned nations of southeast Asia for the same violations of United Nations law a dozen years ago.

Canada did well to halt deportation to Haiti at the time of the coup last fall, but now we must do more.

There are Haitians in danger of persecution who now have no way to flee persecution in their country, but are not eligible to apply at our Port-au-Prince visa office as refugees because they are in their own country. Therefore, I call on the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the cabinet to use section 62 of the Immigration Act to designate classes of Haitians as being in need of our protection and, therefore, eligible to apply at our visa office for entry to Canada as refugees.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, here is some news about the Canadian economy that should be mentioned.

Exports in March reached a record level of $12.8 billion, with $9.8 billion in sales to the United States alone. This is the third month in a row in which we have had an encouraging increase in the gross domestic product.

In fact, exports to the U.S. rose 12 per cent between December and March. During this same period, labour productivity has soared at an annualized rate of 5.7 per cent, surpassing the historic trend in the 1 to 2 per cent range.

Canada is regaining its competitive position. Could it be that our economic policies are beginning to pay dividends?

* * *

DRUNK DRIVING

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, despite massive public awareness campaigns, drunk driving continues to be a serious problem in Canada.

Recent statistics indicate that the number of impaired driving charges has fallen. Conservative estimates state that the ratio of impaired drivers to the number of those who get caught is 200 to 1.

Education has lead to a slight decrease in the problem by reducing alcohol abuse among young people and by diminishing the number of casual drinkers who drive after a few drinks.

We need tougher sentences in court, but the real responsibility lies with each of us. As members of Parliament, we have a special responsibility to lead by example.

During Nepean Days in my riding, a group will be donating proceeds from the sale of Canada Day memorabilia to a local chapter of Students Against Drunk Driving. I applaud their efforts in support of public awareness and encourage other communities to do the same.

* * *

YOUTH VIOLENCE

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, following hard on the looting and violence of May 4, yesterday's teenage brawl on Toronto Island is extremely disturbing. This is by no means the first time that incidents of this kind have occurred in Toronto.

At the conclusion of the 1991 Canadian Music Awards, large groups of youths rampaged through the Eaton Centre. Following the 1988 New Year's celebrations in Nathan Phillips Square, gangs of youths smashed windows and looted. In 1987 and again in 1991, youths went on a rampage at the CNE and after the 1981 Grey Cup, football fans celebrated by overturning cars and looting stores.

In fact, there have been riots in Toronto as far back as July 12, 1858 when Orangemen and Catholics fought each other and two men were shot.

That it has happened before, however, is no excuse. This kind of lawless behaviour just cannot be tolerated.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare had responded to constitutional agreements on aboriginal issues by saying, and I quote: "I don't understand that we needed 125 years in Quebec and in two months they, the natives, could get all that they get."

The minister should know the aboriginal peoples have not arrived at this point over a period of two months. It has taken hundreds of years of looking in from the outside. It has taken many years of demanding a place at the table.

What is more, Canadians in every region of this country know this fact and have said they want the constitutional reform package to address these issues.

Stop back-tracking. If Quebec were to separate, it would still have to deal with the same aboriginal issues. Premier Bourassa should come to the negotiating table, because in the long run aboriginal peoples and Quebecers have some common causes. Native self-government will only be a tough sell if you make it so.

* * *

ALLERGY AWARE PROGRAM

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, members of Parliament, federal departments and the private sector have worked together to make information on potential food allergens available to consumers who are sensitive to certain food substances.

After several private members' initiatives, consumer and corporate affairs developed a requirement for the mandatory listing of ingredients on food labels, an important step in ensuring that consumers are aware of the ingredients in a food product.

I commend the Canadian Food and Food Services Association, the Allergy-Asthma Information Association and the Department of National Health and Welfare for implementing the Allergy Aware Program.

Thanks to this program, quick service restaurants are publishing charts listing the foods served in their establishments and identifying the ten most prevalent allergens consumers may wish to avoid. Such initiatives and partnerships benefit all consumers and must be commended.

• (1410)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, 60 per cent of the 969 women murdered between 1974 and 1990 in Ontario were killed by male partners, according to the recently released study, "Women Killing: Intimate Femicide in Ontario".

The report shows ironically that shelters created to protect and save the lives of women are also saving the lives of men. The growth in shelters since 1981 correlates to the decrease in the number of men dying at the hands of their female partners. Because women now have somewhere to turn in an abusive situation, they are not resorting to violent means.

Women are still being killed by their male partners in as large numbers as ever. Native women in Ontario are six times as likely as non-native women to be killed by a spouse.

The report notes that the justice system still neglects to protect women. Peace bonds, restraining orders, and other measures have failed and will continue to fail without proper police protocols and appropriate judicial response.

We must continue to support shelters, but the issue of abuse and murder must be brought to light. We must educate all Canadians, particularly the professionals.

* * *

BILLY BISHOP

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago today, Billy Bishop took off for further glory. He made a one-man raid on a German aerodrome 12 miles behind enemy lines in France. It was a famous raid that was to earn him the Victoria Cross.

Our greatest First World War ace was challenged by four enemy aircraft during the raid. He downed three of them and emptied his gun into the fourth before making his escape.

Billy Bishop was only 24 when he received the Victoria Cross, the Commonwealth's highest award for gallantry, from George V at Buckingham Palace. On the same occasion, he received the Military Cross and the Distinguished Service Order.

This man from Owen Sound was only one of the many Canadians who brought credit to the Royal Flying Corps and proved to hidebound generals that the new-fangled flying machine had a role in warfare.

Indeed, at the end of the war, over half of the top 20 aces of the Royal Flying Corps were from Canada.

Canadians like Billy Bishop were born to high skies and open spaces and were ideally suited to the challenges of aerial combat. Let us never forget the skill and the bravery of young men who conquered new frontiers.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, an appalling study was released by the Women We Honour Action Committee yesterday. It shows that between 1974 and 1990 at least 61 per cent, and perhaps as many as 78 per cent of the women murdered in Ontario were murdered by the men they had lived with.

It is horrifyingly macabre that in Ontario, and presumably in the rest of Canada, the statistically surest way for a woman to secure her own violent murder is to enter into a spousal relationship.

It says something deeply alarming about the culture of maleness and male violence in our society. It raises frightening questions, the proper answers to which are fundamental to the continued living of up to 100 or more women in Canada this year, next year, the year after that, *ad infinitum*.

Whatever it takes, and increased funding for women's shelters and post-shelter aid, education of police and the judiciary, and anti-violence education in the schools are utterly essential starting points, this undeclared war against the women Canadian men allegedly love must be ended.

* * *

HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Mr. Speaker, you are well aware of the acute concern that the people of Canada have for their environment. One of the main concerns of Canadians relating to the

environment is their own health and the health of their families.

It was fitting that the Minister of National Health and Welfare announced on March 20 of this year the action plan on health and the environment.

As a further measure to ensure that the public is informed about the important link between their environment and health, I welcome the news that the Department of National Health and Welfare is about to launch a new report during this Environment Week on the topic entitled, "A Vital Link, Health and the Environment in Canada".

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint–Léonard): Yesterday, I received a letter from a young Canadian in my constituency who is looking for a job after graduation.

At the beginning of the year, he wrote to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister referred his letter to the minister of employment. The minister of employment has not yet answered.

However, he went to an employment centre to register for a program but was told that this program took place only once a year and it was too late for this year. The only chance he has is to wait for next year.

We have been asking for several weeks why this government cut the funding of training programs and why it does not put more funds into them.

When the member for Hamilton East said there was no more money for training programs yesterday, the Minister of Employment and Immigration said that was false. Why can my constituent not get into a program? It is important for him to find a very good job after having worked so hard to graduate from university.

* * *

TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, Canadians of all ages watch television more than many of my generation would wish. While the use of one's leisure time is a matter of personal choice, the nature of those programs can have a substantial influence on viewers, particularly on the young, and that is of consequence to all of society.

If television portrays life as one in which violence including rape and murder are day–to–day occurrences, young people may learn to accept such violence as being a natural part of their own lives. As an example, 13–year old Virginie Larivière of St. Polycarpe, Quebec is convinced that her 11–year old sister was brutally and tragically murdered as a direct result of the portrayal of such violence on television.

In a different but equally important vein, Canadians look for television and particularly to the CBC to be an accurate portrayal of the role of our country in world history, but veterans have been outraged and insulted by revisionist portrayals of that history as in the recent series *The Valour and the Horror*.

Those who produce and those who select television programs have an immense and even frightening influence on their viewing audience, an influence to which they have not given adequate attention.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. We all hope that the earth summit in Rio will be a success. Already the international community is seriously concerned about the United States' refusal to sign several international agreements which are critical to the success of this summit.

Will the Prime Minister give us the assurance that he is going to pick up the phone and call the President of the United States to urge him to sign these treaties of paramount importance at this time? Otherwise the community of nations will be very disappointed.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend would take offense if the President of the United States phoned me to tell me to sign a treaty after the Canadian government had decided otherwise. This is something for each nation, for each country to decide for itself.

Of course, on an issue as important as this one, I have already conveyed to the President of the United States our views regarding not only the importance of this summit, but also that of the treaties that flow from it. I

stated in a speech yesterday the Canadian position and our objectives for this summit as well as what the Canadian government will do immediately afterwards to contribute to its success, because we believe that this summit is a most important event as regards all issues relating to the development of the environment.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister.

There were supposed to be three conventions at Rio. One was climate change, another was endangered species and the third one was forest management. The convention on forest management has been completely dropped and now the Americans have convinced other industrial nations not to have specific targets or deadlines for the one on climate change.

President Bush's advisers are bragging that when they are back from Rio they will have very little to do to meet any new commitments.

I want to ask the Prime Minister what I asked him in French. Will he use his good office and call the President to tell him that according to what we know, of the three conventions that were proposed, two will not be signed by the United States—one has been in fact dropped—and the third one, the President does not want any deadlines or targets.

Will he tell the President of United States that if that is the case, Rio will be a complete failure?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is always imprudent to try to judge the results of an important international event before it takes place.

It is always very, very imprudent to suggest that if a given country does not propose or agree to do a certain act, the entire thing will collapse. There are 178 countries in the world. There will be members of the United Nations, there will be more than 110 heads of government at Rio, and while the United States plays an important role in this, as it does in all other international affairs, it is not the only player there.

• (1420)

We do not propose to subcontract our rights or obligations in the environment to the United States or anybody else. We will be there to fulfil our obligations on behalf of Parliament and the people of Canada and we expect other nations to do the same thing in their national interest.

* * *

FISHERIES

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question concerning the fisheries.

This morning we read in the press that the Europeans have decided to stop fishing off the coast of Newfoundland. Of course they stopped fishing for a very good reason, there are no fish any more.

We would like to know from the Prime Minister if he can guarantee to this House that the Europeans will not come back next fall and that if they decide to come back it will only be when we have enough stock on the banks. Can he assure that Canadian fishermen have a livelihood for themselves and not for others?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. gentlemen has noticed we are having some success with respect to the campaign we have been waging with respect to foreigners.

Mr. Chrétien: There's no fish, John.

Mr. Crosbie: You cannot have it both ways. Yesterday you were going berserk, we had to stop foreign overfishing. Today it looks like we are on the way to stopping foreign overfishing and you are complaining there are no fish. Now which is it? What do you want? Do you want to stop overfishing or not?

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[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

M. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, while preparing his visit to Rio, the Prime Minister said the environment should be the focus of the next round of the GATT negotiations. If he is really convinced of that, why does he continue to consider the environment as a secondary issue in the negotiations for

the proposed free trade deal with Mexico? Why does he not insist on the enforcement of common standards for the three countries? Why does he not insist on an accession clause which would protect the environment and on a dispute settlement mechanism which would take the environment into account?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): My friend should be careful when talking about the accession clause because that opens very interesting doors into other areas.

As for the environment, I can assure you that it is part of the Canadian government's negotiating position in all our global initiatives. As I said yesterday in a speech about what would happen after Rio, we intend to make the environment a priority in all our commercial negotiations and particularly in the case of the GATT. Evidently all countries will have to co-operate and participate, but I think Canada is taking leadership action in this area and we will invite others to follow.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister.

The Rio conference is about the environment, trade, and the relationships between the rich and the poor. The North American free trade agreement is about exactly the same thing. The Prime Minister cannot say one thing in Brazil, another in Mexico, and hope to maintain any degree of credibility.

Will the Prime Minister integrate the enforcement of common environmental standards directly into the Mexican agreement and into its dispute settlement mechanism?

The Prime Minister has said that the environment should be the focal point of the next round of GATT negotiations. Will he demonstrate his sincerity now in the current round of Mexican negotiations?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with some of the observations made by my hon. friend. The conference in Rio is going to deal not just with the environment but with the problems of foreign debt, aid and trade in respect of developing nations, how their own economic situations can be accommodated to the horrendous economic costs of preserving their own environment.

There is not a bifurcation but there is an equally important degree of responsibility to be accorded in Rio to the problems of Third World development. I think my hon. friend quite properly points that out.

Canada's policy of eliminating debt in sub-Saharan Africa, our problems of write-offs of debt in the Caribbean countries, the developing countries, are all part and parcel of that general approach.

With regard to trade, we are surprised by some of the opposition we see in this House, because precisely one of the ways that you are going to increase the well-being of people in developing countries, a developing economy such as Mexico, is to enter into a free trade agreement with developing countries, so as to give them access to developed markets. In this way they can enrich their own citizens, thereby raising the well-being of all of their people.

Because of that fundamental principle, and because it has just been articulated so well, I would then conclude that my hon. friend is also speaking, because he is environment and I think associate finance critic, that he is speaking for the Liberal Party and committing them to full support for a North American free trade agreement with Mexico.

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WESTRAY MINE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and it concerns the tragic accident at Westray mine.

On May 20, the minister responsible for small businesses assured this House that the government would bring forward and I quote: "all the appropriate information as soon as possible". Two weeks later we still have not received any of that information.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he will assure this House that he will bring forward this week all of the documents pertaining to the Westray mine and how those decisions were taken.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform my hon. friend that the documents are being assembled and they will be tabled in the House this week.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that they are tabled this week and I thank the minister for his response to that question.

I also would like to ask a supplementary question of the Prime Minister. As we know, there were many concerns prior to the approval of the loan guarantee for the Westray mine by independent consultants, as well as, we understand, by federal departments, about not only the financial viability of the mine, but more importantly, about the safety of the mine.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister, given that he did intervene, as he is asked to do on many projects of regional economic development, could he share with this House the reports on which he based his decision and felt that indeed this was a safe project for the federal government to proceed with.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the House yesterday that my involvement in the decision-making process on behalf of projects of regional economic expansion is by and large the same. There is an intervention sometimes by a provincial premier about a given project. It is examined carefully and it follows the cabinet committee route and a decision is made.

We made that decision in Central Nova pursuant to a set of objective criteria and we made a similar decision involving exactly the same company in the constituency of my hon. friend, in the Yukon. That company has provided good employment opportunities there and I think it has been actively supported, quite properly so, by my hon. friend who has made representations on its behalf and to which we responded.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, of course, is quite right. As I said in my second supplementary, it is to be expected that the Prime Minister of Canada would take an interest in regional economic development opportunities.

Given the very tragic results, however, at the Westray mine it is equally important that the Canadian people are aware that these decisions were taken with full information and knowledge of any risks. There was an environmental assessment done of this project, as we know, from the 1991 Curragh Resources prospectus. It said, and I quote: "The Westray Mine has been reviewed under the environmental assessment and review process".

I would ask the Prime Minister if he was privy to this environmental assessment and if so, what was his opinion of that particular environmental assessment and will he table that with this House?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform the leader of the NDP that the environmental assessment will be tabled along with the documents to be tabled this week.

There were a number of other reports upon which the federal government relied. The federal government in fact relied on all the technical reports that existed in making this decision. The decision was clear, based on all of these reports, that it was technically feasible to have the mine and that the economic factors and the safety factors were certainly manageable. It was technically possible to go ahead with the mine.

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• (1430)

JOB TRAINING

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Yesterday the minister let it be known that his department was about to run out of money for training UI recipients.

In the case of Winnipeg his department is currently paying between $6,000 and $7,000 a year in tuition fees alone for people taking secretarial and business administration courses.

How can the minister, at a time when he says his department is running out of money, defend such patently high fees for training people?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will try not to get into a discussion of the criteria that provincial institutions established to fix the tuition fees of training Canadians in their institutions.

It is important to recognize that this government has acknowledged the need to train Canadians. We have increased the resources so that we can train unemployed Canadians. Throughout Canada this year it is $3.4 billion, which, I might add, under the Unemployment Insurance Act is three times the amount we were

spending to train Canadians in 1990. This is a fact from which the hon. member cannot derogate.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

Although the minister may claim the amount is higher, the fact is that the department is totally wasting the money in its allocation. People who need training simply do not have the opportunity because of the outrageous fees being paid to these firms. The minister refuses to deal with this issue.

Among those who are trained in Manitoba this department and other departments have refused to announce one program for economic expansion, one program for economic development in that province.

Could the minister please tell me and the House what he expects these graduates to be doing once they have finished their courses?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, these graduates will benefit from the economic policies of this government. That is what they will do.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Valcourt: All unemployed Canadians out there are listening to the Liberals laughing. I hope they are listening to them.

Back in 1978 the leader of that party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, talked about unemployment and said: "But I don't believe I can be"—

Some hon. members: Order, order.

Mr. Valcourt: They are not interested in the good words of their leader.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Today the minister boasts about the amounts he is spending to train unemployed Canadians. Perhaps he will admit today that this training was funded by raising taxes on wage earners through higher UI premiums while other employment programs were in fact cut back.

Why is his government disguising the size of its deficit by shifting the cost of employment programs to the UI account? Why is it tarnishing the future of Canadian workers to polish its own record of failure?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, what we hear in this place. It is as if Canadians were not always the same taxpayer.

I have news for the Liberals. Whether you are in northern New Brunswick or in Saskatchewan, when you pay your premium rate you pay it as one Canadian taxpayer.

The member is asking me today to tell Canadians that we will follow the NDP policy, that we will print money to buy the illusion of prosperity.

We have targeted training as a priority area of activity for this government for the benefit of Canadians.

Right now the demand for training is very high. We have to acknowledge that we cannot put every UI claimant on a training course. What we are doing is targeting these funds at those most in need.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, the minister should know and understand that he is frying Canadians to cook his books.

The minister keeps apologizing for the rejection of training applicants by saying that it is impossible for his government to accommodate every UI recipient.

That is no surprise to unemployed workers whose training was denied for lack of funds but who see endless tax dollars being spent on government ads telling them how competitive they are.

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the hon. member to put her question.

Ms. Guarnieri: Why has the minister's government chosen to spend taxpayers' dollars to train public opinion before an election rather than to train workers for skilled jobs?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I know Liberal doom and gloom is hard to overcome, especially when you sit there and you do not like it.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I know you don't like it.

Mr. Valcourt: The fact of the matter is that earlier I referred to the economic policies of this government and they all laughed.

The chairman of Canadian steelworkers is quoted in an article. We know the importance of steelworkers in Ontario. He said: "During the first quarter of this year

steel shipments were up 3 per cent, making a 5 per cent year over year increase quite feasible".

Mr. Telmer said: "Canadian steelworkers and their customers are also benefiting from interest rates that are at their lowest level in 19 years".

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ROYAL OAK RESOURCES

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour.

For the past 10 days we have witnessed a labour relations fiasco in Yellowknife. Workers at the giant mine are on strike against their employer Royal Oak Resources. The issues in dispute are the very real health and safety concerns of the workers.

Rather than bargain in good faith and address the concerns of the workers, the company's response to these legitimate concerns for a safe working environment was to hire security guards in riot gear complete with attack dogs.

Will the minister now intervene over and above appointing a mediator to ensure that the company returns to the bargaining table, bargains in good faith and settles not only the strike but also the legitimate health and safety concerns?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. friend that matters of occupational health and safety are under the jurisdiction of the territorial government and not of the federal government. Having said that, the industrial relations part is under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

Last week I was in contact with the owners of the mine and with the union. Having received a request from one of the parties, I appointed a mediator yesterday. The mediator is having the parties meet as we speak this afternoon.

The president of the national union, I understand, has flown to Yellowknife and is meeting with the president of the mine. I deplore the violence that has taken place on the picket lines. I would urge both sides to put their efforts toward settling the disputes.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, we are back to the same old thing of pawning off from one jurisdiction to another the life and safety of workers in these working conditions. That is not acceptable.

Given the violence we have witnessed at the mine, including three workers requiring hospitalization and the constant threat of violence that is ever present due to these wonderful Pinkerton agents—is it not amazing that they keep coming up through history all the time—will the minister now take the next necessary action, amend the Canada Labour Code and introduce anti-scab legislation?

• (1440)

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the government has no plans to amend part I of the labour code on industrial relations.

Let me remind my hon. friend that at the federal level in Canada we do settle over 97 per cent of the negotiations of collective agreements without work stoppages. The system works well.

Occasionally we do have cases and that is why we are putting all our efforts into those cases to make sure there is no violence. We want the parties themselves to agree on a settlement.

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WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister presided over a cabinet meeting where the $85 million loan guarantee for Westray was discussed and finalized. Certainly in questions such as that there are discussions about the conditions that must go along with such a loan guarantee and there must be some conditions imposed.

Could the Prime Minister tell us today how many of these conditions related to safety and what were these conditions?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the answer is patently obvious. The province puts conditions in place for health and safety, for occupational safety for nine different departments that regulate mines. The conditions of the loan guarantee we worked out with the bank were that all of those conditions must be complied with.

Not only that, the contract that was entered into made it clear that there would be compliance and there had to be compliance or the guarantee would not be there. We informed ourselves on a regular basis month by month that this was the case.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the minister of state for small businesses still has not said what conditions there were or if there were in fact any conditions attached to the loan regarding safety.

The government's own department of energy through CANMET stated that there were methane problems in the mine, and the minister of energy is quoted as having said: "We were all aware of the mine having high methane deposits". Then the minister for small businesses sloughs off the question and does not tell us what conditions there were.

Will the Prime Minister include among those documents to be released the CANMET study on the Westray mine and the subsidiary agreement on the financing of Westray?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the hon. member's question is absolutely clear. Every single provincial regulation as it deals with mines—and there are nine different departments that affect a mine that is to be put into production and its daily monitoring—must be complied with. That was secured in the contractual arrangement for the loan guarantee and, as I have said, on a monthly basis we assured ourselves that the mine was in compliance.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer is less than clear.

The question was whether or not the CANMET study would be made available. Perhaps, in attempting the second time to answer a very specific question, the minister would also tell the House whether or not a summary of the direct communications between the Prime Minister and the premier of Nova Scotia will also be included in the documents to be released, we understand, as early as tomorrow.

In addition, will there be a summary of whatever directives were issued by the Prime Minister following those personal conversations with the premier of Nova Scotia? Yes or no.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I have a very long list of all the municipal and regional political leaders who have supported this regional economic development project.

The Prime Minister made it very clear yesterday that he supported it. We certainly support regional economic development, especially when it is a provincial priority. So did the warden of the municipality of Pictou county, Hank Dunnewold, so did the mayor of the town of Trenton, Barry Trenholm, so did the mayor of the town of Stellarton, Ronald Marks and so did the chairman of PICORD, which is the Pictou County Research—

Mr. Speaker: There has to be another way to give this information to the House. The hon. member, supplemental.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the minister can hide behind all the lists he wants and all the local officials he would want to name. What members of this House are asking for, quite properly, is whether or not key documents will be made available. The minister for the second time has refused to answer.

I ask him again, will the CANMET study be available? Will a summary of communication between the Prime Minister and the premier be made available? While he is at it, will he tell us whether the reservations expressed by senior federal officials, such strong reservations that the premier felt compelled to call the Prime Minister, reservations primarily out of the department of energy, will be made available as well?

We don't want a shopping list, we don't want a propaganda poll—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has put his question.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): I would tell my hon. friend that all appropriate information will be released. He will be very pleased when he sees how extensive it is. It deals with all of the questions he has raised in the House.

NATIVE SELF-GOVERNMENT

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

For many years provisions have existed for development of native self-government agreements on a band-by-band basis in Canada. For example, I understand that the Kingsclear Band, which is one of three in my riding, has achieved considerable progress in many aspects of such a concept, and that the Kingsclear Band is an excellent candidate to become one of the first in Atlantic Canada to sign a self-government agreement.

My question is this: what would such an immediate self-government agreement entail and how would it be implemented?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): The community self-government policy of the Department of Indian Affairs has been in place, I think at least since 1985. It envisages the negotiation between a particular Indian band or First Nation and the federal government, a set of optional means to be given parliamentary protection by way of legislation, to administer their own communities in the areas of, for example, education and health and lands management and membership, presently covered under the Indian Act.

It is our intention to continue to negotiate such agreements pending an adoption of the inherent right to self-government, should that be constitutionalized in the near future.

* * *

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

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

Reports from Quebec City show that Arthur Dunkel, the GATT Director General, is stating that our marketing boards must abandon supply management and adopt tariffication. This indicates that the government's message to our associate governments around the world has failed to convince them of the value of supply management.

Will the Prime Minister explain why he thinks his message has not been accepted by presidents Delors and Bush, and did he fail because they still remember that Canada's original position was tarification at the GATT until Canada's farmers found out about it?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend's last statement is incorrect. What he has failed to recognize is that the position Canada has presented at GATT has been developed with the provinces and with the producers. We have been continually putting forward that position.

Mr. Dunkel, who is a hired gun, a bureaucrat, has put forward a text. But individual nations, sovereign nations, will make their decisions in the best interests of their own country and their own economies, how they enter GATT.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): I think the hon. minister should remember that for the first two years our position was tariffication. It was changed then.

This past February this House reiterated Canada's support for a strengthened and clarified article XI, 2(c)(1), and urged the Prime Minister to use his influence to build international support beyond that being received from Japan and North Korea. What new support has his activities brought to the supply management cause, and how many countries are now on side with Canada as a result of these activities?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): My hon. friend obviously missed the attendance of President Jacques Delors of the European Commission here in Ottawa.

Mr. Althouse: No, I didn't. I was wondering what the results are.

Mr. Mulroney: Oh, you were wondering what the results were.

• (1450)

Here are the results he announced about a month ago in Ottawa. He said that he quite understood and was sympathetically disposed toward the position the Canadian government had put forward to the point where he was advocating the proposal that a 90 per cent deal that allowed for this kind of exemption was better than no deal at all.

We all know that each country is seeking exemptions for various matters. The marine industry in the United States, the import of bananas to the European Commu-

nity from former colonies, and so on, represent important exemptions they are all seeking.

There is nothing wrong with Canada pointing out the important dimension that marketing boards constitute for our agricultural industry.

This we have done with some considerable degree of success, witness the statement made in this building a month ago by President Jacques Delors of Europe.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of small business.

The minister is well aware that most jobs in this country are created by small business and that most small businesses just cannot get a bank loan. Three months ago the budget promised some help but nothing has been done to implement that and the time is fast approaching for the summer recess.

Will the minister immediately take steps to help small business get financing, even through the Federal Business Development Bank or through putting in place legislation to allow small business to survive and create jobs, or does the minister subscribe to the sign on the wall of the finance department which reads "the light at the end of the tunnel will remain off until further notice"?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. friend that there has been a constriction of credit in the banking system for small business and because of that the last budget did some very important things which are in fact being put into place.

With the Small Businesses Loans Act, the ceiling will be lifted to $200,000 from $100,000. It will be done as soon as possible while making the Small Businesses Loans Act easier to deal with.

The small business financing program is there. We have the lowest interest rates in 22 years. We have the lowest inflation in 22 years. Yesterday new financial institutions were formed by trust companies and insurance companies as well as banks to get into commercial lending.

REFUGEES

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of immigration.

Last week several Canadian organizations working with refugees announced that they had given up on the minister of immigration because he had virtually stopped using his discretionary powers to admit refugees on humanitarian and compassionate grounds and consequently their appeals to him were a waste of time.

The law gives the minister the discretion to admit deserving cases when there are humanitarian and compassionate grounds. My question is this: why is the minister refusing to use these legitimate powers and will he make it clear to the Canadian public the criteria he has for using these powers?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the statement made by certain people at that meeting that I never intervene on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

The difference between my department and others is that I do not publish every day the individual actions I take in this department on behalf of refugee claimants.

Mr. Tobin: What others? Name the other ministers.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister has been asked a question and is on his feet to answer. I ask hon. members to extend the usual courtesy.

Mr. Valcourt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1991 alone over 8,000 people were admitted to Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds so this charge that we are not exercising these criteria in favour of claimants or immigrants is groundless.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the minister is not using these discretionary powers with respect to refugees as they were used in the past and more refugees are now being deported than ever before, often to dangerous situations. For example, last year in Quebec only four cases were accepted on humanitarian grounds out of 884 applications. That is applications to him after they were refused by the board.

Will the minister be frank with the Canadian public and say why he has restricted the use of these powers, because he has restricted the use of those powers?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, some people can level the charges they want. I know I am entrusted with administering a refugee determination process which the United Nations Commission on Refugees has labelled the best and the fairest system in the world.

Canada welcomes every year and affords protection to tens of thousands of people in need of protection. No other country in the world beats that record. I am applying the law. Every time I receive an intervention on behalf of someone in need of Canada's protection, he gets it.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Last week in a speech the Prime Minister said:

> The road has been dilatory and dangerously indifferent to the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Today while we meet, Sarajevo is being shelled, thousands of people are being killed and wounded and are losing their homes.

I want to ask the Prime Minister this: Even with the recent round of sanctions being put in place are we now once again in danger of being too little and too late?

Will the Prime Minister be instructing the Secretary of State for External Affairs at the meeting of foreign ministers this week in Oslo to raise whether or not the mandate of the UN forces in that region should be expanded or whether NATO itself should take a look at whether it can undertake peacemaking initiatives and stop the tragic fighting in Bosnia?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend will have to tell me precisely what he means by two things.

He is asking whether the United Nations mandate would be expanded. Expanded to do what? He is asking whether we would instruct the Secretary of State for External Affairs to ask for NATO intervention. NATO intervention to do what?

The United Nations peacekeepers, including 1,300 Canadians, are already in the region. They are there prosecuting the instructions of the Security Council of the United Nations. Obviously this has not brought about the results we wanted. We are working very closely with the United Nations to make sure we advance in that.

If my hon. friend has some ideas that might help in that, I would be happy to listen to him and to follow through carefully, provided I understand exactly what information is he seeking or what instructions he would like the Government of Canada to convey.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I have a supplementary for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister may begin by paying attention to the words of his own secretary of state who was quoted yesterday as saying: "We may have to consider further actions, including military actions".

Those are the words of the Prime Minister's own secretary of state. Is that going to be the question or the position taken by the government?

I will ask the question specifically. Will the Government of Canada take the lead in asking for a direct airlift of humanitarian assistance to the city of Sarajevo? Will we be asking particularly for the convening of an international conference to deal with the massive problem of over one million refugees who are now existing in that region? Will Canada take the lead in ensuring that these innocent people will not be harmed, injured, or killed any longer?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): As my hon. friend knows, we were the first industrialized country to ask the United Nations last September to involve itself in the Yugoslav crisis, long before it deteriorated to the extent it has because we were fearful of precisely that result, I think in fairness, so was my hon. friend at that particular point.

We have been pressing for the opening of the Sarajevo airport precisely to achieve the objective of an airlift for humanitarian purposes. Without the opening of the airport which is now being subjected to gun-fire from the neighbouring hills, we have difficulty in getting humanitarian assistance in there. We are moving on that as well. My hon. friend indicates the Secretary of State for External Affairs indicated what her intentions were. I

know what her intentions were. My question to my hon. friend was what he meant by the suggestions that he was making. He made two very important suggestions. I think it is equally important that he specify exactly what he had in mind. If he is saying that we should ask for NATO to involve itself militarily there, if he is saying that we ask the United Nations to direct its peacekeepers to be transformed into people on a more aggressive footing, that is something we can contemplate. We must understand: Is that the position that my hon. friend is advancing? If so, is that the position of the Official Opposition? He seems to be signalling yes. Is that right?

• (1500)

Now my hon. friend says "the answer". I cannot answer. It was your suggestion.

Mr. Speaker: I will take a single question from the hon. member for Longueuil and a single question from the hon. member for Halton—Peel. The hon. member for Longueuil.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In 1989 I had the opportunity to study the sharing of expenditures for research and development. It was found that Quebec received $1.2 billion less than Ontario in research and development contracts from the federal government.

Approximately two weeks ago, I received from the minister a CANMET report in which one can see that the federal government is spending a lot on research and development and that the trend remains the same, that is approximately 11 per cent for Quebec and 55 per cent for Ontario. Could the minister tell us if he intends to continue to treat Quebecers this way for a long period of time?

[*English*]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the member has asked me that question because it gives me the opportunity to indicate to him that some of the leading edge technology on energy efficiency is taking place in the province of Quebec, in particular, in laboratories in the riding of our colleague, the Minister of Labour.

I think for all of us this is very important. It is important for us as Canadians. It is also important for the province of Quebec. I am pleased that the hon. member gave me the opportunity to make this announcement and further demonstrate how Quebec colleagues are in fact promoting their province on research in that province.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for veterans affairs.

Many Canadian veterans were shocked when they watched the CBC television series *The Valour and the Horror* earlier this year. They felt that history was being rewritten to denigrate the efforts of heroic Canadian soldiers and airmen during the Second World War.

Is the minister aware of the outrage being expressed by Canada's veterans and is he in agreement with them that this series defames Canada's proud war record?

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all I can say that we are indebted to CBC and the National Film Board for the fact that they put those three programs on in prime time because I think everybody in this House knows the importance of Canadians understanding the immense contribution and the sacrifice of Canadians in time of war.

Having said that, however, I can say that many veterans were unhappy at how the contribution of Canadians was portrayed in those particular episodes. They wrote me and expressed their feelings very forcefully. I can tell you they wrote to other ministers, the Prime Minister and, of course, the CBC as well as the National Film Board.

The fact of the matter is war is very often violent and destructive and unpredictable. Obviously decisions have to be made at a time of duress. While it is easy for us to criticize, it is much easier to make a comment some 50 years after the fact.

REFERENDUM ACT

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: With regard to the procedural argument made earlier today in relation to certain amendments being offered at the report stage of Bill C-81, I indicated this morning that I would return to the House as soon as possible. I am now ready to share with hon. members the consequences of my consideration of their interventions this morning.

[*Translation*]

This morning's discussion was about whether Motions Nos. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34 standing in the names of the hon. members for Annapolis Valley—Hants, Yorkton—Melville, Churchill, Jonquière and Papineau—Saint-Michel were in order.

[*English*]

These proposed amendments all seek to change the bill by adding to it specific provisions which would relate to the effect a referendum would have.

The bill as it is now before us and as agreed to by the House at second reading makes no mention of the effect of a referendum. It deals only with the process of holding a referendum. The question of effect is a very vital one of fundamental importance to this country.

The problem faced by the Chair, however, is that proposed amendments are examined, not in relation to their significance, but from a strictly procedurally perspective. Do they seek to alter or amend existing provisions of this bill, in which case they are normally in order and allowed? Or do they seek to import new provisions into the bill which exceed the scope of the bill as already agreed to by the House, in which case they are out of order?

I have examined these particular amendments very carefully and listened attentively to arguments made this morning in the House.

[*Translation*]

The Chair is bound by quotation 698(1) in the 6th edition of Beauchesne, and I quote:

> 698. An amendment which is out of order on any of the following grounds cannot be put from the chair:
>
> *Speaker's Ruling*
>
> (1) An amendment is out of order if it is irrelevant to the bill, beyond its scope or governed by or dependent upon amendments already negatived.

[*English*]

In considering these proposed amendments and the arguments made, the Chair is of the view that proposed amendments Nos. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34, in seeking to add to the bill provisions relating to the effect of a referendum, go beyond the scope of the bill as agreed to at second reading.

The bill deals now only with the process of conducting a referendum, and to add provisions relating to the effect of a referendum goes beyond its scope as previously agreed to and is not in order.

The hon. members for Churchill and for Cape Breton—East Richmond both suggested to the House this morning that even if these proposed amendments were to be ruled out of order, the House could decide by consent to consider them anyway and to vote upon them.

That suggestion is absolutely correct. My ruling these amendments out of order does not preclude the House from dealing with them if there is consent. That is a question for the House to decide.

Procedurally, I am bound by the rules and practices of this institution. I must rule proposed amendments Nos. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34 out of order.

The hon. member for Churchill drew the Chair's particular attention to Motion No. 19, which he agreed was substantially different from the motion which was moved and negatived in committee. On this point, I am persuaded that the member's argument has merit.

Motion No. 19 will therefore be allowed. It will be grouped with Motions Nos. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 for debate and voted on only if Motion No. 18 is negatived.

I wish to close by thanking all those hon. members who participated in the procedural discussion this morning for their succinctness and their courtesy.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, for clarification and guidance from the Chair, it is my understanding that the Chair has now found that Motion No. 34 from my colleague from Papineau is procedurally out of order. Is that correct?

The only way that the Chair can see that this particular motion could come forward for subsequent debate is there would have to be unanimous consent by all

members of the House to allow that to come forward. Am I correct in the interpretation?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond, in consideration of the remarks that the Chair has just made, is exactly correct in the interpretation.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, would it be appropriate at this time to ask whether there will be unanimous consent within this House to have the provisions of Motion No. 34 as produced by my colleague from Papineau put before this House and be debated upon and thereafter adjudicated?

Would there be unanimous consent from all parties in this House?

Mr. Speaker: I understand completely the position of the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond.

On a point of order he has suggested to the House that there might be possible consent. If that is the case it should probably follow discussions between members on both sides of the House. Certainly there was some indication that at the moment at least there is not unanimous consent. We have to move on to other matters.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, earlier, my colleague for Cape Breton—East Richmond asked for unanimous consent. We, from the Bloc Quebecois, said yes. I did not hear anyone say no. If somebody said no, where did he come from?

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I did not put a motion for unanimous consent. I said that this matter ought to be properly discussed between members and if then the matter is put to the House we would see what the House did. I did say that I clearly heard some members indicating that at least at the moment there was not a mood to have complete consent.

Mr. Nystrom: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your ruling and I appreciate your comments of a moment ago.

The government House leader has asked for the consideration of unanimous consent for Motion No. 34 in the name of the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel. I would like to ask for the same consideration for the other motions that you have ruled on, for the simple reason that the government House leader, a week or two ago, said the government would be willing to entertain the possibility of dealing with amendments that were really out of the scope of the bill. To do that we need the unanimous consent of the House. I would like to ask for the same consideration for the other ones as well.

Mr. Speaker: The difficulty I am in is that there is no motion before the House. The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond has made a suggestion by way of a point of order and unless this is picked up and clear directions given to the House, I cannot proceed with the debate on this point.

As I have said, the appropriate thing to do is if there is to be further discussion between members, it should take place and then perhaps the Chair could have some indication of what is prepared to be put in front of the House by agreement.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, considering that our colleague is asking for unanimous consent of the House to debate Motion No. 34 and that you, Mr. Speaker, in the ruling you gave this morning, referred to Motions Nos. 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34, I would like in that context, that all those motions be debated as a whole to see if their is unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Speaker: I understand perfectly well the hon. member's position but, with due respect, it is the same position as was taken this morning and without unanimous consent, the Chair cannot change position. For the time being, it is up to the members of this House to discuss it.

[*English*]

Perhaps I can ask if it is on the same point.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, what you are telling us is that we cannot consult our colleagues. I heard with my own ears the Liberal Party House leader say he was in agreement, the NDP spokesperson say he was in agree-

ment, a spokesperson for the Conservatives say he was in agreement. Everybody agrees, so why postpone until later something we can do right now?

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard my concern about the Chair's intervening in something which I think should probably be discussed between members, but I will settle this.

Perhaps the House could give some guidance to the Chair. There has been a suggestion made that if by unanimous consent particular amendments which I have felt were not acceptable procedurally be debated, that would take consent. Is there consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and the motion of Mr. Murphy (p. 11215).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C–81 be amended

(a) by striking out clause 1 line 7 at page 1 and substituting the following therefor:

"chief agent", in respect of a ref—"

(b) by substituting the words "referendum committee" for the words "registered referendum committee' wherever the latter words occur in the Bill; and (c) by making such modifications as may be required in consequence thereof.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C–81 be amended in Clause 2

(a) by striking out lines 39 to 41 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

""referendum committee" means, as the case may be, the committee comprised of such persons and groups as support a referendum question or the committee comprised of such persons and groups as oppose a referendum question"; and (b) by striking out lines 14 to 16 at page 4,–

Motion No. 35.

That Bill C–81 be amended by deleting Clause 13 and the heading preceeding Clause 13 and substituting the following therefor:

'REFERENDUM COMMITTEE

13. The Governor in Council may make regulations governing referendum committees, including regulations

(*a*) providing for such matters as may be necessary for the proper operation of referendum committees, including the name under which they are to be known and the manner in which they are to be established;

(*b*) providing for the setting up of local branches of referendum committees in each electoral district;

(*c*) providing for the affiliation to the referendum committee supporting the referendum question or to the referendum committee opposing the question, as the case may be, of persons who, or groups that, support or oppose the question, as the case may be, and prescribing norms and terms and conditions with respect to the affiliation and financing of such persons or groups;

(*d*) prescribing, for each province, the maximum amount of referendum expenses that may be incurred by either referendum committee;

(*e*) prescribing the maximum amount of referendum expenses that may be incurred by either referendum committee throughout Canada or in two or more provinces specified in the proclamation issued under subsection 3(1).

14. (1) A referendum committee intending to incur referendum expenses throughout Canada or in more than one province shall file with the Chief Electoral Officer a request for approval of the proposed apportionment of such expenses.

(2) A request for approval shall be signed by the leader of the referendum committee and shall name the provinces in which the referendum expenses are to be incurred and the amounts which the referendum committee intends to incur for each province.

(3) Not later than five days after receipt of a request for approval, the Chief Electoral Officer shall notify the leader of the referendum committee of the Chief Electoral Officer's decision to approve or not to approve the proposed referendum expenses apportionment.

(4) The Chief Electoral Officer shall approve a request for approval if, in the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer, the manner in which the referendum expenses to be incurred by the referendum committee are intended to be apportioned among the provinces specified in the proclamation issued under subsection 3(1) in which such expenses are to be incurred fairly reflects the distribution of the Canadian population between such provinces.

(5) A referendum committee that incurs referendum expenses throughout Canada or in more than one province without prior approval by the Chief Electoral Officer is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty thousand dollars.

15. (1) Where the total referendum expenses incurred by a referendum committee throughout Canada or in more than one province are less than stated in the request for approval referred to in section 14, the referendum committee shall ensure that the apportionment of the referendum expenses of the committee among the provinces specified in the proclamation issued under subsection 3(1) in which such expenses are to be incurred fairly reflects the distribution of the Canadian population between such provinces.

(2) A referendum committee that contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty thousand dollars.

(3) Where a referendum committee commits an offence under this Act, the leader or chief agent of the referendum committee who directed, authorized, assented to, acquiesced in or participated in the commission of the offence is a party to and guilty of the offence and is liable on summary conviction to the punishment provided for the offence whether or not the referendum committee has been prosecuted or convicted."

Motion No. 50.

That Bill C–81 be amended in Clause 17 by striking out lines 10 to 14 at page 17 and substituting the following therefor:

"maintain a registry in which shall be recorded the name, address and telephone number of the chief agent of each referendum committee."

Motion No. 51.

That Bill C–81 be amended in Clause 18 by striking out lines 15 to 46 at page 17 and lines 1 and 2 at page 18, and substituting the following therefor:

"18. (1) Every referendum committee shall appoint a chief agent and an auditor.

(2) Where the position of chief agent of a referendum committee becomes vacant or the chief agent is unable to perform the duties of chief agent, the committee shall forthwith appoint a new chief agent and file with the Chief Electoral Officer a notice in writing, signed by the leader of the committee, of the name, address and telephone number of the new chief agent and a statement, signed by the new chief agent, that the signer has accepted the appointment as chief agent of the committee.

(3) Where the position of auditor of a referendum committee becomes vacant or the auditor ceases to be qualified as an auditor or becomes ineligible to act as an auditor before having complied with this Act in respect of any referendum finances return of the committee, the committee shall forthwith appoint a new auditor and file with the Chief Electoral Officer a notice in writing, signed by the leader of the committee, of the name, address and telephone number of the new auditor and a statement, signed by the new auditor that the signer has accepted the appointment as auditor of the committee."

Motion No. 54.

That Bill C–81 be amended by striking out lines 40 to 47 at page 20 and lines 1 to 45 at page 21 and lines 1 to 24 at page 22 and substituting the following therefor:

"polling day, allocate equally between the two referendum committees the broadcasting time to be made availabe under section 21.

(2) Each referendum committee shall indicate on which networks it wishes broadcasting time to be made available to it.

(3) In order to allocate broadcasting time, the Broadcasting Arbitrator may request additional information from the referendum committees.

(4) The Broadcasting Arbitrator shall, as soon as possible after completing the allocation and, in any event, not later than Monday, the twenty–first day before polling day, send a notice in writing of the allocation to the referendum committees, every network affected by the allocation and the Canadian Radio–television and Telecommunications Commission.

(5) An allocation of broadcasting time to be made available by a broadcasting network is final and binding on the network and on the referendum committees.

23. The Broadcasting Arbitrator shall, on request, provide the referendum committees with the names and addresses of all network operators."

• (1520)

Motion No. 55.

That Bill C–81 be amended in Clause 25 by striking out lines 36 to 38 at page 22 and substituting the following therefor:

"25. (1) Each referendum committee shall, not later than Tuesday, the".

Motion No. 59.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 34

(*a*) by striking out line 6 at page 28 and substituting the following therefor:

"travenes subsection 15(4) or (5) or"; and

(*b*) by striking out lines 10 to 15 at page 28.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to know whether or not Motion No. 35 was withdrawn.

Mrs. Venne: You stopped reading at paragraph (b).

Mr. Lapierre: Because, Mr. Speaker, I did not have the pleasure of hearing you read it.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I am somewhat ill at ease to see the members from the Bloc Quebecois—

Mr. Lapierre: Order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): —insist that you read the entire motion, especially when they have it before them.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be helpful to the debate. The question from my friend opposite was whether or not you had read Motion No. 35. I believe that I did hear you read Motion No. 35.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully as you read Motion No. 35, and you did stop at paragraph (b).

In view of the fact that these motions were introduced at the last minute, that we did not get to look at them yesterday—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Very well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Jonquière—those who witnessed what the members from the Bloc Quebecois just asked you to do will tell you—this is called misuse of power.

So we have—

Mr. Lapierre: I rise on a point of order.

Mrs. Venne: I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Saint-Hubert on a point of order.

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, you asked if we would dispense, but we said no because these motions were introduced in a hurry yesterday, so we have not had the time to read them yet and we are reading them along with you even if you are going quite fast.

That is why I ask you to resume.

[*English*]

Mr. Littlechild: Mr. Speaker, we have all had an opportunity to read these motions on at least two occasions. First, the hon. member for Jonquière mailed copies of his motions to all of our offices, second these were handed out yesterday. We have had an opportunity to read them at least twice, and I think we should move on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, the eight amendments that are on the table and that are grouped together all refer to the same objective, namely to put a ceiling on expenses during a referendum, as well as to set up a referendum committee for the yes side and one for the no side, which we call umbrella committees.

In our democracy and in our country we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms which contains various provisions. Two of those provisions are invoked depending on the group of people who want to achieve a specific objective. Some people ask us this question: Based on the freedom of expression and the freedom of association, can we force people to be grouped together under a committee for the yes or no side during a referendum? On the other hand, section 1 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and of the Constitutional Act of 1982 says: "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law

as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society."

In Quebec we have already had a referendum in 1980. At the time, there was a referendum committee for the yes side and a one for the no side, in which the principles of equity regarding expenses related to the referendum were complied with. Today, in 1992, at a time when our country is possibly getting ready for a national referendum, I am motivated by the same kind of spirit, a desire for equity and the need for both sides to have access to the same means. In that context, I feel that it would be appropriate to include in this bill very strict rules to ensure that the yes side and the no side can potentially get the same public funding to promote their respective views. It is in that context that I tabled these amendments to the bill, which my colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois as well as all the members of this House were informed of more than 10 days ago. I tabled these amendments in order to ensure fairness. Generally speaking, the moneys available for the yes and the no sides regarding referendum expenses would be the same across the country, as well as in each province and constituency.

• (1530)

I would like to mention a newspaper article dated May 20, in which Minister Marc–Yvan Côté was reported as saying the following: "Under our system, there must be a minimum of fair play between the two opposing camps. Referendum legislation must reflect this attitude, said Minister Côté." The article went on to say: "While recognizing the federal government's right to conduct a referendum, Mr. Côté referred to an unconscionable free–for–all in which anyone could spend $20,000, as a slap in the face of democracy."

Our government does restrict what a registered committee or group of persons may spend to 56.4 cents per voter. However, there are no restrictions on the number of committees that may be set up across the country. There could be 10, 20, 100, 1,000, or tens of thousands. Nobody knows. As a result, we could end up with an entirely inequitable situation in our democratic system. That is why I tabled the amendments that are before the House today, which our colleagues will be asked to discuss and possibly vote on later.

I have no desire to prolong the debate. I think the gist of what I wanted to say is there. My colleagues will be able to consider the kind of ceiling I wanted to introduce in the bill to achieve a certain degree of fairness.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac–Saint–Jean): Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House today is one that is basically acceptable and fair, one that the Bloc Quebecois will support.

The hon. member for Jonquière found the basis for his arguments in Quebec's referendum legislation. It so happens that this legislation exists and has stood the test of time for a dozen years or so as part of Quebec's statutes.

This is not just a formal reference to existing legislation or past experience, but proof positive that democracy is far better served when both sides in the debate are on equal footing.

Just imagine what will happen if the bill is not amended, considering the kind of rules it contains. We can assume there will be an appeal for corporate funds, which are practically unlimited. There will be an appeal for money from the big corporations, while the government will be able to draw on public funds with practically no restrictions. We can assume that in the sovereigntist camp, there will be a basic imbalance. I think we just have to accept the fact that those who support sovereignty for Quebec will never be able to raise as much money as the federalist across the country, especially if they have access to the financial establishment in this country.

Mr. Lapierre: And abroad.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac–Saint–Jean): At this point, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be useful to refer to a tried and true democratic tradition. The Canada Elections Act has from the very beginning of its existence provided that it was imperative in an election for the parties to be subject to the same spending limits. Why? Because choosing those who govern us is so important, the consequences are so far reaching, we must ensure the electorate makes its decision in a context devoid of any brainwashing, where serious debate can take place and where it is possible to make an objective decision.

In other words, when important decisions are to be made in a democracy, money should not be the deciding factor. We want the citizens of the country to decide. That is the most elementary and essential principle of how democracy operates, a principle that has been recognized and applied in the Canadian democratic system.

One wonders why, when the stakes are much higher than in the case of electing a government, the House of Commons should decide to depart from a long tradition of democracy in this country and proceed to destroy the equality and balance that exists between the opposing parties?

On what grounds would the Canadian legislator depart from a tradition that has made our democratic system one to be proud of?

The only argument I heard was the existence of the canadian charter. It is a strange paradox that a charter that was supposedly put in place to protect freedom of expression, maintain civil rights and prevent unfairness is now invoked to prevent legislators from maintaining a democratic tradition that would preserve fairness between the parties in an essential debate on the future of Quebec and Canada.

We must believe that this argument is invalid. We must have at least enough respect for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to say it does not stand for such unfairness, that it would not force legislators to act unfairly or in a discriminatory fashion. Quite the contrary.

If legislators had to take a risk on the chance that opponents of the bill would challenge it in court, they should err on the side of freedom of expression; they should take a risk for fairness and balance between the sides.

I submit that regardless of antagonisms, because I know there are some, and regardless of bitterness, because of course there is bitterness, but only out of respect for this long unbroken democratic tradition in Canada of which Quebec is a part and which Quebec will want to follow if it becomes sovereign, because we believe in Canadian democracy; we respect it and it is one of the great values that we recognize in our country.

Why, when we want to rebuild the country, when we want to give people a chance to speak out on a basic issue concerning its existence, its fundamental rights, why would we break with the principle of fairness with respect to spending?

I did not hear a single demonstration or justification from the government that would lead us to believe that this principle should now be set aside. It is true when I say that Quebec has experience with it, because Quebec had a charter of rights too in 1980, when the government held a referendum with spending limits and yes and no committees. Anyone could have used the Quebec charter to prevent the government from holding a referendum which allegedly violated freedom of expression. That did not happen because basically, we well know that the best way to violate freedom of expression is to swing the balance, deprive one of the parties in the debate of financial resources and give them all to the other side.

I believe that we legislators should ensure that the people decide and to the extent that this referendum seeks to let the people speak and not the political establishments, and not get around public opinion in an important debate, to the extent that the people's voice is to be heard, we should ensure that the big corporations, the banks, high finance and fundraisers do not sway the decision on the side of money. Just out of respect for the referendum principle, which would refer the matter to the people, let us trust them and ensure that they can decide freely and fairly.

I cannot understand that in a Parliament where legislation has been debated for 125 years in order to defend democracy and protect democratic rights that are always threatened, we are today pleading against a government that would have us believe that for the sake of freedom of expression, it has to limit that freedom and trample it under foot.

We are not demanding anything subversive. We are asking for rules of fairness that respect democracy, so that people can speak freely. On that, we fully support the efforts made by the hon. member for Jonquière. We may differ, but we believe that he is right on that and we hope that many voices will be raised on both sides of the House and more and more among the Conservatives to uphold freedom.

• (1540)

Second, regarding these two committes, the bill allows a multiplicity of committees. It seems to limit the number of committees since the expenses are limited for

each committee, but it allows for an infinite number of committees; it does not fool anyone. It is essential however, for the sake of coherence, to have two referendum committees, one for and one against. Otherwise, the whole process will be ruled by the law of the jungle. It will be an incredible mess. It will be a sorry sight to see committees being created by the thousands, sometimes by people who will cut the pie into strategic pieces.

What a pitiful sight these thousands of committees created all over Canada without a clear mission in the absence of two distinct kinds of committee, the yes committees and the no committees. They will lack direction. Confusion and ambiguity will be rampant. No one stands to gain anything whatsoever from such total confusion especially when dealing with such a fundamental decision.

To conclude, I would like to say that we will of course vote in favour of the motion.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I cannot miss this opportunity to look at the motions tabled by the member for Jonquière and to tell him that I also believe this to be a fundamental aspect of the democratic value of this potential exercise. Obviously, if the government decides not to follow the basic rules of democracy with this bill, the member for Jonquière, like us, will oppose a piece of legislation that would be undemocratic and illegitimate. The real test for the member for Jonquière will be the final vote. That is when he will find out if his colleagues support his amendments or not. If he cannot convince his government, I hope that he will not want to be an accomplice of an exercise that he himself calls undemocratic.

Obviously the only way to have a fair referendum is by establishing two sides. Right now, there could be hundreds if not thousands of committees on all sides. One can imagine the free-for-all that this situation could trigger. Just think that any small group in the country could decide to form its own committee. Any businessman could set up his own committee. There could be a Paul Desmarais committee and a Guy Saint-Pierre committee. In the end, every businessman will want to have his own committee.

In reality, this would make no sense. I hope the government realizes that if it does not adopt civilized rules, nobody will take this exercise seriously. There is even one of my colleagues who would recommend a committee for the former colleague of the member for Jonquière, Mr. Gravel, and a Michel Cogger committee. There could be an unlimited number of committees and all kinds of them. Obviously, nobody would take such an exercise seriously. Therefore, if the government wants to make a fool of itself, it simply has to keep going in that direction.

The beauty of the referendum legislation in Quebec is that all those who participated in this democratic exercise recognized its fairness. The reality is that the sovereignist government lost its referendum but it recognized the democratic value of the result that same day. Everybody accepted the rules of the game. And that is what was extraordinary in the end. I am not commenting on the result but on the democratic process. In fact, at that time, I also thought that the result was extraordinary. But what I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that all the participants in this exercise agreed it was a fair and equitable process.

Here, the government started off on the wrong foot. There is nobody in this Parliament, except the leader of the government and a few other ones who want to use this issue for political expediency rather than for sound motives, and we can see that people do not take this exercise seriously. Even the Liberal Party leader, who had himself suggested the idea of a referendum, was forced to admit that the rules established under this bill are undemocratic. I was surprised to hear, for example, that even if the bill was undemocratic, he was still willing to vote for it. That worried me a little during the press conference. I know that the hon. member for Jonquière made similar remarks, so I wonder how elastic his conscience is.

When we talk, for example, of the Quebec referendum bill and the principles that guided it: first, the umbrella committees, and second, the spending limits, it is obvious that in a democracy, with Canadian democratic values, we agreed that in order to get elected here in the House of Commons, we could not let people spend millions and millions of dollars. We did not want to accept the American jungle where everybody has to—campaigns are so expensive that we become the victims of various

lobbies. We must virtually submit ourselves to the power of money.

This Parliament gave itself some rules and each of us who sits here recognized the value of spending limits. Why is it that, with such a fundamental issue as the Constitution, it would now be the free-for-all? There is something indecent about all this. It is so indecent, so blatant, that it is staring you in the face. That is why the citizens, particularly from Quebec, will never feel bound by the result of a process which is distorted from the beginning. If the government thinks it can solve anything with such a trivial process, it is grossly mistaken.

As soon as there is a free-for-all in the establishment of the committees, as soon as the power of money overrides the content of the debate and the decision of the citizens, it is obvious that there is absolutely no fair play. We are in the heart of the British institution which should be the perfect example of fair play. I know some days you doubt it, Mr. Speaker, but I also know you are trying every day to apply that fair play.

I tell you there is no fair play in this bill. All political parties, except the Conservatives, who have their eyes completely blindfolded, recognize that there are problems with the democratic value of that exercise. Why not solve at least that detail?

The hon. member for Jonquière has the merit of at least raising the issue. I must also tell you that it is obvious that the financing criteria—I did not have time to thoroughly examine the proposal from the hon. member for Jonquière—I do not know if he limited the contribution to individual financing or if he allowed large corporations a free hand. I suppose that with its slogan that almost says "Let the people decide", the government would want to make sure that the decision would be taken by the citizens, and not by the multinationals. It is obvious that a decision by the citizens should be financed and managed by the citizens themselves.

I would like to return to the attack in order to emphasize a point. A bill that is flawed from the beginning, such a weird exercise will get no credibility in the eyes of the public, particularly in Quebec considering the precedent and the democratic values that are essential to that exercise.

I cannot imagine the government thinks for a minute that anybody in Quebec could feel bound by such legislation. I cannot understand why English Canada does not object to that. I cannot understand why Conservative ministers and members from English Canada are willing to accept such unworthy legislation. They should oppose it, they who claim to be the great protectors of democracy. The most stupid argument I heard was from the Government House Leader, who used the excuse of the charter of rights to violate those same rights.

• (1550)

You must have quite a bit of imagination to think that Canadians and Quebecers are going to swallow the argument that the Canadian charter of rights prevents us from putting some democratic principles into this referendum bill.

This is insulting for the charter of rights. In 1980, all parties involved accepted the results. The problem in 1980 was not a weakness in the statute, it was a weakness in the Constitution. Her Majesty was not bound by the statute. In other words the spending limits applied only to Quebec citizens. The federal state was not bound by a provincial statute, which means, unfortunately, it was able to abuse the system. Everybody now recognizes this was the only weakness of the process in 1980.

Consequently, I congratulate the hon. member for Jonquière, I am looking forward to testing the depth of his convictions and I hope he will stand up to the end.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, members of the Bloc Quebecois do not have to decide for me what I will do on third reading.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order, it is a point of debate.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, these amendments are very important and I want to speak generally in favour of the initiative taken by my colleague and friend, the member for Jonquière, in bringing this group of amendments, which the Speaker has clustered together. There are eight different motions that we are looking at together.

It is important to understand that there are three main elements to this package of amendments. The first element is that it recognizes the importance of having committees, or as some call them, umbrella committees, to organize the activity for the yes side and the no side in a national plebiscite.

The second element is that there would be spending limits that would maintain an over-all balance and fairness in the process so that spending does not become the name of the game, but that the whole effort is proceeded with on a balanced footing.

The third element in this group of amendments by my colleague is to deal with some reasonable exceptions. This is done by accommodating the exception that is already in the bill as drafted by the government, an amount of $5,000. This is to ensure fairness and balance for the rigorously independent of mind.

Briefly, it is important at this juncture of the debate to note the origins of each of these three elements of the package; the umbrella committees, the spending limits and the reasonable exceptions. The first concept of having the umbrella committees is something that interestingly enough was developed in the United Kingdom for its plebiscite in 1975 on whether the U.K. should continue to adhere to the European Community.

I know that a great many Canadians think that holding direct votes, referendums and plebiscites is something that is unparliamentary and not in our best British parliamentary traditions. It is a sobering thing though to actually look and see that it was the British who developed this concept in 1975.

It worked well enough there to attract a positive interest of legislators in our country and in the province of Quebec. The National Assembly embraced this concept in *La Loi sur les référendums* and has seen it used not only in the direct vote on May 20, 1980 on the question of sovereignty association, but also one time since the charter has been in force. It was used in the October 1989 vote in northern Quebec on the whole question of the forming of a new constitutional system of government for the aboriginal people, the Inuit of northern Quebec.

There has twice been the experience in our country with umbrella committees, both of them in the province of Quebec. Quebec has again given our country leadership, not only on this issue, but on how to have modern structures that permit the necessary balance.

On the second area, the spending limits, the origins are equally important for all of us as we consider these amendments because it was the Barbeau commission that reported in 1966 on spending laws for Canadian federal elections, election expenses and so on. That report, like a great many commission reports in this country, languished for not just months but years until it was picked up by a Liberal member of Parliament who was quite interested in the subject, Mr. Hyliard G. Chappell. He got a committee going and all of that initiative led to the Barbeau commission's report coming forward in 1974 when Parliament passed the Election Finances Reform Act in 1974.

Since then we have had a couple of decades of experience at the national level with rules that govern how money is raised and spent in the conduct of our national elections. The effort here is to see those same principles and the values that underlie them carried into this legislation that will pertain to a national plebiscite on constitutional matters.

Those rules from 1974 had one feature that was very significant and that was where Parliament decided to draw the line between freedom of expression on the one hand and the efficacy of these election finance laws on the other. As long as we are a country there will be debate over where that line should be. There is clearly a trade-off here. The issue of having that line in the right place so that there can still be adequate freedom of expression but also respect for these rules that Parliament wants so that our political processes do not simply become a process dominated by the wealthy is the fundamental issue.

When Parliament passed, very rapidly, amendments in 1983 to shift that line dramatically in favour of the finance laws and against freedom of expression, that put in place a law that was certainly challengeable. It was challenged by the National Citizens Coalition. In Alberta that case came before the Court of Queen's Bench and, interestingly enough, the National Citizens Coalition, an organization that is often denigrated by many in

the country, was found to have led an important fight there. Subsequently, many others who often speak up for civil liberties in Canada, freedom of expression and so on, were latecomers to climb on board that bandwagon. It was very important that that issue was before the courts and that was a decision in Alberta that struck down the place that Parliament had put that line because it too greatly infringed on freedom of expression.

Perhaps the government of the day should have challenged that law, should have appealed that decision, but it did not and the fact is that right now we have that same issue here before us in the House of Commons in this bill. It is the content of the amendments by the member for Jonquière. Regardless of whether the member for Brant thinks that it should have been appealed—I agree, it should have been—the fact is it was not. At least Parliament, better than the Supreme Court of Canada in my view on this matter, is now going to have a chance to consider again where that line should be on freedom of expression.

That is why I think the third point about reasonable exceptions is the point that raises the role of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Supreme Court of Canada in relation to Parliament and what we do here.

I am glad that the approach taken by the member with his amendments dovetails with what is already in the government's bill where there is exception made, as I say up to $5,000, for those who want to operate outside the two umbrella committees.

• (1600)

Let us be careful. I would caution those in government who try to draft legislation before they bring it to us here to be careful, to not be so anxious to have legislation that is charter proof that it becomes plebiscite proof. We will end up with something that could never be challenged in court because it has nothing left in it to be challenged but it does not have either any of the substance, rules, and procedures necessary to see the plebiscite will be fairly carried out in accordance with the values that for 20 years have become deeply enshrined in our Canadian political culture.

In short, it is important in speaking to support these amendments to make these two final points. Talking about umbrella committees is not to talk about strait-jackets. The creation of umbrella organizations, under which the many different groups would maintain their integrity and positions could operate, is quite different than something that would unduly restrict them as a strait-jacket would.

The view that they would have to be the exclusive vehicles for those supporting or opposing has been an unfortunate attitude with which to view the umbrella committees. They can operate to advantage to bring structure, purpose, and channelling the energies of those who want to divide up the broadcasting time, who want to raise and spend the moneys, but they do not have to cut it off entirely. That is the reason these amendments deserve support.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to an allocation of time for report stage and third reading of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada.

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 allocating a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stages.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words here in support of the motions before us calling upon the government to consider forming umbrella committees in order to conduct the referendum campaign in a more orderly way.

I realize there are certain problems with umbrella committees. There are legal opinions. There may be violations of the charter under section 2(b), which is the freedom of expression section, or section 2(d), the freedom of association section. That is not known for sure and legal opinions on this are divided.

We have had many legal opinions saying that exclusive umbrella committees are probably a violation of the charter. Other people have said if we have certain reasonable limitations in terms of spending they may not be violations of the charter.

The suggestion I made before and I want to make again to the government is a quick reference to the Supreme Court so we can clarify this particular issue. This issue will go to court anyway in this country very shortly. There is going to be a court action launched in the province of Quebec to challenge the Quebec referendum law under freedom of association and under freedom of speech in that particular province. There will be a court judgment rendered on whether this is in violation of the charter.

I suggest the government consider at this time referring this issue to the Supreme Court and try to get the Supreme Court to fast-track it so we can get a decision on whether we can establish umbrella committees.

The province of Quebec is recommending the use of the notwithstanding clause to make this charter proof. I certainly would not recommend that action at this time for this House but that is one possibility of what could be done.

If we can set up umbrella committees, that is the way the House should go. In a referendum question, a referendum bill, as seen before the House today, we will have one question, maybe two or maybe three.

I think one option is to set up a yes committee for each question and a no committee for each question. People who are on one side or the other can be part of that committee like they were in the province of Quebec.

It worked very well in the province of Quebec in 1980 in terms of how it was organized. I was part of that in terms of the federal New Democratic Party on the no side. I was the person who was delegated by my party to attend some of the no meetings.

[*Translation*]

I remember when the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer was also a member of the no committee in 1980 in the province of Quebec. He was mayor of Hull at the time, if I remember correctly. He was there, and I was there as a federal delegate for the New Democratic Party.

[*English*]

We had no problem in terms of the organization of the no committee or the yes committee in terms of allocation of time for advertising, or allocation of time in terms of money. It was orderly. It was very well done. We did not have any problems in terms of the organization.

If it is the will of Parliament, if it is the will of the people of this country that we set up an umbrella committee again, surely we can argue before the court that would be seen as a reasonable limitation on freedom of association or expression in this country.

After all, in a referendum question there are only two answers. It is either yes or no. It is not maybe or maybe but. It is yes or no. If everybody is on the yes side or the no side, surely to goodness you can get together and organize, as in the province of Quebec, fair treatment of all the organizations in each umbrella group and make the argument before the court that is not unfair limitation under section 2(d) of the charter which is freedom of association.

In terms of freedom of speech, another suggestion I have made in terms of the motion before the House here today is perhaps if people do not want to be part of these umbrella committees, we can take an idea from the Lortie royal commission on electoral expense in which he said that if you do not want to belong to a political party, you will be allowed to spend $1,000 as an individual in terms of third-party advertising.

You, Mr. Speaker, are supposedly not part of the yes side or the no side of this referendum. You could if you were a private individual spend $1,000 in buying ads, printing brochures, renting halls and persuading people to vote either yes or no. Therefore, you do have an outlet in terms of political expression and I wish the government would take a serious look at that as one of the options.

Also in terms of freedom of speech in this country and freedom of expression, all we are talking about here is the freedom of paid expression. No matter how we organize this, people can still write letters to the editor, phone the open-line shows, knock on doors to persuade their neighbours and talk to their neighbours. They can still participate in public meetings.

There is no inhibition in terms of their freedom of speech, and that is a very basic part of this country as well. The freedom of speech is there. All we are talking about here is the freedom of paid speech in this country. We could construct rules and regulations that are charter

proof if we had national umbrella committees in this country, one for the yes and one for the no.

If we have more than one question on the referendum, we could have an umbrella committee for the yes and for the no for the first question. We could have an umbrella committee for the yes and for the no for the second question or, if there are three questions, have the same thing for the third question as well.

Again, there is a parallel here with the Elections Act. There is no limitation in this country on the number of political parties. What we have in this country is a limitation of what each political party can spend but there is no limitation on the number of political parties.

If we had two, three, four, five referendum questions, there would be a limitation on the umbrella questions in terms of the number of questions that were asked, but the limitation would be the number of committees in so far as we have the number of questions.

There is a parallel here to the Elections Act. Before I sit down, I ask that the parliamentary secretary across the way take a serious look at this proposal.

• (1610)

I know the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore has made many recommendations as a recognized expert in this House on referenda as to how we could have a yes and no committee, how they could be charter-proof, how people can guard and keep their right for freedom of speech and freedom of opinion, freedom of association being given respect in this country and still have an orderly referendum campaign where there are reasonable spending limitations so that people on both sides of the question have the same access to the paid media.

In the final analysis, what we have to make sure we do is that we have a fair piece of referendum legislation, where a referendum cannot be bought or be perceived to be bought by one side or the other.

If there is a perception that somebody is buying the referendum, somebody has access to all kinds of money that the other side does not have, it can create a backlash in this country, a backlash in one of the regions of the country, in the province of Quebec, in western Canada, in Newfoundland, or anywhere else. We can find that people are voting against the perception that big money is buying the result, rather than voting for or against the question in the referendum itself.

Those are some of the basic arguments as to why, if there is to be a national referendum, we have to have spending limitations. The only way we can have real spending limitations is if we have umbrella committees. It was done in the province of Quebec. It was suggested by the member across the way from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, suggested by the Liberal Party, supported by our party and suggested by our party in terms of the committee. The government itself has said in principle it would like to have limitations on what could be spent.

Let us be a little bit imaginative with all the legal advice we have in this country and draft legislation where we can have yes and no committees for every question. We would still have freedom of speech for third party advertising, if that is what they call it. I would say $1,000 limitation per person and have a referendum campaign in this country that is fair and just.

I want to stop here and just ask the parliamentary secretary to go back to the government to see whether or not there is a possibility of taking another look at it, a different way of organizing this, so we can have meaningful limitations.

In the final analysis, if we have legislation that is perceived not to be fair it could come back to haunt all of us. We do not want that.

What most of us want in this House is a constitutional package in the end that is supported by the three national political parties, all the provincial governments and the aboriginal people. Then if we have a national referendum, a package that the people of this country will feel good about going out and saying yes to, we will all be on the same side in saying yes to Canada and saying yes to this new federation.

Now we have a bill that is drafted in such a way where certain organizations can spend an awful lot of money. If we are not careful, we run the risk of souring the atmosphere and having people vote against a reasonable package when they otherwise would not do it.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please.

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Winnipeg North—Revenue Canada; the hon. member for Edmonton East—The Environment; the hon. member for London East—Housing; the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap—Atmospheric Contaminants; the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Immigration and Refugee Board.

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes to support the motion moved by the hon. member for Jonquière. I find it totally acceptable, and all my colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois agree.

I know very well the 1980 legislation Quebec used to hold its referendum. As my colleague from Yorkton—Melville mentioned earlier, I was mayor of Hull in 1980. The no umbrella committee asked me to chair the western Quebec committee and demand a renewed federalism from the federal government.

At the time, I thought it was still possible for us to get along in this country. I chaired the no committee in the Outaouais region, and in that referendum, the no side won with 59.8 or 59.9 per cent of the votes. The PQ government, which initiated the referendum legislation, bowed to the will of the people and accepted the results of the referendum, and from then on we waited for the renewed federalism we had been promised. I know all about it.

On April 20, 1980, I stood on the same platform with Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien and Claude Ryan, at the Robert-Guertin arena in Hull, in the riding of Hull—Aylmer. At the time, this was 12 years ago, we were fighting for renewed federalism.

Today, 12 years later, we are discussing ways to put Quebec in its place, right here in Ottawa, in the Parliament of Canada.

The Conservative member for Jonquière tabled a motion that is very similar to Quebec's referendum legislation, which reflects a respect for democracy. It respects both the yes and the no sides. There is a balance between the yes and no umbrella organizations, and there are specific spending limits within those organizations. We call that fair play. We call that democracy. We call that respect for the other side.

Today the government has decided to practically ignore the motions tabled in this House. Only two members of the Conservative Party bothered to speak to the motion tabled by the hon. member for Jonquière, and the leader of the government has already moved a motion of closure for tomorrow. Yesterday those members said: we will not give the 48 hours provided under the Standing Orders, and we will move closure to end debate after 24 hours. Today, another motion for closure.

I think this kind of interference is unfortunate. I think it is sad to see democracy flouted this way, especially when we are dealing with the Constitution of the country, a Constitution foundering on the distrust of two founding peoples, a Constitution they want to ram down the throats of Quebecers. They want to put Quebec in its place.

Mr. Speaker, I joined the Bloc Quebecois in this House after June 23, 1990, when Meech Lake lost any significance it may have had and was turned down by two Canadian provinces. I did so to defend the greater interests of Quebec within the precincts of the House of Commons and to serve the interests of Quebec, with the respect owed to democracy and the integrity we can expect from our elected representatives.

• (1620)

I think it is a great pity that a Conservative member would put forward today amendments relating to the very substance of democracy and the freedom of expression and that this government refuses to be tolerant, and moreover ignores it.

As for the fact mentioned when Bill C-81 was tabled that a ceiling could not be put on expenditures because this could be challenged under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, this raises serious doubts about the confidence placed in the charter. If we do not have confidence in it, let us change it or repeal it. Why not have used the notwithstanding clause? If that had been the case, it would have been possible to use the clause to maintain democracy, to maintain expenditures for such a major consultation process, as Quebec will be consulting its people at the same time on its political future, under a

yes umbrella and a no umbrella, in face of the constitutional rejection of English Canada.

Are you suggesting that this House force down the throat of Quebecers a deal bought through a massive publicity drive, at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, such as the one this government has already embarked upon? That is absolutely incredible. It is unthinkable.

People in my riding were telling me just the other day that they could not even watch a simple game of hockey on TV without an advertisement on what a beautiful country Canada is being flashed on the screen every five minutes. It is not ads such as those that will bring unity between the two founding nations. That is not the point. It is much more a matter of Quebecers mistrusting English Canadians who cannot even agree among themselves.

Mr. Bourassa cannot be blamed for not attending the federal-provincial conference, when the nine English-speaking provinces do not agree among themselves. How do you expect Quebec to reach an agreement on its own?

We will support the motion of the member for Jonquière. For those who are watching us on TV today, especially in Quebec—I can understand where English Canada is coming from—I think it is a great pity to have such an undemocratic piece of legislation forced on them. Unfortunately, we can find only a few members to stand up for Quebec in this House, including the hon. member for Jonquière who supported it and proposed amendments. The others caved in, and are grovelling. They will be remembered in history—not that of Canada, but the Quebec history—as members sent to Ottawa to defend the interests of Quebec and caved in on such a fundamental issue. I urge Conservative and Liberal members from Quebec to prevent this from becoming a reality.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to intervene in this debate to support the motions presented by the hon. member for Jonquière.

I want to congratulate him on presenting Motions Nos. 2, 7, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55 and 59, which in many respects take some provisions of the Quebec Referendum Act that advocate not only the creation of two umbrella committees, one for the yes side and the other for the no, but that set limits on what each of these two committees can spend in a referendum campaign.

Of course, the Liberal Party of Canada hopes a Canadian referendum will not only give Canadians a chance to express their opinion on thorough changes to their Constitution but also give them a chance to say yes to Quebec and give Quebecers a chance to say yes to Canada. We are not afraid of such a public consultation. The Bloc Quebecois representatives seem to fear like the plague a referendum in which Quebecers would be asked their opinion on a series of constitutional amendments in line with the traditional five demands of the Quebec government headed by Robert Bourassa.

We think that the Government of Canada and the provinces are moving towards a compromise on a package of constitutional proposals that could considerably change our Canadian system, but that could also satisfy Quebec's legitimate aspirations. What better way than to ask them directly, in a referendum, whether or not they approve of this constitutional package put forward by the Government of Canada and the provinces. I think that is a completely democratic exercise which is quite legitimate and in no way contravenes the basic rules of democracy.

Certainly it would be better to bring all the yes supporters together on one side and all the no supporters together on the other and to impose strict spending limits on them. That is the purpose of the amendments proposed by the hon. member for Jonquière. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the members of the Liberal Party of Canada will support these amendments enthusiastically.

We hope that the government will think it over and see that these amendments are justified. If, unfortunately, the government did not accept these amendments, we would at least hope to see a government representative, either the parliamentary secretary today or even better the Prime Minister himself on third reading, assure us that if the government holds a referendum on specific constitutional offers, it will not abuse its spending power and intervene in a heavy-handed, undemocratic way. Then both the supporters and the opponents of this proposal can fight it out on a level playing field with equal chances for both sides.

• (1630)

It seems obvious to me that it is not necessary—as I have already said in this House—to spend excessively to point out the merits of Canadian federalism. I do not think that it is necessary to spend excessively in any province of Canada, including Quebec. I am convinced that it is not necessary to use money to convince Quebecers of the merits of a good constitutional reform that would provide a favourable response to the five traditional requests of the Government of Quebec.

This is why I regret that, so far, the government has not deemed appropriate to impose more rigid limits to electoral and referendum expenses, and more importantly, does not see the opportunity to copy the referendum legislation of Quebec.

Some of our colleagues in this House ask themselves this question: if the amendments tabled by the member for Jonquière were to be rejected, should the member for Jonquière or other members in this House who support these amendments vote against the referendum act?

Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that at this time we hope these amendments will be agreed to. We also hope the government will recognize that it is essential to have a bill that will not only be fair but will be perceived as being fair and equitable for everybody, including the separatists, the independantistes and the members of the Bloc Quebecois. It seems certain to me that whatever we do, those indépendantistes, separatists and members of the Bloc Quebecois will always be disappointed and unsatisfied, but I nevertheless think the referendum legislation is essential for the Government of Canada.

We believe that if the Government of Quebec has an act that enables it to hold a referendum, and if the government of British Columbia has an act that enables it to do the same, it goes without saying that the Government of Canada should also have a piece of legislation enabling it to hold a referendum and to consult Canadians across the country or in specific regions of Canada.

I do not know what this government will do following the constitutional negotiations. I do not know if the Government of Canada will invoke section 3 of this bill to hold a Canadian referendum in some provinces but not in all of them. This means that the Government of Canada could, provided it reaches an agreement with the provinces, allow those interested in doing so, to hold their own referendum according to their provincial legislation. The Government of Canada could therefore hold a referendum in the provinces where there would be no desire to hold such consultation at the provincial level. It is quite possible that all these discussions which seem to scare the members of the Bloc Quebecois are totally useless. Indeed, it may well be that, under this legislation, there will be a referendum in several provinces, but that in the case of Quebec it will be its referendum act that will apply. Should this be the case, all the antics and fears of our friends from the Bloc Quebecois will have been useless and unnecessary.

Whatever the situation may be, I will end by saying that we must have a referendum act that enables the Government of Canada to act if it deems appropriate to do so. Also, this legislation must, as much as possible, ensure a level playing field for the two sides, and be democratic by allowing those who want to belong to either group to be subjected to the same rules and be allowed roughly the same electoral and referendum expenses.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the comments made by my friend from Jonquière, a Quebecois patriot, who nevertheless works hard for a renewed Canada.

My friend was a member of the two special joint committees and he was present at the organizational meeting of the legislative committee on that bill.

[*English*]

He is a member of Parliament who has truly made a constructive contribution to this debate and to many preceding debates. He has presented a series of amendments which would have the effect of bringing into Bill C-81 the concept of exclusive umbrella committees as in the Quebec legislation on referendums. Only two umbrella committees would be set up: one in support and one in opposition to the question or questions.

The mechanics for the administration of this scheme would be left to the Governor in Council to make by regulation. There are numerous issues raised by this approach, issues which were also canvassed in the legislative committee which completed its work last Tuesday.

The first of these would be the restriction of participation to two exclusive committees and that, as has been touched on in this debate, raises charter concerns with respect to freedom of expression and to freedom of association.

I heard my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean seeking to deprecate the importance of that. I wonder if he was perhaps speaking in the context of the 1980 situation which preceded the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I know he referred to the Quebec charter, but I do not think it is exactly four-square with the situation we have here.

My friend from Papineau—Saint-Michel referred to the charter issue only very fleetingly. I was looking forward to his grappling with that issue because I know he had the opportunity to read the opinions which have been submitted to the government on the issue. I wonder, with all due respect to that distinguished gentleman, whether he was so much persuaded by those opinions that he did in fact skate around the issue of charterability.

The Governor in Council, under the amendments proposed by my friend from Jonquière, would be obligated to control the process in detail. That would include apportionment of funding among affiliates, rules for affiliation, maximum spending limits, the manner in which the committees and affiliates would be established and indeed the names of the committees.

I would ask with great respect whether it is really the intention of my friend that the cabinet would be setting those rules.

• (1640)

It seems to me the exercise we are talking about here is an exercise of maximum involvement of the people of Canada and a democratization of the process. To have cabinet intervening in matters so intimately involved with the exercise of freedom of expression would I think be somewhat abusive to the process.

The Chief Electoral Officer under these amendments would have to approve the apportionment of expenses of a committee which operates nationally or which operates in more than one province. These are important matters which have not been addressed in the amendments as to how they would work. In the Canadian context testimony was given in committee that this scheme would likely be contrary to the charter.

The question of freedom of association is in many ways more profound and more challenging than even the fundamental question of freedom of expression, which is inextricably wrapped up in the question of the spending limits in particular.

It is interesting that the Bloc Quebecois would be in support of these amendments. What would happen if they were to become the law of Canada and if members of the Bloc Quebecois were participating on whatever side? I would guess they would be negative to any propositions that would be put forward to the people of Canada. They might find themselves under the same umbrella as—these are just examples because we cannot be certain of this—Mr. Manning and the Reform Party; Mr. Elmer Knutson, the founder of the CORE group, which is fundamentally opposed to the use of the French language in Canada as is the Association for the Protection of English in Canada, which I think would be under the same umbrella with them and who knows who else. The National Citizens Coalition, the Assembly of First Nations, REAL Women and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women might all be together under the same tent. I wonder if they have really thought this through.

It was an excellent intervention that my friend from Etobicoke—Lakeshore made. He is an authority on these matters and he quite correctly described the three main elements of these amendments: the setting up of the committees, the spending limits, and the issues of balance of fairness that flow from those and the reasonable exceptions.

I listened as well to the intervention from my friend from Yorkton—Melville who has been working with these issues since 1980 and has made a great contribution to the debate in our country. He observed that the challenge is to set up committees and rules that are charter proof. It was the intention of the government to try to find those rules, and those committees that would be charter proof. The truth be told, the government

would prefer to have committees if only they would withstand the test of the charter.

At this stage I would venture to say it is certainly imprudent to risk the challenge of the charter in the face of the very overwhelming opinion to the contrary.

With great reluctance I would advocate the defeat of this cluster of amendments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I think we just heard a repetition of the government's arguments justifying the passage of a bill which is a true conscription of democracy. What is really extraordinary is that we refer to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to justify rules which impose no limit on spending.

The federal government will be allowed to spend millions of dollars. Each committee will be allowed to spend up to $8.5 million and the number of committees will be unlimited and all that, in the name of democracy and freedom of speech. It is really unbelievable. I think it would appear utterly ridiculous to the Supreme Court, whose opinion we could have sought, and certainly to any normal democracy that a charter of rights and freedoms would give the richest and most powerful such a disproportionate influence. Allowing everybody to express their opinion on a major issue is the simplest way to improve the democratic process.

Once again, we invoke individual rights to deny this democratic exercise. A group or an individual, let us say a billionaire, could decide to spend freely to express his views.

We are told that the government will reject the amendments proposed by the hon. member for Jonquière. He already knows about it. The hon. member for Jonquière is part of this government. He knows where his party stands, and he will have to decide what to do.

This was a nice attempt at showing some national pride. He dared propose amendments to make this bill a little more democratic. He did it knowing full well that they would be defeated. At least he was called a patriot, a great patriot, by our friend from Edmonton Southwest. Then he said he would vote against his amendments, he is a patriot, but a patriot who is going to be hanged. Of course, he knows the government will use its majority to defeat his amendments.

We also heard from the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel who said he agreed, he was going to vote for the proposed amendments which provide for an umbrella group on the yes side and another umbrella group on the no side, as well as some control on spending. The hon. member was very sanctimonious.

This bill is essentially the same as the one tabled by Marc Lalonde in 1979. As far as the hon. member for Jonquière is concerned, we can still speculate whether he acted in good faith, whether he will have the guts, one day, to make a decision? There is no doubt the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel was here to vote for the War Measures Act. There is no doubt about his sincerity when it comes to democracy and the future of Quebec.

The jury is still out about the hon. member for Jonquière, but it will not last much longer. The crucial moment is fast approaching. In his area, editorialists do not trust him too much, but we can still expect a surge of pride, we can still hope he will draw his own conclusions, since the government said it will defeat his motion. It is not enough to look good, you also have to push the conclusions to their logical end. If the hon. member for Jonquière really believes that to be democratic the referendum process needs spending limits and a grouping of people on each side of the issue, and if he knows that his motion will be defeated, he can draw his own conclusions.

Several other members should also reflect on that and draw their own conclusions, because we are told that we need that bill, but we will not use it. This measure is totally anti-democratic. This is a preparation for a showdown, a conscription of democracy, but it is not going to be used. They are inching their way towards some kind of show of force. History repeats itself. The first time it is tragic, the second, ridiculous. Nobody in Quebec takes seriously people who have been procrastinating for months. That is what they have been trying to do by putting things off for the last two years by spending millions of dollars, by having people changing their mood from good to bad and back again, by riding the roller coaster of hope and despair and by being totally unable to make a decision because they know that at the end of

the road, there will not be any proposal worth considering.

• (1650)

The member for Papineau—Saint-Michel was saying earlier that the federal government has the right to hold a referendum on serious proposals that would be favourable to Quebec. Everybody knows that the Quebec premier is hoping for serious proposals, but he is losing hope of ever receiving some serious proposals and is even considering holding a referendum. We know full well that if the government and the Liberal Party had some serious proposals to make, the premier of Quebec would be the first one to want to submit them to the people of Quebec, but Mr. Bourassa will never have any to present.

This is why we are planning to pass a law which is nothing short of a violation of democracy, because nothing in the constitutional package will be acceptable. On top of that they want to gag us. Since the beginning of this debate those members have tried to gag us. We had been told that during the important report stage we could speak our mind on each clause. Now they tell us they are bringing the guillotine in tomorrow. Well, I think there is still some hope before they drop the guillotine tomorrow. We can still pursue the debate on this bill and hope that by arguing with our colleagues from Quebec they, at least, will understand how important it is to oppose this bill.

Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 26, I move:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill C-81.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member have the seconder?

Mr. Tremblay, seconded by Mr. Lapierre, pursuant to Standing Order 26(1) moves:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of consideration of Bill C-81.

Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places?

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): More than 15 members have risen. Pursuant to Standing Order 46(2), the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the remarks all day from members of the Bloc Quebecois and to listen to them you would think that they were the only ones in the House who cared about the people of Quebec.

They seem to come across like they have some special gift for giving counsel to the people of Quebec.

This kind of nonsense that has been going on today is really counter productive for the people of Quebec. I heard the member for Jonquière speak earlier today. He is an example of someone who is trying very hard to be constructive and creative in a very difficult circumstance.

As someone from downtown Toronto who does not understand all of the complexities that you are facing in your province right now, and I admit that openly, I salute you for your attempt to try to bring some order to this debate because the people who were opposing you today from the Bloc were not being constructive.

This is just small-time tactics. It is not a productive exercise and the more it goes on, my prediction will be the more they will sink themselves into oblivion.

The people of Canada are having a very difficult time understanding what is going on in this House the last two days. First of all, they tried to shut down the South Moresby National Park and now they are trying to infer that we are jamming some kind of exercise down the throats of the people of Quebec.

I believe that Quebecers are much more intelligent than the Bloc Quebecois is giving them credit for. I have many friends in the province of Quebec and they tell me that right now the thing that is uppermost on their mind is the economy. There are many, many people right now, not just in Quebec but in every part of this country, who are in deep economic pain.

There are people who are not working. There are businesses that are having difficulties making ends meet and the quicker we get rid of this divisiveness that is being promoted, the better the chances of this economy coming back together. We have so much in this country to work on, but it is pretty tough when you have this kind of counter productive spirit working, especially in this place.

I listened to the member for Hull—Aylmer who talked about the fact that in 1980 he was on the same stage as Prime Minister Trudeau. I am sure that many members of the government who are in power today were also on that same stage. He seems to forget it was his participation with that spirit and leadership that was responsible for this man not only being the force that he was as the mayor of Hull, but was also one of the reasons why he was elected to this Parliament of Canada.

The people in his riding did not elect him to work at separating this country. They elected him to come to this Chamber to work at keeping this country together. I have great difficulty in understanding where he is coming from. He talked about the fact that the day after the Meech Lake Accord went down it was the end of his life as someone who believed in Canada.

The fact of the matter is that there were many, many people, even in the province of Quebec, who believed that there were serious flaws in the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I hear the member regretting the failure of Meech Lake.

I accuse him and his colleagues of killing Meech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): 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*]

HAZARDOUS WASTE

BAN ON IMPORTATION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should ban the importation of all hazardous waste.

• (1700)

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak on this timely issue on the eve of a conference which could have overwhelming implications for the future of our planet.

The motion I am introducing is a very simple motion but it flows from the work done by the Brundtland commission dealing with our common future and the work that will be examined in great detail at the conference in Rio de Janeiro. I would like to read the motion into the record:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should ban the importation of all hazardous waste.

It is a simple motion but it speaks to the issue which has gripped our nation and indeed the world for the last number of years and that is the issue of what constitutes sustainable development.

One of the messages from the Brundtland commission was clear: think globally and act locally. This particular motion enshrines the notion of local action into parliamentary law. What it says is in future industrial development and in future residential development in our country we have to be prepared to deal with our own hazardous wastes at home and likewise that other countries must feel compelled to do the same.

It is an important concept because in the world of garbage in which we live, and Canada is one of the greatest garbage-producing nations in the world, it is critical that we not only find ways of disposing of our garbage, but begin to take responsibility for our own waste. This particular motion enshrines that as a principle, specifically in dealing with the issue of hazardous waste.

[*Translation*]

I first introduced this motion in 1989 when we learned that Canada was importing BPC contaminated gasoline. At that time, customers had no idea that the gasoline and heating oil they were purchasing might be toxic. Farmers did not suspect that the oil used to heat their greenhouses might be toxic. I tabled the motion hurriedly in order to ban the importation of hazardous waste into Canada and to make Canadians understand that we should treat our own BPCs. It is not enough to encourage BPC exports. It is absolutely essential also that we have the means to dispose of our own waste. I had this matter slated for debate in early May last year because I knew that the situation not only had not improved but had worsened.

It is a fact that Canada remains, on the eve of the Rio de Janeiro meeting, the single largest producer of waste material in the world. Canada is the most wasteful country in the world. On the other hand, we have yet to adopt a policy requiring that, as a matter of principle, we

treat our own waste material and especially our toxic waste.

In fact the situation keeps worsening even now. In its May 27 issue, *La Presse* reported that Canada is the world's largest importer of toxic waste material.

[*English*]

We are the largest world importer of toxic waste. Canada, a country that wants to be a world leader in Rio, is also the world leader in importing toxic waste.

[*Translation*]

It reported that 95 per cent of all hazardous waste material imported into Canada comes from the United–States. Canada imports 142,000 tons of dangerous waste, and exports almost as much.

So we have nearly 300,000 tons of hazardous waste crossing the border between Canada and the United States.

[*English*]

Think of it, 300,000 tonnes of toxic waste is passing our border on an annual basis. Small wonder that the fire–fighters of Canada are doing their level best to get legislation which would ensure that transportation of toxic waste be properly computerized. In that amount of tonnage, clearly there is the possibility for some very serious accidents and very serious public ramifications.

[*Translation*]

Canada is the biggest carrier of toxic waste. As luck would have it, I am raising this issue at the very moment the international community is meeting in Rio to try to find answers to the major ecological problems of this planet.

[*English*]

It is just a coincidence that this motion is coming forward on the week that we are moving into the real conference but it is also critical that as Canadians, before we preach to the world, before the Prime Minister unveils another empty green plan, we should tell the world we are the number one world importer of toxic waste, a fact that most Canadians are not aware of.

[*Translation*]

I hope conference delegates in Rio are not aware of these statistics because it would be very embarrassing for Canada. It is embarrassing to rank first as a carrier of toxic waste when we want to tell the Third World it should clean up its act.

There is plenty to do here. In fact, there is a whole industry that depends on toxic waste for its very existence. There is a company north of Montreal that advertises in the United States, saying that it assumes full responsibility for waste upon reception.

This goes against the principle that producers should be responsible for their own waste.

[*English*]

That violates a basic principle that those who produce waste should be responsible for its disposition.

[*Translation*]

There are now more than 1,000 sites where toxic waste can be found in Canada. More than 50 of these sites are orphan sites, which means no one is responsible for them.

[*English*]

Fifty orphan sites, 1,000 toxic sites across this country, and 50 of those that nobody is taking responsibility for. They are simply washing their hands.

[*Translation*]

In Quebec there are 333 depots for toxic waste.

[*English*]

Three hundred and thirty–three depots for toxic waste, 66 of them are dangerous for health.

[*Translation*]

It would cost $500 million to clean them up. While we are arguing here in the House about what should be included in the referendum bill, we have a situation where we already have 333 hazardous waste depots in Quebec alone, and we would need $8 billion to clean up the 1,000 contaminated sites we have across Canada.

[*English*]

It would take $8 billion just to clean them up.

[*Translation*]

This year, 6.5 million tons of hazardous waste will be produced.

[*English*]

Six and a half million tons of toxic waste will be produced in this country in this year alone.

[*Translation*]

As long as people think they can get rid of their toxic waste by exporting it abroad, they will continue to produce it.

[*English*]

The point is, as long as we have the option of sending our waste elsewhere and developing an international traffic in toxic waste, it becomes very easy not to deal with the issue of waste. Stick it on a barge, send the PCBs off to a Third World country. As long as we fail to enshrine the notion of looking after our own waste, we will not have any initiative locally to actually deal with our own toxic waste.

• (1710)

The practice of Canada–U.S. trading of toxic waste encourages waste production.

Indeed, an entire industry depends on importing toxic waste to make a profit. Banning the importation and obviously the export of hazardous waste would force us as Canadians to deal with our own waste. The surest way to responsible management is to deal with it ourselves. As long as we can ship it off to another country, the tendency is to look the other way, to take the easy route.

In our own country we have some startlingly positive examples of companies that have done something to reduce their own waste and with stupendous results. At one office, an Etobicoke office, Bell Canada implemented a comprehensive program of waste reduction. Before the program, the building was generating 800 kilograms of waste a day; coffee cups, paper, beverage cans, packaging and organic wastes. Through education and provision of creative alternatives, those 1,000 employees at the Etobicoke office have managed to reduce the waste from 800 kilos to 22 kilos a day. That is hardly enough to fill three green garbage bags.

That is a 97 per cent reduction. They are so excited about this program that Bell intends to extend its program to all 110 buildings in Ontario and 85 buildings in Quebec with positive results.

Another company, Canadian Waste Exchange, specializes as an intermediary between car manufacturers, for example with extra paint, and schools which can use that material. There are other dramatic radical ways of eliminating waste. Quaker Oats Company has introduced an innovative way of looking at packaging. Non-marketable food because of faulty packaging or expiry dates instead of being thrown out is now recycled and used as chicken feed.

In 1986, the company began the process of recycling food that had not been used. It saved $1 million in the process and it has invested that money in a closed loop water cooling system, totally eliminating all discharge into a nearby river.

Dupont has decided to eliminate the production of virtually all hazardous waste by 1995 by substituting non-toxic products, for example, toxic products like arsenic. It is also changing its production technology.

Dupont is also committed to reducing junk waste by at least 50 per cent before the end of this decade. It is finding that reduction pays great dividends. Reducing waste by 38 per cent in the production of paint at Dupont has meant an increase of one-third in productivity.

This is what sustainable development is all about. Being environmentally responsible also makes economic sense. Instead of being the laughing stock of the world by being the largest trader in toxic waste as we speak, Canada could become a world leader by accepting full responsibility for the waste that we generate. The examples I have just mentioned show that it makes economic sense.

Surely there are some necessary adjustments and some investment costs in the short term but those will pay off in the long term economically and environmentally.

[*Translation*]

Canadians are concerned about the quality of the environment and about the effect of pollution on their health. We do not want to be the toxic waste dump site of other countries.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, we do not want to be the world's toxic garbage dump.

[*Translation*]

They do not want our industries to keep producing waste that is a threat to the health of their children, their parents and their own health. We no longer want to ship our waste to our neighbours. Banning imports and exports of toxic waste would force companies to reuse, recycle, reduce and, in the long run, eliminate the production of toxic products.

If Canada does not act now, other countries will take the lead and Canada will remain behind, its procedures and technologies getting obsolete.

The demand for environmentally friendly technologies and industrial processes will give rise to a great innovative creativity. It will create new markets and jobs and it will allow companies not only to conserve resources but also to reduce costs and increase profits. Japan already has understood the enormous possibilities and so have certain European countries.

In 1990, Japan launched a 100-year plan,

[*English*]

sto lat, as they say in Polish, a 100 year plan has been launched in Japan.

[*Translation*]

They will convert entirely to sustainable development and invest enormous sums of money in research in order to develop clean technologies.

During the seventies and eighties, Japan seized the opportunity of the oil crisis to change its production methods. Already it uses only 50 per cent of the physical resources and energy required by the United States and by Canada to create one unit of production.

[*English*]

The Japanese understood early that small cars not only make economic sense, they make environmental sense. Right now they have taken the approach to energy use that sees very specifically that for every unit of production created in Japan, they use only 50 per cent of the energy that we use in Canada and the United States. Why? Because they are operating in a much smaller geographic area. They understand that what we do to the land comes back to haunt us in the food chain in the Great Lakes, in the tainting of mother's milk that we see now in the Arctic and in the fact that the food chain in the Great Lakes has already seen evidence of potential brain damage as a result of toxic waste disposal.

[*Translation*]

Only if we adopt a long-term vision and if we have the courage to act shall we succeed in saving our planet.

[*English*]

In the United States the House of Representatives in Congress is looking at legislation to ban the export of hazardous waste and the import into the United States. The representative who introduced the motion said: "Banning exports supports and goes beyond the international agreements we have signed at Basel in 1989. It also represents good foreign policy".

As we know trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste is controlled by the Basel convention signed in 1989. Yes, Canada is a signatory and the Basel convention was created in response to concerns that hazardous wastes were being dumped on developing countries, particularly the African states, in a non-environmentally responsible manner. In other words developed countries were using the undeveloped countries as their cheap dumping grounds.

The underlying objectives of the Basel convention were to cut down waste, to recycle waste and to make sure that where possible home country responsibility prevailed for waste disposal and treatment.

However, African countries at that convention understood that the only effective solution was to ban outright the importation of waste on their continent.

It is important that we in Canada also take our own world responsibility seriously and we show the nations of the world, as they gather in Rio de Janeiro, that we too care about this issue, understand this issue and have the political will to act on this matter.

This House can, by way of this motion, unequivocally affirm our will to implement a real policy aimed at setting Canada on the path of world leadership and sustainable development. It is not enough to go to Rio and make fancy declarations to the international media. We have got to back it up with actions. This particular motion makes it clear that Canada will follow the objectives of our common future in thinking globally and acting locally. That is the direction in which we have to go.

I urge the House to support this motion.

• (1720)

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this very important issue, although I fear it is sometimes a misunderstood issue. I will come back to that later in my remarks.

First of all, I want to stress the fact that certainly the Government of Canada, in co-operation with the provincial governments, very much agrees with the hon. member in her expressed desire to reduce all waste, including hazardous waste.

That is why the Council of Ministers of the Environment some time ago entered into and began to implement an agreement whereby waste within Canada would be reduced by 50 per cent by the year 2000.

I am pleased to be able to report to the House that good progress is being made at this very moment in that direction.

With respect to the specific motion before us, I must caution Canadians to ensure that they understand the fundamental question before us is how to recycle, if possible and if not, how to dispose of in an environmentally sound manner hazardous waste wherever it may exist.

Since 1986, the Governments of Canada and the United States have co-operated as a result of an agreement entered into in that particular year to ensure that hazardous waste is dealt with as efficiently as possible. We believe, and it has been our practice since 1986, that it is most efficient and most environmentally sound to try to dispose of by way of final disposition or by recycling of hazardous waste in the shortest distance possible between the site of production and the site of final disposition.

The very nature of Canada, Mr. Speaker, of which you are familiar as a result of your residency in Alberta, presents us with a unique problem. The problem within Canada is the fact that the vast bulk of our population lives within 100 miles of the Canadian-American border.

We are a huge nation in terms of the breadth of our country, but we are a nation in which our population is situated in a relatively narrow boundary. We have discovered it is very often to our collective advantage, and I would say as well to our environmental advantage, to take the opportunity to export hazardous waste to a disposal site situated in the United States which is closer to the point of origin wherever that might be, than some other disposal site which may exist within Canada.

In fact, we are a major exporter of such hazardous waste but under very strict and controlled conditions and under those circumstances where the disposal site, whether it be a final disposition site or a recycling site is situated closer to the point of origin than that which may exist within Canada.

In return we do indeed, as the hon. member has said, receive a considerable amount of such hazardous waste from certain parts of the United States. Again it is in those instances where the site of origin in the United States is closer to a point of disposition in Canada than would be the case if it were to be sent solely to other disposition sites within the United States.

Certainly there is a certain emotional appeal, and indeed probably a certain political appeal in the statement that countries, nations, provinces, communities, whatever the case may be, should dispose solely, only they should be held accountable for their disposition of their waste.

The most important consideration facing us in terms of our acceptance of our responsibility to try to manage our waste in as sound an environmental manner as possible is with respect to the need to keep the transportation distance as limited as possible. By doing so, we limit the possibility of any accident. We must also ensure that the depot to which it is sent, whether it be located in Canada or the United States, is operated in an environmentally sound manner and that the recycling process or the disposition process, as the case may be, is done under strict government controlled regulations.

At the moment, we and most Canadians believe the system is working to the advantage of both Canadians and Americans. Certainly, as Canadians we are able to export a significant amount of waste to American dispos-

al sites which are closer to the point of origin than those which may exist in Canada.

In fact, the statistics I have available to me indicate that in 1991 Canada exported 223,079 tonnes and imported 135,161 tonnes of hazardous waste. It is important to note that 53 per cent of those exports were destined for recycling operations, in this case in the United States.

It is important that we do all we can to minimize the risk. When we speak of environmental problems it is important to understand that those problems are global in nature. As I have said on other occasions in the House, it is also important to understand that there must be a global response to those problems, in this case, an international response and an agreement entered into between United States and Canada in 1986.

As the hon. member referred to in her remarks, there was another agreement as well, the Basel convention. In 1989, Canada signed the Basel convention. We anticipate that this fall we will be able to ratify that convention. That convention, in essence, has the same kind of objectives as the agreement we entered into with the United States, the safe disposition of hazardous waste.

As a result of the steps we have made in that direction, I would like to take just a moment to inform the House of new import and export regulations which are being put in place with respect to hazardous waste. It is important to understand that, indeed, they are very thorough.

First of all, the existing controls of hazardous waste shipments such as prior notification and manifesting requirements will remain in place. In other words, these shipments must be done in such a manner that the receiving country and the receiving authorities are well aware of their anticipated arrival and the nature of the shipments.

Second, the exports or imports may not proceed until it is confirmed by Environment Canada that all the conditions and regulations are met to ensure that hazardous waste will be managed in an environmentally sound manner.

Third, the requirements for liability coverage will be implemented to ensure that costs for any damages from transportation accidents which could arise are met.

Finally, should a problem arise during the export of some Canadian hazardous waste, the Canadian exporter will be obligated to inform Environment Canada and to make alternative arrangements or to return the hazardous waste to Canada.

I agree thoroughly and fully with the hon. member when she says that the bottom line objective is to reduce the amount of waste. The Government of Canada for that reason has entered into a commitment to move in the direction of a 50 per cent reduction by the year 2000 and she is correct. She is correct when she suggests that this will be good economics. She is correct when she says that there is a considerable amount of enthusiasm in the private sector for making that happen.

Where she is not correct, in my opinion, is when she suggests that drawing up boundaries which conform with political boundaries will lead automatically to the safer treatment of such hazardous waste. The present arrangement where Canada exports hazardous waste to the United States when a disposal site there is closer to the point of origin and we receive hazardous waste from the United States when a disposal site here is closer to the point of origin is not only more efficient in terms of cost but it is also actually safer in light of the fact that the transportation routes are being kept as short as possible.

Mr. Speaker, coming from the province of Alberta you are well aware of the fact that your province has put an excellent facility in place. However, you are also aware of the fact that to transport hazardous waste to that facility from all across Canada would incur an immense amount of risk because of the distance, the vastness of Canada.

The present arrangement is one where there is an emphasis on safety and an emphasis on a minimum of risk and is the appropriate policy to follow.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate this evening on the private member's motion that the government should ban the importation of all hazardous waste.

• (1730)

I want to indicate that I support the concept of the bill, for a number of reasons. Primarily it is because I believe the onus should be on the jurisdiction that generates such waste to be responsible for its disposal.

If a province is allowed to export its waste to the United States there would be less likelihood of two things happening. One is the development of an appropriate disposal or neutralizing facility in that particular region. The other and more important one is that without being forced to deal with the end product within that jurisdiction, that jurisdiction is less likely to force the creator to change the manner in which that particular good is manufactured or created so that it does not have hazardous waste as a by-product. For those two reasons I support this motion.

I also believe even within jurisdictions there should be a restriction that, for example, if an area of a province does not either have within its location the producer of the hazardous waste or benefits from the production that brings about the hazardous waste, it should not have to bear the responsibility for the storage or disposal of such material.

I am speaking specifically about the province of Ontario, and I am thinking specifically about high level nuclear waste. We all know that AECL has had a program for 10 to 12 years now of looking for an underground storage facility for nuclear waste that is created in southern Ontario by Ontario Hydro. It has been looking and drilling in northern Ontario. It has been drilling in the community of Atikokan in order to test the theory that granite is an appropriate medium in which to store for long periods of time, millenniums, high level nuclear waste.

Northern Ontario does not benefit from the nuclear reactor program that Ontario Hydro launched many years ago. In fact, residents of northern Ontario, like the residents of southern Ontario, are now finding there was a high price tag for those nuclear reactors. That price tag forced Ontario Hydro to increase its rates by over 11 per cent this year, 9 per cent next year, and who knows what thereafter, in order to pay for those mega-elephants. We still do not know what it is going to cost to de-commission them. We still do not know if we have the technology to not only handle the high level waste but also to handle the buildings and what have you.

A number of chemicals are created within our borders. There are a number of products which when released into the atmosphere or placed on the ground will destroy vegetation, animal life and human life. Those are the kinds of things we are talking about in terms of the private member's motion, the banning of importation of all hazardous wastes.

We should accept responsibility for what we produce, but I think it is the responsibility of our neighbours to the south to look after what they produce.

I visited Love Canal a number of years ago, in 1985 in fact, with the Canada-U.S. parliamentary association. We toured what once was a city, a city the size of Atikokan, Ontario in fact, that was closed because of the dumping of toxic wastes. We walked along the Niagara Gorge, along the Niagara River and saw the chemicals seeping out, in fact dripping from the walls as they leached through the ecosystem.

I have seen in other cases where hazardous goods are illegally transported between Canada and the United States. Not only are they illegally transported but they are hidden in trucks with other cargoes. The placarding has been removed from the tankers carrying toxic waste in order that the cargo goes across the border from the United States into Canada undetected. That is happening and is happening today. One of the ways we can deal with that is just by saying no to the importation of hazardous goods.

It works both ways. The province of Ontario should stop the exportation of garbage to the United States for a profit. That is our responsibility. At the same time we should not be exporting garbage from Toronto to Kirkland Lake or any of the other northern communities. He or she who produces the garbage should be responsible for it.

In this brief intervention I just wanted to give a quick outline of why I am supporting the member's motion. I would encourage all members of the House to do so as well.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion moved by the hon. member for Hamilton East:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should ban the importation of all hazardous waste.

I whole-heartedly agree with this motion and certainly commend my colleague for bringing it before the House at this time.

We can look at the increased incidence of cancer in the Great Lakes basin, the continuation of industrial spills in the Great Lakes waters and our rivers. We can look at the thinning of the ozone and its impact on animal life in the southern extremities of South America, let alone

what it is doing to human life at the present time. We realize that as inhabitants of this earth we must take action.

We can look at the saturation of the soils in some European countries with animal wastes, waste in such concentrations that it has affected the productivity of the soil and has got into the water tables and well water of those countries. Some of this waste is now being barged to other countries, some of which are Third World countries, to be disposed of.

This is simply not acceptable. Nor is it acceptable that just a few years ago cyanide chips were being transported from Chicago to a disposal site in Lambton county. They were being brought in without the knowledge of surrounding inhabitants until they found out accidentally. How much more can we get in terms of toxicity in cyanide chips?

We saw attempts just three years ago to build a low level nuclear waste disposal site in St. Clair county, Michigan, that would serve as a disposal site for several other states. This is a different aspect to importation of toxic wastes. That site was to be built near a stream that drained into Lake Huron. It would endanger the water intake of the city of Sarnia and much of Lambton county, and if a proposed pipeline goes through it will affect a lot of Kent county itself.

How can we allow such things to happen? More recently we had several truck loads of hazardous waste in British Columbia being brought to a site near Sarnia, Ontario. It was a similar site where cyanide chips were disposed of.

The member for Brandon—Souris mentioned that the reason we had an agreement to accept waste from other countries was that it was the lowest distance to travel. Certainly that did not apply to the volume of hazardous waste going from British Columbia to Ontario. Surely there must have been a closer site somewhere in B.C. or the state of Washington or Oregon. Why did it come our way?

• (1740)

More recently we learned of hundreds of truckloads of waste being trucked from Montreal to the same site in Lambton country. Surely there must have been a site somewhere in New York state or in the New England states that would have been closer than the 600 miles they had to travel to bring it to Lambton county.

More important, what was the impact of all this on the health of Canadian people? I am very fearful of the impact. I mentioned earlier the higher incidence of cancer in the Great Lakes basin.

A recent media article stated that no one really knows what is happening to millions of tonnes of toxic waste generated within Canada annually. This was from a federal report on the state of the environment. Even worse, we as Canadians have allowed increasing amounts of hazardous waste into the country. We still do not know if the monitoring system is working as it should because it will only work effectively if those who generate the waste are honest and responsible corporate citizens generally concerned about the future of this planet, of our children and of our grandchildren.

Imports of hazardous waste from the U.S. into Canada increased to 142,000 tonnes in 1990. Lax border inspections were at the heart of the 1989 case of alleged imports of fuel laced with PCBs, a prohibited import under the CEPA.

The Auditor General's 1991 report examined the compliance of customs operations with domestic regulations controlling import and export of hazardous waste. It found that there was no defined program within Customs Canada to deal with the movement of hazardous materials. No training was provided for customs staff on the subject of hazardous materials. Little has been done within Customs Canada to gather information, analyse and assess the risk of illicit transportation or non-compliance with relevant legislation, or to target cargo entries for examination of hazardous materials.

The substances banned from importation under CEPA were not found to be listed in the Customs Canada information base on prohibited imports. There is no evidence of Customs Canada enforcing a Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act.

The Auditor General's report also notes that in the event of a random examination to find hazardous materials the inspectors may in fact release the shipment out of concern for their own personal safety.

He also noted that a memorandum of understanding has been established between Environment and Customs defining the roles and responsibilities of both depart-

ments regarding inspections and shipments of hazardous waste.

We owe it to ourselves and we owe it to future generations. I have heard the argument that provinces have the responsibilities to regulate handling and disposable hazardous waste, but it is the federal government's responsibility to regulate international trade of the wastes.

The transboundary movement of hazardous wastes across Canada and across the Canadian border is governed by three pieces of federal legislation: the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Hazardous Products Act and the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act.

It is ludicrous to pass the buck to provinces, to pass the buck to individuals or companies or to blame the United States. It is ludicrous to say we would like to act but we do not want to upset our international relationships. Frankly, if we pass this motion today, Canadians who have gone to Rio can hold their heads high and be proud of this decision.

It is clearly our duty to act on this issue. No one else can. We owe it to our children, our grandchildren and generations of children yet unborn to take actions like this. I urge the House to adopt this motion calling for the banning of importation of all hazardous waste into this country.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the remaining time of the member for Lambton—Middlesex to speak on this very important motion, a motion which contains 17 words, probably the most important 17 words that this House and this country have heard in a long time.

Prior to this we were debating the referendum and we saw how wordy it was and how complicated. Here in 17 words we can turn the environment of this planet around. If in Rio all countries adopted this policy, we would have the beginning of a turning point on this planet. If implemented, what would it mean? It would mean that every country would be forced to reduce the production of waste, especially hazardous waste.

I will be very interested in what the government members say on this because I cannot see or understand why they would oppose such an important motion contained in these 17 words. I congratulate the member for Hamilton East for being so creative, coming out with such a simple motion and yet so important.

I wanted to speak to this motion because of my experience recently, a little over a month ago, on the external affairs visit to Russian and Ukraine. What did Russia do? It exported their nuclear waste to the Arctic. We have been reading about all the nuclear waste that is being stored up in the Arctic. From that spot the entire northern hemisphere can be affected. If the former Soviet Union had a policy that it would have to look after its own waste, that waste would not be in the Arctic today.

I cannot stress the importance of these 17 words. This is the kind of policy that we should not even have to debate over an hour. At the end of a one-hour debate we should all pass it unanimously and get on with building this country, get on with saving the environment on this planet.

I add my congratulations to the member for Hamilton East for bringing in these important 17 words.

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to make some comments on the motion before us today. The motion speaks to the issue of banning outright the importation of all hazardous waste into Canada. The main concern of this motion appears to be with the hazardous waste imported into Canada. However, it is not clear whether the proposed importation ban would be imposed on all hazardous waste arriving in Canada from world-wide sources or only those hazardous wastes coming from the United States.

In any event, it is important to point out that the movement of hazardous waste between Canada and the United States has been controlled since 1986 through a bilateral agreement known as the Canada-U.S.A. agreement on the transboundary movement of hazardous waste.

This agreement sets out the conditions for the export and import of hazardous waste between the two countries. The proposed complete ban on imports of all hazardous waste would be contrary to the Canada-U.S.A. agreement and would also remove the only viable waste management option available to many Canadian and U.S. companies.

Internationally, Canada is a signatory to the Basel convention which would limit the trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste to only those countries with which Canada has an agreement. This convention was

designed to ensure the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste.

Nationally, current federal legislation in the form of the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act also contains provisions that allow for the control of trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste. The transportation of dangerous goods regulations are quite specific as to the requirements for notification, manifesting, labelling, placarding and packaging for all classes of hazardous waste to ensure that a certain level of safety in transportation is maintained.

• (1750)

As the previous examples illustrate, there are numerous legislative and regulatory controls in place to ensure safety in transport and that hazardous wastes are dealt with in an environmentally sound manner to protect the Canadian public and the environment.

Hazardous waste only accounts for about 20 per cent of Canada's total waste requiring management. Both Canada and the United States export and import all types of waste, including hazardous waste, to ensure that it is managed at the closest environmentally-sound facility on either side of the border. These options allow both Canadian and American companies to ship hazardous waste across the border where facilities exist for proper disposal when facilities may not be available in the generating country. In other instances these very same hazardous wastes are valuable secondary raw materials for industrial processes or are recoverable to be reused once again. Therefore, it is readily evident that some of these wastes still have a market value.

The movement of hazardous goods is a two-way street. I submit that a total ban on imports of these wastes by Canada would invite a reciprocal action on the part of the United States and our European trading partners, thereby removing an important hazardous waste management option for many Canadian countries. This situation would have a negative impact on the recycling industry, especially at a time when the government is supporting the four *Rs*, of which recycling is an important element.

Another point to consider is that under the green plan a national goal has been established to reduce the generation of all wastes by 50 per cent by the year 2000. This waste reduction program will also permit the federal government to collect data on the trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste and other wastes. This data in turn would be critical to the development of effective policy and laws and to the enforcement of regulations.

Recently green plan funds have been committed to conduct co-operative research with universities, private sector and provincial governments as partners. Through green plan initiatives, the government has shown its commitment and support for new science, especially environmental science, aimed at reducing, recycling and reusing hazardous waste or at their safe destruction.

The green plan-supported research and development will be focused on environmental technology and science needed for the 21st century. This environmental science will also provide industry with additional options to meet regulatory requirements and will assist industry in measuring the programs made in compliance with regulations.

Through government support of the science and technology action plan, the development of environmental technologies to provide solutions to environmental problems would be encouraged and new economic opportunities would be offered to Canadians.

Combined with private sector research and development of these technologies, the net result would be the production of new investment opportunities and the creation of jobs in Canada's environmental industries. This can only happen so long as Canada does not isolate itself by closing the borders to the movement of hazardous waste.

Industry has shown a willingness to participate in the environmental arena with the commercialization of hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities, and through the establishment of hazardous waste exchanges. These types of initiatives should not be short-circuited by cutting of a source of raw materials.

In 1987 the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment commissioned a review of waste exchange programs. From this study, a number of recommendations were made on how to improve the effectiveness of waste exchanges and to identify opportunities which

would increase the financial self-sufficiency of waste exchanges.

Following this review in 1991, the green plan also identified waste exchange as a key initiative worthy of pursuing. Through the green plan, moneys have been earmarked to expand and to help the waste exchange program achieve a strong economic base in order to sustain itself by the year 2000.

Environment Canada recognizes that the waste exchange program will play a major role in achieving the goal of cutting waste by 50 per cent from 1988 levels by the year 2000.

However, in order for such a program to be successful more support from Canadian industry, which also relies on recyclables imported from the U.S., will be necessary.

Waste exchanges and treatment, proper transportation, storage and disposal facilities are all components of waste management. Unfortunately, these types of activities, although essential, are not attributed an as favourable an image as recycling.

Recycling is only one, albeit very important, of the elements of the four *Rs*: recycling, reuse, recovery and reduce.

All these measures take time and are not all available at this very moment. It is true that hazardous waste is being generated through industrial processes right now. However, there are structures in place and tighter controls planned to manage these wastes in an environmentally sound manner.

For these reasons and the negative impact they would have on the Canadian economy, the motion before us today is unnecessary and, indeed, undesirable.

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 have a moment or two to intervene in this very important debate.

On examining the motion before us it appears to be the intent of the motion to protect the Canadian environment by reducing the waste coming into the country, but the motion does not include any measures which would help Canadians to manage their own waste at home, nor would such a ban introduce any new measures for the actual reduction in the volume of hazardous waste being produced in this country. That is a very narrow view of the management of the global environment.

As well, a total ban on importations may cause other countries to forbid imports of hazardous waste generated in Canada. This would immediately be cause for environmental concern since not all areas of the country have facilities necessary to treat all kinds of hazardous waste.

In my own province of Alberta we have the Swan Hills treatment centre, which is one of the finest in the world, but it is situated some distance from the locations of production of hazardous waste. Inability to export waste would mean storing hazardous substances until new treatment plants could be built.

The construction would take several years and could lead to improper storage as storage space fills up or to other more dangerous practices such as dumping.

Even if the required types of treatment facilities already existed in abundance in Canada, those sites would probably be located at a great distance from some waste generators as in the case of Swan Hills.

Waste from Canadian generators would therefore be on the road for longer periods of time, increasing the possibility of transportation accidents. In addition, these facilities may not have the required capacity. Still more facilities would have to be built. Overall, a complete import ban could create severe problems for Canadian industry as well as the environment.

The cost in terms of dollars and of damage to the Canadian environment could be very high indeed.

Consistent with its commitment to global environment protection, Canada signed on March 29, 1989 the Basel convention on the control of trans-boundary movements of hazardous waste and their disposal. A convention which came into force on May 5 of this year requires all countries to control their shipments of hazardous waste crossing their borders.

Under the provisions of the Basel convention member countries have the duty to ensure that the waste generated in their country is disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. This means that each government must allow only those exports of hazardous waste which cannot be treated in an appropriate and timely manner in their own country.

• (1800)

At the same time parties to the convention must allow only those imports for which proper and safe facilities exist. In Canada, regulatory initiatives under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to enhance the already existing tracking system for transfrontier movements of hazardous waste are now nearly completed. New regulations should be in place this fall.

In conclusion, it is a very long border. We have a very big country. A complete ban on the importation of hazardous waste should not be supported. Such a ban would not necessarily help the environment and would be of little benefit to Canadians or to Canadian industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, on March 10 I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration to initiate an inquiry into certain unfortunate incidents reported with respect to the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Such incidents were cases of members of the board sleeping while the tribunal was in session and refugee claimants were making their case. Other incidents were situations where members of the board were laughing or ridiculing refugees who were making their claim before the board. Then there were examples of racism or sexist remarks made by members of the board to claimants who were appearing before them. We also had a situation where a member of the board tried to exercise undue influence on another member of the board with respect to giving a judgment.

We have examples of inconsistent judgments where for example one member of a family was granted refugee status and another member of the very same family was not granted refugee status because they went before different panels of the board. There were situations where judgments were prepared in advance.

There were these many incidents which led me and many others to request an inquiry into the workings of the board, the Immigration and Refugee Board, to find out exactly what was happening and to take corrective action.

I wish to refer to some of the newspaper headlines with respect to these incidents. I have a clipping from *The Toronto Star* which states: "Snoozing adjudicator a problem for refugees". Another newspaper clipping states: "Tribunal member sleeps during refugees evidence". Another from *The Globe and Mail* states: "They're fired: two adjudicators laughed during man's story". This is about two members of Canada's refugee board snickering during an Iranian man's story of torture. Another one states: "Stress on the board drove official close to breakdown". Another from the Canadian Press states: "Rulings confuse refugees; Latin American community fears hard line attitude".

Then we have one from *The Ottawa Citizen* which states: "Refugee board official removed from the job". In this case the official was removed for trying to influence independent board members to turn down refugee claims.

I asked the minister to initiate an inquiry into all these matters. That was in March. Since that time I have met with the chairman of the board. This morning we had a committee hearing with respect to these matters.

While I still think many changes have to be made, I feel the chairman is taking steps in trying to correct these things. As a matter of fact, several of these people were suspended and now the chairman is trying to initiate further changes. I hope the government will co-operate with the chairman in making the necessary changes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to bring to the attention of the House that we are under new Standing Orders here and Adjournment Debate is four minutes for those who are asking the question and two minutes for the reply.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue)): Mr. Speaker, Canada's refugee determination system is admired around the world as one of the world's fairest and most humane and I think the member knows that.

In the little more than three years since its creation, the new Immigration and Refugee Board has handled 55,000 cases to their conclusion. Most of the 280 immigration and refugee board members have backgrounds in immigration, refugee work or law. Before they hear their first case, all members undergo the most extensive training program given to members of any Canadian tribunal.

The minister is well aware of the allegations raised against certain members. He expressed his concerns about these allegations to Mr. Fairweather, the chairman of the Immigration and Refugee Board, in the strongest possible terms.

Mr. Fairweather responded: "The complaints were thoroughly investigated. Several members were removed from the hearing schedule and apologies were issued in another case".

In short, where concerns have been raised, appropriate action has been taken promptly by Mr. Fairweather. If the member has concerns about other particular cases he too should bring those concerns, as he did, to the attention of Mr. Fairweather.

As for the guides which assist members in writing their decisions, the Appeal Division of the Federal Court rejected claims that these guides in any way prejudiced Immigration and Refugee Board decisions. It is time for the hon. member to give this board and its many highly dedicated members the credit they very much deserve.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, the unique Experimental Lakes area in northwestern Ontario has enabled Canadian scientists to conduct world class research on fresh water ecosystems.

This cluster of wilderness lakes has served as an ecological laboratory and has answered several tough environmental questions.

This is the facility that helped convince the public in Canada and the U.S. that phosphates in laundry detergents caused the explosive growth of algae in lakes. This research was instrumental in convincing policy makers to control the use of phosphates. It is no exaggeration to say that the research at the Experimental Lakes helped save Lake Erie.

The ELA program established that even moderate amounts of industrially generated acid rain damaged Canadian lakes. This information was crucial in the fight for pollution controls on industrial smokestacks.

The ELA program is continuing to do ground-breaking scientific information on the effects on aquatic life by heavy metals. Using its 22 year string of uninterrupted data allows researchers to describe the horrific effects on northern Canada that are likely if the world fails to limit emissions that cause global warming.

Most recently an ELA program has been started, before new hydroelectric dams are built, to determine the amount of the greenhouse gas methane that is released when large tracts of boreal forest land are flooded for the creation of reservoirs.

There does not seem to be any question about the quality of research that is conducted at the ELA. It has led to the publication of 500 scientific papers. Last year its first scientific manager received the internationally prestigious Stockholm Water Prize for work that was conducted there.

No one denies either that pioneering research of this calibre cannot be done on a fiscal shoestring forever. The time has come for the federal government to make a long-term commitment to enable the facility to remain independent and its respected work to continue.

Simply put, the ELA needs money quickly. The Auditor General stated in his annual report released last December that: "The program has clearly reached a critical decision point. The secure financial base is eroded and the program currently relies heavily on unpredictable special external funding sources". Unfortunately, when it comes to money, the government's attention seems focused on other matters.

When I raised this subject in the Oral Question Period on March 12, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, whose responsibility it is to fund the program, apparently did not even know what I was talking about. He mistakenly called the project, "the Edmonton experimental lakes" and then asked: "Is it in Ontario" before admitting that: "Now you really know I have not looked at it

recently". The Minister of Environment seemed to know no more.

When my colleague, the member for Skeena and the NDP environment critic and the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake and our associate environment critic brought this up in the Standing Committee on the Environment, department officials indicated they were working with officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans but that no green plan money was expected to be available for this purpose.

• (1810)

The Prime Minister spends $840,000 each year to compile reports on newscasts and newspaper articles. Is it not high time that the government came up with at least that much so this excellent environmental research can continue?

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 member opposite from Edmonton East, the Experimental Lakes area, which is run by the DFO Freshwater Institute out of Winnipeg is located 55 miles southeast of Kenora, Ontario.

The Experimental Lakes area, better known as ELA, is the Department of Fisheries and Oceans largest field research station. It is operated by the department's Freshwater Institute located in Winnipeg. The ELA contains approximately 50 small lakes and their watersheds in a remote and uninhabited area set aside for research through an agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

This station has been in place since 1968 and has long-term whole lake experiments that have been directed with application to freshwater fish habitat. Their research has contributed significantly to our understanding of the causes and the mechanisms and effects of the lake enrichment or eutrophication, and latterly the acidification of the Great Lakes as well.

Approximately 400 items of primary literature, reports and other scientific publications have resulted from the work there. There have been a number of Ph.D. dissertations and there has been 40 graduate theses work done there.

The 22-year database on water and climate conditions places ELA in a unique position in being able to detect early warning signals of global warming in fresh water.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is treating the current financial status of ELA very seriously. We contracted with the Rawson Academy in 1990 to develop long-term financial support through the establishment of partnerships with other government departments, universities and businesses. The business plan was received by the department in April of this year and a strategy for its implementation is now being developed.

There has been and will continue to be reductions in spending due to the spending pressures that affect the government as a whole. However, as the minister indicated in this House on December 10 of last year, the work at ELA is going to continue.

HOUSING

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, there is more than one Canadian financial institution questioning the wisdom of the federal government's action in raiding the CMHC's mortgage insurance fund for $55 million.

This federal cabinet decision, implemented on March 31 of this year, was simply a last minute attempt by this government to reach its deficit targets. What this government is ostensibly doing is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

By siphoning the mortgage insurance fund's surplus, this government potentially is jeopardizing the solvency of the fund, which is used to insure home mortgages for Canadians all across the country.

The minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation said in this House on April 30 that the mortgage insurance fund is well able to make this so-called contribution.

However, what the minister failed to inform Canadians about is the fact that the mortgage insurance fund had a pre-tax loss last year of $27 million.

What the minister also failed to inform Canadians about is the analysis in the CMHC's five-year corporate plan which forecasts an increase in the number of mortgage defaults this year.

In fact, the corporate plan indicates that defaults are expected to rise from $161 million in 1991 to $614 million in two years.

This CMHC forecast for increased defaults is based partly on the higher risk involved in insuring mortgages with a 5 per cent down payment, but mainly because of the recession and the thousands of lost jobs and plant closures across this country.

Also this documented forecast in the five-year plan proves that statements made publicly by the CMHC's senior vice-president in charge of insurance are wrong. He told a national newspaper that mortgage defaults had already peaked in 1991. We know that to be wrong and the facts in the corporate plan indicate that the peak should come in 1993.

When the government raided the mortgage insurance fund, reducing its surplus to $94 million, it had the direct consequence of jeopardizing CMHC's ability to cover potential mortgage defaults, and potentially could undermine the availability of insurance for the 5 per cent down payment plan, which we as a party proposed and do support.

Let us not forget that the main reason for the escalating defaults are due to this government's economic policies that have created a general economic downturn, which also has put pressure on the mortgage insurance fund by raising the number of potential defaulters.

Another CMHC document indicates that before the 5 per cent down payment plan was implemented by this government, risk analysis was undertaken to ensure that the accelerated defaults would not jeopardize the solvency of the mortgage insurance fund.

Those risk assessments were calculated on the basis of the surplus available in the mortgage insurance fund. When the government siphoned $55 million from this fund, I suggest it put the solvency of the fund at risk. It is startling and irresponsible for the government to reduce the fund by this amount at a time when the fund is experiencing increased claims.

The money is in the fund for the benefit of homeowners and the home industry, nothing else and no one else. Despite the reassurances of this government that careful actuarial studies were completed before the money was taken, the fact remains that there is a risk involved.

This government cannot deny that it has chosen to take that risk, that it is this risk that potentially threatens the solvency of the mortgage insurance fund and, in turn, the availability of insurance to potential homeowners and home builders.

Mr. Dave Worthy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond today.

A portion of the surplus in the mortgage insurance fund was directed to the government's Consolidated Revenue Fund to help produce the federal deficit. It, of course, is one of the top priorities of this government to see that that deficit does get reduced. It was not a rating of the account. It was a planned move based on actuarial information.

I would like to draw the attention of the member to the information that was contained in the 1991 annual report of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. It indicates that CMHC has done what it has for many years; it has done an excellent job of managing its mortgage insurance fund.

The balance sheet in fact shows that CMHC has increased its provision for claiming the losses from $282 million in 1990 to $447 million in 1991 in order to meet its mortgage insurance fund obligations in the coming year.

Even with this increase, the surplus is over $149 million. On the advice of its actuary, based on all of the information indicated by the member opposite, CMHC was advised that it could set aside an additional $92 million to further protect the viability of its mortgage insurance fund.

The remaining $57 million existing in the surplus of the fund was not needed for claims, for business on the books of CMHC. The government has taken that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired.

ATMOSPHERIC CONTAMINANTS

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, on March 18 I raised the issue about the possibility of atmospheric radioactive releases from the Hanford nuclear reservation in Richland, Washington, which is about 250 kilometres south of the British Columbia-Washington border and the possibility of contamination by atmospheric radioactive contamination

over many years of both intentional and accidental releases from the reservation.

I might add that the reservation is home to some 63 per cent of all the high level nuclear waste produced in the United States and has, under the sands of Hanford, hundreds of millions of litres of high level waste and radioactive sludge that is stored in underground tanks.

At Hanford at this point, at least the reactors which were used in the weapons production during the cold war are now mothballed. However, during its actual years of operation the Hanford plant emitted into the atmosphere over 500,000 curies of iodine 131, and other radioactive contaminants.

It is the cumulative effect of these atmospheric releases over the many years during the time that Hanford was a weapons production facility that is concerning U.S. scientists that are now undertaking extensive investigations as to the extent of the radioactive contamination and the possibility of long-term health effects to those areas of the population exposed to that contamination.

• (1820)

My question at that time was whether or not the Minister of the Environment or the minister of energy would in fact recognize the need for Canada to send a Canadian delegation of scientists to Hanford to co-ordinate efforts that are now ongoing with U.S. scientists involved in the Hanford dose reconstruction project in order to better determine whether or not there was in fact significant atmospheric contamination of Canadian populations across British Columbia and possibly Alberta borders.

I also asked at the time whether or not the minister was prepared to initiate studies similar to the epidemiological studies now being undertaken throughout the greater Washington area and the Pacific northwest to determine whether or not there are long-term health effects as a result of those radioactive releases going back as far as the late 1940s.

I might add that the children exposed to the Hanford releases years ago would now be in their thirties and forties. Many of those children in the community surrounding Hanford are now in fact demonstrating clinical symptoms of thyroid disease which are consistent with evidence of radiological damage. Health studies have shown an alarmingly high incidence of thyroid cancer and thyroid disease in those communities surrounding the Hanford reservation.

I think it is a real legitimate concern that we also investigate whether or not there has been any long-term health effect to those population centres in Canada, in British Columbia, that may have received any significant level of that radioactive contamination.

I have made the argument that the federal government should involve itself in these ongoing U.S. studies. We should seek to determine the cumulative level of exposure to B.C. residents from the years of Hanford releases.

I have been pressing for the government to implement a co-ordinated emergency response plan in the event of a more current danger and that is the possibility of explosion of some of the underground storage tanks at the reservation itself.

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 once again inform the member opposite that the Canadian government is aware of the concerns with the Hanford nuclear site and has brought these concerns to the attention of the U.S. Department of Energy.

In 1988 the Department of External Affairs raised concerns about the impact of past releases of radioactive material from Hanford, Washington. An investigation was made by the Atomic Energy Control Board to provide a preliminary assessment of the issue. Their investigation included estimating the radiation doses possibly received by Canadians from historic and current atmospheric releases from this and other American facilities.

I would like to state very clearly that based on the history of atmospheric releases from the U.S. nuclear facilities under study, the AECB estimated that the maximum radiation dose to an individual at the border between the United States and Canada would not have been higher than one fifth of 1 per cent of the AECB's annual dose limit for members of the public.

In other words, as you have been informed previously, based on preliminary analysis, the historic and current atmospheric releases of radioactive contaminates from the Hanford nuclear facility are unlikely to pose any negative impact to Canada.

As you are aware, the site is no longer an active weapons production facility and the problems on site are now largely related to the local leaking and seeping of chemicals, and this the hon. member has acknowledged. Present Canadian concerns with this facility are related to the cleanup work, reconstruction, and the risk or possibility of accidental radioactive releases from waste material.

In October 1991, an *ad hoc* Canadian Interdepartmental Committee on Hanford, chaired by Health and Welfare, with representatives from the AECB, Environment Canada, External Affairs, and Emergency Awareness Canada were formed to review the past, present, and future effects of Hanford operations on Canadians.

The U.S. officials are willing to address the Canadian concerns and to provide information on an intensive dose reconstruction project currently under way on the ongoing operations at this facility and on the development of emergency procedures.

The U.S. Department of Energy has undertaken a massive plan to clean up the site and safely dispose of the waste permanently. Currently the U.S. Department of Energy does not have all the information available to make some decisions and therefore research and development is required to get to the decision-making points. As this information becomes available the risk to Canadians can be reassessed.

REVENUE CANADA

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, justice delayed is justice denied. My constituent, Mr. Zvi Gitter, president of Imperial Cabinet in my riding of Winnipeg North, has been waiting for justice for much, much too long. He and nine other cabinet makers in Manitoba have lost over $300,000 unfairly and unjustly and the minister of internal revenue is yet to rectify this injustice. My constituents alone lost over $82,000. The money was lost when the cabinet makers were not given rebates due to them from the federal government.

A year ago last March I brought this matter to the attention of the minister in the House of Commons. In a press interview following Question Period the minister said, and I quote from the March 27, 1991 issue of *The Winnipeg Free Press*: "The bottom line is that I am satisfied on a case-by-case basis everything was done in accordance with the rules and regulations that were distributed fairly and equitably to everybody, every manufacturer in every province, every town and every region".

Nearly a year later, on March 2, 1992 the Canadian International Trade Tribunal rendered its decision on this issue and found that Revenue Canada's memorandum of information, which was to benefit manufacturers of kitchen cabinets, was not made available to the industry served by the Winnipeg district office even though the information was being used by the ad industry in other parts of the country.

I would like to quote from this decision: "I. The error can be directly attributed to Revenue Canada; II. The error resulted in an inequitable and unjustifiable application of departmental policy to the industry in one region of the country; III. The memorandum that was unfairly applied to the Winnipeg region was not a regulation made pursuant to the Excise Tax Act".

The discredited departmental policy allowed one region of the country to benefit to the detriment of my city. Promulgation of such a policy, were it deliberate, is unconscionable. Not knowing such a policy was promulgated was, to me, a classic example of ministerial irresponsibility.

Therefore, I ask how the minister would explain to this House that he caused such a policy to be issued in violation of the tax law he has sworn to uphold. How will the minister explain to this House this determination by the Canadian International Trade Tribunal with the minister's statement of a year ago: "Everything was done in accordance with the rules and regulations."?

Nearly three months ago, March 12, I again raised this issue in the Chamber and the minister again failed to give a satisfactory reply. Therefore, in light of this I ask the parliamentary secretary and I challenge him to reply to these concerns. I seek the support of this House to have the minister admit his mistake and make the appropriate restitution to my constituent and other cabinet makers in Manitoba in the name of fairness and justice. I would like the parliamentary secretary, as he replies on behalf of the minister, to remember the universal truism that justice delayed is justice denied.

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the cabinet makers in Manitoba were treated equitably and the member for Winnipeg North knows this full well. The minister even gave the hon. member a brief regarding this subject.

In answer to the member's concerns regarding the Canadian International Trade Tribunal's decision to dismiss the appeals by Imperial Cabinet and other Manitoba cabinet makers concerning the use of a determined value to account for federal sales tax, I must emphasize here that all kitchen cabinet makers across the country were well advised of how to apply for this discount. There were two separate excise news publications sent to all the licensees across the country, including those from Manitoba. Information was available at any excise office. The industry was well informed.

The facts of the matter are very simple. If licensees met two criteria, they were eligible for the discount. First of all, it must apply only to a regular product line and, second, they must have a published list price. If they met these criteria, Manitoba cabinet manufacturers like any other manufacturers across the country were then allowed to use a discount to calculate the amount of tax charged.

In conclusion, as the minister has already stated, Manitoba cabinet makers were treated in a fair and equitable manner, the same as all other cabinet manufacturers across the country.

An hon. member: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no points of order.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed adopted. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 3, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

SUDBURY, ONTARIO

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, today the regional municipality of Sudbury is being recognized by the United Nations and has been presented with the 1992 United Nations Local Government Honours Award at the earth summit in Rio de Janeiro for its work in land reclamation.

Sudbury is green and getting greener every day. Lands once barren and devastated are covered in grass and trees; all this due to the co-operation of all within the community as well as with the help of all levels of government.

First, Sudbury's efforts were recognized in Ontario and in 1990 Sudbury was awarded the Lieutenant-Governor's Conservation Award. Again in 1990 Sudbury received the Government of Canada Environmental Achievement Award.

Earlier this year Sudbury's work was recognized by the United States and received the Chevron Conservation Award, and now the world recognizes Sudbury's achievements. Sudbury has become a world leader in vegetation enhancement.

All Canadians can be justly proud of these outstanding achievements and of the international recognition. Congratulations Sudbury.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, shelters for battered women give out only their phone numbers and not their addresses because it would endanger the lives of women and children. Abusive men are most likely to kill their partners when the women attempt to leave them.

Shelter workers and others who have helped battered women have also been threatened, beaten and killed. A Liberal member of Parliament, without consulting the organizations involved, published the addresses of all the shelters for battered women in his riding. Women's organizations wish to hold the member for Broadview—Greenwood accountable.

Women's organizations who help battered women are the experts on this issue. I urge all members of Parliament to consult with these women's organizations in their ridings before sending out any material dealing with violence against women. This recent action which puts abused women and children at further risk could have been completely avoided.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine has brought to my attention the following matter of great importance.

Future eastern Canadian summers without the monarch butterfly are a certainty because of the logging of the few Mexican mountain top sanctuaries where these insects stay over winter. Saving the Mexican winter range for the monarch is of great importance.

Currently our Minister for International Trade is on a mission to Mexico to discuss environmental technology and has said that the President of Mexico has placed a very high priority on improving Mexico's environmental protection and control capabilities.

Sustainable growth should blend a genuine commitment to the environment with a consistent focus on quality. It will take effort by all of us to make this a reality.

Today, as the earth summit convenes in Rio de Janiero, I encourage all members of Parliament to support and encourage efforts to preserve the world's forests, wildlife and beautiful species for the enjoyment of North Americans now and in the future.

S. O. 31

BREAST CANCER

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, this year alone there will be almost 16,000 newly diagnosed cases of breast cancer and 5,200 women will die of this disease in Canada.

We cannot understate this problem. Breast cancer today is a crisis of epidemic proportions, and yet it is still being largely ignored.

According to the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control, breast cancer research is severely underfunded. In fact the Medical Research Council only spends $1 million a year out of its $182 million research budget to combat a disease that affects one in nine women. The National Health and Research Development Program spends a "whopping" $40,000.

I suspect these figures are correct because when I contacted health and welfare for confirmation it would not release any figures to me despite the fact that it had them. The reason for this was that they had to be cleared by the director of the department.

Could it be that the government was too embarrassed to tell us the truth? It is time that we recognized the scope of this problem and allot the necessary funds to it.

When the government can find $20 million for ad campaigns, I am certain it can do more to combat breast cancer. If we are really interested in equality for women then the logical starting point would be to ensure basic equality for the health and welfare of all our citizens.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RACISM

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, whereas the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right of each individual to have and to exercise on an equal basis human rights and freedoms without distinction, discrimination or preference based, in particular, on race, colour, religion or ethnic origin;

Whereas the Sorel area, as well as the rest of the province of Quebec, is intended to be a host territory for any person who wants to settle there;

Whereas the citizens of Richelieu condemn the distribution of hate propaganda and any other form of violence or discrimination based, in particular, on sex, race, colour, religion or ethnic origin;

Whereas the people of the Sorel area, as well as the people of Quebec, long to live in a harmonious society where each and every man and woman has equal opportunities to live, grow and work;

I decry, as federal member of Parliament for Richelieu, along with several organizations in my riding, any racist, discriminatory rally promoting hate and violence to be held in the Sorel area.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN TISSUES AND ORGANS

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Law Reform Commission of Canada released paper entitled *Procurement and Transfer of Human Tissues and Organs*. The document contained several important recommendations regarding this vital medical practice, among them that organs and tissues for use in transplant or research should be obtained through donation rather than purchase.

I believe this recommendation is excellent and I call on this government to act upon it. Besides the moral argument for respect for the living and the dead, there are very sound practical reasons for this recommendation.

Canada has an impressive track record for blood donations. We do not pay for blood, and thus generally those who donate do so for purely altruistic reasons. The United States health care community is forced to pay for certain blood products. This has created a market where people who are knowingly unqualified donors can sell bad blood for the sake of personal gain or compromising their own health for money.

The same holds true for organs and tissue. People should be donating these for the purpose of preserving and protecting life. I support the commission's call for making the purchase or sale of human bodies, organs and other non-regenerative tissue a Criminal Code offence.

[*Translation*]

BUYING CANADIAN

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, we can never stress enough the importance of buying Canadian. That is why I want to emphasize the importance of encouraging Canadians to shop at home and buy our products.

The economy is getting back on track slowly but surely. Therefore, we must be vigilant in order to keep this recovery going. Yet, certain aspects of the economy are not protected enough, which could jeopardize this upturn.

An example of this is that lots of people want to work in Canada where salaries and wages are the highest in North America. However, a number of those people spend the money they earn in Canada in the United States, and that will have negative effects on our economy. No country in the world can resist such a regime very long.

Therefore, I urge everyone from all regions, particularly the people of my riding, to deal with their own people with trust. Our economic future depends closely on our capacity to save what we have.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development recently published its annual farm subsidy figures and again the figures are misleading.

The OECD claims Canadian farmers receive subsidies totalling $8.8 million. It has been calculated that this figure is five times the actual support level. The OECD assumes that any amount above the world price for any product is a subsidy.

In the world market, the so-called world price of most commodities is far below the cost of production because of subsdized surpluses. The Canadian domestic price is higher than the world price because the world price is rock bottom.

If we use the OECD's rationale, we could say that a Canadian factory worker is being subsidized by the Canadian taxpayer because his or her wage is higher than the world salary rate. The OECD's definition of world price misrepresents the real picture.

Canadians receive the best value in the world for food in terms of price, quality, wholesomeness and safety.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, for many months, Canadians and Quebecers have been discussing the Senate reform. In today's *La Presse*, an article written by Maurice Girard is entitled: "Benoît Bouchard: Should the Senate be abolished?" And further: "Having spoken very clearly today, Mr. Bourassa can take the lead in favor of a more equal Senate". It is quite possible. I ask again: Should we not abolish the Senate outright? It would be a lot simpler.

Mr. Speaker, I am in favor of a "triple E" Senate. First, Elect the senators as federal members of Parliament, since several of them are competent; second, Eliminate it; third, End it, for the good of taxpayers.

* * *

[*English*]

REFUGEES

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, a Nigerian refugee claimant facing deportation has sought sanctuary in the Vancouver Collingwood United Church after he received a deportation order in early May.

Steven Ogunwuyi was implicated in the April 1990 failed coup in Nigeria, and Amnesty International and the Vancouver Refugee Council oppose his removal because of widespread evidence which indicates that executions, torture and inhumane treatment have been meted out to all who have been accused of attempting to overthrow dictator Ibrahim Babangida.

Moves to provide sanctuary to refugees facing life threatening deportation orders can only increase as the Conservative government further restricts the asylum it provides to people fleeing persecution.

I call on the government to establish a moratorium on deportations to Nigeria until the political situation has been clarified and the outcome of the upcoming elections determined.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN FORCES

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, last week I was in Cyprus. I would like to take the time I am allowed to say to you, and through you to all Canadians, how proud I felt while spending an evening with the Canadian soldiers who are acting as peacekeepers and peacemakers in that region.

I attended the presentation of the United Nations medals to the 3rd Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment. I met Lieutenant-Colonel Gagnon and I spoke with French Canadians from the Saguenay, Lac Saint-Jean, the Eastern Townships, Lac Mégantic, Laval and other regions. I listened to *O Canada* being sung in French by all those military, I saw our flag fluttering quite high and well in view, I heard the band of the 1st Battalion of The Worcestershire and Sherwood Forester Regiment play a song I had learned as a child when my mother sang it for me: *Vive la Canadienne.*

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to be a Canadian and I cried with emotion. I thank the commander of the force, his officers and all the military who gave me the opportunity to strengthen my feeling of belonging.

* * *

[*English*]

OPEN HOMES CANADA

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, an exciting event is taking place in London, Ontario this summer which will foster the spirit of goodwill and unity in the country.

Open Homes Canada, *Bienvenue Canada*, is a unique, Canada-wide exchange program which was initiated in London, Ontario.

Londoners will be opening their homes to fellow Canadians for a four-day visit on the civic holiday weekend of August 1.

This exchange is an attempt to bring people together to share their homes, interests and activities and to understand each other better.

All MPs will be contacted by Open Homes Canada and challenged to try and send one visitor or family from their constituencies to London, Ontario.

Ordinary people from all walks of life have a crucial role to play in renewing Canada. Open Homes Canada is one way we as Canadians can be part of the unity process.

I encourage and challenge each of you to get involved and inform your constituents. With everyone's support and participation a renewed Canada may be only a weekend away.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology spoke in Toronto last week with a message to Canadian business people which deserves emphasis.

The minister stated that prosperity in our country greatly hinges on increased investment levels and cited Japan as an inspiration to follow in the sense that long-term planning accomplishes a higher state of competitiveness.

Our standard of living in Canada is 25 per cent higher than that of Japan and we are second only to the United States. Therefore the benefits of increased investment by the private sector will not only maintain that standard but it will also improve upon it.

We have set an impressive record over the past 30 years by establishing the second highest economic growth rate of the G-7 nations.

These are encouraging statements made by the minister and the message is clear: Increased competitiveness is the key to future prosperity.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday in Toronto the Minister of Finance told bankers that he was very optimistic. However, since he brought down his budget the minister has revised his economic growth predictions for 1992 downward from 2.7 per cent to 2.3 per cent.

That being said, will the Minister of Finance revise his forecast for unemployment upward to reflect the impact of his economic policies?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is encouraged as I am that we have had positive growth in the last three months of this year. It has been modest and moderate but, nonetheless, it is going in the right direction.

Today we have had new evidence that the economy is strengthening inasmuch as on the manufacturing side shipments are up by 0.9 per cent. Orders were up by 0.8 per cent in the month of March. That, too, is encouraging.

We have indicated all along that because of the restructuring accompanying this slowdown the job side of the picture is not as optimistic as we would like to see it.

Nonetheless, with the continuing decline in interest rates, with the strengthening of the U.S. economy, with the initiatives that have been taken in the budget, and with the improvements in productivity, it all augurs well for a stable and durable recovery.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Bank announced its forecast for the economy yesterday and predicted growth of only 1.4 per cent. This is very much in line with what the Conference Board predicted two weeks ago: growth of only 1 per cent.

In releasing the report the bank said: "That type of growth is not enough to stop the unemployment rate from rising or lead to a substantial recovery in profits".

Why is the minister sticking to his predictions at this moment for jobs when every indicator makes it very clear that he was wrong on that forecast? Will he revise it so that the Canadian people know the real unemployment situation?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Very simply, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants to quote from the observations of the Royal Bank of Canada, I will do the same thing.

Mr. Earl Sweet, the Royal Bank's assistant chief economist said in connection with the release of his projections: "On the plus side the significant restructuring by Canadian business needed to regain and increase their share of world markets is beginning to make itself felt in stronger productivity and exports to the United States are growing".

The hon. member and his party continually harp at the government's initiative to try to expand trade opportunities.

• (1420)

It is quite obvious it is the merchandise trade, the exports out of Canada particularly to the United States but also to other countries, that will create jobs and economic activity and is what will improve our standard of living. That is what we are pursuing on all fronts.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, since we have been in a recession for virtually 30 months, it is obvious that sooner or later, something will happen. Something will suddenly happen in the Canadian economy when we have a new government in Canada.

In the meantime, we have problems which cannot be denied. Manpower temporary services says that this summer the employment situation is worse than last year. In some sectors it is the worst situation since 1978, when surveys in that field were started.

Why is the Minister of Finance being stubborn? Why does he not want to do anything concrete to give jobs to

the young people who want to be employed this summer so that they can go back to university next fall?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am not being stubborn at all. What we have to do is try to get the fundamentals in place.

We set out in the budget of 1991 to bring down inflation so that we could bring interest rates down and keep them down. As of today treasury bills are trading at 5.95 per cent, one of the lowest levels in over 20 years.

That is a clear indication that if the fundamentals are right and the initiatives are in place it will spur economic activity, particularly in the manufacturing and processing sector.

If productivity is increased you are then more competitive. You can then compete for those markets abroad, not only in the United States, but also in other countries of the world. That is what my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, is working at.

On the training and retraining side, the Minister of Employment and Immigration has expanded the budget for training and skills upgrading.

Those are all important components of a rational, realistic approach to economic recovery. That is what we are following.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Minister of Employment and Immigration has not expanded the budget. In fact, last year, the minister cut $100 million for job training from the Canadian Jobs Strategy. This year he slashed another $100 million from the Canadian Jobs Strategy for training. Now he has the unmitigated audacity to admit: "We have a problem. There is no money". Is it any wonder?

Exactly what does the minister intend to do to solve the problem that he himself and his government created?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the minister intends to address the problem by looking at ways where a plan can be developed within the UI account to provide additional funds this year for developmental uses.

If we are able to put such a plan in place, it will mean that unemployed Canadians in need of training will benefit from even more than the $400 million that we included in the last budget by another increased amount. I should be able to finalize that within the next few days.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the minister has admitted that the UI training fund has run dry.

Under the Canadian Jobs Strategy he has admitted that his government has slashed $200 million to help unemployed Canadians reintegrate into the workforce.

I ask the minister in all sincerity if his government really wants to help the 1.5 million Canadians who are unemployed get trained, at the very least will he restore the $200 million that he cut from job training under the Canadian Jobs Strategy?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in keeping with Liberal traditions, of course the member does not say who in Canada should be taxed more to raise $200 million. Or maybe he is suggesting that we increase the deficit.

The hon. member leaves the impression that we have used training funds. If he wants to be honest with the House and the people he will admit that training funds in Canada have gone up $400 million this year for UI recipients. That is the reality.

We are in the process of finalizing a plan that will provide additional funds for developmental uses this year. In order to achieve this we will, of course, have to be reallocating funds within that envelope in order to clearly show the government priority to training.

* * *

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Certainly, there are many outstanding issues and difficult issues being dealt with in the Constitution now. Every Canadian is aware of that, as is everyone in this House.

I congratulate the minister and all those from the provinces who agreed to have aboriginal people at the table and to discuss aboriginal issues. All Canadians agree it is time for that long-outstanding historical issue regarding Canada's First Nations to be dealt with.

Today the minister is quoted as saying that provinces uncomfortable with the proposed constitutional agreement on aboriginal self-government could opt out of a new constitutional arrangement.

Could the minister tell this House whether or not in his view this jeopardizes the legitimacy of the tentative agreement that was reached last week on the inherent right to self-government for aboriginal peoples?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader of the New Democratic Party for her question. Let me take the opportunity to thank all members of the House for the encouragement they have given me through these negotiations.

The answer to her question is that in my judgment, it does not jeopardize the agreement. The question was raised by one of the premiers who indicated that it should not be interpreted that he would be intending to invoke that right. I think that as a matter of law he is correct, but I have no reason to believe that there will be any unravelling of the agreements that occurred on aboriginal issues.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the fact is the matter has been raised. I am sure the minister is quite correct. We all agree he is certainly very familiar with all aspects of the Constitution. It may be that Premier Wells, who made this comment, was not necessarily suggesting that he on behalf of his province would do so, but it does raise a very important question.

I believe Canadians and indeed aboriginal people feel that any agreement reached on aboriginal issues would apply to aboriginal people and First Nations in every part of this country.

I ask the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, on behalf of himself and his government, will he assure this House that it is his intention to support and to ensure that the final agreement will contain a clause on the inherent right of aboriginal self-government?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Let me deal with that question directly, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, it is our intention. We think that there has been historic progress made on these matters, not simply in the establishment of the inherent right, but also in the recognition by aboriginal peoples that that must be exercised within Canada, that there must be other recognitions of the sovereignty of Canada, that the right would be inherent, and most important, the agreement by all parties that there would be a three-year period before which anyone would take it to court.

That should give a great deal of comfort to everyone. It gives us three years in which we can work out by negotiation, not by court decree, not by the decision of politicians or by native leaders, but work out by negotiation the form of aboriginal self-government.

The one other thing I should say has to do with the word "agreement" coming out of the process that I am chairing. It is understood by everyone that any conclusions we come to at that table have to be approved by respective governments. So in a sense, there is no formal agreement, but there is a willingness around the table to work to secure the agreement of governments to the proposals that have been the subject of consensus there.

• (1430)

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the minister this question. In terms of the position taken by the federal government, if it is clear and if it is his intention to ensure that the recognition to the inherent right of self-government for aboriginal people, as negotiated in this round, is advocated by this government will be that it will be the right of inherent self-government for aboriginal peoples, first nations in all parts of this country. Is he prepared to commit today that this is the position he is taking on behalf of the government and that it is his intention to see this in the final package?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is our intention. We have dealt in the discussions with the principle of the equity of access to the right. We are agreed that the right should be available to all aboriginal people.

The other thing that has been done which is of potentially historic importance, if we are able to carry it off, is that the provinces have been forthcoming with regard to undertakings to make available land and to keep in place social and other services for the Métis people in a way that would allow the Government of Canada, with those assurances, to move forward to have all aboriginal people, including the Métis, included under section 91(24).

* * *

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the European Community has recently agreed to reform its common agricultural policy in such a way as to contribute to an early conclusion of the Uruguay round of the GATT.

Throughout these negotiations the government has assured Canadian dairy, poultry and egg producers that it will deliver a clarified and a strengthened article XI. Does it still believe that it can do that?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, that is the position of the government. We are encouraged by the movement on the part of the European Community on reform of the common agricultural policy which I would say is a necessary ingredient to a successful resolution of the export subsidies and the internal support limitations for the Uruguay round.

That does not in any way affect our position on article XI. We still have the position of strengthening and clarifying article XI. We continue to discuss this with our trade partners. We would note that other countries have specific items that they want to have dealt with in the negotiations as well. So the book is not closed on that one by any means.

AUTO INDUSTRY

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, in the current North American free trade negotiations, the United States has demanded that automobiles entering its market duty free must have a higher North American content.

In 1988 the government fought hard against higher North American content on the grounds that it would discourage further foreign investment and jobs in Canada.

Is that still the government's policy or is the government now agreeing to a higher North American auto content in the NAFTA negotiations?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the rule of origin is a very important part of the negotiations of the NAFTA, particularly as it affects the automotive sector. It has been a key objective of the Government of Canada in the negotiations to have a clarification, a greater transparency, a greater ease of administration and compliance to the rule of origin. We seem to be achieving that during the course of the negotiations.

The question of the level of content has not been negotiated. Some flexibility is provided as a result of the acceptance of the Canadian approach to the calculation of the rule of origin and that will enter into a final negotiated position on what that level might be.

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SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister yesterday in this House compared the very existence of Canadian supply management and the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Canadians to the importation of bananas into Europe. No Canadian farmer has any idea what the Prime Minister was talking about.

For months now we have been told the Prime Minister's strategy has been to get onside individual leaders, particularly President Bush.

What support did the Prime Minister get from President Bush after his latest round of talks with the President? If he did not get any support, what further action is he prepared to take to get that support?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend surprises me with his question. First of all, the misstatement is very substantial. I made no comparison whatsoever of article XI and bananas. The Liberals got no bananas; the hon. member is bananas.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: This may take awhile, but let us start again.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I will not go any further. I was indicating simply that other countries seek exceptions as Canada has been doing.

If my hon. friend does not know it, the European countries which formerly had colonies are seeking a very important exception to allow for the entry of the primary product of bananas into the European Community as an exception in much the same way as the United States of America is seeking an exception for the provisions of the Jones Act in respect of its maritime industry, and in much the same way as Canada is seeking an exception in respect of the products under article XI. That is the point I was trying to make.

That is the point I made and that is the point that President Delors of Europe acknowledged here when he said that he would rather have an agreement that was 90 per cent complete with a few exceptions than no agreement at all.

I am sorry that my hon. friend did not understand the background to this complex issue. If there is any other information he would need with regard to developments in the agricultural file, please let me know.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should know that article XI is now in GATT. There is no comparison between article XI and those two situations. Surely the Prime Minister of this country should know that.

The Prime Minister and the government have been telling us to depend on the Prime Minister's personal brand of diplomacy. Canadians have seen this diplomacy in action and they do not like it. The Prime Minister has given away fish to France and has received no support.

He has caved in on a number of trade issues to Washington and he has received no support. In fact, the head of GATT, Arthur Dunkel says: "Tariffication with no exceptions for Canadian supply management".

What is the Prime Minister prepared to do to get this support from other countries?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that if a guy does not know about bananas he does not know about fish.

The fact of the matter is that we have given away absolutely nothing to France. Due to the efforts of the distinguished Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the European Community has stopped overfishing off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and that is a tribute to the leadership of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: All I can do is indicate to my hon. friend that while there are no guarantees in this business, we have been working very hard with the stakeholders and with the producers to try and protect that provision of the agricultural industry which is so important to a number of Canadian producers and to the Canadian family farm in many instances.

We view it as a legitimate exemption. Other people do not share that view. Perhaps my hon. friend does not share that view because he tries to trivialize it by failing to understand that it is an exemption in much the same way as the maritime industry is an exemption for the Americans, and in much the same way for a developing country whose only export product is bananas constitutes an exemption.

The Liberals laugh at it, but for developing countries which only have that produce to secure foreign exchange, it is of vital importance that they secure an exemption in that regard.

What we are trying to do is encourage that exemption for developing countries. We accept the exemption in respect of the United States and we hope that others will view the exemption we are seeking on behalf of article XI as an appropriate instrument as well.

• (1440)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I hope the House will bear with me. I am going to depart from our usual practice and recognize certain visitors.

I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of a parliamentary delegation from Australia led by the Honourable Peter Walsh, Senator for Western Australia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency Mr. Jacques Attali, president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*English*]

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

When declaring 1985 International Youth Year, the United Nations warned of the potential for explosions among unemployed and alienated youth. We have had youth disturbances now in Canada—in Toronto, Halifax and elsewhere—to which the Ontario government has responded by initiating an emergency job program for youth.

Is the minister and his government prepared to join with Ontario and other provinces in initiating an urgent program for job creation for youth this summer in order to respond to the deep concern about the potential for a long, hot summer?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, obviously nobody is pleased with certain developments that have led to violence in this country and other countries around the world. I am sure nobody condones that.

With respect to this government's programs for youth, my hon. friend will admit we have had programs in place for a long time. We are very pleased that the provinces are ready now to do their part in order to help us find jobs for those students during the summer.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, Manpower Temporary Services indicates the job situation this summer will be the worst since 1982. Meanwhile, this government is spending only 70 per cent as much money now as it was in 1989 for summer youth employment.

With an unemployment rate among youth already at 17.7 per cent and going up this summer, it is more important to have action than rhetoric. Will this government act to introduce an emergency summer program for youth with the urgency it deserves before there is more trouble in this country?

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 Canadian people agree they prefer action to rhetoric; that is why we are on this side of the House and the hon. member is on the other side.

With respect to statistics, Statistics Canada has indicated recently that students have better chances of finding employment this summer than they had last summer. Notwithstanding that, we have increased the Challenge Program this year as we did last year.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I want to return to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and ask him about unemployment in Hamilton.

The Minister for Science, the ministers who visited Hamilton last week, and the minister of employment himself, have all claimed recently things are looking up and are good in the Canadian steel industry.

There are thousands of unemployed steelworkers in Hamilton and they know the situation is not good. What is the minister prepared to do to help these unemployed steelworkers?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I met with the steelworkers a couple of weeks ago in Toronto, and one view among them was that they were quite happy with the efforts this government is deploying to help them adapt to the changes that are happening in their industry.

If the hon. member would like to get details of all the assistance we have given the steelworkers I would be pleased to provide it for her.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, if the minister really believes he is doing enough for the Canadian steel industry then he is totally out of touch with reality.

This government promised free trade would bring jobs to Hamilton. In fact, we have lost thousands of jobs in the steel industry alone. The American steel industry's threatened trade actions against Canada will make the situation even worse.

This government has not resolved the trade dispute. It has run out of money for job retraining. What is the minister prepared to do for the unemployed in Hamilton, except talk through his hat?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concern for the steel workers. That is why with CSTEC we have entered into an agreement where I and my predecessor have committed very substantial amounts of money to help these workers retrain and adapt to the restructuring that is taking place.

The member talks about the steel industry. Mr. Fred Telmer of Stelco Inc. made a comment that is quoted in the *Hamilton Spectator* which I invite her to read. He says: "Indeed, during the first quarter of this year, steel shipments were up 3 per cent, making a 5 per cent year–over–year increase quite feasible. Canadian steel–makers and their customers are also benefiting from interest rates that are at their lowest level in 19 years". That we owe to the economic policy of this Minister of Finance.

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JOB TRAINING

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Two weeks ago the minister confirmed that his department would honour the retraining commitments for 1992 that were made to the workers of both the Abitibi and Red Rock mills in Thunder Bay and in Red Rock. He further undertook at that time to review the retraining commitments that had been made to those workers for the years 1993 and 1994.

Would the minister be prepared to give us a status report as to the funding that will be available for those commitments made by his people for the retraining programs to Red Rock and Thunder Bay for 1993 and 1994?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the government is in the process of finalizing a plan that will provide additional funds for developmental use this year. In order to achieve this, we will be reallocating funds to meet what is clearly a government priority. I should be able in the next few days, I hope, to be able to apprise members of the House and Canadians of these changes that will help meet this heavy demand for training on the part of unemployed people.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): A supplementary, if I may, to the same minister. Let me just say that the people of Thunder Bay appreciate the extra added effort that the minister has shown for those unfortunate workers in Thunder Bay and Red Rock.

However, since our last meeting further permanent layoffs have been announced, mainly because of the policy for downsizing the shipbuilding industry in Canada.

My question to the minister would be what plans does his ministry have to make commitments to those unemployed workers who have not yet had commitments made with respect to retraining?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member I am sure would agree with me that what we cannot do, nor should we do, is put every UI recipient on training.

What we have to do, what we can do and what we want to do, however, is to make sure that those who most need training get it. In the case of further layoffs in the area that my hon. friend mentions, adjustment committees are being set up in order to work with both the labour and the business side of the equation in order to find ways where we can help those workers. The hon. member can be assured that in the case of these other lay–offs they will get as fair treatment as we can muster for their benefit.

[*Translation*]

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State.

According to the media this morning, this year Canadian taxpayers will have to pay $390 million in interest and recovery costs to lending institutions because students failed to pay back their loans to these institutions.

• (1450)

Can the minister tell us today when the legislation will be amended with a view to making banks toe the line with respect to recovery of student loans in case of defaulting students?

Once again, Canadian taxpayers are footing the bill.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that negotiations with the banks are on the right track. Clearly, the student loans program needs some drastic changes. I have had talks with all the provinces in recent months, and we have now spent about 10 days negotiating with the banks to ensure that the cost to the Canadian taxpayer will be reasonable, considering the program students are being offered. We also want to ensure that students are the real beneficiaries of this program which is not the case today.

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[*English*]

GRAIN HANDLING

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of grains and oilseeds.

As the minister knows the grain handling system in Canada is grinding to a halt. Elevators on the west coast, in Thunder Bay, and the river ports are filling up, if they are not full, and we have a real crisis on our hands.

I would like to ask the minister what action the government is taking to ensure that our customers, primarily Russia, are able to receive our grain that they have already purchased.

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, the member exaggerates considerably when he says that the grain system is grinding to a halt.

There is no question that we have a problem in the seaway and the St. Lawrence River, but there is space in the country elevator system. The west coast ports are likely to set a record this year. In fact, the grain is moving out of the country and we have the possibility of setting an over-all record for grain movement and exports for this crop year.

With regard to the Russians, I think there were erroneous press reports around last week. There have been no lost sales to the Russians because of their lack of ability to pay freight. We have extended considerable credit to the Russians to buy our grain, in fact on a per capita basis, more than any other country except Germany.

We think our credit facilities have been very good and the results are there because, as I said, over all we have the possibility of setting a record this year for grain movement.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the same minister.

The minister should know that this week, CSL scrapped two of its lake boats as a direct result of the situation that exists. He should also know that both the U.S. and the Europeans, which are pumping grain into the Commonwealth of Independent Nations like they have never been before, are outdoing us and are also subsidizing the transportation from their country to the CIS.

Will the minister act today to find a solution so that we can get the grain moving again, and instead of putting people on UI they can be there moving the grain from farm gate to port?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, again there is a serious problem on the lakes. We know that over half of the Great Lakes

fleet is tied up. In fact, the number of boats being tied up is increasing every day. There is a problem.

Let me say again that there have been no lost sales or shipment of grain to the Russians to date because of their inability to pay freight on Canadian grain purchased on Canadian credit. I am aware of what has been going on as far as the Americans are concerned. We are very competitive with the Americans.

I point out that we are the first country to sign a long-term grain sales agreement with the Russians. We did that back at the end of February when President Yeltsin was here. Again, the Wheat Board is dealing with Export Khleb on a continuing basis and has had very good results as far as sales commitments are concerned.

To suggest that we are going to solve all of our problems with the Russians by extending them credit for freight certainly is not going to solve all of their problems.

With regard to what we are doing, we are going to be meeting with the Great Lakes shippers in Winnipeg at the Wheat Board next week. We have also decided to convene some meetings with the shippers to see what we can do to address the over-all problems.

We do not find ourselves in the situation that the member raises.

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CALGARY AIRPORT

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

When the Conference on North Atlantic Assembly was being held in Banff from May 14 to May 18, the international airport in Calgary was flying the flags of the participating nations, including the flag of the former Soviet Union and the old flag of communist Bulgaria.

I advised the manager of the airport that the Soviet Union has ceased to exist, that the flags of Ukraine, Byelorussia, Russia and the Baltic States should have been there and that the flag of the Soviet Union ceased to exist many months ago. The manager said that he did not receive orders from Ottawa to remove the flags. They are still there.

When is the minister going to order the airport management to remove those flags?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member took his complaint to the manager of the airport where it rightly belonged.

I was not aware that those flags were flying, but I will contact the manager.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Sixty per cent of women murdered in Ontario, we now know, are murdered by their partners. Obviously the Minister of Justice is aware that peace bonds and restraining orders are ineffective in protecting women in their homes.

Will the minister indicate to the House today what action plan the Government of Canada has to stem this tide of death and to replace what is clearly an outmoded procedure?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very good but somewhat complex question. She will know that the firearms legislation which was passed by the House contained a provision requiring the possibility of a prohibition order for firearms to be considered in all applications for bail or peace bond hearings, the hope being that firearms can be taken out of those very, very dangerous situations.

Arising out of the National Conference on Women, Law and the Administration of Justice in June 1991, there is a federal-provincial-territorial task force addressing the question of the workings of the system of the administration of justice with respect to women.

There is an action plan coming forward that will be presented to me and my provincial colleagues at our national meeting in October. We had hoped to meet in May. Many of my colleagues are involved in the constitutional discussions. That meeting is scheduled for October.

That will enable us to have included in our action plan the results of the interim report of the blue ribbon panel on violence against women. We are approaching this very serious question in a serious and systematic way.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's comments and I know her efforts are sincere, but we are in the position of this being an hour late and a dollar short.

Within the last month a woman in Sydney, N.S. applied for a peace bond and was told to return three weeks later for her hearing. Less than 48 hours later this woman was dead, allegedly at the hands of her estranged husband. We cannot wait until October. We cannot wait another few weeks.

When can the minister give us a response that will protect Canadian women in their homes as soon as possible?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if I thought there was a legislative initiative or a policy initiative that I could sponsor, I would do so immediately with, I know, the support of all members of this House.

A similar situation was brought to my attention some months ago by the Attorney General of Manitoba. What we are attempting to do is to raise the level of awareness and co-operation with all levels of government that have responsibility in this area through policing, through the prosecutorial function and through our efforts in judicial education, to try to make more widely known what that article or what the recent study has reflected, that is that the pathology of spousal assault is unique and must be dealt with on its own terms in the courts.

The bail laws are strong. They give the tools to the courts, but judges have to know what they are dealing with when they have certain kinds of applications brought before them. They must know the likelihood of reoffence and make their decisions with respect to restraining orders on that basis. We are working with our provincial colleagues and with those who have responsibility in the policing area to—

Mr. Speaker: We must move on.

[*Translation*]

MEDAL AWARD CEREMONY

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was in Cyprus last week where I experienced some exceptional moments with our Canadian soldiers.

My question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. How could a special medal award ceremony for soldiers of the Royal Van Doos, a truly impressive occasion, be completely overlooked in this country? Why do the media choose to ignore these colourful ceremonies which would make us even prouder to be what we are?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Outremont was right to draw our attention to the important job being done by Canadians as peacekeepers, in Cyprus in this case. I understand he attended a medal award ceremony, a way to recognize the professionalism and dedication of our soldiers, and I think such ceremonies should be brought to the attention of all Canadians.

* * *

• (1500)

AIR TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Transport.

Recently, Air Canada released a study on the air transportation industry in Canada. The study identified two basic options for the industry: first, the acquisition of Canadian Airlines International by foreign interests, and second, a merger of Canada's two airlines with foreign partners.

Which option does the government prefer, and what does it intend to do to promote that option?

[*English*]

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, indeed a report has been prepared and has been presented.

As the hon. member knows there are discussions being held with Canadian Airlines, with a partner. We have yet

to be presented with a recommendation on that particular one. When we hear from that airline we will have more information on which to base our decision.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, everybody is quite aware of the developments that are occurring in the industry with great losses being suffered by both Canadian Airlines.

We now know that Canadian Airlines is close to a deal. We know that Air Canada is talking about a deal possibly including equity with U.S. Air.

When is the government going to take some action to give policy leadership on this important issue which confronts the Canadian airline industry?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, the concerns of the airline industry and losses are not concentrated in Canada alone.

Indeed there are changes taking place in the airline industry around the world. Much of the losses that are being incurred are not through policy decisions but rather through changes in the economy and changes in flying patterns.

The airlines are private companies. They are making private company decisions. We as a government will work with them as best we can to make sure we have a healthy industry.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS OF MEMBER FOR NEW WESTMINSTER—BURNABY

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of personal privilege.

I believe the member for New Westminster—Burnaby made statements in the House today which were factually wrong. I would like to review the "blues" and speak to the House at the earliest date.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has raised a question of privilege. I remind the hon. member that statements that may be disagreed with may not necessarily be privilege, but I will certainly go along with the request of the hon. member to have a chance to look at *Hansard* and bring the matter back to the Chair.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

PROGRESS REPORT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, I rise to report to the House of Commons on the Canada round, on the distance we have travelled on the road to constitutional renewal, and on the distance we must still go to succeed.

At the invitation of the Prime Minister during 19 days of meetings in seven cities across Canada, ministers and aboriginal leaders have met to find ways to move this country forward.

I believe we are closer than ever to healing the wounds that bind us, to keeping the country that unites us. The progress we have made is unprecedented.

We had set May 31 as a target to conclude, but in Toronto we agreed that we had come so far that we should continue. Our purpose is agreement on all aspects of the Canada round, and that goal is within reach. We agreed in Toronto to a pause to consult, to gain some perspective, to identify areas where compromise might occur.

We have all learned hard lessons from the past. We have realized that we cannot make Canada more inclusive unless the process to get there is inclusive as well. We have all realized that no single part of this country can move forward in isolation and that the Canada round is necessary not just in name but in substance. We have all realized that no single part of this country can move forward in isolation, that a Canada round is necessary not just in name but in substance. We have all realized that closing doors does not open minds. So we are discussing a wide range of issues today: equalization, a new Senate, a common market within Canada, a new relationship with aboriginal peoples.

Nothing is agreed yet. There will be no final agreement until there is full agreement on a full package of change. But we are on the way to real change.

I will not review in detail every issue we have discussed, but I want to report on the major issues. Although serious questions remain to be resolved, the progress we have made is without parallel in the constitutional history of Canada. The glass is much more than half full.

[*Translation*]

First, we have reached consensus on ways to make Canadian federalism more flexible and more effective. That includes explicit recognition of exclusive provincial jurisdiction in eight areas that we believe are best handled locally—forestry, mining, tourism, housing, recreation, and municipal and urban affairs, labour market training, culture.

In the special case of culture, the Constitution would also explicitly affirm that the federal government would maintain national cultural institutions and granting programs. Any federal-provincial agreements in these areas, and in immigration, could be protected by the Constitution and thereby shielded from unilateral change.

That would also be the case for agreements respecting regional development. Powers made available to any one province would be available to all. The Constitution would constrain the federal government from using its spending power in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

If provinces want to opt out of new national shared-cost programs, they could do so, with compensation, if they undertake programs compatible with national objectives.

The Constitution would protect Canada's transfer payments from unilateral change. The commitment to national economic infrastructure and regional development to reduce disparities would be strengthened. There would be a requirement of regular consultation on equalization.

[*English*]

The fundamental objectives of the Canadian social and economic union would be entrenched in the Constitution. These would include social services, education, protection of the environment, the goal of full employment, of a reasonable standard of living, and a commitment to strengthen the Canadian economic union through the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital.

There is agreement to repeal the federal power of disallowance and to limit the federal declaratory power.

Second, there is consensus on a new, more inclusive vision of the country.

We have agreed on a Canada clause that would guide the courts in interpreting the Constitution, a declaration of the fundamental features of this country, of Quebec's distinctiveness, of Canada's linguistic duality, of aboriginal rights and responsibilities, including a new third order of government, of our democratic values, of the equality of women and men, of cultures and races, of the provinces in this federation.

We are recognizing the distinct society of Quebec and ensuring that provincial governments have the means to express their identity and goals.

We have agreed to open a new partnership with the aboriginal peoples of Canada, based upon a mutual respect that involves the recognition of their inherent right to self-government within Canada. That idea is not new. The Iroquois Confederacy and other aboriginal governments practised forms of democracy here before most European countries did.

Nor should the idea cause alarm. There are forms of aboriginal self-government now in Canada and they work better than the colonial systems which have created such despondency and such despair among Canadian aboriginals. The difference is that now those governments would be rooted in the Constitution.

• (1510)

The right would not be contingent, nor delayed. It is agreed that all parties would choose to wait three full years before that right was taken to court. That would give everyone time to begin to agree on what self-government would mean in particular communities, and to agree on what it would not mean. This three-year period ensures that the definitions can be worked out by agreement, by negotiation, not by the courts.

Existing provincial and federal laws would continue to apply until aboriginal governments have the authority to adopt new regimes which would operate within the Canadian system but would reflect aboriginal reality. The charter of rights would apply as it does to provinces.

Existing treaty rights would be protected and interpreted in a manner that is just, broad and liberal, taking into account their spirit and intent.

There have also been undertakings by the provinces with respect to land and the maintenance and services that would allow the federal government to include all aboriginal peoples, including the Métis, in section 91(24) of the Constitution.

[*Translation*]

Third, we are well on the way to improving substantially the national and federal institutions of Canada.

The Constitution would finally entrench the composition of the Supreme Court, including three civil law judges from Quebec. The appointment of Supreme Court judges would be based on lists submitted by the provinces.

First Ministers' Conferences would be strengthened as instruments of Canadian co-operation and the Constitution would require an annual meeting of Heads of Government.

On the Senate, we have not yet settled the basic questions of the basis on which the Senate is chosen, or its powers. But a great deal is agreed. Senators would be directly elected. A system of proportional representation would be defined by Parliament to ensure that the Senate would fully reflect the diversity of Canada. The new Senate would ratify federal appointments or reject them. It would have a 30-day suspensive veto over supply bills.

There would be guaranteed representation for aboriginal Canadians. On issues of French language or culture, a double-majority rule would apply.

[*English*]

On all of these issues there is broad agreement on the principles and on the essence of the proposals. In many areas exact legal text has been agreed word by word, line by line.

The work of the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee has been an invaluable guide in our discussions. In many cases the specific language has been borrowed. Where we adopted a different approach, for example, in describing the jurisdiction of the provinces, I believe there was agreement among the federalist parties whose unanimity gave such authority to the report of Parliament.

There has been extraordinary agreement. But it could all come to nothing because these discussions are not about one item and not about one agenda. This is a Canada round and we need agreement on the whole if we are to have agreement on any parts.

A question of critical importance to Canada is our ability to have the kind of common market in our country that has allowed Europe to offer such tangible benefits to its citizens. When Canada was formed trade was in goods, and the barriers to that trade were brought down by the original Confederation agreement. In that same nation-building spirit we must reduce Canada's own barriers to the free movement of people, capital, services and goods.

Two other major issues stand out: the Senate and the constitutional amending formula for changes to national institutions. I do not believe we can reach agreement on either unless we reach agreement on both. I am confident we can. But that will require flexibility and vision on the part of everyone who wants this country to continue and succeed.

Three Senate models are being considered: equal representation of provinces; equal representation of regions; and equitable representation. All models share the principle that a new Senate must be much more broadly based. All models have aspects that commend them to serious consideration by provincial and federal governments. Each model obviously presents difficulties for others.

Those who argue the absolute equality of provinces put that forward as a principle of a federation, equal in importance to the principle of representation by population. Not everyone agrees and there is equally genuine concern about a reform that would allow six provinces representing 17 per cent of the population to stop or to appreciably delay decisions of a democratically elected House of Commons.

The federal government has said that if there is a consensus in the country on a particular model we could accept that model. However, if it were to be composed on the basis of the equality of provinces its powers must be much more limited than if it were more broadly based.

We need a system that represents the different parts of Canada better but we also need a system that works, reforms that will improve government, not prevent it.

In Toronto I put forward some views on the powers I saw as being appropriately associated with the different models under discussion. I hope this may provide some basis for agreement. So far there is no consensus on the model or the powers of a new Senate.

We must find a consensus or this whole Canada round will fail. Everyone has agreed on Senate reform. The question is whether provinces who have hard positions now are prepared to find some way to agree and to make the Canada round whole.

I believe that if we can find an acceptable model for the Senate we can find agreement on an amending formula.

Sometimes we might wish that we were a simple country: one language, one culture, one clear identity. But that is not who we are and has not been for centuries. We are a complex, accomplished society, whose success depends on our respect for ourselves and our respect for others. If that mutual respect was important in the past, it is even more essential in the modern world in which we must co-operate and compete.

These present constitutional issues are of crucial importance to Quebecers who must decide whether to stay in Canada or not. They are of crucial importance to aboriginal Canadians who have been left outside longer than anyone else. And they are for western Canadians who have felt shut out of national decisions.

[*Translation*]

We all understand that the only way to achieve our goals is to achieve them all together. But there is more to it than that. Issues which interest Quebec are of profound importance to every other Canadian because if Quebec rejects Canada in October, every Canadian will suffer, materially and for generations.

Aboriginal issues are of profound importance to Quebec because if we can establish an acceptable framework for self-government that can lead to greater certainty for Quebec and more harmony in pursuit of the goals of Quebec.

Institutions which give Canadians a sense of belonging to their country strengthen the whole country. We need each other after the Constitution too, and the respect we show each other now will make it easier for us to make progress together later.

• (1520)

[*English*]

Generosity is not a luxury in Canada. It is what keeps us together as a community, just as the absence of generosity could break us into bitter pieces.

I am encouraged by the sense of generosity I have found around the constitutional table, in this House and in this country. Our real challenge now is to find the ingenuity and the generosity to make the Canada round work and to make Canada work.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank the minister for his statement in the House today.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and all Liberal members and senators, I can assure him that we hope for a resolution of the constitutional impasse. We support him without reservation in his efforts on behalf of the government to bring the provincial and federal governments to agree on a series of proposals that could break the constitutional deadlock.

Of course we on this side of the House are watching him with some trepidation and even impatience. It is still good to keep in mind that back in April 1991 the Leader of the Opposition and leader of the Liberal Party of Canada submitted not only a procedure for resolving the constitutional impasse but also a nine-point program that the Liberals thought would settle the constitutional issue fairly and equitably.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ouellet: We are very pleased on hearing the report that the minister just gave us to see today that considerable progress has been made and that almost all of the nine suggestions made by the Liberal Party of Canada were accepted not only by the government but by all the provincial representatives who negotiated with the minister in recent weeks.

Nevertheless, I would like to draw the minister's attention to some points that we consider absolutely fundamental. I will quote what the minister himself said in his speech a few minutes ago: "The constitutional developments now under way are of the utmost importance for Quebecers. Secondly, they are also very important for native people, who have felt excluded for a very

long time, and finally for westerners who also feel left out of national decisions".

If you allow me I will return briefly to each of these three points. We Liberals believe that it is absolutely essential in this constitutional round to give Quebec back its veto on constitutional issues and amendments. That is why we proposed a constitutional amending formula that would ensure a veto for the government and people of Quebec.

We think that the minister will have failed in the discussions now going on if he is unable to convince all his provincial discussion partners of the absolute necessity of an amending formula that guarantees a veto for Quebec.

Secondly, we want to recall—

[*English*]

It is absolutely essential that it be fully understood, as this round cannot only be a Quebec round but ought to be a Canada round, that we do something for the aboriginal people.

I heard the minister saying here today, and I will quote him again: "We have agreed to open a new partnership with the aboriginal people of Canada based on a mutual respect that involves the recognition of their inherent right to self-government within Canada". Then he went on to say: "That idea is not new, nor should the idea cause alarm".

It is quite clear that the Liberals profoundly believe the time has come to recognize the aboriginal right of self-government within our Constitution. For us, there is no alarm. We are very concerned when on the one hand we see the minister speaking and being very open and generous in order to achieve this and on the other hand we see his colleague, the minister of health, on TV making all kinds of difficulties or so-called difficulties about this very simple fact that ought to be part of this current negotiation round.

We are hopeful that every Canadian from every political party and every level of government will be generous enough to understand and accept the wording that has been put in the Beaudoin-Dobbie reports in relation to aboriginal issues.

Finally, the third component of what we think is essential as part of the Canada round is a tangible progress in reforming the Senate in a way that would be satisfactory to the legitimate aspirations of westerners and people of less populated provinces, who think that the overwhelming representation of Ontario and Quebec in the House of Commons makes them a smaller part of the decision process in Ottawa.

We Liberals believe that there ought to be a reform of the Senate that will allow a better representation, if not in the House of Commons then certainly in the Senate, in order to meet these legitimate aspirations of these provinces.

I want to be quite clear that the Liberal Party, under its leader, has made a series of suggestions regarding the Senate. We made these suggestions thinking that the west and the Atlantic provinces would be well served by this. In the Beaudoin-Dobbie report we dissent in relation to the Senate because we felt that the level of representation could be improved on what was suggested by the government and more particularly we felt that if we are talking of an elected Senate and a more equitable Senate, it ought to be an effective Senate also.

We felt that the proposal of the government was not going far enough in the directions of an effective Senate. Frankly, we are not afraid that the House of Commons would be paralyzed because there would be a more effective Senate.

• (1530)

We believe that if there is a certain price to pay in order to meet the legitimate aspirations of westerners and Atlantic Canadians it ought to be paid.

We are saying that the minister ought to work diligently to convince the representative of the provinces who are meeting with him that they have to give a veto to Quebec on the amending formula. He has also to convince his counterpart to respond in a positive fashion to a reformed Senate which seems to be needed and desired by the Atlantic provinces and the western provinces.

[*Translation*]

Finally, for everyone to win in this constitutional round we think it is essential for the Government of Canada to clarify its spending power and a new, more efficient, and functional distribution of powers to the federal and provincial governments and also to strengthen the federal government's position in the economic field.

While we want this constitutional round to please Atlantic Canadians, Quebecers, Ontarians, and westerners, there must also be something for those who believe in a strong and effective central government for Canada. We think that depends on strengthening section 121 of the Constitution.

We were pleased with what the minister said about this desire to ensure greater freedom for the movement of goods, people, services and capital in Canada and we want to tell him that we support this effort to ensure that Canada is really a common market and that the Liberal Party of Canada will always fully support his efforts to convince the provincial representatives to accept constitutional changes to strengthen Canada's economic union.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the minister that he is entering the crucial phase of negotiations, as he himself knows. Obviously, unanimity would be the best outcome. Of course a unanimous position of the federal government and all the provinces on a set of proposals would be the best of all worlds, but it certainly will not be easy to achieve or even possible.

I would like to quote an article that appeared on May 30 in *La Presse*. Journalist Marcel Adam wrote that Meech failed because of the unanimity requirement:

> That is why Brian Mulroney promised in February to come up with a plan that all provinces would support.
>
> "I do not want nine tenths of an agreement," he emphasized. "I do not want two thirds of an agreement; I want all provinces to sign—"

That is what the Prime Minister of Canada said.

Mr. Adam continued:

> Believe me, that statement was heard by all the premiers, who will make a point of reminding him of it when the time comes.

Mr. Adam concluded his article by saying:

> If my analysis is correct, the present process will fail for the same reason as Meech: the sacrosanct principle of unanimity.

I think it is very important that we understand why the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada suggested quite a while ago that we had a national referendum to make sure we are not dragged down by provincial Premiers who in their talks and discussions with the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs and the Prime Minister of Canada will always try to get more. They will want this or object to that on the basis that it might not be popular in their province.

But at the present time the Canadian interest is paramount. If we can satisfy the legitimate demands of Quebec, the demands of native peoples, and the demands regarding an effective, equitable and elected Senate, I say to the Minister: "In the end, if you are unable to get unanimity, trust the population of Canada, organize your referendum and you will win it".

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ouellet: It seems certain to us that we can get a majority in the four main regions of the country in favour of a constitutional reform which serves the best interest of Canada as a whole.

We say to the minister: "Good luck. You are entering the final phase of the negotiations; you must succeed. We are behind you, but beware, nothing must be perceived as a gain for some at the expense of others". In this constitutional round, all Canadians, no matter where they live, must be winners.

We believe that if you have a set of proposals which has the support of a majority of premiers, most of the population, including that of Quebec, will vote in a referendum in favour of a renewed Canada, a Canada which would say yes to Quebec and which will let Quebecers say yes to Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, first of all I welcome the minister back to the House. I congratulate him on both his endurance and his patience throughout this process. He has been working very hard at it and I think we owe him a debt of gratitude for the work he has put into this particular issue.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nystrom: The most important thing as we continue into the final phases of the Canada round is keeping this country united and getting Canadians marching in the same direction once again.

I am pleased from what I have found out about the negotiations to note the state of play to date in terms of what is being tentatively agreed upon. As the minister said there is no agreement until the final negotiations are completed, but the state of play to date reflects a

great deal of what we agreed in this House on the Beaudoin—Dobbie report.

I am very pleased with that because as the minister said to have an inclusive Canada round we must have an inclusive process. Let us turn to what the three parties did in terms of the Beaudoin—Dobbie committee. We had public hearings. We had six national conferences. We involved Canadians in these mini-constituent assemblies across this country. We had long and hard negotiations between the parties. We put aside our political labels. We stood up for Canada and came up with a report that is reflective of what the Canadian people want.

• (1540)

I say today that I am pleased to see that the provinces in the main are listening very carefully to what the Canadian people had to say. I hope later on when the premiers become involved that they too will keep an eye on public opinion and an eye on what the three parties said in the Beaudoin—Dobbie report. I think it is very important.

To date we see in the discussions held across the country some positive news for the aboriginal people of this country. We see an agreement now by all the provinces participating, plus the aboriginal people in the territories, and the federal government, to recognize the inherent right to self-government of aboriginal people. This is long overdue. It is finally going to happen. It is about time in terms of doing justice to our aboriginal people.

[*Translation*]

As regards the province of Quebec, I think that people everywhere in the country feel that Quebec is different, that it is not at all a province like the others. It is truly a unique and distinct society. Now there is agreement, and that includes Mr. Clyde Wells from Newfoundland, to enshrine the distinct society clause in the Canadian Constitution. There is also a consensus across the country to reform the Supreme Court of Canada in order to amend the Canadian Constitution and allow three civil law judges from Quebec, as well as six common law judges.

It is important for Quebec to protect its unique society, to protect a province which is different and which constitutes a minority not only in Canada but also in North America.

[*English*]

There has been progressive movement in terms of regional fairness, in terms of regional development and in terms of protecting transfer payments to the provinces from being unilaterally ended by the federal government in the future. There has been progress made in terms of strengthening section 36 of the Constitution, the section on equalization that is so important to six or seven of the provinces including my home province of Saskatchewan.

In terms of the new idea of a social covenant or of an economic union, I am pleased the governments have agreed with a report we made in this House on the details of what should go into a social covenant: the protection of medical care, higher education, primary education, the environment, the right of workers to collective bargaining, and the importance of things like full employment in Canada, decent housing, and a decent standard of living for all Canadians regardless of where they live in this country.

It is the same in terms of minorities and openness: to have some positive changes for minorities, visible and other minorities in Canada—

[*Translation*]

—and also a change in the Canadian Constitution for linguistic minorities, French speaking and English speaking ones across Canada.

[*English*]

Then we have the Senate. We in the committee probably wrestled more with the Senate issue than any other. I am not surprised the minister is having problems with the Senate issue when he meets with his counterparts across the country.

This is indeed the most important issue, next to perhaps the division of powers, but certainly a very difficult issue to settle in terms of trying to get a compromise and a consensus in the country.

Substantive progress has been made. We now have, for example, agreement all around to have an elected Senate, progress after over a hundred years. We have a very important agreement to have the Senate elected by proportional representation, something that I would not have predicted six or seven months ago would be agreed

to by not only the three national political parties but all the provinces, the aboriginal people and the territories.

With proportional representation we can have a Senate where we can achieve the important goals and objectives of gender parity and representation of minorities, a House that reflects the diversity of this country more than we have today in the House of Commons or indeed in the appointed Senate. Very important progress has been made on the Senate issue.

For the aboriginal people we have agreement now to have aboriginal representation in the Senate. Even three months ago we did not have that agreement. The three parties said in our report that we would recommend aboriginal representation in the Senate if the aboriginal people agreed. At that time there was no consensus in their community. Now there must be a consensus because the aboriginal people have agreed that they should have aboriginal representation in the Senate, again very good progress. There has also been some progress in terms of Senate powers. Again I think it is very important.

Finally, in terms of the substantive matters we have on the table to settle the whole issue of whether or not the Senate should be equal or the Senate should be equitable. Tied into that is the amending formula in terms of how we should reform the Constitution in the future.

In terms of the amending formula we have a couple of new ideas on the table. One was proposed by Saskatchewan which would give Quebec and Ontario, the big provinces, and a combination of smaller provinces a veto namely seven provinces representing 85 per cent of the population. This is something we did not have that is worth considering.

We have another idea that is new for the Northwest Territories. Again it is worth considering in terms of the amending formula.

The important matter that will have to be resolved—and this is why I am glad there is a pause this week where people can go back and reflect—is whether the Senate should be equal or equitable.

In the House we have given some pretty clear directions to the minister that we believe the model should be one of greater equity between the provinces.

We have notionally the idea that we have five regions in the country, each with around 20 per cent of the senators. That would give the small provinces a lot more representation and a lot more clout compared to what they have now. That is the important issue. When we talk about whether it is equitable or equal in the Senate it leads directly to the powers of the Senate. Those two things have to be worked out over the few weeks that lie ahead.

There are one or two other things I want to say. I would like to say to Robert Bourassa, the premier of Quebec, that the rest of Canada has shown its good will. The rest of Canada has gone a considerable distance. The rest of Canada has made some very substantive progress. The time has come very soon when the premier of Quebec should come back to the bargaining table and have some input on behalf of the people of his province.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I know that it was difficult following the failure of Meech Lake. However, I also think that the rest of the country is now acting in good faith. We feel that we have the necessary flexibility to make arrangements, not only for Quebecers but also for the aboriginal peoples, the rest of the country, the smaller provinces, and everybody because this is truly a Canada Round.

Given this good faith, it is time for Mr. Bourassa to act. It is time to go back to the negotiation table to represent the population of Quebec. Now is the time to act.

[*English*]

In conclusion, we have a great country. Canadian people are now saying to those of us who are politicians that the time has come to negotiate the deal. The time has come to make the accommodation. The time has come to make the arrangement and to settle the constitutional issue in the next few weeks and put this issue behind us so that in a few months' time we can get back to dealing with the real issues which are issues of hunger, employment, jobs and the recession, real issues that real people face.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre (Shefford): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford on a point of order.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I know that this House prides itself on recognizing the right to a dissenting opinion and to freedom of expression. Consequently, I request the unanimous consent of the House so that we can also acknowledge this admission of defeat that was just made by the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I believe the hon. member knows that Standing Order 33(1) provides that only a member from each of the parties in opposition to the government may comment briefly thereon. However, the House can govern its own business and it can give its unanimous consent to give the floor to another member. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry but there is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Richelieu on a point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, during the speech made by the Liberal party member, the hon. member for Beauséjour and leader of that party told the leader of the Bloc Quebecois to shut up.

An hon. member: "Shut up."

Mr. Plamondon: Should the member retract his comments? Should he have to retract or will you make your decision later on?

• (1550)

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford might be kind enough to allow me to answer one point of order at a time.

Mr. Lapierre: It is on the same point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If it is on the same point of order, I apologize. The hon. member for Shefford has the floor.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I was indeed very upset by those comments. I was hurt by the member for Beauséjour and I hope that he will retract.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the two members for having drawn my attention to that incident. We will check *Hansard* and make the appropriate decision.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

RED SUCKER LAKE SCHOOL

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of the Red Sucker Lake community, which had its first school built in 1957.

Whereas this school is in deplorable structural condition and, in fact, was closed by both the community and an inspector from Labour Canada on May 11, 1992 due to safety concerns, and whereas the school has been scheduled for replacement in 1992–93 but this has been postponed for a number of years, and whereas the situation is extremely urgent and of public importance, we the undersigned, which is almost the entire population of Red Sucker Lake, call upon Parliament to request the federal government to consider priorizing the replacement of the Red Sucker Lake school for immediate replacement.

May I just add a word to say that this issue is really pressing and urgent. The children are losing their school year. It is completely deplorable that in this century we have this deplorable situation at the Red Sucker Lake school.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the honour to present to the House a petition signed by a number of my constituents living in the Arden area, 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 May 13, 1991, to pass legislation which could permit a national referendum on the Constitution.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure pursuant to Standing Order 36 to table before the House two petitions signed by Canadians from across this country opposed to

the government's decision to terminate the Court Challenges Program.

They call upon the Government of Canada to rescind this particular decision and reinstate the Court Challenges Program which has been of benefit to many Canadians across this country in challenging the various laws in this country.

FEDERAL ELECTION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I too have the honour and duty to present a petition to this House signed by a number of Hamiltonians.

The petitioners say that whereas the opinion polls continually and consistently reflect mass dissatisfaction with this current government and that the Prime Minister has not listened to the people of Canada, and that since there is no provision for an impeachment process, they are asking Parliament to hold a free vote of confidence so that individual members of Parliament can vote according to the wishes of their constituents and force an election.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Madam Speaker, I too pursuant to Standing Order 36 am privileged to present a petition on behalf of some 176 constituents of Winnipeg North. They are concerned about the Government of Canada terminating the federal co-operative housing program and pray that Parliament urge the government to immediately reinstate the federal co-op housing program and commit the $6.5 million to the program which had been planned for 1992 and to permit approximately 2,000 co-op housing units to be sponsored this year.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Madam Speaker, I have four petitions with many, many names on co-op housing calling upon the federal government to reinstate that program and also to commit the $6.1 million to the program to permit approximately 2,000 co-op housing units to be sponsored this year.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Madam Speaker, I have another petition calling upon 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.

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 stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Today, the hon. member for Shefford, and yesterday, the hon. member for Saint-Hubert seemed to be against allowing the questions to stand. If either one has a numbered question, and I am obviously referring to a question under their name, and wants to know at what stage the answer is, I am convinced that the hon. parliamentary secretary will be pleased to reply.

Since there does not seem to be any particular question, all will therefore be allowed to stand.

[*English*]

Are there any Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers?

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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 Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dingwall: Madam Speaker, yesterday I gave notice of a motion for production of certain papers. I know it would not be appropriate for the parliamentary secretary to have ready today the papers which I am requesting. I wonder if he would take it under advisement to see whether or not he could produce those papers for next week.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I have heard the hon. member's request. I have no idea if what he is asking is reasonable or not. He is a reasonable man so I will take it

on the face of it and will determine whether or not it is a reasonable request and respond accordingly.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's request is on notice. It might be unreasonable to ask that it be produced today.

Before proceeding to Orders of the Day, 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 45 minutes and we will continue until 7.45 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-81

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I move pursuant to Standing Order 78(3):

That, in relation to Bill C-81, "An Act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada"; not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of report stage and one sitting day to the consideration of the third reading stage of the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the allotted day to the report stage consideration and on the allotted day to the third 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 stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

• (1600)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

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. 149*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Belsher
Bernier	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blais	Blenkarn
Bosley	Bourgault
Brightwell	Cadieux
Cardiff	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Cook	Corbeil
Corbett	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois	de Cotret
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dobbie	Dorin
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Fretz	Friesen
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Guilbault
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hockin
Hogue	Holtmann
Horner	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jacques	Jelinek
Johnson	Joncas
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Langlois
Larrivée	Layton
Littlechild	Loiselle
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McDermid
McKnight	McLean
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Oberle	Plourde
Porter	Redway
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin	Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Tétreault	Thacker
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van De Walle	Vankoughnet
Vézina	Vien
Vincent	White
Wilbee	
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Winegard
Worthy—119	

NAYS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Assad	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair	Bellemare
Bevilacqua	Black
Blackburn (Brant)	Blaikie
Breaugh	Butland
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Clancy
Comuzzi	Copps
Crawford	Dingwall
Duceppe	Edmonston
Ferguson	Fisher
Flis	Fontana
Foster	Gaffney
Gardiner	Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Jordan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kindy
Kristiansen	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Lapierre	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leblanc (Longueuil)	MacLaren
MacLellan	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	McCurdy
Milliken	Mills
Murphy	Nault
Nowlan	Nunziata
Nystrom	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Parent
Parker	Peterson
Phinney	Plamondon
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Rocheleau	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vanclief	Venne
Walker	Wappel
Whittaker	Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—85	

PAIRED—MEMBERS

nil/aucun

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

Mr. Boyer: Point of order, Madam Speaker. I wanted to mention to you that I was present for the vote but abstained on the vote for time allocation.

Mr. Hawkes: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. A number of members who were not present earlier might not realize that because of ministerial statements the bell is expected to ring at about 7.30 p.m. tonight, with the vote to commence at 7.45 p.m. I thought it might be important to put that on the record.

* * *

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Tuesday, June 2, 1992 consideration of Bill C–81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It is very difficult for the Chair to hear what is going on on the floor. The hon. member for Churchill was seeking the floor on point of order.

Mr. Murphy: Madam Speaker, to assist members of the House, especially later on tonight, I would give notice that I will not move the motions standing in my name, Motions No. 14, 15, 17, 19, 23 and 47.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member. The Table has taken notice and any member who would like to have those numbers written can come to the table.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford, on a point of order.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, once the motions are before the House and the member decides not to move them himself, can another member do so on his behalf? Can he withdraw them without unanimous consent? I really would like to know.

Madam Deputy Speaker: A motion is before the House as soon as the Chair presents the motion to the House. If the hon. member decides not to move his motions, obviously the Chair will not present them. This means the motions bearing the numbers mentioned by the hon. member for Churchill will not be before the House.

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Richelieu, on a point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: These motions were presented to the House at the report stage and they therefore belong to the House. To withdraw them would require unanimous consent. We have had a similar situation already.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No, these motions were not presented to the House. Notice was given that these motions would be presented, but the notice may be withdrawn, which is what happened. As a result, the motions cannot be presented in the House again.

Mr. Plamondon: On the second point raised by my leader, can someone else—

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Just a moment. Order, please. It is impossible for the Chair to hear a member talking from the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, my question concerns the second point raised by our leader, which was whether another member can present them, since they are already on the Order Paper.

Madam Deputy Speaker: For another member to present motions that were withdrawn would require the unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Plamondon: Mindful of the great democratic virtues of the people around us, I wish to seek unanimous consent for a vote on these motions.

Madam Deputy Speaker: You would first need the consent of the hon. member for Churchill.

• (1650)

[*English*]

Mr. Murphy: No, Madam Speaker. I introduced 25 amendments in the time period that was allocated. After looking at the entire package of amendments, comparing them with the motions of the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville and looking at what the government itself has presented, I thought that these six particular motions were not necessary. I still have a number of motions on the floor which we will be forcing votes on.

I think the hon. members of the Bloc will have all the opportunity they wish to vote later on tonight.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I was reluctant to get up to debate this particular set of motions because there was not much that I needed to say on them, but I felt in light of the proceedings in the House yesterday it was incumbent on me to get up and explain to the public what has been going on in this place in relation to the proceedings on this bill.

[*Translation*]

What we saw yesterday, Madam Speaker, was an attempt by members of the Bloc Quebecois to kill this bill. They brought in all their members to make ten-minute speeches on every amendment moved in the House by the other members. It's a big change to see all these members here, and I am delighted to see them I must say. But yesterday they were here for the sole purpose to kill this bill and to obstruct the proceedings of this House and I think that should be said, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have a point of order. The hon. member for Shefford.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is interpreting the perfectly democratic approach taken by our members as an attempt to obstruct the proceedings of this House. I know you will not accept this inference when members are merely exercising their rights which it is your duty to protect.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member knows perfectly well this is not a point of order. However, perhaps I should remind the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands—

[*English*]

—he may have been impugning motives. I would be grateful if he would come back to the substance of the motions in front of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I was trying to explain my reasons for taking part in this debate, and I made it clear that I would not have done so if we had not had all these speeches yesterday by members of the Bloc Quebecois. I did not make good speeches, Madam Speaker, but I spoke just the same.

It is clear that this party, the Bloc Quebecois, is out to destroy this country as it is today, to divide it. The referendum proposed under this bill runs contrary to

their aims because the bill will allow all Canadians to vote on a question concerning the Constitution.

[*English*]

For that reason, Madam Speaker, these members have sought to deprive Canadians across this country of their right to vote and they are prepared to block this bill in order to do it.

Their votes will not block it. They know that because the government has a big majority and some support elsewhere, but they feel that they can obstruct it in this House. What we saw yesterday was a parade of speakers designed to bring this bill to a standstill in the House. It has prevented our members from getting on with debates on the motions that we would like to debate.

You only have to look at the debate that went on yesterday on the first clause because it was on the title of the bill, for heaven's sake, and everybody had something to say on the title. When does that ever happen? Never. It is ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous.

What we want to do now is participate in this debate today so that we can put our views on the record with respect to these amendments and this bill and we are going to be deprived of much opportunity because the government, in order to deal with the obstruction, has had to bring in this guillotine and apply time allocation again.

I will come back to that in a moment because I would like to talk about the role of the New Democratic Party in all this. Its members were willing participants. Last night they obstructed this House in allowing us to sit late so that members could continue to speak to these amendments and allow the various amendments at report stage to be debated.

Mr. Whittaker: What are you doing now? You are obstructing the bill.

Mr. Milliken: I am explaining why I am speaking on this debate and the hon. member knows it.

What the New Democratic Party did was say it will not sit late. Its members all stood up and objected when the question was put last night to continue the hours of sitting.

Why did they do that? Because they are not democratic. Remember the Federal Democratic Republic in Germany, the FDR? Remember that? Why was it called a democratic republic when it was a communist dictatorship? Because it was trying to cover up its anti-democratic values, that is why. It was trying to pretend it was something it was not.

The New Democratic Party is involved in the same exercise. Those members do not want the people of Canada to have a vote on this issue. They do not want Canadians to express their views in a referendum. They want to tell Canadians what is good for them and jam it down their throats.

We in the Liberal Party do not take that view. I am sorry to make this partisan but we are being deprived of our rights to address this bill in this House because of the tactics, the partisan tactics, of the other parties in this House.

We have played easy and co-operative on this and the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader knows that. We worked with him in the committee to get the amendments to this bill. We have agreed to some amendments. We would like more, and we have moved more here that we would like to debate today, but we are going to be deprived of that opportunity because of the government's guillotine and the Bloc's obstruction and the unwillingness of the New Democratic Party to debate late last night.

That is what is depriving us of an opportunity to carry on a reasonable debate on this bill.

We have fault down on one side. We have fault down on another side. Now let us look at the government's hand in all this.

Here we have a government saying it wants to save the country. What a sudden revelation that was to this group because if the government is intending to save the country it would have brought this bill in months and months ago when the Leader of the Opposition stood in this House and asked it to do it. He had a deal with the government House leader to bring this bill in months ago and the government House leader dilly-dallied.

The Quebec caucus on the other side went to the minister of constitutional affairs and got it stopped. That is why this bill was not dealt with months and months ago. Instead the government House leader in his usual dictatorial and bully-boy fashion came waltzing into this House one day and said: "Here is the bill. Pass it".

Here we are debating this bill today, three days of debate on second reading, jammed into committee, three sitting days in the committee with closure threatened on the Thursday night so we walked out.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader moved a closure motion in committee, for heaven's sake. We walked out but got the committee going again Wednesday because of co-operation on our part and a willingness to get on with the job and do it properly.

It was all done on Tuesday which was faster than the government expected anyway because we were so co-operative. We allowed votes. We carried on. We lost a lot of votes but we carried on and we got the job done.

Now we are back here and we are going to have two days of debate on report stage with 65 amendments and one day of debate at third reading. This on a bill to save the country.

You would think the government would allow this House to have a reasonable debate on this issue. Instead it clamps down at every turn. The Bloc in its hypocritical way is nodding "yes, yes" and its members are the ones who caused this particular move on the part of the government.

I can sympathize at least with the bully-boy tactics of the government when I look at what went on in this House yesterday. I can sympathize. I do not agree. I think it is wicked and I think the government should be ashamed of itself for putting itself in this place, but had it brought this bill in before, had it brought it in in a timely way, it would not be in this jam today.

It is its own fault. It was promised in the throne speech a year ago, April as I recall was the date of that throne speech. Here it is a year later and the government is finally bringing the thing in and in its usual bully-boy way is saying, "Pass the bill now, or else".

That is what the country is faced with. That is this government's notion of saving Canada. That is its notion of preserving national unity and doing all it can to save the country.

For the government House leader to try to bully us the way he has the last two weeks is an example the most shocking abuse.

• (1700)

He is trying to blame the Liberals, who have co-operated throughout on this bill, with everything that has gone wrong. They are trying to blame the Liberal Party of Canada for failing to co-operate when this party has, in fact, co-operated significantly on this bill. We have suggested sensible amendments and we have other sensible amendments that are being rejected. We will accept that and we are willing to have a fairly limited debate and have a vote. We indicated our willingness to do all that.

However, the government House leader is trying to suggest that it is our fault that the country is in this mess when we urged the government six, eight, ten months ago to bring this bill in and get on with it.

I cannot understand the approach of the government House leader. Unfortunately, he has been a real bully-boy throughout this exercise. It is shocking.

Mr. Gauthier: It is a disgrace.

Mr. Milliken: It is a disgrace. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is right. The government House leader should be ashamed of himself.

Another thing I would mention is his inattentiveness to this debate. He has not sat in on this debate in this House for five minutes since his own speech on the opening of the debate. He got up and left right after that speech. He did not even have the courtesy to stay and listen to the leading speeches from members of the opposition at that time. That is contempt of Parliament. The government House leader has an obligation, especially as an officer of the House, to remain in the Chamber and listen to the debate, particularly on his own bill. This was his bill. He had a duty to be here.

An hon. member: Order.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member says order. He should go and speak to the government House leader and say, "Do your job and get into the House". That is where he should be.

An hon. member: Right on.

Mr. Milliken: He should be in this House defending this terrible legislation and allowing votes and debate on every amendment that has been proposed by the members of this House, 65 amendments and only a handful will be debated.

I see that my time is about to expire. I am sorry that is the case. I could go on at length on this bill. I have a lot of things I would like to say about these amendments. However, I will bow to the Chair's position and I will sit down.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Madam Speaker, I want to participate although I know time is limited under the rules. I believe it is ten minutes at this stage.

I want to compliment the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on most of what he said. I was very interested in what he said and I am glad he finally said it. Madam Speaker, you have been in the chair for a good part of the day, the majority of the day. I have been sitting here in the House for the days it has gone on. I got from the table and from the committee clerk the time involved in Bill C–81 in terms of second reading 16.5 hours, about two and a half days. Second reading was two and a half days. Here we are with allocation of time so that at 7.30 p.m. tonight the bells will start to ring for 15 minutes and then we vote on a multitude of amendments. The 64 have been consolidated in either 40 or 23, depending on who you speak to.

The thing is passing strange. We are debating the referendum bill on the Constitution of Canada. We had a statement from the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs this afternoon, thank goodness, and the loyal opposition spokesperson and the NDP spokesperson. They, at least, were elevating the debate in terms of their participation.

As an independent member who used to belong in the government party, I had the fundamental problem on the Constitution with the government party. We are debating the referendum bill that is giving the government, correctly, a vehicle or a tool to put many serious questions to the Canadian people and take it out of the hands of the leaders of the land who have not been able to define the consensus and I do not think they are going to be able to define the consensus.

I watched Premier Bourassa last night on television pretending that the Senate problem was going to keep him away from the bargaining table. I have partial sympathy for that chameleon of political science, the premier of Quebec. I can sympathize that he may not want to get involved in the federal–provincial negotiations now with some of the apparent agreements in principle with no legal text. Therefore, blame it on the Senate. Who wants the Senate—an appointed body that is an anachronism of history and has no place in a democratic elected system?

This may be the hang–up people are pretending it is. Frankly, for Premier Bourassa it is one of the double ironies in the world. He stayed away from the bargaining. I can understand his post–Meech hangover, or post–Meech depression. There was a depression across the country because things had been whipped up in the country, whipped up with a lot of intellectual dishonesty that never should have happened. It was one of the problems I had to face and I finally walked.

Having had the problems, having had the initial backing off and understanding in part—I am very open on this, but I am also a very practical politician—I can see politicians in several parties and/or perhaps the premier of Quebec using the dead Senate issue. I say the Senate is dead until it gets some credibility and if you are going to have it, it has to be elected, I agree with that.

Then we get into all the processes, all the definitions of what we give it, power, and how do you have it elected, and is it equal, is it equitable, and/or regional.

Let us go back to the beginning. Let us eliminate the Senate and give the people a chance to vote as to whether they even want a Senate. The NDP used to be a party proud of at least standing for some principle in reform and it was abolition of the Senate. I do not agree with the objectives of my colleagues the Parti Quebeçois but I do give them credit. I am totally against what they want but at least they speak with some conviction on what they want.

We have been in this debate and I agree it has been shortened. I understand the government's problem, but frankly, all members, without obstruction, should have a chance to speak on this issue which is fundamental to the core of the nation. Here we are with an allocation order that is going to terminate tonight and then a third reading tomorrow and we have not had a leader of the three national parties speak in this debate.

With the greatest respect for the House of Commons, having been here longer than most members in the House, this is a terrible insult to the whole history and tradition.

John Diefenbaker would be rolling over in his grave to know we are going to discuss the potential referendum to try and resolve impasse on constitutional discussions. We have not had a national leader participate in this debate. We have had two allocation orders already, one on second reading and now one on report stage.

There are fundamental things. I have listened to the hon. minister for intergovernmental affairs this afternoon and I give him credit. He has brought civility, calm, and patience, patience that frankly is starting to be a yoke around his neck in these delicate discussions as they have had them from coast to coast for months.

We all know the reality and there is now an impasse there and some are blaming it on the Senate, some are blaming it on something else. It is easy to blame the Senate.

Even the NDP spokesman yesterday talked about the mechanics of a bill. All we are talking about is mechanics. Shall it be money here, or committees there, or registered agents there, time allocation here? There has been no discussion at all from of the three national parties as to what they want in terms of a future in this country that a referendum may help to find.

As I say, that is corroborated by the absence of the three national leaders unless they intervene in this debate sometime between now and 7.30 p.m. and I think they darn well should.

They should tell Canadians. We know what the Parti Quebeçois stands for. As I say, I am totally against what it stands for but I can understand it to a point. Frankly, unless we become more realistic, compatible, and tolerant, as the hon. minister of intergovernmental affairs said today, we are going to have problems.

It did not help things today not to give the Parti Quebecois a chance to give its view, which we know. You know what is going to happen with the Bloc Quebecois. You know what is going to happen in the Quebec papers tomorrow. Its members are going to be martyrs. They have been cut off at the pass. They could not speak.

Here you are going to have the minister of intergovernmental affairs speak. You could have the spokesperson who happens to be from Quebec, the member for Papineau speak. You had the member from the NDP speak.

• (1710)

They could speak on something that is fundamental and that we all call the Canada round. What do we do? We shut out those who are dedicated to a Quebec, admittedly by itself. They are in this House but we cut them off at the pass. Wait until we see in the Quebec papers how they become pseudo-martyrs.

Tonight we are going to go through the hocus-pocus and hypocrisy in many ways of voting on 30, 40 or 50 amendments when we usually have agreement. I can understand their interest from a straight political point of view. They have been very definite in their interest and we are going to be here for hours.

That will be a nice story, not you or I, not to the political elite that have been trying to get a consensus, and other political elites that have been trying to break up the country, but to the average Quebecois or the average Canadian. Speaking of the Quebecois, they are going to say: "Hey, our boys did not have a chance. Those dirty anglophones across the country cut them off at the pass". We did that today.

There are so many things to say. I do not know how many minutes I have left.

I want to come back to the minister of intergovernmental affairs because there are so many things one could say and perhaps I may have a chance later on or at third reading. I agree with the majority of what the government House leader said. I really want to put this out in the public domain and I hope that someone from the government side answers it. Yesterday, we saw a set-up question from the member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury to the minister of Indian affairs about Indian self-government.

I want someone from the government side, either the Minister of Justice who certainly knows about it, the minister of Indian affairs and certainly the minister of intergovernmental affairs to try and get through. What happened to Meech? People thought we were actually dishonest. We cannot let the same intellectual dishonesty that affected Meech affect the very sensitive progress now. One of the most sensitive things is the whole question of the inherent right of the aboriginals to

self-government. The minister today said this is not new. I take great exception to that. Then there is the proviso in the constitutional discussions that we are not going to talk about this or adjudicate it for three years.

What I want is for someone on the government side to answer before this debate is completed how to rationalize this potential agreement which is sensitive and which is properly receiving very considered response across the country.

There is a court of appeal decision in British Columbia between Delgamuukw, who is the plaintiff, also known as Earl Muldoe, suing on his own behalf and on behalf of all the members of the Houses of Delgamuukw and Haaxw, et al, against Her Majesty the Queen in right of the province of British Columbia and the Attorney General of Canada.

In conclusion my point is this. This case which is presently before the courts is on the very issue of the inherent right of the aboriginals to self-government. How can we have ministers of the Crown say in this House or ministers at the negotiating table pretend that there is going to be a three-year moratorium on defining this issue?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do apologize to the hon. member but I think in all fairness, I must at this time, tell him that his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Madam Speaker, I will start by going along with what the previous speaker said. I greatly admired his democratic approach to us and his recognition of the reaction that the French press and French-speaking Quebecers will surely have to our being gagged by this government for wanting to express a different point of view. It is using laws or regulations to limit such a serious debate to a single day. For two years, since the Meech Lake Accord failed, this government has been telling us that it wants to save this country. It wants to come up with an acceptable proposal for Quebec. Two years later, we are still going around in circles, no further ahead but pushing forward, not to save the country but to save the face of this government and its leader. They are trying to rush through a bill without examining some 60-odd amendments that have been proposed. We are now at the second set of amendments and already debate is being cut off. That is unacceptable in a democracy.

The Prime Minister, the leader of the government, has been going around the world for two years at public expense and I would have thought that he would bring back the great democratic virtues of other governments, but no, he has only brought back manners. Is he following the example of the government of South Africa or Iran or some African dictatorship? He has brought back a new way of using our parliamentary system—

An hon. member: A perversion.

Mr. Plamondon: A perversion—to boycott debates, although they are democratic. What bothers me more, as I pointed out a while ago, is that in this debate, as the independent member from Nova Scotia who preceded me said, the government members, especially those from Quebec, are not taking a position.

As a citizen of Trois-Rivières, across from my riding, said to me the other day: What are the members for Trois-Rivières, Saint-Maurice, Champlain and Lotbinière doing? We don't see them in this debate. They get up only when they have to go to the toilet or close the window. What that person said in my riding is really something. They are so absent from the debate that one would think they are asleep. If they were to wink now, they would have to open an eye. Their constituents have some hard things to say about them.

Mr. Lapierre: What are the people of Jonquière saying?

Mr. Plamondon: I went to Jonquière which my colleague just mentioned. I would not want to see people's reaction to his statement today that Canada must be saved at any cost. Implicit in that was even if it meant suppressing basic rights and not meeting Quebec's historic demands of the past thirty years.

You know other Conservative members sat in this House, and I found out what they said. You will recall that the Liberal government in 1979, before it was defeated, also proposed a Canada-wide referendum. A slew of people in Quebec and in this House rose against it. Let us remember the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Let us also remember that there were not many Conservative members from Quebec then, but there was one very well-known and highly respected member from Joliette, Mr. LaSalle, if I may name him.

An hon. member: He was the only one.

Mr. Plamondon: What did he say about the Canada-wide referendum? Madam Speaker, this is what he said on January 31, 1979:

> Members from Quebec, in particular the Minister of Communications (Mrs. Sauvé), urged members of the House to support the government in its endeavour to acquire this repressive tool because she felt the danger which is upon us. I was sorry to see her lack of trust in the decision that Quebeckers will be making, and I think that she has acknowledged her party's failure to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of a province and meet the objectives of a majority of Quebeckers as well as all Canadians, who would want to see, in this constitutional reform, a chance to secure an interesting future for all concerned.

He condemned it, he got up, he spoke, he defended Quebec's higher interests. The hon. member for Joliette added:

> —the federal government [the Liberal government of that time] considers it essential to pass a law to oppose a possible decision by a majority of Quebeckers.

History is repeating itself. Why a referendum? To interfere with the democratic process embarked upon following the failure of Meech, with the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and Bill 150 which will give us a referendum on the real issue: do you want Quebec to be a sovereign state or not?

• (1720)

With its Canada-wide referendum, this government, a government incapable of tabling proposals, incapable of carrying out its duty, incapable of uniting its federalist forces, incapable of making offers, will interfere with that process, as democratic and fair as it is, and with the reflection undertaken by the people of Quebec which will lead to a referendum to be held in the fall.

They are afraid. And not only are they putting forward an act providing for a Canada-wide referendum, but this act is totally devoid of the democratic virtues and the respect for citizens that one would expect from any referendum act, as is the case all over the world. As the hon. House leader said, they are going to try and buy votes by spending millions on publicity. It has already started, with the Canada 125 advertisements we are seeing on the tube, often using very debatable statements such as Canada presumably being number one, very debatable statements indeed. Millions would also be spent during the limitless referendum. Can you imagine a less moral, less acceptable act of democracy than dipping into the public purse—what am I saying?—rather adding to the national debt, because the purse is empty.

An hon. member: Taking money from Quebec.

Mr. Plamondon: They are spending tons of money, including money from Quebec. All that money squandered. Such an immoral act is unheard of in the western world.

Today, instead of debating the amendments put forward to limit expenditures—and this happens to be one of them—they will not even take part in the debate. So much for democracy! How undemocratic! What sort of democracy has this country become? It had a great track record as far as following the British parliamentary system was concerned.

We are turning our backs on our entire democratic history by spending millions in an attempt to buy public support. Why not have a yes umbrella and a no umbrella like they had in England for the referendum on whether or not they should join the Common Market and in Quebec as well?

What would we have called Quebec if there had not been a yes umbrella and a no umbrella in the 1980 referendum, if it had failed to provide a start-up grant to both and had spent money through its 39 ministries to convince the public to vote "yes"? We would have called Quebec undemocratic. We would have called it fascist. We would have compared it to the government of South Africa.

But that was not the case. Quebec did respect the principles and the values of democracy. If the Canadian charter prevents you from limiting expenditures, tear it up. It is no good. A charter that does not allow you to prevent millions from being spent in a limitless referendum is no good and should be amended. In closing, Madam Speaker, I condemn both the limit put on this debate and this horrible waste of money to have a referendum which will solve nothing as the hon. member for Joliette said in 1979.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary-West): It is interesting to listen to the members of this House. The hon. member mentioned the fact that some members of the Conservative Party were not participating in this debate. but he fails to mention that over the course of the past year, he worked in this House a total of five, perhaps six days. In our party, all members get to speak, all members work seven days—

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I would ask the hon. member for Calgary West—

An hon. member: Shut up his mouth.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I really do not need the kind of advice that I just heard on my left when I am talking to a member in the House. I believe that I worked in a friendly, fair and honest way all week with the members and I think that they can trust me and let me finish when I am talking to another member.

[*English*]

I would ask the hon. member for Calgary West not to imply things that will automatically bring chaos into this place. Out of respect for the institution of Parliament, I would ask him to please come back to the subject at hand. It would be much appreciated.

Mr. Hawkes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have great respect for this House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I now have a question of privilege.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: Question of privilege, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead on a question of privilege.

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I did hear the comments you just made to the member and government whip. However, given his responsibilities in this government, the member must do more than avoid creating chaos. He just insulted all members of the Bloc Quebecois to whom he refused, as Whip, the right to participate in any constitutional committee, the right to be represented at all the constitutional conferences, in spite of the official requests that we made to him. The member has consistently refused us the right to speak.

I would ask him, through the Chair, to not only comply with the resolution tabled by his government and avoid using abusive language that, as you said, leads to disorder in this House, but also to correct the facts and to retract his comments, because he is at fault.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I listened carefully to the comments made by the member for Calgary West, as well as by the member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead. I believe that we must not mix different things. The hon. member refers to his presence as well as that of some of his colleagues on committees, but this is a decision that was not made by anybody. It is simply based on our rules, and I believe that we all know that. Consequently, we must not mix things up.

I am convinced that the hon. member for Calgary West will, in a minute, formulate comments that will restore peace in the House for the end of this debate. Indeed, some apology might be in order.

[*English*]

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, perhaps it was my second language. If I went over the bounds of decorum in the House, I do apologize. I have great respect for this Chamber. I heard the member opposite talking about the absence of members on this side of the House, so I assumed that somehow or other it was appropriate to talk about absence on the other side of the House as well. I know that we are never supposed to talk about absence and therefore I will talk about presence, if you do not mind.

I was present on an airplane a week ago Sunday to be available at the—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, I have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Madam Speaker, in order to help restore a better atmosphere, I want to mention that I never said that the Conservative members were not in the House. I said that they were not participating in the debate. That is the difference and perhaps my colleague has—

• (1730)

Madam Deputy Speaker: We are now on a point of debate not a point of order. Now that apologies have been received, I would like to proceed in an appropriate manner. The hon. member for Calgary West.

[*English*]

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, we have had a caucus committee on the Constitution of Canada and a referen-

dum meeting weekly for months now. Our members from the province of Quebec have been present.

We had committee hearings on this particular piece of legislation and the Conservative members from the province of Quebec were present at the Friday meeting. They came back to Ottawa to be present at the Monday meetings. They came back to Ottawa to be present at the Tuesday meetings. They were the only representatives from the province of Quebec, other than the member from the Liberal Party who was present at those meetings where this issue and this piece of legislation was discussed in great detail.

I thought the people of this country would like to know. If other members had been present at the committee hearings and the House allows them to be present, the whole country should understand that they could have been there and heard the testimony related to the issues that were discussed—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford raises a point of order. I hope it is a genuine one.

Mr. Lapierre: I think the government Whip does not do justice to his job when he says he did not see any member from the Bloc Quebecois in committee. Although we did not have the right to speak—

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is not a point of order as the hon. member knows. The hon. members had the opportunity to speak on numerous occasions since we started consideration of this bill at report stage. They were recognized regularly and if there is a point of debate on which they disagree, they certainly had the opportunity to refute. I think it would be wise to let someone else take the floor since other members allowed the hon. members to talk without interruption.

The hon. member for Richelieu just completed his 10 minutes of speech. I am convinced that some hon. members disagreed with what he said but they did not rise constantly with fallacious points of order. I would ask that the same courtesy be extended to other members and that an end be put to the raising of blatantly false points of order which seem to be raised only to interrupt whoever has the floor.

I am going to ask the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead to withdraw. What he said was unparliamentary.

Mr. Gérin: I will abide by the decision of the Chair because the word was unparliamentary. The Whip was saying that no member of the Bloc Quebecois was ever present in the constitutional committee. Friday, the day following the tabling of the bill, 10 days ago, I was there with him.

[*English*]

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, in 13 years I have never heard a member denied the right to speak at any committee. Whether they are a member of the committee or not they have always had the right and that continues today. It is part of the tradition of the place. It is part of the tradition of democracy.

Those members who were present on Monday at committee hearings heard testimony from a number of people, including the royal commission report on electoral reform and a law professor that the opposition had picked. I want to say to the Liberal deputy House leader that every witness asked for by anybody was heard by that committee. No witness was refused.

The testimony was rather clear and consistent that under the Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms the democratic rights are not even subjected to the notwithstanding clause. Those democratic rights are rights which no government can override at any time in any way, whether it be provincial or federal; that is the right to vote, the right to hold office and the right to those kinds of administrative practices that enable you to activate that right. I suggest to the House that includes the notion that you must be able to associate with others to exercise those rights and influence people's votes. I suggest to the member who is moving this particular package of amendments, this is the kind of logic and the kind of practice that comes out of our history that has been around for a long time in this country, but is codified in the Constitution through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Any attempt by the Government of Canada to restrict the rights of people to associate for the purposes of influencing the outcome of a vote would, in fact, be arguable clearly before a court of law and, based on the testimony we heard in committee, would likely lead to

the striking down of those parts of a piece of legislation that attempted to do that.

I would say on that basis where we are fighting for the future of our country, one we hope will be better for our children and our children's children, that we should have as wide open a system as possible to enable people to participate. We should have a referendum wherein people are allowed to participate in unfettered ways, which respect not only the wording of our Constitution but the intent of our Constitution, to activate and maximize those democratic rights that lie at the heart of the entire system of government.

There can be a case made for recognizing associations and the bill attempts to do that. That was the purpose of some of the amendments, to say: "If you want to associate, if you want to spend beyond a certain amount and under another certain amount, associate, register, let us know who you are, where your money is coming from and how you are spending it". That is part of the bill.

However, to say to people: "There are only two groups you can belong to, that some unknown group with an unknown membership is going to be able to tell you whether or not you can participate the way you want in arguing for the future of your country" is to state the kind of principle I would hope this democratically elected institution would not uphold. If we were to make a mistake and uphold it at this point, I am sure that the courts of our land would strike it down as being an infringement that runs counter to the activation and the actualization of the democratic rights and the other rights in the Charter that deal with freedom of association and freedom of speech.

I simply wanted to make that point. I am sorry I was distracted by the rabbit tracks of how hard people were willing to work on behalf of their country. I would like to assure the nation that the members on this side of the House are always willing to be pleasant and work hard, whether they do it in their riding or in the House. They do it in some kind of balanced picture. I am in a position to know because of my position within the party. I doubt if there has ever been a harder working group of parliamentarians who participate more in the major decisions than exists in our party at this moment in history.

It has been a wide-open process from start to finish with a lot of information and a lot of chances to discuss and influence and that is the way it should be. Any attempt by the Parliament of Canada to pass a piece of legislation that denies others in this country that opportunity to do likewise is a misguided piece of legislation and I would urge members not to support amendments that take us in that direction.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I would like first to refer to a statement that was made by the premier of Alberta talking about referendums. I am going to quote him. The quote comes from a conference he attended at Alternatives '91 that was held in Banff, Alberta. I quote: "I have come to the conclusion that in the particular case of a Constitution as distinguished from a mandate for programs arising out of a specific election, I believe we have to have a referendum as ultimate ratification. What I want to impress upon you though, because I am a pragmatist and a westerner, is that it is very important when I think back to the constitutional negotiations of 1981, if you believe in the equality of provinces"—and I think this is the important thing he says—"the referendum has to be by province, not by region and not by simple national majority. We are a confederation".

• (1740)

This is why I believe the colleagues on my left are right. They are certainly not represented in this forum. They are not being allowed to participate in committees and they were not able to respond today to the minister of intergovernmental affairs.

As the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants said, it is important on a national referendum issue for the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the New Democratic Party and the leader of the Bloc Quebecois to be able to express their feelings on the Constitution. They have not done so.

We have a bill before us on referendums. This bill is not a binding referendum. It is simply a polling of people. As has been asked before, why spend $100 million on a referendum that is not binding? It is simply an indication of what people feel at a given moment and it is a very, very expensive poll. We should not proceed with an incomplete bill.

I introduced in the House two referendum bills that would have been binding on the federal government in its own jurisdiction. It should not go beyond the jurisdiction of the federal government because we are a federation of provinces and we have no jurisdiction to deal with

provincial jurisdictions like the province of Alberta, for instance.

Therefore I think the bill before the House does not respond to the needs of the nineties. People today want to have input into what is happening in this country. They are fed up with all this constitutional talk, this poker game that the government is playing with the people of Canada.

As time progresses we have to look seriously at what options we should have. We have a country that is beautiful but we do not negotiate with the partners. If the Bloc Quebecois, for instance, is representative of the province of Quebec, it should have a say in this issue. It should be invited to committees. It should be invited to participate. Otherwise our country is going to fall apart.

The oldest democracies in the world like Switzerland have referendums. Those referendums can be initiated by the electorate and are binding on parliament and on the government. But it has to be a field in the jurisdiction of the federal, provincial or municipal government.

Somebody mentioned that Switzerland was slow in progressing in certain areas, for instance the rights of certain people, but it had the referendum and it passed.

The people have to have the last word in any government. The problem in Canada as I see it today is that we have been governed from above. We have not been governed from the people. Members come to this House and are ruled by old traditional rules of the 19th century where even a member cannot address another member across the floor. He has to address the Chair. It is not like in the Senate, in the other House where a member can talk across to another member. They were the lords. They were the upper crust. In this House we are simply the commoners and a commoner cannot talk to another commoner across the way. He has to address the Chair. This is an old rule, a rule of the 19th century. I am surprised socialist members have not asked for changes to this rule. They seem to like it.

An hon. member: Who cares?

Mr. Kindy: Some NDP member asks: "Who cares?"

An hon. member: What difference does it make?

Mr. Kindy: What difference does it make? They have difficulty understanding that if we cannot talk across to a member or we cannot address him like they can in the Congress of the United States or even in the Canadian Senate we are not full members of this House.

An hon. member: What?

Mr. Kindy: We are still in the 19th century where the Speaker represents somebody we have to bow to. If we want changes, we have to have in the first place a referendum that is binding. Second there should be initiative. It means that people can initiate a referendum on something they disagree with. We should be open, as I said, so that everybody in the House can be represented on a committee. I as an Independent and other members who are Independent are not invited to sit on committees. The Bloc Quebecois has nine members who are not allowed to sit on constitutional committees affecting the province of Quebec.

If I am right, the polls indicate that the Bloc Quebecois probably represents 60 per cent of the voters on the French speaking side of the population. Those voters do not have a voice in this House and I believe it is not just.

If we want to build a country, we have to be able to speak in the House and be able to represent. Then, naturally, there would be no conflicts and we could resolve the constitutional issues.

The province of Alberta has just introduced a bill on binding referenda. I am sure that the premier of Alberta, Mr. Getty, will represent faithfully the feelings of Albertans. One of the reasons he is going to represent them is that he is a firm believer western Canadians have been shafted by the system that exists right now.

If an election is held in Canada, before it reaches the border of Manitoba the cards have been played and we know who is going to be the government. This is why we need an equal and effective Senate. This triple-E Senate is necessary to maintain Confederation. Whether it is Atlantic Canada or whether it is western Canada, it has to have input in central government.

I want to conclude by saying that the bill before us, Bill C-81 which is called a referendum bill, is really not a referendum bill. It is a bill simply to poll people. It is not binding. It will simply indicate the feeling of the people

in the country. This could be accomplished much easier by having a poll done by some company.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I suppose that there must be a large number of people watching this debate on television and wondering what on God's earth we are talking about here.

• (1750)

I heard one member just moments ago talk about the doubt and the loss of confidence in the parliamentary process. Then we had to sit through an exercise which demonstrated that a great deal of incompetence and a great deal of idiocy occur here and is portrayed on television sets across this land with parliamentarians who purport to be participating in a particular debate but utterly fail to do so, insulting one another on bases that have nothing at all to do with constructive contribution to debate.

It strikes me that we could not have had ludicrousness portrayed more starkly than to enter into debate on whether we call one another by our names or our constituencies. The real issue is whether in fact, as the hon. House leader on the other side indicated, a referendum is a noble exercise in the democratic process.

I would submit there are some instances in which a referendum can be a very appropriate means by which the electorate, the common person, can be involved in a decision-making process. As I have said in this House before, if the electorate is to engage in making decisions then the decisions better be clearly set out in terms of what the decision is all about.

What we have before us is the prospect of some fraction of 25 million people, those old enough to vote, making a decision not on whether we should have alcohol, not on whether we should have conscription or any other similarly simple question, but on the very complex package which the record will indicate not even the day-by-day participants understand very well. If they understand very well the variety of propositions which will be the constitutional package, they certainly have serious doubts about what the implications of all of those propositions might be.

If this referendum is to go forward it is going to be exceedingly important that every person who constitutes the electorate understands clearly what the proposition is, that is they understand what the constitutional proposals will be in a whole number of spheres and who is to be trusted to communicate what those issues are.

The House leader on the other side suggested that the most noble form of the democratic process, the most noble expression of freedom of speech and freedom of association, is to have every little group represented that can get up the money and is able to constitute themselves a committee for the purpose of taking one side or another in this referendum. What he suggested was that no spending limit is the most ideal expression of democratic freedom if we mean by that freedom of association and freedom of speech for the wealthy.

Have no doubt about it. This referendum, whether it is decided in terms of what is right to decide as I see it or wrong to decide as I see it, has a very large probability of being decided in direct proportion to the amount of money available to one side or the other.

An hon. member: Democracy by the highest bid.

Mr. McCurdy: Yes, it will be democracy by the weight of gold that can be delivered to one side of the issue or the other.

If you think we are talking from a vacuum of experience, witness the vast majority of referenda that have occurred in the United States where there are no such spending limits and you will learn the lesson. If that is not a sufficient demonstration of the dangers, many of us had those dangers adequately demonstrated to us in the 1988 election where gold by weight determined the outcome.

We are not talking about a defence of democracy by those spokespersons on the other side, we are talking about a defence of manipulation. We are talking about a defence of the capacity of those who have to lead those who have not down the garden path. Do not mistake the prospect. The electorate of this country will never understand clearly what they are voting for and what they are voting against if there is an election based on the premises being defended by this government.

Is there a solution to it? The hon. House leader on the government side indicated there is a preponderance of legal opinion which indicates that any limitation in the number of committees, the amount of money that might be spent, will be seen as a contravention of the charter. That is not ambiguously so. There still exists a difference of opinion.

I believe the principle is correct that there should be spending limits. I believe there is reason in a limitation of the pro and the con to two committees. I believe that strongly. If that is so, then we have included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms a principle that all around me I have heard defended when we have pleaded that equality in the charter should be absolute.

We have heard a quick defence of the notwithstanding clause, a defence for no other reason than to ensure inequality. But we have not heard a mention of the application of the notwithstanding clause to ensure that the democratic process as expressed by a referendum would work. I find that strange.

In the absence of a Supreme Court decision that might be gotten by reference or in the absence of an appropriate decision and therefore the application of the notwithstanding clause to ensure fairness, what we will have is not an expression of democracy, but an expression of the power of some to mislead the many and lead them down a garden path. It is not exclusively with respect to the constitutional proposal but in respect to any notion this government or any other might put to a referendum as an excuse for not making the kind of decisions we are elected to make.

I want to emphasize to the people that are watching this debate, look out. Do not be fooled. When that 30-page document comes out which constitutes the constitutional proposal and you are asked to vote yes or no, you had better watch the fine print because this government is like a used car salesman, the fine print is what could kill the country and we had better watch out for that.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand and speak on Bill C-81. I was one of the members of the committee last week when the House was in recess who came back and reviewed the bill in committee. I would like to say a few words about the element of fairness in this debate that is going on here today. During my 10 minutes, I will probably comment on some of the debate that took place in committee.

• (1800)

I am concerned about the rights of individual Canadians. How does the individual Canadian participate in this referendum, if it ever comes to a referendum? Many will write letters to the editors and many will knock on doors. There are many ways that people can participate indirectly and not spend any money that is recorded.

However, how about an individual who feels strongly about Canada and decides that he or she would like to put a small ad in the local newspaper expressing how he or she feels about Canada. They place one, two or three ads. In many small weeklies across Canada the bill might come to $200.

What is wrong with that? What is wrong with thousands of individual Canadians wanting to participate that way? Yet we have heard through the process that somehow this is wrong, it should not be allowed to take place and that there should be rules that if you want to place an ad maybe you have to go under an umbrella committee.

It is important that individual Canadians would have an opportunity to express his or her view openly and not have to worry about regulations.

The legislation states that if over $5,000 is spent, there should be some transparency. Therefore, I am sure in communities across this nation we will see service clubs deciding they would like to do something as a group of 40 women or 70 men. Any organization can get involved in its own way during this referendum campaign which, if it is required, would be less than five weeks in duration. But if it decides it is going to spend over $5,000, it would then have to register as a referendum committee.

Once an organization registers, a tremendous amount of transparency must take place. It must then indicate if it has had people donating over $250 and then register their names. It must indicate its source of funds. It must then list down its expenses. It must appoint someone to be its financial officer or auditor and it has to have its books audited. This is all controlled by the Chief Electoral Officer. The committee must be registered. There are numerous regulations that have been put in place. There

is a measure of transparency for those who want to spend over $5,000.

Some people have suggested that maybe the limit should be $20,000. I think that is too high. Some have suggested the limits be as low as $1,000. That was one of the amendments put forward in the committee but we thought that was too low because although an ad in *The Cambridge Reporter* is relatively cheap, for a North York service club to buy a one-page ad in *The Toronto Star* would cost well over $1,000 and then it would have to report. We do not want to take away from individual Canadians the opportunity to participate in their own way. If they get over $5,000, again there are very tight restrictions as far as the reporting goes. We do not think that is taking away a person's freedom to express themselves, their freedom of speech, their freedom of association. All it does is provide a measure of transparency.

In the committee some people suggested that if you are going to spend over $5,000 then you need to have 100 members in your committee. Again, you look at some service clubs that have 40 members in rural Canada operating under a charter for some 30 to 40 years suddenly having to go out and sign up extra people just so that they can be a referendum committee. The government members rightly voted that amendment down. It is common to have service clubs with under 100 members. We thought that would put undue restrictions on them.

Another concern was that some members opposite thought that we should make public funding available. I think constituents have to understand that during an election when one contributes to my campaign or if they contribute $100 to any federal member's campaign, they get a $75 tax credit on their income tax return. In the plebiscite or referendum campaign, if an individual contributes $100, there is no tax credit. There is no public funding involved that way. Because there are no taxpayers' dollars going back, then indeed there should be greater freedom for the individual as to how they want to participate in the referendum.

One of the things that we really want to try to do with this is a precautionary measure. Right now the provinces, the federal government, the territories and other groups are sitting down and are getting close to, hopefully, a successful conclusion. If they reach that successful conclusion, there will be no need for this. Even if seven provinces with greater than 50 per cent of the population or even if there was total unanimity and everybody signed, one of the amendments from the opposition party said that we will go on with this referendum in any event. It is a non-binding referendum. It is non-binding because of the way the Canadian Constitution is written. Even if everybody signed and the Parliament of Canada, the Senate of Canada and all the provincial parliaments went through their procedure, the Liberal member thought we should have this non-binding referendum in any event.

I pointed out to him that the cost of doing a referendum is serious business. The cost is well over $100 million. The government member said: "If we have an agreement and if everyone has agreed with it, why would we want to go on afterward and have a $100 million poll for no purpose at all?" That is an amendment that was defeated.

I would like to sum up by saying that there are many elements in this plebiscite legislation. I think it is important that we not take away the right of individual Canadians in their small way for small expenses to express their view on how they feel about Canada. There are people who would put a $1,000 ad into a newspaper and state their view. That would have a marginal impact. But if some like a Darryl Sittler or Jean Béliveau puts an ad in the paper that also costs $1,000, that probably carries a lot more influence.

We struggle with the people who are talking about spending controls. How do you try and put a value on two different ads, one from an ordinary Canadian and one from a Canadian who has a high profile?

• (1810)

I see that my time is expiring and I want to say that I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on this bill.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and humility that I come before this House to speak on this bill because Bill C-81 is a very important bill.

I am speaking on behalf of my party, but particularly as a member from Quebec who sat on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee for over seven months listening to people's views on referendums and listening to Canadians from coast to coast to coast telling us what they felt was

needed to get out of this constitutional morass we find ourselves in.

In general, I think referenda are a good idea. I am in favour of referenda. I believe in the city of Montreal, for example, that people should be particularly consulted before they are forced to accept these huge tax increases or forced to accept these mega projects, whether it be an Olympic stadium or whether it be any other huge expense. People should be questioned when the situation is one of a yes or no and where there is a process which is fair.

This is not a fair process. Bill C-81 is not a fair law. This law is bad. A bad law is a bad law is a bad law. I do not know when this debate became some sort of morality play where, if you are against this bad law, you are against Canada. How ridiculous can it be?

I heard that patriotism was the last refuge of scoundrels but I never knew that it would be the refuge of Liberals and Conservatives, but it seems to be. We have transformed what I thought would be a legitimate debate on a legitimate law. It is a legitimate law. It is a law which is being passed by a legitimately formed House. All of a sudden we have drawn this line in the sand that if you are against this particular referendum, you are an enemy of Canada, you are an enemy of the Prime Minister and an enemy of the people. No, my gosh, that is not the case at all.

We believe this is bad law. We believe that people should be consulted in a fair and honest manner. When it is said that this is not fair, if I was a lawyer before any judge and I consider members here my judges collectively, you would have to make the case why it is unfair.

We had a number of committees saying there must be a double majority. There must be a protection for certain groups in Canada in order to make sure that this referendum is fair. I can talk about Beaudoin-Edwards, which is where that recommendation was. I can talk about Beaudoin-Dobbie and their recommendation or I can go back 10 years and talk about Pépin-Robarts, with the same recommendations.

I intend to vote against the referendum bill. I intend to vote against it for several reasons. First is its unfairness. Second, we are talking about $108 million—not thousands—$108 million super survey that may or may not take place, that may take place in every province but Quebec. That is interesting. That means Quebecers are second class citizens and that they may not get to vote. Or it may take place in every province but British Columbia because perhaps they are going to have their own referendum. It may not take place in Alberta because Alberta will be having its own referendum.

It is not a referendum in a traditional sense.

It is not saying: "Look, we believe in you, the people. We are going to trust you. We are going to follow you. You just simply tell us what your opinion is, and we will put it into law". No. It is a non-binding referendum. In other words, it is a referendum which is saying: "Tell us what you think. What we are going to do is make our own law anyhow. We will not guarantee to you that you going into that voting booth is what we are going to do".

What kind of signal does this send to the public, that we really care about their opinion? If this government cared about the opinion of the public, of Canadians, it would have put the GST to a referendum. I would love to have seen it do that. It would have put the free trade to a referendum. I would love to have seen it do that, but it did not.

Let us not be foolish. This government does not trust the people. It does not care about the people. This government just wants to manipulate for $108 million some sort of a rinky-dink kind of referendum that it may not or may have in certain parts of the country.

This is a recipe for disaster. This is not for friends of Canada or enemies of Canada. This is a recipe for disaster. It is surprising for a government which has, I think, made some good progress on the constitutional front with the different committees that have held hearings before. It has done fairly well.

The first ministers right now are just about getting together on some more delicate points. I am saying: Let them do their job. That is what they were elected to do.

I do not see how a referendum could possibly do anything but provoke Clyde Wells, the premier of Newfoundland. Are we going to tell Clyde Wells: "We do not trust you. We are just going to hold this over your head so if your people vote maybe 51 per cent against, you are

going to follow their view". He is not going to do that. That man is not going to be moved by a non-binding poll.

This shows how bankrupt this government is for ideas. I think I have wakened a few of my colleagues on the other side. I am glad for that. The point is if you are dealing with a federal system you do not go trying to hammerlock the premiers into agreeing with you.

You do not do that. You do not threaten them when there is no reason to threaten them, when progress is being made. You surely do not come out with some half—I was going to use an unparliamentary word—donkey, there you go—half donkey kind of referendum which is only going to divide people, which is only going to be ridiculous because it will be so confusing. Finally, it will cost $108 million for very little.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that we have to trust the people. We have to believe in the people. We have to do what we were elected to do. We should be leaders. We should be leaders who say: This is what we can do for the constitutional problems that we have caused.

If we can get together here in this House and put all this stupid partisanship aside and say: "Look, this is what we need", we could do it.

There has been progress with all the three leaders here and other leaders as well who have said that we believe that Canada is much more important than these political games, this referendum here and referendum there because finally, it is not going to be a referendum which is going to solve our problems.

It is not going to be millions upon millions of dollars spent on polling which we have never seen the results of from this government. That is not going to solve our problems, and it is not going to be us constantly making on the government side these TV commercials showing what a great place Canada is.

Of course it is a great place, but we are not responding to the real problems which are constitutional in nature.

• (1820)

I just simply say, let us quit zig-zagging around here. Let us go to the heart of the problem and make sure that the elected officials do their jobs and that we do not waste any more taxpayers' money. I was not elected here to waste money, not to spend $100 million.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognising me and for giving me the opportunity to use the next couple of minutes to make a few comments on this issue.

I will not review in detail the amendments proposed by our colleague from Jonquière. He undoubtedly put a lot of thought into them and structured them in such a way that they are interesting and can be easily analysed. But our colleague from Edmonton South West raised the issue of the proposed amendments and I believe—as a matter of fact, I am certain of it—he studied—and analysed the consequences of those amendments. During the remarks he made yesterday, he was able to put the whole debate in context.

We are dealing with the very fibre of the Canadian nation. This debate is not solely a parliamentary debate, it is also a debate which makes the members of this House spokespersons. The members opposite should not turn this into a charade. For some time now, these people, who sense that their ship is about to sink, have been manipulating the House and manipulating the members in order to—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would hope that the hon. member would give the other hon. member an opportunity to speak. After all, he is a colleague from your province and we would all like to hear from him.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hogue: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I really appreciate that you could put this debate well above partisan politics and, particularly, above personal issues. But, there are in this House members, particularly from the Bloc Quebecois, who make sophisms. Finally, those sophisms become dangerous. On the surface, they appear interesting, but when you dissect them, you fully realize that they are dangerous for society as a whole, not only in Quebec, but across Canada.

They talk about freedom, about gagging, about a lack of democracy, and they revel in a number of notions and concepts. They want yes-and-no committees in order to guarantee freedom. Freedom, Mr. Speaker, is not necessarily in controlling. Canadians are able to make their own opinion, their own judgment, their own evaluation, and it is not relying very much on the national conscience, on the conscience of Canadian citizens in each province to think that, if there were umbrella commit-

tees, if the data were too rigid, we could, as much as for spending limits, make sure that issues would appear.

This is a false debate. A fundamental question must be answered here. Do we belong to a country? Do we want to break that country? Canadian citizens, both from Quebec and from the other provinces, are adult enough, smart enough and confident enough of their views and of their sense of belonging to be able to answer a question if a referendum was necessary.

Too much interference seems to be the real danger here. If we start setting all kind of standards, we start interfering with people's basic human values. This debate demands a renewed awareness of where we come from, of our family values and our roots. The umbrella principle as applied to the yes and no sides is so restrictive that it would prevent individuals from making use of their individual freedoms and the freedoms of the groups to which they belong.

In Quebec, in the present as in the past, a great deal has been said about the evils of money. Parti Quebecois members repeat *ad nauseam* that money leads to the destruction of our moral fibre. I maintain that money is not necessarily associated with negative or evil behaviour. A person can be wealthy and at the same time be capable of doing good, while people with less money do not necessarily have a monopoly on virtue. I think this insistence upon restrictions, and at this point I want to get back to my remarks on sophisms, this sometimes cavalier tendency to associate money and evil is unacceptable. In fact, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was a case in point yesterday.

An hon. member: As usual.

Mr. Hogue: In the course of his speech, he mentioned that the money could be used in such a way that members of the Bloc Quebecois or separatists, as they are commonly referred to, would have trouble making themselves heard.

When a cause is just, people can always make themselves heard, and I repeat that anyone who thinks that Canadian citizens and Quebec francophones will let themselves be bought underestimates the intelligence, feelings and moral fibre of the people of this country. It is insulting, and that is why I am grateful for this opportunity to rise in the House and reject this connection out of hand. My family has been in Quebec, in Canada, in our country, for 12 generations. This is an insult to the integrity of a French Canadian, an insult to the integrity of a Canadian or a Quebecer, period.

I sat with our colleague from Papineau—Saint-Michel on the Bélanger-Campeau commission, and we all know what happened there. While the commission was sitting, there were people who were working very hard to advance a cause. However, aside from these efforts to identify certain objectives and implement them, there were also discussions taking place behind closed doors. There was a lot going on in secret. One of the vice-presidents, who ostensibly did not take sides, had already taken a position. Another vice-president is now using all kinds of money to try and get a movement going. Apparently what is sauce for the goose is not necessarily sauce for the gander.

Before I finish, I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak in this House in my mother tongue, to do so with pride and to tell those on the other side of the House who are trying to sabotage our efforts that since I came to Ottawa, I have had both the privilege and the opportunity to speak French and to be just as good a Canadian as anyone else in this country.

• (1830)

You see how bad tempered and vituperative they get when we start talking about human values, Mr. Speaker?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you right away that when he rose earlier, the government Whip made false statements.

First, he said that no member from the Bloc sat on the referendum bill committee. I would like to tell you—because I want to re-establish the facts—that several members of the Bloc were present. Our members went even though we are denied the right to vote. They tell

members to come; they tell them that they are welcomed and have the right to come. Indeed, the members of the Bloc were told to sit there, not to vote, and remain quiet as much as possible.

I want to re-establish the facts and name my colleagues who attended. There were, among others, the member for Hull—Aylmer, the member for Shefford, the member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, and myself. I believe it is really important to state the facts regarding this issue.

An hon. member: Put that in your pipe and smoke it whip.

Mrs. Venne: This afternoon we discuss the wishful thinking of the member for Jonquière. We, the members of the Bloc, asked yesterday for an extension of the sitting; the New Democrats and the Conservatives rejected that request, including the member for Jonquière.

An hon. member: He does not want us to talk.

An hon. member: This is unbelievable.

An hon. member: He does not want us to discuss his business.

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, it is rather surprising that the member for Jonquière would vote against having an extended sitting on his own motions, that is against a discussion on the substance of his amendments. This is truly unbelievable. He told us that he would like to see umbrella committees—

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do not think the record should go uncorrected in that regard. There was not a vote on extension of the hours. There was a test of the House and a formal vote was not conducted. So it is incorrect to say the member for Jonquière voted against it.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: In any case, the member for Jonquière rose to oppose—

An hon. member: It is not often that he stands up.

Mrs. Venne: —extending the sitting hours. I want to make that clear.

For the moment, I will keep talking about those umbrella committees for the yes and the no sides that the member claims to want to integrate to the bill by way of his motions. He now asks that these umbrella committees for the yes and the no sides now be included in the act in order to help limit expenses.

As the bill stands now, there could be any number of committees in any given riding, throughout Canada. The government says that it will put a ceiling on expenses, that a maximum of 56 cents per voter will be allowed; yet, the number of referendum committees is unlimited.

Based on my understanding of this bill, a resident of British Columbia could very well register in my constituency—why not?—since there is nothing against it in the present legislation. I do not see any logic in this. If some members find this logical, so much the better, but I personally do not see anything logical in there.

Mr. Lapierre: They can spend $8.5 million.

Mrs. Venne: As my colleague for Shefford says, the committees can spend $8.5 million; that is certainly not what I call a limit on expenses. It may be the limit for the expenses incurred by the Conservatives, but for people like us who are used to democracy, this is not what we call limiting expenses.

What I find praiseworthy are the efforts made by the member for Jonquière when he decides to propose amendments to the referendum bill, in particular his Motion No. 35, at paragraphs (d) and (e). I would like to quote these provisions because I think it is important to emphasize this point. I know you have read these motions yesterday, but I must confess it was a bit fast for me to understand. This is why I am going to read them a bit more slowly, so we can better grasp the meaning of Motion No. 35, more particularly paragraph (*d*).

It is to prescribe, for each province, the maximum amount of referendum expenses that may be incurred by either referendum committee, that is the one supporting the referendum question or the one opposing it.

Paragraph (*e*) prescribes the maximum amount of referendum expenses that may be incurred by either referendum committee throughout Canada or in two or

more provinces specified in the proclamation issued under subsection 3(1).

As I said earlier, this is wishful thinking on the part of the hon. member for Jonquière, he knows that his government will never agree to put a ceiling on spending.

It is obvious when one sees the orgy of spending which is being done for Canada's 125th birthday on the back of Quebecers and with our money. Every night on television we have to endure commercials on the 125th birthday. We are certainly justified in wondering what the government will spend next on the referendum.

I do not see in the amendments proposed by the hon. member for Jonquière—as I said, I read them quite quickly, since the leader of the government introduced time allocation—anything which would force the government to register with one of the committees. This is not in and it seems rather important to me. If he had wanted amendments that mattered he would have provided for the government to be included in one of the referendum committees.

In other words, the Conservative government can waste public money any way it wishes. The bill does not set any limit on spending by the federal government so I would have expected the hon. member for Jonquière to include limits in his amendments and motions.

As we can see Quebec conservative members will not be supporting the motions of their colleague from Jonquière. Apparently he did not manage to convince them to join him, which is regrettable.

I understand his disappointment, I went through that. Personally, I followed my conscience and left that party which can only accept puppets, members who do not think and who obey without murmurs. I left the party—

An hon. member: You must be glad.

Mrs. Venne: Yes, I am glad now. I would have thought the hon. member for Jonquière would have followed.

An hon. member: He does not have the guts.

Mrs. Venne: Indeed, I do not think he has the guts but this is a matter of opinion.

Finally, I would like to mention another point where the proposals are lacking. In his motion No. 35 the hon. member for Jonquière proposes that the Governor in Council may make regulations governing referendum committees. I would have preferred that they be governed by the statute.

I have one minute left? Then, Mr. Speaker, during that minute I would like to talk about the French language that the hon. member for Outremont was mentioning a short while ago. The French language does fare too well in these motions. On page XXVI of the *Order Paper* for June 2 alone I could pick four mistakes. In the third paragraph at the third line you can read "*—d'une provinces—*", with an *s* at the end. At the last line of that same paragraph we read: "*une amende maximale de cinquanate mille dollars*". It should probably read "*cinquante mille*", but it is one more mistake. There is another one in the penultimate paragraph where it says: "*Le comité référendaire qui contravient—*", instead of "*contrevient*". And in the last paragraph, "*sommaire*" is spelt with only one *m*.

• (1840)

This is to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is obvious this was done in a hurry. Nobody had time to revise. I will admit these are minor mistakes but we would expect better from a government which has considerable means at its disposal.

I only wanted to point that out to the hon. member for Outremont who was taking pride in the fact that he could speak French in this House. I must tell him that I am very disappointed, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak about the motions presented by the member for Jonquière. I think it is interesting to support this motion since the member for Jonquière showed a certain degree of courage yesterday, during four to five hours, when he rose to speak against the opportunity that was given members to debate his own motions.

The member for Jonquière is suggesting the creation of umbrella committees. He also suggests that there should be a referendum committee in each riding and in each province and that there should be a certain spending limit. I think that what he means is that each province should be allowed to spend, according to its

population, amounts that would be fair for a referendum.

I understand why the member for Jonquière is presenting these motions. It is because he was sitting on several committees to prepare for what was called a renewed Canada. I understand the member for Jonquière because at least we realized that those committees were organized and planned by the government, by the Liberal Party, and that they were phoney. These committees were phoney because everything had been planned beforehand. They toured Canada and listened to Canadians from coast to coast, fully aware that their reports were already written. We realized that while the committees were touring Canada, members of the Privy Council and other government officials were in Ottawa preparing the committee's report. It was indeed a phoney committee and the member for Jonquière, when he realized what was going on—

An hon. member: Do you really think he realized what was going on?

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Maybe he did not but then again maybe he did. Let us say he did and that what he wanted to do with these motions, with these amendments to the referendum bill, was to put a stop to these abuses and make the bill a little bit fairer and more equitable.

Mr. Speaker, for the past months I have been watching TV at home and usually when we celebrate our country, or the Queen, or Dollard, it only lasts a few days. But now, for the 125th anniversary of the country, in Quebec we get advertising every 15 minutes on every TV channel.

It is a case of subliminal advertising. They want Canadians, and Quebecers in particular, to believe that they are living in a great country. We are shown magnificent mountains, beautiful lakes and rivers. That is all very nice but they have magnificent mountains in Peru as well. They also have beautiful lakes and rivers in that country. More great mountains can be found in Africa, in the desert, and there are many beautiful lakes around the world. That proves nothing. It does not show that five years down the road this country will be completely bankrupt because there are too many political powers in this country.

I was listening to the hon. member for Outremont earlier. If I were him, I would not have dared rise in this House, especially after having sat on the Bélanger–Campeau and experienced first–hand this exercise in democracy the people of Quebec have carried out. That was a good idea to set up the Bélanger–Campeau commission, and it showed respect for the public to appoint representatives from management, labour, the cultural spheres, the health sector, the three main political parties—the Liberals, the PQ and even the Equality Party, which is not really a party, with only two members at the present time, but it had three then.

They listened carefully. It was not a mock committee like the one we are trying to establish with this referendum bill here. This is an absolutely appalling bill. Personally, I cannot understand this. It is beyond me. In a country that claims to be democratic, to actually see such a bill being introduced supposedly to seek the opinion of the population while trying to manipulate it, that is appalling. You cannot manipulate people like that. The people of Quebec will not tolerate being manipulated. Quebecers are no longer the water carriers they are thought to be in the rest of Canada. Quebecers are educated. They set up and operate businesses. They are self–reliant and capable of evaluating the performance of this government here in Ottawa.

Right now the House of Commons is trying to pull the wool over their eyes. You think that is what will happen. You think that Quebecers do not see what is going on. Quebecers are currently watching and soon they will take concrete action that will turn against you people, who try to fool them. Quebecers have had enough.

An hon. member: They will beat you at the election.

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, you know that yesterday the Conservative parliamentary secretary said that the hon. member for Jonquière was a patriot. I recall that somebody else was called a patriot. His name was Louis Riel. It is that same party, the Conservative Party, who hanged him because he wanted to defend French Canadians in Manitoba. Quebecers remembered those same Conservatives and Prime Minister Macdonald for a 100 years. They elected Liberals in Ottawa. Once in a while they threw them out.

That is what Quebecers are going to do to the Conservatives for the next 100 years. Do not think that we are going to be fooled like that for long.

Mr. Lapierre: This time they will vote for the Bloc!

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): I hope you understand full well what I mean. It is a disgrace to see things done that way, to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in order to keep Quebecers from expressing themselves.

• (1850)

I have another important point to make, Mr. Speaker. The Conservative government and the Liberals who support it—and I am not the only one to say that—just want to short-circuit the Quebec referendum. Quebecers took a serious step. They want to express themselves so the Conservative government tries to short-circuit the Quebec referendum. It wants to keep Quebecers from freely expressing themselves on their future, and that too is a disgrace. I hope that Quebecers understand—I am convinced they do—that members from the Bloc Quebecois are defending them today and are not going to be bullied.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the bill before us is deficient in several respects. It does not provide for umbrella committees; it does not limit the number of committees, so an unlimited number of committees is possible. In fact this means that there is no spending limit. So much so that the hon. member for Outremont asked earlier why have spending limits, while his government referring to its bill tries to have us believe that there is a limit of 56 cents per voter.

The government was not even able to get the member for Outremont to believe this, although he usually swallows whatever he is told. He told us, "There are no spending limits; we don't need any." He is right about that, I understand perfectly; it is for show—there is no spending limit.

Also the government is not subject to these tight limits. It does not have to disclose its spending or reveal its sources. In fact it clearly wants to buy votes. We will see. We have already seen. It has started an extraordinary propaganda campaign; we saw private broadcasters who will invest up to $10 million in a campaign that will start again in September. They said so clearly in a letter to all members of this House in September, a few weeks before the Quebec referendum deadline.

It is not by chance we are told. They will put out propaganda and we are told why. In that, they are following the example of the Liberal government in 1980. The federal government in 1980 did not comply with the Quebec law. It was not subject to the Quebec law so it inundated Quebec with propaganda leaflets. In a meeting with prisoners in Bordeaux jail I saw people who had received a pamphlet in prison touting the merits of Canada. It was headed, "I'm here to stay". They appreciated that a lot I can tell you.

I think that we are overlooking important democratic gains that Canada has made. I am thinking of the Election Act. It sets spending limits and other conditions. I do not understand why this government does not follow Quebec's example with umbrella committees and spending limits; it has worked well. Everyone has boasted about how democratic the Quebec referendum was. The member for Jonquière uses it as a model but not the government.

We are told that the charter would not allow limiting spending or the number of committees, but the charter is there to support freedom of expression. We may ask who are free to express themselves. Those who have money? That is the answer the government gives us. Basically they are confusing the purposes of the charter with some of its technical aspects. The purpose of a charter of rights and freedoms is to ensure a greater measure of justice, freedom, equality, fairness; everyone should have the same right to speak. This bill totally contradicts that principle.

Nevertheless this charter has a mechanism to allow spending limits or to limit the number of committees without violating it. The notwithstanding clause could be used. The clause is part of the charter. Now, either the clause is faulty and we get rid of it, or the charter is acceptable in its present form, and we use the mechanisms provided in the charter.

I am in favour of these amendments, and I imagine the hon. member for Jonquière will vote against the bill, unless it is amended. I imagine the hon. member for Chambly will do the same since they both said they could not accept the lack of spending limits and the anti-democratic tenor of this bill was unacceptable. I imagine that all the members—the hon. members for Richmond, Louis-Hébert, Rimouski—Témiscaouata, Bellechasse and Roberval, for instance—who took part in the 1980

referendum on the yes side and who all have organizers who belonged to the Parti Quebecois and who took advantage of the PQ organization, as well as part of the Liberal Party which in some ridings supported the Conservatives, I imagine all these members will remember their roots.

I would also like to touch on some of the points the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel raised during this debate. He felt that Quebecers and the Bloc Quebecois were scared. We are not afraid of a referendum. However, we have certain principles. We maintain Quebecers should determine the future of Quebec. That is called the right to self-determination, recognized long ago by the NDP and recognized with a lot of fanfare last August by the Conservative Party at its convention in Toronto. So far it has not been recognized by the Liberal Party, but that is also a matter of principle. They never said so. I had discussions with Liberals and I asked them whether they agreed with the right to self-determination. They always answered: "We took part in the 1980 referendum." But when I suggested they say it, their jaws seemed to lock. They cannot say "Yes, we agree".

I think Quebecers should determine Quebec's future, just as Canadians in the other provinces should determine theirs. It is not up to the Americans. We will do it in Quebec, under Quebec legislation.

I repeat, we are not afraid of this referendum in Quebec. Who is? The federalist parties are afraid of a referendum on sovereignty as proposed by the Liberal government. We are not afraid to join the very broad consensus reached by Bélanger-Campeau. Three members remained outside this consensus: the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, together with Robert Libman and the ineffable member for Outremont, who did not even have the guts to say no anymore than he did to say yes.

The Bloc will support these amendments in order to show its opposition to the anti-democratic tenor of this bill. However, the fact remains that the bill lacks any legitimacy. If it were democratic, it would still lack legitimacy in Quebec, because it was rammed through at the last minute for the sole purpose of short-circuiting the serious process that has been taking place in Quebec for the past two years, starting with Bélanger-Campeau and followed by Bill 150, a carefully controlled process light-years removed from the Spicer circus, Beaudoin-Edwards, Castonguay-Dobbie and Beaudoin-Dobbie or BoDo.

Our process was not one of those expensive circuses like the constitutional caravans we have had in Canada for the past thirty years.

Mr. Speaker, we will support these amendments but we will vote against the bill.

[*English*]

Hon. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention earlier to participate in this debate. What sparked it for me today, I guess, was that in some ways this is a special and historic day in the development of constitutional democracy. Not only are we debating this piece of legislation, as is proper, but one of the authors of the notion of supporting referenda legislation on this side of the House published a rather interesting book today. I thought at some point someone should mention that the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore deserves a great deal of credit for his support over the years in attempting to move many of us in the direction of this form of legislation or this *genre* of legislation.

• (1900)

I read part of it this afternoon and it reminded me that he and I have debated this subject internally and privately for many years. I am sorry that members opposite who preceded me—while we are on the subject of amendments with regard to spending limits and so forth which I will come back to—think that all there is to this process or all there is to this legislation is an attempt by some to muzzle the province of Quebec. I hope they will conclude at the end of it that that is not the intention of this legislation.

Therefore, let me put it to you this way. I do not examine this legislation in the context of whether there will or will not be a referendum in the province of Quebec by Quebecers for their purposes in their absolutely legitimate right to consult themselves about what they want their future to be. Should they do that, I hope they will conclude that they want to stay in Canada.

Therefore I ask myself the question I think members of the Bloc Quebecois should be asking themselves. Should that happen, and the province of Quebec feels comfortable about being in Canada, what should the legislation be that the members of the province of Quebec will be dealing with here that would govern future constitutional amendment procedures? Because that is what I think this is about.

It took us 125 or 127 years to get to what is an historic piece of legislation. It is the kind of legislation that, as the hon. members will know, five or ten years ago I would have said I would not support for all of the old and traditional reasons of "I am a Tory". My colleague from Montreal, the dean of the House, knows full well what that means. I am not just a Conservative, I am a Tory. I have old fashioned views about representative democracy, the rights of this legislature and the importance of this place. Both the Meech process and my hon. friend for Etobicoke—Lakeshore have convinced me that if we are going to make people believe that the Constitution of this country is their own, they are going to have some part in the process of adopting it.

They have to feel it is theirs and they have to feel ownership in it. The other way to say it is that those things you can change by changing the government may not need to be put to referendum. For those things that you cannot change by simply electing a different group of people to government perhaps you need a different vehicle to decide. What lay behind those who have been promoting this kind of legislation for many years, and I salute my friend, is not that this is about the admitted difficulties we face in trying to find a resolution to an existing constitutional dilemma. It may or may not be a useful tool. One does not know entirely. In my own heart I do not know the answer.

The member for Outremont will know that there are dilemmas for many of us as to whether the use of such a tool is a useful thing in the circumstances. One has to answer that question separately from whether Parliament should have this tool. After all these years in every town hall, every public meeting that I have attended on constitution making, the people have to have some sense that it now belongs to them. In the end, all of the consultation we do will be blessed if we have faith in their capacity to say that it is theirs. I think that is what this was meant to be.

Within that context, if I may put it in the amendments from another old friend, the hon. member for Jonquière—some members opposite are attempting to play the divide and conquer game—I accept that. It is sometimes done by members opposite. We never did it when we were in opposition.

I take entirely legitimately the intentions and the *bon esprit* of the hon. member for Jonquière that these are motions that he thinks would be useful in amending the bill. I struggle in a different context with the notion of whether one could limit expenses in election acts and what one does with that.

I am on record elsewhere as saying that if we could avoid limiting what people spend to express themselves in election procedures, I would be for it. The only reason we have ever been forced to it in that context is the notion that we have invented a concept of limiting the rights of candidates to spend and that therefore perhaps we have to limit the rights of others to spend in order to defend the candidate's right to get through a campaign properly. Even now properly the courts struck out our attempt to say people could not spend anything. We are now dealing with election expense amendments that are trying to find some way through the need to control what can be spent in elections and at the same time to defend the essential liberty of Canadians to do what they want and to express themselves.

My dilemma with these amendments is that I think they probably come too far in the context of giving people the right to own their Constitution. These particular amendments come too far toward the notion of saying when we give you liberty, which we do not really give you if one thinks about it, we just really let you find a way to express your own liberty through referenda.

Then we should somehow say how you choose to express yourself and how you choose to group yourself needs as much control or the form of control we found necessary to put into the Elections Act. I have difficulty with that because essentially I am a libertarian. I therefore have that difficulty. That is my problem with these amendments.

I rose only to say in the context of the book that was published today that we may be down into the morass of the details, and we do that at report stage, that is sometimes necessary, but that is not really what this is about. In the end I hope it is not about the premiers. I hope it is about, I think it is about, giving back to Canadians a sense of ownership of the rules of their beloved country.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, that was a good exchange, true parliamentarians talking to each other. It is not political. It is basically important for me, absolutely important. Reflecting on his speech, I would like to ask him to comment on a question that is really troubling me as a federalist.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead as the next speaker. Does the hon. member for Saint-Denis have unanimous consent to ask the hon. member for Don Valley West a short question?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Prud'homme: I graciously thank the House.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member knows I am a federalist. What federalism means essentially is that Canada is not a unitary country, it is a federation made up of majorities and minorities.

I do not mean to object to the right of a government to hold a referendum. What concerns me is this: In its wisdom, does the government think it would be right to hold a referendum to ask the Canadian people to decide? I acknowledge that. But what would happen if by chance an overwhelming majority, having English as its official language, decides one thing, while as we have seen before another majority, from my province of course, decides just the opposite? How do we solve this dilemma in a federal system?

Mr. Bosley: My hon. colleague knows full well that a referendum will not solve this issue. I can see he stands by his principles when he asks this question.

[*English*]

I do not think a referendum is going to solve the problem he raises. It becomes necessary if the result is divisive. If the result of a consultation is divisive it will be necessary for those of us in this place who must ultimately make the final vote to reflect upon what that referendum will have told us if it achieves the result he describes.

In principle if you ask me the question: Because the anglophone part of this country accepts constitutional amendments that are not accepted among the majority of francophone parts of this country in the example my hon. friend poses, is it up to me to be reflective of the duality of this nation and say we must therefore not pass those amendment? Yes it is, in my view.

That does not make it wrong to try to use the methodology of a referendum, national, local, or regional it seems to me anymore, to ask folks do you accept this notion? Eventually I say to them it seems to me it is logical that that step will become even more complete. It will no longer be in the terms of the technical language, a plebiscite. It will become eventually I suspect, in Constitution-making, true referendums. We will eventually be doing what the Danes did yesterday about the union in Europe. We will eventually be saying that in some form or other, the people of this country will have to make the final decisions about adoption of rules and that if they are rejected on a regional basis, they will have to be rejected on a national basis. It seems to me that is where this logically goes which is the only way that I can see in law to overcome the member's concern.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to say a word on this very important issue for the future of Quebec, the future of English Canada and the dismantling of the country.

Mr. Speaker, you are the voice of wisdom and I would like to remind you that we are now in the process of examining the second of 64 amendments to this bill, only the second one. Since there is approximately 20 minutes left in this debate, it is obvious that we will not have time to discuss the other 62 amendments.

Mr. Speaker, because the government decided to resort to a gag order we will have properly examined two amendments out of 64. Imagine that one of those—and I am going to make all Canadians laugh—

An hon. member: Or cry.

Mr. Gérin: I would like to make them laugh rather than cry.

In those two days, we spent more than half of our time discussing whether the title of the act should be a referendum or referendums. Just imagine. Do you have any idea how much one day of proceedings in the House of Commons costs? There are about 135 days in a year. Not many of those days are useful ones but there are 135 in all. The budget of the House of Commons is somewhere between $700 and $800 million. You can imagine the costs when the House wastes its time. The government did that purposely in order to avoid a debate on important amendments among the 62 that are left.

Later on the Conservative and Liberal members, among others, will vote one after the other on these amendments without having had one minute of debate in the House on those, simply because the government decided to cut off the debate.

You know that the two days of debate will end this evening, and with tomorrow, because the government will again resort will to the same procedure at third reading. Those three days represent one of the shortest periods of time to examine a piece of legislation.

If Canada decides to pass a law to protect small butterflies during the winter it may take ten days in the House. However it is not worth discussing for more than three days a Canadian referendum that everybody opposes, including Mr. Bourassa who said today that he hopes the federal government will not hold a Canadian referendum in Quebec. Moreover, more than half of those three days will have been spent discussing trivialities.

Mr. Speaker, you are a just and sensible man and I wonder if you have the authority to extend the sitting hours this evening, during the whole night if necessary, so that we can keep discussing motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8? Come on; this does not make sense. We will not have time to discuss those motions.

As one who worked really hard regarding public financing, among other issues, I would have liked to tell you about those things. I found some interesting things. The Quebec Conservative caucus got involved. The Prime Minister had promised that it would be done before election time. He reneged on that just like he reneged on everything else, and today he uses closure to keep us from talking about this issue.

Mr. Speaker, you listened to me carefully and I wonder if you think that it is fair that the studies in the hands of the government House leader on the issue, among others, of spending limits, of popular financing, and of the application of the charter of rights are not made available to members? What does the government House leader want to hide from us? Where is the public interest in hiding the findings of a study financed with taxpayer's money? What do we want to hide? Why not deposit them on the Clerk's table so that we may consult them? We are not crazy in Quebec. We know how to read. Today's issue of *La Presse* headlines: "A referendum calls for as rigid a framework as an election". The article is by Patrice Garant, a Laval University law professor. He quotes judicial precedents, Mr. Speaker: the Supreme Court of the United States, in 1976, Buckley vs. Valeo; and then, a Manitoba case. Unless I'm mistaken, Manitoba is still part of Canada. He mentions the Belloti decision of the Supreme Court of the United States concerning a Massachussetts statute; he then refers to Mackay, another Canadian case, and applies the test set out in the Oakes decision. Why are we being hoodwinked? Then he comes up with another extremely detailed document, the Ford decision.

Do you feel that the supposedly secret studies or documents which the government House leader is deliberately hiding from members would not provide this professor, a political science expert, with greater insight? Is this the freedom recognized by the charter of rights? Is this part of the gag decree? Is it logical for the government to act in this manner? No more so than barring Bloc Quebecois members from the Castonguay–Dobbie committee on the Constitution, the various constitutional conferences, the travelling circus which criss–crossed Canada during three months, or the legislative committee which concluded its work last week and was a monumental farce. No witnesses were called. The whole thing was over in a day and a half, not even two days, barely three to four hours. The whole process was prearranged.

The Liberals, NDPs and Conservatives had agreed beforehand that there would be no legislative committee. The Bloc Quebecois, who oppose this bill, was not given a single seat on the committee in order that they might tell Canadian men and women, and Quebec men and women, what is going on. Some think they can convince the Canadian population, English and French Canada, English Canada and Quebec, by veiling the truth, by some fancy window dressing, by gagging opponents.

Is there a private conversation going on while I am speaking, Mr. Speaker, or were you talking to me?

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I was telling the hon. member that you have another two or three minutes left as far as your debate is concerned. I regret if I have disturbed the hon. member's train of thought.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You have a rich experience here, you have been a member of this House of Commons for more than 15 years. As for me, I have only been here since 1984. I don't know if you remember but when I first came to this House as a young member, I was told by my English-speaking Tory colleagues—because Quebec did not have any Tory members before—"Here, my friend—

[*English*]

—you are in the House of Commons. You will see fair play".

[*Translation*]

Where is this fair play? Is that what the House of Commons is all about? In French, the word *communes* or *commun* does not have quite the same meaning.

Were they telling me that the fair play of democracy, the fair play of the British, the fair play of English Canada, the fair play of English Canadian members, would mean gagging a group of members who had faith enough in their ideas and beliefs to the point of leaving this puppet government? Is that fair play? Is that what the House of Commons is all about? Is that democracy? Do you have the right to prevent me from speaking on 62 out of 64 amendments? Is that fair? Is that correct? I am asking you, Mr. Speaker. Answer me, is that correct?

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I intend to take a few minutes only. I know other hon. members would want to speak too and I do intend to co-operate in seeing that others have also the opportunity to express their feelings.

• (1920)

I must say that I listened to what the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead had to say, but there is something I do not get. If I understand him correctly, he does not intend to vote for the bill, nor to propose any amendment. He does not want to improve the bill in any way, and he certainly does not want to do anything that would give this bill the credibility it is so lacking, according to him.

If this hon. member and others do not wish to propose amendments, do not wish to vote for the bill, when this legislation is passed later on today, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering—

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I know that you are as familiar with the rules of this House as if you had written them yourself. Tell me, Mr. Speaker: is a member of Parliament allowed to presume how another member will be voting later in the evening? That is what the member for Glengarry—Presscott—Russell just did, and I know that we are—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am not a magician and I do not think that we presume anything. Honourable members are honourable members. I would like to listen to his debate. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Boudria: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, of course, listened to what the speaker before me had to say, even if I was not in total agreement with him. Perhaps he and his colleagues could have reciprocated, especially on this memorable evening in the history of the House of Commons. The point I want to get across to the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, is this:

What do they care whether we are dealing with section 3, 14 or 33? How can they object since they do not want to change a thing in this bill to improve it and have a better bill? I find it extremely difficult to understand the thinking of the hon. member who spoke before me—

Mr. Gérin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I have a problem. In his speech, the hon. member, referring to me, maybe not by name, but in no uncertain terms, asked

me a very direct question. I will ask for the unanimous consent of this House to reply immediately to the hon. member or at least to use his speaking time to respond to the comment he just made.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is not unanimous consent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am nearly done. In closing, I will ask the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead again and those like him who seem prepared to listen to their own speeches but not that of others.

If his constituents can express their views on the future of Canada, why is he denying that same right to mine, in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell? Why would the people of my riding be entitled to less than the people the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead and others are representing?

I for one, believe that all Canadians have the right to express their views on the future of this country. Of course, I would like certain amendments to be made to improve the bill. But the main question remains: Do Canadians have the right, and should they have the right, to ratify the Constitution once an agreement has been reached, hopefully, between all governments in Canada? and I hope there will be such an agreement—

The hon. member for Shefford is asking: Has one not been reached?

Mr. Speaker, I think that, to most people watching this debate on TV, including members of this House, the answer to that question should be pretty obvious. In the absence of an agreement, how could we vote on a non-existent agreement? You do not need to be too clever to figure that out. I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that most people understand that.

That being said, I will now let other hon. members have the floor seeing that there are a few minutes left. I want to thank the House for allowing me to make this brief comment and to conclude I would say that the voters in my riding definitely have the right to express their views on the future of this country. That is why I intend to vote for granting them that privilege which I believe they should have in that day and age, today, on this 3rd day of June, 1992.

[*English*]

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I realize there are very few minutes left in this debate. I would like to say a few words about some of the issues that have been dealt with and some of the ones we are not going to have the chance to deal with because of the time allocation motion.

As the previous member from the Liberal caucus mentioned, some members of this House did put forward amendments. Others chose not to put forward amendments on this legislation. I would like to indicate on behalf of our caucus, the New Democratic Party caucus, that the critic, the member for Yorkton—Melville, and myself, looked through the amendments that were proposed by Conservative members, by Liberals, and by some of the independent members of this House. We found that we could support a lot of those amendments. Regardless of what part of the House those amendments came from, we considered them on their merit.

On this issue where the government has been talking about a non-partisan approach, I wish it had taken the same attitude. I talked to members of the government caucus who put forward motions. I am told that the word has gone out among the government benches not to vote for those motions. That is what I hear. We will see what happens later on.

The concern I have is that the government felt throughout this process once we, that is the three parties in this House, voted to allow this to go to second reading, we went to committee stage and entered report stage with the idea that the government would be open to amendment. We were told that by the government House leader.

We indicated at the outset that we had some concerns with the legislation, not with the principle of a referendum, and I reject some of the comments made by other members of this House, especially among the Liberals, that we are against a referendum.

Our caucus has voted—

Mr. Milliken: Yes, you are against the referendum. You are anti-democratic. They are against the people making decisions.

Mr. Murphy: The member for Kingston and the Islands is a fool sometimes. He knows darned well that at second reading our caucus voted for a referendum. He knows darned well that our representatives in the various committees of this House voted for a referendum. We have not changed our minds. We want to make sure it is a fair game.

If that party, which has a fundraising letter out at the present time on its position on referendum, a fundraising letter which it sent out prior to the government giving it the wording, feels committed to its fundraising letter and does not think it is important to look at legislation, that is its own concern.

We look at the legislation and it should not try to be devious. I left the Liberal Party 25 years ago because it lacked principles. I am not surprised it has not changed over these years.

Mr. Keyes: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. With the duties you perform in the chair, Mr. Speaker, I know you were taking a moment to discuss probably another very urgent matter with someone who approached the chair at the moment. During the oration of my NDP friend he accused my colleague, someone I respect very dearly in this House, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, a distinguished and learned member of not just the policies we have in our party but also of course the way in which this House operates, referring to him as a fool.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that you in your capacity would ask the NDP member who was speaking previously to go—

• (1930)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 7.30 p.m. pursuant to 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 every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 2 standing in the name of the hon. member for Jonquière. It will be applied to Motions Nos. 7, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55 and 59. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence) moved:

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-81 be amended

(*a*) in Clause 1 by striking out lines 4 and 5 at page 1 and substituting the following therefor:

"1. This Act may be cited as the Plebiscite Act.";

(*b*) by substituting, in the French version, the word "plébiscitaire" for the word "référendaire" wherever the latter word occur in the Bill;

(*c*) by substituting, in the English version, the word "plebiscite" for the word "referendum" wherever the latter word occurs in the Bill; and

(*d*) by making such modifications as may be required in consequence thereof.

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants) moved:

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-81, be amended in Clause 2 by adding immediately after line 6 at page 1 the following:

" "Aboriginal Peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada."

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 2 by adding immediately after line 6 at page 1 the following:

" "aboriginal Canadian" means any self-declared aboriginal Canadian who wishes to be enumerated as such for the purposes of voting.

"aboriginal vote" means a separate addition of votes cast by aboriginal Canadians for and against any referendum question."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Mr. Nowlan is not in the Chamber to move Motion No. 11. Perhaps Mr. Kindy could move it for him.

An hon. member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is not unanimous consent.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel) moved:

Motion No. 12.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 3 by striking out lines 24 to 34 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"3. (1) The Senate or the House of Commons shall not during 1992 adopt any resolution authorizing the Governor in Council to issue a proclamation in order to amend the Constitution of Canada on any question relating to it, before the Governor in Council, by proclamation, directs that the question be put to the electors of Canada at a referendum called for that purpose."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 2 by adding immediately after line 20 at page 2 the following:

" "national referendum committee" means any referendum committee that campaigns or intends to campaign in at least fifty (50) electoral districts."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville) moved:

Motion No. 30.

That Bill C-81 be amended by adding immediately after line 39 at page 12 the following new clause:

"13. There shall exist an umbrella committee that represents the supporters of the affirmative for the referendum question or referendum questions. There shall exist an umbrella committee that represents the opponents of each referendum question."

Motion No. 49.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 15 by adding immediately after line 31 at page 15 the following new clause:

"(c) The umbrella committees established in support of or in opposition to one or more referendum questions shall limit their spending to 56.4 cents per registered voter as determined by the returns of the most recent general elction preceeding the holding of a referendum."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 30. 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.

And more than five members having risen

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 37.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 13 by adding immediately after line 23 at page 13 the following:

"(vii) the name, address and signature of 100 electors from each electoral district in which the committee intends to support or oppose the referendum 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 38.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 13 by adding immediately after line 33 at page 13 the following:

"(d) any registered referendum committee that has indicated it will be opposing or supporting the referendum question in fifty electoral districts or more must register as a national referendum committee."

Motion No. 46.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 15 by adding immediately after line 31 at page 15 the following:

"(3)(i) For the purposes of subsection (2) each national referendum committee shall be entitled to incur additional referendum expenses in the number of 10 cents."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 38. 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.

And more than five members having risen

Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

• (1940)

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 8.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 2 by striking out line 13 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"porting or opposing during a".

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 42.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 15 by striking out lines 10 and 11 at page 15 and substituting the following therefor:

"period that, in the aggregate, exceeds nine hundred and ninety nine dollars."

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 be please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville) moved:

Motion No. 43.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 15 by adding immediately after line 11 at page 15 the following:

"(2) No person or group shall incur referendum expenses during a referendum period in co-ordination with one or more persons or groups if the aggregate amount of the referendum expenses exceeds the limit authorized by this Act for that person or group."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 44.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 15 by adding immediately after line 11 at page 15 the following:

"(2) The Government of Canada shall not incur referendum expenses in excess of the limits provided in this clause."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 45.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 15 by striking out line 26 at page 15 and substituting the following therefor:

"1992 is 20 cents; and".

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 10, standing in the name of the hon. member for Jonquière. As the hon. member is not in the Chamber will somebody else—

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 13.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 5 by striking out lines 24 to 31 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) The wording of the referendum question will be prepared by an independent commission.

(i) The membership of the committee will be approved by the House of Commons after consultation among the political parties having a recognized membership of 12 or more persons in the House of Commons."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 5 by striking out lines 43 to 46 at page 5 and line 1 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"sitting day of the House following the day on which notice of the motion was given.

(5) On the expiration of the third sitting day of the House of Commons on which the motion is considered, or at such earlier time as the House is ready for the question."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville) moved:

Motion No. 18.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 5 by adding immediately after line 4 at page 6 the following:

"(6) No motion shall be adopted unless supported by at least two-thirds of the members of the House of Commons present and voting."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I would like to mention that the hon. member for Jonquière has arrived and will now move his motion.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is a little late.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The rules which were given to me for information purposes state that you have to be present at the time the motion is moved, as was the case yesterday when the said motions were being debated in the House. However, no one told us that at the time this procedure would apply we would also have to be present. In other words, you are asking us to be here almost day and night.

I insist that these motions be debated and voted on.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When the motions are put the member should be in the Chamber. I regret that we have to stay here all night but that is the way the Standing Orders are.

I can ask for unanimous consent from the House if we can put Motion No. 10 in the name of the hon. member for Jonquière. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I hear a no. I regret.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 20.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 6 by striking out lines 1 to 12 at page 7.

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. May I ask which of the motions I introduced as a member of Parliament will not be voted upon? Does that apply to all motions starting with Motion No. 2?

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It just had to do with Motion No. 10. The hon. member was not in the Chamber. Just that one motion.

• (1950)

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Motion No. 21.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 7

(*a*) by striking out line 41 at page 7 and substituting the following therefor:

"Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Commons at least"; and

(*b*) by striking out lines 4 to 12 at page 8 and substituting the following therefor:

"of the Senate stands referred to such committee of the Senate, if any, as is designated or established, prior to the deposit, to review the regulation and a regulation deposited with the with the Clerk of the House of Commons stands referred to the Special Committee on Electoral Reform established on February 14, 1992, or if the Special Committee no longer exists, to such committee of the House of Commons as may be designated or established to review the regulation, and the committees may make such recommendations to the Chief Electoral Officer with respect to the regulation as they consider appropriate."

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville) moved:

Motion No. 22.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 7 by striking out lines 9 to 12 at page 8 and substituting the following therefor:

"established to review the regulation.

(8) Every regulation made pursuant to subsection (3) to (4) is subject to the approval of the aforementioned committee of the House of Commons and shall not take effect until seven days after it is approved by that committee, or such later date as may be specified in the regulation."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 21. 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): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 24. Mr. Milliken is not in the Chamber. Is there unanimous consent to allow another member to move his motion?

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent if I were to take the position of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands in order to move this amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

An hon. member: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, we will consent but vote against.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret there is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Motion No. 25.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 8

(*a*) by striking out line 44 at page 8 and substituting the following therefor:

"the issue of the writs of referendum, the returning officer";

(*b*) by striking out line 1 at page 9 and substituting the following therefor:

"names are not provided by those parties by the thirty-first day before polling day, may"; and

(*c*) by striking out lines 3 to 10 at page 9 and substituting the following therefor:

"(6) Where more than one enumerator is appointed in a polling division or there is more than one polling division for which only one enumerator is appointed, the returning officer shall, as far as possible, appoint half of the enumerators in the polling division or divisions, as the case may be, from among the persons nominated by the registered party whose candidate finished first in the last election in the electoral district and half from among the persons nominated by the registered party whose candidate finished second in that election."

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): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Motion No. 27.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 11

(*a*) by striking out in the English version line 14 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"in the electoral districts in which it indicated, in its"; and

(*b*) by striking out lines 19 to 21 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"an electoral district of an agent of at least one of the registered referendum committees that support the referendum question or an agent of at least one of those committees that oppose the question or if".

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): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Motion No. 39.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 13

(*a*) by striking out lines 11 to 13 at page 14 and substituting the following therefor:

"registered if the name or logo of the committee is the name or logo of a federal party or a provincial party or so resembles such a name or logo that the com-"; and

(*b*) by striking out lines 19 and 20 at page 14 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*b*) any name, or abbreviation of a name, used to identify the party in election".

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): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 52.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 19 by striking out line 33 at page 18 and substituting the following therefor:

"(d) the name and full address of each contributor, listed".

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division stands deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On Motion No. 53 standing in the name of Mr. Ouellet, I need unanimous consent for someone to move the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is not unanimous consent.

Some hon. members: Yes, yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will ask again. Is there unanimous consent for Motion No. 53 standing in the name of Mr. Ouellet to be put?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is unanimous consent.

Mr. David Dingwall (for Mr. Ouellet) moved:

Motion No. 53.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 21 by striking out lines 14 and 15 at page 20 and substituting the following therefor:

"hours of broadcasting time and a minimum of three hours of broadcasting time for purchase during prime time."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 56.

That Bill C-81 be amended by adding immediately after line 26 at page 23 the following new clause:

"26. Each network operator as defined in this Act will provide a maximum of 3 additional hours of paid time which will be allocated in a similar fashion to free time broadcasts by the Broadcast Arbitrator."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 58.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 32 by adding immediately after line 42 at page 26 the following:

"(4) Regulations made persuant to subsection (3) may be appealed to the Public Service Commission which has the power to review and uphold, or overrule the regulation."

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 nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

• (2000)

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 60.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 39 by adding immediately after line 12 at page 30 the following:

"(1) Each Returning Officer shall within one week of the election writs being issued appoint sufficient revising officers and agents to ensure that each household may be visited to ensure the lists are accurate."

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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Motion No. 61.

That Bill C-81 be amended by striking out the heading immediately preceeding line 13 and lines 13 to 19 on page 30 and substituting the following therefor:

"REVIEW OF ACT

40. (1) On the expiration of three years after the coming into force of this Act, this Act shall be referred to such committee of the Senate, of the House of Commons or of both Houses of Parliament as may be designated or established for the purpose of reviewing this Act.

(2) The committee to which this Act is referred shall review the Act and submit a report thereon to the House or Houses of Parliament of which it is a committee, including a statement of any changes the committee recommends.

COMING INTO FORCE

41. This Act shall come into force on a day to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council."

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville) moved:

Motion No. 62.

That Bill C-81 be amended by deleting Clause 40 and substituting the following therefor:

"40. (1) This Act shall come into force on a day to be fixed by order of the Governor Council and, subject to subsections (2) and (3) shall remain in force for a period of three years.

(2) At any time while this Act is in force, both Houses of Parliament may, by joint resolution, direct that it shall continue in force for a further specified period from, or indefinitely after, the day on which it would otherwise expire.

(3) Where this Act ceases to be in force after the issue of a proclamation and before all requirements of this Act have been met in respect of the referendum held as a result of that proclamation or before all proceedings arising during or out of that referendum have been completed, this Act shall be deemed to continue in force in respect of that referendum until all such requirements have been met and all such proceedings have been completed."

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 63.

That Bill C-81 be amended in Clause 40 by striking out lines 15 to 19 at page 30 and substituting the following therefor:

"council, and shall remain in place until either a referendum has been held or until the end of November 1993, whichever occurs first."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 61. 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): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate having the unanimous consent of the House so that the hon. member for Jonquière can move his Motion No. 10.

[*English*]

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus, we give our consent to that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, we just gave our unanimous consent, but I heard a Conservative say no, however.

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, we would be delighted to give unanimous consent to the hon. member opposite.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill) moved:

Motion No. 64.

That Bill C–81 be amended by adding immediately after line 40 at page 30 the following new clause:

"42. The provisions of this Act and any regulations made pursuant to this Act are not to be interpreted by the Courts in any manner that would prevent changes to the electoral laws of Canada."

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions at report stage of the bill now before the House.

Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I give the floor to the hon. member for Saint–Hubert, on a point of order.

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, I see several male members wearing hats in this House. I believe that is completely contrary to the rules of decorum in this place. Of course, I find it very nice. If we want to change the rules, I want to admire them, but I believe it is not proper behaviour in the House.

[*English*]

Mr. McKnight: Madam Speaker, if you check in Beauchesne's I think you will find that the member uncovering is recognized. Therefore it is appropriate that men may wear hats, but they may not be recognized until they uncover.

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is a question of whether they can wear hats or be called or not. We from all parties, including the Independent, have been working very hard on improving the decorum in this House. I hope the gentlemen will respect that and remove their hats.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, I would also like to add that I think male members are required to wear ties in this House. Many of them are not wearing ties today.

[*English*]

Mr. Johnson: Madam Speaker, I am appalled by the sexist comment made by the hon. member from the Bloc Quebecois.

I remember a few weeks ago on St. Patrick's Day a female member of Parliament was wearing a bright green hat and nobody said a word. I think that should be taken into consideration. These types of comments are not needed in this House.

• (2030)

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Citation 329 of Beauchesne's 6th edition says:

> The Standing Orders of the House are virtually silent on the subject of Members' dress. Standing Order 17 requires that a Member who wishes to speak must rise uncovered.

So when a member rises, his head must be uncovered. That is exactly the ruling applied on another occasion, which the hon. member for Calgary North referred to recently, when a member wore a hat during a vote.

Citation 330 of Beauchesne's 6th edition also says:

> A jacket and tie are required to be worn by male Members.

To be recognized and have—May I finish my sentence? The hon. member for Longueuil will please remain seated while the Speaker is standing.

[*English*]

The first question is on Motion No. 1.

The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 150*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Black
Blaikie	Butland
Edmonston	Fisher
Gardiner	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hovdebo
Karpoff	McCurdy
McLaughlin	Murphy
Nystrom	Parker
Saint-Julien	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor	Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—25	

NAYS

Members

Anawak	Andre
Arseneault	Bélair
Bernier	Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Bosley
Boudria	Cadieux
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Catterall
Collins	Comuzzi
Cook	Copps
Corbeil	Corbett
Crawford	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Crosby (Halifax West)	de Cotret
Dingwall	Duceppe
Epp	Ferguson
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Gérin
Guarnieri	Halliday
Harvard	Hawkes
Hockin	Hopkins
Jelinek	Jordan
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kindy	Landry
Lapierre	Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay	MacKay
MacLaren	MacLellan
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McDermid
McKnight	McLean
Merrithew	Milliken
Mills	Nault
Nowlan	Nunziata
Oberle	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Phinney
Plamondon	Proud
Redway	Reimer
Rideout	Rocheleau
Siddon	Thacker
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Valcourt
Vanclief	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vézina
Walker	Wappel
Winegard—87	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 2. This vote will also apply to Motions Nos. 7, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55 and 59.

The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negatived on the following division:

Government Orders

(Division No. 151)

YEAS

Members

Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bélair
Bevilacqua	Black
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blaikie
Boudria	Boyer
Butland	Callbeck
Catterall	Comuzzi
Copps	Crawford
Dingwall	Duceppe
Edmonston	Ferguson
Fisher	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gardiner
Gérin	Guarnieri
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Jordan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)	MacAulay
MacLellan	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
McCurdy	McLaughlin
Milliken	Murphy
Nault	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parker	Phinney
Plamondon	Proud
Rideout	Rocheleau
Saint-Julien	Shields
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Taylor
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Vanclief
Venne	Wappel
Whittaker	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—68

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Belsher
Bernier	Bosley
Bourgault	Brightwell
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Cook	Corbeil
Corbett	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	DeBlois
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Friesen	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Grey (Beaver River)	Guilbault
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hockin
Hogue	Holtmann
Horner	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jacques	Jelinek
Johnson	Joncas
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Larrivée
Layton	Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McDermid
McKnight	McLean
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Nowlan	Oberle
Paproski	Plourde
Porter	Redway
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Tétreault	Thacker
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van De Walle	Vankoughnet
Vézina	Vien
Vincent	White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard	Worthy—111

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost. I therefore declare rejected as well Motions Nos. 7, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55, and 59.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Shefford on a point of order. However, I would like to remind him—I will hear him now—but I would like to tell him that, according to our rules, between the time that a motion is voted on and the time that the results are announced, the Chair cannot entertain any point of order.

I will now hear the hon. member for Shefford.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, the reason I got up as soon as the results were announced was to make sure that you would not proceed to the reading of the next motion.

In fact, you read motion No. 2, but you omitted the other motions which were in the Order Paper and which were standing in the name of the hon. member for Jonquière. I regret, but you did not ask permission from the House to dispense from doing so, and I would like to hear those specific motions.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would like the hon. member to re-examine a bit the ruling of the Chair. What it says is that the motion that was voted on was Motion No. 2. So, I put Motion No. 2. The ruling of the Chair then said that the vote on Motion No. 2 also applied to the other motions that I enumerated. I did not have to read them to the House.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 3.

House divided on Motion No. 3, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 152)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Black
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blaikie
Boyer	Butland
Edmonston	Fisher
Gardiner	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Horner
Horning	Hovdebo
Karpoff	Kindy
MacWilliam	McCurdy
McLaughlin	Murphy
Nowlan	Nystrom
Parker	Redway
Saint-Julien	Shields
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Taylor
Whittaker	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—34

NAYS

Members

Anawak	Anderson
Arseneault	Atkinson
Bélair	Belsher
Bernier	Bevilacqua
Bosley	Boudria
Bourgault	Brightwell
Callbeck	Cardiff
Catterall	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Comuzzi
Cook	Copps
Corbett	Couture
Crawford	DeBlois
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dingwall	Duceppe
Duplessis	Edwards
Fee	Feltham
Ferguson	Ferland
Fontaine	Friesen
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gauthier	Gérin
Gibeau	Greene
Guarnieri	Guilbault
Gustafson	Harvard
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hicks
Hogue	Holtmann
Hopkins	Hudon
Hughes	Jacques
Johnson	Joncas
Kempling	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Koury
Lapierre	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lopez	MacAulay
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacLellan
Marchi	Marin
Marleau	Mazankowski
McLean	Monteith
Moore	Nault
Nicholson	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Paproski
Phinney	Plamondon
Plourde	Porter
Proud	Ricard
Richardson	Rideout
Robitaille	Rocheleau
Roy-Arcelin	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vanclief	Van De Walle
Venne	Vien
Vincent	White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Worthy—116	

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 12. If Motion No. 12 is carried, Motion No. 4 will not be voted upon and we will then go on to Motion No. 5. If Motion No. 12 is defeated, Motion No. 4 will be voted upon.

The House divided on Motion No. 12, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 153*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Bélair
Boudria
Catterall
Crawford
Ferguson
Gaffney
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
MacLellan
Marleau
Nowlan
Pagtakhan
Rideout
Wappel—31

Arseneault
Bevilacqua
Callbeck
Copps
Dingwall
Flis
Gauthier
Guarnieri
Keyes
Kindy
Marchi
Nault
Ouellet
Phinney
Vanclief

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Andre
Atkinson
Belsher
Black
Blaikie
Bourgault
Butland
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Collins
Corbeil
Crosbie (St. John's West)
de Cotret
Desjardins
Duceppe
Edmonston
Epp
Feltham
Fisher
Friesen
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap
Hockin
Holtmann
Horning
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Kempling
Kristiansen

Anderson
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bernier
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Boyer
Cadieux
Cardiff
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbett
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Duplessis
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fontaine
Gardiner
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes
Hicks
Hogue
Horner
Hovdebo
Hughes
Johnson
Karpoff
Koury
Landry
Lapierre
Layton
Lopez
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McCurdy
McLaughlin
Merrithew
Moore
Nystrom
Parker
Plourde
Reimer
Richardson
Rocheleau
Saint-Julien
Shields
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Soetens
Stevenson
Taylor
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Venne
Vien
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—138

Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacWilliam
Martin (Lincoln)
Mazankowski
McDermid
McLean
Monteith
Murphy
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Ricard
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vincent
Whittaker
Worthy

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina

Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

• (2100)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 4. If Motion No. 4 is negatived, we will have to vote on Motion No. 5.

An hon. member: On a point of order, Madam Speaker—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I cannot accept a point of order once the question has been put. I will explain as far as Motion No. 11 is concerned after. It was not presented to the House for a very simple reason.

The House divided on Motion No. 4, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 154)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bélair
Bevilacqua	Black
Blaikie	Butland
Callbeck	Catterall
Copps	Dingwall
Edmonston	Fisher
Flis	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gardiner
Guarnieri	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Heap
Hovdebo	Karpoff
Keyes	Kindy
MacLellan	MacWilliam
Marchi	Marleau
McLaughlin	Murphy
Nault	Nowlan
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parker	Phinney
Rideout	Saint-Julien
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Taylor
Wappel	Whittaker—46

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Belsher
Bernier	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley	Bourgault
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Cook	Corbeil
Corbett	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	DeBlois
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Dobbie
Duceppe	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Friesen	Gérin
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Horning	Hudon
Hughes	Jacques
Johnson	Joncas
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Lapierre
Larrivée	Layton
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lopez
MacKay	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Masse
Mazankowski	McDermid
McLean	Merrithew
Moore	Oberle
Plamondon	Plourde
Porter	Redway
Reimer	Ricard
Rocheleau	Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Siddon
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van De Walle	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard	Worthy—109

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

• (2110)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

I may want to answer the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants on his point of order.

Mr. Nowlan: Madam Speaker, actually I am glad we had the vote. I was trying to curtail the vote because of the fact that the Speaker ruled earlier that my main motion was not in order.

This motion was to help my main motion because I was trying to involve the aboriginal Canadians in the process.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Thank you. We will not get into a debate as to the reasons.

I will take 15 seconds to explain what happened earlier so that people who are watching this long vote will know.

When Motion No. 4 was put to the House earlier tonight, the hon. member was not in the House. Still that motion was brought forward even though it should not have been. When we arrived at a later motion, someone brought it up to the Speaker's attention and the motion was not put to the House because the proposer was not present at the time.

[*Translation*]

Since Motion No. 4 was lost, the next question will be on Motion No. 5.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 5.

The House divided on Motion No. 5, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 155*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Callbeck
Copps
Edmonston
Flis
Gagliano
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Keyes
MacLellan
McCurdy
Murphy
Nowlan
Pagtakhan
Saint-Julien
Taylor
Whittaker—43

Anawak
Arseneault
Bélair
Black
Butland
Catterall
Dingwall
Fisher
Gaffney
Gardiner
Harvard
Heap
Karpoff
Kindy
Marchi
McLaughlin
Nault
Ouellet
Rideout
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Wappel

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Belsher
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Cardiff
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
DeBlois
Desjardins
Duceppe
Edwards
Feltham
Fontaine
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Hicks
Horning
Hughes

Atkinson
Bernier
Bourgault
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Couture
Della Noce
Dobbie
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques

Johnson
Kempling
Lapierre
Layton
Marin
Plamondon
Porter
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
Shields
Soetens
Stevenson
Têtreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Venne
Vincent

Worthy—77

Joncas
Koury
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Moore
Plourde
Ricard
Rocheleau
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina

Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 6.

The House divided on Motion No. 6, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 156*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Arseneault
Bélair

Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bevilacqua

Black	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blaikie	Butland
Callbeck	Catterall
Copps	Dingwall
Edmonston	Fisher
Flis	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gardiner
Guarnieri	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Heap
Hovdebo	Karpoff
Keyes	MacLellan
MacWilliam	Marchi
McCurdy	McLaughlin
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Rideout
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)	Taylor
Whittaker	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—42

NAYS

Members

Andre	Belsher
Bernier	Bosley
Bourgault	Cadieux
Cardiff	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Clifford	Cole
Collins	Corbeil
Corbett	Crosbie (St. John's West)
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Duceppe
Edwards	Epp
Ferland	Fontaine
Friesen	Gérin
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Jacques
Joncas	Kempling
Landry	Lapierre
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lopez	MacKay
Martin (Lincoln)	McDermid
McLean	Merrithew
Moore	Oberle
Plamondon	Plourde
Redway	Reimer
Robitaille	Rocheleau
Saint-Julien	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Siddon
Sobeski	Sparrow
Tardif	Thacker
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Valcourt	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vézina
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard—68	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Angus: I rise on as point of order, Madam Speaker. Given that Motions Nos. 6, 37, 30, 49, 38 and 46 were grouped together for the purpose of debate, I was wondering whether there might be consent to have the vote just taken apply to those.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not have unanimous consent.

The next question is on Motion No. 30.

The House divided on Motion No. 30, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 157*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bélair
Bevilacqua	Black
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Butland
Callbeck	Catterall
Copps	Dingwall
Fisher	Gaffney
Gardiner	Guarnieri
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hovdebo
Karpoff	Keyes
McCurdy	McLaughlin
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Phinney
Rideout	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—36

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Bosley
Chadwick	Corbeil
Corbett	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	de Cotret
Dobbie	Duceppe
Duplessis	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Gérin
Gibeau	Greene

Grey (Beaver River) Guilbault
Halliday Hogue
Horning Hudon
Hughes Johnson
Koury Kristiansen
Lapierre Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil) Lopez
MacKay Martin (Lincoln)
McLean Merrithew
Oberle Plamondon
Porter Redway
Robitaille Rocheleau
Roy-Arcelin Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth) Siddon
Sobeski Soetens
Stevenson Tétreault
Thompson Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont) Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel) Valcourt
Van De Walle Venne
Vézina Vien
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Worthy—64

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand Anderson
Arseneault Bird
Blondin Caccia
Cadieux Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova) Catterall
Clancy Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper Copps
Crosby (Halifax West) Danis
Darling de Cotret
Ferguson Gustafson
Harvard Jelinek
Kaplan Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast) Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth) Maheu
Marchi Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard) Martin (Lincoln)
Masse Mayer
Mazankowski McCreath
McKnight McLean
Milliken Nault
Nunziata O'Kurley
Ouellet Pagtakhan
Phinney Redway
Richardson Rideout
Rompkey Schneider
Shields Simmons
Stewart Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel) Valcourt
Vézina Weiner

• (2130)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 49 negatived.

The next question is on Motion No. 37.

The House divided on Motion No. 37, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 158)

YEAS

Members

Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) Black
Blaikie Butland
Fisher Gardiner
Harvey (Edmonton East) Heap
Hovdebo Karpoff
McCurdy McLaughlin
Murphy Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor—15

NAYS

Members

Allmand Anawak
Arseneault Bevilacqua
Bosley Callbeck
Campbell (Vancouver Centre) Catterall
Collins Copps
Corbeil Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West) de Cotret
Dingwall Duceppe
Epp Flis
Gaffney Gérin
Grey (Beaver River) Guarnieri
Halliday Harvard
Hawkes Hockin
Hogue Horning
Keyes Kindy
Koury Kristiansen
Landry Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil) Lopez
Martin (Lincoln) McDermid
McLean Merrithew
Nunziata Oberle
Pagtakhan Phinney
Plamondon Redway
Reimer Rideout
Robitaille Rocheleau
Saint-Julien Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon Thacker
Tremblay (Rosemont) Valcourt
Vankoughnet Venne
Vézina Wappel
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—62

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand Anderson
Arseneault Bird
Blondin Caccia
Cadieux Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova) Catterall
Clancy Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper Copps
Crosby (Halifax West) Danis
Darling de Cotret
Ferguson Gustafson
Harvard Jelinek
Kaplan Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast) Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth) Maheu
Marchi Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard) Martin (Lincoln)
Masse Mayer
Mazankowski McCreath
McKnight McLean
Milliken Nault
Nunziata O'Kurley
Ouellet Pagtakhan
Phinney Redway
Richardson Rideout
Rompkey Schneider
Shields Simmons
Stewart Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel) Valcourt
Vézina Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 38. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 46.

The House divided on Motion No. 38, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 159)

YEAS

Members

Black
Butland
Gardiner
Heap
McCurdy
Murphy
Taylor—13

Blaikie
Fisher
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Karpoff
McLaughlin
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Bevilacqua
Callbeck
Copps
Couture
de Cotret
Duceppe
Feltham
Gaffney
Gibeau
Greene
Guarnieri
Hogue
Keyes
Koury
Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacLellan
Merrithew
Nowlan
Pagtakhan
Plamondon
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Siddon
Venne
Wappel
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—54

Anawak
Bosley
Cook
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Dingwall
Fee
Flis
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday
Horning
Kindy
Kristiansen
Larrivée
Lopez
McLean
Nault
Oberle
Phinney
Redway
Rocheleau
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Vézina

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken

Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean

Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 46 lost as well.

The next question is on Motion No. 8.

The House divided on Motion No. 8, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 160)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Black
Butland
Copps
Fisher
Gaffney
Guarnieri
Heap
Keyes
Marchi
McLaughlin
Nault
Phinney
Taylor

Anawak
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Callbeck
Dingwall
Flis
Gardiner
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Karpoff
MacLellan
McCurdy
Murphy
Pagtakhan
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Wappel—30

NAYS

Members

Bernier
Bourgault
Champagne (Champlain)
Clifford
Desjardins
Duceppe
Edwards
Feltham
Fontaine
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Koury
Layton
Lopez
Nowlan
Plourde
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Soetens
Tardif
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Worthy—58

Blackburn (Jonquière)
Cardiff
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Dobbie
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Hicks
Horning
Hughes
Johnson
Kempling
Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Moore
Plamondon
Porter
Rocheleau
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Sparrow
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Venne

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

• (2140)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 42.

The House divided on Motion No. 42, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 161)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bevilacqua	Black
Blaikie	Butland
Callbeck	Copps
Dingwall	Ferguson
Fisher	Gaffney
Gardiner	Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Heap
Karpoff	Keyes
MacLellan	McCurdy
McLaughlin	Murphy
Nault	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Phinney
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Taylor
Wappel—31	

NAYS

Members

Andre	Belsher
Bernier	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley	Bourgault
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Collins
Cook	Corbeil
Corbett	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Della Noce	Duceppe
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Friesen
Gérin	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday	Hawkes
Hicks	Hogue
Horning	Jacques
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Lapierre
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lopez	Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid	McLean
Merrithew	Nowlan
Oberle	Plamondon
Redway	Reimer
Robitaille	Rocheleau
Saint-Julien	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Siddon
Sparrow	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vien
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—61	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 43.

The House divided on Motion No. 43, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 162)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bevilacqua
Black	Blaikie
Butland	Callbeck
Fisher	Gaffney
Gardiner	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Karpoff	Keyes

Lopez
McLaughlin
Nault
Phinney
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
McCurdy
Murphy
Nystrom
Saint-Julien
Taylor—24

NAYS

Members

Belsher
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Cardiff
Chartrand
Clifford
Desjardins
Edwards
Fontaine
Gérin
Grey (Beaver River)
Hogue
Hughes
Kempling
Lapierre
Layton
Nowlan
Rocheleau
Shields
Thompson
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—39
Bernier
Bourgault
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Della Noce
Duceppe
Ferland
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Horning
Johnson
Koury
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Plamondon
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sparrow
Venne

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

• (2150)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Saint-Hubert on a point of order.

Mrs. Venne: Madam Speaker, I just saw the hon. member for Windsor—St.-Clair vote and leave the House. I hope, to say the least, that his vote will not be counted.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead on a point of order.

Mr. Gérin: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point.

While the last vote was taking place, I noticed that at least 10 members came in and left the House during the vote. I am convinced that several of the votes taken today are absolutely illegal.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 44.

The House divided on Motion No. 44, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 163*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Butland
Gardiner
Harvey (Edmonton East)
McLaughlin
Nystrom
Taylor—15
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Blaikie
Fisher
Grey (Beaver River)
Karpoff
Murphy
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)

NAYS

Members

Anawak
Bevilacqua
Duceppe
Feltham
Flis
Gagliano
Gibeau
Greene
Horning
Lapierre
Lopez
Marchi
Plamondon
Saint-Julien
Stevenson
Thompson
Venne
Wappel
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—36
Atkinson
Chadwick
Fee
Ferguson
Gaffney
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Hogue
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacLellan
Nault
Rocheleau
Soetens
Tétreault
Van De Walle
Vien

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall

Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Miss Grey: Madam Speaker, I would just like some clarification. Normally, when a motion comes from this side of the House it is votes for first on this side and then those who would vote against. It would start with the government benches and then come over here to the Liberals, the Official Opposition. I am wondering why on that particular vote the Liberals began on the second vote and then followed by a few Tories who needed to make up that number. Why the difference? Is that standard procedure?

Madam Deputy Speaker: There was really no particular reason for the vote to be taken one way or the other, as we do have people from both sides of the House voting yes or no on different motions.

The next question is on Motion No. 45.

The House divided on Motion No. 45, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 164)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Blaikie
Dingwall
Gardiner
Karpoff
MacLellan
McLaughlin
Nystrom
Taylor—19
Anawak
Bevilacqua
Butland
Fisher
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Keyes
McCurdy
Murphy
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)

NAYS

Members

Blackburn (Jonquière)
Duceppe
Fee
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Horning
Hughes
Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Nowlan
Porter
Rocheleau
Saint-Julien
Tétreault
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne
Assiniboia)
Dobbie
Duplessis
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Hogue
Hudon
Koury
Larrivée
Lopez
Plamondon
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
Sobeski
Thompson
Van De Walle
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Worthy—35

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

• (2200)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 13.

The House divided on Motion No. 13, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 165)

YEAS

Members

Flis
Anawak
Blaikie
Dingwall
Gaffney
Gardiner
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Marchi
Althouse
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Butland
Fisher
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Keyes
McCurdy

McLaughlin
Nowlan
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Murphy
Nystrom
Taylor—22

NAYS

Members

Belsher
Boourgault
Champagne (Chamnplain)
Clifford
Collins
Corbett
Desjardins
Edwards
Fontaine
Guilbault
Hawkes
Hogue
Jacques
Landry
Leblanc (Longueuil)
McDermid
Plamondon
Reimer
Rocheleau
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sparrow
Thacker
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Venne
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—51
Bernier
Cardiff
Chartrand
Cole
Corbeil
Della Noce
Duceppe
Ferland
Gérin
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
Kempling
Lapierre
Lopez
Moore
Plourde
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Vankoughnet

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 16.

The House divided on Motion No. 16, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 166)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Atkinson
Bevilacqua
Bosley
Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)
Clifford
Collins
Corbett
Desjardins
Dobbie
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Gaffney
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
Hughes
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Marchi
McLean
Moore
Plourde
Redway
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Vankoughnet
Wappel
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard
Andre
Bernier
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bourgault
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Corbeil
Della Noce
Dingwall
Duplessis
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Gibeau
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Joncas
Keyes
Lopez
McDermid
Merrithew
Oberle
Porter
Reimer
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Van De Walle
Vien
Worthy—78

NAYS

Members

Duceppe
Grey (Beaver River)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Plamondon
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Gérin
Lapierre
Nowlan
Rocheleau
Venne—10

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer

Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

• (2210)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This archaic and nonsensical exercise proves that this House of Commons needs an electronic voting system.

I do not know how we revise the rules and procedures, but it is a very legitimate point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The point is well taken. Tonight we will go on with the votes as ordered. We cannot change the rules at this moment.

The next question is on Motion No. 18.

The House divided on Motion No. 18, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 167)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Dingwall
Flis
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Keyes
McLaughlin
Nowlan
Taylor—23
Anawak
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Black
Butland
Fisher
Gaffney
Gardiner
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kristiansen
Murphy
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)

NAYS

Members

Atkinson
Chadwick
Duceppe
Fee
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Horning
Hughes
Lapierre
Lopez
Porter
Rocheleau
Saint-Julien
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Dobbie
Duplessis
Feltham
Gibeau
Guilbault
Hudon
Johnson
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Plamondon
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
Sobeski
Soetens
Tétreault
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Worthy—36
Stevenson
Thompson
Van De Walle
Vien

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 20.

The House divided on Motion No. 20, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 168)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Black
Butland
Gardiner
Heap
Murphy
Taylor—13
Angus
Blaikie
Fisher
Harvey (Edmonton East)
McLaughlin
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)

NAYS

Members

Anawak
Bevilacqua
Bosley
Dingwall
Epp
Gaffney
Gérin
Halliday
Lapierre
Lopez
McLean
Oberle
Andre
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Cook
Duceppe
Flis
Gagliano
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Keyes
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacKay
Nowlan
Plamondon

Redway
Rocheleau
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—35
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Thompson
Van De Walle
Wappel

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 21.

The House divided on Motion No. 21, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 169*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Belsher
Bevilacqua
Bosley
Boyer
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Della Noce
Dingwall
Epp
Flis
Gaffney
Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Joncas
Keyes
Lopez
McDermid
Oberle
Redway
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Sparrow
Thompson
Andre
Bernier
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bourgault
Cardiff
Clifford
Collins
Corbeil
Desjardins
Edwards
Ferland
Fontaine
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Halliday
Hawkes
Jacques
Kempling
Landry
MacKay
McLean
Plourde
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Thacker
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van De Walle
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—56
Vankoughnet

NAYS

Members

Duceppe
Lapierre
Rocheleau
Venne—7
Gérin
Plamondon
Tremblay (Rosemont)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

• (2220)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The next question is on Motion No. 25.

The House divided on Motion No. 25, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 170*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Bernier
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bourgault
Cardiff
Collins
Corbeil
Della Noce
Dingwall
Epp
Ferland
Fontaine
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday
Hogue
Keyes
Belsher
Bevilacqua
Bosley
Boyer
Chartrand
Cook
Couture
Desjardins
Edwards
Fee
Flis
Gaffney
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Hawkes
Kempling
Landry

Lopez
McLean
Oberle
Reimer
Saint-Julien
Sparrow
Thompson
Vankoughnet
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—51

McDermid
Moore
Redway
Robitaille
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Thacker
Van De Walle

NAYS

Members

Duceppe
Lapierre
Plamondon
Tremblay (Rosemont)

Gérin
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Rocheleau
Venne—8

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

Anderson
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, on a point of order I am wondering if there might be unanimous consent to take the division just recorded and apply it to votes on Motions Nos. 27 and 39.

An hon. member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent has not been granted. The next question is on Motion No. 27.

The House divided on Motion No. 27, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 171)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Bevilacqua
Chadwick
Couture
Dobbie
Fee
Gaffney
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hogue
Jacques
Keyes
Lopez
Plourde
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Stevenson
Thompson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Vien
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—40

Atkinson
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Cole
Dingwall
Duplessis
Flis
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Hicks
Hughes
Johnson
Koury
Nowlan
Porter
Roy-Arcelin
Sobeski
Tétreault
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Van De Walle

NAYS

Members

Duceppe
Lapierre
Plamondon
Tremblay (Rosemont)

Gérin
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Rocheleau
Venne—8

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina

Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

• (2230)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The next question is on Motion No. 39.

The House divided on Motion No. 39, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 172)

YEAS

Members

Anawak	Andre
Bevilacqua	Black
Blaikie	Bosley
Collins	Corbeil
Couture	Dingwall
Epp	Fee
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hawkes	Hogue
Keyes	Landry
MacKay	McDermid
McLean	Nowlan
Nystrom	Oberle
Parker	Redway
Reimer	Robitaille
Saint-Julien	Thacker
Thompson	Van De Walle
Vankoughnet	
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—38	

NAYS

Members

Duceppe	Gérin
Lapierre	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Plamondon	Rocheleau
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Venne—8

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The next question is on Motion No. 52.

The House divided on Motion No. 52, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 173)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Bevilacqua	Black
Blaikie	Dingwall
Duceppe	Edmonston
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gérin	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Keyes	Leblanc (Longueuil)
McLaughlin	Murphy
Nystrom	Parker
Plamondon	Rocheleau
Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Whittaker—23	

NAYS

Members

Atkinson	Belsher
Bernier	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bourgault	Cardiff
Chadwick	Chartrand
Cole	Couture
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dobbie	Edwards
Fee	Feltham
Fontaine	Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hogue
Hughes	Jacques
Johnson	Joncas
Kempling	Koury
Lapierre	Lopez
Moore	Nowlan
Porter	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van De Walle	Venne
Vien	
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—44	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau

Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

• (2240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Saint-Julien: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker,

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Abitibi, on a point of order.

Mr. Saint-Julien: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have some clarification regarding motion No. 24; more precisely, I would like to know why there was no vote on this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is because the mover, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, did not move his motion. Consequently it was not put to the vote.

The hon. member for Richelieu has the floor on a point of order.

Mr. Plamondon: A little while ago there was unanimous consent to allow a member to move a motion. Maybe we could ask if there is unanimous consent to move this one.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There is no consent.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 53.

The House divided on Motion No. 53, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 174*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bevilacqua	Black
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blaikie
Dingwall	Edmonston
Flis	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gardiner
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Keyes
MacWilliam	McLaughlin
Murphy	Nystrom
Parker	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor	Whittaker—24

NAYS

Members

Andre	Belsher
Bosley	Bourgault
Clifford	Collins
Corbeil	Della Noce
Desjardins	Duceppe
Edwards	Epp
Ferland	Fontaine
Gérin	Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday	Hawkes
Hogue	Horning
Hughes	Johnson
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)	McDermid
McLean	Nowlan
Oberle	Plamondon
Redway	Reimer
Rocheleau	Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Sparrow
Thacker	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vien
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—45	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 56.

The House divided on Motion No. 56, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 175*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Black
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blaikie
Edmonston	Gardiner
Harvey (Edmonton East)	MacWilliam
McLaughlin	Murphy
Nystrom	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor	Whittaker—16

NAYS

Members

Anawak	Belsher
Bevilaqua	Bourgault
Clifford	Comuzzi
Della Noce	Dingwall
Duceppe	Edwards
Flis	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gérin
Grey (Beaver River)	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks	Hogue
Horning	Hughes
Johnson	Keyes
Koury	Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Nowlan
Plamondon	Rocheleau
Saint-Julien	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sparrow	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Venne
Vien	
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Members Assiniboia)—36	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion is lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 58.

The House divided on Motion No. 58, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 176*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bevilacqua	Black
Blaikie	Comuzzi
Dingwall	Edmonston
Fisher	Flis
Gaffney	Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Karpoff	Keyes
MacWilliam	McLaughlin
Murphy	Nowlan
Nystrom	Parker
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Taylor
Whittaker—27	

NAYS

Members

Cardiff	Chadwick
Chartrand	Cole
Desjardins	Dobbie
Duceppe	Duplessis
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Gérin	Guilbault
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hicks
Hogue	Hughes
Koury	Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lopez
Moore	Plamondon
Plourde	Porter
Robitaille	Rocheleau
Roy-Arcelin	Saint-Julien
Sobeski	Soetens
Stevenson	Tardif
Tétreault	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Van De Walle
Venne	Vien
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—43	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault

Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout Members
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

• (2250)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 60.

The House divided on Motion No. 60, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 177)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Blaikie
Fisher
Heap
MacWilliam
Murphy
Parker
Taylor
Black
Edmonston
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Karpoff
McLaughlin
Nystrom
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Whittaker—16

NAYS

Members

Anawak
Bevilacqua
Comuzzi
Duceppe
Feltham
Gaffney
Gérin
Hogue
Johnson
Koury
Larrivée
Nowlan
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Thompson
Van De Walle
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—33
Belsher
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Dingwall
Fee
Flis
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Hughes
Keyes
Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Plamondon
Rocheleau
Sobeski
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand
Arseneault
Blondin
Cadieux
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
Ferguson
Harvard
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Marchi
Anderson
Bird
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clark (Yellowhead)
Copps
Danis
de Cotret
Gustafson
Jelinek
Karygiannis
Layton
Maheu
Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Milliken
Nunziata
Ouellet
Phinney
Richardson
Rompkey
Shields
Stewart
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vézina
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McLean
Nault
O'Kurley
Pagtakhan
Redway
Rideout
Schneider
Simmons
Thorkelson
Valcourt
Weiner

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 61. If Motion No. 61 is agreed to, the votes on Motions Nos. 62 and 63 will be obviated. If it is negatived, we must vote on Motion No. 62.

The House divided on Motion No. 61, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 178)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Atkinson
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cardiff
Chartrand
Collins
Corbeil
Crosby (Halifax West)
Desjardins
Dobbie
Edwards
Feltham
Flis
Friesen
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hogue
Hughes
Kempling
Koury
Larrivée
McLean
Nowlan
Plourde
Redway
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Vankoughnet
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—71
Andre
Bevilacqua
Blais
Boyer
Chadwick
Cole
Comuzzi
Couture
Della Noce
Dingwall
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Fontaine
Gaffney
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hudon
Johnson
Keyes
Landry
Lopez
Moore
Oberle
Porter
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Soetens
Tardif
Thacker
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Van De Walle
Vien

NAYS

Members

Duceppe	Gérin
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Lapierre
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Plamondon
Rocheleau	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne	Whittaker—10

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

• (2300)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

The next question is on Motion No. 64.

The House divided on Motion No. 64, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 179*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Black
Blaikie	Edmonston
Fisher	Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Heap
Karpoff	MacWilliam
McLaughlin	Murphy
Nowlan	Nystrom
Parker	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor—19	

NAYS

Members

Bevilacqua	Anawak
Atkinson	Belsher
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Chadwick	Chartrand
Comuzzi	Cook
Couture	Dingwall
Duceppe	Fee
Flis	Fontaine
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gérin	Greene
Guilbault	Halliday
Hogue	Johnson
Keyes	Koury
Lapierre	Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lopez
McDermid	Oberle
Plamondon	Redway
Rocheleau	Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Van De Walle
Venne	Vien
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)—43	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Layton
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (Lasalle—Émard)	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	Mayer
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved that the bill, as amended, 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen

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

(*Division No. 180*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak	Andre
Atkinson	Belsher
Bevilacqua	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blais	Bosley
Boyer	Cardiff
Chadwick	Chartrand
Clifford	Cole
Collins	Comuzzi
Cook	Corbeil
Couture	Della Noce
Desjardins	Dingwall
Dobbie	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Flis
Fontaine	Friesen
Gaffney	Gagliano
Greene	Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hogue
Horning	Hudon
Hughes	Johnson
Joncas	Kempling
Keyes	Koury
Landry	Larrivée
Lopez	McDermid
McLean	Moore
Nowlan	Oberle
Plourde	Porter
Redway	Reimer
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Siddon
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van De Walle	Vankoughnet
Vien	
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard	Worthy—84

NAYS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Black
Blaikie	Duceppe
Edmonston	Fisher
Gérin	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Karpoff
Lapierre	Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacWilliam	McLaughlin
Murphy	Nystrom
Parker	Plamondon
Rocheleau	Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne	Whittaker—26

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Bird
Blondin	Caccia
Cadieux	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Clark (Yellowhead)
Cooper	Copps
Crosby (Halifax West)	Danis
Darling	de Cotret
Ferguson	Gustafson
Harvard	Jelinek
Kaplan	Karygiannis
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Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	McLean
Milliken	Nault
Nunziata	O'Kurley
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Phinney	Redway
Richardson	Rideout
Rompkey	Schneider
Shields	Simmons
Stewart	Thorkelson
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Vézina	Weiner

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

It being 13 minutes past 11 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 23.13 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 4, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS OF MEMBER FOR NEW WESTMINSTER—BURNABY

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of privilege that emanates from a statement pursuant to Standing Order 31 that was made yesterday in the House of Commons by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

In the member's statement she imputed motives to an action that I had taken which I believe impedes me from doing my work as a member of Parliament.

In the particular statement she mentioned that I was endangering the lives of women and children by a pamphlet that I had given out wherein I had listed the names, the addresses and the phone numbers of some transition shelters that were listed not only in my riding but across metropolitan Toronto.

On March 31 in this House of Commons I participated in a debate where I read to the House a piece of material that was a gift to me from a survivor. It was entitled *Women's Country* and it talked about the issue of violence against women and children. At the end of that speech I received calls not only in my Ottawa office but also in Toronto for copies of this particular speech.

We went to the Department of National Health and Welfare and obtained some additional statistics on violence against women. We also gathered together a list of shelters and transition houses which we obtained from myriad places. We received them from libraries. We received them from a variety of places.

We then responded to the requests that we had received in Ottawa and in Toronto. The balance of them I sent to approximately 2,000 people in my riding.

Many of the people who called me and asked for this piece had said that they were survivors. Many of them had said that they were people who had worked in the violence against women issue for many years. I felt, based upon the reaction I had received, that I was doing the right thing.

Last Friday I started receiving phone calls. I might say that this was after about 10 days of the piece being out in the community. All of the calls that I received were positive, previous to this last Friday.

A leader in this violence against women committee said to me: "Dennis, you should not be releasing the addresses of these shelters". She did say, of course, that I was putting lives in danger.

I responded to her by saying two things. First of all I will not give out any more with the addresses on them. I will also call the chief of police, which I did, Chief William McCormack, to make sure that there would be an added security alert to the houses that were listed.

Some of the shelters that were listed in the pamphlet have their addresses listed in places that are quite public. For example, the two shelters in my riding have their addresses listed in the Toronto phone book. Not only does it have the phone number, but it actually has the address of the shelter.

I refer specifically to Nellie's Hostels for Women. The idea that these addresses are confidential is a debatable point. In other words, there are some shelters that do believe that they should be confidential and there are other shelters that publish them.

I leaned to caution and did not distribute any more with the addresses. I respected the voice of the women who called me. I must say, though, that if I am guilty of putting the lives of women and children in danger then I would ask the question: What about those professional organizations that also publish their addresses?

I would also say that we in the Parliament of Canada spend millions of dollars a year advocating that women go to these shelters. Are we suggesting that they go to places that are not secure?

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to intervene in the member's question of privilege, but I have not heard anything yet that indicates a question of privilege. It seems to be a clarification of his own role rather than anything that happened in this House.

With regard to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, she is not able to be here today, at least at this time of the day. It was one of his own colleagues who pointed out to us late last night during the votes that she was not feeling well. She will not be here for a while this morning.

However, I did not get up on that particular point. I got up on the fact that what the member for Broadview—Greenwood was talking about had nothing to do with a question of privilege. If he is talking about his own situation, that is a different issue and perhaps he wants to get up at some other time.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can try to be of assistance to members.

The hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood raised this matter yesterday. I do not think I am trespassing by saying that he suggested to me earlier this morning he would want to raise it.

I understand that the office of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby was notified that the hon. member wished to proceed at this point. It may well be that it would be appropriate to hear the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby at some point when it is convenient.

• (1020)

The point the hon. member for Churchill makes I think is sound. There may or may not be a complaint here. I have not heard all of it, but I think the point that the hon. member for Churchill makes is reasonable. As this is a question of privilege, I know the hon. member would want to address it from the point of view of privilege and not stray into debate.

I accept the intervention of our hon. friend. I am sure that the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood will wrap up his argument. At that point, depending on what I have heard, I may ask the hon. member at least to have the opportunity to address it further if that is necessary.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up. Basically I want to make the point that at no time when I distributed this piece, *Women's Country*, with addresses attached was there any intent to do malicious damage.

My point of privilege is quite specific. When another member in this House accuses another member of putting the lives of women and children in danger, it makes it very difficult and impedes us in our work as members of Parliament. That is the simple point.

I have every intention of continuing to try to be constructive in advancing this issue which is of concern to each and every member of this House, but I do not think I will have any effect at all if my constituents believe that the actions I take are putting the lives of people in danger.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Etobicoke—Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member has raised this matter in the House this morning as a point of privilege because it relates to the use of the office of a member of Parliament to distribute information and the impact that can have on the general public and indeed on other members of Parliament.

Because this information was received in my own constituency, which is part of the same metropolitan community shared by the member who has just spoken, there was a lot of concern raised in my constituency. I think it is helpful the member has clarified his intentions as to what he was seeking to do.

Clearly a dilemma has been raised. On one hand this member, as many of us do in the course of fulfilling our public office, would want to let women know where the shelters are and how to contact them. The dilemma comes from the fact, on the other hand, that in many instances—in fact in most instances—these are safe houses and information generally out and about as to where they are can create very serious problems for those who are seeking refuge there.

In the case of the Etobicoke—Lakeshore constituency where Women's Habitat is located and for years has been providing this needed and unfortunately necessary service to women and children, there was great consternation that an address and a location that they tried to keep not broadly known was in fact revealed in this way.

It is a matter that raises an important question of privilege. I am glad that the member has taken the opportunity to clarify that before the House and on the public record, because it does have an impact on not only those of us who are members in the community but many of the women and their families who are living there.

Mr. Speaker: What I am going to do, and I know the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood would support this and if the House would go along I would like to hear from the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby as to whether or not she would wish to make an intervention. When I have done that, probably we could arrange to bring the matter back to the House, if necessary.

I do want to say this because it is important that it is said. This may or may not be a question of privilege but the issue that has been brought to the House for all of us is a very serious one.

The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore has made a positive contribution to the discussion this morning. All of us who are parents and all of us who care are deeply concerned about the matter that has been raised. In saying that, I am not saying whether or not it is a question of privilege. I will decide that in due course.

In any event, I thank the hon. member and I thank the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore and the hon. member for Churchill for their interventions.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I have had a communication from the office of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. Apparently they understood this issue was going to be raised at three o'clock today. If the Speaker wishes, I suspect that is the time the hon. member would respond on this issue.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member for Churchill. I most certainly will give the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby every opportunity to address the Chair in the House later on today if that is appropriate.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

WESTRAY MINE

TABLING OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to a commitment I made to this House, I am tabling today documents pertaining to the federal government's assistance to the Westray Mine project.

Additional contractual documents are also being made available through the Department of Industry, Science and Technology.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I would like clarification of the documents tabled. The minister indicated that other contractual documents were available through the department. Does that mean they have not been tabled but that a list is available to members to consult and to request them? If he could explain his comments please.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the situation is that the total sum of all the documents represent several feet. What has been provided is a list and an opportunity for members, or anybody else, to access the documents in the library of the Department of Industry, Science and Technology and to copy them and so on. It was just simply impractical to table them all without a fork-lift.

* * *

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 Orders 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to nine petitions.

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

Routine Proceedings

JUSTICE AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

EIGHTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General.

In accordance with its order of reference of Wednesday, May 6, 1992, your committee has considered Bill C-71, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act and other acts in consequence thereof, and has agreed to report it with one amendment.

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

* * *

• (1030)

PETITIONS

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I rise today under Standing Order 36 to present a petition from a number of people from the town of Selkirk, Ontario, which was sent in by Norma Davidson of Selkirk.

It calls upon this government to accept or reject constitutional amendments as proposed by the government in a referendum. What these citizens call upon this government to do, which is different from the government's legislation, is for it to have a double majority, a majority of votes cast in the provinces with the territories being given the status of one province, and a majority vote of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada together.

PORNOGRAPHY

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today under Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by many of my constituents from Malpeque, Prince Edward Island. They state that whereas pornography is a serious problem in Canadian society, they humbly pray and call upon Parliament to take measures to address the serious social problem, pornography, and protect Canadian women and children from its harmful effects.

REFUGEES

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and pleasure to introduce today a petition approved by the Clerk from 87 residents of Canada, from many places including Toronto, Elmsdale, Gravenhurst, Willowdale, Thornhill, Scarborough, Downsview, Williamsport and several locations in British Columbia and the prairies.

The petitioners are concerned about the situation of the families of people who have been accepted as refugees in Canada but have not yet been able to bring their families, their spouses and children from countries where some of them are living in extreme difficulty, if not danger.

Therefore, the petitioners urge 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 allow them to be reunited in Canada for inland processing.

LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to present petitions from several Canadians, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and ratified thereby, who call upon the Parliament of Canada to urge the Government of Canada to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention without delay and to mobilize Canadian diplomatic resources to encourage other nations, in particular developed nations, to ratify this important treaty as well.

The petitioners do that for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that a statement from the World Commission on Environment and Development, commonly known as the Brundtland commission, states that the most significant initial action that nations can take in the interests of the oceans' threatened life support system is to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention. It points out the critical role that oceans play in the life support systems of the whole planet.

There have been some objections to the ratifying of it. The Secretary General of the United Nations has come to agreements with some nations which had reservations about ratifying it and most of those concerns have been clarified.

Sixty nations are required for ratification of this convention, 51 now have and it is extremely important that at least 9 more sign it. It is certainly incumbent upon Canada to take its part in that.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table pursuant to Standing Order 36 calling upon the Government of Canada to rescind its decision with regard to terminating the Court Challenges Program. This petition is signed by residents of the province of New Brunswick, in particular from Campbellton, New Brunswick, as well as Mann Mountain, parts of Restigouche, Sainte-Anne, as well as other parts of that province.

The second petition deals with the same subject matter signed by numerous residents of Kingston, Ontario, who are all in agreement that the termination of the Court Challenges Program is indeed an injustice and the government ought to rescind its decision forthwith.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I would like to revert briefly to the item Introduction of Government Bills.

An hon. member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Come now, I call upon the House to cooperate. I think I proceeded a little hastily earlier.

An hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): This is not a matter requiring unanimous consent. The Chair made a mistake in proceeding a little too hastily and, thus, is allowed to revert to a previous item.

* * *

CARRIAGE OF GOODS BY WATER ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Harvie Andre (for the Minister of Transport) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-83, an act respecting the transportation of goods by water.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Andre moves that the bill be now read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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

Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

CIVILIAN WAR PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Harvie Andre (for the Minister of Veterans Affairs) moved for leave to introduce 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.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Andre 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.

* * *

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. DeBlois): Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved that Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak once again in favour of Bill C-81. This bill has been the subject of thorough consideration in committee and I am confident its provisions reflect the will of the majority of the House.

It remains very important for members to keep in mind the purpose of the legislation. It is a precautionary measure designed to give the Government of Canada the ability to hold a referendum on constitutional reform, if such a step ever were to become necessary and desirable.

• (1040)

The legislation does not say a referendum will be held, nor does it detract in any way from the important deliberations that have been going on with respect to finding acceptable constitutional solutions that address the concerns of all Canadians.

This legislation has been the subject of keen and useful scrutiny in committee. The government promised it would seriously consider any amendments from the opposition which would improve the legislation, and we have honoured that commitment. Of the 29 amendments proposed by the opposition parties, 13 have been accepted by the government.

I would like to discuss for a moment several changes that have been made in the bill.

As hon. members will recall, when the bill was first introduced there was significant discussion about the issue of spending limits on the part of participants in any future federal referendum. Some hon. members expressed the view the legislation should have limits on spending to prevent any unfairness in the course of a referendum campaign.

It is certainly the intention of the government to ensure any referendum is fair. Measures to ensure fairness should be workable and sensible. In committee this issue was addressed and the legislation has been improved as a result of amendments agreed to in committee. The bill now proposes the spending regime, which applies to political parties under the Canada Elections Act would apply to each registered referendum committee.

This amendment puts reasonable constraints on any single committee. As I have stated to hon. members in this House and as has been expressed in committee, limitations on the number of committees are viewed by a considerable body of legal opinion as being an infringement of the charter provisions dealing with the freedoms of association and expression.

This discussion about the use of an umbrella committee has been, in a sense, a very frustrating one. In face of overwhelming legal opinion shown to the opposition, from literally all parts of this country that such an umbrella committee would clearly be a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we nevertheless had amendments proposed last night to impose these various umbrella committees. They were defeated so in a sense it is academic, but one wonders about the wisdom of voters who in the face of this opinion say: "It doesn't matter. Politically it is a good thing to vote for so we are going to vote for it. It doesn't matter that it violates the charter".

Forgetting about the charter argument, consider for a moment the common sense practical consequences of trying to legislate an umbrella committee. Let us, for example, suppose there was a referendum on the Meech Lake accord and one would have in law that there shall be umbrella committees. Think about the practical consequences. First, how are these committees formed and who brings them together?

I suppose some official would call a first meeting of everybody who wants to participate in the committee and they would then set up an organization and run it.

Let's talk about the no committee, for example, on a Meech Lake situation. Attending this first meeting you would have, presumably, as diverse groups as the Assembly of First Nations, because they did not think there was anything in there for the natives. You would have the triple-E group because there was nothing in there on Senate reform. Presumably the National Action Committee on the Status of Women would be there because there was nothing in there for women. Maybe the CLC, the Canadian Auto Workers and who knows how many other groups would attend.

Then the question is how do they vote? Who gets what weight? Does everybody there have an equal vote? Do you give the same vote to an organization that has a million members as to an organization that has 10? Do you give the CLC a vote and also every one of its constituent political unions? In other words, the auto workers are members of the CLC. If they show up and say they want to participate do they have a vote as well as the CLC? Do they have 10 votes? How do you practically take care of that situation?

Assume somehow you can practically take care of that situation. Given what we have seen trying to reach agreements around this House when we have three or four different parties in a relatively small committee and how long it takes, imagine trying to bring together that group.

Then you tell that group to raise an allocated limited amount of money.

"You shall raise and allocate a limited amount of money." The native groups would want money to fight this Meech Lake accord because there is nothing in there for Indians and aboriginals and they think it should be defeated.

The National Action Committee would say it wants some money to spend on fighting it because there is nothing in there for women. Then you are going to have the REAL Women organization saying it wants money to fight this because it thinks it has already gone too far in terms of the feminist agenda. Then the CLC is going to have its claim. How would those things be adjudicated?

Suppose the committee decided that REAL Women has a cause and it should be allocated a certain amount of money and air time to fight its cause. Is NAC not going to say: "Okay, that is fine with us"? Of course not. It is going to object strenuously and it will certainly go to a court. What judge is going to say: "Too bad, you cannot participate"?

Common sense indicates that is the wrong thing to do. For example, suppose the question had many parts where you were asking about a package that included Senate reform, aboriginal self-government and all the other items now under discussion.

You may want to campaign against aboriginal self-government and for Senate reform, or *vice versa*. Does that mean you have to be simultaneously on both the yes and no committees or do we have a multiplicity of committees? If you have a multiplicity of committees, do you have one yes committee and several no committees because each group has a different reason for wanting to say no?

Just common sense dictates that would be a foolish thing to do. It is for that practical reason that out of the 600 referenda held in the western world that were looked at by the Hansard Society in the U.K. at a conference in co-operation with American Enterprise Institute, only one had succeeded in having umbrella groups with limited expenditures and everybody else excluded from campaigning, and that was in Quebec. What happened in Quebec? It was a very unique situation. The question was very simple, basically. You were for sovereignty or you were against it.

In the National Assembly there were two parties. One was for sovereignty and one was against. The legislation provided that committees be set up. The organization would be undertaken by the Parti Quebecois or the Liberal Party of Quebec and anybody who wanted to participate had to do so under one of those committees.

There were no subtleties. People were not asked whether they were for sovereignty with an upper house, sovereignty with native self-government, et cetera. It was a very simple question amenable to that kind of structure. It worked out fine. Everybody found that a reasonable way to participate, and it proceeded.

To impose that model on legislation that is enabling only, in which there could be multiple questions and which could be complex with many parts is to fly in the face of common sense. That is why we had to oppose it.

I thought common sense would dictate. It has been a considerable source of frustration that the common sense argument was either not understood or simply dismissed in the pursuit of the political objective of saying: "Ah, but for fairness you have to have umbrellas and limits", even while recognizing that kind of ideal is simply impractical, impossible, and there is no way in which it could be done.

Mr. Edmonston: Show us the legal opinion.

Mr. Andre: The hon. member for Chambly walks in making comments. Typical.

Common sense indicates the charter is very clear in this regard.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Andre: I hear heckles from the New Democratic Party, and I have never attributed common sense to the New Democratic Party. Do not worry, I am not talking about you. It is important the legislation be as fair, as reasonable and as workable as possible. I believe this bill meets this test.

• (1050)

In the interests of fairness, disclosure and openness, the bill provides that all committees intending to spend over $5,000 be registered and the contributors and their contributions in amounts over $250 be made public.

The bill also ensures free broadcasting time will be allocated equally to both sides of the referendum question. I pity the broadcasting referee in the Chief Electoral Office who is going to have to make those allocations because it is going to be very difficult. But this is a relatively simple thing compared to what would be required should anybody be insane enough to agree to umbrella committees.

There is nothing in the bill to in any way limit access of all sides to the purchase of broadcast time. As a result, I believe all sides of any question will be able to be put their views fairly to the Canadian public if a referendum was ever held.

I would like to draw attention to the other issue which was discussed in committee. Opposition members expressed concern about the issue of consultation with respect to any referendum question. Opposition parties wanted to ensure there was appropriate advance knowledge about the question. The government agreed with this request and accordingly the bill was amended to ensure leaders of the two recognized opposition parties in the House are provided with the proposed wording of the question and consulted on this wording at least three days before notice of the motion in the House is given. This will ensure a minimum of four days notice before debate begins.

I want to advise the House as well the government agreed to an amendment limiting contributions to referendum committees to sources of financing within the country. This change will alleviate the concern about contributions from non-Canadians including foreign governments, companies which do not conduct business in Canada, and trade unions which have no bargaining rights in Canada.

In another area the government agreed to an amendment which clarifies what is a referendum expense. The change will ensure the normal conduct and responsibilities of members of the Senate and the House of Commons will be specifically excluded from the definition of referendum expenses.

This recognizes the role of the MP must continue during any referendum.

The bill was also amended to respond to a suggestion that provision be made for the text of the question to be made available in aboriginal languages in appropriate locations at the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The bill as amended in committee addresses the issue for which it is designed. It enables the government to deal with any eventuality, but it should be repeated that no decision to hold a referendum has been made yet. Canada must have every appropriate means at its disposal to defend itself and promote unity.

This is a straightforward matter of prudent management.

Mr. Edmonston: By leadership.

Mr. Andre: I see the member for Chambly is again shouting from his seat. Frankly I do not think you promote the unity of this country by aligning yourself with the Bloc Quebecois.

We know why they want to destroy the country. We wonder why the members of the New Democratic Party would align themselves with them.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I think the government House leader knows better. We are not aligning ourselves with the Bloc Quebecois. We stated we are for a referendum. We do not agree with the legislation which is going to be in place for more than three years and can be used for any number of referendums in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. I think it is not a matter of privilege or a point of order. It is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Andre: We believe Canadians have learned a great deal about the constitutional challenges facing this country. The citizen's forum, the hearings of the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, the conferences over the winter and the multilateral processes have yielded important and significant progress toward the resolution of the Canada round.

Perhaps most important of all Canadians are getting to know one another through this process and are coming to terms with Canada's vast and endearing diversity. We are all too familiar with those who want to destroy this country. They do not understand Canada's greatness and they do not want to understand. Even more, they do not want others to know the real Canada much less come to appreciate it.

In a way one has to feel sorry for those with such an attitude. Theirs is the politics of division, discord, and suspicion. Their aspirations are oriented toward tearing down not building up, wrecking not improving. The real Canada is far from perfect but it is the best country in the world. No Canadian should feel bashful about saying it loud and saying it often. It is the simple truth. The real Canada at its best is all about tolerance, civility, peace and prosperity. These are values that Canadians want expressed more vividly through a renewed Constitution. These are values which they want to have translated and given increased meaning in their daily lives.

This legislation, of course, does not create the perfect future for this country. It would be preferable if such a precautionary measure as this legislation was not needed at all. The commitment of my government is to Canada's renewal and every tool should be available to meet any possibility. For this reason, I urge the House to approve this legislation. I ask, in particular, the members of the New Democratic Party to put partisanship aside.

Mr. Murphy: After that stupid remark you just made.

Mr. Andre: I was in opposition a long time and I know the disputes that occur in opposition. I know that frequently in opposition the only thing you can unite on is opposition to the government.

I would ask the New Democratic Party, after their four-hour caucus where, figuratively, there was blood on the floor, to please recognize that what is at stake here is the best country in the world. I ask them not to put this best country in the world in jeopardy by their partisan concerns and their inability to come together as a party.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to make a very long statement. Nevertheless, I want to express my opinion on third reading of this bill, which is meant to give us a very useful tool in Canadian society, a way to consult the people on something as important as the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, you should know that in April 1991, our party was the only one that had studied the problem thoroughly and had the courage to submit a comprehensive plan to Canadians to resolve the constitutional crisis which today needs to be resolved as soon as possible because the public is sick and tired of talking about the Constitution.

[*English*]

We decided as a party in April of last year to make a nine-point proposal. When the minister got up in the House yesterday, I was happy to realize that the nine-point proposition that had been submitted by our party, plus the process, has been accepted by the government. In fact we are on the last item of the process, which is the referendum.

Why did we suggest the referendum? It is because the Constitution of the land belongs to the people. That is a very simple proposition. For years we have debated this problem and we see it again at this moment. People are using this occasion to try to bargain something for themselves. When you really talk to the people of the country, they ask why.

This country should have a Constitution. It is very important but it cannot be the only problem we face from now on. It is very convenient for this national government and provincial governments to talk about the Constitution but when you go to the people, they do not want to hear about the Constitution. They want to hear about jobs, economic growth and social improvements. When they open a newspaper all they see is the Constitution. As a politician, when you make a speech on the economy, the press is there talking about the Constitution.

We are all fed up with that. We know that when the Constitution is in the hands of the people, it will be very difficult for any level of government to use the Constitution as a scapegoat instead of talking about the real problems of the nation.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1100)

Mr. Chrétien: We did not propose a referendum for a deadlock-breaking mechanism. That has never been our intention. Whatever the result of these negotiations, we have to go to the people. We have to give the Constitu-

tion back to the people of Canada. We need to have this great day when Canadians need to say yes to this country remaining together and to enter into the 21st century. That is exactly what we want to do.

I want to say today, because it is very important, that there is an element of using the referendum to pressure people. That has never been the intention. The intention was to consult the people of Canada and let them decide what the Constitution of our land should be and legitimize the process. I am confident that when the people of Canada realize that, they will be confident and will gain back the pride that they have lost through these terrible last seven years.

We do not want the government to use it as an instrument to push people around, but to give a voice to the people of Canada for a new Constitution.

I do not like what the government is doing in terms of what it is going to do when it has a referendum. It should be very clear that we should not proceed with any change in the Constitution if one of the four great regions of Canada says no to this package or any package. It has to be clear that the Constitution will not be changed. Nobody can force us. We can say as a matter of policy of this House that if Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario or the west says no, then we are not proceeding. It should be very clear that this is the way it should be in a country as diversified as ours. It is as simple as that.

We are disappointed with some elements of the bill. We think that the government could have accepted many of the amendments that we made, but we will vote for the bill even in its imperfection. I do not understand the position of those in the NDP. They do not want to consult the people of Canada because they do not like the car that is going there. They say they are going in Cadillacs or they are not going at all. I find that stupid because I am willing to walk for this country if need be.

I am not happy. We made some suggestions. I think we should regroup the people. I know that when we have a referendum we will have an umbrella because I am willing to fight for Canada with the Conservative Party and the NDP Party and we will be together on the same platform. It is not that bad. I have done it before. I was on the same platform as the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs in Shawinigan for the last referendum.

An hon. member: Oh my God.

Mr. Chrétien: It was not that bad. I was with the Minister of National Defence. Imagine that.

Some hon. members: Oh no.

Mr. Chrétien: In those days he was not arriving in his jet. He walked there. It is not that bad because it is a great cause.

We will do that. We will be together and we will fight for Canada because we believe in it.

We hear the noisemaker from Shefford over there. Yesterday he was so indecent. He would still be in his boat in the Magdalen Islands if the member for Papineau had not been his mentor and given him a chance to be a member of Parliament. At least he should have a bit of decency and respect. That is the reason why I was mad. He should have some respect for the member for Papineau.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I have no lesson to learn from the Leader of the Opposition on the friendship and respect I have for the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel. My friendship and respect have been constant. We may have different political opinions but still respect each other.

[*English*]

Mr. Chrétien: I do not have time to spend with this member. I just made a point and I think that he understood that. I am glad that he says that he has respect for the member from Papineau. I do too. It would have been very nice yesterday to let him finish his speech without making the nonsensical noise that he made.

We will have this referendum and we want it. Whatever happens there will be a referendum. We want all Canadians to be consulted. I do not understand people who say that the legitimate Government of Canada and Parliament of Canada, that have been acting under one Constitution since 1867, suddenly in the words of the Bloc Quebecois—

[*Translation*]

—would not have the right to consult the citizens of Quebec. This is a referendum for all Canadians. The best proof that members of the Bloc Québécois are Canadians is that they are here in this House. Why would they not want Quebecers to be consulted in the same was as Ontarians and residents of the Northwest Territories? Why would they not want all Canadians to say yes or no? That is democracy. Democracy must not

be managed piecemeal; it must apply equally to everyone. That is why we say there must be a regional majority to respect Canada as it really is. On the other hand, one part of Canada should not be excluded, because then the referendum debate and vote would be virtually meaningless.

I would have liked the bill to be more appropriate and spending to be better controlled. What will happen? The mechanism or vehicle may be defective, but the important thing in a referendum is that the ultimate verdict will be given by each citizen freely voting on this country that we believe in. That is what we have always proposed.

The bill is not perfect. Personally, I would like some parts of it to be changed. Some concerns have been expressed. But from the beginning, we wanted to co-operate with the government. In fact, as I said at the outset, if you take the plan as it was presented yesterday by the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, everything that we submitted in writing and that was adopted by the Liberal Party in all regions of Canada appeared in the House of Commons report and again in the minister's announcement. What gives us great satisfaction is that the reservations we mentioned—

[*English*]

We had some elements we disagreed with in the Beaudoin report. We were not at the table, but the premiers and their representatives and the negotiations have retained some of our objectives. We did that because we felt it was important.

Take the matter of culture. We have to maintain the right to help all Canadians in that field. Of course, the mechanism could be different because it was not in the Constitution, but we gave a better definition.

It is the same thing with energy. We thought there should be a national say in the energy policies of the land. Why be together if we cannot take a national interest when it is needed from this Parliament?

We made a lot of progress. I am happy with that. I understand why the Bloc Quebecois does not want to vote, but I do not understand why all other members of Parliament do not want to vote together. We started to work together. We made our proposal and we fought very hard. It is unbelievable to have the New Democratic Party running away when we want to hear the voice of the people. When they cannot make the distinction between the forest and the trees, it is absolutely unbelievable.

• (1110)

Politically I am happy because when I travel in Canada I will say: "These are the people he does not want to be consulted in a national referendum". That is good for me, but it is bad for the country that they cannot elevate themselves high enough to have the three major parties agree on a bill. Even if it is not a perfect bill, it is the bill that will be the cause of one of the greatest days of Canada.

On that day in Canada we will all get up and we will walk to the polls. On that day Canadians will decide to be together for the next century. The people of English Canada will get up and will say: "Let us go to the polls and say yes to Quebec. Let us say yes to a new Canada". The people of Quebec will get up and say: "Yes, we want to stay in Canada because it is the best solution for us".

It will be a great night when all together the different parties of people who believe in this country will have given birth to the Canada of the 21st century.

My members will vote for this bill. We asked the government to say clearly that when the referendum is held we will not proceed if we do not have a majority from the four regions of Canada. We want the government to understand that we never propose a referendum just to push the premiers around, to have a solution, but to have ratification by every citizen. They will be able to go, as I said, and say despite of all the problems arising and all the problems we will have in the future, we are still number one. It is worth fighting for it. That is why we are all in this House.

I hope the referendum will be held in this land this year and the future will be great for what I consider to be the biggest and best country of the world, our beloved Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I would like to point out to the House that yesterday's *Votes and Proceedings* contain several errors in the list of votes. Because of major computer problems that are still unexplained, the printed lists do not reflect accurately the notes given to the Clerk during last evening's votes.

The Chair has asked that a revised version of the *Votes and Proceedings* be reprinted later today and distributed as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the printing and the distribution of the *Debates* are also delayed for the same reason.

We apologize for any inconvenience resulting from that situation. We now resume debate with the leader of the New Democratic Party.

[*English*]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I rise with pleasure to speak on third reading of Bill C-81. Certainly the previous two non-partisan speeches have been very interesting, as has the long series of non-partisan speeches on the Constitution.

It is very important to clarify what we are speaking about today. It is not whether Canada should have a referendum. It is not whether Canadians should have a voice. We are debating Bill C-81 which would set out the technical details of how that voice would be heard and how that voice would be interpreted.

I would like to deviate from the previous two speeches and speak about some of the substance of this bill. Throughout the constitutional process the New Democratic Party has supported a referendum. We continue to do so. What we do support is a fair referendum and a referendum where Canadian voices are truly heard.

On several occasions—first the Beaudoin-Dobbie report and second in the Beaudoin-Edwards report—we supported along with the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party that a consultative referendum should be held on constitutional matters. We stand by that position.

On second reading of Bill C-81 we voted in favour because in principle we wanted to vote for a referendum. It was our understanding that the government would be open to some substantive changes. As the government House leader pointed out, some changes were made, but in our view these changes were not the fundamental ones that would have made this a fair referendum.

Throughout this constitutional debate I am proud to say that the New Democratic Party has pushed for an open process and involvement of Canadians in a way that Canadians could have a really substantive role in constitutional debate.

We have argued that for the Constitution to succeed new approaches had to be taken. I proposed two years ago that a constituent assembly should be established to discuss constitutional matters. The Liberal Party and the Conservative Party rejected that suggestion. They said no, that the old ways would have to work and they were not prepared to look at new approaches.

I believe that was an error. The six constitutional conferences which were subsequently held at the encouragement of New Democrats proved when Canadians from all parts of this country came together and listened to each other that they can come up with sensible and reasonable solutions and that in fact the citizens of this country have much to offer, as they would have to offer in a fair referendum.

Throughout this discussion of a referendum I have raised, as has other member of my party, many questions because we believe that a referendum should have careful thought and consideration. We have never put it forward as a magical solution to the country's problems. I think that would be unrealistic. But we have accepted it because we feel that we can trust Canadians and that when Canadians speak and have the chance to do so fairly they will make reasonable decisions.

Our goal in expressing concerns and in raising suggestions has been to ensure that if there is a referendum it is to be a fair one. It must represent a genuine reflection of the people's will and at the end of the day withstand scrutiny as having been the result of a just process so that one cannot discredit the outcome. It is very important that we start at the beginning to ensure success, not to build in failure.

[*Translation*]

That is why my party supported this bill at second reading and supported the reports of the Beaudoin-Edwards and Beaudoin-Dobbie committees. We voted in favour of that bill at second reading because we thought the government had given its assurance that it would accept the recommendations and amendments made in committee.

Our constitutional critic, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, proposed several reasonable amendments in committee yet, all those amendments were defeated by the government without serious consideration.

Bill C-81 was made even more unacceptable when the government deleted the clause, in fact its own clause, that would have made this bill invalid after three years. That legislation has now become permanent.

The government displayed absolutely no openmindedness. It is true, as the leader in the House mentioned, that some amendments were made, but they were not fundamental ones. The government rejected any form of non-partisan co-operation. Unfortunately, the result is that we now have an unacceptable bill. Because of this bill, the referendum campaign could be non-democratic.

What will be the value of the referendum if the campaign is dominated and manipulated by the rich and the powerful?

[*English*]

Yes, many Canadians want a referendum, but they want one in which their votes count for something and their voices will truly be heard.

A referendum bill to be fair should ensure four things: first, that every Canadian has a chance to take an equal part in the campaign; second, that the process be non-partisan where governments act as facilitators of the process and not as partisans putting forward their own agenda; third, that the question on the ballot be fair and understandable; and fourth, that there be some agreed upon means to interpret the results.

I have to say with regret that this bill fails on each count. It fails the test of fairness at every step, and it gives me no pleasure to say that. We wanted to see changes. We put forward reasonable amendments. We believed the government when it said it was open to real change because we wanted to support this bill.

• (1120)

I want to talk briefly about where we feel this bill fails the test of fairness. First there is the question of spending limits. One of the hallmarks of Canadian democracy is that elections are accessible not just to those who have the money.

Today in the United States it costs a person who wants to run for senator an average of $3.7 million. Certainly that leaves out the majority of Canadians who would ever want to participate in an election, if we do not continue to have reasonable spending limits that mean we have a democratic system.

There is no doubt there are precedents in this legislation—they are not legally binding, I understand that—which could lead to that road and that Americanization of our system where we do not have those spending limits.

The government said that we could not put in spending limits, that it was against the charter of rights. Then it brought in spending limits of $8 million per committee with a limitless number of committees. Is there really anybody in this House who does not believe that an $8 million limit is really no limit at all?

We have asked repeatedly. If the government had been prepared to do it, I would have been prepared to recommend that we vote for this bill. If the government had said that this was an important issue and it would make a reference to the Supreme Court about whether we could have reasonable spending limits, it seems to me that would have been a reasonable gesture. It would have put to rest this question, because there were differing legal opinions about whether or not there can be spending limits.

We cannot accept that a referendum in which money can be the determining factor is a fair and just referendum for Canadians. Referendums to be fair have to be accessible to all Canadians and there have to be spending limits. At the time of an $8 million study of our electoral system and the Electoral Reform Commission proposing significant changes which would allow fairer spending rules for elections, it is strange this government is setting a dangerous precedent in going in the other direction.

As I said earlier, let there be no mistake: This is clearly a move to an American style system, a system where now in the United States less than 50 per cent of the people vote. Why is that so? Almost all incumbents get re-elected. Few are challenged. It really is a system where people are influenced by lobby groups and by money. That is not the way we want to see the democratic system in Canada. Any long-term consequences this legislation would entrench are simply unacceptable.

It is interesting. A recent survey of American literature, just to illustrate this point, showed that winners in a referendum campaign spent eight times more than those who lost in a referendum campaign. It seems to me that says it all in terms of the importance of making sure we can have legislation that is fair.

The question Canadians have to ask themselves is: Do they want a referendum that can be bought or do they want a referendum that can be judged on the merits of the issues? Obviously I support the latter.

There is also the question of what is the role of government in a referendum?

[*Translation*]

This brings me to say a word about the role of the government. We know that this bill allows the government to get all the publicity that it wants. It enables the government to take sides, to use taxpayers money to promote one point of view at the expense of the other.

Of course, if the question only consisted of asking the population whether it likes Canada or not, it would not matter so much. Obviously, all members of the federal parties like Canada.

The question should have to do with the content of the agreement that was reached. The role of the government would then be to give people the information they need to make a decision.

A referendum is a consultation process: You ask people what they think. To be able to make a decision, these people need to hear the arguments supporting the two views.

Do not try to tell people how they should vote. Listen to them. Trust Canadians.

[*English*]

Then we come to the matter of the question and the fact that the framing and timing of that question at this point in this legislation is left solely in the hands of the Prime Minister and the cabi net. In that case, this will be a government referendum.

Let me be honest. I really cannot understand why the government has chosen not to involve in a meaningful way the other federal parties in this House and why the government would not accept in the legislation that a question should be formed in a non-partisan way and that any question posed and discussed in this House should be approved by a majority of 60 per cent in this House of Commons. Surely that is only reasonable. It is only common sense.

If we are going to be truly non-partisan, let us be non-partisan. Let us have meaningful consultation and co-operation and listen to the suggestions from all sides.

In previous days, I asked the Prime Minister if he would consult the provinces, territories, and aboriginal people as well about the formation of the question and he has rejected that.

Surely, all of us who want this country united, who believe that we have not been sent to this House of Commons to destroy this country, want to ensure there is a fair process to build on success. We want to make sure that we consult with all of the parties involved and make sure that we are going to the people with a question that is real, that is genuine, that is non-partisan.

Then the peopBle of Canada can say: "Yes, I want to vote for that kind of Canada because that is a Canada where politicians work together, where provinces, territories, aboriginal people work together. That is the kind of Canada I want to work for, and that is the kind I want to vote for".

That is the kind of referendum we want to see.

It seems to me the amendments we proposed were common sense. Heaven knows we are going to need all the common sense we can muster in the next few months.

Finally, I want to turn to the issue of how a referendum would be interpreted. All three federal parties in this House have signed reports on where they stand.

They stated that a consultative referendum should be interpreted by a regional or double majority so that no one part of the country could be seen to be left out. I agree with that. When we signed that, when we discussed that issue in those various committees, we were serious about that. We did not just sign that and say: "Oh, well, when it comes to a referendum we will just put that aside".

I know we said that in the report. We said there should be some interpretation. We said parts of the country should be assured they will not be left out but when it

comes to it we will just go along. We will not forget we said that and that we are committed to that.

The New Democratic Party has not forgotten it was committed to saying that the west has to have a voice, Quebec has to have a voice, Ontario has to have a voice, the maritimes and Newfoundland and Labrador must have a voice, and the north must have a voice. It has not forgotten that. When our party makes those commitments in reports that it signs, it means them.

Obviously, it seems more expedient to put that aside, for the government to say no. It wants Canadians to have a voice, but it is not going to tell them how it is going to listen to that voice. Yes, Canadians can put their marks on the ballots and their views might be taken or they might not. The government will decide at the time. That is not good enough. It is not good enough for Canadians to become involved in their country, to mark their ballots for their country, and then to be ignored.

[*Translation*]

There are indeed many problems with this bill. I repeat once again that today's debate is not on the principle of a referendum but rather on the appropriate rules governing such an exercise.

I have already mentioned the two reports that we supported, just like the Conservatives and the Liberals did, and which recommended not only that all of Canada should give its approval, but also that each region should support the same constitutional objectives.

• (1130)

[*English*]

Those represent our major concerns about this bill. Some may suggest, indeed some have here today, that we have raised some of the worst case scenarios. Surely, it is our role as parliamentarians to analyse carefully what is being done here. I make no apology for that because legislation should foresee all possible scenarios.

We know that the result of any referendum could be called into question by those the Prime Minister has called the enemies of Canada. That is precisely why we have to build in fairness and legitimacy to the process, so that the process itself will not be called into question and so that these enemies, these people who want to destroy Canada, do not have that tool in their arsenal. It is fundamental that the process is seen as legitimate from the beginning.

A campaign bought by the rich with a meaningless question could be simply divisive. Those who want to destroy Canada would use it against Canada.

There are those in this House who say that we have to accept this inadequate bill, that we should not have a democratic debate because we should all just go along and that is the better thing to do and the nicer thing to do. I dare say there will not be one person in this House who votes yes on this bill who does not believe it is an inadequate bill. I have to say that, yes, the easy thing to do is to simply go along.

I have listened to the insults and the charges by the Leader of the Opposition and the government leader. I make no apologies that I take my responsibility as a parliamentarian seriously to raise serious questions in this House.

Yes, it is more comfortable in the short term to accept something knowing it is inadequate. Let us remember this is not as it was originally proposed, legislation that would be in place for three years, but now is permanent legislation. Therefore, those who are going to vote yes on this inadequate legislation should think they are voting now for permanent legislation.

As I said earlier, we are not debating whether there should be a referendum. If there is a referendum the New Democratic Party will participate in it. But the essence of parliamentary debate and what we are sent here to do is to raise questions when we feel they are serious, not to oppose for the sake of opposing, but to stand up for fairness and to ensure that all Canadians have a voice.

We will never back down from doing that and we will never back down from debate because of fear. We will debate on substance and merit. We will stand up in this House on every occasion, yes, even on the occasion of the Constitution and debate from the principles we believe, based on the substance and merit of whatever is being debated. We will not be intimidated by those who say: "Well, I will get you in the next election". I care more about this country than I do about the next election. It is our job as parliamentarians to raise questions and to debate.

I regret that we will not be able to support this bill at third reading. I urge the government to make sure it will reconsider and offer Canadians a fair voice.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I must say to the Leader of the New Democratic Party she has a lot of courage, and although we do not share the same vision of the future of this country, her respect for democratic values is shared by Quebec and by parliaments in other countries, including Great Britain. I know there will be a political price to pay for what she is doing, but I think that in the long run, people will realize that she was right, since this referendum will resolve absolutely nothing because of the undemocratic and unwarranted provisions this bill contains.

Let this day be remembered as one of the saddest days in the life of this Parliament and the history of this government. A government that was elected to bring Quebec back with honour and enthusiasm is now creating a machine to crush the aspirations of Quebecers.

If you were not convinced before, Mr. Speaker, you should have listened to the speech by the Leader of the Opposition, who gave this government the kiss of death by supporting a bill that, he hopes, will bring Quebecers smartly into line.

This Parliament should be ashamed of this undemocratic exercise. To members who think that in the short term they will be able to make some political gain, I say that in the long run they will realize that the seeds they sow today will lead to the break-up of this country. I want them to understand that Quebecers will never feel bound by this referendum, and that this kind of provocation merely helps the cause of the Bloc quebecois, for which we are thankful.

In any case, the government has shown a lack of integrity in the way it treats its citizens. All this is just a smoke screen to hide what is in fact a deplorable failure. A government that apparently was sincere in its commitments to Quebec is now running roughshod over every jot and tittle of those commitments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but I must remind him that the purpose of the period for questions and comments is to allow comments or questions on what was said by the previous speaker.

Mr. Lapierre: I could not agree more, Mr. Speaker, and I was just getting to that.

I would like to say to the Leader of the New Democratic Party that the weaknesses she found in this bill are there for all to see. There is not a person on this planet who could give the futile exercise the leader of the Opposition favours any credibility.

I may remind the Leader of the Opposition that if he had met the commitments he made in 1980, we would not have the kind of mess we have today, and since he was also among those who killed Meech Lake, he is doubly responsible for this situation.

Government members who have now become the accomplices of the leader of the Opposition should be ashamed. I see the Minister of Labour, who got the nationalist and sovereigntist vote by flirting with sovereignty. I say he has betrayed his constituents.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Shefford obviously does not agree with us on what the future of our country should be. In fact, the Bloc Quebecois does not want a future for Canada. The New Democratic Party does want this country to have a future, and that is why we want a fair referendum.

[*English*]

In listening to the political speeches of the three speakers today from the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the Bloc Quebecois, I feel very comfortable in saying that while there seems to be a lot of fighting of the next election here today in this House, I want to fight for Canada. I think that is what we should be doing now.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to pose a couple of questions to the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party. It is usually the other way, that she is firing the questions over here. This is a rare opportunity.

First of all, the leader referred to a constituent assembly and I know her party has advocated one. It did in its dissent to the committee that I had the privilege of co-chairing. How does she reconcile the idea of a constituent assembly having no accountability? Does she not feel that constitutional change should reside here,

among people who are accountable in the most final way, in a general election?

Second, she referred to some United States precedents with the relationship between election spending and the successful candidates. That really has no relevancy to a referendum campaign. It does apply when there are candidates in the field.

• (1140)

Colleagues of the member made the point they thought the 1988 election had been bought by special interests. I would ask her whether she has seen any scholarly study or otherwise that would prove the relationship between expenditures made in the 1988 Canadian election campaign and the outcome of that election.

Finally, the member referred to the idea the Prime Minister had rejected the involvement of the provinces and territories from forming the question. Does she not believe they are intimately involved through the present process in determining what the package will be and thereby, by deduction, will be heavily involved in answering the question? I know she posed a question to the Prime Minister a couple of weeks ago on the subject, but I think the question was an all-embracing one involving various groups other than the provinces and territories. I think the Prime Minister's response was if we consulted everybody, we would not have a question.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, a constituent assembly was proposed almost two years ago now at the beginning of the constitutional process. Obviously it is not a process that would be valuable at this time. That is why we support a referendum, but a fair referendum.

In terms of the constituent assembly, as it was originally proposed, I would say the constitutional conferences the government finally did support were microcosms of what that constituent assembly could have looked like. But it was rejected at the beginning. It was rejected as being too different and new. We had to go a traditional way.

A lot of countries have used constituent assemblies and there are many models. There are many ways this country could have gone at the beginning, but we are not at the beginning of the constitutional process now. I think most Canadians hope we are definitely at the end of the constitutional process.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. McLaughlin: I would certainly agree we need to be debating much more in this House the questions of the economy and of our communities across this country that desperately need help; the services in this country that need help; and the unemployed who need the attention of this government and a change in economic policies.

Much work has been done in California and here in Canada in terms of studies about the use of money in referendums. I have not read any studies done on the spending of money during the free trade debate in 1988, which is what the member was referring to I assume. I think there is no doubt all of those people who spent millions of dollars just before the 1988 election to support the Canada-U.S. trade deal, to convince the Canadian people and put fear into their hearts, did not do it because they thought that money would not do any good. They did it because they knew it would influence Canadians and in fact spending that money does influence Canadians. I do not need a scholarly study. Those people did not spend millions of dollars because they thought it would be useless. They spent it because they thought they could put fear into the Canadian people. Now Canadians, including those who supported the Canada-U.S. trade deal, know what it meant is you will lose your job.

Finally, I specifically asked the Prime Minister whether he would involve the provinces, territories and aboriginal people. Those are the three parties, as well as the federal government, at the constitutional table. The Prime Minister clearly said no, it was the purview of the federal government.

My point in asking that question was simply to point out once again to let us try and build in some success here. Let us stop fighting the next election. Let us work for the country and let us do that together. That will be a non-partisan process.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate on third reading of Bill C-81.

This is legislation which will allow us, when circumstances warrant and when its effect is beneficial, to hold a referendum on constitutional changes.

Of course, this bill, and I emphasize this point, is not part of the amending formula of our Constitution. Neither does it replace the traditional means based on common sense that we used in the past to change the Constitution, that is the consultation, the discussion and the negotiation leading to a consensus, nor does it claim to impute to them other intentions.

The bill is not a substitute for the process I just described. To the contrary. It is another tool we are giving ourselves to try to find long term solutions to constitutional issues by consulting the people and putting to good use the opinions they will express on a given question.

If the situation allows it, the opinions thus expressed by the people could guide us toward a more solid consensus. A referendum would not solve the problem once and for all since it is not binding and has only a consultative value, but it could lead us further on the path toward a settlement of our constitutional differences.

This bill we are reviewing today is a good piece of legislation, which our colleagues in the legislative committee made even better. I will not deal with the policy issues concerning this bill. Rather, I will comment on changes made by the legislative committee.

All the members will remember that the government House leader announced, even before the committee hearings started, that the government was going to offer to set limits on the expenses of the referendum committees and would present an amendment to this effect. The legislative committee adopted an amendment which applies to the registered committees more or less the same rules as the ones political parties have to abide by when it comes to election expenses.

For the year starting April 1, 1992, the limit, just as in the case of a political party, is set at 56.4 cents per voter in the riding where the committee intends to campaign. A clause to this effect was added to the bill so that when a committee applies for registration, it has to state, in the application form signed by its president, in which riding it intends to campaign.

As far as the subsequent question of campaign contributions is concerned, a new disposition of the bill makes it impossible for any registered referendum committee to accept contributions from, first of all, an individual who is not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident; second, a corporation that does not carry on business in Canada; third, a trade union that does not hold bargaining rights for employees in Canada and, fourth, a foreign government or an agent thereof.

This new clause will guarantee that any consultation of the people will be free of any outside influence. The reason for this provision is crystal clear; it will ensure an even greater fairness.

I would also like you to notice that when a government makes a contribution to a registered referendum committee, this contribution has to appear in the committee's report regarding its expenses and the contributions it received. This improvement also was made by the legislative committee.

The bill was further improved in a number of other areas. Among the very positive improvements, I note the amendment to clause 3 which was approved by all parties in the legislative committee which provides that the text of the question will be available in aboriginal languages. That is a new provision at the federal level; it says that the Chief Electoral Officer shall ensure that the text of a referendum question is available in such aboriginal languages and in such places in those languages as the Chief Electoral Officer, after consultation with representatives of aboriginal groups, may determine.

The bill was again amended in order to allow for better consultation on the question itself. The new subsection 5(2) makes it mandatory to consult about the proposed text at least three days before notice of the motion for approval of the text is given. The government is thus showing that it is open to consultation on any referendum question which could be debated in this House.

That amendment is proof of our willingness to co–operate in the improvement of the process itself and therefore, of the legitimacy of that process.

It is with that same spirit of openness and fairness that we added to the bill a clause which allows members to play a role; it lets them examine the regulations which the Chief Electoral Officer proposes to make to adapt the Canada Elections Act or respecting the conduct of a referendum in general.

• (1150)

The bill now says that each regulation that the Chief Electoral officer proposes shall be deposited with the Clerk of the House of Commons at least seven days before the day on which the regulation is proposed to be made. The appropriate committee of the House of Commons may make such recommendations it considers appropriate to the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Chief Electoral Officer, as an officer of Parliament, will be grateful to us for such a useful clause as it will allow him to take advantage of the background and past experience of hon. members. This clause will help guarantee that any regulation the government may use to govern the campaign is not only fair, but perceived to be fair.

Finally, other changes accepted by the committee deal with issues like enumeration for elections and revision of lists of electors, but there is also another very important change.

Bill C-81, as originally proposed, contained a sunset clause which provided that it would remain in force for a period of three years only, unless extended by a joint resolution of both houses of Parliament.

Our colleague, the hon. member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, proposed to change that and provide for a review after three years. This change, introduced by an ardent proponent of direct democracy, means that Canada will keep on the books, for an indeterminate period of time, a statute dealing with constitutional referendums.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, we have before us a bill that enables us to hold referendums on constitutional matters, if this is deemed useful. It does not, and I stress this point, commit us to hold a referendum. Rather, it allows us to prepare for a referendum in a way that will eliminate any doubt about its fairness and openness, and inspire confidence in its results.

This legislation respects the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in allowing for maximum participation; freedom of speech is respected while ensuring accountability. As members of Parliament, we are creating a new right to participate in the event of a referendum; with this new right comes the responsibility to campaign according to rules that are clear and fair and enforced by someone in whom we all have the utmost confidence, the Chief Electoral Officer.

I am confident that this legislation is good for Canada. It will induce participation. If the government, at its discretion, decides that a referendum must be held, we will be ready.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): I would like to express my thanks to the minister for his intervention during which he quite justly reminded us that some of the amendments proposed by the Liberal Party as well as by the NDP and the Tories have been accepted. I believe he is absolutely right in saying that with these amendments, the bill is a much better one than it was in the beginning.

There is however an amendment which was not received either by the House or by the committee because the Clerk of Committee had recommended to the chairman to rule against it because it was beyond the scope of the bill. It is a political matter and I would like to ask him a question about it. The question I wish to put to him deals with the interpretation of the results if there is a referendum.

We, of the Liberal Party of Canada, would have preferred that the bill provide for the results of a national referendum to be interpreted on a regional basis and that, God forbid, if a majority of citizens, Quebecers for example, refused to give their approval to the question, the Government of Canada commit itself not to implement the constitutional proposal.

I understand that the proposed amendment was ruled out of order, but the question remains: If the government has a referendum inviting Canadians to vote on a series of constitutional proposals, will the Conservative government give us the assurance that it will not implement these proposals if a majority of Canadians do not give their approval in all four regions of the country?

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, were we to focus the debate on the political issue instead of on the legal nature of the amendment my hon. colleague presented in committee, I would agree with his position and with his amendment if the referendum bill introduced by the Government of Canada was binding. Then, I would understand why he moved this amendment which, I must say, I would tend to support.

However, Bill C–81 being read a third time today is a consultative piece of legislation. So, I do not think it is necessary, from a legal point of view, to specify in the bill how the results should be interpreted.

However, I must say to my colleague that the object of this exercise is to bring Quebec back into the Canadian Constitution. Consequently, if Quebecers say no, then I do not think it would be wise for a government, whichever it is, to force a view or a bill on the people.

I can understand the position of the Liberal Party of Canada in this debate. We appreciate their support for this bill, but I do not think the concerns of my colleague are justified, since C–81 is a consultative bill.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): I have listened with great interest to what the minister just said, Mr. Speaker. I would indeed wish to underline that the minister represents a neighbouring riding of my own. Contrary to what the Bloc Quebecois member for Shefford said earlier, I admire the excellent work he does for all his constituents, both nationalists and federalists. This, to me, is highly important and needs to be underlined.

The question I would like to address to the minister is the following: the government House leader has stated that all those who vote against this kind of referendum are somehow against Canada. I know that some of my constituents oppose this referendum and likewise in the neighbouring riding represented by the minister.

An hon. member: Most of them.

Mr. Edmonston: Please, I can speak for myself. I would ask him if he can dissociate himself from these comments about his constituents, a great number of which may be against the referendum? Can he dissociate himself from the comments made about people being against Canada simply because they are opposed to the referendum.

• (1200)

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, I was not here when the government House leader made his remarks, but as I understand my colleague here, he seems to be saying that if someone is against this bill in the House, that person is against Canada. I do not think one can oppose this bill because of some technical points that are not in it; I understand that very well.

As a Quebecer, the hon. member for Chambly knows very well that we in Quebec really had a model referendum law in 1980. But my colleague also knows that in the 600 or so referendums held in the western world, about 324 in Switzerland and 300 in all the other countries, there was never legislation similar to what Quebec had in 1980. It was unusual legislation. The reason it was possible in 1980—and the Quebec legislation is undoubtedly very laudable—was that a consensus could be reached, I think. People on both sides agreed at that time that they wanted it to happen in that way. Also, they did not have what we have now: opinions on the charter.

As my colleague knows very well, we discussed the bill at length before reaching this stage. I put some direct questions—I was not on the committee, and my colleague must have done the same if he was there—to the Deputy Minister of Justice, who is in fact the government's legal adviser, and to the Minister of Justice. These people felt that we could not proceed in the same way as the Quebec Referendum Act. It would be contrary to the Charter. Governments must be responsible. A government cannot go against the advice of the Department of Justice and of those whose duty it is to advise the government. That is why we allowed some amendments in committee. We ensured that all spending in a referendum campaign, including spending by the government, would be completely open.

What my friend, the member for Shefford, just said is wrong, because he knows very well that all government spending will be public. If a referendum is held and the government decides to participate in it, the government will have to proceed as the law requires and form a committee. We are thus assured of as much openness as possible, I think, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint–Michel): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate at third reading and support Bill C–81.

I listened very carefully to all the speakers, the members of the government as well as the members of the different opposition parties. What strikes me is the

fact that during the debate at second reading as well as at the report stage several speakers made, to my way of thinking, a fundamental mistake by overlooking an important distinction. Indeed, this debate is on a bill which will provide a referendum tool for the government, but there will be another debate if the government decides to submit a referendum question to the approval of the House of Commons and to consult Canadians.

Yet, a good number of arguments made by members of the New Democratic Party as well as speakers from the Bloc Quebecois may well be pointless, depending on what wil happen when the government decides to use this tool that we are giving him with this referendum act.

We do not know if the Canadian government will hold a national referendum in only one province, or a referendum in a number of provinces. The Bloc Quebecois members are up in arms against the government because it might try to move the referendum that should normally be held in the fall in Quebec, under the provincial legislation.

This is merely speculation. The Bloc Quebecois members do not know if this fall, following an agreement between the Canadian and provincial governments, the federal government will use this legislation to hold a consultation only in all the provinces where there is not already a referendum act allowing provincial authorities to hold their own referendum.

I say this: Be patient; you can voice your fears and concerns at that time, if need be, but it is certainly premature to do so now. You are wasting your time because you have no way of knowing for sure how the consultation process will be implemented this fall.

Second, they tell me the Prime Minister has made a statement. Well, the Prime Minister makes statements every day. He once said that he was in favour of a referendum. Then, a few months later, he said that no, he was not totally sold on the idea. The Speech from the Throne included a promise to table a referendum bill. Then, the minister said that no, there would be no such legislation. In the end, we do have a referendum act. I am not about to be concerned by a statement made yesterday by the Prime Minister. The reality is in the legislation. Section 3 of Bill C-81 states clearly that the government can hold a national referendum in all the provinces or only in one province or some. We will see what happens when the government decides to hold its referendum.

Again, I tell our friends from the Bloc Quebecois: Save your breath; there is no need to worry at this point because you do not know what the referendum will be like; when concerns are expressed about the Government of Canada having a referendum and that referendum not being democratic because there will be no umbrella committees. We do not know either whether it will be on a single question or several.

Bill C-81 enables the government to ask one orA several questions. Serious legal opinions were received from the Department of Justice as well as from respectable legal firms across the country. The hon. member says they are Tory legal firms. I know for a fact that lawyers with affiliations with all political formations can be found in all major legal firms. In Montreal, they even have *péquiste* lawyers.

Therefore, every major legal firm has someone tuned in all major formations. Personally, I go with the legal opinions provided and they say that government must draft its legislation very carefully so as not to impede on the freedom of association of individuals.

• (1210)

If several questions are asked, it will obviously be extremely difficult to get people to group together under either the yes umbrella or the no umbrella since, there being several questions, some will answer yes to one and no to another. So, if there are only two umbrella committees, one yes and one no, you can be sure it will be impossible to properly categorize everyone under one or the other.

I will remind the hon. members opposed to this bill that it does not repeat word for word what the Quebec legislation passed in 1981 says, where it was perfectly clear that there were to be only two umbrellas: one for the people who wanted Quebec to remain a part of Canada and one for those who wanted Quebec to separate. In that case, there were clearly two umbrellas and only two.

Again, what we have is omnibus legislation allowing the Government of Canada to call referendums on the Constitution of Canada. To those who oppose this bill because it does not specify whether there will be a yes umbrella and a no umbrella, I say: "Hang on, when government will use this piece of legislation to submit constitutional amendments to the approval of the people of Canada, we will see if there is more than one question

and if people will spontaneously break into two groups only. And, whether the law says so or not, common sense will prevail". Of course, we will be able to tell whether it is normal and natural to have only two umbrellas and whether people will spontaneously get under one or the other.

I repeat, those who oppose this legislation do so without knowing how it will be applied and it is too early to tell.

Third I say to those who think that the government will take advantage of its position that they are speculating on the circumstances surrounding a future referendum.

Evidently, we in the Liberal Party will ensure that Canadians may express their opinion on the constitutional reform, and particularly that Canadians have the opportunity to say yes to Quebec and Quebecers to say yes to Canada.

We think that when the government establishes that most democratic process to consult the people on constitutional reform, it will be possible to obtain with them a reform which will take into account the legitimate demands of Quebec, of the aboriginal peoples and of the citizens of the less populated provinces of Canada, provided that the constitutional proposal meets the objectives which were expressed so very clearly and precisely by the leader of the Liberal Party. If that constitutional proposal is submitted to the people, we have no hesitation, we are sure we will come alongside of the government.

If I understood the statements of the NPD leader properly, I think they also will join with the government and with us to fight in favour of Canada. I say to those who are here under false pretence—except for the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie—that in the province of Quebec, people will vote in favour of a renewed Canadian federalism which would satisfy Quebec's objectives.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ouellet: Finally, a lot has been said about the fact that this bill is flawed—

An hon. member: Totally.

Mr. Ouellet: —because it does not provide a clause to interpret the referendum results.

Earlier today in the debate, our leader expressed the hope that no constitutional change would be made without the approval of a majority of citizens from the four major regions of the country. Of course, we think that it would be more appropriate to insert that clause in the legislation itself.

I raised that matter earlier with the minister, who assured me that the referendum bill has no legal effect per se to amend the Constitution. So, it is obvious that, even if this consultation of the people has no legal value or is not binding, it will necessarily have a huge moral and symbolic value.

We think that when the Prime Minister decides to put to the people of Canada a constitutional proposal, since it is not in this bill, it will be extremely important that he announces, even before the referendum, that his government undertakes not to proceed with a series of constitutional amendments unless they have been approved by a majority of Canadians in each of the major regions of the country.

To us, of the Liberal Party of Canada, it is obvious that, in the future, we will let such a commitment be our guide.

One thing is certain. When we return to power, this referendum legislation will be amended. The bill provides for its revision by a parliamentary committee in four years. By that time, I hope, the Liberals will be back in power and in a position, with their majority, to amend this legislation. We shall ensure that, in future, constitutional amendments will have to be submitted to Canadians for approval and will require the approval of not only an over-all majority of Canadians but of a majority of Canadians in the Atlantic provinces, in Quebec, in Ontario and in Western provinces.

I see that my time has just about run out, but I would like to raise another point before concluding. I would like to stress that a parliamentary committee gave this bill very serious consideration.

An hon. member: Over two days.

Mr. Ouellet: Some Bloc Quebecois members made a lot of noise for the media over the manner in which this bill was considered at report stage. I would point out that few of them made an appearance while the parliamentary committee was examining this bill and they stayed only for a few minutes. They completely underestimated the very serious work that was done at that stage. I would remind them that a large number of amendments were presented.

I point this out because that is why the Liberal Party supports the bill.

• (1220)

[*English*]

I would like to say that I am very sorry. I accept, I understand, and I respect the position of the New Democratic Party. It will not vote for the bill, not because it is against the holding of a referendum but because it thinks the bill is no good. That is that party's decision.

We want the Canadian government to have an instrument to consult the people. If we vote against the instrument the government is giving us at last then we do not have the instrument. On one hand the NDP is saying that we should have the possibility of consulting the people through a referendum, but on the other hand it is not voting to allow it to happen. Frankly I accept and understand its position to a certain degree, but I fail to see the logic in it.

There is never perfect legislation in Parliament. Mr. Speaker, you witness day after day bills being studied in Parliament. They are passed but they are never perfect.

I want to give credit to the government. Otherwise it would not have been possible to have these amendments. The Liberal Party presented 12 amendments, 7 of which were accepted by the government. They are amendments that I consider important.

There is a few I would have liked to have seen accepted, but they were not accepted. Anyway, I believe the fundamental exercise here is to give an instrument to the Canadian government to consult the people of Canada on constitutional matters and amendments to the Constitution.

To the Liberal Party this is absolutely essential. We cannot accept that the people of Quebec could be consulted on their political future and the rest of Canada could not be consulted. Therefore, we feel this instrument, this legislation, is a tool in the hands of the government that is absolutely essential at this time. We will certainly support this legislation at third reading.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. This member was the last one to rise. During the 10-minute question and comment period, you should not go by any list, but by the first members to rise in order to be recognized.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I want to remind the hon. member, who has a lot of respect for the parliamentary process, that traditionally, when an hon. member has just made a speech, the Speaker looks to the other side of the House. According to this great British parliamentary tradition, I looked opposite the direction of the previous speaker and I noticed the hon. member for Edmonton South West standing up. Right after his question, I would be glad, of course, to look over your side and, if you are standing up, to recognize you. The hon. member for Edmonton South West.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that the previous speaker was a member from the other side of the House. The present speaker is from this side, and then we will have a question from the other opposition party, the NDP. It is quite normal that we should also have an opportunity to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I think the hon. member is trying to do indirectly what the Standing Orders will not allow him to do directly, that is to question the Speaker's ruling. The previous speaker was to my left, so I looked right. I am glad to recognize the hon. member for Edmonton South West.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I think our friends opposite, having had a little practice over the last few days, have decided they like to shout and barrack.

I have a few questions for my hon. friend for Papineau—Saint-Michel who has contributed so much to the constitutional process in our country over the last dozen years or more.

I appreciate what he said about the detailed study of this bill which took place in committee. I did a totalling of the hours in committee and it sat in excess of 18 hours over three days. It heard from the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Justice and later on from the three expert witnesses. Finally, there was the long day of 11 virtually uninterrupted hours doing the clause by clause study. He contributed an immense amount to the success of the bill in committee.

The hon. member referred to the NDP members' position on this bill and like him, I respect their position. But I am a little sorrowful about it because it gives the appearance the NDP members may be opposed to the holding of a referendum although we know that is not their intention. I wonder if he might undertake to use his good offices to persuade his neighbours to perhaps change their minds between now and 4.45 p.m. when we vote.

On the questions of substance on the Liberal position, I wonder if my hon. friend could comment a little further on the four regional majorities idea his party has advocated consistently for some time. Beaudoin–Dobbie advocated there be a consulted referendum but without regional majorities. My friend and I worked on a committee the previous year that recommended those majorities. He will recall there were provinces that immediately rejected the idea and said it violated the idea of provincial equality. They said it moved in the direction of regions on which this country was not built.

I wonder if he would comment on the positions of Alberta and Newfoundland in particular on that issue and on the more recent development that British Columbia regards itself as a fifth region. Has he consulted with his colleague and desk mate from Vancouver Quadra on that issue to learn what the British Columbia position would be?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order please. I must interrupt the hon. speaker because many other speakers want to raise questions to the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to answer the hon. member's question and to explain very briefly why we are talking about regional majority in this country.

You have to acknowledge that Canada is one of the most decentralized countries there is. Throughout the years, provincial premiers have gained in importance and influence like none of their counterparts elsewhere in the world. You just have to compare the influence of a provincial premier with that of a governor in the United States to see how our premiers have become omnipresent and important in our political process. It has reached a stage where it took us almost 50 years to patriate the Canadian Constitution. Why? Because at the federal–provincial conferences, the Prime Minister of Canada could never reach an agreement with the premiers, who were just trying to get benefits for their own province, always to the detriment of the central government.

We, in the Liberal Party think that to leave the final decision to the people is one way to put an end to this inevitable trench war between the Prime Minister and the premiers. It is only natural that a premier would defend the interests of his province and demand the best for his people at a federal–provincial conference, but what is best for his province is not necessarily what is best for the whole country.

• (1230)

That is why we think that if we ask the people, all Canadians as Canadians, to vote on this question and if we get a majority in each of the major regions of the country, then the will and the common sense of the people will prevail, not the provincial or regional interests of the premiers.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member told us this bill was not legally binding and that it was merely consultative. Many members on the government side have told us the same thing. It is what we were told in 1942, before the referendum on conscription. The Prime Minister at the time used a crystal ball and consulted his dog before making decisions.

Mrs. Venne: It was Mackenzie King.

Mr. Duceppe: Perhaps they were better than our Prime Minister's current advisers, who in many cases are the same people who advised the former Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau.

I get the impression the purpose of this referendum is to sabotage the Quebec process. Time allocation is being used to restrict debate on this bill, but the hon. member says "I will support it, although I have a number of reservations". His party did not support Meech Lake, especially his leader with his "thank you, Clyde", as he said, although that exercise was supposed to save Canada. They had reservations, and they did not support Meech. I fail to see the logic in all this.

I wish the hon. member would answer the following question: If we recognize Quebec's right to self-determination, would it not make more sense for this Parliament and the other legislatures to put offers on the table? When a referendum is held under Bill 150, would it not make sense for federalists in Quebec to use these offers to say: "Vote no to sovereignty"? I think it would because the process would recognize the right to self-determination.

When all is said and done, I wonder whether the hon. member feels confident enough to face Quebec's federalist leadership, starting with Premier Bourassa. Is that not the real problem? Is that not why they want to sabotage the process? Do they think the federalist leadership in Quebec is incapable of defending the federalist option because it feels uncomfortable if no offers or only unacceptable offers are forthcoming?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I will say that Mackenzie King must have a very good adviser, since he was Prime Minister for 23 years.

An hon. member: Yes, his dog.

Mr. Ouellet: I would also like to say to the hon. member for Laurier-Ste. Marie that, like so many Quebecers who want to see Quebec separate from Canada, he is sadly mistaken when he deliberately perpetrates the myth that the Leader of the Liberal Party was the one who prevented Meech, because that is just not true.

An hon. member: It is.

Mr. Ouellet: If the leader of the Bloc Quebecois had been a little more frank in his disclosures, a little more "À visage découvert", he would have told us he was one of the people responsible for the demise of Meech Lake. He left the Conservative Party even before the Meech Lake Accord was rejected. He sabotaged the process that had been started to save Meech when he made his sensational exit from the Tory government.

At the very moment the parliamentary committee chaired by the Minister of the Environment was making recommendations that might have saved Meech, the leader of the Bloc, probably anxious to see the accord fail, left the Conservative Party. I imagine, and I say this with regret, that if he had not left the ranks of the Conservative Party, it probably would have been much easier to get an agreement on Meech at the time. However, by leaving the party and doing what he did, he precluded any possibility of an agreement.

Today in Parliament, with the exception of the hon. member for Laurier—Ste. Marie, whom I respect because he was properly elected, while his colleagues who crossed the floor and have no mandate from their constituents to take the kind of position they are taking, these people are trying to break up the country. I say to them that Quebecers want —

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The period for questions and comments is over.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be able to speak at third reading on the bill before us, Bill C-81, an act to provide for the possible holding of referendums in Canada.

I listened with care to the interventions that preceded this, and in particular to that of the hon. Leader of the Opposition who said a couple of things I wish to comment on. He said, first of all, a referendum is not proposed as a deadlock-breaking mechanism. I am sure he was not contemplating the government would use it as such.

I think all parties whose members have subscribed to this idea and to this legislation are holding to the recommendations of Beaudoin-Edwards and Beaudoin-Dobbie, which have identical wordings. "We recommend that a federal law be enacted to enable the federal government at its discretion to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal either to confirm the existence of the national consensus, or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolutions." That is not a deadlock-breaking mechanism. It is a facilitative mechanism.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition went on to say, and I believe this is a direct quote: "Whatever happens, there will be a referendum". That is not the intention of the government. The government would much rather this process be seen to a successful conclusion without the holding of a referendum.

The whole purpose of having this bill proclaimed into law, as I hope it will be soon, is to be able to use the device of a referendum if absolutely necessary. Mackenzie King was quoted just a moment or so ago, and I would say a referendum if necessary, but not necessarily a referendum, to paraphrase that Canadian statesman.

As colleagues have said, there was very detailed discussion in committee. The bill does not say a referendum must be held or how it should be interpreted. There were 29 amendments proposed in committee. Thirteen of those were accepted in committee or at report stage, and as my hon. friend from Papineau—Saint-Michel has said, seven out of the twelve were Liberal amendments.

It is correct, as the hon. House leader was saying, that there are rather strict limitations on what can be done in the context of 1992 as opposed, for example, to 1980 in the sense we are operating within the atmosphere of a charter today. The freedom of association issue as well as the freedom of speech issue have to be dealt with.

If there are to be umbrella committees that happen voluntarily then that is fine. They presumably would work if they were made to work, but it is our belief to mandate them would be unconstitutional and in some ways perhaps absurd.

With reference to the consultation on the question, I would like to point out not only did we provide a public undertaking to consult the leaders of the recognized parties in the House as opposition parties had requested, but we went a step further. We made that commitment in the bill itself, so it is required now by law as well as by moral commitment, or will be when the bill is proclaimed.

On the issues of financing and the definition of expenses, we have taken the concerns of Canadians into account and have gone a step toward the aboriginal peoples of Canada to make sure the text of the question will be available where appropriate in aboriginal languages.

• (1240)

I would like for a moment to deal with the proposed amendment which was defeated last night and which had been offered by my hon. friend, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. It is an issue that has puzzled a number of people. What is the appropriate word to describe what we have before us? Is it a plebiscite or a referendum?

Some study on the issue indicates that the word "referendum" and its French equivalent *référendum* are much more widely understood and accepted, at least in Canada, than the words "plebiscite" and *plébiscite*. That is particularly the case in the French language. The French word *plébiscite* is usually given a different meaning. The Quebec legislation which is *la Loi sur la consultation populaire* uses the term *référendum*. Using another term in the federal legislation might lead to confusion. To avoid this confusion we might have to use the word *référendum* in French even if we agreed to the change proposed by my friend, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, in the English version of the bill. While that may be technically correct in French, it might lead to a different type of confusion which we would all like to avoid.

I had the opportunity to meet an international expert on referendums, Professor Francis Delpérée of the University of Louvain in Belgium. He has put together one of the most definitive works on the subject. It is titled simply *Référendum* and has several articles from many countries that have had referendum experience.

I will quote from the Canada section of that work. The article was written by our distinguished colleague from the other place, the hon. Senator Gérald Beaudoin:

[*Translation*]

> There are several types of consultative or deliberative referendums. In the first, the people are consulted; in the second, the people participate in the legislative process. Furthermore, the referendum can be optional or required. In Canada, because the Constitution is silent on this point, referendums are optional.

[*English*]

In other words, the word "referendum" is used in the article by Senator Beaudoin exclusively. He, I submit, is one of the resident authorities.

However, I was not content to stay with Senator Beaudoin in investigating this issue. I purchased yesterday a book called *The People's Mandate: Referendums in a More Democratic Canada* by Patrick Boyer who is the very member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore who had proposed the amendment. I am quoting from page 23 of that book:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader is talking about some very important matters and I see that there is no quorum in this House. I would ask you to take the count.

And the count having been taken

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I want to reassure the hon. member that there is indeed a quorum.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am quoting from this book by my friend for Etobicoke—Lakeshore at the bottom of page 23: "Legally, a referendum is binding on a government, whereas a plebiscite is not. Expressed in slightly broader terms, the distinction that ought to be drawn is that a referendum in its legal meaning is a binding verdict of the people that must be reflected in a law or action by the government, whereas a plebiscite is a formalized expression of public opinion that can serve to guide the government on a specific issue or question".

My friend for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, in proposing his amendment which was defeated last night, no doubt was using his own argument. However, he said in making his argument that those were legal definitions. I then sought to find some authority, since there is no authority cited in his book. In *Petit Robert*, the definition of—

[*Translation*]

Plebiscite: a direct yes or no vote by the electorate.

[*English*]

There is no question as to whether it is binding or not. The definition from *Petit Robert*:

[*Translation*]

Referendum: vote by all the citizens to approve or reject a measure proposed by the executive authority.

[*English*]

Again, there is no definition as to whether it would be binding or simply advisory.

Here is the definition of a plebiscite from *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*: "A direct vote of the whole of electors of a State to decide a question of public importance; also by extension, a public expression, with or without binding force, of the wishes or opinion of a community".

The definition of a referendum in that book is: "The act, practice, or principle... of submitting the direct decision of a question at issue to the whole body of voters. Again, there is no question as to whether it would be binding or not.

Perhaps *Black's Law Dictionary* is a more authoritative voice on the definition of plebiscite: "A vote of the entire people—expressing their choice for or against a proposed law or enactment, submitted to them, and which, if adopted, will work a radical change in the constitution, or which is beyond the powers of the regular legislative body.

Finally, here is the definition of a referendum from that book: "The process of referring to the electorate for approval a proposed new state constitution or amendment or of a law passed by the legislature".

I would submit that the issue was, of course, resolved for us last night by the defeat of my friend's motion. I know he had hoped to be here today to speak to the issue. I hope I have done some service by addressing the issue on his behalf. I will now deal with the broader issue of this bill and what it will put into effect. This bill will put into motion a challenge to the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada to begin preparing for the possibility of a referendum, presumably at a later date, but more likely this year if one is to be held.

The Chief Electoral Officer has informed the government and has testified in committee that it will take him a minimum of three months to set the machinery up for holding a referendum. Therefore, there is some anxiety on this side of the House and I know it is shared by members opposite. We want to see that the bill gets proper attention, but that it is also dealt with expeditiously.

I greatly appreciate the co-operation of members of the Official Opposition and the representative of the New Democratic Party on the legislative committee who worked so hard to see that the bill was improved at committee stage.

The question which will be put, as I suggested earlier, will be discussed fully with the leaders of the recognized opposition parties and will, of course, be debated in three days of debate in this House and three days of debate in the Senate. It is contemplated that the question which will be put will thus be the will, not only of the officially recognized parties, but also of this Parliament. That is a lot of time for debate.

It is, of course, a question which will have gone through the crucible with the provinces, the territories and other constituent groups. The hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party referred earlier to the aboriginal peoples. There is input being received on an almost daily basis on this issue and, ultimately, the question. What will precede the framing of the question will be a resolution of the House of Commons and the Senate which will again be brought to both Houses for debate after the response to the Beaudoin-Dobbie report as tabled by the government. This is after the successful conclusion, one would hope, of the discussions or the conferences with the provinces, the territories and the aboriginal leadership. I believe this is due to resume in a matter of days.

• (1250)

The response to what has been going on in this House and in committee over the last few days, I think, has been quite positive. The reaction and the interest of the Canadian people has been engaged. We have received a good deal of feedback in our own offices about the referendum legislation. There are many who were asking us to please get on with it, please have it there and please have it available as an option if it is required.

They are puzzled by the voices of those who seem to oppose the idea of a referendum and they are profoundly puzzled by those who suggest that this referendum is an anti-democratic procedure. They are completely flabbergasted that—

Mr. Plamondon: This bill.

Mr. Edwards: —that suggestion would be made.

My friend says: "This bill". This bill could not be more democratic. It is framed with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in mind. It is framed to give maximum opportunity to Canadians to express their points of view.

Mr. Lapierre: The power of money.

Mr. Edwards: My friend says it is open to the use of money.

We had an interesting discussion with the Leader of the New Democratic Party earlier in the House on the question of money. I challenged her because she was quoting studies in the United States that said that candidates for Congress had been more successful when large amounts of money were spent on their campaigns. That may well be the case.

However, to transliterate that right back to the Canadian experience is very difficult to do and I challenged her to—

Mr. Lapierre: Free trade.

Mr. Edwards: The free trade debate. I challenged her on that very subject and asked if there were any studies that she could point to that would demonstrate that there was a linkage between anybody's expenditure in the free trade debate, on one side or the other, and the results of the 1988 election. She was not able to provide me with any through either the comic book of the CLC or any other campaign that was mounted.

The reaction has been generally positive. I quote from today's edition of *The Gazette* in Montreal: "The Mulroney government need not apologize for using its majority to pass a bill authorizing a national referendum on constitutional change. It is a crude move, but it has to be done and it has to be done quickly. Ottawa has the right to give itself the legislative tools it may need to try to break the constitutional deadlock. It has the duty to acquire the tools by urgent means because the country faces urgent deadlines".

That is a statement of reality and I think that Canadians from Quebec and from other parts of the country are very much awake to the urgent reality that is facing us.

The Gazette goes on to say: "The bill is just an enabling bill or legislation to enable the federal government to hold a national referendum on a question of its choosing and to set certain conditions for the vote".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting quote from *The Gazette* that the hon. parliamentary secretary just read us. Now, if his colleague, Mr. Loiselle, could hand him this morning's edition of *Le Soleil*, he would see that they call it a "referendum bluff". It might help him understand how we perceive this bill in Quebec.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): That was not a point of order. The hon. member for Edmonton Southwest has one minute left.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: My friend knew what I was coming to when he interrupted. What I was coming to was this. I am quoting *The Gazette* again:

> Bloc Quebecois members merely cover themselves with ridicule when they attack this inoffensive bill as "an illegitimate, anti-democratic holdup" and compare its supporters to "Cains" and "Nazi collaborators"—

In fact, the bill is just an instrument that Ottawa may need to break a deadlock, to respect Quebec's democratic agenda, and to consult all the people on matters affecting the future of the whole country. No one this side of the lunatic fringe would contest that objective.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member for Edmonton Southwest and he was referring to several learned texts during his speech. I would like to come back to *The People's Mandate: Referendums and a More Democratic Canada* written by the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. I believe this book just came on the market in the last two days.

One of the criticisms we have been hearing from the Bloc Quebecois is the fact this bill has been put through here in a rather hasty fashion. Of course one of the arguments they have been advancing is the fact very few Canadians, and I am sure they do not mean just Quebecers, really understand all of the ramifications of the bill or just referendums in general.

I must say to the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, there are many members in this House who do not have the understanding of all aspects of this referendum legislation and what it means. It has been studied by the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for many years. He is an expert on it and we all acknowledge that in this House.

Would it not be a good idea for the Government of Canada, in its effort to assist Canadians who it wants to participate fully in this debate, to consider maybe having this book translated and making it available not only in every region of this country, but in high schools, colleges and community centres? In this way we can educate as many Canadians as possible over the next 30 or 40 days, as it takes a 90-day period to prepare for the referendum, as to all the various aspects of what the referendum is all about.

Mr. Edwards: I appreciate the question of my hon. friend who I think was suggesting the Government of Canada perhaps expend some money for the translation and distribution of a book written by a member of Parliament. Were my friend from Etobicoke—Lakeshore not a member of Parliament, I think it might be a subject worth considering. However he is an author and does receive royalties so I am not sure it would be appropriate.

It is a very useful layman's guide to the history and use of referendums. While I took issue with his argument on definitions, I found it very useful in understanding the issue myself. He had written an earlier, perhaps more learned tome which is a scholarly work on referendums. It is heavily footnoted and perhaps not readily assimilated by the layman.

I would remind my hon. friend his suggestion has merit, but beyond the present situation there are provisions in this bill that would provide for the review of this legislation over a predetermined period. Maybe at that time, as we deal with the question of referendum legislation in a more mature way, a long-term education program could take place.

I agree with my friend there is probably little understanding of how the conventional electoral process works, but we are being thrust into a totally new situation and some kind of public education program would probably be well in order.

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

At 13.01 the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

PETROLEUM PRODUCTION

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate before this House how proud I am to be a Canadian. The number of noteworthy projects is growing throughout this country.

Here is one that exemplifies the level of co–operation between provincial governments and the industry, again emphasizing the efficiency of the federal system. The first maritime petroleum production system is being put into operation today. Most likely this project will be held up as an example all over the world because it is unique in that it will allow to search for small oil and gas reserves off the east coast.

For the first time in Canadian history, we are witnessing the coming into operation of a maritime oil production system with a yield of 30,000 barrels per day. Like other light substances, petroleum would evaporate quickly in the event of a spill. Besides, a review of the environmental studies reflect support for this project.

I reaffirm my pride of belonging to such a prosperous and vigourous country. This great track record only strengthened me in my resolve to never do away with my Canada–wide assets.

* * *

[*English*]

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, a veteran and old age pensioner in my constituency of Surrey North, Arthur Cain, is typical of seniors in Canada.

They now pay the 7 per cent GST on almost everything they buy and some have had their pensions clawed back by the Mulroney government. Yet, their old age pension increase is a meagre 37 cents a month.

Mr. Cain is also typical of seniors in that he holds the Prime Minister personally responsible for the financial difficulties he is now facing.

Mr. Cain also resents that the Prime Minister will retire with a pension far greater than any public pension paid to Canadian seniors.

Mr. Cain has decided that he wants to show disgust by donating his 37 cents a month to the Prime Minister. I have in my possession a cheque made out to Brian Mulroney for no dollars and 37 cents—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment please. We have some precedents. Members' statements are not to be used to carry out a personal attack against any other members of the House. I am sure the hon. member would want to be reminded of that.

* * *

CANADIAN BOUQUET

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to inform the House about an artist in my riding who has completed a painting called *Canadian Bouquet*.

It depicts all the provincial and territorial floral emblems of Canada. My constituent hopes his painting will make a difference as we celebrate our nation's 125th birthday.

He wanted something symbolic that shows all provinces and territories together. It represents a unified Canada. It illustrates the natural beauty Canada offers.

Already the response has been overwhelming, with over 300 prints sold to raise money for charities across the country.

I congratulate Mr. Reynolds for his pride in Canada. He feels Canadians have to get out and take action rather than sit back and wait for events to unfold.

He related the painting to how one sends flowers when someone is sick. In this case, the flowers are going to Canada, which Reynolds sees as a little sick now, but with enough strength to recover. We do not want the Canadian bouquet with petals lying on the ground.

The award-winning artist, Michael Reynolds, urges all of us to celebrate Canada. It is a beautiful country.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Mr. Reynolds, I would like to present you with one of the prints.

* * *

BREAST CANCER

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, recently many women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and who live in the riding I represent have asked me to speak out on their behalf. Given the facts of this terrible disease, I feel compelled to do so.

Consider the following: Treatment techniques have not changed in 30 years and the effects of the treatment make women very ill and unable to properly care for their families. Over-all mortality rates have remained unchanged in 30 years, despite improvements in early detection techniques. The incident rate of breast cancer has increased tremendously from one in twenty Canadian women in 1960 to one in nine in 1990. In 1991, there were 5,000 deaths from breast cancer compared with 161 for AIDS. Funding for breast cancer is only $750 per death, compared with $458,000 per AIDS death.

From a woman's point of view, breast cancer is exclusively suffered by women. Women feel research dollars and results are insignificant compared to what has been committed for other diseases.

I am today urging the federal government, despite all the financial pressures it faces, to increase research dollars for breast cancer and to do all it can to support those 40 Canadian women a day who are diagnosed. They deserve more.

* * *

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, as you know, this is National Access Awareness Week. It is dedicated to increasing awareness in the general population about issues of particular concern to people with disabilities. Many barriers prevent Canadians with disabilities from participating fully in the mainstream of Canadian life.

At present, we have Bill C-78 before the House, a piece of legislation which attempts to address a number of those concerns but which also has a number of flaws in it which I hope will be corrected at the second reading stage of debate.

There is much more to be done in the areas of employment, transportation, broadcasting and in the area of the Criminal Code and access to information, just to name a few.

Several years ago when the standing committee on human rights raised a number of concerns that we had around the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker, you were fast off your feet to correct those concerns.

It seems to me that members on the government side should be as quick on their feet to correct these other outstanding problems.

* * *

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, the St. Andrew's Church of Ottawa, located in my riding, is in the forefront of the fight against poverty.

In 1991, the church began the Partnership Against Poverty program with a mandate to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. The program unites the efforts of politicians, both national and provincial, as well as members of the business community, various church denominations and other community organizations.

The partnership program encourages the development of co-operative food bank clubs, community garden clubs and family nutrition programs, otherwise known as collective kitchens.

St. Andrew's Church is also hosting a worship service for the Grand Orange Lodge of Canada next week. These men and women will be coming from coast to coast for a national convention.

The lodge's mandate includes a commitment to charitable endeavours, in particular, cancer research. The Ottawa region has historical significance for Orange Lodge members who count among their membership such eminent Canadians as Prime Minister John A. Macdonald.

I would like to welcome Grand Orange Lodge members to Ottawa and wish them a productive conference and enjoyable stay.

S. O. 31

HECLA ISLAND

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, there is a special jewel located within my constituency of Portage—Interlake in Manitoba. The jewel is known as Hecla Island. In the summer, it sparkles; in the winter, it shines.

My constituents and I want Hecla Island, currently a Manitoba provincial park, to join the roster of national parks across Canada. We want this to occur sooner, not later.

I have made a request to the Minister of the Environment to visit Hecla Island this summer to view the splendour and the beauty of this unique area with his own eyes.

Canada's national parks have world-wide recognition and reputation. Hecla Island will be a valuable addition to the system of national treasures, truly a crown jewel of national parks.

* * *

SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): For years, the people of eastern Prince Edward Island have asked the government to make needed repairs to harbours and wharfs and for years, their calls have fallen on deaf ears.

However, the people of St. John's West seem to speak the language the minister can understand. More money was spent on one wharf in St. John's West in one year than was spent on 28 wharfs in Cardigan riding for the last five years combined.

The time has come for the minister to realize that there are more people who need small craft harbour work than his constituents.

I call upon the minister to be fair to the fishermen of Cardigan and make sure the work to small craft harbours that needs to be done gets done.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the mining industry, which used to be one of our worst polluters, is becoming a leader in respecting the environment. Mines are planning to invest nearly $500 millions in the environment.

• (1410)

Mr. Jean Roberge, the assistant director of the Quebec Metal Mining Association stated that the Quebec mining industry as a whole, and not only big companies like Noranda, went green between the spring and the fall of 1988 and that we are just starting to notice the effects of this shift.

Quebec mines also have the best track record in Canada for respecting the environment, according to directors at Environment Canada.

Back in 1988, the officials of the Quebec Metal Mining Association developed an "environment savings plan" based on the RRSP system to fight pollution during the life cycle of a mine.

The Association has now published the "environmental bill of health of the industry", the first one ever in North America, and it is arousing interest in Europe. The Quebec government is presently distributing it at the earth summit in Rio.

* * *

[*English*]

SENIORS

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the beginning of summer is traditionally the time when Canada salutes its seniors, those older Canadians who helped shape this great country and who share our vision of a prosperous and united future for Canada.

Each province and territory has planned activities and events from late May until the end of June in order to mark the substantial and varied contributions that our older citizens make to this country.

Canadians young and old are taking the time to acknowledge the solid foundation that older people have laid for the society we enjoy today.

As I speak, a number of activities and events are taking place in my home province of Saskatchewan under the theme "Canada's Heritage: Bridging the Generations".

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I urge all members, and indeed all Canadians, to join with their communities in celebrating the achievements of our seniors.

* * *

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, on March 14 this year, the ITAC committee (Industry, Tourism, Agriculture and Commerce) of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell sent a letter to the Prime Minister stating the following facts:

That eastern Ontario has suffered a substantial loss of industrial jobs and that the unemployment rate in our communities in eastern Ontario is twice the national average;

That a number of federal and provincial programs have been cancelled, "thanks" to this government;

That the federal government closed its regional development office for eastern Ontario; and

That the federal government is responsible for social and economic development assistance to disadvantaged regions like ours.

I support the demands of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, and I want to ask the government to establish a regional development program for eastern Ontario in order to help Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Stormont—Dundas, Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and other ridings in dire need of assistance.

* * *

[*English*]

ANDREW DES LAURIERS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday evening, Andrew Des Lauriers, a North York fire captain, was trapped in a tragic blaze in Don Mills. He was put on life support at Toronto General Hospital but despite the hopes and prayers of family and colleagues, Andrew died last night.

I want to convey my condolences to his family and friends. I want to pay tribute to Andrew and all fire-fighters across Canada for their bravery and dedication.

My son-in-law, Mark Zaorski, has been a fire-fighter in North York for eight years. He was one of the dozens of fire-fighters trying to contain this tragic blaze.

Fire-fighters are always ready to protect our lives and property, putting their own lives at risk time and time again. Canadians owe these men and women much gratitude and respect.

* * *

WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, farmers are being sent a bill for a $41 million mistake made by the federal government.

The government paid out interim cheques under the Western Grain Stabilization Program about a year ago, based on a guess on how much the farmers' crops would be worth for the last three years. It was not until last August when the program ended that it took a second look and found its mistake.

With the Saskatchewan election pending no decision was made. But now, farmers who had no say in how much they received from the program in the first place are being billed and not being told why. Even farmers who had left the land in 1989 are receiving bills of up to $750.

The grains and oilseeds minister acknowledges this is a difficult time to be asking farmers for cash. He claims, however, the government has to collect and has given farmers until July 15 in which to respond.

Last year's deficit was $2 billion more than estimated. Does this mean other Canadians will be receiving bills demanding repayment for the government's overspending too?

* * *

SUN AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the week of June 1 to 7 has been proclaimed Sun Awareness Week in Canada by the Canadian Dermatology Association.

In an effort to stem the ever-increasing number of people developing skin cancer, Health and Welfare Canada and the Canadian Dermatology Association are reminding Canadians of the need to protect against over-exposure to the sun.

Since sun damage to the skin usually begins in childhood and every sunburn and sun-tan harms the skin and the damage is cumulative, this is especially directed toward parents and young children.

Health and Welfare Canada is preparing an issues paper entitled "Preventing Skin Cancer: It's Up To You". It will be available soon and will be widely circulated so all Canadians can be better informed on this issue.

* * *

FAMILY ISSUES

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, according to the *Globe and Mail*, 35 ridiculous Tory members of Parliament, who call themselves the Caucus Committee on Family Issues, are proud that they are responsible for killing a national day care program.

They are proud and believe that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms undermines Canada and they also hold the silly view that social policy in this country goes too far in helping people. It does not surprise me that Tory dinosaurs believe this.

What does shock me is that according to this article, they are supported in their views by the minister of energy, the communications minister, the minister for privatization, the minister of small businesses, the minister of science and the minister for external relations.

Do we really have six cabinet ministers in this country who think we would be better off if women did not work outside the home? Welcome to the world of Dan Quayle's Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses.

Documents possessed by the government and released today say this about the Westray coal mine. I quote from the documents: "The interpreted structure is recognized to contain considerable uncertainty—The mine ventilation section, which describes the results of the methane desorption test does not give one confidence—Three, based upon experience elsewhere in the world zones around faults made of elevated spontaneous combustion risks, the seam's thickness also constitute an increased spontaneous combustion risk".

Knowing of those risks, each and every one of those, did the minister responsible exercise his right under the agreement which was consummated by the Government of Canada, the Bank of Nova Scotia and Curragh Resources to do inspections of that mine? If so, will the minister explain to the House as to what those inspection reports said to him?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the first and most important statement one must make about the CANMET report from which he quotes is the study itself concluded that the proposal for a mine at Westray had no major failings. That was its conclusion.

The report was clear about some of the challenges that should be dealt with, the challenges that could be dealt with and therefore the proposal had no major failings. The report also notes that the mine would operate under a Nova Scotia Department of Mines and Energy mining lease.

What does that mean? That means the lease would not be given unless it contained clauses of what the owner can and cannot do. Finally, the federal government's contracts between the mine developer and its lenders required that the company fully comply with all Nova Scotia mining laws and regulations.

What happened was the federal government decided to guarantee the loan based upon an assessment that this was a technically feasible mine and that the challenges could be met. The mining leases to be granted by the province of Nova Scotia would make sure that all provincial regulations were complied with and, of course, we ensured on a regular basis that they were complied with.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. On a previous occasion, the minister referred to the Associated Mining Consultants as doing the independent safety reports. But they have said and I quote: "We didn't independently check any safety conditions".

The minister himself has said in this House that the firm's primary role was to monitor the levels and cost of coal production. I ask the minister responsible if he will confirm whether or not he has exercised his right under the consummated contract in order to inspect the Westray coal mine for safety reasons, where are those reports, and will he explain to the House the contents of those reports?

• (1420)

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member persists in misunderstanding what provincial jurisdiction is and what federal jurisdiction is. He persists of course because he wants to suddenly invent a whole mining regulatory responsibility for the federal government. It was provincial.

What we had to do, and I think it very important that we did this, was on a monthly basis when there were advances of the loan and the guarantee followed with it, was to make sure that provincial regulations, all of them, were being complied with. This is what the mining engineers did.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the minister had in his possession an independent technical report telling them there was a high risk of an explosion.

The minister also had a binding legal document allowing the minister to inspect the mines. Knowing of the high risk of an explosion, why did the minister not exercise his right under that consummated contract? Why was the federal minister responsible so grossly negligent in exercising his responsibility?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): You know, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raising his voice does not make his point any differently than he did two weeks ago. There is nothing new in his question. It is the same question; he will get the same answer.

What he is asking is essentially did the federal government do its own independent inspection of the mine. The answer is no. That is the province's responsibility.

What we did, and we did very carefully, was to make sure that compliance certificates were issued by the mining engineering consultants, and they were issued. In fact, I think that was responsible for the federal government to do it. I have tabled with the documents today what those certificates contain.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Business.

This loan insurance agreement between the Government of Canada, the Bank of Nova Scotia and Curragh Resources commits the federal government to providing up to $85 million to the banks in the event of the failure of the Westray project.

Section 7, subsection (i) of this agreement authorizes the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology to carry out inspections of this project to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with prudent business management and good mining practices.

My question to the minister is this: In light of his previous answers, is he satisfied that good mining practices, including adequate provisions for safety, were carried out by Curragh Resources? If so, does he accept on behalf of his government its responsibility to provide up to $85 million to the banks in the event that this mine is not reopened?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, today it is possible because we have tabled the documents to answer my hon. friend's question in some detail.

First of all let me quote from the documents. This is the loan agreement document: "Prior to each loan advance Curragh must certify"—this is the document that was tabled this morning—"that all government approvals required to be obtained under the Curragh agreement have been duly obtained and are in full force and effect".

This is further supported by an independent engineer's certificate which includes certification of government approvals and compliance with laws. I can read all of those if the hon. member would like, and I will in answering a supplementary if he likes.

What we put in place through this contract was a situation where there would be compliance with all provincial regulations and this we did and certified monthly.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister.

The federal government had numerous reports warning of high methane levels at the foord seam. The federal government's own agreement with Curragh Resources and the Bank of Nova Scotia authorizes it to carry out inspections of these mines. The federal government is on the hook by this agreement for up to $85 million.

How can the minister justify to the taxpayers of Canada, not to mention the families of the 26 dead miners, the failure of his government to carry out inspections to ensure that this mine and the government's investment was secure?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the logic of the hon. member is that if there are some challenges that have to be inspected by the province that he does not think the province can do, the federal government should take it over. We received a report a couple of months ago from the Economic Council of Canada saying that education needs to be revamped and improved in Canada. Following the member's logic, the federal government should move in and take over all the schools. That is really the logic of what he is saying.

It may be a good idea. Essentially, he is suggesting that we not abide by provincial jurisdiction. This we did. They inspected on a very regular basis and we received monthly certifications that they were doing so.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Of the 2,000 pages of information released today on the Westray mine, there is a document apparently provided to cabinet entitled *Westray Coal Inc., Pictou County Coal Project, Technical Review*. This report stressed serious safety concerns about operating the mine. I will quote the section quoted formerly by a member about the mine ventilation section. In this report it says, and I quote: "does not give one confidence".

The report also mentions inadequate time and inadequate documentation. Again I quote from the report that says: "No attempts have been made to assess pillar stresses, roof response, floor response and the like in the report. The time available and limitations in the documentation preclude such attention to detail".

My question to the Prime Minister is what was the rush on this project? Why could there not be sufficient time given for the approval to provide attention to detail? That detail might have prevented a tragedy.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Leader of the New Democratic Party that all of us would have liked to have seen the tragedy prevented, but her chronology is terribly flawed.

First of all this CANMET report was done a number of years before the mine opened. In fact the mine was just beginning commercial production. Between the CANMET report and when the mine opened, there were all sorts of engineering adaptations to make sure it could be safe, to make sure that it could technically comply with all provincial regulations.

This is what the member has to understand. CANMET made some suggestions and they were dealt with in the engineers' drawings and work following the recommendations of CANMET. Also, the CANMET report does not just say, and this is very important, that there is a high danger of methane.

I would ask the House to listen carefully. What the report does is summarize all previous technical reports. Some technical reports, most of them in fact, say there are very low levels of methane. Some say it is moderate. There are a few that express concern. There is a whole spectrum of concern expressed from moderate concern, to very little to some methane. Therefore, the engineers and all of those who put the mine together tried to accommodate that in the years following the CANMET report.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): A supplementary for the Prime Minister. The premier of Nova Scotia had made it quite clear in a number of interviews that he felt "federal bureaucrats were interfering with the process of approval for this mine". According to the minister, that work was done after the CANMET report which I just quoted from.

In these 2,000 pages of documents that have been filed, there is no example of correspondence between officials of government departments or, indeed, between government ministers. I would like to ask the Prime Minister if work was done after this CANMET report, if he can tell this House what information he was privy to that reassured him that these steps had been taken and is that material about to be tabled with this House as well? If not, why did the premier of Nova Scotia feel that it was "government bureaucrats" who were holding this up?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I know what the the hon. member is trying to do with her question. She is trying to give an impression that nothing was done to accommodate any of the suggestions in the CANMET report.

What she fails to understand is that to even open a mine you must get a lease. In order to get a mining lease in the province of Nova Scotia, you must comply with all safety and other regulations of the province of Nova Scotia. This they worked hard at doing and this they did or they would not have been given the lease.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary for the Prime Minister.

• (1430)

What I am trying to get at, which the Minister Responsible for Small Business does not seem to understand, is why this project was hurried up. Why was there such a timetable? There was inadequate time given to deal with the serious concerns that were raised.

In fact, in April 1991 a Calgary engineering consultant who had worked on a number of mining projects was quoted as saying that this mine was one of the most rapid he has ever seen in terms of construction.

The question we are trying to get is simply: Why was it so rapid?

[*Translation*]

My question to the Prime Minister is as follows: Could he indicate to the House whether he has had discussions with federal or provincial politicians, either in writing or in person, about the time frame for this project?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, only a few days ago I referred in the House to conversations I had with the present premier of Nova Scotia and other provincial premiers on regional development projects in their respective provinces.

I talked to the premier of Yukon about a mining project involving the same company, in the hon. member's riding. In supporting federal involvement in the project in her riding, I applied the same objective criteria that were used to support the project in Nova Scotia.

[*English*]

STEEL INDUSTRY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, we received a visit from the steel producers of Canada. They informed us that they face a very serious problem at this moment. Again, despite the free trade agreement, they are about to face some action in Washington. Already some clients are cancelling orders because they do not know if they can rely on Canadian producers.

Despite the free trade agreement, almost every month now we see a new problem developing in trade relations between Canada and the United States. It is always initiated in the United States. When will the Prime Minister do something about it? He was bragging in this House last week that he can talk to George any time. The time to call him is today.

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition must know that this dispute is being brought by the American steel industry under American laws.

There has, as yet, been no definitive information as to whether Canada will be included in this dispute. It seems to me a little premature to be raising a flag of fear when we do not know the answer to that question.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadian steelworkers who saw their jobs disappear because of this government's failure to act will not look kindly on the fact that the Prime Minister does not bother to answer this kind of question.

At a time when Quebec has been hit by a very negative decision on magnesium and a 35 per cent surtax and today, Sidbec–Dosco will be faced with the same problem, will the Prime Minister, for once, start doing something about the problems of Quebec and Canadian workers?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it would be interesting inasmuch as my hon. friend speaks so disparagingly and contemptuously today of the President of the United States.

Did he say that to George in the Oval Office when he was down there? When you were down there, were you acting—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mulroney: He was down there, Mr. Speaker: "Yes, Mr. President. I am so happy to see you. Thank you for having me in the Oval Office."

Then he comes back talking like a big shot. Then he comes back

[*Translation*]

with his public relations exercise.

[*English*]

He forgets that we saw him in such a supine position in Washington.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

* * *

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister of trade said there is "some flexibility" on the question of U.S. demands for an increase in the North American content requirements on automobiles. Yet in 1990 the minister of trade said: "Most of the cost of increasing the content rule will fall on Canada while most of the benefits will be reaped by the United States".

Why has the government changed its position? Has the government prepared a study of how this decision will deter new investment or even the expansion of existing plants in Canada?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should make it clear that there has been no agreement to date on this particular issue.

In terms of where the Government of Canada would settle on this issue, we should make it clear that the Canadian auto workers, the Canadian parts manufacturers and the three large assemblers all want a higher content ratio than the 50 per cent negotiated under the free trade agreement. We know that we want to listen to them.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister of trade said: "We should maintain Canada as an attractive place for foreign car manufacturers to invest". A spokesman for Honda immediately responded by saying: "It is quickly becoming more sensible to invest in the United States rather than risk the problems associated with assembling cars in Canada".

I ask the minister: Is the government's policy to maintain the agreed level of North American content or is it to concede to the United States becoming the hub of a more protectionist North America?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, what we have always been after in the North American free trade agreement is the best deal possible for Canada. There are of course two sides to this.

We know the position of the transplants and we have to take that into consideration. We also know the position of the rest of the Canadian industry and we must acknowledge that.

What we are trying to do is to find an agreement that will satisfy both sides of this. Where the United States wants to go is not the issue. It is where does the Canadian industry want to go. That is our question.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. I cite some of his recent quotes before and after a visit to Washington.

Referring to American trade harassment, the Prime Minister has said that he might accept it from some tin-pot dictator in some tiny little country somewhere. He refers also to low-level bureaucratic harassment. Upon his return to Ottawa he stated: "I am confident that frivolous and vexatious American trade actions will cease".

Strong and confident words, but now they ring hollow. Americans will place their good Canadian friends with Korea, Japan and a host of other countries and charge our suffering, fair-trading Canadian steel makers with dumping.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to implement some of his rhetoric into concrete actions and, if so, what is he proposing to do?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Ambassador Burney has registered very strongly the objections of the Government of Canada to Secretary Franklin in the United States in regard to what we believe is a side-swipe action, very counterproductive and quite unacceptable to the Government of Canada.

In the past the American industry, having taken this action, that would have been the end of it, but because we have the free trade agreement we have an independent dispute settlement mechanism which has rendered a growing number of decisions favourable to Canada.

Because of the free trade agreement and the independent dispute settlement mechanism, we are able to envisage the future with some confidence in regard to this action as, for example, most recently we did when we won a most important decision on behalf of Canadian agricultural producers on the question of pork.

We view this very seriously. We are going to take all vigorous action and we are going to join with the industry and support the industry throughout the process until Canada emerges successfully from this.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate some of the Prime Minister's comments, but I thought the free trade agreement would guarantee access to the American steel market as it had promised.

There is the so-called free trade agreement and the so-called Prime Minister's friendship with the President, but the American President pays no attention to Canadian steel workers, no attention to softwood lumber workers, no attention to Canadian auto workers and no attention to the Prime Minister.

• (1440)

Will the Prime Minister place yet another telephone call to the President and, if that fails, will he assist Canadian steel producers for the first time in preparing counterdumping actions against American steel producers?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think this will impress my hon. friend because he is clearly not concerned about this part of it, but it is important for the record to note that this action was not initiated by the administration. It is an action initiated by the American steel industry.

I think my hon. friend would acknowledge that it would be improper for the Government of Canada or the Government of Ontario to interfere to preclude the possibility of a Canadian company initiating a trade action against the United States. This is not one that is initiated by the political administration of the Government of the United States.

That being said, we still think it is a side-swipe action where they are looking for others, particularly for example the Koreans, and they are side-swiping Canada where we have the largest integrated steel market in the world.

The American administration will work with the administration of Canada to make sure that we are not subject to these side-swipes.

Failing that we fortunately have the dispute settlement mechanism of the free trade agreement which is providing, as my hon. friend knows, an increasing number of very substantial victories that otherwise would have been lost.

My hon friend, given his own experience in this area, has expressed his satisfaction in the past with the existence of this important provision.

* * *

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Youth unemployment across Canada is at an all-time high of 16.8 per cent, compared with the rate of 11 per cent in the general population. The figures are even more tragic in my province of Nova Scotia where youth unemployment is at 22.6 per cent.

My question for the minister is simply this: What is he prepared to do to get these young people working?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, the general programs of employment and immigration obviously apply to unemployed youth.

We also have the youth initiatives under the Challenge program. As my hon. colleague knows or should know, its budgets have been increased this year for the second year in a row. According to the job prospects that we are going to have this summer, notwithstanding the fact that it is going to be difficult we need the partnership of not only the private sector but of provincial governments.

I believe we have what is needed right now to face the serious situation that exists, a situation that has been dealt with, particularly with the government's initiative with respect to stay in school, where we have to make sure that our youth get the fundamental instruments to deal with the future.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, they cannot stay in school when their rates for tuition have gone up 25 per cent and their unemployment rate is at 22 per cent.

The minister says that there have been increases in these grants over the past two years. Yes, small ones, but over the past seven years the cutbacks in these grants amount to over $70 million. On top of that is the decimation of established programs funding crippling universities in Atlantic Canada and making them raise tuitions. Send them back to school with what?

What plan does the government have to give young people in Atlantic Canada some relief and some hope?

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, with respect to hope, again the hon. member has to look at government initiatives as a whole.

The prosperity initiative is specifically about hope and about future prospects. So the youth of today do not have to pay the debt of past governments.

What we are doing right now is making sure that the fundamentals are there. The stay in school initiative is about that, and the training programs my colleague the Minister of Employment and Immigration has put forward are at $3.4 billion.

JOB TRAINING

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

One and one-half million Canadians are unemployed. Part-time jobs are replacing full-time jobs. We have record levels of food banks and homeless people, and the minister makes excuses for not doing more.

Does the minister not realize that money spent on training and the unemployed is an investment in human resources which expands our skilled work force, produces wealth and helps reduce the deficit?

When will the minister take off his Tory blinkers and put more money into training and job creation?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that a Liberal stands in this House today and congratulates the government for having targeted training as a priority area of activity.

He should have been there when they blocked passage of a law in this country that has allowed us in the last two years to triple the amount of money going to the training of UI recipients in this country.

I thank the hon. member for his *reconnaissance de notre bon travail*.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the government is spending more on training out of the unemployment insurance fund but less out of general revenues. To do that the government has cut back on unemployment insurance benefits, which has shifted the burden of the unemployed to the provinces and to the municipalities. That is what it is doing.

Our major competitors in Japan, Europe and the United States spend more on training and education. Does the minister not see that more money spent on training today will produce wealth and dividends tomorrow?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member read our learning paper. These words come from exactly what I published three months ago. I thank him again. He is right. We have to invest more in people. We have to

invest more in training. That Liberal is finally seeing the light. He is right.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, if we could all get some glimpse of the light from the minister of employment it would be useful.

Yesterday the minister of employment said that he would have an announcement to make in the next day or two with respect to more support for training. Across this country there are people who are in desperate need of training and of increased support. Our concern, however, is that the minister is going to rob Peter to pay Paul.

First, is the minister prepared to make the commitment today that there will be more money for training? Second, will he make it with an added guarantee that this increased money for training will not be at the expense of other support for training in other areas?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member come clean with Canada, stand up and apologize to all those workers that need training?

Because of his actions and those of his party, we were delayed for a year and a half. Who is paying for that delay? Canadian workers who could have been trained over a period of 18 months have been deprived of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The minister should know that thousands of workers in Canada have decided to take the training option. For the last three weeks they have been waiting for some kind of specific answer from the Minister of Employment and Immigration to know whether the money will be there to allow them to access training programs. Some of them are unable even to sign up at community colleagues because of the no refund policy.

I want to ask minister a very specific question. Is he prepared to announce today that his government has found a way to reallocate money so that fee paper training can be accessed by thousands of workers across this country? Yes or no.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will not take the 18 months that they devoted to preventing unemployed Canadians from getting training. I should be able to have an answer within the next few days.

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• (1450)

BANKING

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

In the 1980s, after the big banks' loans to the Third World countries went bust, Canadian consumers ended up paying vastly higher service charges.

In the 1990s, after the big banks' loans to real estate developers like Olympia & York have gone bust, what assurance can the government give that once again the real burden will not fall on Canadian consumers who fear being handed a bill for the bankers' lack of foresight?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have noted those comments and I have been in contact with the Canadian Bankers' Association seeking assurances that that was not the case.

I can tell my hon. colleague that indeed I have been informed by the Canadian Bankers' Association that the impact of the O & Y situation will not reduce their capacity to serve their customers, and particularly their small business customers.

I have also been assured that there is no way in which they would attempt to recoup any of these losses from the small business sector. I think that is most encouraging.

I have also been advised by the Canadian Bankers' Association that it will co-operate fully with the small business financing program and other government programs to ensure the small business sector has the adequate financing it needs, and particularly those small businesses in financial difficulty.

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GRAIN INDUSTRY

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds. It has to do with the stalled grain shipments to Russia.

The situation is very serious and cannot be allowed to continue. Yesterday industry sources told me that a solution may soon be found to get the grain moving, and today we hear that the government may ease restrictions faced by cash starved Russians.

Can the minister confirm now whether credit conditions will be changed? Will the Russians be able to use Canadian credit toward ocean freight costs?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, to bring the member up to date, that has been the case for probably two or three months with the line of credit the Canadian Wheat Board has available to deal with the Russians.

It has been the case for I guess a year on some loans that were put out by EDC. It has already been used by the Canadian Wheat Board I believe in one shipment of grain off our west coast to eastern Russia.

In point of fact the Wheat Board has had the latitude to do this for a number of months. It has been its judgment that it has not needed to extend this type of credit in order to make grain sales.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, the minister speaks as if there is no problem out there at all. I want to remind him that freighters have been tied up and workers have been laid off. This tie-up, if allowed to continue, threatens directly the lives of prairie farmers.

Will the Russians get the new credit terms? When will the situation change? How much credit is going to be made available for freight costs? Above all, can the minister assure the House that this kind of backlog will not happen again?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put this into context. There is a problem in the Great Lakes, the problem being that over half the fleet is tied up.

To look at the over-all situation, we still have the chance of having a record amount of grain shipments as well as grain movement in this country for this crop year. To suggest that the whole system is grinding to a halt is simply false.

I already said that the Wheat Board has the latitude and continues to have the latitude to use part of the credit extended to the Russians to pay for freight. If the member is suggesting that the Wheat Board is not using good judgment in this, that surprises me because he has been very supportive of the Canadian Wheat Board. If he is suggesting that I go in and tell the Wheat Board how to run its day-to-day commercial activities, he would be the first one on his feet accusing me of political interference.

I wish he would get his stories straight.

* * *

BANKING

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for small business.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has expressed a concern that consumers and small businesses could bear the brunt of any fall-out from the O & Y collapse. It has also said that bankers are tightening their loan policies for small firms struggling to stay in business.

When will this government take some action to help these small businesses gain access to credit? Or, will this government continue to sit idly by and see jobs go down the tubes?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I really must thank the hon. member for her question. On June 1, the financial institutions reforms which have been finally put into effect allow trust companies over and above a certain size to do unlimited commercial lending. Life insurance companies will have a vastly increased ambit for making commercial loans to small and medium sized businesses.

This is the most fundamental reform of the financial institutions structure in the history of Canada. We are very proud we have done that.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, that answer is totally unacceptable to the small business people across this country. Even some of the minister's own backbenchers are calling for action in this area.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. When will the minister realize that more action is needed now to deal with the credit crunch on small business so that we can create much needed jobs in this country?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's first question was what the government has done.

I agree with her that there is a constriction of credit in schedule A banks toward small and medium sized enterprise in Canada. I think it is a concern. The Minister of Finance and I have carried that concern to the Bankers' Association and to individual bankers.

In fact the last budget brought in some very important new provisions to help small business. The foremost of course is the Small Businesses Loans Act. We are going to lift the limit to $200,000 under the small business financing program. We continue to have the lowest rate of tax of any country in the OECD for small business.

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THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

The Beaudoin–Dobbie committee unanimously recommended a preamble as part of this Canada round of constitutional renewal. The minister knows that the government has received over 35,000 letters from business and community leaders, chambers of commerce, service clubs and thousands of individuals from coast to coast who have strongly endorsed the special joint committee's preamble as a poetic statement uniting Canadians with their history and the values we all hold dear.

Can the minister tell the House that the preamble is in fact a part of the government package it is negotiating with the provinces and that the government is actively seeking their support for that preamble?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is a poetic preamble. I get it read to me at meetings across the country. There have been thousands of representations made to the government.

The question is: What legal weight would language of that kind have in a Constitution? That is the question we are looking at now. I cannot give any guarantees as to exact language, but it is agreed in the conference I am chairing that it is important the document finds some way to summons a sense of pride in the country. We are looking at both that draft preamble and some other language. We will do the best we can.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In his recent statements, I believe it is obvious that the Prime Minister is cooking up a unilateral referendum fraud in spite of the firm opposition expressed by the National Assembly in Quebec and Premier Bourassa.

My question for the right hon. Prime Minister is this: Why is the Prime Minister about to become a traitor to Quebec?

Mr. Speaker: The preamble as well as the wording of the question are absolutely unacceptable.

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member knows perfectly well that the question was unacceptable and is improper. I am sure as a member of long standing in this House—and I know the respect he has for this place—he would want to withdraw.

• (1500)

I am asking the hon. member to withdraw.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the Prime Minister owes everything to Quebec. He is now denying it and I must raise this matter in the House.

Mrs. Venne: Exactly.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is an experienced member here and has been here for many years. He knows perfectly well, it seems to the Chair and it probably seems the same way to other members, that the comments that he has made and the comments that he made after I asked him to withdraw are clearly designed to be such that they are not acceptable in this place.

If the hon. member does not have enough respect for this institution, which he always has shown in the past, to withdraw his remarks then I must ask him again to do the proper thing for this place and withdraw the remarks. Of course, if the hon. member is not prepared to withdraw them then I shall have to decide how the Chair will deal with that. I do ask the hon. member again to do the proper thing with respect to this institution.

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, although I am the target of the member's comment, I do not at all insist, personally, that he withdraw his remarks, but they are still disgraceful comments about another Quebecer and Canadian.

Mr. Rocheleau: Because it's true.

Mr. Mulroney: Unfortunately, that is becoming more and more his style.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected twice in Quebec, as a Quebecer and as a member of the Progressive Conservative Party and its leader. The member who just accused me of treason was elected as a Liberal. He was never elected as a separatist.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I will not say that the member for Shefford betrayed the mandate his constituents gave him, but others might say so at an appropriate time.

As far as I am concerned, I ran as a Conservative and in spite of my faults, I remain a Conservative, because I am a man of my word. I respect the commitment that I gave to Quebecers, just like those who were elected as Liberals have respected their commitment, and similarly for the New Democrats. Mr. Edmonston respected his commitment to Quebecers. Those who refused and went back on their formal commitment—

Mr. Duceppe: Call an election, then.

Mr. Mulroney: —to Quebecers are not sitting here or there, but behind.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the government House leader. Would he indicate to the House the business for tomorrow as well as for Monday and Tuesday and the remaining days of next week.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the House will complete third reading of Bill C-81, an act to provide for a referendum for the Constitution of Canada, this afternoon.

I would like to formally designate tomorrow, Friday, June 5, as an allotted day. Monday the government will call Bill C-41, the Energy Emergency Act, for completion of report and third reading; Bill C-78, an act to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities, for second reading. Hopefully we will begin report stage of Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act.

On Tuesday, June 9, we will hopefully complete second reading of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the children's special allowances act.

I will be in discussion with my colleague and the New Democratic Party's representative in terms of business for the rest of next week.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the business of the House. I would like to take this opportunity to ask the government House leader if he intends to revise the method for recording votes in this House, especially after the disgraceful incidents of last night, led by a small group of members who unduly held back all the support staff of the House of Commons for hours and hours.

I think it is obvious that today, in this modern era, the Parliament of Canada should have a much faster, more efficient voting system than the one we must use when some members engage in systematic obstruction as they did last night.

In closing, I will simply remind the government House leader of the McGrath committee's recommendations. All members of that committee—Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats—unanimously recommended changing the voting system in this House to make it more efficient. I trust that the parliamentary committee studying the reform of parliamentary procedure will deal urgently with this matter so that situations like yesterday's do not recur in future.

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the incident last night reminded me of the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker's description of this institution which he sometimes described as the only insane asylum in the country in control of the inmates.

Last night it seemed that particularly dangerous inmates were in control, hence the suggestion of the hon. member that we look at some way of constraining this exuberant waste of everybody's time. The basically childish performance we saw last night of unnecessarily prolonging the endurance of this House is something we could re-examine in terms of the rules of this place and find a way—electronic voting is certainly a component of that—in which people who watch either in the galleries or on television are not brought to shame and tears as they see this place function.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to House business and perhaps with not too much commentary on the exchange between the House leader and the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel.

I must say before we get too far so we can get on to debate and not have a point of order all afternoon that there were members on all sides, some wearing hats that some people took exception to, that did not help the troubled waters that we all knew were here.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the government House leader for earlier today introducing Bill C-84. The Minister of Veterans Affairs, under whose name it is, is not here today. I must say it is an interesting bill. I have not fully digested it. It is a heck of a lot more complicated than I thought, but I am hoping that in the consultations the government House leader has with the other parties in this coming week that there may be an agreement. I think there is a disposition on all sides to move this along almost in a single day so that this bill could be debated, concluded, and out of the way certainly by July 1.

If we are talking about 125 years, there would not be a more fitting tribute to people who really sacrificed for this country to make sure this omission was corrected.

I say that seriously and congratulate the minister very much.

* * *

• (1510)

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I am always a little bit reluctant to rise in this House to chastise any of the members but perhaps Mr. Speaker can give me some direction as to whether what I am bringing up is a point of order or a point of privilege.

Today, if I understood correctly, we had one hon. member in this House calling another member a traitor. I think that this kind of language is completely unacceptable to this House. Notwithstanding that we had the Prime Minister saying that he did not mind this kind of language being addressed to him and he gave the reasons for it, I personally as a member of this House take umbrage at the fact that one hon. member can call another hon. member a traitor and not have any repercussions at all.

Mr. Speaker, as the spokesperson for us in this House, I call upon you to consider a decision that at the very least the member who used this word against another member be seriously reprimanded and that we demand that those words be withdrawn from the record of this House of Commons.

We are not going to be played as the buffoons because there are a few hon. members here who can step out at any time and call other members names which have never been acceptable in this House and which I hope will never become acceptable here, Mr. Speaker.

Points of Order

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I was rising earlier in the same vein, not so much to comment on the language itself, but to say that it is not up to any individual member, even if that member is the Prime Minister, to decide what language is acceptable or unacceptable to the House. The Prime Minister, and it may have been gracious of him to do so, said that he was not bothered by the language that was used. I hate to see the precedent set by which individual members decide what is acceptable.

It is up to the House, through you, Mr. Speaker, to decide what is acceptable. I would hope that you would consider some way of establishing that to be the case. I understand the difficulty that we were all in at that particular moment, but I would hope that we would not let this become a precedent.

If members use unacceptable language, that is unacceptable language whether or not a particular member is prepared to accept it. I am not even sure whether in this case the language itself or the word itself should be debated but what I am looking at here is the procedural point of who is it, where is the locus of authority with respect to what is regarded as acceptable and not acceptable. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to take that under consideration.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can assist the House. I have listened very carefully to interventions from both colleagues who have been in this place a long time.

First of all, I have ruled that the comments that were made are unacceptable and they are unparliamentary and they are to be withdrawn.

Second, if they are not withdrawn, then I shall find my own way to discipline that particular member.

They are absolutely unacceptable. The hon. member knows they are unacceptable. If the hon. member wants to rise in his place and address this Chamber again, the hon. member is going to have to withdraw.

VOTING PROCEDURE

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a point of order, the same as the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel.

My understanding is that *Hansard* is not printed yet because there were mistakes in recording the votes. Apparently some of the members who were twinned appear as having voted. This is why I support the idea that we should have a change in voting patterns and we should go into the 21st century and have electronic voting, as was suggested by the McGrath commission.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you are going to look into it. I am sure that you will do it in your wisdom.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure I can share will all members of the House the particular recommendation of the McGrath commission to which the hon. member for Calgary Northeast refers which has been considered at length.

The hon. government House leader indicated perhaps with electronic voting things could be expeditiously carried out. As your Speaker, I am quite prepared to do that if, of course, there is sufficient disposition in that direction.

I would say to the hon. member for Calgary Northeast the proposition is not quite as simple as it may seem. He may want to discuss that with me and perhaps others in greater detail. Certainly the hon. member raises a matter of importance to the House which was dealt with in the sense that a recommendation was made by the McGrath commission.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, on the same point raised by the hon. member for Papineau-Saint-Michel, I would like to say that we were accused of using obstructive tactics last night when we asked for the votes. We did that to force people who hid behind their party to come out and show themselves. It was the purpose of the votes as it is always the case. When members ask for a roll call in the House, it is for this reason.

Last night, we unfortunately witnessed here an incredible circus. One would have really thought it was the far west with cowboys. It was awful to watch the circus which took place here. I do not know whether you watched it on television, but it was incredible. We saw people with no tie and no decorum, while, as far as we are concerned, we are repeatly told to respect this House.

Last night, I honestly admit that it was a good thing they did not give hon. members a breathalyzer test because I swear there were a few who would have registered more than .08.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members, as is their right, are expressing some dissatisfaction with the bench yesterday. I will take them into consideration and see if I can be of some assistance. I am sure the hon. member would not want to go too far in those remarks.

BILL C-78

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I believe we are still on House business. If we are, I have a question for the government House leader concerning Bill C-78. It is omnibus legislation dealing with a number of concerns to Canada's disabled population.

I understand the government wants to introduce the bill for second reading on Monday because there is some urgency to it and I accept that.

I would be willing on behalf of the New Democratic Party to assure the minister we would be prepared to pass that bill with one speaker per party and go through all stages at one time. Unfortunately, because of a prior commitment I cannot be here Monday but I and the NDP caucus would certainly be willing to do that on Tuesday.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the offer of the hon. member. I do know this particular piece of legislation emerged really from an all-party committee under the chairmanship of my friend and colleague, the member for Oxford.

I know there is wide support generally. We have not been able to get the unanimous support needed to treat the bill at all three stages. We will continue to try, but that remains an obstacle. I cannot commit to the hon. member that we will proceed in that way, but I will commit to try to seek that kind of procedure.

The hon. member has been one of the staunchest supporters and workers on this and I appreciate his desire to be here. I hope he will appreciate it is not to keep him out of the involvement that we scheduled it for Monday. The problem is the House adjourns on June 23 and there is so much legislation to go through. I need to plan around ministerial schedules and hopefully around the schedules of critics in the opposition.

• (1520)

I will take his representation. We will see what we can do. I know the hon. member has contributed substantially to the development of this legislation and I would like him to be here to speak on its behalf.

Mr. Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I want to make it absolutely clear I do not view it being necessary that I be present on Monday, if that is the timetable that is established. My caucus would still be committed to passing the bill at all three stages with one speaker per party on Monday.

WESTRAY COAL MINE DOCUMENTS

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I want to address a point to the government House leader. The Minister for Small Businesses and Tourism stayed in the House for some time but had to leave because of other commitments.

This has to do with the tabling of documents regarding Westray this morning. There were a substantial number of items that we believe should have been included in those documents to be tabled this morning, particularly those arising from question No. 437 which was put on the Order Paper by my colleague, the member for Churchill, in December 1990 and answered in part on March 18, 1991.

At that time, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister said that correspondence and calls received by the office of the Prime Minister regarding the Westray coal mine project are noted and forwarded to the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology for his information and consideration.

The point to the government House leader is that in correspondence, the member for Churchill, the Official Opposition and I have asked that those documents be included among those that were tabled this morning, but they were not. I would ask the government House leader to indicate whether or not we might expect to have those tabled very soon.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member has asked for is private correspondence between ministers.

He will know the longstanding constitutional tradition that cabinet confidences cannot be released for good and valid reasons he will understand. Indeed, such is the strength of that position that Beauchesne's makes it very clear it is out of order to ask for the production of such documents. I refer the hon. member to Beauchesne's 6th edition, citation 446, section 3:

> Minister's correspondence of a personal nature, or dealing with constituency of general political matters, should not be identified with government papers and therefore should not be subject to production in the House.

Beauchesne's covers it quite well. I want also to make the point that the documents that were tabled, plus those that are available at Industry, Science and Technology, will enable anybody to examine the total history of this project. There really is no relevant information missing that would prevent detailed analysis in order for the hon. member or anybody else to reach whatever conclusion they might want to.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS OF MEMBER FOR NEW WESTMINSTER—BURNABY

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, both you and the majority of members of this House of Commons will know that since I was first elected three and a half years ago, one of the issues I have brought to the floor of this House and I raise at every opportunity, both within this House and in the Canadian community at large, is the issue of violence against women.

Earlier today, the member for Broadview—Greenwood told this House that I made statements that imputed his motives and impeded him in his work as a member of Parliament. The record will show that is simply not the case. At no point in my statement yesterday did I impute motives to the member or say that he acted out of any malicious intent.

What he did in publishing the addresses of shelters for battered women in the Toronto area was certainly wrong, but I never said or implied that he acted out of an intent to endanger lives. I want to quote from what I said: "Shelters for battered women give out their phone numbers but not their addresses because it would endanger the lives of women and children". The member published and distributed shelter addresses without consulting them. This is true. Abusive men have followed and killed their partners and have also killed shelter workers in transition homes. This is true. The member said that millions of dollars were being spent on shelters and that we are advocating that women go to places that are not secure.

The alternative is staying in an abusive situation. Shelters are not secure when abusive men find out where they are. The member said the addresses were already public information. But there is a difference between finding the addresses at the public library after research and circulating them to thousands of people.

Most organizations on the list do not publicly give out their addresses. They are trying to erase public records of their addresses and publish only their phone numbers.

The member has actually missed the point of my statement which was, as I clearly stated, to urge all members of Parliament to consult with women's groups in their ridings before sending out information on violence against women. The member's troubles over this matter could have been avoided had he contacted the groups he listed beforehand.

I maintain my recommendation to all members of this House to consult with groups in their ridings as to what is an appropriate tool for education on this matter and what to enclose with it in terms of support systems available in their communities for survivors of violence.

Not all members have the experience of working in a shelter for battered women. I understand they are therefore unaware of the effects some of their actions may have on those women and children. But a review of my statement will show no inaccuracies whatsoever.

I had hoped that my statement would be taken in a constructive manner by all members of Parliament. Instead, I find that the member seems to not have learned from that.

Violence against women is an extremely important issue to me and to many members in this House. It is my responsibility to urge members to avoid the situation the member for Broadview—Greenwood put himself into for the sake of abused women and children in all our ridings across Canada.

What he did was wrong, publishing the addresses of shelters for battered women. It was wrong. It did put women into increased danger. It was not intentionally wrong, I understand that, but it was wrong all the same.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, on the same point, the member seems to persist. In her comments, she again states that the member for Broadview—Greenwood has put women at risk by doing what he did. I find that unacceptable.

I rise to support the point of privilege raised by my colleague, the member for Broadview—Greenwood. Let us put this matter into perspective. I believe that the member for Broadview—Greenwood put it into perspective this morning when he indicated the background to the dissemination of that particular information.

He was giving a speech in the House of Commons on the issue of violence against women and children. He was commenting about a publication entitled *Women's Country* which was given to him by a victim, a battered woman. He was subsequently called for information about women's shelters. In his opinion and in his judgment he felt that information was needed for women who are in that situation to provide information where these women might go to seek out help.

The member, as the member who just spoke, was trying to be helpful. Yet the member who is accusing him of putting women at risk, and I would submit for political reasons given the nature of my colleague's opposition that being a former NDP, chose to rise in the House of Commons—

An hon. member: Order, order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Please. On a point of order the hon. member for Churchill.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I thought the debate was going on a fairly high level until the last person got up.

• (1530)

We try to not impute motives in this House. I have read the statement from the member for New Westminster—Burnaby and there is no mention of the party affiliation of the member for Broadview—Greenwood.

There is a very important discussion about a very sensitive issue. I think the member who just spoke is going beyond any reasonable remarks in what he just said. I think he owes an apology not only to the hon. member but to the House.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please.

I think the issue is an important one, but this is not the appropriate time for a debate on this question of privilege. The hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood stated his position this morning. and the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway gave his as well. I can recognize the hon. member for York South—Weston again, but I would ask him to be brief so that we can get back to the subject before the House today.

With this proviso, I recognize the hon. member for York South—Weston.

[*English*]

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, the NDP member stated again today, just a few moments ago, that the actions of the member for Broadview—Greenwood have put women at risk.

He is accusing the member of actually putting these women at risk. But the member for New Westminster—Burnaby ought to grant the member the common courtesy of pointing out that a number of these shelters and hostels publish their addresses in the Toronto directory.

She knows that, yet she chose in her selective submissions not to point that information out. Perhaps she can take issue with hostels like Nellie's in Toronto and other hostels that publish that information. Rather than speaking to the member privately, the NDP member chose to rise in the House to give the issue a higher profile to score some cheap political NDP points by attacking the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I would ask members to show a little restraint. This is a very delicate subject and could easily lead to an explosive debate.

I will again recognize the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. I would ask her to be brief, and I hope this will conclude the debate.

[*English*]

Ms. Black: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify. I want to set the record straight.

I did contact the member in his constituency office in Toronto over a week ago when I began to get a number of calls from women's organizations that work to protect women and children who are in abusive and dangerous situations, sharing their concern with me.

The reason I have raised it in the House of Commons, as I have clearly stated, is I think all members of Parliament in this House should be aware of the implications of printing the addresses of shelters for battered women and abused children. That has very severe ramifications.

I would also hope all members of Parliament in this House, who have known me over the last three and a half years as I have raised these issues consistently with concern and compassion, know I would not in any way use this as a cheap political manoeuvre, as was stated.

* * *

THE ROYAL ASSENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Government House
Ottawa

June 5, 1992

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Peter Cory, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 4th day of June, 1992, at 5.30 p.m. for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

Yours sincerely,

Judith A. LaRocque,
Secretary to the Governor General.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, be read the third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There were four minutes left for questions and comments after the speech by the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I did not rise for the four minutes but for the 20 minutes I am allowed in this debate. I will let someone else take these four minutes and wait my turn for the 20-minute speech I am allowed.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member on the government side who spoke to Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada. I have a two-part question, and I think the hon. member should be able to give a straight answer.

The hon. member said that a referendum was extremely important in order to consult the people today, that we should trust Canadians, and that we should not be afraid of what they may decide. If this government is not afraid of what Canadians decide in a referendum, will it conduct a referendum on the goods and services tax?

The second part of my question is as follows: If not, could the government explain why there was no referendum on the goods and services tax? This is a straight question, and I would appreciate a straight answer.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I guess this has some relevance to the debate and I will answer the question, since I think my friend asked it in sincerity.

The government is not prepared to put a measure which is already in place to a referendum.

Second, the act implementing the goods and services tax was not submitted to a referendum of the Canadian people because it was part of the election platform of this party in 1988. I can recall being asked numerous questions about it as we went door to door in 1988. It is my belief the Progressive Conservative Party and the government which had a mandate from 1984 to 1988 got a renewed mandate in part because of its commitment to repeal the manufacturers' sales tax and replace it with a consumer-based tax.

I will concede the precise nature of the tax was not defined at that point. An all-party committee subsequently recommended the form of tax which we now have. Representatives of the hon. member's own party participated in that. That has now been implemented and is behind us. If the people of Canada do not approve of the tax, that will be one of the issues on which they will judge the government in the next general election.

That is a matter suitable for adjudication in a general election. Constitutional matters may be open to referendum under certain circumstances, but I do not believe there is a demand, nor should there be a demand, in this country for submitting conventional pieces of legislation to the referendum process.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a singular privilege to speak on third reading of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, and reflect the sentiments and wishes of my constituents from the riding of Winnipeg North.

• (1540)

At the outset I would like to commend the government for recognizing at last the need for a national referendum, which was proposed by the Liberal Party a little over a year ago on April 21, 1991, when my leader formally announced our party's nine-point plan for Canada's new Constitution.

It is high time we referred Canada to all Canadians and not fragmented portions for their final say. A national referendum will give Canadians outside Quebec a chance to tell their fellow citizens in Quebec they are important and essential to the country we know and love. It will give Quebecers a chance to say yes to all other Canadians from sea to sea.

The Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a former Liberal Prime Minister of our country, once said: "The foundation of a nation is will". I therefore say let the people express this foundation of Canada.

The referendum bill proposed by this government however has some remaining problems. While they call it a referendum, what the Conservatives are really proposing is more of a plebiscite.

A referendum and a plebiscite are not the same, although not infrequently mistakenly interchanged in usage. Allow me to cite a reference book entitled *Lawmaking by the People: Referendums and Plebiscites in Canada*, by one of our own colleagues, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. I quote from page 13 of his book:

> The main difference between the two voting devices is therefore that a plebiscite is essentially a public opinion poll, but a referendum automatically binds a government to enact a law (or to refrain from doing so) according to the voters' wishes.

Indeed, what the government is really proposing is more of a plebiscite. What the government has really proposed, if it were not to be bound by the results of the vote, is a plebiscite in the context of this definition. If it were so, it would be the most costly public opinion poll at a cost to Canadian taxpayers of some $100 million at a time of very high unemployment and intense suffering on the part of millions of Canadians without jobs.

But there will be greater suffering without a united Canada. There will be greater disappointment if every Canadian voter is not given the opportunity to express her or his will, her or his voice in a referendum.

I am therefore saddened that the Leader of the New Democratic Party said her party would not support this referendum bill. My sadness was joined by alarm and grave concern when I heard the separatists in this chamber applaud the New Democratic leader and call her courageous. It takes courage to insist that Canadians be given the opportunity to express their will on Canada's new Constitution.

As my leader has repeatedly said: "The Constitution belongs to the people and all Canadians should have the final say on any constitutional reform package". My leader had a vision and the courage to express that vision on this issue a little more than a year ago.

It is true the bill as we have it today is not a perfect one. Our caucus however was pleased when the government accepted many amendments we introduced. I still have some concerns. The government has not made a commitment to not pass the constitutional reform package without the clear majority from each of the four regions of Canada: the Atlantic, Ontario, the west and Quebec.

The government must commit itself to respect not only a national majority but a clear majority from each of the four regions of our nation. The government should not use this bill as a tool to simply manipulate the provinces into agreement. The referendum should be an essential component of the decision-making on the future of Canada.

Let the people of our great democratic country express themselves and determine their future directly on a vital issue such as the issue facing the country today.

In the spirit of our federal country and our proud tradition of protecting minorities while respecting majorities, we should ensure real agreement across the country by demanding that the referendum vote pass in each region of the nation.

If we ask Quebecers with other Canadians if they want to journey further with us but provide no guarantee that we will not swallow their answers in the majority of the rest of the country, what kind of signal are we giving them?

Quebec, like the west and the other unique regions of Canada, must know that its distinctive perspective and separate importance to the country is cherished by the promise that its will will carry weight.

Each region must be able to affirm Canada and we must affirm the importance of that in any referendum we propose. Also, it is important that its mechanism be fair, and that the people of each region of Canada who must choose whether or not to vote and how to do so know that their opinions will be treated with all due respect.

Indeed, the referendum has to be fair not only to each of the regions but also with respect to each side of the question. Once again, the government refuses to provide a framework for fairness. Do we want money to decide the question of our country's future, or will we provide the essential structure of contribution limits to allow the real will of the people to be expressed?

As in any election in Canada, fairness must be ensured by keeping the battle ground level. Spending limits and, more important, contribution limits guard the right of Canadians to make their own decisions and express them unhindered by the absence of wealth or unduly purchased by it.

There should not be an illusion of support due to wealth alone.

I am glad that the government has listened to some opposition concerns, the concerns of the Liberal caucus at amendment time, accepting a number of our amendments.

Last, the government's bill does not ensure fairness in another dimension of administration of a referendum, the development of the question to be asked. The government proposes a few days of parliamentary debate on the wording of the question which would only allow for amendment, not participation, in the wording by opposition parties.

In an issue as important as the future of our country should not we, as members of Parliament, abandon our disagreements and allow the people of Canada instead to benefit from our differences by consulting together to present them with the most clear and helpful question possible?

The Prime Minister has assured reporters that his lack of popularity would not interfere with the determining of the future of this country through a referendum. He is willing to trust the people of Canada to put aside partisan political considerations to express truly their will for Canada. The people are to transcend partisanship in this essential issue but the elected members of this government, unwilling to let their control of events slip in the slightest, even for the sake of Canada, are not.

This is not consistent nor does it give Canada and Canadians their best chance before a referendum.

The moral force of popular will is the essence of a referendum. Whether it is legally or not legally binding is merely a debate on legal technicality. Moral force goes beyond the confines of technicalities. Moral force is at a higher level, on a higher pedestal. Moral force expresses, in the context of the national unity debate before the country, the will of the people, the will of all Canadians from sea to sea. In turn moral power or strength depends on the fairness of the process, how the referendum is conducted and its results interpreted and accepted.

• (1550)

At this juncture I would like to mention the efforts of two Canadian scientists, Dr. Jon Gerrard, a professor of paediatrics at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine, and Dr. Jean-Pierre Despres, a professor at the University of Laval in Quebec City. These two scientists, along with 2,200 others from coast to coast, have signed petitions for a unified country. These scientists come from different cultures and speak different languages and yet they see the need for Canadian unity to ensure the future of science and education in Canada and thereby ensure the future of Canada itself.

Let me quote from the resolution our Canadian scientists have asked me to table in this House:

> Be it resolved that we as Canadians rededicate ourselves to a renewed spirit of co-operation, to build a nation where tolerance, diversity and caring for others are hallmarks.

Let this spirit of co-operation to build a renewed nation begin in this House today. Let us have the courage to consult with all Canadians. Let us, the elected representatives of the people, irrespective of political stripes, listen to their will and understand their hearts and minds. It has been said *salus populi suprema lex est*, the will of the people is the supreme law. Indeed the foundation of a nation is will as I said in the beginning.

I believe Canadians have the will to hold their country tight, to keep it from breaking. Do we have the will in Parliament to let them show their love for this land? I pray to God we do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I know there are many members who would like to make questions and comments on that excellent speech of my hon. friend from Winnipeg who truly demonstrates a patriotism that many of us could well emulate.

I want to ask him one question and make one comment. I will do the comment first.

Mr. Prud'homme: Short.

Mr. Edwards: Very short. I know my friend from Saint-Denis is anxious and I will be quick.

The comment that I have is concerning the government's participation in the referendum campaign. I just want to put on the record that if the government chooses to contribute to a registered referendum committee, that contribution will be reported by that committee. This is something of an elaboration on the comments of the Minister of Labour earlier today.

The bill does not affect the government's ability to carry on its business during a referendum campaign. Any government spending on the referendum would of course be subject to the usual scrutiny of all government spending. Governments of course are accountable. Finally, this bill of course does not authorize any expenditures other than those necessary on the part of the Chief Electoral Officer. There are no other expenditures authorized such as advertising or promotion expenditures. Anything like that would have to be voted on of course by Parliament.

My question for the hon. member has this point. The hon. member may have heard earlier today in Question Period our colleague from Kitchener put a question to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs having to do with the proposed preamble to the Constitution which the joint committee recommended. I know that my friend has just demonstrated that he has a great love for fine language. I am wondering whether he himself is in support of the proposed preamble and whether he would do his share to see that it is incorporated in our final constitutional document.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is consent for the following motion:

> That four members and two staff of the Subcommittee on Acid Raid of the Standing Committee on Environment be permitted to travel to Washington, D.C., June 16 to 18, 1992, in relation to its study on Canada-United States acid raid reduction programs

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It is not in the rules to table motions between comments and questions. I would prefer that that period expire before putting such a motion. I would ask the parliamentary secretary to wait.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member asks if there is unanimous consent to allow him to present a motion.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, because I hope that those or two or three minutes, since time is running out, will not be substracted from the 10 minutes allowed for questions.

I know that the hon. member took the floor at 3.52 p.m., which means that he talked for three minutes. I respectfully submit that there are seven minutes left for an answer from my colleague and for a comment that I would like to make, unless you recognize someone else.

[*English*]

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and comments. Certainly I support in essence any preamble that fully describes the spirit and the soul of the country that we together, irrespective of cultures, irrespective of differences, not only tolerate but respect each other. In that spirit I support the principle of the preamble.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I know that the debate is coming to an end. At this point, I would like, for obvious and very political motives, to be on the record today.

I want to make something clear, and I do this partly because of the speech made by my hon. colleague from Winnipeg who said "the will of the people is supreme". I, Marcel Prud'homme, member for Montreal—Saint-Denis, member representing Quebec in Ottawa, want to be clearly understood.

Regardless of the past, if there had been a referendum in years gone by, my attitude would have been the same. I do not know, at this point, if I will abstain from voting or if I will support this legislation, but one thing is certain: I want to be clearly understood. My position is unequivocal: Never, and I mean never, will I recognize a referendum through which a majority from outside Quebec would impose its views on that province. This means that I would have hoped to see in the bill this issue of regional veto.

I am speaking on behalf of my province. I know that Quebec is a region. I leave it up to Canadians to define their regions. I remember an hon. member who wished that Canada would be divided into five regions. This reminds me of our history class in school when we were taught that there were five regions in Canada. Today, others see four regions. I do not have to get involved in this debate. I will talk on behalf of my region.

I want the record to state clearly that, personally, I will never accept that the rest of Canada dictate its views to Quebec. I will go even farther by saying that I would fight anybody from any political party, including mine, who would believe or who would want people to believe that we can, through a Canadian majority, impose something on my province that it does not want.

Mr. Speaker, there is no point in making a long speech. This is a well-thought comment that I wanted to make in the House.

• (1600)

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary-North-East): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the remarks made by the member for Saint-Denis. He knows all the admiration I have for him. I agree with what he said. I feel that, as a confederation, we should not, by a pan-Canadian vote, impose a pan-Canadian decision on any province.

I go even further than the member for Saint-Denis. I feel that Alberta surely has the right to be heard. It presently has before its legislature a referendum bill. I really feel that, while we form a confederation, an over-all view should not be imposed on any region or province.

That was by way of a comment.

[*English*]

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I suspect there is not that much time left for questions and comments.

The member who recently got up and to whom we are supposed to be directing our questions and comments through the Chair, of course, said that he was going to support this legislation. Then he went on to list a number of the major areas that the Liberals had said must be in the bill.

They are important areas like the item that his Liberal colleague just mentioned, which is the whole idea of the double majority where each region's vote is looked at and considered by the government. That is a very important issue.

The issue of real spending limits is also very important. There is the whole issue of making sure that the question that is going to go out to the people of Canada is done in a non-partisan way. All those major areas were defeated by the government.

In addition, there were other suggestions to make sure that the poor, the native people, the ethnic communities of this country and the women who may not have funding can take part in a referendum campaign. That is if they have some means of participating. Unfortunately, under the rules that the government put forward, it is basically a big-buck campaign. If you are rich, you campaign and others are excluded.

The Liberal Party did not get any of these major amendments. One of the things I noticed as I was going through the votes last night was that there is very little time left. We want a referendum. We want a fair referendum in the New Democratic Party, but a lot of the amendments that the Liberals voted with the government on last night, time after time after time, ensure that there will not be a fair referendum.

I ask him: "Why did you vote with the government so many times last night on important amendments? Second, since you did not achieve any of your main goals, how can you support such unfair legislation?" We want the people to decide. Why support this legislation?

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I had addressed all those concerns in my debate.

I would only say that there is an overriding concern which is that we should let the people decide irrespective of the imperfections in this bill. If the New Democratic Party agrees but will not give that opportunity for the people to express their will through a referendum, then it is the greatest hypocrisy that I have heard in this Chamber. The referendum will convey the message from Canadians. Let the will of Canadians prevail and not the analysis that the New Democratic Party is trying to portray.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Jonquière.

Mrs Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 62, I make the following motion:

That the member for Richelieu now be given the floor.

Mr. Speaker, you may have noted that more than two members rose at once. I therefore make the following motion pursuant to Standing Order 62.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I appreciate the hon. members' patience.

You will understand that my reluctance to proceed too quickly is due to my concern for ensuring full compliance with the Standing Orders of this House and that certain conditions are met before this kind of motion is approved. I wanted to check with the clerks to make sure that such is the case, and indeed it is.

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.

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 fewer than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Therefore the motion is lost.

Motion negatived.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, in the past few days some members have not acted so eloquently and in a way that befits Quebecers.

We are at third reading of Bill C-81, the referendum bill. Why are we dealing with a referendum bill today? We must go back to Meech when a premier, by not respecting his signature, created a major constitutional deadlock and the five conditions for Quebec to return to the constitutional fold were not met. As a result, the whole country was in a major impasse.

A year later, the Prime Minister of Canada, decided to try to solve the constitutional problem again. To do so, despite the strong and bitter criticism from many opponents, he created the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee. This committee had a specific purpose: to see how the constitutional amending formula could be changed and also to look into the subject of referendums. We on this committee, chaired by two eminent colleagues, Senator Beaudoin and my fellow member, Mr. Edwards, made the following recommendation: We thought that the federal authorities—

An hon. member: They have left.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Indeed, our colleagues have left. We thought that the federal authorities should table a referendum bill in the Canadian Parliament. This referendum would be optional. It would be up to the authorities to use it as required. Given the heterogeneous nature of the country, we thought that the bill should provide for a double majority, a national majority and a majority in each of the four regions.

This referendum would not change the Constitution of Canada. Its result would have a political, not a legal value. It would not bind the two levels of government, but it would send an eloquent message.

• (1610)

That was one of the recommendations of the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee, because it was felt that in case of a deadlock, we would ultimately have to go to the people.

The Prime Minister subsequently appointed a second constitutional committee, the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee, to prepare an in-depth analysis of the changes that would have to be made in the Canadian Constitution to rally the provinces, the First Ministers and the people of Canada around the same set of constitutional proposals.

I had the privilege of working on this committee as well. This is what our committee had to say: "We recommend that a federal law be enacted, if deemed appropriate by the Government of Canada, to enable the federal government, at its discretion, to hold a consultative referendum on a constitutional proposal, either to confirm the existence of a national consensus or to facilitate the adoption of the required amending resolutions".

Both committees recommended that there should be a mechanism, in case of a deadlock, that would allow us to go to the people.

Where are we now? The First Ministers and their representatives met over a period of several weeks and are trying, on the basis of the Beaudoin-Dobbie report's recommendations, to formulate constitutional proposals that will respond to the expectations of all Canadians, not only Quebecers, and of all the provinces.

However, we must still deal with the, perhaps not very palatable but still very real, possibility that we may be faced with a deadlock. If that happens, what is our responsibility as parliamentarians? At the very least, we must ensure legislation is in place that would enable Canadians across the country to say how they see their country and what they want from their country. Under our democratic system, the right of First Ministers to let this country break up because there is a deadlock is superseded by the fundamental right of Canadians to say what they want from their country and whether they agree with the proposed changes.

The government has tabled legislation, Bill C-81, which provides for referendums on the Constitution of Canada. I have examined the bill, and there are many aspects I do not like. For instance, I felt it was very important, in a Canadian referendum, to be able to respect the differences that exist across the country, especially in Quebec, which since 1982 has not been a party to this constitutional agreement and which as a distinct society asked for certain specific powers and got no for an answer as a result of the demise of Meech.

I would have liked to see a double majority, in other words provision in the legislation that requires a majority both across Canada and in each of Canada's four major regions. The west must say yes, Ontario must say yes, the

maritimes must say yes and Quebec as well. This is not only a matter of vision but also a way to avoid the kind of situation that caused the demise of Meech Lake, when a single First Minister, because he refused to sign his name, prevented the Constitution from being amended and Quebec from turning to the constitutional fold.

We could have the same situation if a First Minister were to say: "I am committed to respecting the decision of my province in a referendum". In that case, we might get the same result as we did after Meech, which means Quebec would not be able to go after its veto, with all the consequences that would entail.

I had a second amendment I wanted the House of Commons to approve. It was about spending ceilings which would ensure that yes committees or no committees would never have an undue advantage over each other, based on the funds available to each side.

I would refer to it as an inequity situation in a referendum. That is the context in which I first tabled amendments for consideration before the legislative committee, amendments not unlike many that were considered at the time of the 1980 referendum in Quebec. Then I tabled the same amendments before this House so that they could be disposed of. Our Speaker ruled that the amendments—not just mine, but those of opposition members as well; there were five in all along that line—were out of order in that they went beyond the scope of the bill. And there is no going back on this ruling of the Speaker.

There is nothing stopping our Prime Minister or opposition leaders from giving the people of Canada the assurance that the Canadian majority will not decide for Quebec. Nothing is stopping our Prime Minister and opposition leaders from making such commitments.

On the other hand, votes were taken in this House yesterday on the amendments relating to the ceiling on expenditures as well as and the yes and no umbrellas and these were defeated. One hundred and eleven members voted against and 68 for the amendment I had tabled to ensure that, if a referendum were to be held in Canada, it would be the fairest possible. That being said, I suggest that democracy means allowing a member to put forward proposals to amend a bill and letting his colleagues decide, based on their own knowledge and conscience.

In that context, what is in the best interest of Canada? Indeed, we may decide we would rather have no bill than to have one that is flawed. In that case, what would happen? The result would be that, in the event of a constitutional impasse, we would be stuck. I maintain that we are better off with a flawed piece of legislation than to have no way of consulting the people of Canada in the event of an impasse.

Mr. Plamondon: That is no piece of legislation. It is a hold-up on democracy.

An hon. member: There are two peoples in Canada.

An hon. member: It is not worth it. It is a waste of money.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Moreover, if we do not have a referendum act, the people of Canada could well be the first to criticize us the most sharply for having failed, as members of Parliament, to afford them protection in the event of an impasse. And that is our duty as parliamentarians.

I could rise in this House tonight—as a matter of fact it would look good if Jean-Pierre Blackburn rose and voted no—and vote against this bill because it does not provide for a ceiling on expenditures as I hoped it would. It would look good—

Our hon. friend will get a chance to speak in a moment, if he would just wait his turn. It would look good indeed. But would it be the responsible thing to do?

I sat on the Beaudoin-Edwards committee where members of this House did recommend that there be a referendum act. Later, the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee recommended the same thing. In that context, we do need a referendum act. We do because of the threat of an impasse. That is also why I intend to support the principle of this referendum bill, as imperfect as it may be, as I did by the way in second reading. Unlike the members from the Bloc Quebecois, however, I suited my action to my words. I tabled amendments and attended the legislative committee for that purpose. Yesterday evening, my hon. colleagues had the opportunity—

Mr. Plamondon: Not one single of them was passed—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. Out of respect for the people watching us, I would call upon all hon. members to make an effort in terms of self-restraint so that democracy can prevail in this House, in the greatest freedom and respect for individuals.

• (1620)

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, it is in this context that—

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The member for Rosemont has the floor.

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that you want to maintain some order. Could you ask our colleague opposite to be a little more professional when he speaks?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): This was not a point of order. The member for Jonquière has the floor.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Well, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to these members who would not stop talking but who did not put their words into actions and did not present any amendments to try to improve this bill, to try to really protect the interests of Quebec, they really could care less.

This being said, I would point out again that section 3 of the bill as it now stands could imply that there will be a referendum either in some provinces or across Canada. I also want to tell this House that, a few days ago, I had the privilege of talking to the Quebec Premier, Mr. Bourassa. For the time being, nothing can let us presume that, during the referendum, Quebec will or will not follow the rules it has set out and that we are all aware of concerning an umbrella committee for the yes vote and another one for the nos. That will be up to the Quebec government to decide when the time comes.

This being said, I would like to get back to the remarks made by the member for Saint-Denis who said earlier that he did not know if he would abstain tonight when the bill is put to the vote. I too could abstain. I could do the same.

An hon. member: How brave of him.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): I could take the same action.

An hon. member: What a brave man.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): What do Canadians need—

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I listened to the hon. member's speech with a great deal of interest. I hope he makes his speech.

Then he should wait for the vote to see what I will do. I do not want him to get all worked up about what he could do. He should stick to his speech and not get me involved in his comments. He will see what I will do when we vote.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, my comments deal with abstaining from voting. We need a referendum law.

An hon. member: Why?

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): This piece of legislation is not perfect but there could be a deadlock and we do not have the right, as parliamentarians, not to provide Canadians with the tool that they would need in such a case. It is in that context that we must make a decision and take our responsibilities.

We have the right and the privilege to make amendments. Members of Parliament have the right and the privilege to vote on these amendments.

I will end my speech with a last comment. During this debate over the last few days, I have seen the members of the Bloc Quebecois rise in this House on numerous occasions. There was little substance in their comments, very little substance.

These people want to be recognized and then they abuse the system because they do not have anything of substance to say. Then again, they criticize us because we use a gag order. Instead, they should show us that they deserve getting additional time. Then we will be pleased to consider their request.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I will not have the opportunity to participate in this debate because there is not enough time. I would have liked to express my views on this bill, but since there is not enough time, I will ask a question of the member for Jonquière.

If there is a referendum, does the hon. member think that the Prime Minister, or the federal or provincial authorities, must first give Canadians a clear and precise idea of how the result of that exercise will be interpreted? Let me explain.

I want the member to tell me what he thinks of the double majority. I want him to tell me what he thinks of the proposal made by the Liberal Party, which was rejected by the parliamentary committee—he was there—because I know that he was an active member of that committee. He made a great contribution to the work of the committee. The resolution calling for a double majority was rejected because it was beyond the legislative framework proposed by the government. But I am still of the opinion that the Prime Minister of the country must make a statement before the referendum to the effect that if a region of the country, whether it is the Atlantic region, Quebec, Ontario, or the west, has a majority opposing this project, the Prime Minister will not in any way implement it.

Does he agree that the importance of the regions in this country is fundamentally what makes Canada? In my opinion, there are two elements that shape this country and that are fundamental: First and foremost, the linguistic duality, because it is there and it must be recognized and, second, regionalism because it is a fact and a Canadian reality.

Does the member agree that regionalism must in this referendum process be the paramount consideration for the Prime Minister of the country when he will interpret the result of the referendum?

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform my colleague that what he says was part of the amendments I tabled both before the legislative committee and in this House. Here is what I proposed:

> If a referendum is held in all the provinces of Canada, the Senate or the House of Commons shall not adopt any resolution authorizing the Governor General to issue a proclamation in order to amend the Constitution of Canada where the amendment would directly or indirectly be contrary to the opinion expressed, in a referendum, by a majority of voters in Canada and in each of the four main regions.

Then they are described in detail.

This was part of the amendments other opposition members proposed in various terms at different moments. I dearly wish, you can understand, that party leaders in this House would commit themselves to this. It is presently their prerogative to decide. That is why I wanted the bill amended.

Moreover, and I felt this was important, an amendment of this kind would prevent any premier from declaring: "The decision taken by the people of my province will be binding upon me". Let us take Newfoundland as an example. If this commitment was made in a referendum where there is no regional majority, and the people of Newfoundland said no, our goose would be cooked There can no longer be a veto for Quebec because unanimity is required.

This is why I was referring to a regional majority in order to protect not only the province of Quebec but the three other regions also, and avoid situations of the kind I just described.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): I would like to make a comment directed at the hon. member for Jonquière. I would like to draw his attention to what was said on January 31, 1979, by one of his former colleagues, the hon. Roch La Salle. The subject was the referendum proposed by the Liberal Party, which was in power at the time.

> Never has such a large Quebec group been so weak in the Liberal caucus. Never has a 60-member group from Quebec betrayed so often the vital interests of the province of Quebec. This needs to be said, Mr. Speaker, and a bill is not going to solve those problems.

He was talking about a possible referendum bill. Ironic, is it not? Mr. Roch La Salle, that same January 31, 1979, said also:

> The Prime Minister, in the wake of his fiasco and monumental failure on the political and economic fronts, has designed this tool to enhance his image as the great savior of confederation. Actually he is responsible for and the originator of our present problems with his team riding his coattails and not daring to speak up.

• (1630)

It seems to me this is almost prophetic as far as you are concerned, the hon. member for Jonquière. Note that, as a Conservative member of Parliament, Mr. La Salle had guts when he was on the opposition side. That time is over. He was not ashamed of standing up and talking.

"Never, he said, would I accept to be afraid of the good judgement of Quebecers in their own referendum." Let us trust the people of Quebec, he said in that speech. Here is the truth. This is my first question and I would appreciate your comments.

The second one concerns the fact that you said that an unworthy law was better that no law at all. This is terrible. Here is a repugnant, immoral bill, without spending limits, something intolerable in a western democratic society. Something never seen before. You do not want a referendum, you want to be able to buy the conscience of citizens and block Quebec's aspirations.

This is why I am asking you and all Conservative members from Quebec—on behalf of our growing children, on behalf of senior citizens who fought for years to get what we have in Quebec, on behalf of unemployed workers who dream of sovereignty to find a job at last, on behalf of all those who long for leading this Quebec we have been seeking for generations—I beseech you, please, show courage rather than cowardice and vote against this bill.

Mr. Blackburn (Jonquière): I did not talk about an unworthy bill, but about a flawed bill, which is quite different.

Second, once again I will show the hon. member that when you talk and work hard for changes, changes do sometimes happen.

At first, there was absolutely no spending limit in the bill. With our interventions, it was established at 56.4 cents. That is a step forward. I would have liked to get more. That is only one umbrella committee for the yes side and only one for the side no, because there are two opposing sides. But pursuant to clause 1 of the Constitution: "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society".

It is on the basis of that clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and of the Constitution of 1982 that I argued that we could have one yes committee and one no committee and that we could set a spending limit. But other people told us that pursuant to clause 2, the Supreme Court of Canada could say that that is unacceptable and contrary to constitutional rules. The future will tell us.

I repeat, I did what I had to do, I moved amendments so that we could have a good bill and my colleagues voted in keeping with democracy. I will not sulk because I did not get what I specifically wanted. We need a referendum bill because, if we face a deadlock without having such a bill at our disposal, the consequences would be serious. So, we have to take our responsibilities.

[*English*]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): In the little bit of time we have left, I would like to just mention one figure, and I hope people are listening and watching us on television from coast to coast, from west to east and north to south. The figure I want to mention is 37 cents. It is less than 50 cents. This 37 cents I am talking about is what pensioners received this year from the Canada Pension Plan for an increase in the cost of living; 37 cents. I do not know if you can buy anything at McDonald's for 37 cents. People in the gallery are saying no. I know very few things you can buy for 37 cents.

Mr. Belsher: It is for a quarter of the year.

Mr. Edmonston: That is correct. The member from the government side said the figure is right but it is only for the quarter. That means maybe if our pensioners in this country, French, English and other languages are lucky, they will get more than 37 cents in other quarters of this year. Well that is fine. Perhaps that is the way the government reasons.

An hon. member: How does this get into the referendum?

Mr. Edmonston: It is easy. It is 37 cents to all of our millions of pensioners versus $108 million for a referendum which is not binding.

An hon. member: Before government advertising.

Mr. Edmonston: It is a referendum where there is no control on the expenses. We do not know what the question will be, but generally this referendum is nothing more than some kind of super survey. That is it.

We know referendum is not even a proper term. People have said referendum means it is binding and when the people vote the government has to respect their wishes.

This government is not saying that. You know the government is not saying that. This government says it wants to hear from the people, but we have no guarantee whatsoever this government will actually listen and act as the people want.

This government is scornful of popular will. This government did not want a referendum, it wanted a plebiscite. You know the difference between plebiscite and referendum; it is not binding. This is not binding.

My party wants a referendum. We want a fair referendum. I was on the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee. The government members know I was and I tried to participate in a positive way. I was fully aware of the fact that even a Liberal member said there had to be a control on the expenses and a double majority.

Then we had Beaudoin–Edwards which said the same thing. Then we had Beaudoin–Dobbie. I served proudly on that committee and tried to be positive. It said we should have control of these expenses and we should have a referendum which is binding, but it is not.

I am disappointed in this bill but I am really disappointed in this debate. This is not a debate at a level ordinary Canadians are going to find relevant. This is a debate we have heard for the past several days where each side of the House is calling the other side traitors, prostitutes, and selling out the country. I do not believe that.

I do not agree with the government but I do not believe this bill is illegitimate. I do not agree with the government but I do not believe certain members did not work as hard as they could, particularly members from Quebec. I know my friend, the hon. member from Jonquière, has done a commendable job trying to change this bill. He has my admiration and he is a member of the government side.

Some people say if you are against the referendum you are against Canada and you do not want to put any faith in the people. I issue a challenge today to the government members. If you really believe in going to the people, I challenge you. Take the GST to a referendum. Let us hear the people speak about the GST and bind yourselves to the GST, number one. Let me give you another example.

Mr. McDermid: What about capital punishment?

Mr. Edmonston: We will get to capital punishment but let me get to my speech because I asked the question and I am sure you will respond.

Second, if you believe in the will of the people, the people are up there in the gallery, the people who are listening to us, and those watching on television, if you believe in referendums, if you believe in liberty and democracy, take the free trade deal and put it into a referendum.

Mr. McDermid: We did. It was called the 1988 election.

Mr. Edmonston: A referendum. Listen to the people.

If you believe the people are equal and everyone has the same voice, why not control expenses?

• (1640)

Everyone has the same voice. Why not control expenses? What is this deal about 56 cents per person, $5 million or $8 million limit on as many committees as you want? Is that really the way to go? Even people in your own party say: "Come on, get smart, this is not want we need".

I can have admiration for members from any political party because I listen to what they say and I listen to the logic of what they say. I have listened to the Liberals and I have listened to the Conservatives. I disagree with the Conservatives. I disagree with the Liberals. I think the lack of this protection of a double majority and a lack of protection for the expenses are imperfect and are flaws that go to the heart of this bill.

That is really a difference between us and other members of the government and the Liberal Party. I know many Liberal Party members are very unhappy because they want it. I remember my good friend, the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel saying: "We have to have this. This double majority is very important". That is one of the reasons we signed on Beaudoin–Dobbie, but you did not get it.

Is it enough not to have this particular tool? Is there an urgency right now for this referendum which is not binding? I do not think there is any urgency at all.

While we are talking about the people I do admire on this debate, I must tell you some of the interventions I have not admired because I do not think they were very appropriate.

My friends from the Bloc Quebecois are hon. colleagues. One has been elected here as a member of the Bloc, but I consider them to be more or less the Hari Krishnas of the independent movement. They come out and give very fatuous and not very intellectual arguments. It is almost like what we hear in Quebec. There is a fellow by the name of Charbonneau who sells Vitagro. He used to say: *"Parole de Charbonneau, c'est Vitagro qu'il vous faut"*, or by the word of Charbonneau Vitagro, it is what you need for your plants.

It is like the independence movement in Quebec. If the *Independantistes* want to convince us, they have to give us more arguments than telling us: "Well, listen this referendum is no good. It is terrible. It is treasonous. It is against the rest of the country", because that is not true. There is nothing treasonous about this. A bad law is a bad law is a bad law. It is as simple as that and $108 million is something the Liberals understand because they are used to spending big bucks.

I have a letter here, dated May 26, 1992, issued by the Liberal Party and it is a fund-raising letter. It is about the referendum. You know what the Liberal Party says? It is signed by the Leader of the Opposition who says: "For many months, I have maintained that the so-called constitutional crisis was caused and fuelled by politicians". He is right. He is one of them. Do you know what he says at the end? "If you agree with me, please help us fight for your democratic rights. Please send us $100, $500, $200, $50—there is nothing less than $50 here—or a special gift". I guess this is the referendum lotto. I do not know but this is a special gift. He is saying: "Help us fight the referendum".

Members on the other side got these fund- raising letters. The point I am trying to make here is when the Liberals were sending off this fund-raising letter asking for $50 or more that would make Tammy Baker proud, they were at the same time getting tossed out by the government on every one of the amendments my good friend the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel and others considered crucial to this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows:

[*Translation*]

the hon. member for St. Boniface—Youth employment; the hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre—Job creation; the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie—Trade; the hon. member for York West—Employment; the hon. member for Prince George—Buckley Valley—Softwood lumber industry.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): 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 bill to which the concurrence of this House is desired:

Bill S-10, an act to incorporate the Green Shield Canada Prepaid Services Association.

Pursuant to Standing Order 135(2), the bill is deemed read the first time and is placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the House.

* * *

[*English*]

REFERENDUM ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 4.45 o'clock p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, June 3, 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 third reading 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.

[*Translation*]

Before the taking of the vote:

Mr. Speaker: May I have the attention of the House, please?

There was a problem during Question Period concerning a statement made by the hon. member for Shefford. The hon. member has a long experience in the House of Commons. I have asked him to withdraw his remarks. I think I must ask the hon. member again to withdraw his remarks.

[*English*]

I would like to ask the hon. member, who, as I mentioned earlier, has seen many years of service in this place, if after some reflection he would be prepared to withdraw the remarks that were made. I would hope that the hon. member could find his way clear to do that. I will hear the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): You know, Mr. Speaker, in the heat of debate, one can say things that one should not. As I certainly would not want to displease you, I am happy to withdraw what I said.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member very much.

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 181*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Andre
Attewell
Bellemare
Berger
Blackburn (Brant)
Blais
Boudria
Cadieux
Catterall
Anawak
Atkinson
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Belsher
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Brightwell
Callbeck
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Comuzzi
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Ferguson
Flis
Foster
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault
Harvard
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Johnson
Jourdenais
Karygiannis
Keyes
Koury
Larrivée
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
Maheu
Marchi
Masse
Mazankowski
Merrithew
Mills
Moore
Nicholson
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Peterson
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Rideout
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Soetens
Speller
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Whittaker
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard
Clifford
Collins
Cook
Crawford
Danis
Della Noce
Dingwall
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fontaine
Gagliano
Gauthier
Greene
Guarnieri
Harb
Hawkes
Hockin
Horning
Jelinek
Joncas
Kaplan
Kempling
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen
Layton
Lee
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacWilliam
Manley
Marin
Mayer
McDermid
Milliken
Monteith
Nault
Nowlan
Ouellet
Parent
Phinney
Prud'homme
Reid
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sobeski
Sparrow
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vanclief
Vankoughnet
Volpe
White
Worthy—138

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Black
Breaugh
de Jong
Edmonston
Gérin
Heap
Karpoff
Lapierre
McLaughlin
Murphy
Angus
Blaikie
Butland
Duceppe
Fisher
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Mitchell
Nystrom

Parker	Plamondon
Riis	Rocheleau
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne	Waddell
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—33	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bélair	Boyer
Champagne (Champlain)	Walker

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please, 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*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona) moved that Bill C-311, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Parole Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak on my private member's bill, Bill C-311, which is an act to amend the Criminal Code and Parole Act.

This bill came about as a result of a meeting the Edmonton caucus of Progressive Conservative members of Parliament had with six victims of Larry Takahashi last June. On Friday, June 14, 1991, our Edmonton caucus met with these six victims. We met in Edmonton and we listened to their concerns.

From that meeting we took their concerns here to Ottawa. We discussed them through our caucus system. From that process our Alberta caucus decided to ask the hon. member for St. Albert and me to present a private member's bill on the subject of parole. We did this. We worked diligently over the summer and introduced Bill C-311 on October 8, 1991.

This bill has been co-sponsored by 15 other members of Parliament, which is quite significant. I think this has been the greatest number of co-sponsors of any private member's bill introduced in the House of Commons. It signifies a great deal of support for this initiative.

I want to say at the outset the bill deals with a number of provisions and I will go through those. The bill could not deal with counselling and treatment for victims of crime because of course a private member's bill cannot add an additional expense to the government.

This bill increases the amount of time that convicted inmates are required to serve before they are eligible for parole. I will not go into the technicalities of the schedules for that, but for violent and dangerous offenders generally, they would have to serve three-quarters of their sentence before being eligible for full parole or mandatory parole and one-half their sentence before they are allowed day parole.

Pursuant to Standing Order 86(3), I would like to inform the House of the names of the members who co-sponsored this bill. First I would like to read the Standing Order:

> 86(3) Notwithstanding the usual practices of the House, not more than twenty Members may jointly second an item under Private Members' Business and may indicate their desire to second any motion in conjunction with the Member in whose name it first appeared on the *Notice Paper*, by so indicating, in writing to the Clerk of the House, at any time prior to the item being proposed.

All names received pursuant to Standing Order 86(3) shall be appended to the Notice Paper, and that they have. The Notice Paper reads:

> Seconders pursuant to Standing Order 86(3):
>
> October 8, 1991—Messrs. Porter, Hughes, Thacker, Dorin, Richardson, Shields, and Fee; Mrs. Sparrow and Feltham; Messrs. Johnson, Van De Walle, O'Kurley, Littlechild, Malone and Edwards

I want to thank my colleagues who co-sponsored this bill with me. It has been very, very important.

• (1720)

Mr. Speaker, as you and members of the House will recall, Larry Takahashi was convicted in 1985 of several sexual assaults and he was required to serve in the Mountain Institution in Agassiz, B.C. where he is today.

He was let out on escorted temporary passes to go golfing with unarmed guards. *The Vancouver Sun* found out about this because a guard in that institution notified the paper that this was happening. The paper ran a story on it. The citizens of Edmonton and across the country were outraged because this person, who was initially charged with sexually assaulting 138 people and sentenced to three life terms and well over 75 years in

prison, after a few short years was let out to go golfing with unarmed guards.

The area where he assaulted most of the victims was in south Edmonton in 1985. My riding covers roughly one-third of south Edmonton. This is the middle portion of Edmonton. In addition to the six victims we met with, others contacted me and asked that something be done about it.

The response was Bill C-311 which was introduced on October 8. This bill, as I said, increases the portion of the term of imprisonment that inmates are required to serve. The bill also requires that the National Parole Board be required to consider, at the parole hearing of an inmate, any statement of a victim or witness of an offence committed by that inmate. This is very, very important because up to now, victims have generally been left out of the process.

At the end of the trial the focus of society's attention shifts to the accused. We try to rehabilitate the inmate. We offer counselling and a host of things. We try to give them job skills in prison. We could do much more there.

What I am saying in this bill is that we should pay particular attention to the needs of victims. A lot of them have psychological needs, material needs and needs in the process of administration of justice. They should be given an option of knowing when a prisoner is out on day parole and when they are released and whether that person has made any progress as of that date.

Also at the parole hearing, this bill is saying that the Parole Board should consider the trauma the victims have gone through and their needs because justice is a balancing act.

The bill also requires the notification, which I just mentioned, of when a prisoner is let out on day parole and full parole. These were covered generally in the government Bill C-36 which was passed by the House and is now in the Senate.

There is one thing that has not been covered. This bill has put forward an item for public debate and discussion. That is that a violent and dangerous offender who has been accused more than once, a serial offender, would have sentences which would have to be served consecutively, rather than concurrently. This would reflect society's outrage. We are not saying this should be for all sentences, but for a particular segment, the sentences should be served consecutively.

I am hoping to hear what my opposition colleagues and the government have to say about that aspect of the bill.

I would like to read a couple of letters which I received last June from constituents who are very, very concerned about this just to give an indication to the House of why we brought this bill forward in urging the government to move on the area of parole reform. It did eventually move on parole reform. After I introduced my bill the hon. Solicitor General introduced a bill. The justice committee has held hearings all year and has gone through clause-by-clause study. It is now in the Senate. I would like to quote from a constituent who says: "Balancing the victim's rights with those of the offender are important in considering reforms to the Parole Act. Day passes and other privileges provide opportunities to rehabilitate offenders under controlled situations. Let's not over-react and stop providing these privileges". He then goes on to say: "But let's also keep in mind the anguish of the victims. Our greatest concern should probably be for them". I would agree wholeheartedly with that.

Another constituent wrote me. He said: "I have been viewing with alarm the actions of federal officials administering Parole Board regulations. I would look to our lawmakers in the House of Commons to enact or amend legislation to protect my family and society at large from lax treatments of criminals after they have been convicted and sentenced by the courts." I agree with that, as I am sure most members in the House would also agree.

This constituent went on to say: "I would appreciate it if you would advise me if you are willing and able to indicate some action and when appropriate changes might take place. In this matter, it appears to me that the bureaucrats should not be given discretionary authority which can in effect defeat the punitive and corrective power of the courts and also obviously make possible further criminal acts during the time of a criminal's escorted temporary absence".

We did follow through. We did listen to our constituents and the people of Edmonton and brought forward this bill. I am pleased to say that I believe it had an impact on the government because the government then brought forward its own bill.

At the meeting with the victims of Larry Takahashi they presented us with a list of nine demands which I would like to go over. I want to read into the record their letter that they gave to us that day. It is addressed to the Solicitor General of Canada, and to the Prime Minister of Canada. It reads as follows:

> We as victims feel we have the right and privilege to contest the day passes awarded to Larry Takahashi.
>
> Our first-hand experience is that he is dangerous and psychotic. We further believe that the judicial system is failing in its mandate to protect the public. We are also of the opinion that Larry Takahashi has a dual, or split, personality. He fooled the public and his family before in believing him to be a "nice" guy and active in the community. He is now doing the same in the prison and they are "falling for it".
>
> This is making a complete mockery of our judicial system. How can we put any kind of trust in a system where three life sentences plus 73 years mean absolutely nothing? There is no credibility; no effectuality deemed by this sentence. What are the repercussions in a society where punishment is not matched to the crime?

This is a letter from six victims of Larry Takahashi who are very, very concerned and in fact scared that he might come back to get them and revisit the crimes.

The demands or requests are as follows:

> 1. Three life sentences plus 73 years should indicate the amount of time an offender should serve.

I tried to indicate this in our bill. I am willing to accept other arguments about consecutive sentences, but I think we should go in the direction of saying that a sentence should be a sentence in indicating what three life sentences and 73 years really mean.

> 2. There should be a stronger line of communication between the court system and the Parole Board.

We agree with that and I believe Bill C-36 has enacted, in regulation form, some stronger lines of communication.

> 3. Dangerous serial rapists should not be awarded the same rights as other offenders. Their time served for eligibility for parole should not be on the same status as someone who commits a lesser offence.
>
> 4. Due to financial considerations, 122 women were denied their rights to appear in court to tell their story about the violence committed against them.

One of the reasons for this is the cost of the time in the court system, but many of these victims, I believe, should have had a right to put their views forward. That is why we included the victim impact statement. For those victims where the charges are dropped, they still can have their say in court through the victim impact statement.

• (1730)

They said to me that, as a result, the Solicitor General and the public at large is led to believe that only seven women were raped. That is not true. Many, many more were raped, but due to time and the processes of court, this was not explored.

> 5. The court should not have the right to dismiss a victim's charges without prior approval from the victim.

They wanted to give some control to those victims.

> In Takahashi's case, 122 voices were not heard. The decision was made on behalf of these women solely on the basis of cost and the trauma that would be incurred. These actions make us feel invisible and discounted.

It is a travesty, I believe, not to listen to the voices of these women.

> 6. The victims should have the right to be informed of any changes in status of the prison term of the offender, i.e., day passes or parole.
>
> 7. Victims should have the resources and opportunity to be rehabilitated back into society, just as the offender is.
>
> 8. We believe there should be a recognition of the violence committed against women. Value is attached to the destruction of material objects (such as a broken window) but no value is attached to the destruction of an emotionally sound and well being.
>
> 9. It should be mandatory that the victim impact statement be read by the Parole Board prior to review of the offender's application for parole.

I believe I responded to the concerns of these victims. I believe the government has responded. We are well on our way to dealing with the problem of violence against women. The government has a number of initiatives in that respect and we are working on those. We could do much, much more.

On their point number one, they indicated that a concurrent sentence means nothing. I would like to quote from our meeting. They said that it was sickening that information about Larry Takahashi's recreational passes had to be leaked by a prison guard. They thought that the privacy rules were too strong in this case and that the weight given to the protection of the public should be paramount.

Their fourth point was about the more than 130 women who had been attacked. They indicated to us that plea bargaining reduced this to seven charges. This discounted the trauma of 122 women. Many of these women had psychological problems. They are still having psychological problems today.

Some of the marriages of these women broke up. Some of them had family problems. Some of them were not able to work very well and I believe that is a travesty.

They also indicated that our judicial system is eager to rehabilitate the offender but does nothing to offer psychological counselling for victims or to provide any of the material needs of the victims. The victims gave me an example where Larry Takahashi broke into a house and then there was compensation for the window that was broken. However, with this one particular woman, her marriage broke apart. She needed counselling and the government would only cover six sessions of this.

This is seven years after it happened and she is still experiencing that emotional trauma which is terrible.

The police treated her quite badly. I know the police are trying. They are trying their best to implement new rules. As an example, the police took sheets so they could take them to the lab and examine them for evidence. They cut big holes in these sheets.

Two years after they had taken them, the doorbell rang at one of the victim's homes. A delivery person said: "Here are your sheets back". I think that was appalling that they would bring these sheets back with large holes cut out of them without any forewarning or anything. We certainly can do an awful lot more for victims.

The parole legislation, Bill C-36, was introduced by the government. The justice committee, acting as a legislative committee, toured the country. It went to Vancouver where it heard a number of witnesses and then it came to Edmonton. The justice committee, of which I am a member, heard again the victims of Larry Takahashi. At that time we stated we would listen to them—in Bill C-36—and take some of their concerns forward. We did that.

I am very very pleased with the progress. It shows that private members can have an impact. We had 16 members from the Alberta Progressive Conservative caucus act on behalf of people in Edmonton, in Alberta, across Canada, and I am pleased the government has responded.

The official government response, Bill C-36, is not perfect but it goes a long long way in addressing some of these needs. I hope to hear from the government and other members of Parliament on this issue. This is such an important issue for Canadians.

People are losing faith in their justice system and we have to restore that faith. We have to balance the different interests of people acting within the judicial system. We have got to tip the balance back a little bit toward the victim which I believe we have done and that is very important.

I will close with those remarks. I want to thank my colleagues in the Alberta caucus and others who have supported this bill so much. I am looking forward to hearing the views of my colleagues.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I find it most interesting that we are now dealing with this particular matter of Bill C-311.

We have just gone through the process of considering Bill C-36 which went through a large number of the issues that are raised in this bill. I want to say from the outset that we on this side are supportive of some of the recommendations that were in Bill C-36. In fact, we went a long way to try improve Bill C-36 and we did not meet with the success we had hoped for because of the member opposite and by the party opposite.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[*Translation*]

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. DeBlois): 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-31, An Act to amend the Extradition Act—Chapter 13.

Bill C-68, An Act to amend the Competition Act (multi-level marketing plans and pyramid selling)—Chapter 14.

Bill C-328, An Act respecting National Public Service Week: Serving Canadians Better—Chapter 15.

Bill C-77, An Act to amend the National Defence Act—Chapter 16.

Bill C-53, An Act to provide for the imposition of special economic measures—Chapter 17.

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Thorkelson that Bill C-311, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Parole Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committed in the Departmental envelope.

Mr. Thorkelson: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if I could seek the unanimous consent of the House to extend Private Members' Hour by the time it has taken to do the Royal Assent and the vote. If we could extend it by that amount of time or until the debate collapses, I would appreciate it.

May I ask for unanimous consent for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent to extend the period of Private Members' Hour for five to 10 minutes, the time it took to go to the Senate? I suggest that the hour be extended to 6.10 p.m.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I will continue on with what I was saying before we had a message from the other place.

My colleague opposite has introduced a measure which in some respects is redundant now with what has transpired by the government by a very hard-working and dedicated committee of this House dealing with Bill C-36.

That piece of legislation to my mind was an attempt to correct some of the problems. We on this side were supportive in the sense of trying to make the bill better. I believe that in some areas we did make it better and we did have some improvements. I am thinking particularly in the area of victims and their involvement in the parole process, the ability to be there and to have some input, and also to be notified should an inmate in the institution be out on a day parole or on a pass of any sort. You can think of the obvious upset that would occur if you were walking down the street and saw the perpetrator of an offence on you personally walking down the same side of the street.

• (1750)

We tried to get this government to strengthen those areas that would help victims. I have to say, in all candour, the member opposite being part of the government team, that as you peruse the committee records you will see that he and others in his party voted against strengthening the legislation which would help victims. We were really surprised because we thought, given this bill being introduced and the legion of co-sponsors of the bill, and the high regard that those co-sponsors have within his party, that he would have seen to it that his party was supportive of the amendments which were brought forward by this party in order to make the laws that relate to victims and as it relates to those inmates who are out on temporary absences of either escorted or unescorted nature. Instead, he and his colleagues voted nay to those positive amendments. Now he stands in his place and says to all: "Here is a bill that is going to remedy all of the problems" and of which we in this House should be supportive.

I say sure, we should be supportive of some of the recommendations that are here. But where was that support when it counted? Where was that support when it would have made a difference? We all know the process here. We know what is going to happen with this particular bill. When it could have had an effect, when it could have made an impact for victims across this country, his party was not there. In fact, not only was it

not there, but it voted against those positive recommendations that came from this party.

The member tells me that it is not true. We will let the *Minutes and Proceedings* of the committee verify what the situation is. All that I want to say from this side is that we are very, very supportive of legislation which keeps the victims as part of the process in a sense that they can feel the necessary protections of the law and that they have some input into the process. As my colleague opposite has said, the victim becomes a victim of the system as the process unfolds. We did not want to see that happen.

We heard very emotional testimony from the victims of Larry Takahashi. My colleague is more than correct when he says that the system failed those victims and failed them badly. We proposed a strengthening of the law so that the system would be more responsive.

We looked at temporary absences, and the government was very quick to point out to us that temporary absences have a very high success ratio. We drove home the point during the debates in committee on Legere and Gingras that when there is a failure, in most cases it is a tragic failure.

The government prepared a report, the Pepino report, and we on this side co-operated in seeing that those changes and amendments which would strengthen and protect society in the temporary absence situation were, in fact, adopted.

I would say that, as I think back over all of the evidence that we heard and the ways that we approached the problems of parole and temporary absences and all of those problems, we have been most supportive in many of the areas that the government has embarked upon. But I think that as you go through Bill C-311 that it does not really deal with some of the real root problems. Mr. Speaker, I know that you would be concerned about this. We were advised by the Canadian Bar Association that Bill C-36, and therefore this bill, is putting the cart before the horse. It is dealing with parole and with temporary absences before we have dealt with sentencing.

An hon. member: There are some sentencing provisions within the legislation.

Mr. Rideout: My colleague tells me that there are some sentencing provisions within this legislation. I say to him that the Canadian Bar Association asked the Minister of Justice to bring forward legislation on sentencing and not to proceed with all these other aspects of parole such as temporary absences.

Logic dictates. It does not take a whole lot of logic to realize the first thing that happens is not that the system deals with how we are going to let the person out of prison. It deals first with how long the person is going to be in prison.

Therefore, we should be dealing with sentencing so that we will know what is going to transpire, the length of sentence and then the type of system we have to put in to allow people to be re-established and reintroduced into society.

Instead it is the cart before the horse and that is wrong. When the Minister of Justice appeared before the committee, I asked her the following question: "When will we have sentencing legislation?" Her response to me was: "Soon". Soon is in the eyes of the beholder.

We were told months ago that the sentencing legislation would brought in. We know we have a summer break and some time in the fall and all other things that are ongoing. Therefore, the chances of sentencing legislation coming before this House and ultimately being dealt with and enacted are very remote. We probably will not see sentencing legislation until after the next election. That is wrong.

We on this side are saying: "Let us not play politics with victims. Let us not play politics with inmates. Let us not play politics with this attitude of law and order that the government has come forward with over the last number of months".

We hear all the business of law and order. They are going to keep society safe. They indicate how things are going to happen and tell the citizens of the country not to worry. Then, when we look at the legislation, at what it says and at what members do when they deal with that legislation, we find they were idle words and nothing really happens.

We on this side of the House say: "Look at the record of the positive things we have tried to put in as far as victims are concerned, the rights of inmates, the corrections to the sentencing system, and weigh them against what has been done by the party opposite and see that the government is very wanting".

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to join in this discussion of Bill C-311, which was proposed by the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona and supported by about 15 of his colleagues, which is rather unusual.

This private member's bill concerns sentencing, corrections and conditional release. I interpret the focus of these proposals as being the "early" release of offenders.

The bill raises the questions of when release should occur and indeed if release should ever be granted to some types of offenders.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona, and all members of the committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, who for over six months have been studying Bill C-36, which covered many points found in Bill C-311. Sometimes a complementary bill can lead to broader, more wide-ranging reforms. I must commend all members who took part in this work. As you no doubt know, this bill is now before the Senate.

Therefore, I would like to devote my allotted time to sharing with this House and Canadians some thoughts about public safety, the criminal justice system and conditional release as it now exists, before we proceed to consider other matters.

• (1800)

Nobody should think that the decision to release an offender to the community is made lightly. The decision-making process is careful and extensive. It is quite obvious that any release decisions are bound by court-imposed sentences. I see no merit in discussing the Criminal Code and sentencing processes at this juncture, because the undertaking has been given that the Minister of Justice will be announcing a major initiative in this regard.

I will reserve comment until the sentencing package has been tabled. However, I believe it may be helpful for members to know something of the conditional-release process and the roles and responsibilities of the principal agencies of the Ministry of the Solicitor General: the Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board.

Through these agencies, the Ministry of the Solicitor General as part of our criminal justice system deals with two fundamental issues which lie at the very heart of what defines the quality and the nature of the culture of this country.

The first of these is public safety, an issue which is of paramount importance in terms of the quality of life. The proposals recently considered by the House in Bill C-36 will enshrine in law the principle that the protection of society should be foremost in the minds of those entrusted with the administration of court-imposed sentences in the federal correctional system.

The second issue is human freedom in all its dimensions: the deprivation of human freedom, the respect for human freedom, and the quality and dignity of human freedom. This is an important consideration, given that the most extreme sanction the state is able to impose on its citizens is carried out by the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

The ministry, through the Parole Board and Correctional Service, is responsible for ensuring the safety of the public, its employees both in federal institutions and in the community, and more than 20,000 offenders under its charge each day of the year; it must carry out this responsibility in a society which places very great importance on the rights and freedoms of all its citizens. How the Correctional Service and Parole Board go about their business is a matter of concern not to just a small minority but to all Canadians.

As I said, on any given day the Correctional Service is responsible for close to 13,000 offenders in federal institutions and over 7,000 on parole or mandatory supervision, and it is recognized by correctional practitioners that the primary objective is to contribute to the protection of society. Through the recent legislation, this perception of their role has been formalized.

The common view might be that police protect the community through the enforcement of laws, while jails, prisons and penitentiaries protect society by keeping criminals locked up so that they cannot commit new crimes. Some might also argue that penitentiaries protect society by serving as a deterrent against crime.

These opinions are based on a number of myths about crime, corrections and parole.

It is a myth that all offenders incarcerated in federal prisons are serving sentences for violent crimes—in fact, violent crime constitutes about a tenth of all criminal offences known to police. Furthermore, only a portion of violent offenders receive sentences that entail incarceration in federal institutions.

Another negative perception is the myth that almost all offenders in our federal institutions are repeaters when, in fact, over 60 per cent of federal inmates are serving their first federal term.

There is the myth that most offences are committed by parolees or inmates on mandatory supervision. In fact, less than one per cent of crimes in Canada can be blamed on these individuals. About 12 per cent of those released on full parole are revoked for committing new offences; about 19 per cent of those released on mandatory supervision commit new offences while still under supervision and, of course, not all these offences are serious or violent.

The myth that most conditional releases end in failure continues. In fact, over 99 per cent of temporary absences are completed successfully; roughly 70 per cent of all full paroles are completed successfully and more than one-half of all releases under mandatory supervision are completed successfully.

A further note on this is that about one half of the cases statistically denoted as "failures" are instances where supervisors have returned offenders to penitentiary for non-criminal, technical violations of their release conditions.

Finally, most notably when the matter of capital punishment is the topic, there is the myth that the murder rate in Canada is on the increase. In fact, a number of recent years have seen the number of homicides at its lowest since 1973, before capital punishment was abolished.

These figures suggest that, in all but the most extreme cases, a "lock'em up and throw away the key" approach to corrections is unwarranted. A more constructive correctional philosophy—as is currently held by most correctional professionals—is that society is best protected in the long run through an approach based on the following reality: The vast majority of federal inmates are serving definite sentences and they must, by law, be released at the end of their term.

The remainder, including those serving life sentences, will all, again by law, become eligible for release at some point in their sentence. This means that most offenders will eventually return to the same communities in which they committed the offences.

Within the context of this reality, the best way to contribute to the protection of society over the long term is to motivate all offenders as fully as possible to become law-abiding citizens upon their release. However, a released offender cannot be expected to become a law-abiding citizen if throughout the sentence period he or she has been denied the opportunity of acquiring basic social skills, deprived of any autonomy and stripped of self-respect and human dignity.

To be sure, I recognize that not all offenders will respond to this approach. There will likely always be a need for maximum security institutions which rely primarily on external controls to protect society. I also recognize that under the existing system—even without the punitive measures proposed in Bill C-311—there are individuals whose crimes are so numerous or horrendous that release at any point in their sentences is unthinkable.

However, even in our highest security institution, the Correctional Service believes there should be a strong emphasis on motivating offenders to accept increased responsibility. I might say that the imposition of interminable sentences without the slightest hope of eventual relief could be seen as the surest way to deprive correctional authorities of the most important mechanism for motivating offenders.

In conclusion, our prisons are just as much a part of our community as our hospitals, our schools, our geriatric centres and our psychiatric institutions. The men and women held in our prisons and penitentiaries are all members of our society. Apart from a handful of the incarcerated, all will return to and again become part of the community. The process to facilitate and to safely maintain this reintegration is comprehensive and taken very seriously by those administering it.

It has been my intention to demonstrate that the system now in place is capable of adequate responses to today's correctional problems. The will and the expertise are at hand to administer correctional legislation for the public good.

I supported the measures put forward in Bill C-36 and have confidence in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act that confirms current practice and imparts a firm sense of direction for correctional practitioners in the coming years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ferland): As no other hon. members wish to participate in the debate, the hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

JOB CREATION

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a word on the unemployment situation in Winnipeg in hope of getting an answer to the questions I asked in this House over the past few months.

[*English*]

The issue of job creation has been raised with this government several times.

• (1810)

In Winnipeg, we now face a situation of at least 43,000 people actively looking for work and about an equal number of people who are on social assistance, either from the provincial or municipal governments. This is a tremendous economic burden being carried by the city.

In the past, governments have sought strategies to include these people and to work through training programs and through economic development projects to increase the opportunities for their own job.

When asked in the House directly, the minister has consistently refused to change the strategy of the government. When asked in committee, his colleague responsible for western diversification could not think of ways to help out Winnipeg beyond the present plans. It is an intolerable situation to have so many people unemployed in Winnipeg and so few opportunities for training available. In fact, it is becoming a crisis.

I would like to expand on one or two particular problems. First of all, within the aboriginal community in the inner city there are a large number of projects actively involved in training. They have particular needs to act as independent service organizations to reach out and to help these people they are training. In the last several months they have been caught in a battle, both a political battle in Ottawa and a political battle in Manitoba, as to who should control these programs.

I call upon the government to come out with a solution that protects the rights and responsibilities of inner-city training groups to operate independently from government, but at the same time, independent from anyone else's political agenda.

I have met several times with these groups. My colleague from St. Boniface who is here on this debate has also met with them. The member for Winnipeg South Centre has met with them. Several MPs from the Winnipeg area have met to discuss this issue and to insist that the government work together with the groups from the inner city to produce an effective pathfinder strategy.

We have recently come across an even more difficult situation where the department of employment is actually running out of money for dealing with trainees. One of the reasons is the high tuition fees being paid, without question, to some of these schools. The second reason is the improper allocation of moneys in the Manitoba region. The third reason is the cutback in the job creation funds in the last two years which has taken at least $8 million out of the system.

At the very time when the unemployment numbers are higher than ever, at the very time when our needs are tremendous, we find that the government has withdrawn services. I call upon the government today to explain exactly why it cannot help the people of Winnipeg to find training and to find jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I am pleased to remind the hon. member of this government's commitment to all Canadians, including native people.

In April 1989, this government announced the Labour Force Development Strategy.

An essential element of this strategy is the Pathways to Success program and the establishment of native management boards.

The native boards will approve projects for native employment and training, set local, regional and national priorities and ensure that native people's associations are aware of the policy and development of training programs.

The native boards are defining how to develop a greater ability to deliver employment and training services directly. This reflects the principles of the Pathways to Success program and the government's belief that developing the native people's human resources is a priority and is part of this department's commitment to self-sufficiency for aboriginal people.

Some $200 million a year is available for the next four years to help the Pathways to Sucess process.

In cooperation with the native boards, we are looking into the employment and training programs and services available to native poeple.

This is an ideal opportunity for the native community and the government to change its basic working relationship with the native people and adapt to changes in the native communities.

Employment and Immigration Canada and native organizations must co-operate to create a new climate of understanding needed to bring about significant changes in human resource development for all of Canada's aboriginal people, regardless of their background or the region where they live. In this spirit of partnership, many native boards have already been established.

In closing, we are working hard to help all the native groups in Manitoba develop and implement a regional structure for Pathways to Success in that province.

[*English*]

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, it was on March 16 that I raised a couple of questions in the House and pointed out that we were experiencing the worst recession in the history of Canada. I asked what the response of this government was to this recession. I was focusing on youth on that particular day.

If we talk to young people today, they tell us there is so much uncertainty that the future is really very bleak.

[*Translation*]

There is no certainty at all.

[*English*]

We have an unemployment rate among youth that is almost 17 per cent across Canada. In some cases, it is hovering around the 25 per cent mark. There are over 400,000 young people out of work today as we speak.

Daily, in my constituency young men and women highly motivated and willing to undertake any kind of work activity see me for advice. But there are no jobs. This is a shameful situation.

In February of this year, Canada lost 32,000 full-time jobs and 22,000 of those affected young people. There are roughly 100,000 fewer young people working today than there were a year ago. This is totally unacceptable.

Where are those jobs, jobs, jobs that have been promised by the Prime Minister for this group and for any other age group? The response of the government is cutbacks, cutbacks, cutbacks and inaction or a duplication of what was before. This is simply unacceptable.

Since 1985, 41,000 student jobs have disappeared as a result of this government's budget slashing.

It is important to point out that there is both truth and some exaggeration of truth in what the government has said. I use this analogy: I hire someone for $10 an hour; I cut their salary by $2; I am now paying them $8. If I give them an increase of $1 an hour, I can then claim that I have given them a 12 per cent increase. That happens time and time again with these particular cuts.

[*Translation*]

On four occasions the government decided to cut increases in federal transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education. I think that is the wrong approach, because if we consider the period between 1986 and 1995, there will be from $9 million to $10 million less to spend on our colleges and universities. And the result? Tuition fees have skyrocketed and student debt has increased by leaps and bounds. Today there are even waiting lists for young people, and where I am, in Winnipeg, it can be up to two years. I think that is entirely unacceptable.

The government may have overlooked the fact that by the year 2000, two-thirds of the new jobs that will be available will require 12 years of schooling, while the remaining one-third will require 16. This means we must invest in our colleges and universities as well as in jobs.

The government is destroying the prospects of our young people. As far as productivity is concerned, the future of our country is at risk. We have to look at education as an investment. It is an investment, and if we do not make that investment today, we will pay the price tomorrow.

I would like to repeat what I said not long ago, and if the hon. member wants to challenge that, I will listen to what he has to say. Young people need jobs, education and training. They must take an active part in preparing for their future, and they must believe in what they are doing. They have asked the government for help, but it seems to me the government has chosen to ignore them and refuses to recognize the fact that there is a tremendous need for this kind of help today because of the recession.

Our young people want to believe in their future and they want to make a major contribution to the prosperity of this country. That is what our young people want. If the situation does not change very drastically, these young people will be in a position to effect the changes required following the next federal election.

• (1820)

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, I listened very carefully to my hon. colleague from St. Boniface. Following his question in the House last March 16, insofar as employment and immigration is concerned, I am pleased to inform the hon. member that this government is fully aware of its continued responsibility to assist canadian students again this year in their search for summer employment.

The Minister of State for Youth, Fitness and Amateur Sport announced the funding for the Challenge '92 Program on March 18, 1992. The Challenge program, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is designed to help students find summer employment and to give them practical work experience that will ease their transition from school to work.

Challenge is focused on assisting those who are facing difficulties in the labour market. Therefore, emphasis is placed on helping high school students, who traditionally have the most difficulty in finding summer employment, and potential and recent high school dropouts who risk continued employment problems.

The Summer Employment/Experience Development (SEED) component of Challenge '92, which pays wage subsidies to employers for hiring students, will be strenghtened by $3 million. The SEED component will be increased from $80 million to $83 million.

It is hoped that SEED will encourage employers from all sectors to participate in the program and to create as many job opportunities as possible this summer for Canadian students.

Last year the SEED component subsidized over 29,000 employers who created over 54,000 new jobs with a budget of $80 million.

In addition, the funding for the four remaining challenge components will be kept at last year's levels. They will receive the following allocations: student business loans $900,000, business drive for jobs $800,000, native internship program and the Canada Employment Centres for students $12 million.

The Challenge program promotes and encourages employers to create jobs and sponsor on-the-job learning experiences for young people. This program has been very successful since its inception in 1985. It is hoped that it will be even more successful this year in stimulating employers to create jobs for students and to actively participate in providing valuable summer work experience to Canada's future labour force.

Challenge '92 will continue to encourage the hiring of designated group members and the creation of activities designed for these groups.

[*English*]

TRADE

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I asked a question to the Prime Minister and the minister of science answered the question.

The question was very specific: What did the government anticipate Mexican workers would be able to purchase on $4.50 per day? The promise of the North American free trade agreement is that we will not only help ourselves, but we will also help the average Mexican worker who will be able to purchase goods from Canada.

I want to cite the minister's answer because it is a dandy. Excuse the poor vocabulary. He said: "At the moment, we have certainly in the automotive industry one-way trade with Mexico. For every car we can bring up here from Mexico, we have to send two and a half to offset this." What the Mexicans will be able to buy from us is two and a half cars. That was the answer. I am seeking perhaps a better response this afternoon.

I was in Mexico the week before last and found out that $4.50 a day is what hundreds of thousands of Mexicans earn. Just that week, they had signed an accord with labour, business and government. In Mexico, they tend to be one and the same. They signed a prosperity agenda to increase productivity in the industry in Mexico. Sound familiar?

The union had decided not to sign that agreement. It held out for two years.

It said it wanted a 25 per cent increase in wages for Mexican labour before it was going to sign. It relented and the accord is signed. Right now Mexicans earn $4.50 a day. Next year they will earn $4.50 a day and the year after they will earn $4.50 a day. So the question remains: What do you anticipate an average Mexican worker will buy from Canada?

My Mexican interpreter suggested to me many many of these people smoke. If they smoke, it costs them $3 a day for a package of cigarettes. There is not a lot left over. I hope they are spending it on better things than cigarettes, nevertheless, it points out a real problem.

I was with a business group in Mexico and I guess I was working incognito. I asked the owner of a massive Maquiladora operation: "Do you have any labour problems down here?" He said: "Absolutely not. We know how to handle these people". They certainly do. They know how to handle them because they give them $4.50 a day and they are going to continue to give them $4.50 a day.

Some of my worst fears were realized. I have to admit one of the operations I went to was immaculate. The working environment was beautiful. The workers seemed quite content. The discussion between the manager and myself went very well until I asked who owned the company and if it was doing very well in profits. As soon as I said that he said: "It is time to move on".

When I got back I looked into the profile of this industry. This industry made 30 per cent more profit in 1990 than it did in 1989. It is doing exceedingly well. I would say it was making obscene profits. Yet it chooses to pay its workers $4.50 a day.

I will end by asking the question yet again. What does this government expect the average Mexican worker to buy from Canadian manufacturers on $4.50 a day?

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, considering the situation of the Mexican work force, the North American free trade agreement will reinforce economic growth throughout North America, including in Mexico.

The hon. member refers to Mexican wage levels and speaks of $4 to $5 per day. Mexican wages are lower than in Canada, although rates of $2 to $3 hourly are the norm in the manufacturing sector. Moreover, wage rates tend to be lower in those industries already more fully integrated into the North American economy. Trade brings growth and growth leads to higher wages for workers.

The North American free trade agreement will eliminate most Mexican barriers to exports from Canada. It will also create export-led growth and jobs in Mexico. Mexican consumers, including workers, will also have greater access to and greater capacity to buy competitive canadian goods such as grains, red meats, fishery products, wood and paper manufactures, and automotive products, including mass transit equipment. This will be good for Mexico and good for Canada.

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to review a question I asked during the Question Period of April 20 of this year.

It had to do with the whole economic climate of metropolitan Toronto, a city that used to be an important piston in the economic engine of our country. It would seem to me, as a member of Parliament for York West as part of metropolitan Toronto, the government has either completely ignored the economic fabric of the city or it assumes that somehow metropolitan Toronto is the perceptional fat cat city of Confederation. I am not saying metro Toronto is completely down and out because it is not. At the same time, the government needs to recognize there is also a chronic under-belly to metropolitan Toronto on an economic basis that is in need of some kind of stimulus in order to get that piston operating again, so the engine can function in a much better capacity and put Canadians and their families back to work.

• (1830)

That is essentially the question I asked. The week before I asked that question, the metropolitan Toronto government put out a report suggesting last year alone almost 9,000 Toronto firms either moved out of the city or went bankrupt. As a result of the loss of 9,000 firms in Toronto alone, there was a direct net loss of 65,000 jobs. On top of that another 30,000 jobs were lost as a result of Toronto companies trying to survive by downsizing.

In my own vicinity, the government recently announced it was going to close the Downsview Military Depot and transfer it to Montreal. An independent study concluded that on an economic basis Montreal was the worst location and the best was Kingston. That meant an automatic loss of 330 direct jobs and also a loss of $106 million in annual contracts that went largely to the metropolitan Toronto area. The number of indirect jobs are probably incalculable but very significant.

When you put the entire package together, it is not one that encourages confidence in the marketplace. It is not one that puts a vibrant Toronto city back to work, but allows it to fester. Confidence is not there and therefore consumer spending is not there.

My question on April 20 is the same one I have this evening. What measures does the government intend to implement immediately so metro Toronto, as an important facet of the economic situation in this country, can return to some degree of normalcy, and the spin-offs we have in metro Toronto as a direct benefit to citizens in Toronto can also be felt in other sectors across the country, and try to begin to put a recovery package in place? It needs some government stimulus or initiatives, rather than a *laissez faire* attitude, which means the recession will drag on much longer than need be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I wish to respond in greater detail to the questions of April 29 by the member from York West.

The government shares the concerns of all Canadians with the effects the economic slowdown has had on jobs and unemployment, and is working to strengthen the economy and accelerate the recovery.

While the labour market situation deteriorated in Toronto during the downturn, between 1984 and 1990, a total of 296,000 jobs were created in Toronto and many new businesses were started.

The government's efforts are directed to improving the climate for investment through lower interest rates, lower inflation, lower deficits and greater economic confidence in order that more new businesses start and that existing businesses begin hiring more workers.

Successes in bringing down the inflation rate and interest rates to the lowest levels seen in almost 20 years are benefiting canadians now.

The government's current strategy in the area of training will ensure better employment opportunities for Canadians. Under the labour force development strategy, actual spending for labour market programming is expected to increase 62 per cent over a four year period, from $2.1 billion in 1989–90 to $3.4 billion in 1992–93. This will assist more than 650,000 unemployed Canadians to acquire new skills. Furthermore, the Department of Employment and Immigration Canada will spend an estimated $741 million in 1992–93 in Ontario.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in the member's riding, York West, the government spent $3.1 million on the Canadian Jobs Strategy and other programs in 1990–91.

[*English*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise to follow up on a trade related question that I asked on March 27 of the Minister of Forestry. It is a question on a very important trade matter and that of course has to do with the softwood lumber tariff dispute that we currently have with the United States.

It was on a specific matter. It related to the then actions of the U.S. commerce department, where at the time of its early rulings on our softwood exports to the United States, the commerce department had ruled. It had applied the tariff to not just the actual wood that we exported to the U.S., but in essence the way the tariff was developed. It applied also to the packaging, the labour, and the transportation.

I led, as you know, a delegation of New Democrat MPs to Washington, D.C., where we raised this matter directly with the commerce department. I think our intervention at that time was timely because in fact the commerce department's verification teams as they called them had looked at the situation, determined in most cases they had erred on this point, and in fact they were going to change the policy in that regard.

That was a minor victory for Canada, but of course we are on the verge now of perhaps the biggest trading war we have had yet with our trading partners in the United States. By the end of this month the commerce department will rule next as to whether in fact we have injured the lumber market in the United States by our exports to the U.S.

My question that I hope the parliamentary secretary can respond to tonight is this. When the Prime Minister visited the President he certainly appeared to have come back empty-handed, given the most recent announcement, particularly raised today by my colleague for Sault Ste. Marie about steel, and the whole countervail actions that are starting to take place there.

I am most interested to hear from the parliamentary secretary as to the success so far of the government in terms of getting the U.S. commerce department to accept or agree to the use of—even weak as it is—the dispute settlement mechanism of the free trade agreement. We have yet to hear whether that is in fact the case.

Can he confirm that even if that is the case, under the free trade agreement really all the dispute settlement mechanism does is determine whether U.S. law was applied correctly.

Certainly an indication of the difficulty we are going to have there is that the U.S. lumber lobby when we met with them basically said well if that is the case, if our law is not tough enough to deal with you up there in Canada, we will just get the law changed.

I hope the parliamentary secretary can bring the House up to date on this. I hope he has some better news for us tonight than what the Prime Minister had to report after his meeting with President Bush because this issue is a critical one for all of Canada and in particular British Columbia and my part of B.C., where a great deal of our lumber exports go into the U.S. market.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time to respond to a question raised by my hon. friend concerning the government's actions in response to the U.S. decision to impose a 14.48 per cent tariff on the entry value of lumber shipments to the United States and the effect this is having on reloaders and wholesalers.

First, let me state that when the U.S. department of commerce made its preliminary determination of subsidy on March 6, instructions were issued to apply the bonding rate on the price at the border, rather than the price at the mill. The result was that in-Canada transportation costs were incorporated into the calculations and lumber remanufacturers had to post bond on the total value-added price of the lumber.

This problem has been resolved. After representations from the Canadian government, the department of commerce has issued new instructions to U.S. customs to assess the bonds against the value of the lumber at the mill rather than at the border. This change is retroactive to March 12.

Transportation costs will be excluded from the calculations and the remanufacturers will have to post bond only on the value of the timber, rather than the total value-added price. This will provide considerable relief to the reloader yards, the remanufacturers, and the lumber wholesalers.

Discussions are continuing with the Department of Commerce regarding the U.S.-origin logs issue which is of particular concern to Quebec. As well, the department of commerce agreed to our request for a special blanket bonding. Canadian exporters will not have to post bond on each shipment to the United States, as is normally the case in this process. This will alleviate the administrative burden on Canadian exporters.

In conclusion, our position in this case is unchanged—that is to remain united and fight the case through to the end and win.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ferland): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed adopted. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.41 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 5, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River) moved:

That this House condemns the government for its negligence toward the worst social and economic difficulties faced by residents of Ontario in modern times.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have an opportunity in this House to debate an issue that is of great concern to all residents of the great province of Ontario.

The issues touch on national interests, of course, but the residents of Ontario have particular reasons now to fear for their futures and to question the attempt of the government to manage their economy and their social planning, the infrastructure of the economy. They have very real fears.

In an effort to ensure as full a debate from the Liberal opposition side today in this relatively short day, we will be asking that we split our times.

• (1010)

I want to make reference to the motion itself. It says:

That this House condemns the government for its negligence toward the worst social and economic difficulties faced by residents of Ontario in modern times.

Anyone who doubts the seriousness of the economic crisis has only to visit the streets of Toronto, of Sudbury, of Thunder Bay and look at those who are unemployed, who are losing all they have built around them over the last many years of prosperity and to see the fear in their eyes.

As we speak today, we are reviewing the new monthly unemployment statistics. These days, this is a bad news item every month. But Statistics Canada tells us that the unemployment rate in Ontario is 10.9 per cent. It is a double digit figure for the first time in a long, long time.

We are not the only province with double digit unemployment. Ontario has been the engine of the national economy, assisted by all the other regions. The engine of the national economy has now struck double digit unemployment with apparently no end in sight. There is no light at the end of the tunnel because this government is not doing anything. This government is taking the hands-off approach of letting the private sector solve our problems and it is not working.

The unemployment rate in Toronto is 11.2 per cent. Promises over the last few years of jobs, jobs, jobs and sacred trusts are simply not believable any more. There has been a reneging by the Prime Minister on those promises. Ontario, Toronto, and our national economy are paying a very high price.

There are two specific issues I want to address relative to metropolitan Toronto. They relate to the economic and social planning envelopes. One of them is urban crime and the other has to do with federal non-funding of immigration and refugee settlement.

On the urban crime issue, in our metropolitan area in Toronto we are seeing a decaying of neighbourhoods. For the first time, we are seeing what I would call a criminal block-busting of neighbourhoods. The criminal block-busting relates to the crack house phenomenon. That is the situation where there is no landlord and the criminals and drug pushers move in and take over a house. That brings prostitution, more drug pushers, drug purchasers and petty thieves who want to finance their drug habit to the neighbourhood.

That is decaying and destroying neighbourhoods in which people just like all the members in this House of Commons live in. Ordinary neighbourhoods are falling victims to this criminal block-busting.

Prostitution in Scarborough is up 95 per cent over the last year. That is a doubling of prostitution crimes. Drug offences are up 22 per cent.

These are figures that residents and many neighbourhoods in metropolitan Toronto are struggling to cope with. They look to their elected representatives. They look to government and they see nothing happening. The cancer of the crack house continues to grow. They ask for the government to react, to do something about it.

In the meantime, the government watches while the powers of police to investigate and prosecute are restrained. They look at a Criminal Code that is 100 years old and does not address the phenomenon of the modern crack house. The government is simply not addressing the phenomenon of the urban crack house with either legislation or policies. It has not provided any alternatives.

To put the icing on the cake, there is legislation that permits the seizure of proceeds of crime. Usually those proceeds are seized as a result of drug criminal activity. Even when the municipality bears the cost of the drug investigation, which in many cases in a metropolitan area like Toronto amounts to many millions of dollars, the federal government is not giving back to the metropolitan police the money that was spent to investigate the crime in the first place. That is negligence. That is an abandonment of the federal government's very important role in this area. The government is deaf to the issue of urban crime.

The second area I want to bring to the attention of the House has to do with federal non-funding of refugee and immigrant settlement.

In the one area of refugee settlement, the region of metropolitan Toronto and Peel will spend approximately $430 million in the settlement of refugees. That includes welfare costs. That money comes from the pockets of municipal taxpayers. The federal government has capped its funding of all of this and has not responded to this funding imperative.

If the federal government and federal legislation is going to accommodate the refugees, then it damn well better start funding the settlement initiative. Municipal taxpayers are becoming fed up with having to carry more than their share of the burden when they do not manage the laws and the borders.

An hon. member: That does not happen in New Brunswick.

Mr. Lee: Well it happens in southern Ontario.

The other area has to do with the field of education. We have a lot of great new immigrants in this country. They are populating principally our larger cities and we are glad and proud to have them.

A difficulty arises when they come in large numbers to particular municipalities. The school boards are forced to absorb the second language training for these new Canadians. When they come in large numbers it creates significant distortions for school boards.

I have a list of schools here that have anywhere from 43 per cent to 27 per cent of students who must be educated in a second language. English is the second language.

The cost of integrating and adjusting goes on for several years, the school-boards estimate about four years, and the federal government is not assisting. The federal government is happy to have the new immigrants, happy to have the family-class immigrants and the business-investor immigrants and Canadians are too. But the federal government has abandoned to the municipal taxpayers the cost of funding the education integration.

There is a cost because if the costs are not paid, the school itself and the quality of education in the school suffers. The full student body is not able to absorb all of their education training in the English language or in the French language in Quebec or other parts of the country.

This is an abandonment in these areas: urban crime, they are asleep at the switch; and in federal funding of immigrant and refugee settlement, they have abandoned it to municipal taxpayers.

These taxpayers and their elected representatives on a municipal and regional level are very angry. They are waiting, I am waiting, and my constituents are waiting to see what this government is going to put forward as a solution to that ridiculous abandonment in that field.

I will close now and invite this government to address its negligence before it is too late.

• (1020)

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, we have listened to the lead-off speaker today from the Liberal Party, a member from the Scarborough area of metropolitan Toronto. He stood here and talked about a litany of problems we are facing in the province of Ontario, but once again the Liberals have no solutions.

They stand and its more money: maybe we should throw more money at this problem and more money at that problem. They do not say where the money comes from. They do not say we will raise the deficit. They do not say we will borrow more money, we will raise taxes or whatever it may be. They do not say any of those things.

The hon. member talks about the job creation. I can tell him that we have come through a very difficult recession. Of course our unemployment rate is unacceptably high right now. I can tell him that we saw the fastest job creation in the industrialized world between 1984 and 1990 when 1.6 million new jobs were created, of which 1.4 million still exist. We must understand that. It must be understood by the Canadian people that 1.4 million of those jobs still exist. Entrance into the labour market and the unemployment rate because of the recession we have gone through have increased.

He talks about the decaying of neighbourhoods and the drug problem. I remember very well—and I am going to remind him of this because I think it is very important—a speech that the Prime Minister of this country gave. I believe it was in 1987. I could be wrong. I sat here in the House and listened to the hon. member for Hamilton East. She stood and ridiculed the Prime Minister on his speech. The Prime Minister said that we had a drug problem in this country. He put more money and more effort with the RCMP to fight drugs. The RCMP has been somewhat successful but not successful enough because we have not seen the elimination of the drug problem.

The Liberal Party, led by the hon. member for Hamilton East, tore the Prime Minister apart saying that he was exaggerating, that he was saying things were way out of control, that he should not be talking that way, and that that was not accurate.

Today we see Liberal members stand and all of a sudden express concern about crack houses and about drug problems in this country. The Prime Minister warned about this problem and the government did something. The hon. member says it did not. It has done something about it and it is continuing to work on it, in co-operation, I might say, with local police forces and police forces around the world. It is very important.

He talks about immigration and immigration levels. The hon. member should know the system. The system was in place long before we became the government. The government through the Minister of Employment and Immigration would contact the provinces in a consultative mode and ask: "What can you absorb in immigrants each year?" Those recommendations come in and that is how the levels are determined.

The hon. member is saying that it is all the federal government's fault for bringing too many immigrants to this country and not funding them. For heaven's sake, education has always been a responsibility of the provinces. If he is saying that we should start funding elementary and secondary education from the federal government then he should stand and say it.

Is that Liberal policy? Is it Liberal policy to fund elementary and secondary education? If it is then let us have it as a policy and let us see them fight that one out in a constitutional way. I mean the provinces will take the money.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe that was a comment but the member has a minute to answer.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, that was a long comment with a question wedged in at the end.

I did not say it was the federal government's fault there is immigration to this country. I said it was the federal government's responsibility to ensure that immigrant settlement took place properly.

I am not saying the government should throw money at this. I am saying the government should use its brains, its leadership and its jurisdiction.

The member opposite complains because a member on this side critically challenged an initiative of the government at one point in time. It is our job to challenge critically from time to time, but it is the government's job to exercise leadership. It is the federal government's responsibility to address these things.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Scarborough—Rouge River on his excellent presentation this morning. He outlined some of the key concerns we as Canadians face in metro Toronto and in the province of Ontario. I would also like to take this opportunity to speak to the issue in a more global sense.

In the past two decades major economic changes have forced Canada to confront rapidly shifting international, political and economic relationships. The pressures of the GATT, the free trade agreement, and the structural deterioration of our economy demand that Canadians find innovative solutions to international competition.

Unfortunately Canada stands extraordinarily exposed to the challenges of an increasingly global economy. This federal government has adopted a hands-off approach to economic management, leaving Canada open to the free play of international forces.

The situation is now so serious that commentators are beginning to speak of a window of opportunity within which Canada might still be able to recover control over its economy.

The legacy of this government's mismanagement of the economy is staggering. One and a half million Canadians unemployed, of which 400,000 are young people.

Since 1989 more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs have vanished, many never to return. We have seen record personal and corporate bankruptcies. Taxation levels are higher than ever even as the federal government plans are drawn up to abdicate its responsibilities further. We are paying more for less.

I have spoken in this Chamber before on the need for a new contract, a new set of arrangements among Canadians. The federal government should play a key role in defining the economic and social relationships within our society.

Historically relationships among Canadians have been marked by confrontation instead of co-operation. The consequences of this history is lack of focus on goals and a total absence of a national vision on the part of this government.

The reasons for this are not difficult to uncover. Although this government speaks of creating an innovative economy, its own policies are more appropriate to bygone days. Its thinking is obsolete.

As many studies have shown the federal government does not understand the dimensions of global change. The evidence for this is everywhere. The federal government, committed to cost cutting, is unwavering even as the entire economy crashes to the ground.

To this government numbers matter more than people. They matter more than jobs. They matter more than the future of our youth. They matter more than the sacred trust of health care of our seniors and of those who have fallen out of the work force. In the messages Canadians have sent to this government there is a palpable sense of betrayal and breach of trust.

The implications of this public distress of the federal government are extensive. As elected representatives we need to communicate with the people as opposed to talking at them.

But prospects for success in this regard are grounded in the perceptions Canadians have of governments. This government has confused the reluctance of Canadians to subscribe to Tory policies with an unwillingness of Canadians to act.

Canadians are ready to act. Canadians continue to believe that they are the makers of their own future. This is a powerful asset. This asset provides a solid foundation for presenting Canadians with choices about how to upgrade their schools and how to ensure Canadians have world-class skills and motivation.

Canadians can understand and want to understand what needs to be done. However Canadians have become lost in the maze of conflicting messages sent by this government. What people hear are statements of concern from this government, but these statements are coming precisely at the same time that this government is ignoring those concerns. It is yet another example of this government pulling back from its responsibility.

There is a widely shared consensus among business leaders that action to upgrade the skills of the work force is needed now. It is vital that the knowledge and skills of those already in the work force be kept current and competitive. The rapid pace of scientific and technologi-

cal advance is shortening the useful life of knowledge gained through formal education or training.

• (1030)

The requirement for continued learning throughout an individual's working life must be recognized as a binding priority. In this important area this government has reduced its commitment and has clearly been left behind by its competitors.

Priority attention is being paid to developing human resources in Japan, Germany, Mexico, United States, and virtually all our major competitors. In this highly competitive age the economic performance of firms depends more than ever on a well trained work force.

The Liberal Party believes that training is not a cost but an investment. Education is an economic development. If we are to compete successfully with Japan, Germany, Mexico and the United States, federal government policies must encourage appropriate levels and types of vocational development within industry. Government support for training must be more actively focused. However, national industrial training programs are not making a significant contribution toward encouraging the employer sponsored training new technologies demand.

Employees in the most competitive firms increasingly require high flexibility skills which are essentially strong learning abilities, a willingness to change and an ability to work in teams.

But these flexibility skills are meaningless if young people do not stay in school. Over 30 per cent of students drop out before completing high school. Since unemployment affects the youth population in particular, this indicates an urgent need to deal with school drop–out.

I am not advocating that the federal government assume jurisdiction over the provincial responsibility of education, but what I am advocating is that the federal government must assume its own responsibility of its role to foster a Canadian controlled economic base. The role must be strong enough to secure Canada's place on the global stage. This requires the government's full participation.

There is little evidence of government commitment to Canadians today. The gulf between the rich and the poor is steadily widening. Record numbers are on welfare and unemployment insurance. Over 700,000 children need food banks. The future for young people in this country is bleak. As tuition fees increase and debt loads mount, many despair at finding work at all.

In my riding of York North the effects of less than full participation by government are pervasive and insidious. Government should be a vehicle of opportunity. Instead the citizens of the greater Toronto area feel victimized by this government's policies. Whole communities are at risk.

According to a study by the York Region Service Needs Committee, youth services have been placed on hold as provincial and municipal governments in turn feel the effects of the government's insensitive fiscal stringency.

Funding for counselling young people has evaporated. Unemployment among youth is increasing steadily as retraining courses and job placement programs are unable to achieve results. And this government believes it is doing enough.

The legacy of this belief is the failure of government incentives to improve sustainably the competitiveness of firms anywhere and everywhere in Canada. The focus should not be whether enough is being spent on training. The focus should be on whether Canadians are getting an efficient and innovative training system that spells results.

Clearly the more high wage good jobs Canada has, the better. Accordingly the most important set of policies this government could bring forward would be those that increase the capacity of innovative firms to expand. This expansion would be assisted most effectively through partnerships among all participants.

People are the key to making our economy work. To compete we must have a pool of Canadians skilled in the emerging technologies. We must have communities that attract and can retain these people. We need people committed to pulling together.

Canadians need to believe that they can make a difference. It remains to this government to show Canadians that it is willing to make a difference.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate today.

I listened very carefully to my hon. friend's comments. His number one concern seemed to be competition, as well as a well-trained work force and education. I do not believe anybody in this Chamber would argue with that, but I do have a couple of questions.

Over the past few months I have received over 6,000 responses to a survey from the people who live in my riding. Their number one concern is deficit reduction and they want the government to start working on the debt.

With regard to competition, this involves all of us. The hon. member said that people are the key to the issue. It involves not only all levels of government but the agencies, the work force, educational institutions, research and development, and science and technology.

We should be talking to each other with the keen interest of coming out with some resolutions and ideas so that we can move forward together. As we go through the peaks and valleys there is no doubt that Ontario is suffering, but there are other places in Canada that are suffering too.

Competition is the number one priority. We do need a well-educated and well-trained population, but how are we going to go about that?

I chaired the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology and we came forward with a report, I believe in 1988. The government in 1988 was spending just over $5 billion on research and development and science and technology in all federal departments. We also introduced scholarships for science and technology in centres of excellence. That is addressing the problem in one area.

We also made amendments to the UI bill to put money into training for people who were unemployed. I believe the figure is $3 billion or $3.8 billion this year. I think the member is saying that is not enough.

There is only one taxpayer, whether he is paying federal, provincial or municipal taxes. We must deal with raising the funds so that we are able to follow up the resolutions that the hon. member is putting out today. No one is going to disagree that we need a well-educated population. We spend more per capita than other countries with the exception of Sweden. We have to spend more efficiently and effectively.

I would like the member to tell the House exactly who is going to pay, or indeed how we can redirect funding to obtain the goals that he has outlined.

Mr. Bevilacqua: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question. However, it is quite evident that this government speaks a different language than the rest of Canadians.

Canadians need jobs. This government has been abdicating its responsibility towards that duty. If we examine the master plan that the government has presented it does not speak at all to the future. As a matter of fact, a close analysis of the budget would probably show that a very small percentage of the budget is dedicated to areas that speak to the future: namely research and development, education and training for young Canadians.

I personally do not understand how this government plans to lead Canada into the future when Canadians are telling it that we need more commitment to education. They are telling it that if we want to build a high-wage, highly skilled society we need commitments. It cannot simply be words.

The time has come for Canadians to realize, and particularly this government, that we need a new contract, a new set of arrangements between the individual, the community and the government. To that end, I can tell the member opposite that the government's plan is simply not working. Its message is not getting through.

We on this side of the House clearly understand that research and development and education and training are part of our economic development plan. We certainly do not think that we can compete when 30 per cent of our high school students drop out. We know that.

What one must do, as I am sure the member does as a responsible member of Parliament, is do some inner analysis and look within for answers.

• (1040)

This government's policy has failed. The member must admit that. We still have over 400,000 young people who are unemployed. This summer there will be young people who will not be able to continue their education. At the end of the day we must make sure that we give the necessary prerequisites to Canadians.

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and participate in this debate, particularly as the member for the riding of Ontario. The debate is about the province of Ontario and the economic policies of the federal government as they impact on Ontario.

I have listened to two previous speakers from Ontario, one from a riding immediately adjacent to mine and one not too far removed from mine. We are operating in very similar economic environments, and there are some problems.

The member for Scarborough—Rouge River talked about some problems as though they were the problems of the federal government, such as municipal taxes. He said that the tax rates are going up because of the policies of the federal government. I would suggest that municipal taxes go up because provincial or municipal governments increase their spending. That is the reason they go up. When large salary increases are extended to teachers in the school board system, which has nothing to do with the federal government, the money must be found somewhere.

When we have an inflation rate of 1.7 per cent and they hand out salary increases of 6 or 7 per cent they must raise municipal taxes to find the money to do so. We at the federal level have recognized the problem of dealing with salaries. Although it was a very unpopular and very difficult thing to do we were able to accomplish some goals so that in the last budget it was possible not only to avoid tax increases but to have some tax decreases.

When the members opposite from Toronto area ridings complain about municipal taxes I would encourage them to talk to their municipal colleagues, and to put the blame where it belongs.

It is the same for provincial responsibility. Two members from the Liberal Party got up and spoke about the problems of southern Ontario as if those problems had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that Ontario has the highest spending government in Canada. Year over year it increases spending far more than anywhere else in Canada, including places like Alberta.

All I can say is that when we are talking about problems in Ontario in many instances they are directly related to the provincial government.

The members talk about welfare costs. Yes, there are more people on welfare and I am sorry to hear that. We did not force the provincial government to increase the payout to those receiving welfare over the last two years by 28 per cent. It chose to increase that amount and simply assumed we would write a blank cheque for whatever money it wanted. We did not force it to add all these day care centres on to the schools being built in my riding. It did that and presumed we would write a blank cheque to pay for them.

Those costs are strictly provincial, municipal, and school board responsibilities. To blame them on the federal government, as the two members opposite have done, does a total disservice.

On the other hand, as we in Toronto are impacted by high real estate costs, I did not hear these members say that because of the policies of the federal government we can now get mortgage rates substantially below anything they could ever get in their entire house-buying days, not just in their house-buying days but in mine as well. Mortgage rates are lower.

I come from a constituency that has a lot of new housing under construction. People are either getting their first mortgage or a renewed mortgage and they are all able to get one at a much lower rate than they have ever been able to in the past, unless they happen to be over 50 or 55 years of age and can remember those days when mortgage rates were low and very attractive. We are back down to those levels and there are projections that they may drop even further.

The members talk about the problems young people are facing.

It is funny that the member did not talk at all about the fact that the federal government introduced this 5 per cent down payment policy for Canada Mortgage and Housing. Young people are able to buy housing and take advantage of the very attractive house prices in the Toronto area right now. They can take advantage of very attractive mortgage rates and get into their homes, which is something that I thought the members opposite would say was a good policy.

However, I do not recall hearing them mention that at all. The impact of that housing policy allows for house construction and it creates construction jobs. When people build houses they put things inside those houses

which are manufactured, such as carpeting, appliances, furniture, lighting, electrical equipment and so on.

They have to buy lawn mowers to cut the grass and other products to maintain the place, and certainly most, if not all, of those products are manufactured in Canada. Guess what? That creates manufacturing jobs. Is it working? I would say that it is.

Not only I say that it is. A recent article in *The Financial Post* says: "Longer work week may signal an upturn. Manufacturing employees spent more hours on the job in March than they did in the same month last year". That is a good sign.

Are we out of the woods? No, but it is a good sign. It is a sign that things are happening the way that they should happen.

Another member spoke about training funds. One of our members from Calgary got up and made some very legitimate points in response to that request for more training funds. However, what was not mentioned in the debate by the member from the Liberal Party is that since 1990 we have tripled the amount of money going into training funds.

Over $3 billion a year is now spent on training. Much of that is for those who are on the unemployment rolls. Much of that is for those who are unable to find jobs because the skills they have do not match the required skill for the jobs that exist. That is a positive step.

Is it enough? We can always say it is not enough, but can the taxpayers afford it? We must understand that in many instances in order to fund unemployment insurance training programs we must increase the deduction for unemployment insurance. Those who are working will therefore have less to spend because of that problem.

It is a fine balance, but I would say that in the last three budgets we have moved the numbers in the right direction, I think very successfully. Is that all we have done? No, not at all.

In this budget we have recognized the problems that Ontario is facing. We have recognized that there is a need to assist the manufacturing sector to make it more competitive. Therefore we introduced a reduction in the tax that must be paid by manufacturing because we have increased the capital cost allowance.

That is a very direct benefit to the manufacturing industry of Canada, particularly the manufacturing industry of Ontario. If the provincial government has done nothing else right in Ontario over the last year and a half it has been in office, it did follow the lead that we provided on that capital cost allowance. It has also made a similar move in its budget.

About the only good thing in its budget was that move. The net result was that Ontario based manufacturing is better able to invest in new technology and new ideas. Therefore Ontario based industry can be more competitive. That is positive.

Not only did we do that, but we have made it possible for consumers across Canada to have a little bit more money to spend. I do not want anyone to believe that they are going to be able to buy a Rolls Royce with the tax cut that we put in place, but we did put in place a tax cut for all personal taxpayers in Canada. It helps them pay less tax and therefore they have more to spend.

It comes into effect on July 1 and there will be more to follow early next year. Those were very positive steps. We have recognized the need that exists in Ontario and we have very clearly tried to do something about it.

More than that, we have made some very major steps for small business. We have increased small business loans, which means that small businesses can borrow up to $200,000 guaranteed by the federal government to invest in new technology and new capital equipment. We have also put in place additional small business loan programs. All of those programs have been to provide help in a very difficult time in southern Ontario.

• (1050)

This difficult time we are talking about is not all doom and gloom, as the members opposite are saying. We have done a number of other things to assist not just Ontario business but all of Canada. For example, we spent extensive time in a committee chaired by the member for Mississauga South dealing with financial reforms.

We have now changed the method in which financial institutions operate in this country so that all Canadians, particularly business, can access the trust companies, insurance companies, and credit unions. They have a

whole new pool of revenue and funds that they can access. That is a very positive move for Canada and Ontario, particularly southern Ontario.

We have seen improvements in house sales this year. We have seen a tremendous improvement in the bank rate. I have talked about the bank rate as it applies to mortgages for individual consumers in this country, but it is not just those people who benefit by this improvement. A low bank rate helps businesses in this country borrow money, and borrow it on a much better basis.

I should add that there are some very good things going on in Canada. One of the problems we have in this country is that we do not have the courage of our convictions, and that is certainly evidenced by all those on the other side of the House. I would like to give a few examples.

Free trade was supposed to be a terrible thing, at least according to some of the comments made by those in opposition. Yet we are into the third year of the agreement and in March a headline in one of the local papers stated: "Trade figures surge in March as exports hit a record high". A record high is positive.

If we examine those numbers we find that the percentage of manufacturing exports as a part of that total was larger than ever before. In fact, we had a record trade surplus with the United States and record exports to the United States in March.

I do not know where all the doom and gloom that the members opposite are talking about is. Those numbers are very positive and they are very positive for Ontario. Manufacturing was part of that.

It goes even further. Another headline states: "Economy shows modest growth for third month". Another states: "We are moving in the right direction as hard hit manufacturing perks up". Manufacturing in Ontario is starting to see real benefits from what has been done.

They say there are no good signs, but there are many of them. In the Algoma region an article about a company called Great Lakes said: "Great Lakes enjoys a healthy year". The article says that the company is doing all right.

There is a company in Cambridge that found that Canadians were not prepared to accept its products. Jane Martin went into the manufacturing business and found she had to export up to two-thirds of her products to the United States in order to make the business grow. She was able to do it. She was able to do it very successfully because she stood by her convictions and said: "There is a way to do it and the way to do it is to get on with the job. If Canadians do not want to get on with the job, I will sell my products somewhere else". She did and it worked and the company is very successful. That is one example.

We heard how the textile industry in Canada would be devastated by the free trade agreement, at least that is what those opposite said. A textile manufacturer in Cambridge, a city in Ontario, said: "I agree with the free trade agreement. I think it will be good for my business". Canadians said: "You're wrong, the textile industry will be decimated". What did he do? The chap's name is George Hancock and he put in place new technology and new manufacturing ideas. Lo and behold 1991 was his best year ever. He has increased his exports. He is now selling in the United States, which he did not do before. Twenty-five per cent of the company's $7 million revenue in 1991 was generated out of exports to the United States.

There are people who are prepared to be very positive, who know how to do it and who are prepared to get off their duff and get it done. That is what we need in this country.

Members may argue that is not constructive. At least that is what the members opposite try to argue. What are the general benefits of this? I happen to have an article from *The International Herald Tribune* on Monday, May 25. It is a U.S. publication distributed world-wide. Its headline is: "Canada sets an example". It is the editorial. I would like to read one paragraph of the editorial because it says exactly what we in this party and government have been saying.

> Both Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Bush are conservatives and both resist raising taxes. Mr. Mulroney has attacked his deficit mostly by curbing spending. Canadians have complained loudly and bitterly but they re-elected him in 1988. He has kept the squeeze on, although he will have to run again next year.
>
> There have been real costs—

—and we have all identified them.

S. O. 31

Unemployment is much higher than in the United States but inflation is only half as high. With the end of the recession the chances for a strong recovery are better in Canada than in the United States.

Mr. Mulroney makes jokes about his low popularity ratings. According to opinion polls only 20 per cent of Canadians like him. A politician's popularity is capital and he has spent his capital well on economic benefits that will come to Canada for many years, regardless of who is Prime Minister.

A foreign magazine, a foreign publication is talking about the strength of the Canadian economy and about how we in this country are going to reap benefits for many years to come. I have no doubt about that in the least.

In conclusion, I would like to point out to the members opposite that there are some problems in Ontario. However, I am convinced that the problems have been addressed and the initiatives we have taken will lead us to future economic prosperity. We are starting to see some of that already.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member for Ontario. I share the community that he represents.

First, I want to say that he said many things in his speech that I agree with. I do not want Canadians to think that we are all doom and gloomers over here because that is not the case. He spoke of low interest rates and we recognize that fact. He also spoke of low inflation rates and we recognize that fact as well.

We are not elected to this House of Commons just to talk for those who are advantaged or doing well. We are also elected to this Chamber to speak for those in our community who are going through difficult times. In your community, my community—and let us forget the number 11.2 per cent because it is a misleading number—right now we have over a half million people not working in the greater Toronto region and area.

In this House it is our responsibility to try to find work for them. The comment saying: "Let us not give a blank cheque to those who are on welfare" might have been a bit cruel. I do not think anyone was suggesting that we give a blank cheque to anyone.

There are a lot of Canadians who understand and realize that there are abuses in the welfare system and abuses in the unemployment insurance system. None of us would support ignoring those abuses. What people are crying for—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to interrupt the hon. member. It being eleven o'clock I must go to statements. The hon. member will have an opportunity after Question Period.

It being eleven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, in October 1990, roughly 20 months ago, the Prime Minister and then Minister of Finance promised at that particular time a review of the goods and services tax on books and reading materials.

It is now time for that particular review to take place.

Most Canadians would realize and acknowledge that the goods and services tax on books has reduced reading in Canada and has driven Canadians to shop for books and magazines outside Canada. It has also harmed our writers, our publishers, our book stores and our libraries. It has also affected students in a very negative kind of way.

Continuing this tax will reduce our literacy, our competitiveness, our productivity and our prosperity. It has also contributed to a loss of jobs. This has been documented.

The GST is a tax on literacy. It is a tax on knowledge. It is a tax on learning.

The Economic Council of Canada has pointed out that there will be another one million illiterate Canadians, functionally illiterate Canadians, out there in the work force by the year 2000.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

BUY CANADIAN PROGRAM

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, when the announcement was made earlier this year that the General Motors foundry in St. Catharines would close in 1995, the city council reacted by calling on the federal

and provincial governments to establish a program to encourage our citizens to buy products domestically.

I am glad to say that the federal government has responded to this resolution and has listened to similar suggestions made during the Community Talks meetings across the country.

Last month the government launched the "Canada—Buy Into It" program. It is a campaign designed to ask Canadians to take a fresh look at the quality and range of products we produce in Canada.

This is an important initiative. Our manufacturers are responding to competitive pressures to improve the quality of their products, and this program highlights that fact.

I am confident that this initiative will be very helpful in promoting the idea of supporting wherever possible the businesses of neighbours and friends.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, on April 3 a prominent human rights activist, Ajit Singh Bains, was arrested in India.

This retired judge and current chairperson of the Punjab Human Rights Organization has been thrown in prison and denied the right to a full and legitimate trial under the rule of law.

Further, the police confiscated valuable documents relating to his human rights work.

This incident has summoned condemnation from the international community. Prior to his arrest three Canadian members of Parliament from all three parties met with Mr. Bains in January in India. It is an insult to this Canadian Parliament that this man was then arrested.

The World Sikh Organization's genuine concern for the human rights of all peoples cannot be ignored. The carnage continues in the Punjab, in China and in many other areas of the world.

I urge the Secretary of State for External Affairs to voice Canada's disapproval in the strongest possible terms to the Indian government about the continuing violations of human rights and to call for the immediate release—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Don Valley East.

* * *

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, most jobs are created by small business but most small businesses cannot get bank loans.

If we really want the banks, the trust companies or the life insurance companies for that matter, to provide small businesses with lines of credit and loans for inventory rather than just fully secured asset loans then the government must be prepared to lead by example.

Unfortunately the lending policies of the Federal Business Development Bank are exactly the same as those presently employed by the chartered banks.

We cannot expect the banks, the trust companies or the life insurance companies to lend to small business if the government's own lender of last resort, the Federal Business Development Bank, will not.

At present the FBDB's aid to small business seems to be based on the theory that if we hold their head under water long enough they will develop better lung control.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Dieppe raid on August 19, 1942. In April I was honoured to be among those who visited the Canadian cemetery at Dieppe while in France for the 75th anniversary of Vimy Ridge.

Today I would encourage the government to consider the following request made by the Dieppe veterans.

First, the commemorative stamp for the 50th anniversary should be issued prior to August 19 rather than in November as now planned.

Second, POW veterans from Dieppe should be made eligible for the veterans independence program.

Third, post-traumatic stress disorder should be recognized as a pensionable disability.

And last but not least, Dieppe veterans should finally receive an appropriate medal for their part in the raid.

Meeting these requests would be a fine way to mark the 50th anniversary of this tragic chapter in Canadian history.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, world leaders are meeting in Rio de Janeiro to discuss our global environment. The nations of the world must work together to preserve and protect our global heritage: the environment.

[*English*]

The government should do everything in its power to lead by example on issues such as biodiversity and global warming. We must help companies develop new technologies that will take pollution out of the production process.

Canada must take this opportunity at the world summit to be a global leader. The government must urge all nations to fight stratospheric ozone depletion, pollution of our oceans and global deforestation. It is our common heritage and we must protect it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, World Environment Day is an opportunity for us to demonstrate our determination to preserve our environment. We expressed that determination in Canada's green plan, to which all Canadians contributed. Published in December 1990, the green plan is our action plan for meeting the challenges of sustainable development.

More than ever before in our history, we are focusing our attention and efforts on the environment. We know that our economic prosperity depends on a healthy environment. We know too that our success depends on working together, here in Canada and with the other nations of this world.

While our country is celebrating Canadian Environment Week, more than 150 heads of state are meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the earth summit. This conference will be a major step toward achieving our common objective to make sustainable development a reality for this generation and generations to come.

* * *

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want the House to hear about a young constituent of mine, 17-year old Nick Iozzo, who has just learned a lesson about the Mulroney government.

Last winter Nick saw an ad for a summer job with the Department of National Defence to get musical and military training in the reserves. He is a musician and he wants a career in music so this was right up his alley.

He applied for the job. Lengthy auditions were held, and he and 34 other youngsters were hired for this job. He and his family were very happy and he assumed he would be doing it for the summer.

However, a few days before he was supposed to report for work he was telephoned and told the job was cancelled because of Department of National Defence budget cuts.

Nick wrote to me and asked me to help him now that it is too late to get another job. He wonders how anyone can trust this government, and frankly so do I.

* * *

CALGARY SOUTHWEST

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, in April I sent a survey to the constituents of Calgary Southwest asking them for their views and their concerns, and to rate in order of priority the most important issues.

I want to thank the 6,000 plus people who took the time to return the survey. Eliminating the deficit is the number one issue. Close behind the people of Calgary Southwest believe both health and education must be a majority for all levels of government.

Property rights should be entrenched in the Constitution. The Senate must be reformed. Elected, yes, many want an equal number of senators from each province but abolition has strong support.

One constituent said:

> I fully support free trade, GST, deficit reduction, and economic restructuring but you had better frame this card because I doubt you will get many like it.

* * *

THE FAMILY

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, this week Canadians learned about the existence of a Tory family caucus which has taken credit for the influencing of the many negative cabinet decisions on policies affecting families.

The reality for families today is that in the 1950s it took an average of 45 hours a week of paid work to support a family. Now it takes an average of 65 to 80 hours. Today two-parent families make up the largest group of families living in poverty. Poverty rates among two-parent families would more than double without the incomes of wives.

• (1110)

New Democrats know that Canadians want a government not rooted in the past but one which will recognize and accept the transition families are going through and seek to provide policies which address the new roles of families; a government which is committed to full employment and which provides training and other necessary support programs; a government committed to improving access to non-profit, universal, quality, affordable child care.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Index Linked Mortgage Program to assist the development of co-operative housing projects has been abolished, and that as a result, the number of co-operative housing units will be reduced by 80 per cent. The program, which the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation qualified as low cost and high-performance, should not be cut.

Mr. André Gariépy, president of the *Coopérative Loge-Uni*, Mrs. Mariette Dunn, secretary, Mr. Guy Simard and Ms. Youance, Desin, Thiboutot, Bédard, Gagné and Simard, all members of the same housing co-op in my riding, have made it clear that they totally disapprove of these regressive measures by the Conservative government, and that is why I ask the government to reverse its decision.

* * *

[*English*]

HARBOURS

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, for six years the barge named *The Prince Edward Island* has been tied up at the pier in Whitby harbour. This derelict vessel has been an eyesore, a possible safety hazard and a possible environmental hazard.

It has taken a concerted effort, particularly by the town of Whitby and its municipal council but also by the province and the federal government, to get rid of this thing finally. Just the other day it was towed out of Whitby harbour. The unfortunate part of it all is that it is going some place else.

I call on the federal government to bring forward regulations to prevent this kind of thing from happening at any harbour anywhere in Canada again.

* * *

MANITOBA UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, today's unemployment statistics indicate that northern Manitoba has 24.8 per cent official unemployment. This is the highest of any region within any province of Canada. Yet this federal government has refused to renegotiate the northern development agreement, has refused to provide funding for the port of Churchill, has refused to do anything with regard to the hydro development, and has refused to provide adequate training for native Canadians.

My statement in this House is to the effect that the government is ignoring a very important part of this country. It has no concern for the youth. It has no concern for native Canadians. It has no concern for women.

Why does it continue to be the government when it will not do anything to help the people?

S. O. 31

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in May 1992 was 11.2 per cent, up 2 per cent from last month. This is the highest unemployment rate since November 1984.

In my own region in eastern Ontario the rate has gone up by three-tenths of one per cent over one month and 2,000 more people are unemployed this month than last month.

Here is what the government had to say about unemployment on October 25, 1991 when the Minister of Finance said—and I know it is unfair to quote him, using his own words—as follows:

> I ask the hon. member to consider the fact that the merchandise trade balance is up, housing starts are up—on an annualized basis and unemployment rates are coming down. The indicators to which the hon. member refers, such as bankruptcies, have a certain amount of lag time. I would ask him to take that into consideration.

Things are going better.

* * *

CATHOLIC TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, at this time in our unity debate and at a time when Canadians who are modest and self-effacing run themselves down quite a bit, I thought I would read a message from my riding office about something that is happening in Canada.

My assistant just talked to a teacher from St. Patrick's school in Sebringville, Ontario. He tells me that the Catholic Teachers' Federation is celebrating Canada Day by having all school children in Catholic schools across Canada, hundreds and thousands of schools and thousands of students, sing *O Canada* at twelve noon. This was on Tuesday, June 2. Then they are going to shake hands, hug, and generally celebrate the joy of living in this great nation.

My staff member ends by saying: "I don't know if anybody in Ottawa knows this, but I think it is great". Until now I don't know if anybody in Ottawa did know of it, but I too think it is great.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate World Environment Day, a day for all Canadians to demonstrate their commitment to a healthy environment.

More than at any previous time in our history we are focusing our attention and efforts on the environment. Most of us know that our future, both our physical well-being and our economic prosperity, depends on a healthy environment. We know too that our success depends on working together to achieve a common goal.

That is what we are hoping for at the earth summit in Rio de Janeiro this week and next. Heads of government and over 30,000 people in total are attending this important conference at which the Canadian delegation will be playing a leading role.

The green plan, Canada's national agenda for protecting and restoring the environment, has been suggested by the United Nations as a model for other countries to follow in designing their own strategies. The partnership principle which is achieving positive results in Canada can be made to work on a global level as well.

If we work together we can make a difference.

* * *

CHILD EXPLOITATION

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, one of the worst crimes that faces our country is that of child exploitation.

Next week Mrs. Monica Rainey, the head of a group called CACE, Citizens Against Child Exploitation, will be in Ottawa to present over 10,000 signatures of support from my constituency of Okanagan Centre.

People in a position of trust who exploit children should never be allowed to return to those positions again. Our laws need to be changed to make that happen.

Mrs. Rainey will be meeting with various ministers and MPs from all sides of the House. I would urge all members of Parliament to offer their support to her in her efforts to put an end to this terrible abuse of children.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The unemployment statistics released today are staggering: 11.2 per cent, the highest rate since this government took office in November 1984. There are 1,536,000 officially unemployed with hundreds of thousands more who have given up hope and given up looking for a job. Seven provinces now have double digit rates of unemployment.

This government must take responsibility for the devastating situation we are in today. When will the minister finally admit on behalf of his government that the government does not have the slightest idea how to put Canadians back to work? When will he finally admit that the unemployment rate is a direct result of the policies of his government?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year members opposite were calling for lower interest rates. They were calling for a lower dollar. They were calling for a 5 per cent down payment for mortgages. Two weeks ago they called for more section 26 training in Canada.

Today we have a lower dollar, lower interest rates and $150 million more for training and work sharing, but we still have problems and we acknowledge that.

What is important is for the hon. member to pay attention to the real facts that happened this month.

Mr. Nunziata: People have lost hope.

Mr. Valcourt: The member says: "People have lost hope". How does he explain that over 50,000 people returned to the labour force this month? That is an encouraging and positive sign for our economy.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, there are faces behind the massive numbers of unemployed in Canada. The hardest hit are women and youth.

The unemployment rate among women rose to 10.3 per cent; 20,000 women lost their jobs last month. Youth unemployment is at 17.8 per cent. There are 114,000 fewer young people employed this year than in May of last year. Among young men the rate is 20.3 per cent. Students looking for work this summer have little or no hope of finding summer jobs.

What positive news does the minister have today for the youth and women of Canada who are desperately searching for employment?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member talks about women—and in his earlier question he referred to 1984—he should also add that since 1984 it is close to one million; 890,000 more women are working today than in September 1984 and 71.5 per cent of the jobs created for women since September 1984 are full-time jobs. That is an improvement over the era when his party governed Canada.

• (1120)

He is asking: "What are we doing for those people today?" He seems to imply that we take solace in the fact that people are unemployed. Not at all.

We are working on the fundamentals of the economy being right, not on having a quick-fix solution, throwing money at the problem, giving them make-work projects and then having them on welfare again. We are working to create solid, sustainable, long-term jobs and this is what the budget of my colleague, the Minister of Finance, will achieve for Canada.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, this minister is not hoodwinking Canadians into believing that this government is providing the necessary leadership in order to put people back to work.

It is clear that this government does not know what it is doing on the unemployment front. It is paralysed. It is ad libbing its way through the worst economic crisis since the Depression.

He referred to the budget. Let us look at the budget the Minister of Finance handed down just a few short months ago, in February.

In that budget, the Minister of Finance said that the unemployment rate this year would average 10.3 per cent. In January, it was 10.4 per cent; in February, 10.6 per cent; in March, 11.1 per cent; in April, 11 per cent;

and in May, 11.2 per cent. It is obvious that the minister is out of touch with reality.

Given the fact that the minister based his budget to a large extent on assumptions that the unemployment rate would average 10.3 per cent this year, does he still stick to his target? Does he realize in order to meet his target, the unemployment rate will have to average 9.7 per cent for the balance of the year?

Is the minister prepared now to stand up and to admit that he was wrong in his budget of February 25? Will he tell Canadians what his government expects the unemployment rate to be for the balance of this year?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will recognize that we have acknowledged the unemployment figures are higher than we would like, obviously because of the weakness in the economy and because of the fundamental restructuring that is taking place.

The hon. member should be encouraged by the fact that the labour force grew this past month by some 56,000. There were 31,000 new jobs created.

What is more encouraging and is really a reflection of the policies of the budget, some 41,000 new jobs have been created in the manufacturing sector. That is precisely what we attempted to do in the budget. We tried to address that particular sectoral weakness, namely the manufacturing and processing sector.

Obviously, with the economy being weaker than we had projected in the budget, the hon. member is aware of the fact that Statistics Canada adjusted the figures for 1991 downward by almost one half of one per cent. This has a reflection upon the growth prospects for 1992.

I ask the hon. member to give the budgetary policies a chance to work. The clear example that 41,000 new jobs have been created in the manufacturing sector is proof positive that the policies of the budget are in fact taking hold.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

He says he wants Canadians to give more time for his policies to work. The minister has been saying for months now that his policies are going to turn the economy around. If he is right, why has the unemployment rate gone up and not down? Why has the number of people working fallen by 25,000 in one month alone? Why has the number of full-time jobs dropped by 221,000 since last May?

I ask the minister: In the face of these terrible numbers, where are the jobs? Where are the jobs? Why does he not do more right now to get people back to work?

[*Translation*]

Where are the jobs? Why doesn't he do everything that has to be done to put Canadians back to work immediately?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there are 12.207 million Canadians who are currently working. The hon. member compares the statistics with 1984. In 1984, there were 10.849 million Canadians working out of a work force of 12.331 million. Today we have a work force of 13.7 million. The hon. member is wrong in one of his submissions. The fact of the matter is the labour force has grown this past month by some 56,000. There have been 31,000 new jobs created. There have been 41,000 new jobs created over the last two months in the manufacturing and processing sector. That is a specific area we addressed in the budget.

Today's *Ottawa Citizen* quotes one-year mortgage rates have now reached a 25-year low. Canada is not alone in having difficulty with the unemployment situation. The United States of America has just recorded its highest unemployment levels since October 1983. It is a world-wide problem we are trying to address in the most effective way possible.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, in talking only about the number of people working, the minister and his government are in effect writing off the 1.5 million people who are out of work. Surely, they deserve more from this minister.

There is no doubt that the unemployment rate is up, not down. The number of full-time jobs has fallen, not increased. I cannot believe that after these tragic numbers announced today the minister is essentially giving us the same answer he has been giving us for months. Why can he not say something new to at least give some hope

to these 1.5 million people in this country who want to work?

Why can the minister not figure out that his policies are not working? Why can he not commit today to making job creation his first priority and not his last?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is one of our major priorities. The fact that 41,000 more people are working in the manufacturing sector today than there were in the last two months is proof positive that it is working. The fact that there were 31,000 new jobs created in the month of May is proof positive that our policies are working.

The fact that the Minister of Employment and Immigration just announced an additional $150 million for job training and skills upgrading is again proof positive that this is a priority for us. Why does the hon. member not listen to the answers, rather than reading his rhetoric from questions he prepared in advance.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. He will remember well that back in 1984 when his party took office, it decried the tragic situation in terms of the unacceptably high levels of unemployment, the crisis in unemployment created by the Liberal administration before that was up in the 11 per cent range. Well, we are now back to 1984 levels of unemployment.

May I suggest rather than this exchange which may be seen as some sort of statistical mud wrestling in terms of figures, that we admit there is a crisis facing our country in terms of the high levels of unemployment.

Will the Minister of Finance say he takes this seriously and that he plans to call an economic summit of finance ministers across the country to deal exclusively with finding ways and means of reducing the high levels of unemployment in Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, ministers of finance meet on a regular basis. We have had first ministers' meetings to deal with the economic issues.

Perhaps the most appropriate way to help resolve the problem is for the hon. member to talk to his socialist friends in the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. They moved in to take up the slack that we provided in terms of reductions both for the corporate and private sector and for individual Canadians. We lowered taxes, we did not raise them.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, back in the 1930s, R.B. Bennett admitted that his Conservative policies of the day were wrong and he changed course half-way through the 1930s. Unfortunately, it was too late.

Before it is too late now in the 1990s, my question for the Minister of Finance is this. He knows that there is a willingness across the country to introduce a municipal infrastructure program that will create thousands and thousands of jobs. That can be done. He has the support of governments across the country.

Will he now invest in the future of those people who are unemployed and give them a chance to work and get them off unemployment insurance and welfare?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I repeat for the hon. member's benefit, we addressed in the budget a specific area that needed to be addressed. That was essentially the manufacturing and processing sector and improving the business climate, the small business climate and adding some stimulus to the economy by bringing down the burden of taxation. These are all positive things.

• (1130)

A positive indicator is clearly the fact that there have been 41,000 new jobs created in the manufacturing sector. There have been 31,000 new jobs created in the month of May. The labour force has grown by 56,000.

The hon. member wants to go on a spending binge. He wants a huge infrastructure program. I know the position of the hon. member's party is that we should print money to do that job. That is not an option as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, R.B. Bennett had the courage to admit his government had made an error in judgment, that it had brought in policies that were not working. Unfortunately, it turned course too late in the day.

The Minister of Finance knows by the figures this morning that we have literally hundreds of thousands of highly educated Canadians with post-secondary degrees who are unemployed. There are people with Ph.D.s driving cabs.

The Minister of Finance knows that one of the engines of job creation in this country is small business and tourism. Would he call together the ministers from across the country and territories responsible for small business and tourism to find ways and means of creating jobs in those two critical sectors so people can get to work?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that my hon. friend and his party have discovered tourism and small business. I have to say that this is a very important part of the Canadian economy.

As a result of this, we have through the WD, which would interest him, increased the amount of money that the federal government is going to put into stimulating both small business and tourism.

I have to say though that the NDP government in British Columbia has refused to co-operate with us on the WD money for tourism. We have put forward a tranche of funds and we have asked British Columbia to join us. To date, it is the last province to join us in having a tourism program which would also help small business.

I urge him to take his message to the provincial government in Victoria.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The unacceptable national unemployment rate of 11.2 per cent pales in comparison to the rate in Atlantic Canada.

In eastern Canada alone there are now 10,000 more people looking for work than there were in April. In my province of Prince Edward Island the unemployment rate is over 19 per cent; in Newfoundland it is over 20 per cent.

Why does the minister refuse to understand that his government's lack of leadership in generating jobs is causing many easterners to lose hope?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): It seems to me that the hon. member is interested only in scoring political points. Why does she not look at the programs in place in Atlantic Canada?

I was in New Brunswick and announced with Premier McKenna a $282 million program to help welfare recipients and unemployed Canadians in New Brunswick get off welfare and into productive jobs. We are working with Newfoundland and Labrador, with P.E.I. and Nova Scotia under ACOA and under unemployment insurance programs to try to help those people acquire skills to occupy the new jobs.

We can be concerned about the fact that yes, in a recession the last thing to turn around is unemployment. Looking at the figures for this month, this is happening. It is not a negative sign that over 50,000 people have entered the labour market this month. It is a positive sign. With the proper policies and the fundamentals in place, we can look to much better days.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister. This government is not only willing to leave easterners out to dry, it is also willing to accept the fact that the unemployment rate among women has risen sharply.

In fact, since January, 82,000 women lost their full-time jobs. Canadian women deserve better, Canadian youth deserve better and Canadians in general deserve better from this government.

Why will this government not come forward today with an infrastructure program that could provide hope for Canadians across this country?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as was indicated in the budget, we are undertaking a number of initiatives via the private sector that will help stimulate the economy in certain key areas, for example, in the transportation sector and airport development. The hon. member is aware that we are actively pursuing the Prince Edward Island fixed-link which would be a very important transportation connection and would also create jobs.

We also indicated we would be exploring with the provinces the possibility of upgrading our national highways system which is part and parcel of a four-year study undertaken by the federal and provincial ministers of transport. These are all issues that are undergoing active consideration.

I repeat to the hon. member that it is important to get to the fundamentals. A long-term low interest rate is the basis for long-term sustainable growth in bringing inflation down and keeping it down. That has had a very positive effect in terms of increasing our productivity and of increasing our profit margins. That is the key to reinvestment and the creation of jobs in the future.

Those are the fundamentals that have to be in place. We are going through that painful restructuring and adjustment process. Clearly, there are positive signs that are occurring, for example, the merchandise trade and the improvement in the job picture. As the budget policies take hold, further evidence of that will be seen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of employment.

Statistics Canada just confirmed 91 per cent of Canadians in a recent poll think the recession is not over. Unemployment in the Montreal area rose to 13 per cent in May. The rate also went up in Chicoutimi, Jonquière, Quebec City, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke.

Why does the government continue to pursue economic policies that have quite simply failed to create jobs for the residents of major cities in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member should say clearly and precisely what he means.

The government has implemented economic policies to create a climate that would lead to the creation of permanent jobs. If the hon. member argues that we should use the approach his party cherished for decades of throwing money at problems by creating fictitious jobs with taxpayers' money, that is not the solution we are considering.

If the hon. member would look at the real situation resulting from the economic policy, the lowest interest rates in 20 years, the lowest inflation of all industrialized countries, all these factors will lead to private sector investment that will result in permanent employment in the long term. That is what Quebecers want.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, this government was elected in 1984 with promises of immediate job creation. After all this time we are in an unacceptable situation.

In May, a thousand jobs were lost in Sherbrooke and another thousand in Trois-Rivières. In the Montreal area alone, 12,000 jobs were lost in May, Mr. Speaker.

Will the government finally accept the program put forward by the Liberal leader of working with the municipalities to give employment to all these 14,000 families that lost their jobs in May alone?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member to pay attention. When he tells us about the Liberal Party's famous plan, I remember that in January, he submitted this Liberal proposal to us. Under it, $125 million more would have been spent to train Canadians and give them the skills they need to hold new jobs.

We rejected it because we invested $450 million more in this key sector of the economy, namely our workers' skills. We rejected the Liberal proposal out of hand in favour of something much better, to the benefit of Quebecers and all Canadians.

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[*English*]

PRIVATE FAMILY TRUSTS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, in 1972, the Liberals eliminated the federal inheritance tax and brought in a 21-year tax exemption for private family trusts. That 21 years is almost up, with these trusts to be finally taxed on January 2, 1993. Estimates of how much money exists in these trusts run as high as $70 billion.

• (1140)

I want to ask the Minister of Finance if he would show he is serious about reducing the deficit and the equitable sharing of reducing that deficit and commit now not to extend this exemption so that the tax is collectable on January 2, 1993, from these trusts and goes either toward eliminating the deficit or toward the kind of job creation programs that have been suggested in the House today.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know that the position of the New Democratic Party has always been to tax Canadians into submission. What is important—

Some hon. members: Fair taxes.

Mr. Mazankowski: Well, that has been their policy and we have seen evidence of that in the last three budgets that have been brought down by the socialist governments. They believe in tax, tax, tax and to heck with the economic impact.

The hon. member has to be aware that any tax regime has to be competitive with the global situation. We have been trying to bring about through tax reform a tax regime that would allow us to compete more effectively and to provide incentives for the private sector to invest and to spend, and to create new jobs and new job activity.

It is within that context that we have approached the whole issue of tax reform.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Finance why it is okay to tax the middle class to death, as this government has done through its changes in tax reform, the icing on the cake being the GST. Yet the minister gets up and weeps these big crocodile tears. He does not want to tax the Bronfmans to death. He does not want to tax all these other large wealthy families in Canada that benefit from these trust laws.

I say to the minister he cannot have it both ways. He cannot ask Canadians to take him seriously about the deficit and refuse to do something about this kind of wealth.

Will the minister commit today to not extend this Liberal tax exemption for the wealthy and make that money available either for deficit reduction or for the renewal of Canada's municipal infrastructure rather than just giving this billion dollar gift to some of Canada's wealthiest families?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know that the position of the New Democratic Party would be to do away with the capital gains exemption. That would be a further burden on small business, a further burden on farmers, kill all incentives to generate wealth, kill all incentives to generate new jobs.

I can give the hon. member this assurance. As long as I am finance minister, I will attempt to put in place a tax regime that will be competitive and reflective of the reality of the global marketplace.

* * *

YOUTH

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of employment.

Over a year ago the government received a report on the shortcomings of the Canada student loans programs which it had commissioned. The report stated that cost allowances for students have not been updated since 1984 and that the allowances fall significantly short in most categories.

Given the fact that so few students will find work this summer, what is the government prepared to do in advance of the next school year to address the double crisis of student unemployment and inadequate student funding.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that a number of deficiencies in that particular program have been raised. I believe the hon. member opposite has raised some of them.

We have been moving very aggressively to come to grips with the issue. The program is a shared program between the provinces and the federal government. It is also under the administration of the banks.

We have reached agreement with the provinces with a view to first of all increase the weekly loan limit to reflect the increases in costs since 1984. We have also talked about the possibility of removing the 3 per cent administration fee to give the students a greater opportunity.

We started negotiations with the banks about two weeks ago to see how we could put in place a new regime that would make the system more efficient.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, the minister's response is unacceptable. I think it is an insult to the over 300,000 students who would like to return to school but cannot find work this summer.

My question is for the minister of employment. The minister of employment must understand by now, given the figures released today, that we are dealing with a national crisis in relation to young people in this country. What is this government going to do before this House

rises to help young people find work so they can return to school in the fall?

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 think everybody here will agree with the fact that the situation is difficult, particularly for the young people.

That is why this government is striving through its prosperity initiative, its budget, et cetera, to make sure the fundamentals are there so the youth of our country have the hope to find the necessary instruments to guarantee their future.

That being said, my colleague the minister of employment has put into place the appropriate programs to deal with those youth who are out of school. Through the Challenges program we have put in place the necessary programs and moneys to deal with those students at risk to make sure they do return to school. We believe the most fundamental of the instruments they need for the future is an education.

I am also encouraged by a recent report from Statistics Canada that says this summer more students will be able to find employment than last year. We have put more money into the program in order to facilitate that.

* * *

JOB TRAINING

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of employment.

On Tuesday he said Canada's small and medium-sized businesses are "doing nothing to help train workers".

The minister knows that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business study shows that last year these businesses spent $9.6 billion for on-the-job training. When is this minister, who has cut government funding for training, going to stop blaming business for his own failures?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): I do not know what they take Canadians for, standing up in the House and telling people we have cut money for training when in fact the funds earmarked for training have gone up by $450 million. This is *chest le comble*.

As for his small business reference, I have not said that small business is doing nothing. I am comparing what Canadian corporations are doing in terms of training in Canada. If we have to compete in this world, we have to compare ourselves to our competing partners. American corporations spend twice as much as Canadian corporations to train people. The Japanese spend five times as much as Canadian corporations to train people and the Germans spend eight times as much. That is what I am referring to.

If he cares to go and talk to the small business people in Canada, he will find they agree they have to invest more in the people.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, let me clear this up. This minister has not increased government funding for training.

Mr. Valcourt: That is a lie.

Mr. Peterson: He said it is a lie.

Mr. Speaker: It is one thing to have disagreements but if somebody shouted out "It is a lie", I wish the member would just get up and withdraw it and let us get on with Question Period.

Mr. Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw.

Mr. Peterson: This minister has simply diverted unemployment insurance funds which are contributed entirely by workers and employers to training. It is not government funding. It is out of their pockets.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is putting a question. I am sure the House will give him the courtesy to be heard.

Mr. Peterson: The Canadian Federation of Independent Business wrote in a letter to the minister and I quote:

> The ignorance displayed by the minister is unbelievable, and his attempts to blame someone else for training difficulties is unconscionable.

I ask the minister, who said business does nothing to help train workers, if he will apologize for this gross misrepresentation.

• (1150)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): No, Mr. Speaker, I will not apologize for Canadian workers who are seeing private sector companies not investing enough in their skills in Canada because skills are the success of a competitive economy.

No, I will not apologize because German corporations spend eight times more than Canadian corporations, the Americans spend twice as much and the Japanese spend five times as much. What they agree on is that they have to spend more to help people acquire the skills needed in a competitive world.

I hear the rhetoric of the member. I think we should find another club. It will be the same—

Mr. Speaker: I think we have to proceed.

* * *

WHITBY HARBOUR

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, for six years a boat was anchored in Whitby harbour, a boat that was derelict, unsightly, unsafe, a possible environmental hazard, among other things. As of this week it has finally been towed out of Whitby harbour to some other unknown destination.

Will the Minister of Transport come forward with regulations that will prevent a vessel of this type being tied up along any pier regulated by the Department of Transport in Canada ever again?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

The department is very aware of this issue. I think his constituents have been well represented on this issue. The member has expressed the concern a number of times.

The concern here is that in cases like this the government is constrained to ensuring the vessel in question is safe or does not present on environmental danger. There are very real constraints to our ability to order a private owner to move a vessel.

I can only say that the government has looked into the matter. The vessel has now been removed through the impetus and efforts of the hon. member. We are reviewing the regulations with a view to resolving these matters more quickly in the future.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period my leader read from the CANMET study with regard to Westray and pointed out that with regard to the ventilation section and methane that the test does not give one confidence.

The minister in response said that the studies were outdated. Yet in 1990 in the professional magazine *Northern Miner* it referred to the inspection of Westray and said: "The potential for spontaneous combustion underground has not been clearly assessed".

The minister in the House has said that the government was not necessarily concerned with safety. It perceived that to be a provincial responsibility. I would ask the minister this: If you are making an economic investment, why would you not look at this information about the danger signals and realize that there is a real potential that your investment is in danger?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that with every investment and every underground coal mine that has ever been done, there has always been the danger of methane. That exists for all coal-mining investments.

What is different here is that there were a host of studies to try to assess whether the whole project would be economically and technically feasible.

The CANMET review is a review of all of those studies: the Dames and Moore study, the AMCL report in March, 1988, the Placer reports, the Hacquebard review, the Kilborn review and all other technical studies that led up to the decision by the company to go ahead with the mine. All of those reviews looked at the questions to which my hon. friend refers. The reviews all made it clear that the methane problem was either a small problem or a moderate problem or it might be more than that. All of them were looked at. They had to be included as part of the technical review. The fact is that they were and the decision was made by the mine to go ahead because the technical studies summarized by

the CANMET review made it clear that the mine was technically feasible.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I come from a mining area. The minister was in that area very recently. Yes, all coal mines are dangerous. However, a mining area that has cost over 240 deaths in the previous period is obviously much more dangerous.

Therefore, the government knew it was not just an ordinary coal mining area.

My supplementary question is this. In December 1990, I tried to get the correspondence between ministers and between officials on this very aspect by tabling a question on the Order Paper.

That correspondence was not tabled in the House yesterday. The government has the ability to table that information. If it will not table it in this House, will it guarantee that all of that correspondence—absolutely all of that correspondence—will be made available to the various inquiries?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, there are three separate points to the hon. member's question.

The first point essentially is why, given the tragedy that occurred, did the government guarantee a loan to have the mine start in the first place. Those reasons are clear to the House just from the questions today about unemployment. That part of Nova Scotia had very high unemployment, and there was a provincial economic development priority. I know his party believes in economic development in the regions where there is high unemployment. That is one reason why this particular mine was looked at.

We studied very carefully the possibilities of doing it as long as it was viewed as being technically feasible. In fact, that is what all the documents made clear yesterday. The CANMET review of all the technical studies says this mine is technically feasible, and then it made some other recommendations as well.

In terms of communications beyond what I have tabled in the House yesterday, our role as a financial guarantor of the loan puts us into a position of being concerned with it from a technical point of view and from a financial point of view. There will be some more documents tabled along that line as well.

* * *

BANKING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The minister is aware of the fact that in an effort to provide the necessary financing for Canadian exporters to help create jobs in Canada, the Royal Bank has applied for a banking charter in China. He also knows that approval of that banking charter is contingent upon the minister signing the application for the Bank of China to have a Canadian banking charter.

Does the minister intend to sign the application of the Bank of China? If so, when?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

The Minister of Finance has forwarded a letter to the Bank of China, giving it approval in principle for establishing a bank here in Canada. Our banking regulations require that the Bank of China now must advertise over a 30-day period establishing a Schedule II bank here in Canada.

There is a 30-day waiting period following that for comments on its application. Following that, it would apply for certification to the Minister of Finance.

The letter was forwarded, as I said, April 30 by the Minister of Finance. The procedure is well under way.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the failure of the Government of Canada to exercise prudent and due diligence in the Westray coal mining project has unfortunately resulted in a national disaster.

The government's own documents as tabled yesterday recommended: "The Department of Industry, Science and Technology consider more in-depth geological mining process, economic evaluation of the type undertaken by commercial lending institutions on projects of this magnitude".

Did the minister follow the advice of his own agencies? If not, could the minister explain to the House what possible reasons he could give for not following that advice?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right. There were three recommendations from the CANMET review.

First, that the Department of Industry, Science and Technology confirm that the contractual arrangements with the Nova Scotia Power Corporation were in place and assess the significance of failure there. That of course we did because without that contract, there would not have been any cash flow to speak of.

The second recommendation was that Westray had to demonstrate and disclose its efforts to secure commercial lending.

The third one is the one he is quoting, that the Department of Industry, Science and Technology consider a more in-depth geological mining processing economic evaluation of the type undertaken by commercial lending institutions on projects of this magnitude.

Remember that our role in this was purely financial. We were guaranteeing a loan. We did further studies of a technical and financial type in order to make sure that our guarantee would be reasonable.

• (1200)

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for indicating to the House that further studies and the advice of the department were followed. We look forward to getting that information in the weeks ahead.

My specific question to the minister is this: On page 5 of the agreement consummated by the Government of Canada, Curragh Resources Inc. and the Bank of Nova Scotia, it says the lender—

> —made specific disclosure to the minister of the risks associated with the project in a letter dated September 14, 1990.

I ask the minister responsible if he would explain to the House the nature of those risks, both commercial and otherwise, and if he would be so kind as to table the contents of that letter in the House of Commons so that all members will have an opportunity to review its contents.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the hon. member, with 2,000 pages of evidence and documentation, will not have found all of it. But, in fact, the analysis of those questions is in the documents that I tabled yesterday.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. David Warner, Speaker of the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

WESTRAY MINE DOCUMENTS

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism in response to my question said that he was going to be tabling more documents with regard to the Westray situation. Yesterday in *Hansard* the government House leader indicated that there really is no relevant information missing.

Mr. Speaker, we were given 2,000 pages yesterday and we were told by the government House leader that there was no relevant information missing. We got an answer today from another minister during Question Period that there were more documents to come.

I would simply ask this: Does the government have another package of information that is coming on Westray? If so, when are we going to get it?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, we are getting into debate here. The hon. member should have completed my comments from yesterday where I said that "the total documentation would be several feet high and require a forklift". In fact, there is no attempt to keep anything inaccessible to him or anybody else. They will be made available in the library room at Industry, Science and Technology.

The minister of state for small businesses said today that if there is a line up for certain pieces of documentation in the library, we will certainly table those so that they will be accessible rather than forcing everybody to go over there. But the object is to have—

Mr. Murphy: You didn't mention the library.

Mr. Andre: I wish the hon. member would do me the courtesy of accepting what I am saying and not interrupting me and not questioning my motives, which is so much his habit. The reality is that all of the relevant information will be made available.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to impugn the motives of the government House leader, but I do want to inform him of the procedure which was set up by the minister of state for small businesses for obtaining the documents, particularly the ones he refers to as being seven-feet high.

Yesterday members of my caucus who went to try and get those documents found that copies were made available to media representatives when, in fact, our colleagues and our research people had to read the documents and thereafter request a Xeroxed copy of the information that they were looking for.

I am not suggesting that there is a double standard here. But I am wondering if the minister could take under advisement my suggestion that this matter be looked at and perhaps a way found in which to expedite the relinquishing of that information so that it is made available, not just to representatives of the media. Because this is a major issue affecting the country, we think that it ought to be made available quickly and promptly to all members of Parliament.

I mention that in the spirit of trying to get all of the information.

Mr. Andre: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, that is the intent. What might have happened is that a number of members of the media had put in access to information requests. As you know, in that regard there is a cost associated. The applicant pays for the duplicating costs and so on. There is no intent to try and put obstacles. On the other hand, there is a very real concern that we may be saddled with several hundred thousand dollars worth of bills for duplication and so on if it is thrown wide open. I can assure the hon. member that I will communicate the facts he just informed me of and see what we can do to make sure that the information is accessible.

Mr. Kindy: A point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would hear the Chair first.

The exchange that has taken place is, I hope, helpful. I have to remind the House that is getting well beyond a point of order.

Is the hon. member for Calgary Northeast on the same point?

Mr. Kindy: No.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the hon. member.

RECORDED DIVISIONS

Mr. Kindy: Mr. Speaker, I wanted a clarification from you concerning the votes of June 3, in particular vote 150. The question is of pairing. I see that some members were paired with people who have died. This may be an error. It happens that Mr. Malepart is appearing as being paired with somebody.

The question of pairing as such concerns me because Erskine May, 21st edition, defines pairing as a "system that enables a member to absent himself or herself , and to agree with another member that he or she will be absent at the time of the vote. By this mutual agreement, a vote is neutralized on each side of a question, and the actual size of the majority is not affected".

I see that members on vote 150 are paired and have voted and are on the same side. I would like you to clarify for me and maybe for other members and for the public generally just how it works.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that the Deputy Speaker has addressed the House on this point. I will consider very carefully the intervention of the hon. member for Calgary Northeast and report back to the House if that is appropriate. In any event I will be in touch with him.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

MINISTER'S ADVISORY GROUP ON DEFENCE INFRASTRUCTURE

TABLING OF REPORT

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to table today in accordance with Standing Order 32(2) the report of the Minister's Advisory Group on Defence Infrastructure, in both official languages.

I would ask that this report be referred to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs for its consideration.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

43RD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 43rd report of the Standing Committee on House Management, on the broadcasting of the proceedings of the House.

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

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-348, an act to amend the Criminal Code (gun control).

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

Ms. Greene: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill would be to establish a system that would enable the authorities to know the number and kinds of unrestricted firearms that are being acquired by Canadians after the coming into force of this act and to trace those firearms when they are subsequently disposed of, lost or stolen.

• (1210)

The police forces throughout this country and many, many groups in the community are asking for this kind of firearms registration system.

Mr. Speaker: Ms. Greene 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

GREEN SHIELD PREPAID SERVICES INC.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I call for unanimous consent of the House to move a motion:

> That notwithstanding Standing Orders 132 and 140, the petition for a private bill from Green Shield Prepaid Services Inc. presented on Monday, June 1, 1992, and reported by the Clerk of Petitions Tuesday, June 2, 1992, be deemed to have been filed within the required time limit and received by the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

AUTHORIZATION FOR SUBCOMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

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 four members and two staff members of the subcommittee on acid rain of the Standing Committee on Environment be permitted to travel to Washington, D.C., June 16, 17, 18, 1992 in relation to its study on Canada-United States acid rain reduction programs.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 50 people from right across this country.

The government is proposing to add to its GST by taxing the printed word. These citizens protest this move as much as they protest the GST. This is even worse. It strikes a blow at learning and the transfer of information.

I commend my colleague from St. Boniface for the efforts he has made in this area.

Mr. Speaker: I would remind hon. members that remarks at the presentation of a petition should be brief and should not get into the realm of debate.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 50 Canadian citizens asking Parliament to rescind the goods and services tax on books, magazines and newspapers.

In their petition they point out that the dissemination of the printed word is a cornerstone of democracy. They also point out that prior to the goods and services tax, going right back to 1867, there has never been a tax on books in Canada. They ask that this tax be rescinded.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition today signed by many Canadians. It is a petition concerning the tax on reading. They indicate that since Confederation there had not been a tax on books, magazines and newspapers until as we know, this government brought in the GST on reading. They call upon Parliament to have this tax cancelled.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions that I wish to present this afternoon.

First is a petition from constituents from Ottawa South asking the Government of Canada to consult with the people of Canada by way of a national referendum on matters of constitutional amendment.

Presumably legislation adopted in this House yesterday will contribute to safisfying the request of these petitions.

[*Translation*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition, signed by residents of the riding of Ottawa South, who call upon Parliament to consider the possibility of reinstating the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Your petitioners deplore the fact that the government has abolished the Court Challenges Program.

[*English*]

CANADIAN OLYMPIC TEAM COLOURS

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by a great number of people from Mississauga objecting to the purple and white trim on the Canadian colours worn in the Olympics last winter in France and praying that the government makes sure that Canada's team be represented in the Canadian colours of red and white in Spain this summer.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 from many people from the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta reminding this government that since Confederation we have never taxed books. They are begging and humbly asking to reaffirm this historic principle embodied in tax-free status for the printed word by returning the zero rate in GST legislation.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from many Canadians submitted to me. It states: "Don't tax books, don't tax reading. It is a bad policy, bad for business and it is bad government. It is contradictory, completely so, to our fundamental democratic principles. Books and reading materials have never been taxed in this country." The petitioners ask that it be abolished and be abolished now.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I continue to receive petitions from Canadians who are asking the government to reconsider its position on the Court Challenges Program and pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the opportunity to present these petitions to the House.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by residents of St. Catharines asking for a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government.

VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by over 700 Canadians from British Columbia, Alberta, and various municipalities in Ontario including Oshawa, Mississauga, Orillia, Pickering and Barrie.

The petition articulates the sorrow, pain and loss on the death of Helen Groat, a victim of violence. They note the increase in murder and manslaughter by individuals on early release.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to restrict the leniency and the issue of day passes and early release so that all of us may be better protected.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present two identical petitions with a total of 729 names, signed by constituents from my riding of Okanagan Centre, requesting the Government of Canada conduct a binding referendum on all constitutional amendments.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. One is that the Government of Canada has seen fit since Confederation to apply a zero rate of tax to magazines, books and newspapers and now proposes to include them in the GST, in fact it has imposed it.

The undersigned 100 petitioners from across Canada humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reaffirm the historic principles embodied in the tax-free status for the printed word by returning the zero rate in the GST legislation and regulations.

LIFETIME CAPITAL GAINS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): The second petition is from 41 Nepean petitioners with regard to the recent budget, where the government eliminated the $100,000 lifetime capital gains exemption on real estate purchased after February 1992. These people again call upon Parliament to reinstate the $100,000 lifetime capital gains exemption as it certainly affects people of the middle class and their savings.

CROATIA

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition on behalf of the Croatian community of Thunder Bay whereby they implore the government to keep using whatever means are possible in order to bring some peace and harmony to their troubled homelands.

• (1220)

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to present to the House today, the first being from Canadians from the province of Manitoba.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament 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, irrespective of child care choice.

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by residents of Cornwall and other eastern Ontario communities in support of the parents of Nina de Villiers and I am sure I could add, regrettably, of others since.

Therefore, the petitioners request that Parliament recognize that crimes of violence against the person are serious and abhorrent to society and that it amend the Criminal Code of Canada, the Bail Reform Act of 1972 and the Parole Act accordingly.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker the third petition again is signed by residents of Cornwall.

The petitioners call upon government to recognize that a referendum of the people be binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker finally, I have a petition signed by Canadians from the province of Nova Scotia.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reaffirm the historic principles embodied in the tax-free status for the printed word by retaining the zero rate in the GST legislation and regulations.

WATER DIVERSION

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I have eight petitions with the names of 326 people from communities throughout Okanagan—Shuswap. The petitioners are from Armstrong, Vernon, Falkland, Kamloops even, Enderby, Lumby and Salmon Arm.

They are concerned about the plans to divert a portion of the North Thompson and to sell that water to the California market. They are asking the government to state categorically that it will not permit our fresh waters to be dammed and diverted into the U.S.A and to state that Canadian waters are not for sale.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): On another issue, I have a petition signed by a number of residents from the Vernon area in the Okanagan—Shuswap asking the government to hold a referendum upon the constitutional amendments as proposed by the government.

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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, Question No. 293 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 293—**Mr. Milliken:**

What were the production and publication costs of the government's report entitled "The State of Canada's Environment"?

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Production and publication costs for The State of Canada's Environment and accompanying highlights document and brochure amount to $1.5 million over a four-year period. This amount includes design, editing, typesetting, printing in both official languages, contracts for non-goverment authors, as well as nearly 100 external peer reviewers.

The report is being sold and distributed by the Canada Communication Group, which comes under the Department of Supply and Services Canada. The sale price is $29.95 plus shipping and taxes.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The question as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 228 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 228 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 228—**Mr. Boudria:**

Which government department and agencies are currently developing computerized information systems and for each project not yet operating as intended, what was the original completion date, the revised completion date, the original cost estimate, the actual expenditures so far, and the revised cost estimate?

Return tabled.

[*English*]

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

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—ONTARIO ECONOMY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lee (p. 11449).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are seven minutes remaining in questions and comments to the hon. member for Ontario. The hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood had the floor.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, just a short preamble of my comments before we went into Question Period.

I indicated parts of the member's speech where I quite frankly agreed with some of the statements he had made.

As I pointed out, we are not here just to assist those who are advantaged. We are also challenged and it is our primary responsibility on this side of the House to speak for those people who are going through difficult times in all communities across Canada where there are people unemployed.

There is room for the Government of Canada to do more work with the 1.7 million entrepreneurs in this country. The greatest hope for job creation lies within that sector of the economy. I believe that with low interest rates and low inflation, it improves their position to participate in bringing people off the welfare and unemployment insurance rolls.

This is what I would like to ask the member. Does he not share the view of many that there is a real problem with confidence in that particular sector of our economy, namely the small and medium-sized entrepreneur? We are always being challenged here to present ideas. Does he not think that it would be a good idea to review the standing committee that put forward employment opportunities for the 1980s? This report was produced in 1982, I believe. The Minister of State for Finance and Privatization was part of that committee. There are 186 ideas within this report that the government could review or pick and choose. They are all ideas on how to put Canadians back to work.

What is wrong with reviewing that? What is wrong with taking some of these ideas and using them to lever the entrepreneurship of this country so that they can be motivated to take a chance on the 1.5 million Canadians who are out of work? If each company hired one person in the next 60 days we would have a much better economy on our hands and we would reduce that $35 billion to $40 billion draw which is all taxpayers' money. It would even give us some opportunity or option to reduce taxes.

Why does the government not see if it can use that force to put Canadians back to work?

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the questions from the member for Broadview—Greenwood.

The member is certainly correct in talking about low inflation and low interest rates being of benefit to the small business community and the entrepreneur. He should also of course agree that low inflation and low interest rates are also significant benefits to the unemployed and those on fixed incomes, whether they are senior citizens or others. Inflation is the worse curse that they face. There are some real positive things and I think the member has acknowledged some of that in his comments.

I am sorry I am not personally familiar with this 1982 report. I guess the report that the member refers to talks about many opportunities. From 1982 to 1992, if I heard the minister correctly today, there are over 2 million more people employed in the work force. That is not to say that we should be satisfied at that level. I am sure that specific ideas could come out of that. This could be combined with some of the ideas that are in the budget this year such as improvements to accessing funds for small businesses and the re-regulation of the financial industry to allow entrepreneurs access to funds. There are many things that can be done.

In conjunction with the member, I look forward to the government coming forward and saying: "Look at item number 10 in that proposal and let's do it". It could also be number 11 or number 12. I suspect that many of them have already been implemented.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Ontario in his speech this morning criticized the remarks of my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River who pointed out that the policies of this Conservative government had forced tax increases on the municipalities and the provinces. The hon. member for Ontario said that if municipalities had increased taxes then that was their doing and we should condemn them and not the federal government.

I want to ask the hon. member this. Does he not realize that when his government, the Conservative government, cut unemployment insurance benefits, as it did a few years ago in Bill C-21, and when it made it more difficult to qualify for unemployment insurance and when it shortened the benefit period and made other

cuts, that it was in fact shifting the burden of the unemployed to a great extent to the municipalities in Ontario and to the province? If you have a large number of people who are unemployed, and they do not have unemployment insurance, there is no place else they can go to keep them alive but to the welfare system. The welfare system is financed in Ontario by the municipalities with the help of the province. Either the member did not know what he was voting for when he voted for Bill C-21 a few years ago or he did it and is now concealing the fact. The fact of the matters is that thousands of people who would have been eligible for unemployment insurance and covered by the federal program are not now covered by that federal program. Since we do not believe in letting people starve to death the only recourse for those people is to go to the municipalities.

• (1230)

I was on the committee that studied that bill. We went to Sudbury, Ottawa, and Toronto. Every municipality said: "Do not do that because you are going to increase our tax burden. You are going to put a big burden on us to take care of the unemployed".

I ask the hon. member how he can say that the policies of his government were not responsible for that enormous shift to those municipalities in Ontario for the unemployed? Nobody else can take care of them if they do not have unemployment insurance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has one minute to answer that question.

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, I could use the whole day.

The fact of the matter is that in the unemployment insurance scheme the higher the unemployment insurance rate in a particular region, the higher the benefit time available to individuals. Throughout Ontario there are tremendous programs through unemployment insurance. These include many training funds which help keep people off the welfare rolls.

It was not the federal government that increased the rate of payment to welfare recipients by 28 per cent. I should point out, contrary to what the member says, that it is the federal government that helps fund the program with 50 per cent of the dollars. It is the provincial government that spends it willy-nilly as though there are no controls required.

There is a substantial difference in outlook between me and the member. I guess I would take our approach as being a far more constructive approach to the issue of taxation in Ontario.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the motion of the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I commend him and his caucus for putting forward this motion.

The motion is:

> That this House condemns the government for its negligence toward the worst social and economic difficulties faced by residents of Ontario in modern times.

We all know the signs of trouble in Ontario, as well as in other parts of this country. Some previous speakers have given some of the statistics on the matter. Some speakers following me from all sides will quote statistics. Therefore, I do not wish to go heavily into the statistics of the trouble signs. The main one is the increase in unemployed as a percentage to 11.2 per cent. This is one of the very highest rates that we have had in my lifetime since I was a boy during the Depression.

Worse than that, factories have been closed and even dismantled at twice the rate they were during the last recession in 1981-82. Those jobs are not going to return if good times—as they are called—return. They are gone. The factories are gone. They have been dismantled. There is a little bit of employment among some of my friends in the millwright union for dismantling factories, but it is not what they would rather do. They would rather be building factories.

In Toronto, on College Street where I live, there are homeless and there are beggars. People come to my office who have been quite demoralized by experiencing the downturn in the economy as it has affected them, their families and their friends.

We have seen a youth riot in Toronto. We have seen gang fights and general signs of considerably demoralized youth. This includes the drop-out rate in the high schools.

There are some things that can be done, even by the provincial government, which the Ontario government is trying to do. It has borrowed money to restart some jobs. For example, there is highway construction and the building of 20,000 units of non-profit housing. The president of local 183 told me a couple of weeks ago how

pleased he is that at least 5,000 of the 12,000 members of his union are working.

He is very pleased to see 50 construction cranes around the city. He says that if it were not for the non-profit housing program of the Ontario government hardly any of that would be happening.

There are 20,000 day care spaces to be opened under the government's program. The government has also taken a risk, a well considered one and I hope it will be a successful one, to prevent the Algoma Steel mill in Sault Ste. Marie from closing. When the crisis broke the provincial government moved in quickly and organized a task force including all stakeholders: the community, the union, the company, the banks, the provincial government and the federal government.

I must commend the federal government because, although it delayed long enough to cause considerable worry, it nevertheless joined with the Ontario government in a program to subsidize older workers' early retirement so that the people of Sault Ste. Marie do not lose all their young men and women by forcing them to leave Sault Ste. Marie to find work.

However, I do not want to dwell on the remedial programs that may be used, that may not be used, that should be used and so on. I want to deal with a large fundamental problem that needs federal action, which is the impact of the free trade agreement and of the proposed North American free trade agreement in terms of destroying jobs.

The federal government must cancel the existing agreement and cease negotiations on the present North American agreement until it can be fundamentally reorganized along different lines so that it does not put all the burden of change on working people.

I want to quote from a recent report of the city of Toronto's economic development committee to the city council on the—

An hon. member: Communist.

Mr. Heap: The hon. gentleman across calls Mayor Rowlands and various other people communists. I will leave it to him to sort it out with them.

This is a report of the city of Toronto. It will be considered in a couple of weeks at a meeting of the city's committee on this issue. It concerns the impact of trade liberalization on the city of Toronto.

There is not enough time to go through the whole report because it is a very detailed report based on many other documentary surveys. For example, it points out that there has been a great shift of head offices from Ontario to the United States. Pillsbury has moved and Avis has terminated 16 of its head office positions. Head offices in the city of Toronto experienced a 16.2 per cent drop in employment from 1989, following the free trade agreement, to 1991, a loss of 7,254 jobs. This is happening in the head offices of our country.

Another segment of industry that has been very hard hit is the food processing industry. There is a great deal of food processing in and close to the city of Toronto and metro Toronto, though not as much as there was. In the period from 1989 to 1991 the food processing industry lost 21.4 per cent of its jobs in the city of Toronto and 8.6 per cent in metropolitan Toronto as a whole.

Many of those industries moved to the United States, partly as a consequence of a wave of mergers and American takeovers of industries like UNICO which then either shut them down or seriously reduced them.

• (1240)

The Ontario Food Processors' Association which hopefully supported the free trade agreement in 1988 is now pointing out that although the federal government promised transitional assistance—it was recognized there would have to be transitions in the industry and the federal government promised transitional assistance to those industries negatively affected— this assistance has not been forthcoming, at least not so far as the association is concerned.

The United Food and Commercial Workers Union is of the opinion that the free trade agreement has not presented the industry with the open markets of the United States that were promised. This is widely understood. It has even been acknowledged by some of the people who helped to negotiate the agreement, such as Mr. Ritchie, that the Americans have not kept their side of the bargain and it looks as if they are going to be less

willing to keep their side of the bargain. This has had a very serious effect on this industry.

The union also wants to know what has happened to the promised restructuring and retraining assistance that was promised by the Prime Minister during the last election.

One of the sections of the city planning department, the Workers' Information and Action Centre, has pointed out that Kellogg shut down its Etobicoke plant in June 1991 laying off 380 workers. VS Services of Toronto announced in its annual meeting in February that 1991 was the worst year for the food processing industry in its history. It cited the effect of the free trade agreement on closings as one of the causes.

Nobody pretends there has not been a recession around the world. However, the rate of job loss in manufacturing in Canada has been 23 per cent over the last three years and the rate of job loss in the United States for the same period has been only 6 per cent. We have lost jobs at four times the rate of the United States.

Mr. McDermid: If you want to know why read the Conference Board report.

Mr. Heap: That is largely because of American take-overs and American ownership, and their preference for shutting down plants, such as Inglis in my riding.

An hon. member: Read the facts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There will be an opportunity to ask the hon. member questions after his speech. I would like to hear it and I hope other members will give him the opportunity.

Mr. Heap: In the film, video, and audio industry from 1989 to 1991 there was a 7.7 per cent drop in employment in the city of Toronto and a 3.6 per cent drop in metro as a whole.

In the radio and TV stations there was an 18.4 per cent drop from 1989 to 1991 in Toronto, and a 9.8 per cent drop in metro as a whole. There are many industries that are not listed here. Only a few of the key ones were picked for emphasis.

In the publishing industry other than newspaper publishing, newspapers seem to have done well, there was an 11 per cent drop in employment from 1989 to 1991 in the city of Toronto and 5.5 per cent in metro as a whole. Obviously the city of Toronto, being the centre of many of these industries, has felt a greater impact than metro as a whole.

The Canadian Printing Industry Association has estimated that 3,000 jobs were lost across Canada which were directly attributable to the free trade agreement. It maintains that the industry's current unemployment rate in metro is 14 per cent following a loss of 3,700 jobs. It also points out that the annual trade deficit in printed products has jumped by 214 per cent since 1989. That is a very big jump in the trade deficit in print between Canada and the United States over two years, to the disadvantage of Canada.

It went from $106 million to $331 million and it expects that with an annual growth rate this deficit will reach $485 million by the end of this year. This is the industry association speaking.

It also points out that another way in which government policies have hit this industry is the unexpected end of postal subsidies and the imposition of the goods and services tax on magazine publishers. These actions together increased the publishers' mailing costs by 40 per cent.

Magazine revenue dropped in 1991, and of course the result of that is staff reductions.

There was a study by Price Waterhouse & Company in 1991 that showed that Canadian book publishers have dropped an average of 6 per cent each year since the free trade agreement and that four publishers have gone bankrupt.

There was also a study by Employment and Immigration Canada that suggests that the economic picture of this sector would be further eroded under the proposed North American free trade agreement. It says that Canadian printing plants are expected to lose further market share to American competition, and says that investment may even be diverted to Mexico.

The industry which has lost the most has been the fashion, or garment, industry. It is called both. It dropped from 1989 to 1991 by 45.8 per cent. It lost almost half its employees in the city of Toronto. In metropolitan Toronto it lost 27 per cent. That is a very serious drop.

Many of these workers who live in Spadina are recent immigrants with origins in China, Portugal, or the West Indies who have not been able to find other work. When

their place of employment closes they go to other places and they are not open, not hiring, or they are closing.

When I talked with some of the industrialists last year they blamed it on the goods and services tax, the high dollar that was hindering Canadian producers from getting the benefit of the tariff reductions, and on the high interest rate and the unwillingness of banks to lend to their industry at all.

One of them has moved his operation from Toronto, Ontario to Buffalo because he is getting a subsidy of $10,000 per job, as well as other subsidies from the state of New York, to move there to produce his jackets and sell them in Canada and in the United States.

Another one has taken to sourcing many of his dresses that he manufactures in Mexico or in Taiwan through the United States. He has cut his work force from about 100 to about 35, just to take account of small shifts in the demand.

These are people who need retraining, and as far as I can find out from them, the unions and the employers concerned, almost none of them have been able to get effective retraining.

The Canadian Apparel Manufacturing Association called 1991 one of the worst years on record for the Canadian apparel industry. This is its generalization. It applies much more widely than to just Toronto. According to the Apparel Manufacturers and Marketing Association of Ontario, the Consumer and Corporate Affairs figures show that the goods and services tax is having a disproportionately large impact on clothing prices in Canada.

The figures show that the GST added 1.1 per cent to the over all consumer price index. However, for clothing, footwear, and accessories the GST boosted the price by 4 per cent for men's clothing, 5.5 per cent for women, 5.1 per cent for girls, and 6 per cent for boys. It has hit this industry quite hard.

This is not directly a result of the free trade agreement, but it is related to the associated policies of this government.

It also points out that in 1991 the value of imports from the United States grew by 18 per cent while retail sales of Canadian-made apparel shrank by 13.4 per cent. This relates to the introduction of American-owned chain stores and supplies from American sources, or from overseas sources through the United States, in good part.

• (1250)

Part of the effect of the destruction of almost half of the jobs in Toronto in the garment industry, which we have had for over a century is a great increase of home work. People, nearly all of them women, are pressured by poverty to take work home rather than working in a factory, which they would prefer. The wages are often around $2 an hour for piece work. This is even with their children sometimes helping and even with providing their own sewing machine, light and power and so on. What they can earn often does not go much above $2 an hour. This is vastly below anybody's concept of a minimum wage.

There are an estimated 2,000 of these home workers in the city of Toronto and they are definitely among the extreme working poor.

What we need is a basic re-examination of what has been done to the Canadian economy by the free trade agreement, by the goods and services tax and by the high interest rates. These rates have now come down, but during the two years following the free trade agreement, they added to the problems. There is also the high Canadian dollar which lost markets in the United States that might have been gained by the tariff reduction.

We believe the government should reconsider this and seriously consider giving notice to cancel the free trade agreement. It should break off negotiations for the North American free trade agreement and introduce policies that would help to revive the Canadian manufacturing industry under independent Canadian ownership.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the member had taken a look at the March trade figures where we had the largest trade surplus ever in our history. It was $12.8 billion. Of that $12.8 billion, $9.8 billion went to the United States—those terrible Americans—with the free trade agreement. Again, this was a record export to the United States. Where does he get the idea that the trade agreement is somehow destroying us?

He mentions the fact that the duties are less for goods and garments going to the United States. They are less. He mentions the fact that there are competitive problems. That is true. However, manufacturing in Canada increased in productivity by 1 per cent last year and 4 per cent so far this year. The Wood Gundy report says it will increase by at least 8 per cent this year and 12 per cent next year. We only increased the number of manufacturing jobs in the months of April and May by 40,000. This is the largest increase of any element in unemployment. Manufacturing is all of a sudden disappearing, but jobs are increasing.

I am wondering whether the member for Trinity—Spadina has been there too long and has not been out looking at what is really happening in the world and Canada. We are in a restructuring. We are in a global recession, yes, but we are in an industrial restructuring where we have improved the efficiency of the economy with the goods and services tax. We have improved the efficiency of the economy with our free trade agreement and with our trade agreements generally. We have improved efficiency and business confidence. The Conference Board of Canada suggests that business confidence is up 16.1 per cent.

Where has he been? There may be problems, but part of those problems are NDP problems in the province of Ontario where legislation introduced yesterday would make it the roughest, toughest labour legislation in all of North America.

Mr. Mills: The world.

Mr. Blenkarn: The world. Here is the member for Trinity—Spadina, a member of the New Democratic Party, who ought to turn his heat on Queen's Park. He should make sure that Queen's Park withdraws that stupid legislation and lets Canada build, grow and trade again.

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, there have been quite a few statements and very few questions, but I can take some of the statements as implied questions.

As for the last one about the Labour Relations Act, it is not true that it is harsher than in other jurisdictions. In fact, in many ways, it is less harsh, even as proposed, than certain parts of legislation in other parts of Canada such as Quebec and, in general, in the countries of Europe which are doing better economically, or at least as well as North America. They have a much stronger labour movement and they have a much stronger recognition of the obligations of employers to their workers.

It has been recognized, even by Bill L'Heureux who is the president of Hees Inc. that there has to be a balance of co-operation. He has commended the Premier of Ontario and his government for their conduct toward industry. He is not a nobody. He represents a great deal of investment. The way he spoke publicly on this matter indicates that he sees good prospects of co-operation between Ontario investors and the Ontario government in the creation of jobs.

The hon. member may want to disagree with Mr. L'Heureux. He is free to get in touch with Mr. L'Heureux and give him his views. Perhaps he will learn something from Mr. L'Heureux.

On the matter of the recent trade surge, it remains to be seen how that translates into the employment and well-being of people in Canada. Unemployment in Ontario increased by 17,000 in the month of May. It has often happened that the over-all wealth of a country, in the usual way of measuring it, increases, but it does not get distributed where it is needed which is to the majority of the people. If the majority of the people do not have the means to feed their children well, if they have to go to food banks—as many have to in Toronto—and if they do not have the means to get their children educated, then the economy will suffer. I think these are things that are being overlooked by the government of this country.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I was listening with interest to the speech and the comments by the hon. member for Mississauga. I have a small comment to make.

I have a friend who is a big developer in Mississauga. I had occasion to talk to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would hope the hon. member would direct his questions to the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina as he was the one who was speaking.

Mr. Kindy: I had a discussion with this friend and he told me that even though he was strong financially and he built 180 houses, he could not sell 20 because there is a depression in Toronto. Here is a person who has been involved in development for a long time and he feels that Canada is moving toward a depression.

Would you like to comment about it?

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, it is a very general question, but I am not sure I would say we are moving toward a depression.

A couple of weeks ago I heard somebody suggest on the radio that Canada had slipped back into the recession. I was startled because I never noticed that we left the recession. It must have happened at three o'clock in the morning when I was asleep.

I would say that we are in a depression. I hear these rosy predictions by the members opposite and the Minister of Finance, but they are being proven false by experience. I think we are in something like the 1930s again. It is something we have not had for 50 years.

• (1300)

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak today about the economic crisis facing Ontario and facing my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk. Unfortunately we have an NDP government that has been running this province. As some hon. members across the way said, it has brought in some drastic legislation which I think is ill-timed and will ill-equip Ontario to compete globally and internationally in the years to come.

Ontario is at an economic crossroads. As a province and a country we face many challenges ahead. We all know that our economy is undergoing extensive restructuring as world economies become increasingly integrated. We see the effects around us every day and the reality is that we cannot compete.

As the same time, we are told by this government that we must become more competitive. However, this is without any real suggestions as to how we can go about doing this. Traditionally, we have placed heavy emphasis on our natural resources. In fact, our resource industries have been the cornerstone of our economy. We remain the leader of all industrialized countries in exporting unprocessed natural resources.

However, in recent years there has been a downturn in resource-based industries and Canada faces increasing competition from less-developed countries. We have yet, as a country or a province, to seriously deal with this situation.

The manufacturing sector, which is also an integral part of Ontario's economy, is in decline as well. This has led many people to argue that Canada, specifically Ontario, is in the process of deindustrializing. Hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, mostly in Ontario, have been lost since 1988 as a result of companies closing down or moving south of the border.

Most Canadians, I would suggest, blame free trade. Most would also blame the economic policies of this government for the downturn in our economy. Although I cannot disagree with them, I would also suggest that it is not only the fiscal and economic policies of the government, but it has been a lack of leadership, not only at the federal level but at the provincial levels, that prevents provinces across this country from really addressing the serious problem of not having enough well-trained people able to compete in this ever-changing global climate.

Whatever the case, there was a promise made by this government during the free trade agreement debate when it said it would bring in adjustment programs. It would bring in the best adjustment programs in the world. We have yet to see this happen. There are increasingly long line-ups of people who want and desperately need training. It is in my area and I am sure it is the same in the areas of all hon. members.

The people of this country, in my province and riding I would suggest, are far ahead of members in this House in knowing specifically that they are going to need training and better and more skills in order to compete. What they need from us is the dedication and the drive from members of Parliament within this Chamber in order to provide the programs whereby they can be trained.

Like many of my colleagues on both sides of the House, I understand the importance of becoming more competitive. I know that our economy is changing and that Canadian industry as a result has to adapt. I realize that we cannot turn back the clock, but we must move forward. The protectionist mindset of many Canadians, indeed of people on all sides of this House, must change. I understand these things are a fact. I understand that the government does have to play a role in restructuring our economy and I would suggest that it has been lacking in that role.

We have been told by the government that we need to become a more diversified economy and that we must become more competitive in the areas of manufacturing, science and technology, research and development and education. The studies are many as to how we can do this. There has just been a lack of any commitment by governments over the last few years on directions in

which we can take these studies and put them into action.

I am not talking about writing a blank cheque to welfare recipients. I am talking about investing in our future, investing in Canadians and investing in our country.

We need to invest in machinery, equipment and new technologies. We need to invest in infrastructure. We just cannot sit back and expect to survive. We need to control this globalization that seems to be affecting all parts of the world. As a country we need to take hold of that and make sure globalization does not control us but that in fact we control globalization.

I would suggest to hon. members sitting across that individual Canadians cannot do that themselves. It is going to take a role of government in helping individual Canadians to grab control of this globalization and to work it on behalf of Canada. We need to get Canada and we need to get Canadians working again.

Unemployment is too high. I do not care what figures are thrown out. I know Statistics Canada threw out some in the last few days. They are just simply too high. We have to address that problem first and foremost.

I would suggest that my leader has developed and put forward reasonable ways in which we can help deal with that problem. Let us get these people working first. Let us get them paying taxes, and then let us get them into the proper skills training they need.

Along with the resource based industries and manufacturing, Ontario also has an agricultural industry which is facing crisis. It really threatens the whole infrastructure of Ontario's small rural communities. Our agricultural industry remains one of the most important resource based industries we have.

As I have said before and I will continue to say—I know other hon. members on both sides of the House have said it too—in order for a country to be secure and to be proud, as you have said many times, Mr. Speaker, we must make sure our agricultural industry is the cornerstone of our economy.

I believe the sovereignty of our country is inextricably linked to us sustaining a food industry within Canada. I hate to say this—and I know you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, because in your area it is the same—small town Ontario is closing down. A lot of these places are closing down as a direct result of the decline in our agricultural industries.

Our farmers are the most productive farmers in the world, and nobody can argue that. Farmers provide Canadian consumers with the highest quality of food in the world. We have higher qualities of food than anywhere else and they do it at reasonable prices too.

I suggest to those Canadians who go across the border thinking they are getting a great deal on food that they are not. In fact they are bringing back food that is not as high quality or as high standards as we have in Canada.

No other country in the world can make this claim. The future of the family farm or a rural life is not threatened because Canadian farmers are inefficient or because of competitiveness and globalization. Instead agriculture is in jeopardy because of international trading problems, international trading agreements. Although they are very important to Canada and to certain sectors of agriculture, they have no business interfering in our internal market programs.

The government must become more sensitive to the difficulties facing our farmers instead of constantly blaming other countries for our problems. We must beat them at their own game and we must be able to compete with them internationally. We must invest in our farmers.

As a result of the situation facing our farming communities and as a result of globalization, my community of Haldimand—Norfolk is at an economic crossroads. We are really facing an economic crisis in this country which I believe threatens our prosperity for both today and tomorrow.

As a province and as a country we can move ahead, but I would suggest very seriously that the government has to take some responsibility and to invest in Canadians.

• (1310)

I know they will say over there that they are spending billions of dollars, but I believe we have to be more focused in where we spend that money. I would suggest the first place to start is by putting our unemployed

people back to work in some sort of program and to help with training and retraining them.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. It was a positive speech. It was well focused. It hit exactly on the problems and some of the solutions that have to take place. In all fairness I think he would admit, if he had stopped to think about it, that the budget of the Minister of Finance that came down in February emphasized helping businesses streamline and modernize.

He talked about new equipment and streamlining. One of the interesting or encouraging things about the increase in imports into Canada that we have seen—and we have seen an increase in exports as well and we still have a trade surplus there—is that the increase has been in new and modern equipment coming into Canada to streamline. We are seeing it everywhere.

I will be talking in my remarks this afternoon about the riding of my friend. One of the companies I had the pleasure of touring with him in his riding, in Stratford, was the FAG Bearing Company. It is not only bringing in modern equipment. It is designing it and building it for its own use. It is very exciting and it is happening here in Canada.

I agree with him. We increased the capital cost allowance in the budget to allow companies to write off that equipment quicker. We cut their taxes to encourage them to establish now, to create jobs and to streamline.

In all fairness, the government is doing that and I think that is fine.

I heard the member say that we should get people jobs first and then train them. That is a problem, because the jobs that are available need specially trained persons to fill them. It is kind of what comes first, the chicken or the egg? I listened to him and I heard what he was saying. I do not disagree. I would much rather have people working now, but the jobs that are available require the special training and therefore we have to concentrate on training.

I am, very pleased the hon. member would commend the Minister of Employment and Immigration for adjusting and coming up with another $150 million for training because of the high unemployment in the country today and the need for that retraining.

Mr. Speller: Mr. Speaker, I agree with a number of the directions in which the minister went in that budget. Unfortunately what I do not agree with in what he did was where he was getting the money.

I understand his problems with the debt and I understand the importance of bringing the debt down, but unfortunately he took money from one important area and put into another important area without really reinvesting new moneys in these areas. I believe very strongly that we need to invest new moneys. We could get these new moneys by investing in Canadians, putting them back to work and thereby, once they are back to work, collecting taxes.

I would start that by following the suggestion of our leader for an infrastructure program. We need to invest the billions of dollars it will take, quite frankly, because we will get a double investment back from the provinces. Who is going to win? It will not be the provinces. The federal government will win on this because we are the ones who are going to get back all the taxes. It would not take a lot of money out of our operating budgets now to do that.

Another area on which I disagree with the government is the whole sense of co-operation between Ottawa and especially my province of Ontario. I see this government going in one direction and saying that we have to cut the debt and we want to put emphasis on this area and the provincial government going in a completely different direction. It does not work for Canadians.

We have to put our political differences aside and co-operate both federally and provincially in sending a strong signal to Canadians that we will help them in these areas and in training.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to add my words in my support of the motion presently before this House.

I have been asked by my colleagues to represent the interests of northern Ontario in this debate. I thank them very much for giving me the opportunity to do so.

The economy of northern Ontario is a microcosm of the economy of Canada. We in the north depend economically on our resource based industries: mining, softwood lumber, newsprint, container board and fine paper. We manufacture in the north among other products the finest commuter rail cars in the world.

Interwoven throughout this entire process is a need for a well maintained transportation facility, especially a viable seaport. We have the largest grain storage and cleaning facilities in the world and the most qualified work force in Canada. We are capable, if called upon, to handle over 20 million tonnes of wheat a year.

In my judgment I feel it is an honour that we in the north are referred to as the hewers of wood, the drawers of water and the miners of metal. We take great pride in those things we produce from our forestry and our mining based sectors when we look at how much they add to the total economy of not only the province of Ontario but also the Government of Canada.

The economic history I have just outlined is what I consider to be the wealth of Canada. The resource based industries in Ontario and in all of Canada when we include the energy from the west are what has propelled Canada to its present economic status and are the envy of every country in the world.

Let me caution that although we talk about northern Ontario because of our resource based industries are located there does not mean that the rest of this great province of ours, nor the rest of this great country of ours, does not benefit from what we do directly in northern Ontario.

Over 17,000 jobs in the city of Toronto are created as a result of the forest industry alone. Many thousands of jobs in the city of Toronto are created as a direct result of the mining industry.

Thousands and thousands of jobs are created throughout southwestern Ontario because of the container board we produce, container board that is used in the manufacturing process from everything from the cartoning of beer, to furniture, to the harvesting of tomatoes.

Eventually these resource based wages find their way into every grocery store, every clothing store, every drug store, every automobile dealership, and particularly into areas of our province where automobiles are manufactured. I am thinking of Brampton, Windsor, St. Catharines and Oakville.

With the wealth we have in this country where have we gone wrong? Where have we gone astray? Why do we have over 11 per cent unemployment in this wonderful prosperous country of ours? Why do we lack the spirit of enterprise that I sense we once had in our country?

I get the feeling that there is a sense of fear within our country. I suspect there are three fundamental reasons we are experiencing this feeling of fear or apprehension in Canada today. Fundamentally it is the direction we are trying to go from the federal perspective, from the provincial perspective, and indeed because of banking policies.

The federal government has attempted in the years it has been in office to try to change the base of the Canadian economy. It abandoned resource based industries in Canada, the very foundation of our economic strengths. It tried, with all good intentions, to convert our economy which is based on our resources to more sophisticated endeavours.

As a result we look, for example, at the job training program. What we are trying to do now is take the employees who have lost their jobs, both men and women, and retrain them to change the skills they have been able to develop over the years.

• (1320)

I think I have full agreement from all sides of the House that we have a work force in this country second to none when it comes to its skills that have been developed in mining, forestry, the growing of grain and in transportation routes.

We on this side of the House, and I am sure they do too, feel that we should be improving those skills so that we can be more competitive. In that way, we can keep our edge in the economic climate internationally rather than changing and trying to develop new skills.

In Ontario, which is the subject matter of what we have today, we have a provincial government that was not prepared to govern. It now faces the hard realities, as our friends have, of governing and can never in its wildest dreams deliver on the many promises that it made prior to that election in Ontario.

What it has done is what many governments do. We see what these people are doing on that side of the

House. They are raising the expectations of the people of this country and of this province beyond what anybody can reasonably deliver.

Let me mention something else with respect to Ontario, that is the changes in the Labour Relations Act that were introduced just yesterday. Everyone seems to think that there is resentment toward these changes in the Labour Relations Act, and that resentment comes from the business community.

On the contrary. I take the position that those changes that are proposed in the Labour Relations Act affect very directly every working man and every working woman in the province of Ontario. What the government is doing through these changes is upsetting the very delicate balance that we have earned over the years in the very fragile institution of employer-employee relations.

In our labour and our management negotiations, it is attempting to upset this balance. By this very legislation, it has placed itself at every bargaining table in Ontario, a place absolutely no government should venture into. It cannot be the arbitrator of a decision-making process and also be a negotiator at the same time.

You will find that this legislation is non-operable. I am prepared to say at this time that it is ill timed. It is ill conceived. It will do more damage to the working men and the working women of this province than any other legislation that has been passed by every previous government. It upsets the very delicate balance of our labour relations enterprise which has been up to this time working the best it can.

Unfortunately, the banking policies in this country do nothing to help the revival of our economy. From where we sit in this House, Canadian banks have committed themselves to ventures on a transnational stage or in assisting non-Canadian companies in buying out Canadian enterprises, rather than emphasizing the need in every small community in this country where we have small banks to providing the wherewithal, the necessary capital to assist small business and small entrepreneurs to provide that necessary capital that they need.

There is no question that employment will only increase in Ontario from the initiative and from the efforts that small business people throughout this country place into that sector of our economy. Our Canadian banks just seem not to be interested in a policy of providing this service to the small entrepreneurs in this country.

There should be no mistake about the banking services in Canada. There is no mistake that it is simply a store. People go to get a service at a bank like they do at a drugstore. They rent money from the bank and they pay something back in the way of interest. There is nothing secretive about that business.

What is important is that if they are committed to providing a service for the small business entrepreneurs in this country, they should continue to do so rather than committing all of their resources to international corporations which really do not provide any jobs in this sector of our economy.

The policies to which I refer are just the initial. My time does not allow me to go into any greater depth. Let me say that what we plan to do on this side of the House will not affect our deficit and will not affect our debt inasmuch as that is a threshold in anything that we provide or propose. It must always be considered.

Our plan, the plan that I have emphasized here today, only requires the imagination of the people in this House. It requires the imagination of our citizens. It requires initiative that we all have. It requires that Canadians face the future with confidence. We cannot face a future in this country in fear. If we make those fundamental changes, our future, especially the future that we derive from northern Ontario and the rest of the resource-based industry in this country, will make us prosperous once more and make us understand that Canada is a country that anyone and everyone in the world wants to be.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I want to thank the hon. member for his speech. I think it was a very good speech and touched all the buttons.

In listening to him, my feeling is that he wants to be positive about things. He wants to talk positively about the country, positively about the situation and I could not agree with him more.

In my remarks to him a little later on I am going to touch on that. I am wondering if we do ourselves a disservice in this House of Commons when our entire Question Period is made up of the negatives, of the hammering away and trying to do one up on each other as to solutions, et cetera. I am wondering if that does not present to the Canadian public a very negative scenario which offers the media of course the opportunity to put the negative clips on television. When we see this type of thing, it does nothing but discourage Canadians about

spending money or going out and searching for employment or whatever it may be.

I am wondering if there is not some way that we co-operatively could present a better picture to the Canadian people, not diminishing the problems we have. We do have problems. We have got serious problems, but I think we are all working on those. I think we have to present a far more positive picture to Canadians, by us, by Canadians.

We take a look at the United Nations saying we are the best country in the world in which to live, yet when we listen to what goes on here sometimes, we wonder if that is in fact the truth.

Mr. Comuzzi: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague very much for those remarks. I say that sincerely.

I am, as he is, troubled by the impression that the Canadian people may perceive as happening on the floor of the House because of the non-ability of some of us, perhaps being too partisan at times when the economy and the future of the country are at stake.

I will give the minister a small example of the parliamentary process that I think truly worked in the last two and a half weeks. It was with the Minister of Employment and Immigration. We were suffering some fairly severe consequences in Thunder Bay because of lay-offs and lack of retraining funds. I want to compliment the Minister of Employment and Immigration for the great assistance that he gave me in going through this process up to the announcement last night that $150 million was being allocated to the retraining and section 24 benefits in Canada, of which Thunder Bay will be a participant in honouring those commitments that had been made.

I do think the parliamentary process can always be improved if we approach the problems that are common to all Canadians, if we approach them with the assistance, the help and the desire to really make a difference.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question. I was wondering if the member felt that the changes in the financial administration type arrangements in Canada with the Bank Act, the Insurance Act and the Trust Companies Act allowing those companies all to do commercial lending would improve the access to money sufficiently to make money more available to small entrepreneurs and whether he really felt that there was a tightness of money or whether there was a situation where institutions were being rather credit careful.

It seems to me that there is a fairly loose money supply right now, interest rates as low as they are, but the problem may be the credit worthiness.

Mr. Comuzzi: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what was just said. I cannot comment on banking in other centres. I can only comment on what I see happening in the community of Thunder Bay—Nipigon that I represent. I notice there is a tendency for small entrepreneurs, tree farmers who employ 20 people, who come in visit and ask me questions. There is a designer by the name of John Mackett whose concept has met with tremendous success. I do not want to use any numbers, but you will know what kind of numbers we are talking about when banks will not afford the venture capital for this young person with ideas to expand. His working capital is being generated out of the use of his credit card. That is how little he needs.

• (1330)

When we have industrious young people in this country who want to get ahead and dedicate themselves to doing this type of thing, employing people and not being given the opportunity to do so, says to me that there is something lacking in our banking system in this country when we will not take a chance on people rather than looking at just a balance sheet.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, just a short question.

I agree with the member's assessment of the banking industry. Maybe this issue of trust companies we can return to a little later because I think there is some room to market that new act.

I want to ask the member a very specific question related to transportation and tourism. It seems to me that there is tremendous potential to reverse the flow of dollars that are going out of this country on tourism in other parts of the world. It seems to me in the north, not only northern Ontario but all across Canada, there is

great potential to put people back to work and learn a skill that is not only short-term but long-term.

I wonder if the hon. member could say whether or not in his region that the transportation and tourism support allows that possibility for job growth to sort of take root or take place.

Mr. Comuzzi: I would just say that there are some developments going on in the north, but we need some additional developments.

Let me just say that we have the most magnificent shoreline along the north shore of Lake Superior right from Duluth, Minnesota in the United States through to Rossport. It goes by Red Rock and the port of Nipigon. That should be developed. It is the handsomest area on the whole of the Great Lakes and we should do something with it.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to respond to the motion before us today that was put forward by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

First of all I should start by pointing out some facts that are obvious to us sitting here in the Chamber today and debating this. I want to point out some facts about Ontario that not all people might realize. The population of Ontario is really approaching two-fifths of Canada's population. I guess 40 per cent of Canadians live in the province of Ontario.

In the way that we measure prosperity, Ontario has long been a have province. Ontario is considered not eligible to receive equalization payments because of its average per capita. It is based upon a formula that was agreed upon in 1977 for equalization payments. It is a measure that set out 32 ways a province can raise revenues or sources of raising revenues. When this was taken into consideration, Ontario, B.C. and Alberta were considered have provinces.

Most of the industry and most of the business centre of Canada is probably situated in Ontario. Ontario has long been "an engine of growth". We should not get into debate about that because when Ontario is successful, when Ontario is working and when Ontario is generating revenues and doing very well, it sure helps the rest of Canada. We have to see it in the context as a proportion.

At the same time, while I know the province is suffering, I also want to say that the problems that it is facing are also evident in other areas of Canada. Indeed, from coast to coast, we do have provinces and communities with similar situations of high unemployment.

One thing I have to say is that this particular issue we are discussing today is felt right across the country. It is more prevalent in Ontario because there are more people there.

Second, we Canadians have to pay our way. We really are not exempt from any world trends, I think the House realizes that. Some people see the economic conditions that have developed here as being in isolation to anything else around the world. We tend to stick our head in the sand. We feel that we are an isolated island, and that does not really help the situation.

What we must do in Canada is compete and thrive and go out there with the rest of the world. It is very important that we all look not just south of the border but at France, England, Europe, Germany, and Japan, right around the world, and see that a lot of people around the world are suffering from unemployment and a whole change in trade, because of globalization.

I would just like to make a remark on globalization. One of my colleagues across the way made a statement that we in Canada must control globalization. We do not control globalization at all. We are part of it. We work with GATT. We have the free trade agreement with our colleagues in the United States, who happen to be our biggest trading partners. We should be pleased that we have a free trade agreement so that we can work with them, and not be at loggerheads, to resolve difficult situations. We work with the 120 countries in GATT and all our trading partners to resolve difficult situations. We are not in isolation. We have to work in the broader world community.

Ontario is the business and industrial centre of our country. Some people think its happy state, its improved economy and growth during the 1980s should continue on and on. I really wish it would, and I am sure we all do. However, there comes a time when we do have peaks and valleys or ups and downs within the business sectors and the economy of the whole country. We have to stop and we have to restructure. That means governments must rethink positions. That means governments of the

provinces as well as businesses and educational institutions.

The need to modernize or upgrade the infrastructure may apply to some sectors more than others. I think that is why Ontario at this time may need or may be asking for help and we may have to concentrate more of our efforts on upgrading this particular area. However, it must happen across all regions. We saw this in the 1980s with the recession, and we are seeing it again in the early 1990s. We must keep up with international competition.

Let us not be surprised in any way, shape or form that Ontario appears to be hurting more than any other province. I argue that is relative to the context of Canada as a whole. In the province I come from, Alberta, over the last three or four years we have lost thousands and thousands of jobs in the oil and gas industry. The whole of the petroleum industry is restructuring around the world. We have obviously moved away from that National Energy Program that the Liberals brought in. We have deregulated and we have gone to market prices. A lot depends on the world.

When oil and gas companies lay off thousands of employees the rigs do not work. As a matter of fact, in talking to CAODC, the Canadian Association for Oil Well Drilling Contractors, about 10 per cent of the drilling rigs are working. If the drilling rigs do not work the service companies do not work. That means the men and women who provide the infrastructure and the services to the rigs, such as the mud people—we utilize mud to keep pressure under control in the hole—and those who do fracking and testing are put out of work, as are the water-haulers, the welders, the corner store people, the man or woman who runs the motel. It causes a ripple effect right across the country. All areas of Canada have problems.

Let us return to the Macdonald commission of the mid-1980s. It foresaw a lot of this period of adaptation and adjustment that is needed. It was the royal commission that said we should set about making the changes needed in anticipation of increasing competitive pressures at the international level.

• (1340)

Part of that anticipation was the free trade deal and the current negotiations with the United States and Mexico. They are following along the same logic.

Such adjustments are not easy and they do not come without pain, but we need to adapt. We cannot choose any other route. To use a colloquial or trite phrase, the world does not owe us a living. We have to make our own way, and most Canadians indeed know that we have to earn our own way.

They want governments to create a fiscal environment in which there are fewer regulations and fewer bureaucratic nightmares and let the private industry get on with its job. Private industry is the area in this country that promotes the jobs and develops the wealth. Governments do not develop wealth. I have to agree with a lot of the comments made by the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood.

Let us turn now from the economic realities to matters that are more social and domestic in nature. It is sometimes very tempting for all of us here in the House to concentrate on economic issues at the expense of social issues. In fact, our government does have a really substantial record of achievement on the social side.

I was watching the news last night about the tragic developments reported in Martensville, Saskatchewan, which none of us accept. It was totally devastating to hear that. It was the present minister of energy, when he was Minister of National Health and Welfare, who appointed Mr. Rix Rogers to advise him on the problem of child sexual abuse.

I do not think there is one person in this House who did not see what I saw on television last night. It is totally unacceptable. Mr. Rogers presented a report some years ago called *Reaching for Solutions*. Not one person can do this alone. It is only by working together that we can resolve these issues.

Mr. Rogers' report was instrumental in leading to the 1991 renewal of the family violence initiative with its special focus on child abuse. In fact, the whole area of family abuse—abuse of women, abuse of children, and abuse of seniors—has become an area of major concern for us.

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women appointed a special blue ribbon task force some months ago specifically to look into the area of violence against women, but also taking into consideration all violence. I look forward to that report which will be presented later this year.

I also want to draw members' attention to the 1987 drug strategy program. It had a similar impact. In 1987 we put forward a specific partnership with the provinces and the territorial governments, as well as non-government agencies, to review and come to grips with the fact that drug, alcohol and substance abuse is really at an epidemic level in this country. It concerns all of us in terms of the social problems.

To deal with substance abuse in these areas we need long-term commitments. It takes time to develop relevant and appropriate programs, not only for the urban areas but for rural areas. Our aboriginal peoples are in great need of help too.

Ontario is a full partner in that. There was success. If any members would care to read the proceedings from the standing committee on health and welfare the Minister of National Health and Welfare appeared before it about five weeks ago. He presented statistics and measurements on the success rate of the drug strategy program, and it was renewed.

I believe the figure is $270 million over four years. We will be working again with our provinces and with the Minister of Justice, the Solicitor General and the minister of financial institutions to help us get to the bottom of the laundering of large sums of moneys from the sale of illegal drugs.

I also want to remark upon the needs of disabled people. This country has over three million disabled people. They are an important resource to this country.

Over the past four to six years we have worked our way toward more tax credits, more exemptions, and more ways to not only accept but also to make all Canadians realize they are a very important part. The International Year of the Disabled was a great starting point.

The federal government has assisted provincial governments and will continue to do so through de-institutionalization and also with independent living centres. In March 1992 there was a major conference that really focused on specific areas.

Let us take a look at senior citizens and what we have done to help them. Not long ago it was recognized not only here in the House but also across Canada that we have a very large aging population. Drastic measures are not the answer. We all have to work together and come forward with some measures that we all can live by.

We need senior independence programs and we introduced that in 1988. We are demonstrating ways we can get seniors to become and maintain their independence. The new Horizons Program that my colleague's party introduced in 1972 has proven to be extremely successful.

So all these examples I have cited are national issues with regard to social programs. They all require long-term commitments and it is something I know each and everyone of us wants to work toward.

I would also like to say we need flexibility. Obviously, if programs are extremely structured and they do not work there is very little area for manoeuvering and we have to be able to be flexible.

We are a diverse nation and with our aging population we have to look at it and come to some solutions. We cannot sit back and lament. Those challenges out there on the social side also have to be met with fiscal accountability. So while we must be fiscally accountable, and I think this is a major concern of all our constituents, we also have to be socially responsible.

The interesting area has to do with transfer payments. I will look mainly at the estimated program funding for health, education, as well as the Canada Assistance Plan.

In 1984 the federal government transferred $6.13 billion to the province of Ontario which was about $689 per capita. In 1992 we are transferring $9.924 billion and that is about $972 per capita. That is an increase of $3.7 billion or 6.2 per cent. Maybe it is not enough but working with regard to fiscal constraint is most important.

How do we get into this? I think it is most interesting. In fact, let us all come back to reality. In 1969 the government had a surplus of about $332 million. There was no deficit. There was a debt of about $18 billion. You can just watch or chart the economic development, and indeed, the spending of the government through the 1970s and early 1980s where it took us from a surplus of $332 million to a deficit of $38.5 billion. The debt went from $18 billion up to $206 billion.

Over the past eight years, we had to be fiscally responsible. We have been cutting back slowly and now this government today operates on program spending with a surplus. We have done a $29 billion turnaround and we operate with a surplus.

We have to service the debt. Out of every dollar of revenue 27 cents goes to service the debt. That is passive spending; it does no one any good.

• (1350)

We are paying for yesterday's programs and we are not investing in the future. Program spending is limited to 3 per cent this year. All net GST revenues and revenues from privatization are going to debt servicing and reduction. We will see by the year 1995 that the government no longer has to borrow from outside. We will not be putting pressure on financial markets and our deficit will be $5.5 billion. That is something we all have to work toward.

I just want to refer to a statement one of my constituents wrote to me. It has to do not only with his personal income tax level and what he is paying, but he also talks about the social benefits that are out there for families. He also talks about the Canada Pension Plan that he and his employer contribute to and unemployment insurance that employees and employers contribute to. His bottom line was that he cannot afford the tax that is already out there and we simply have to get it down.

I think today in discussing what the hon. member put forward, we all have to live within financial accountability. There is only one taxpayer. Canadians cannot afford any more taxes. Canadians right across this country do not want an increase in deficits. Therefore, we have to spend the money more wisely.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the comments made by my hon. colleague, the member for Calgary Southwest, on this very important issue to Canadians.

However, the opposition motion being debated today seeks to condemn the government for its negligence toward the worst social and economic difficulties faced by residents of Ontario in modern times.

The latest unemployment figures prove this. According to Statistics Canada's figures for May, unemployment in Canada has hit 11.2 per cent. This represents an increase of 0.2 per cent over last month and is the highest national unemployment rate since November 1984.

There are over 1.5 million Canadians looking for work. The figures announced today clearly indicate that the government's economic program and economic policies have failed. The government has certainly failed to come through on its now stale promise of creating jobs, jobs, jobs. In fact, I want to point out to my hon. colleague that her government is actually preventing many unemployed Canadians from becoming employable.

I am referring here to the lack of funds for the section 26 fee payer option. This option provides funding for UI recipients to upgrade their skills and employment marketability by attending educational institutions and taking courses.

I recently met with 400 of my constituents who were assembled by Employment Canada officials to be told that their participation in the fee payer option would be terminated.

Yet the government is currently running some nicely worded ads on national television, boasting about how competitive Canada is. The ads contain statements like: "Upgrading your skills is the key to succeeding in today's economic market". Such a statement is contemptible in view of the fact that the government has torpedoed the fee payer option under section 26. This type of propaganda is shameful.

I would like to ask the hon. member how can her government run such ads when we have 1.5 million Canadians looking for work and when there are 400 individuals in my constituency alone being told that there is no funding left in the fee payer option for them to complete their studies or upgrade their skills in order to have a better chance of finding work?

On May 12 I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration if he would provide the necessary funding to ensure that the fee payer program would continue. The minister declined to make any such commitment.

He did, however, boast about how much money the federal government has put into training programs in Ontario this year as opposed to last year. The minister must think that we are a little naive on this side of the House. By looking at the increasing numbers of unemployed in this country, anyone would realize that there would be a greater demand for additional funds to assist the unemployed in finding work. Thus, the increase in

the funding of the fee payer option in Ontario should not be a surprise.

We have a serious unemployment problem in Ontario and throughout Canada. It is one which is even greater than last year with no relief in sight, especially given the lack of positive action taken by the government.

I would like to ask my colleague to address my question on the fee payer option. Can she tell us today what unemployed Canadians can expect to hear from her government on how they can find work?

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would like to respond to the specific question on the fee payer option.

I am not too sure whether the member is aware of the Minister of Employment and Immigration's announcement yesterday with regard to the additional funding into that particular area. I would certainly be glad to provide him with a copy of what the hon. minister was putting forward.

The fee payer option which allows for training is extremely important and we do recognize, and some of your colleagues do recognize, especially the members for Thunder Bay—Nipigon and Broadview—Greenwood, that unemployment is too high and we all should be working together.

It is nice to debate with people who have specific and positive responses and I want to say I hope the member will address his little eyes to what exactly the minister said yesterday.

The member got on to the ads that are on TV and in the papers. What is interesting is that there have been over 200,000 responses to those and it proves that all Canadians are most interested and indeed want to compete.

I really have to ask a question with regard to Bill C-21 when we amended the unemployment act. One specific area was moving funding over to training and job retraining. It was actually even allowing funding for what I would call moving people from one area of the country to another where the jobs were. The unfortunate part was it was well over nine or twelve months that the bill was held up in the Senate and I do not think the hon. member has to look too far to see exactly who held that up.

Yes, we need more training. Nobody is going to deny that. Yes, we need better education. Yes, we have to become more competitive, but for Heaven's sake why is the member always so negative?

There are positive stories out there. Training has improved. He has just heard the hon. member from Etobicoke make his statement and there are better ways. We will all work together to see that this country prospers.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member talking about how well the Tory government has done on the social program side.

She talked about child abuse. She raised the issue of sexual child abuse and the whole initiative on family violence. The government put $137 million into the family violence program spread over five years and there will be a total expenditure by the end of 1992–1993 of $34 million. That is for all of Canada to deal with family violence.

At the same time, the government cut back on the Canada Assistance Plan payments to the province of Ontario alone in those three years $3.5 billion by the end of the year 1992–1993.

What was that $3.5 billion to do? It was to protect women in abusive situations. It was to provide transition houses for women. It was to investigate child abuse and child sexual abuse. So what did the government do? It dumped the responsibility solely on the province of Ontario.

The government cuts $3.5 billion and then tries to say it put back in $34 million.

Mr. Richardson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, after the diatribe from the NDP the hon. member should be given the courtesy of a response.

• (1400)

I am sure we could get unanimous consent of the House to allow her to reply.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Southwest made a very sound, constructive speech. I wonder if we could ask for unanimous consent of the House to extend for a few more minutes the time to finish off proper questions to the member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I could ask for unanimous consent. If there is unanimous consent, I will allow the hon. member to answer the question.

There is still a number of speakers. I would hope that there would be no complaints come four o'clock. The hon. member for Calgary Southwest could answer, please.

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues in the House. With regard to the question put forward by the NDP member regarding cutting back over $3 billion to Ontario, that is absolutely not true.

I would like to say that yes, there was a cap put on the Canada Assistance Plan but there was about a 6 per cent increase to the province of Ontario. The cap is a cap of 5 per cent over the year before every year and each and every year, so while we are watching our expenditures very carefully, maybe the province of Ontario with regard to its social services needs to take a look at itself.

On family violence and child abuse, there is nobody in this House who will stand for any sexual abuse of children. We have put funding into it and we are working with the blue ribbon special task force.

In conclusion, I want to say we have put out a lot of funding. We are working with all agencies. We are working with all governments at all levels and we look forward to any assistance that we can get. Some people may say that it is a provincial responsibility. It is everybody's responsibility.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, the member in her capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare talked in a portion of her speech of the violence against women and children and the fact that the government has recently appointed Rix Rogers.

I wonder if I could ask the hon. member to arrange for a briefing from that section of the department of health and welfare or make it available. I personally would like to see if she could use her good offices to arrange that for me.

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to arrange a briefing for any colleague in this House or indeed the other House who would specifically want more information or wish to participate in putting forward ideas with regard to child abuse and sexual abuse. I will get back to you within the next few days.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I feel that there is a danger in this debate that those of us who are members from Ontario may be sending out a signal that we are only concerned about the problems in the economy in our own province or in our own city.

All Canadians should know that even though there is more of a primary focus on Ontario and Toronto today, and being a member from Toronto, all of us in this House really do have the same concerns for every region of this country. Traditionally in Toronto, as the member for Calgary Southwest so aptly described in the opening remarks of her speech, Ontario has been a province that has always enjoyed a very aggressive economic state of health.

For the first time, certainly in my lifetime, those of us who are from Toronto are feeling deep economic pain. I think if we can regain the confidence, that sense of "let's take a chance", that entrepreneurial spirit that is basically there—it is latent in our community, but it just needs to be reignited—then that will be of benefit not only to people who are living in Ontario, but in every region of this country.

Make no mistake about it, the people of Ontario always have shared the wealth and resources of our province with every region of this country. We do it happily and generously, and we will continue to do so but we need at this moment in time to figure out a way to get that economy going again.

This morning I had a group of students who were visiting me from my riding, Earl Grey Senior School. I had breakfast with them at the Holiday Inn on Dalhousie Street. The minister from Brampton smiles, but there is an old expression: "Out of the mouths of babes".

Mr. McDermid: I've been there.

Mr. Mills: I would like to say to the minister that this was eight o'clock in the morning. It was not eight o'clock at night, and there is quite a difference.

Rather than me speak to them, I went around to each one of the students and mentioned that I was gong to have this opportunity to debate in the House today. I asked each and every one of them what were the issues that concerned them, and what were the issues that

concerned their mothers or their fathers when they sat around the breakfast table, had dinner or just chatted with them during the evening.

I must start off by saying that many of the students said that they felt things were okay. I do not want to say it was an experience where everybody was negative. There were a lot of those young people whose mothers and fathers were both gainfully employed. They felt good about things, so it was not all negative chat.

We went around to each and every person. I am not going to read off the names of everyone who was there, but I am going to put it to the table of the House and to *Hansard* because I hope there is some way that I can give them credit for their remarks. My ideas are basically their ideas.

They were telling me things that they had heard from their parents. Interestingly enough, it seems to be the same things that most people in this House are talking about. The number one concern for the parents of these children were taxes. They really felt that with regard to the tax designs in this country, the tax systems—they did not use the words "tax design" but the word "taxes"—I know all members are hearing this—we have to meet the challenge of making our tax designs in this country more simple and more fair.

It is important to do that because if students in grade eight are beginning to hear that taxes, taxes, taxes are a negative thing, that they are a disincentive to productivity, it is going to be a part of their language, a part of their thought process. By the time they are 18, 19, 20 and get into the work force, they are going to have a negative attitude toward the system.

Before we get to a point where there will almost be a revolt in this country, we should meet the challenge of reforming our tax system.

• (1410)

The second thing that concerned the students of Earl Grey was the issue of job creation; finding jobs for the people in their community who were out of work. I could not help but remember a young student named Paul Stuart Vanderburg who was living with his grandmother. He was telling us that yesterday or the day before his grandmother, who looks after him, was about to lose her job. They had no other source of income except her job. The two of them lived alone in an apartment. I personally cannot imagine what that would be like, to be living alone with my grandmother and all of a sudden she was going to lose her job and there I was in grade eight about to go into high school. That must be a real frightening experience for a young person.

Young people are concerned about the fact that somehow we get the job creation programs that do exist.

I said earlier in this House that it is incumbent upon us to put ideas forward, but there are ideas that exist in this House of Commons. The Government of Canada has to go back to some of these ideas. We do not need to re-invent the wheel. Where is this Work for Tomorrow—Employment Opportunities for the '80s? There are 185 job opportunities there, many of them linked to entrepreneurship, giving incentives to the enterprises of this country. Rather than sending people to school to be trained, and I am not opposed to that, let the entrepreneurs of this country take people on to their payrolls and train them on the job rather than just leaving people at home on welfare or UI and becoming frustrated because they do not have anything to do, not to mention the loss of dignity. That was the second issue that concerned the students of Earl Grey Senior Public School. There is another challenge for us.

Mr. Speaker, you are signalling me that my time is running out. Another issue that concerned the students was to put more support to tourism in this country. We know that it is the No. 1 job creator. The other thing they said is that government should eliminate waste and abuse of the system. Remember, these words are coming from 12 and 13 year olds. One teacher said to shift some of the defence budget to youth programs.

There was one teacher there who was an American and she said: "You know, Canadians have to be more patriotic." We need to be more patriotic. This American teacher, Mrs. Quinn, was so right when she said that we do not appreciate enough what we have in this country in terms of standard of living. Fear of job loss was another problem.

I realize I only have a short time today, but these thoughts represented here today are those of Earl Grey Public School. I support each and every one of them, but I do want to add two of my own. I think the banking institutions of this country have to re-examine the way that they handle credit with small and medium sized business. I know that the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism admitted yesterday in this House that the financial institutions need to be checked on that issue. I salute him for admitting that.

I appreciate you giving me that extra minute, Mr. Speaker, but I wish I had half the afternoon.

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech and especially the portion on taxes. I know he has done a fair bit of work in regard to simplifying the taxation system. I think that is something we all want to see. In reading his book, it seemed that as he got into the system he found that he had to make exemptions that were similar to the ones that already exist in the tax system to take into account various matters that we need to do in terms of our social structure. I also noticed that a lot of the calculations take place off the particular paper itself. As I said, I welcome the attempt to simplify the tax system.

I have a couple of questions about the tax system. I know he is interested in the environment. Should there be incentives or should we be using the tax system with regard to environmental matters? What does he feel in that particular regard? I would certainly like to know his feelings on that.

There is also the whole idea of the third party who seemed to feel that all we have to do is to put more tax on what they call the rich and all our problems will be solved and the middle class will not have to pay its share. We have to raise a certain amount of revenue and we are all going to have to pay, no matter what percentages we put on it.

The third party in Ontario has apparently defined a rich person as earning $53,000. I would like the member's comments on those particular items.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity of addressing those issues.

First, I want to deal with the issue of the single tax. I have been working on this for the past three and half years with many other tax experts who are much brighter than I will ever be on tax issues. We have made sure that there are some progressive features in this tax design. Yes, we did put in a tax credit for seniors, families with children and charities. We left the RRSP in place. Beyond that, there are no other special categories.

On the corporate side we made sure there was a $100,000 tax credit to make sure that entrepreneurship, or small and medium sized business, has that very progressive break on the first $100,000. In other words, under the single tax, there would be no tax on the first $100,000, but after that it would be 20 per cent. There is a lot of room for simplifying the tax system.

I want to address the point specifically on the environmental issue he asked about. No, there should not be any special tax breaks for the environment. I am as much committed to the environment as any other member in this House. That is the problem with the current tax system. We have been trying to run every sector of the economy through the tax system. That has created so many rules and regulations and exceptions and exceptions to exceptions in every sector of the economy that it is no longer an intelligible system.

We, as the Government of Canada, may decide that the environment is a priority issue. I believe we all agree that it should be and it is a priority issue. In that case, any money it requires can be handled through direct funding. This would be either interest free loans, low interest loans, grants or whatever, but let us not bury these grants or incentives in the tax system. Ten years from now we will be back where we are today with a system that is unintelligible.

What was your last point? I am sorry.

An hon. member: Taxing the wealthy.

Mr. Mills: Oh, taxing the wealthy. I used to believe that those in the NDP were into causes, but I learned my lesson this week. This is a group that is only driven by tactics. What they did to me this week I will remember for a long, long time.

What do you mean: "Tax the rich?" I have absolutely no problem with people paying their fair share. The harder people work, the more incentive they should have.

Mr. Speaker, just give me one second on this. Under the current system there are many people who pay no taxes and obviously that is wrong. However, the harder you work the more you want to punish people. That is

what the NDP wants to do. I think that is bogus. Remember, those people with entrepreneurial skills who build wealth also create jobs and that is what the NDP fails to understand.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate this afternoon.

I would like to start by congratulating my hon. colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River on his excellent initiative to draw the attention of this House to the Tory government's negligence with respect to the economy of our province, Ontario.

[*English*]

Little did we know yesterday when we asked for this debate that we would hear statistics this morning in the House telling us that the economy had gone from bad to worse because more people are unemployed.

I see the Minister of State for Finance saying no while 4,000 full-time jobs have been lost in one month in this country. That is not good news no matter how you cut it.

The minister said awhile ago, in response to another hon. member, that the problem with all of us is that we did not congratulate the Tories enough. The problem with all of us is that we were negative. It is coming from the disciples of Eric Nielsen that we Liberals, according to the disciples of Eric and the disciples of Harvie the chair stormer, that we are negative. Is it not something to hear that from a member across the way?

That statement is a little less than accurate. Of course, I have to use those kinds of words because the rules of this House oblige me and properly so.

I want to say something about my own region of eastern Ontario. Unemployment has gone up to the tune of three-tenths of 1 per cent. That includes the city of Ottawa. If you remove the city of Ottawa for statistical purposes from rural Ontario, imagine how much unemployment has gone up in rural areas.

The number of unemployed has increased from 48,000 in eastern Ontario to 50,000. It is certainly quite appropriate and it is our duty to raise these things in the House of Commons today.

That is why the member for Scarborough—Rouge River should be congratulated, not just by Liberals, but by all members of this House for bringing this issue to public attention because it has to be brought to public attention.

[*Translation*]

There are those who, like the minister, will say that the opposition criticizes the government but fails to offer alternatives. That is hardly fair, since the Leader of the Opposition and next prime minister raised this matter and brought it to the attention of the media some time ago.

I refer you to a press release dated January 21, 1992, in which the hon. member for Beauséjour, Leader of the Opposition and soon to be prime minister, suggested and even begged the government to set up five-point programs for economic recovery. In each case, the Leader of the Opposition explained how program expenditures would be covered. More specifically, the Leader of the Opposition asked, on behalf of all members on this side of the House and for the sake of all Canadians who are unemployed, that the government set up a program for renewal and upgrading of municipal infrastructures, including bridges, for instance.

If you ever used Perley Bridge in Hawkesbury in my riding, Mr. Speaker, you would find it in disgraceful condition for this day and age. It must be replaced.

The same goes for the sewers in some municipalities and for other services. We are not asking the government to build pyramids, as John Maynard Keynes emphasized long ago. We are asking it to participate in necessary projects that must be done, instead of paying people to stay home and do nothing on unemployment insurance, people who would ask for nothing better than to go back to work. We are asking the government to establish programs to give these Canadians in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and elsewhere some dignity, but it seems that the government does not want to understand.

[*English*]

My very distinguished colleagues, the members for Stormont—Dundas and Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, and I have been asking the government to establish a program to assist the economy of eastern Ontario. We have had meetings with municipal officials. Twenty-eight municipalities in eastern Ontario have signed a joint declaration asking for this government to establish a program to attract new industries to this area to get people back to work.

We have been writing to the ministers across the way for three years and nothing has happened. There is nothing for the people of Cornwall, Hawkesbury, Pembroke or anywhere else. We have even outlined a program that the government should undertake, such as the FEDNOR program which already exists for northern Ontario. We suggested that it should not spend oodles of money establishing something new such as a new bureaucracy, just extend the territory of what is there and put people back to work. Those few things do exist right now.

I was having a conversation with my colleague from Stormont—Dundas earlier today. We were talking about the economy of eastern Ontario. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the Stormont Dundas Glengarry Small Business Development Centre which is located in Cornwall has no investment money as we speak. That is funded by the federal government. It is a form of mini-bank. It put out advertisements funded by the federal government which told people: "Come in, we will help you start your own business".

Do you know what they are told when they get there? "We do not have any money". The bank has no money in the bank. It is a Tory bank. The bank that the government has established has no money in it. It advertises its program.

Last year it established the Self-Employment Incentive Program. The minister responsible for eastern Ontario, the Minister of Supply and Services, announced a whole series of these programs for all of eastern Ontario. It was, again, for Stormont—Dundas, for the Hawkesbury area, for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and for Renfrew and so on. He announced the people who could apply. They were people on unemployment who could apply under this program and could get assistance.

The local small business development centres put out ads in newspapers after the minister announced that he was giving the money. In one case, I believe, it was the Stormont Dundas Glengarry centre that was supposed to get about 30 placements. They put out ads inviting people to apply. After they adopted about six of them, they got notices from the department: "We haven't got any more money, stop sending them to us". They said: "This doesn't make sense. How can we not have any more money. We applied for 30". It was whatever the number was. The reply was: "Sorry, but that is the way it is. We've got no money".

The government had announced a program and then cut the funds after it announced it. What kind of sense does that make? Meanwhile we have ads right now on television, as the member for Stormont—Dundas very appropriately and eloquently pointed out earlier today. He said that those ads talk about all this great training.

I was addressing people in my riding at T. R. Leger Alternative School in Alexandria last Friday. They said to me: "Why is the government sending us here and then in the middle of the program it is telling us to go home? We cannot finish our training because they have cancelled the money" Did they think of congratulating the government for that stupid ad on television telling them how great they are at training? Why don't they take the money from the ad and give it to the alternative school to train people to go back to work instead of giving it to their friends in the advertising agencies? Wouldn't that make a lot of sense, instead of wasting it on stupid Tory propaganda advertising? That is all we see because it is the run up to the election.

• (1430)

It is time the Tories smartened up if they want anyone to believe in them by the time the next election rolls around.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): That certainly brought down the level of debate in the House somewhat, Mr. Speaker. We have had a very good and wholesome debate until now.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration has been listening to the problems that my hon. friend enunciated where programs had run out of money because of the pressures of the numbers of people using it with the high unemployment we have. Yesterday morning cabinet approved and the minister announced

yesterday afternoon another $150 million to try to alleviate the problem.

Rather than stand here and scream like a wild banshee, which makes us all look like jerks, it would be more proper for him to make representation to the government to ensure that some of that $150 million in fact went to help those people he was talking to last weekend, instead of stirring up emotions like that which are totally uncalled for.

Mr. Boudria: I thank the minister for bringing up that particular topic, the one on the government's so-called announcements of yesterday.

First of all, the minister should have at least set the record straight. What the government announced yesterday was not $150 million. It was $95 million. The other was already there. That is just nonsense.

It is just like saying I have money, I count it, I put it in my wallet and I count it again. That does not mean that I have twice as much of money. Counting it twice or three times means the same thing. Even this minister should understand that.

Let us talk about how much money has been going to my riding for training. Last year the amount given for all UI programs combined—I could enumerate every single one of them here; I have two pages of them—for Prescott county, in my riding, when the unemployment rate was not nearly as bad as it is now totalled $4,732,000.

This year—and I invite the member to pay attention—$1.3 million instead of $4.7 million. Two-thirds of the money has been cut off, I say to the minister across the way who was just bragging about how much more has been given to my constituents and others. Two-thirds of the money has been taken away.

I invite the minister to go behind the curtains, pick up the phone and phone the Hawkesbury Canada Employment Centre at area code 613-632-2759. The centre will set him straight. It will tell him. He just has to ask the people who work there. They have made a list for me of everything that has been received in 1991-92 and 1992-93. If we compare the $4,732,697 of last year and $1,310,479 of this year, it is less than a third. As a matter of fact it is just a little over a quarter of what we got last year.

How can anyone call that an increase? I invite the minister to dig out his calculator, figure out his new math, and answer that one.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I wish there was more time for us all to speak on our colleague's motion in the House today but unfortunately there is not. The motion, as we know, reads:

> That this House condemns the government for its negligence toward the worst social and economic difficulties faced by residents of Ontario in modern times.

I have listened very closely to my colleague from the Glengarry—Prescott—Russell part of eastern Ontario. I understand what he is saying. Different areas of Ontario are hurt in different manners.

The Economic Council of Canada has warned that Canada must make some fundamental changes in the structure of our economy or risk losing many qualities of Canadian life we all enjoy and take for granted.

I have a letter here from a constituent. I think this is what my colleague is saying but somebody across the floor is not hearing. I would like to hear my colleague's comment. This person writes to me and says: "I am 42, unskilled, untrained and can't get a decent job. In fact I can't get anything. UIC won't put me on an on the job training program because I am not on UIC. I can't collect UIC because I was on WC for an injured elbow. My employer says he doesn't have to take me back and put me on a lighter job load"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to finish?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret there is not unanimous consent.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being given the opportunity to comment on the motion of my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River today regarding the condemning of the government for the economic situation that we find in the province of Ontario, and indeed across Canada as my friend from Calgary South pointed out very clearly today.

It is not just Ontario that is hurting. It is the entire country. Coming from Ontario, the centre of Ontario, I am very concerned about the economic situation and

have been for a considerable amount of time. I want to put this in its proper perspective however.

We have gone through some very difficult times. We have all experienced employment problems within our ridings. There are many reasons for it. There are reasons of restructuring that is going on not only here but around the world. Of course employment is affected rather dramatically by restructuring.

We have seen our productivity in this country drop rather dramatically over the last three or four years, something that I am pleased to see has improved over the last year and will lead us out of the economic problem we have been experiencing.

There are other key reasons. We hear the free trade agreement caused unemployment. There is no question that the free trade agreement caused a rationalization of industries both here and in the United States. But that is a positive thing because that had to happen; it was coming anyway. We had to get through that period of time.

Some friends, some parliamentarians were visiting from Australia just yesterday. I spent a considerable amount of time with them in the afternoon. They are considering introducing a GST in Australia at the present time and were interested in our experience. I had some very good tips for them in those discussions.

They were talking about the economic situation in Australia today. Australia just had 22 per cent interest rates. Does that sound familiar? Its unemployment rate is now almost at 11 per cent and growing.

I was in eastern Europe and Europe recently. The same types of problems are being experienced everywhere because the rationalization is going on. The modernization or the changing global economy, has caused this country to reform, pardon the terminology, our economic bases and get on with the restructuring. That is what is going on.

My hon. friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell stood and talked about the unemployment statistics that came out today. One of the things he failed to mention was that there was an increase in the number of people able to work. Some 50,000 new people came on to the work force this past month.

What he also failed to mention was that 31,000 new jobs were created. Unemployment did not fall by 20,000. More people came on to the labour market. There were not enough jobs for those people, but 31,000 new jobs were created. I might say 20,000 of them were in the province of Ontario, and that is what we are talking about today.

Over the last two months we have seen the manufacturing sector increase its employment by 40,000 jobs. There are not nearly enough jobs yet to make up the rate of unemployment that we have seen in the last two years and want to get down. Unfortunately when we go through restructuring and bring in new equipment, new machinery and so on and so forth, employment does not follow immediately. It always lags in recovery. I am afraid we are still going to see that here.

• (1440)

I heard my friends from Stormont—Dundas and from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell suggest that we throw money at it and create employment. Let us be frank about that. There is not enough money anywhere to make work projects for 1.5 million people. It is just not there. The answer to the problem is not make work projects for one or two months so that people can qualify for unemployment insurance.

The answer is to get the economy going again and to create full-time meaningful jobs. That is what it is all about. That is what the free trade agreement was about. The free trade agreement was in fact to improve our economy and to have companies restructure and in fact improve their situation.

Let me just give a couple of examples if I might. Right in the riding or very close to the riding of the hon. member who proposed the motion today from Scarborough—Rouge River there is a company called Canadian Thermos Products. I want to read this into the record because it is extremely important. Its product is insulated containers; its market is the United States. In response to free trade the United States parent upgraded Canadian operations at a cost of $25 million, creating 120 new jobs; closed its older facility in Connecticut; and began producing the entire North American market in Scarborough.

That is what the free trade agreement is all about. That is what is happening for Canada.

My friend from Stratford who is sitting behind me and I spent a very enjoyable day in the wonderful riding of

Perth—Wellington—Waterloo in the community of Stratford. In the morning we had the privilege of participating in the opening of a $50 million addition which will create 200 new jobs.

One of the interesting things about this production was the new, wonderful equipment to produce precision bearings that are used in the auto industry, in the water pump industry and so on. It was fascinating to see the modern technology they brought in.

To be honest, the principals who were there from the parent company in Germany said to me that this plant in Stratford would soon be out-performing the home plant in Germany. That was good news to hear and it made me feel very proud as a Canadian, extremely proud as a Canadian.

It says an awful lot about the 900 and some workers in Stratford. As a matter of fact one of the workers received his 50-year pin with the same company when we were there. It was absolutely amazing and he is only 64 years of age. He joined as an apprentice at 14.

That is type of thing that is going on. We do not hear about these things from the headlines in the papers unfortunately. We always hear about the tragedies. We always hear about the closings. I cannot remember the last time I saw a plant opening announced on the front page of a paper or on any of our national telecasts in the news.

They might be on some of the local newscasts. I have to give them full marks, but when it comes to our national communications organizations we do not see them. If a plant closed, however, it is a front-page story. It is Chicken Little and the sky is falling in and so on and so forth.

There are a lot of very good things happening: 3M Canada in London with $30 million in a new tape manufacturing plant and Bertrand Faure Ltd. in Mississauga has just improved its production process, which is now allowing it to win new business with Japanese manufacturers locating in Canada. It is forecasting sales in the $60 million range and is investing in equipment. This is exactly what was talked about today in the debate. It is investing in equipment to improve productivity at its plant.

Basic International Network Ltd. in Woodbridge, involved women's fashion sportswear, is exporting about 15 per cent of its production to the United States and is thanking the free trade agreement for allowing it to expand into the United States.

These things are happening. I do not want to go on and on about it, but the point is that the restructuring is going on and the government is trying, to the best of its capabilities, to facilitate that change. The problem is that there is not enough money around to do what we would like to do.

I think that is fair to say.

The poor old taxpayer pays at the municipal level, in some areas at the regional level, at the provincial level, and then at the federal level. We politicians sometimes tend to forget that it is one taxpayer. There is not a group that pays the federal tax and a group that pays the provincial tax. There is one taxpayer.

We must do with the limited resources what we can do within the realm of possibility, without bankrupting the country, without borrowing more and more money or raising taxes more and more. We must do that.

We must be able to work with the resources that we have and work within a reasonable period of economic expansion. That is exactly what is happening.

I do not want to minimize the problem that we have at all, and if I left the House with that impression I did not intend to. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell got up, but he did not hear the quality of debate that was going on today and the discussion between our parties. In general, it has been pretty good.

I was not minimizing our problems at all. We have got them. We have problems. We all have them. We all experience them in our ridings all the time. We know what is going on out there and we are trying to help in the best way.

My friend from Broadview—Greenwood always has some positive thoughts. He is causing us fits in our ridings right now because he has some recording going around saying: "Call your local MP", and of course people are calling us and asking: "What's going on?" However, he is an original thinker. I do not always agree with him but I know people in his own caucus who do not agree with him, and that is all right. At least he is thinking and trying to do some positive things to get the economy going. That is what this is all about.

We appreciate that type of thinking.

There was an article in *The Toronto Star*. We are always knocking *The Toronto Star* in this place because—

Mr. Mills: Don't talk about *The Toronto Star*.

Mr. McDermid: The publisher is very up front, he is a Liberal.

Mr. Mills: He's not a Liberal.

Mr. McDermid: He professes to be a Liberal, and its editorial content is Liberal. That is fair ball. He has always been up front. He has never hidden that. However I have to give him credit for permitting an article in *The Toronto Star* on April 4 or April 5.

The article was written by Tom McCormack, who is an economist. He has his own company and a masters in economics from the University of Western Ontario. He has wide experience. He was one of the directors for the Anti-Inflation Board—

Mr. Mills: Good man.

Mr. McDermid: —between 1976 and 1982. Strategic Projections is the name of his company and it specializes in demographics and economic modelling.

The headline of his article says: "Get Ready Canada for the Next Boom", and the introduction says:

> This country, which already enjoys the second highest standard of living in the world, is on the threshold of an unprecedented expansion, writes economist Tom McCormack. But this golden age of prosperity could be jeopardized by Canadians' pessimistic national mood.

He goes on in this very well written article, backed with statistics, figures and so on, to talk about the positive things in this country. He talks about what is coming down the road. He says that the difficult times we are going through now are necessary so that when we come out the other end we come out running, that we are in great shape to meet the challenges.

That is exactly what is going on in this country today. Although it is not obvious yet we are starting to see very positive signs. Never in the history of Canada did we have record exports like we did in March, and record exports to the United States of America. There was $9.8 billion worth of goods exported to the United States in March 1992.

• (1450)

In the first quarter we had wonderful export figures. We export 25 per cent of what we produce. We depend on exports in this country far more than the United States. It only exports 12 per cent of what it produces, Japan's figure is 14 percent. It is so very important.

These signs of improvement in our exports are a sign that the economy is improving. If the economy in the United States starts to pick up we are going to see phenomenal progress because that is where we export most of our goods. We exported $3 billion to other countries of the world and $9.8 billion to the United States in the month of March. That is a good sign and it is starting to happen. We are very pleased about what is going on.

Everybody takes these statistics and figures and uses them. They can use them in many ways. Politicians have a great knack of doing so.

Mr. Mills: As you do.

Mr. McDermid: I do it too, sure. Of course I do.

There were 31,000 new jobs created, over and above last month. That is a fact. It is right there. I am not juggling the figures.

Mr. Bevilacqua: Part-time.

Mr. McDermid: I said that 57,000 or 58,000 came into the labour force this month, so there were 20,000 that did not get jobs out of that group. I am admitting that.

Mr. Mills: Let us talk about the unemployed.

Mr. McDermid: We want to get the economy improving and continue to increase these exports and manufacturing jobs that will create spin-offs, such as people buying homes and all the other things that go on. That is exactly what we are doing.

I just want to give one quick example, in terms of interest rates alone so people understand what is going on out there. If we took the interest rate of a five year mortgage, in August 1981—this may not be fair—if I had a five-year mortgage it was at 21.75 per cent.

Today that same mortgage is at 9.75 per cent. The difference to a family's pocket is $7,812 per year. That is money in its pocket. That is what it means. These falling interest rates mean that the mortgage rates on a five-year mortgage come down.

On a one-year mortgage it is saving $8,652 per year. That is just in mortgages. Those are types of savings to the people who finance their mortgages.

Let us talk about a small business loan. Let us say a person got a piece of equipment for $100,000 in 1981. He was paying $1,979 per month on that loan. Today he is paying $688 per month. That is a saving of $1,291 per month or $15,492 per year.

That is what is helping the economy. The interest rates are helping the economy. There is no question that with lower interest rates we are going to encourage small business and we are going to encourage young people to buy new homes. Today I just found out that the three-year rate is at 9 per cent. I cannot remember when the mortgage rates were that low. I am pleased that they are so low.

I am convinced that because of this increased activity in manufacturing and in exports and the increased economic activity we are seeing in our country that we are going to see things improve, not only in Ontario but right across this country.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, maybe I could finish the question I started a while ago.

The member was in the House when I was reading a letter from a constituent of mine. I felt this person's letter quite clearly described the plight Canadians are in today across this country. I will not repeat what I said but he is asking for my help. He has no income whatsoever.

He says that social services told him: "Because my wife works I am not entitled to any help from the UIC", even when he offered to pay it back. His wife earns only $13,476 after taxes, Canada pension, and UI. Therefore, he is not entitled to any social benefits. He is not entitled to UIC. He is an unemployed man and is not entitled to anything.

He has been using his Visa to buy the gas for his car so he can go looking for work. He is not complaining. All he wants is the opportunity to go out and work. He is driving a 1980 car. He is in a position in which he needs to be retrained. He is not educated and needs retraining. We now know there is no money in the budget for retraining. He is asking me, as his member of Parliament, to help him out. What is there for me to offer this person? He is only one of thousands in this country who are in this position.

I ask the member opposite, what can I tell this gentleman to do? Where can he go so that he can be offered some hope in this wonderful country of Canada?

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to demean the individual at all. We all have examples in our ridings of people who are desperately searching for work and looking for jobs.

I will reiterate what I said. There is unfortunately not enough money in this country alone to help everybody at this particular time. That is unfortunate, but there is not.

Yesterday the minister added another $150 million for training. Hopefully the individual the member refers to will be able to get into a program, but maybe not. Maybe it will be over-subscribed, maybe it is now. Maybe he is further down the waiting list. I do not know.

The hope I can give him is that the country is coming out of a recession and employment opportunities are slowly getting better. There were 31,000 more people employed in the month of May than there were in April. It is improving, though not fast enough for our liking. We would like to see it happen much faster. However it is improving and we have to hold hope out for those people.

If we are reading letters I can read out a letter that my colleague the Minister of Finance received yesterday. It is from an individual who is unemployed and who has been out looking for work for months. He apologized for his contribution to the party. It could only be $150 because he is unemployed. Yet, he said: "You are on the right track. Keep doing what you are doing because we can see signs that the economy is getting better and I am hopeful I will be able to get a job in the not too distant future with an improved economy". He understands the problem all levels of government in Canada are having. Here is a person who is unemployed and still believes in the democratic—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. McDermid: Members can make fun of him. They can sit there and laugh at him. They can make fun of the individual if they want to, but it is not funny being unemployed. Here is someone who believes in the democratic process and is prepared to participate. Do not sit there and laugh at an individual who writes a

letter like that. I did not laugh at your constituent. You should not laugh at this one.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the minister's remarks. He talked about the economist Tom McCormack, and I too read the article in *The Toronto Star*. I subsequently had some discussions with Tom McCormack and he sent me his latest papers on projections. They were good. I actually believe that the 1990s are going to be better than the 1980s.

However, what we are talking about here today is trying to do something, and not in 1994, 1995 or 1996. Today we are trying to address the problems of the 1.5 million people in Canada who are unemployed. Specifically, we are trying to put a tighter focus on the .5 million in Ontario who are trying to get back into the work force.

• (1500)

The minister was part of a parliamentary task force on employment opportunities for the 1980s. I have referred to this task force at least a dozen times in this House in the last 60 to 90 days. It is a good report.

The report recommends one thing over and over again. The report talks about apprenticeship training, but it talks specifically about linking training to on-the-job experiences. In other words, use the 1.7 million enterprises in this country as partners in taking people off unemployment and putting them into a factory or an office and training them on the job.

Would it not be a much more dignified productive experience if instead of giving out welfare or UI cheques to figure out a mechanism whereby the employer would take people off UI and put them into the factory? Would it not be a much better experience to have a joint venture using those funds and that business? Besides giving people back their dignity, they also become taxpayers and we would be developing skilled workers for the small enterprise which will provide that badly needed support to go into the nineties.

The minister was a part of that task force. Why does he not figure out a way to motivate his cabinet colleagues to make that happen tomorrow?

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I am glad he asked that because I can say the minister did that a few weeks ago. The Minister of Employment and Immigration has a project now in New Brunswick. One of the problems, both technically and philosophically, is that it is a wonderful theory until we come to the employers because there is a union in there. The union says: "Look. Last guy on, first guy off."

If that report is thoroughly read, it will be seen that although we made those types of recommendations we listed all the problems. Canada for so many years has always had the luxury of importing its skilled labour. Because of that, we never really established good apprenticeship programs because when industry needed people, boom, off to England, off to Germany, off to Italy, off to France, off to Portugal, bring them in, set them up.

Today that same luxury is not there. We are behind in our training. Canadian businesses spend one-half of 1 per cent of their income on training. The United States of America spends twice that, about 1 per cent. Japan spends 2 per cent. That is four times what our businesses spend on training and retraining.

It has to change. I agree with the hon. member. We said that in our report but there are so many problems in getting employers to do that. Right now, when you say that you want to train somebody on the job, they say that right now, they have no work for them to train them on, or they say that they need somebody who is really specialized.

I might add one of the other problems in that report that has to do specifically with the hon. member's question is that industry does not plan for the future. This is one of the things my friend from Calgary West would tell you. I am sure the chairman from Montreal would tell you the same thing.

When the industries were asked: "What kind of a person are you going to need three or four years from now," they could not tell us what they needed. They could tell us what they needed next week, but they did not know what they would need four years from now. A person cannot be trained in a week to take a job.

There has to be attitudinal changes. I say to the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood, I believe that report is as fresh today as it was back in 1981-82. I have no disagreement with that.

That is why the emphasis on training is coming from this government and the money is being put forward for training. But we need more in the workplace as well.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise and speak on this motion this afternoon.

The debate has been quite interesting. It certainly has highlighted some of the problems that the largest province in Canada is now facing, problems that have been created in large part by the fiscal and economic policies of this government.

I just want to go back to a few comments other people have made and then come to the things I want to say myself.

One of the interesting things a previous speaker from Calgary was talking about is that this is a world-wide recession and that many countries are having downturns in their economies. The United States is suffering, Japan is suffering and other countries are suffering. There is some truth in that.

But there are also many areas where that is not true. Canada has lost 23 per cent of its industrial and manufacturing jobs. In that same period of time, the United States has lost 6 per cent. So in the Canadian economy Canadian manufacturing is shrinking by 23 per cent. The bulk of those jobs or a great number of them would be in the industrial heartland of Ontario.

The United States has suffered 6 per cent. Now that is quite a dramatic difference. It is said that in the free trade agreement the United States has lost jobs. Yes, it probably has in the same period of time. But it has lost 6 per cent and we have lost 23 per cent.

The member for Calgary Southwest also talked about Japan's economic downturn. Well, I happen to have been there a few months ago and I hate to inform the hon. member but there is a shortage of workers in Japan. There is a shortage of skilled, unskilled, any variety of workers. Japan, for the first time in its history, has to deal with the problem of foreign or itinerant workers. There are now somewhere in excess of 300,000 people from Baluchistan, Pakistan working in Japan. Many of them are there illegally but industries are dependent upon them.

So, when this government gets up and says that it is a world-wide problem and we have nothing to do with it, it really should examine this recession and its impact.

We went into the recession earlier, we went into it deeper, and we are going to stay in it longer. That is because of the government policies of introducing the GST, which has crippled our retail industry, because of the free trade deal, which has devastated our total balance of payments, and because of our high interest rate, which is still higher than in the United States. It has kept our dollar artificially high, thus making exports much more difficult and imports cheaper. This has been kept up over all the years that the Tories have been in power.

It has created difficulties, particularly in the province of Ontario, in the industrial heartland of Canada. So while the province is having economic difficulties because of the economic conditions created by this government, what has the government done to assist the province and the people?

I want to talk about just a couple of things that the government has done. The federal government of course has cut back on the Established Programs Financing which should be there for the provinces to assist in health care and post-secondary education, that great thing the government talks about, education.

There was a formula in place. The formula was based on so much going to the provinces increased by the increase in gross national productivity. It was not by expenditures, not by anything else, but as the country got more wealthy the money was to be transferred to the provinces based on the creation of additional wealth.

• (1510)

What happened? It started back under the Liberals. The Liberals decided that they had the formula but they did not like it and so they started cutting back. Even before the Tories came to power the cutbacks for Ontario amounted to nearly $300 million lost in 1982-1983 and another $360 million lost in 1983-1984. Today the losses are up to $2.6 billion a year. That should have been coming to that province based on the increase in the wealth of this country. A total of $11 billion was cut from the province, not only from health care but also from post-secondary education.

This is at a time when government member after government member stands up and says: "One of the things that is going to save Canada and guarantee the future of young Canadians is for them to get an education". So the government cut back the money going to the provinces for post-secondary education. It was cut back dramatically in the case of Ontario.

Look at what has happened in Ontario as the impact of this recession hits it in terms of the number of people on unemployment insurance or relying on income assistance.

The government anticipated this recession quite nicely because three years ago, it bailed out of any responsibility for directly financing or even partially financing the unemployment insurance system. It dumped that responsibility on employees and employers. That includes small business, municipal infrastructures, hospitals, schools which had to come up with the additional money.

Even with that the government then reduced the number of weeks a person could qualify for UI, it increased the number of weeks they had to work to get UI, and even with that in Ontario the number of people collecting UI went up dramatically to over 23 per cent from November 1990 to November 1991. The number of people who exhausted their UI in November last year was 32,000 which is up 111 per cent over the previous year.

What happens to the exhaustees? They have to go on income assistance. The income assistance case-loads have gone up dramatically. The case-loads are up to a point where there are now nearly 600,000 people receiving income assistance in the province, an increase of 32 per cent from January 1991. That is the number of cases. The number of individuals involved is 1.131 million. That is 1.131 million people receiving welfare.

Of course the federal government realized that it had sloughed off its responsibility under unemployment insurance. It had dumped it down to the provinces, to welfare costs. But lo and behold, it was responsible for 50 per cent of the cost of welfare and thought: "Aha, we cannot have that. We cannot be held responsible for the unemployed. We cannot be responsible for mothers looking after children. We cannot be held responsible for the damage we have caused. We will have to limit the amount the provinces can claim so it is no longer 50/50. We will limit the increase to 5 per cent." It knew full well that the increase in demand was around 32 per cent to 35 per cent but it would limit its liability to 5 per cent.

What does that cost the province of Ontario? The costs to the province of Ontario amount to an accumulated total of something in excess of $3.5 billion. In 1990-91 it was $400 million and in 1991-92 it is $1.3 billion. In 1992-93 it will be $1.8 billion.

The federal government said that it was not only washing its hands of the responsibility for creating this recession, it was not only washing its hands of trying to create employment and get people back to work, but it was going to systematically slough off to the provinces the financial responsibility for the people who have been so adversely affected. It sloughed off in terms of post-secondary education, health care, the number of people on income assistance and those receiving other types of support.

The government did not stop there. There are now other areas where it is sloughing off on the provinces. It has totally cancelled the co-op housing program and its responsibility to provide social housing. It is now cutting back on other social housing programs. We now have cutbacks in social housing right across this country.

It affects Ontario specifically by reducing the number of units being built by 1,957. That is nearly 2,000 units. This has an impact on people's lives. It comes at a time when CMHC has estimated that 560,000 Canadians need social housing to obtain adequate, affordable housing. With 560,000 people needing housing, what has this government done but cut back. It also cuts back on jobs because housing is one of the fastest generators of jobs in this country. It is labour-intensive construction. It employs people directly in the trades, in home building, in the supply industry supplying materials, in the manufacturing industry manufacturing materials, light fixtures, air conditioning systems, furnaces, everything.

It also has a multiplier effect very quickly because if those people are working they buy from the retail stores, they eat out in restaurants and there is a very quick acceleration of employment. Housing is probably one of the best investments a government can make to stimulate the economy.

There are other things that the federal government has done. I want to just briefly compare some of the things that the federal government has done and what the Ontario government has done in spite of the fact that the offloading has been on it.

Ontario started a job training fund in which it put in $1.1 billion over three years. It expects to create 100,000 jobs and provide training for another 800,000 people. An additional $930 million for worker retraining and adjustment is being scheduled for 1992–93. The federal government cut $100 million from the Canadian Jobs Strategy Program. It has no momentum to try to deal with the high unemployment. The Ontario government immediately committed to building 20,000 new non-profit housing units. The figure in the street is 2.12 person years of labour, work, for every housing unit, plus the spin–off, which is probably three or four times that.

• (1520)

What did the federal government do? It cancelled the co–op program and it cut 2,000 housing units from the social housing program.

Infrastructure programs: The Ontario government immediately put in $34 billion in capital funding for schools, roads, homes for the aged, and other public facilities. This will support 67,000 jobs in 1992–93 alone.

What has the federal government done? It has ignored calls by all of the municipalities, all the mayors across this country, to fund a municipal infrastructure program on a shared cost basis with the provinces, the municipalities and the federal government.

This is municipal infrastructure that must be done. These are not luxuries. These are things that if we do not do it now they are going to cost us more in three or four or five years to do. These are basic sewers, roads, sewage treatment plants, hospitals, schools, all of the things that form the heritage that our kids need to make the community strong, to provide the economic base and the economic infrastructure for our small businesses and our industries.

This motion in one sense is very timely today. It focuses on the real difficulties being experienced by people right across Canada, and certainly by people in the province of Ontario. It shows that this government is either lacking in the will to solve the economic problem or the knowledge of how to solve it.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): I cannot help it, but when I get an opportunity to ask a question of the New Democratic Party, I cannot resist the temptation.

The member talks about many of the problems that we are having in the economy today. One of the problems that we are having is the fact that there has been almost a 50 per cent reduction in the amount of foreign investment that has come into the province of Ontario. One of the reasons why there is a hesitancy to invest in Ontario right now is because of the uncertainty created by the labour legislation that is being put forward by the NDP government.

I want to be perfectly clear to this House and to the member that we are not anti–labour here. We are not talking about that. The member is a fair member and I know that he understands that. But 85 per cent of the jobs that are created in the province of Ontario are created by small and medium–sized businesses. There is a skittishness out there in the market right now because of this labour legislation which, rather than advancing the cause of labour, seems to be frightening off entrepreneurs and investors. Does the member not think that part of the problem we are having in the province of Ontario is as a result of what appears to be an almost indifferent attitude toward small and medium–size business and some of the difficulties they are having? I am talking about a kind of indifferent attitude from the NDP Government of Ontario toward that sector of our economy?

Could the member try to explain it to this House and to the people of Canada and specifically to Ontarians? I cannot understand the proposed advantages of this labour legislation that the province is putting forward at this time.

Mr. Karpoff: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have that question. One of the things that I want to make sure the member understands is that the New Democratic Party is probably the greatest supporter of small business in Canada and has been over the last number of years.

We realize that the generation of jobs in this country has been by small business. If we take a look at the jobs that were created up until the point of this recession,

most of those jobs were created by companies employing less than 100 people.

One of the things that we are also aware of is that many of the difficulties that small businesses have experienced in this country is because of the legacy that they have inherited from the Liberals and the Tories, particularly the tax unfairness of the tax system created by the Liberals. They at the national level particularly created tremendous tax loopholes for the very wealthy and the big multinational corporations. Who had to pick up the slack of those big tax loopholes? The average Canadian.

Small businessmen and small businesswomen are average Canadians. I know. I ran companies prior to being elected.

We have in Ontario a legacy left by the provincial Liberal government of not only a whole backlog of economic problems in terms of unfair taxation, but also a whole backlog of things that it never got around to doing that it should have done. One of them was to update and modernize labour legislation.

Even the Liberal leader in the Ontario legislature yesterday admitted the only thing that she could think of to say that was wrong with the bill that was being proposed was the fact that it was poor timing. It was good legislation, but poor timing. The Liberals and the Conservatives had 20 years to bring it in. That was poor timing and it will always be poor timing.

The New Democrats are certainly willing to bring forward and modernize labour legislation to bring back economic stability and a fair labour climate within the province of Ontario, as they will do in Saskatchewan, as they will do in British Columbia and as they will do in Canada when they form the next government.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, now that we have established some of the weaknesses of the Government of Ontario, we perhaps could give a further analysis of what they are doing or should I say not doing on behalf of young people.

The member spoke at length about the importance of youth in Canada and indeed in the province of Ontario. I have a couple of questions. We have two examples of NDP governments, one in British Columbia and one in Ontario. On the one hand the same member that speaks to the issue of student support and support for young people must realize by now that the latest budget by the Ontario New Democratic Party basically stated that there was going to be a $10 million cut in Ontario's student assistance plan at a time when young people are desperately looking for work.

On the other side, in British Columbia we have another premier who has cancelled a very successful environmental youth corps for young people.

• (1530)

The NDP must come to grips with reality. We cannot be speaking and saying on the one hand. When we analyse exactly what is done I will tell you that we are suffering on both ends of the country.

We have a federal government that is Conservative, and we have a provincial government that is NDP. I will tell you that times are tough in the province of Ontario. We would like to soon have an election to re-establish things and have some order in this country.

Mr. Karpoff: Mr. Speaker, I was just looking at the figures that I have here in terms of the loss of federal revenue for post-secondary education.

Health and post-secondary education amounts to $2.6 billion in Ontario this year. One-third of that is for post-secondary education. That is around $800 million. It is not surprising that if they have $800 million less coming from the federal government that they have to curtail this by $10 million.

The bulk of those cuts in transfer payments started under the Liberal administration in 1977. It did it again in 1982 when it cut back on the revenue guarantee. It did it in 1983.

In British Columbia, one-third of all of the cuts to post-secondary education and health care that are now in existence came because of the Liberal administration in the early 1980s and not because of the Tories.

It was well documented. It is there. The Liberal government in the early 1980s started the erosion of health care and post-secondary education in its cutbacks to the provinces and all that happened is that the Tories learned from the Liberals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): One more short question.

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague talk about Ontario and how short we are of money and at the same time about more government spending. He had a litany that took him 20 minutes to illustrate government spending. I would just like to give him a few statistics and ask him to respond.

About 10 years ago the budget in Ontario was $18 billion. Let us inflate that budget and go back 10 years in Ontario. We did not have a crowded health care system. We did not have an under-funded school system. We did not have an infrastructure that was collapsing. In fact things in Ontario were generally not bad relative to all those things that the member was talking about.

It spent $18 billion. Inflate that. That takes it to $28 billion in today's dollars. Add $5 billion because the population of Ontario has grown. That takes it up to $33 billion.

Would the member mind explaining to me why this year in Ontario they have to spend $52 billion to give in Ontario what 10 years ago $33 billion would have bought?

Mr. Karpoff: Mr. Speaker, I think we should take a look at the history of increased spending and look at it particularly when Bob Rae inherited the terrible mess that was left over by the Liberal administration about 18 months ago.

The increase in the spending in those years was dramatic. That is where the difficulty is. During the boom years when Ontario should have been budgeting and planning for the economic downturn, it should have been building up reserves and doing all of the positive things. It should have made sure that its infrastructure was in place and that there were proper roads and schools and all of those things. It blew it. It frittered it away.

The Liberals just did not know how to spend. I want to contrast that to exactly what happens in Sweden under a democratic socialist government. It built into the economy mechanisms that during the boom times when things were good companies were forced to put aside so much money that they could then, when things were down, bring out for economic expansion.

They were forced to put aside money so that when things went down, job training and job creation could be brought out. You cannot expect to deal with the crisis and the mess left by this Tory and Liberal government after 25 years in Ontario and expect Bob Rae to solve it in 18 months. Give him five years and he will solve it and he will also be re-elected to serve as an NDP premier with Audrey McLaughlin as the NDP Prime Minister.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have a very short supplementary here from the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, it will be a short supplementary. The New Democratic Party member made this reference that Liberals were not sensitive to small business. I just want to remind him and this House and the people of Canada that under Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, there were more small business start-ups in this country than in all the years of government put together. We should never forget the fact that it was under the Liberal Prime Minister that the Small Business Loans Act came into play. The expansion of the Federal Business Development Bank, not to mention numerous other incentives, used the power of entrepreneurship to put people back into the work force.

I remember when the member for Winnipeg South Centre was the minister of employment, he came out with that very successful NEED program. It put close to 330,000 Canadians back to work in a 90-day period during the last recession. We used small business. The NDP should just read the facts.

Mr. Karpoff: Mr. Speaker, just before I answer that question, the Liberals and Tories seem to be enjoying this questions and comments period. I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to extend this period for another ten minutes so that I can continue.

It is probably true that under Mr. Trudeau there were probably more small businesses created than at any other time. They were probably all advertising firms or consulting firms that worked for the Liberal party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on the subject

of the difficulties faced by the residents of Ontario. After that last exchange it is somewhat difficult to even respond.

If I may just digress for a moment, I might say that the labour legislation proposed by the NDP government of Ontario is causing some concern. As was mentioned by the member for Broadview—Greenwood, it certainly is in the area of investment in the province of Ontario.

There is one particular company in St. Catharines which is a multinational corporation which has kept it quiet, but made it clear, that there is no further investment to be made in their particular organization in Ontario at the present time. In fact, after reviewing the legislation, that may continue as well. That is the type of thing that is occurring in the province of Ontario now.

In addition, the member spoke about the tax system. It is very interesting that promises were made such that the tax system would be reformed. They had a commission on fair taxation. They were going to have a minimum tax on corporations. Lo and behold, when they looked at it they found out that maybe corporations were not going to have a minimum tax. Maybe they were paying their just due and perhaps putting an extra burden on them would affect their competitiveness.

It is surprising how the strictures of government seem to change the viewpoints and promises that are made during an election campaign. I am sure people will keep that in mind as they review these various matters.

Obviously, it has been a difficult time over the last few years. There have been difficult social and economic circumstances and, of course, this is extended to the province of Ontario as well. As my riding is in the province of Ontario, we have had some difficulties also. However, to say that it results from the negligence of the government and to lay it entirely at the feet of the government is not being completely above board.

Mr. Karpoff: I am sure it is.

Mr. Milliken: Which government?

Mr. Atkinson: Let us look at some specific circumstances. My community has been hurt by the recession and by what has gone on.

• (1540)

The announcement a few months ago that 2,300 jobs were going to be lost because of the closing of a General Motors foundry in St. Catharines was obviously devastating to the community. The immediate knee-jerk reaction was to blame the free trade agreement. That is interesting.

The auto pact has been in effect since 1962. It has done wonders for the North American automobile industry and the automobile industry in Canada has benefited greatly. It integrated the entire North American automobile market with certain safeguards, as they are called. One of those safeguards is that we will continue to produce as many cars as we consume here in Canada. The interesting fact is that we produce almost double the amount of cars we consume in Canada at the present time. We have benefited greatly from the auto pact.

The other safeguard is that the big three automakers are able to import parts from offshore duty free if they maintain a 60 per cent Canadian content level on the cars produced here above that which existed in 1962. They have always done that and they have continued to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I know you realize that you do not mix that with the 50 per cent content rule that exists in the free trade agreement. That does not apply to the big three although the big three have always maintained much more than that 50 per cent North American content.

On the day the announcement was made about those lost jobs in St. Catharines it is interesting that approximately 15,000 jobs were lost in the United States on the same day. The simple fact is that there is an overcapacity in the automobile market. This overcapacity has come about as a result of the imports. They are making greater and greater inroads into the North American market over what the North American automobile manufacturers are producing.

Unfortunately, a lot of that was the result of people thinking the quality of North American cars was not as good as the imports for quite a period of time. The big three have made certainly a great effort in order to improve their quality and the quality has improved. They are trying to win back their market but they have not been able to win back that market share. General Motors was set up throughout North America for a certain market share. That market share has been lost. Whether

it will be regained or not is something we will have to wait and see.

Pessimists would say they are not going to regain that market and as a result the industry has to rationalize down to the capacity they need in order to meet the market demands. They have done that and as a result St. Catharines is going to be affected by that.

It would nice if people would purchase North American cars and get back to the capacity that previously existed. Then there would not be any pressure on them to close the foundry in St. Catharines. The foundry in St. Catharines cannot be expanded and as a result there are larger foundries n the United States that can take on the capacity that is necessary to meet the demands of the marketplace. The foundry in St. Catharines was modern and efficient, yet because of its mere size, this is causing the difficulties.

I also might mention that the foundry represents a portion of the entire factory in St. Catharines. It is not the closing of the entire factory. There are still approximately 6,000 jobs there, but of course they have to justify their existence just as the company in Oshawa has to justify remaining intact within the General Motors system.

The auto pact has worked well for us. It is intact. To say in a knee-jerk way that the loss of those jobs is a result of the free trade agreement is not being intellectually honest and cannot be allowed to continue in that manner.

Obviously we would like to save those jobs and see other jobs created. That is going to take an effort on the part of all of us in working together. To lump those 2,300 jobs together and say that that is a result of the free trade agreement is just not correct. These are the kinds of figures that the opponents to the free trade agreement come up with.

In the North American free trade negotiations—and this is where we may have an internal debate within Ontario—it would be nice to see the North American content be increased for the cars that are able to be exported duty free to the United States. I certainly would like to see a figure of 60 or 65 per cent come out of the North American free trade agreement. That will be beneficial to a community such as St. Catharines. There will be an internal debate within Ontario with the import manufacturers as to whether that is going to be beneficial in their particular case. Something such as that would certainly help the North American automobile industry and I will be watching very closely for that.

That was one example of what has happened. The knee-jerk reactions of some people indicates that happened as a result of the free trade agreement when it is not a function of the free trade agreement. The auto pact is intact. There is an over-capacity in the North American market. To say that those jobs were lost, to lump them in with all the other jobs that were lost, and say it is because of the free trade agreement is not correct. In a lot of instances that is what is occurring in other areas as well.

There have been losses as a result of the free trade agreement, as the Minister of State indicated. There were losses as a result of the implementation of the auto pact as well.

It was interesting that a union leader came before the St. Catharines city council when I was there and said: "You cannot allow the free trade agreement to go ahead". We debated and asked: "What was your initial reaction to the auto pact?" He said: "We were opposed to it. We did not like it. We thought it was going to be bad for us". We asked: "What is your reaction now?" His answer was: "Under no circumstances can you allow the auto pact to be affected by the free trade agreement". It was not. I asked: "What happened to you when the auto pact came into effect?" His answer was: "I was driving cab for a while". He was driving cab for a while because the plant in St. Catharines, which had made all the components for cars produced in Canada at that particular time, switched over to simply producing engines. It had longer production runs and better quality. After that initial restructuring it resulted in more jobs being created.

More cars are produced in Canada than we consume. We have been a net beneficiary of the auto pact. Similar benefits will flow from the free trade agreement but there is going to be a period of restructuring. A recession and an over-capacity in the automobile market in North America cannot be used as excuses to say that the free trade agreement is not working. To say that is to be intellectually dishonest.

I am glad to see that the Liberals have changed their position. Now they are saying that the free trade agreement should be renegotiated. It will be interesting to see what points they say they are going to renegotiate. However, accepting the free trade agreement and accepting the globalization that has occurred it is gratifying to see they have realized that is going to be their position. That was the position enunciated by their government House leader in this House during previous debates.

Free trade has benefited the Niagara peninsula. One industry that has really benefited is the grape and wine industry. During the negotiation of the free trade agreement it was widely assumed that the grape and wine industry would be a big loser as a result of the free trade agreement. There was no protection for the grape and wine industry and it had to rationalize very quickly.

It is interesting that it has produced high quality products and this year it has seen its market share jump drastically. It used to be that all surplus grape products were purchased by the federal government. Unfortunately, the grape and wine industry went through a period where it produced what might be called "pop wines" and so on, and again it developed a reputation in terms of the quality of its products that was not the best.

As a result of the free trade agreement and the Ontario legislation preventing Lambrusca grapes from being put into the wines it has now developed quality wines that are winning awards around the world. Entrepreneurs have realized that and moved in and used the grapes produced in the Niagara peninsula to secure these awards around the world.

An example is Don Ziraldo at Inniskillin Wines. His ice wines have won many awards.

• (1550)

This year there was not any surplus, the industry sold its entire grape product. Ontario wines are being sold in the United States and they are being sold in England. Unfortunately interprovincial trade barriers in this country prevent Ontario wine from being sold to Quebec and other provinces. It is easier for Ontario wine to get into the United States and even England than it is to get into the provinces of this country.

The result of the free trade agreement is that the industry has become more competitive, has produced better wines, and has succeeded. The fact that it cannot even sell in various provinces makes no sense. In that regard I certainly hope the constitutional negotiations succeed and we do create a true common market among Canadian provinces.

We spoke about training earlier today, and I think we all agree that training is most important. We will see what occurs from that particular aspect. The constitutional proposals indicate that the provinces will take over all training. That is something that causes me some concern because the federal government has done a commendable job in the training area.

It was interesting that in the testimony before the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee when the individuals who head the training assistance boards came before the committee they indicated that there certainly was enough money in all the provinces and the federal government for training. It was a matter of directing it. The provincial government itself has its skills training within 10 different departments. It is in the process of bringing those under one umbrella. However, the turf wars that will go on are going to hurt the individuals who need training. That is something we have to deal with.

The motion also refers to the social situation here in Ontario. I would like to touch on that briefly. My community has been hurt very badly recently by the deaths of two young girls and by what appears to be the accidental death of a third young lady. It has created a great deal of fear and anxiety about our system of law and order and the safety of our streets. This random violence has to be something that we all condemn, especially violence against women.

I am glad to see that the federal government is putting money into such things as transition houses and other things that will fight violence against women. However, there is also a role to be played through our justice system. I am glad that the federal government has taken some steps in that regard. They include the Extradition Act amendments which prevent individuals such as Charles Ng and Joseph Kindler from getting the benefit of being in our country and having the protection of our system here.

There is much discussion about the Young Offenders Act as well. It is interesting that the penalty for murder in the Young Offenders Act has been increased. Some people do not feel that is quite enough. There are jury considerations as to why the penalty of five years less a day was taken. Of course we should continue to review the young offenders' system. Perhaps through a system of education people will see that this system is not as lax as some seem to feel at the present time.

There is no provision for parole under the Young Offenders Act. Every sentence that is handed out under the Young Offenders Act is expected to be served for that entire term. Compared to an adult sentence, in a lot of instances the young offender is serving more time than the adult offender for a similar offence.

With regard to corrections, the corrections bill has been passed. I would like to read an editorial from the St. Catharines *Standard*, which says:

> Judges should get a little more power and police should get a little relief as a result of a long overdue bill passed last week in the Commons.
>
> Only criminals will regret the proposed law which will make it more difficult for violent criminals to get parole from prison. Victims and their families will welcome the fact that they will be provided with more information about offenders and their movements on parole or day passes, in addition to being allowed to attend parole hearings and give their views, regardless of a prisoner's wishes.
>
> Defence lawyers and prisoners' rights advocates have criticized the bill, claiming it is a political over-reaction to a mistaken public belief that crime is increasing and the justice system is too lenient.
>
> Fortunately, those who dispense justice and advocates of the rights of victims and society have finally had their voices heard, and Parliament has finally acted accordingly. It only remains for the Senate to do the same.

Improvements have been made and will continue to be made in the justice system. They include stronger firearms control, as well as the proposed rape shield law which is to be brought before this House. Also there is the drug strategy which is ongoing. I understand my friend from Scarborough—Rouge River discussed crack-houses. That certainly is something that must be considered in the justice area.

We have difficulties but we cannot allow them to darken our viewpoint and think that we are not going to be successful in this province and in this country. We are going to be successful. There are many things that we can look forward to.

For my particular community the free trade agreement will provide opportunities that will be available in that community. We cannot turn our back on it and say that we do not want to have free trade in this globalized economy.

It is interesting that the NDP say that it wants to have none of it, that it wants to abrogate the free trade agreement. The opposite of the free trade agreement is tariff barriers around this country, tariff barriers around a country of 27 million people. That is not a sufficient market. It was at one time. It was during Macdonald's era and so on. It is not sufficient.

If we want to build tariff barriers around the country and throw a dispute resolution mechanism aside we do it at our peril. It has been negotiated so that we have access to the U.S. market and we have a dispute resolution mechanism. We do not want to return to tariff barriers. We do not want to return to a trade war.

An hon. member: Go to GATT.

Mr. Atkinson: The member says go to GATT. That was the argument that was used during the election campaign. What has happened? We have not been able to reach a resolution at GATT.

What were we going to do? Were we going to just sit there and not do anything? Were we going to allow ourselves to just be dependent on GATT with our largest trading partner? Could the House imagine what would happen to this country? Could the House imagine how bad this recession would be now if we did not have the free trade agreement?

I am glad that the Liberals have finally seen the light, reversed their 1988 position and said that they are going to support the free trade agreement with negotiations. We are waiting to see what they want to change. However, do not throw away the one opportunity that we have to make this country better. Do not depend on GATT. We have seen that. We are going to try to negotiate it but do not depend on it, because it is not coming about. We certainly hope it will but it has not at this point in time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I first want to congratulate my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River who advanced this motion on the economy today on behalf of all members in the Liberal Party. I thought it was actually quite a constructive day. I think that Canadians will have a lot to digest when they review the tapes this evening.

I want to address the member for St. Catharines who always adds to the level of debate in this House. I say that, however I could not let the people of Canada think that we are in support of the government's position on free trade. While the government's position is a deal at any price our position is quite different. If we cannot correct the flaws in the free trade agreement—and our member for Winnipeg—St. James has said this repeatedly, and I know the NDP are playing this cute little game saying that we are in bed with the government—then we would call for the six month abrogation.

• (1600)

I know there is only a second left, but I would like to salute the member on his comments about law and order. I know it must be a very difficult time for his community because of the tragedies that have happened there. I would urge him to urge his colleagues to bring some amendments to the Young Offenders Act forward to this House at the earliest possible moment. All of us on all sides of the House would be behind him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe those were all comments, but if the hon. member has a little rebut he can go ahead. I will listen to him for 30 seconds.

Mr. Atkinson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments, but I am going from what his House leader indicated here. They said they are going to abrogate it if it cannot be renegotiated.

My hon. friend is a business person. He knows what it is like to negotiate a commercial agreement. He also knows about the give and take that has to go on in that regard.

We would certainly welcome their indication, probably before the North American free trade agreement, as to what they would like to see changed. That would be helpful.

Mr. Mills: Chapter 14.

Mr. Atkinson: One of the things I would like to see changed is the content on automobiles. I would love to see it go to 60 per cent or 65 per cent as I indicated in my speech. If that occurred, that would be fine. Let us not have these amendments that appear to me are going to be made in the NAFTA and would go back into the free trade agreement, and then have the Official Opposition come forward and say: "Those are not the ones that we want. We want something else".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being four o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(17), proceedings on the motion have expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 30(7), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

EXCISE TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface) moved that Bill C-331, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act (books), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to ask the Chair if there is unanimous consent to have this bill made a votable item so that Canadians will know where their member of Parliament stands with respect to the taxing of books and reading materials in Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret there is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Duhamel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I shall try again later.

I am pleased that at long last I am being given the opportunity to correct what I believe is a gross injustice in law. That gross injustice is the application of the goods and services tax on books and reading materials. It is an absolutely insensitive measure on the part of govern-

ment. I would hope that we could set partisan politics aside and look at this in an objective and open way.

It is a bad policy. It is contrary to fundamental, basic, democratic principles. This country has never had such a tax and most western countries do not have one. In fact Ireland tried it and the sales dropped so dramatically that it had the good common sense to remove it immediately. It is not only a bad policy, it is also extremely bad for business. There have been loss of jobs and loss of sales. We have demoralized our creative Canadians, those who write and create for a living, and we have picked on students who are very often those who need the most help. Some students in fact would not mind paying a tax I suppose if that money were returned to the coffers, but if you add that to the reductions in transfer payments, they are really very unhappy about what is happening.

It is a bad policy, it is bad for business, and I shall explore those areas with my colleagues, but it is also bad government.

It is bad government because I have received, and so have my colleagues, thousands of petitions asking the government to remove this undemocratic tax on books and reading materials. I went to an internal committee to see whether or not this could be made a votable item. I respected every single criteria which was before me. Yet the committee did not have the courage to make it a votable item.

I have requested a second time just now and I have been refused. How in the world could one consider that good government?

I am sure that Canadians will be extremely interested in what is going to happen here today. I want to remind my colleagues that it was in October 1990 that the Prime Minister indicated there might be some flexibility in this measure. It was in that same month that the then Minister of Finance indicated subsequent to implementation of the tax that there would be an opportunity to review it and to see whether or not it should be eliminated. The time is now. That was 20 months ago. Surely it is now time to look at this.

What has been the impact of that tax? What has been the impact? We can document every single point made here. It has reduced reading in Canada. It has driven Canadians to shop elsewhere. You have heard about cross-border shopping. It has harmed our writers, our publishers, our bookstores, our libraries and our students.

No doubt it has contributed in its own way to reducing literacy in a country that already has too many functionally illiterate Canadians. That costs the nation over $10 billion per year. It has also contributed to a loss of jobs, many, many jobs. Some publishers are no longer around and some writers can no longer continue.

Let us not kid ourselves. This goods and services tax is a tax on literacy. It is a tax on education, training, retraining, on research and development. It is a tax on learning, knowledge, culture and it is indeed a tax on democracy itself. The goods and services tax is taxing books, magazines and newspapers out of the hands of Canadians.

Let me quote some facts. Book sales dropped 10 per cent the first year of the GST. Subscription response dropped by 50 per cent immediately after the GST. News-stand sales of magazines dropped 10 to 15 per cent last year. The tax on reading has caused the largest drop in Canadian newspaper circulation in 50 years. Circulation dropped 5 per cent last year. Interestingly enough, during the 1981-82 recession, sales dropped by less than 1 per cent in this particular area.

The goods and services tax is driving Canadians out of the country to buy books and magazines. Bookstore sales in some provinces have dropped 20 per cent since the GST was introduced.

U.S. bookstores report that sales to Canadians in certain sectors increased astronomically after January 1, 1991. One store in Vermont now calls itself "Montreal's best English language bookstore", the best English language bookstore, one store in Vermont. You can be proud of that if you want to, but I am not.

The GST is taking books, magazines and newspapers out of Canadian libraries. The rebates to those institutions have taken up to six months. When the rebates come back, do they go back to the libraries? Of course not. They go back to the general revenues. Why do they go back to the general revenues? Because of the reductions in transfer payments, the offloading. Of course

they feel that they need those revenues. So the libraries are losing those particular rebates in almost all instances.

What is extremely sad as well, quite apart from the astronomical increases in virtually every sector, the GST is silencing Canadian voices. It is a tax on creativity. It is a tax on culture. It is a tax on a fragile industry that is in peril. That is what the government has not understood. The GST gives a 7 per cent advantage to American magazines. A 7 per cent advantage. Tell any business person that they can have a 7 per cent advantage on a competitor and see what they do. They will take advantage of it.

I am told that there are more than 3,000 U.S. magazines that do not charge the GST on subscriptions.

• (1610)

The government cannot even try to collect it. At least 50 million magazines crossed into Canada tax free last year to compete directly with Canadian magazines on which the GST is paid.

The GST also gives a 7 per cent advantage to American books. Books imported by mail are tax free if they cost less than $20.

Mr. Boudria: Forty dollars.

Mr. Duhamel: Forty dollars? Thank you. My colleague has corrected me. There has been a change now. It is even better for the Americans and harder for Canadians.

The only major Canadian book club has closed since the GST was introduced. Surely no one is proud of that. The GST stops Canadians from getting the books and magazines they want. Some companies refuse to send books to Canada because of the additional burden.

Others have jacked up the prices so high that we can no longer afford them. These are the results of the goods and services tax on books. The tax on reading is an expensive nightmare to administer. Very often it cannot be collected and when it is collected, it can cost up to $100 per collection, probably not worth the time or the effort.

The GST is isolating Canada from the world. Let me give an example. Book collectors are buying outside the country to avoid the tax. Some foreign dealers refuse to trade with Canada. One Canadian rare book dealer reports that sales have dropped 35 per cent since 1990.

During the last recession, sales in this sector grew. As I indicated initially, many countries have refused to tax reading. I want to repeat again. Most western countries do not tax reading. It is seen as a regressive measure, as an insensitive measure, as a measure that goes contrary to basic fundamental human rights and principles.

In our country where we supposedly place a priority on competitiveness, on productivity, on creating a learning culture, clearly this goods and services tax on books and reading materials is inappropriate.

I had indicated that Ireland had tried the tax, and it was smart enough to remove it.

[*Translation*]

I wish this government could muster the same flexibility and political will, instead of just letting things happen and providing all kinds of arguments I certainly have no intention of supporting.

[*English*]

The GST may only be the beginning. You have heard about the harmonization of the tax with provincial sales taxes. If there is a GST tax on books and reading materials—there is because that is what we are discussing today—and if it is harmonized with the provincial system, then why in the world would there not be an additional tax imposed by the provinces?

I challenge my colleagues to get up and make a guarantee to Canadians that that will not happen.

My colleagues will know as well that we have received thousands of petitions from all over the country, from all socio-economic groups, from all backgrounds who have asked that this undemocratic, insensitive tax that has never been imposed in Canada before be removed immediately because it is contrary to the supposed goals of government: increased and enhanced productivity, more competitiveness and creation of the learning culture.

What does it do? It ignores these petitions. I assure my colleagues, and I would be delighted to table them if they want, that this is but a small sample. Talon Books from Vancouver, B.C. has written a long letter, but I shall quote but one phrase:

> I cannot express to you how important this issue remains to book publishers, book readers and students in Canada.

That is what Talon Books has had to say.

Oolichan Books from British Columbia also wrote in support of the removal of this tax which it sees as regressive.

I have another communique here from over 300 people from Simon Fraser University who say:

> We deeply believe, as do the majority of Canadians, that written or educational materials should not be taxed.

We cannot afford to penalize reading and learning in Canada.

> Taxing written materials not only discourages reading, it also discourages foreign publishers from exporting to Canadian distributors, penalizes Canadian publishers and distributors through increased operating costs and import prices, and restricts Canadians' access to and selection of books for their use—

It goes on. Let me just accentuate the next statement: "The costs of ignorance are immeasurable". That is what these people from Simon Fraser University are saying.

I have another communiqué from the Graduate Students Association of the University of Alberta which supports this bill to remove the goods and services tax on books. It says: "As Canada increasingly will be relying on jobs which demand post-secondary education, and as we move more and more toward a knowledge based economy, a tax on the vehicles of knowledge is doubly regressive".

I have a communiqué from a constituent, a professor, who shared with me a letter that he had received from an American publisher. The publisher says: "Canadian owners will be priced under other countries from now on rather than the former pricing under the U.S. and Canada label". The publisher explains that this is the result of high administrative costs connected to compliance with the Canadian GST that became effective January 1. Canadian members must also pay the 7 per cent tax on all orders shipped to Canada.

The publisher also says: "We will add the 7 per cent to the invoice we send to the society and the society should instruct members to include the 7 per cent GST in their payment to the society".

The publisher points to high administrative costs in connection with the goods and services tax and as a consequence is raising the prices to Canadian customers. These price increases range from 14 per cent to 19 per cent.

A French-speaking constituent wrote as follows:

[*Translation*]

"A dark day for Canada! You can count on our support. The GST is inhuman! How could anyone even think of making a case for a tax on reading, as if the revenue it produces could make up for the harm done to freedom of access to the written word!"

An author wrote not long ago: "Books are a gift from the dead to the living to help them live their lives." Need I say more?

[*English*]

I have two others. One is from my constituent, Mrs. Hart, who said: "I sure hope that you have success in getting the GST off books. It is disgusting to have this tax on reading materials". The second is from the Blais in my constituency. These are just excerpts: "We see the tax as a tax on reading. We want to see this particular tax removed from all books and magazines".

A final example is an article in *The Globe and Mail* that pointed out that the book *Clinical Safety and Efficacy* from the U.S., a technical publication, cost $110. After having gone through all of the hoops and hurdles that are there today it costs $224.28 Canadian.

[*Translation*]

Ladies and gentlemen, I think I have made a very clear case for the immediate removal of the GST on books and other learning materials. It is brutal, and it puts a tremendous burden on the industry and on all levels of society in this country. It also contradicts the basic principles of our society, as well as the government's so-called priorities, which are to increase productivity, make us more competitive and create a learning culture. Well, you do not create a learning culture, and you certainly are not going to motivate people with taxes like these.

[*English*]

I would like to complete my remarks with the following statement. I want my colleagues to listen very carefully. I seek unanimous consent of the House to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing orders and usual practices of the House, Bill C-331, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act (books), be read a second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

Do I have that unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Members have heard the suggestion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret there is not unanimous consent.

• (1620)

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this debate as someone who as a member of the finance committee participated rather extensively in the hearings across Canada when the GST legislation was introduced in this House.

I note the explanatory note in the particular bill introduced by the member for St. Boniface says:

The purpose of this bill is to exempt books from the application of the goods and services tax.

That is fine for the explanation, but if we look at the actual clause to be inserted in the bill it says:

The supply of any book, paper, record, tape or other document published by a publisher.

I presume that not only includes written books but all tapes, records and videos: everything that has anything to do with the recording industry and movie industry. The list would be rather extensive. It is with that in mind I want to make my particular comments.

During the member's presentation he talked about what other countries have done. He referenced Ireland, and I will presume the information he provided on that country is correct. It is interesting in his presentation he would lead us to believe that literacy has in fact been reduced because of the implementation of the GST.

Most countries involved in the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development have this kind of tax and in fact tax books. Two countries, Sweden and Denmark, have a value added tax of 20 per cent on books and reading materials. I might point out that neither one of those two countries is known for its high illiteracy rates. In fact probably the opposite is true.

He also suggested several other things relating to the impact of the tax on the cost of books, on students and so on. The member should be aware there are no GST charges applicable on such things as tuition fees or entrance fees to universities or educational institutions. Libraries, schools and universities—I did not hear him mention any one of those three—qualify for a rebate of the GST. The GST has no impact on their cost greater than the existing cost that occurred when the old federal sales tax was in place. This argument that those institutions have somehow seen an added cost is erroneous, to say the least.

I want to comment further. In his presentation he used the word exempt. If one is at all familiar with the legislation, one has to understand that to make a category or a product exempt increases the cost of the product. I realize that is a difficult term, but let us put it this way. All the inputs related to the production of a book, a tape, a magazine or whatever, are produced by business. Businesses qualify for a rebate of all GST they pay on their inputs. The cost of paper they buy and the cost of services they buy, such as telephone, transportation, printing and typesetting, qualify for GST at the present time but at the end of the day they get the GST back.

Under this proposed bill the businesses would not qualify for a rebate of the GST. They would have to absorb that into their costs of operation effectively raising the price, raising the cost of production of all these things to which the member referred. Putting somebody in an exempt category is probably the worst place.

All we need to do is ask the insurance industry, the doctors and other members of the medical profession whether they like being considered exempt. We will not find one that likes being there because effectively it has increased their costs. This bill is proposing to increase the cost to the very industry this member is complaining is under special pressure.

I am not going to debate whether it is under special pressure, but part of the argument the member uses is that people are not prepared to ship books into Canada because of the added burden of the paperwork. That seems to be a real plus for the Canadian book industry. If the industry in the United States is not prepared to send books into Canada because of the paper burden—and I will accept the argument as it was put—the Canadian industry is at an advantage. The U.S. industry is not prepared to participate in shipping products into Canada. Conversely the GST has been good for the Canadian industry, using the very argument the member makes.

He says that competition does not want to come to Canada.

Let us go back to the exempt status for which he asked. One of the things we faced in our deliberations across Canada was the idea of compliance, the rules on how businesses would implement the GST, how they would sell their products, and how the government would refund the GST to them.

We can just imagine that across the country there are all kinds of small variety stores. Literally everything they sell is taxable under the GST proposal. There are many small gift shops, books stores and department stores. Let us just think where we can buy a magazine, a book, a tape or a film. What they would have to do is segregate their sales. They would have to list all sales that are taxable and keep separate records of all sales that are now exempt under this member's system.

Mr. Mills: They have to do that now.

Mr. Soetens: I would argue with the member for Broadview—Greenwood. The store that sells 100 per cent taxable items needs to keep no records. At the end of the month it is simply that everything sold is taxable.

Mr. Mills: What store is that?

Mr. Soetens: I can mention all kinds of stores. The member should go over to Eaton's and ask what it sells or go into K–Mart and ask what it sells. He has just to travel this country to see that there are thousands and thousands of gift shops where everything they sell is taxable. He asked: "What store?" There is no shortage of them anywhere in this country.

Everything in the particular store he walks by at the airport as he goes to fly home is taxable. He is now proposing that what it sells in the way of magazines will not be taxable. He is putting a burden on small business to keep a separate record of what is taxable and what is not taxable.

The donut shops of this country are already complaining because if they sell five donuts they have to charge tax and on six donuts they do not.

Mr. Mills: That is my point.

Mr. Soetens: Now they have to keep tax records because of that and he is going to say to those donut shops that also sell magazines: "Not only are you going to have to keep tabs when you sell more than six donuts; you are going to have to keep tabs on all the magazines you sell". The donut shops have a problem. With what the member for St. Boniface is proposing, not only would we be placing this problem on the donut shops. We would be placing it on every shop across the country that sells books, magazines, tapes, records, movies and what not.

If I need say nothing else that alone is good enough reason to oppose what the member is recommending in this particular private member's bill. It goes a little further than that.

During the debate that took place on the GST a lot of people came forward and complained about complexity. The simple solution to the complexity problem is to tax everything. There is a substantial group—and I am one of them—that shares the opinion that complexity was required because it was awfully difficult to tax every product that exists in this country. There was a trade–off and in making trade–offs we have to make some decisions. The decision was that books, magazines, tapes and all such other things would be taxable.

The alternative exists. If one wants to describe a particular text book, a book that someone may want to buy because it is a valuable education instrument, one gets into the same problem. One does not want those taxed and somebody can legitimately argue the reason for that. However, I suspect there are certain magazines that people think should be taxed much more heavily.

Although the member's bill does not particularly draw a line as to what is taxable and what is not, obviously it would put in place a supposed benefit by eliminating the tax on literally every product that has anything to do with recording information.

I would say that the tax was fundamentally correct. There are mechanisms to make sure that those who have difficulties at the low end of the scale, low income Canadians, get back enough through the sales tax credit to be able to afford the magazines and books they want. All in all this private member's bill is one that I simply cannot support.

• (1630)

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to get an opportunity to stand and debate Bill C-331. I want to congratulate my hon. colleague, the member for St. Boniface, because I think this is a piece of legislation that is long overdue.

The fact is that the government's imposition of the GST which has been in place for some time now has amounted to an unfair tax on literacy.

In Canada, approximately 30 per cent of our adult population is functionally illiterate. The worst thing that this government could have done is to bring in a tax on reading which amounts to a tax on literacy in this country.

As a result of the imposition of this tax, the publishing industry has been hit extremely hard. Revenues in the industry have plummeted, partly because of the GST as I mentioned and also partly because of this government's made-in-Canada recession that we have been battling for some time now.

Across this country we have seen publishers reporting revenues down some 20 per cent this year as compared to previous years. That is a significant drop in revenues, much of that because of the imposition of the 7 per cent tax on literacy.

The chair of the Don't Tax Reading Coalition indicated that economists in the tax analysis branch of the Ministry of Finance told her: "They put books and magazines in terms of an increase in price resistance on the part of consumers somewhere around one and a half to two times the tax".

What we really are trying to say here if we put it in other words is that a drop in sales will be seen of some one and a half to two times the rate of the tax increase. By the look of the 20 per cent decrease in revenues compared to the 7 per cent increase in tax, we are seeing it is even greater than has been predicted by these economic forecasts.

The government did know at the time it imposed the GST that it would in effect be taxing literacy in this country.

I want to add that youth employment, particularly in lower job categories, but for that matter employment in all age categories has not been assisted by this tax on literacy. When we look at youth employment, university students in Canada who are already facing poor employment opportunities and increasing tuition are now faced with the purchase of books costing upward of $100.

It is very seldom in a university course one buys a single book. Often numerous books have to be purchased for a single course. Anyone who has gone to university knows that courses only requiring one textbook are few and far between.

This tax makes it hard on our university students, particularly those having to finance their own education. It is an unfair tax. It is a tax on literacy. It is a tax on opportunity for higher education. It is a tax that should be rescinded.

Countries in all corners of the earth are focusing on the development, the nurturing, and the educational opportunities for their young people. More money is put into schools and education and it forms the basis for a growing fertile mind. That is not the case in Canada. Not only does this country not put more money into education—in fact we see evidence of the federal government withdrawing funds from post-secondary education—but now it also taxes these growing young minds by taxing that which those minds need to grow in the first place and that is the tax on literature and books.

Over a year ago, the Prime Minister mused publicly that this government would reconsider the wisdom of the imposition of the GST on books. In the throne speech last year, I might remind everyone, he gave his commitment to developing a learning culture to enhance Canadian literacy. Yet this same government has refused to entertain the rescinding of this punitive tax on literature and literacy.

The government instead gave the publishing industry a $140 million boost. At the same time it has overtaxed the consumers of the products these industries produce. I would say in terms of this question the government has been anything but consistent.

The book industry is still appealing to this government to repeal the tax. Canadians who buy books just to enjoy them are leaving those books on the shelves because they are getting more and more expensive. The imposi-

tion of this 7 per cent increase in price has had a substantial effect on the purchase of those materials.

Canadians are cross-border shopping more and more. They are buying books and magazines south of the border because in the United States the cost is lower.

This government has placed Canada in the unenviable position of being one of the very few English-speaking countries in the world to impose a sales tax on reading materials and books for education. Some countries like Ireland tried it, but it quickly realized its mistake and at least had the courage to admit the mistake and rescind the tax. This government has not recognized the mistake. I suspect even if it has, it does not have the courage to do something about it.

The $140 million subsidy to the publishing industry was needed. It is recognized that it was needed, but it is not nearly enough for an industry that has been virtually sold out by this government with the imposition of this punitive tax on literacy.

The Baie Comeau policy which would have strengthened the Canadian publishing industry was simply ignored by this government. This new program, the $140 million fund for book publishing, will not be effective unless it is enforced with vigour.

I would submit that much can be done to assist the book publishing industry in this country. Much can be done to assist the learning culture in this country, and much can be done to assist the opportunity for education for our young people in this country by rescinding this tax.

The government should recognize it made a serious error in taxing literacy. It should have the courage to admit it made a mistake and it should have the courage to rescind its legislation. Yes, it should have the courage to accept the current bill that is before this House and to proceed with that bill.

It is time that this government withdrew the 7 per cent goods and services tax from books and literature and gave the booksellers and publishers in Canada a break. The industry needs more than the token relief that has been proposed.

This is a good piece of legislation. I congratulate my Liberal colleague for introducing it. I would ask that this House consider granting unanimous consent that the bill be now read a second time and moved immediately to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Members have heard the terms of the suggestion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have the opportunity this afternoon to speak on this very important issue. First, I want to congratulate the hon. member for St. Boniface for his foresight in bringing this matter to our attention. Need I remind the House that the member for St. Boniface is an educator. He obviously knows quite a bit about this subject, far more than many of us in this House. He is also a former deputy minister of education. He is a tenure professor at a university as well. He probably has a number of other credentials that this House should know about as well but I will not be describing them this afternoon because I want to get on with describing the bill that our colleague proposes.

• (1640)

The member for St. Boniface very astutely pointed out earlier to us today that the bill in question seeks to correct an injustice, one that other governments elsewhere in the world have corrected.

The hon. member from Winnipeg across the way will no doubt be aware that it was none other than the Prime Minister who promised in a speech that this whole business of taxing books would be examined again.

I would certainly not want to contradict the Prime Minister. I would never want to contradict the Prime Minister, but what I want to do now, and what my colleague wants to do, is take the Prime Minister up on his offer. We want to remove the tax on books, as the Prime Minister wants it.

Perhaps some members across the way will contradict the Prime Minister, but certainly not I or the member for St. Boniface because of our tremendous respect for the Prime Minister. We want to remove the GST on books, as the Prime Minister promised that he would.

My colleague from St. Boniface has talked about the loss of jobs in the Canadian book publishing industry, the Canadian magazine and periodical industry and so on. He is obviously quite right. I want to touch on an issue that has been raised in a peripheral way earlier today, but

one which I had been involved in. That is the whole issue of cross-border shopping, because many books are purchased that way.

There were not that many a number of years ago. I suppose we could argue that there were always too many because books are unfortunately shipped in great portions into this country compared to what we can export elsewhere. It is an unfortunate thing but it is going from bad to worse.

Many Canadians are members of book clubs, and some of these book clubs are based outside the country. There used to be a situation in which whatever you bought outside the country you had to pay customs on whenever it entered Canada. However, some four or five years ago the government exempted every purchase coming from outside the country so long as it was coming by mail and it was under $40 from all duties and taxes. That meant that someone could take a large padded shipping envelope and fill it up with books, or whatever number of books you could put in it as long as it totalled less than $40, and send it to a client in Canada.

If the client in Canada purchased $75 worth of books you just divided the books as evenly as you could between two bags and shipped two bags into Canada.

Mr. Duhamel: Or three or four.

Mr. Boudria: Or whatever the number is, as my colleague from St. Boniface says. Three or four or whatever the number.

That loophole was in itself a disincentive for Canadians to buy books at home and an incentive to buy them elsewhere.

When the GST was added on top of that, there were two reasons to buy books outside of Canada. There was an exemption from whatever duties there might have been and also an exemption from GST. As you do not pay the GST there is no mechanism for the province to collect the provincial sales tax. However, in any case, I do not know of a province that has a provincial sales tax on books. Nevertheless, there was no way to collect that tax if a province were to have so chosen.

In any case, the GST does apply on books, and it and any duty is not collected.

The government now says: "We will fix that because we will now charge the GST and anything else that is applicable on purchases of $20". It has proposed a bill that is at report stage. It should be debated within the next week or so.

Nevertheless someone can still buy a book, or several books, for $19.90 and ship the order into Canada in various packages of $19.90. The government has now applied a $5 surcharge on every purchase coming into Canada by mail. It is an administration fee by the post office and that is not bad in itself, except that the U.S. post office charges roughly $10 in a similar situation.

It charges $8.40 U.S. which is roughly $10 Canadian. Actually, it is about $10.50 with the present value of our currency. If the Canadian government wanted to apply reciprocal rules why did it charge $5 instead of $10? If it really was serious about curtailing cross-border shopping of many goods, including books, it could at the very least have imposed similar fees.

[*Translation*]

So, Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes remaining to me, I would like to emphasize that this initiative is a bad policy and undemocratic. Of course it is bad for the book publishing industry, for editors and those who publish Canadian books. It creates more unemployment, as if we did not have enough already.

The government does not listen to Canadians, especially since, need I remind hon. members opposite, as I said somewhat jokingly a little earlier, the Prime Minister himself promised a group of Canadians a while ago to review this whole policy of collecting the GST on books. If the Prime Minister was serious then, I think he should take the opportunity in the next few minutes to telephone the members opposite in the lobby and remind them that he made the promise. The hon. member for St. Boniface did not promise Canadians that the GST would not apply to books, neither did the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell; the Prime Minister himself did. The member for Winnipeg sitting opposite should remember. I am sorry if I interrupt her to remind her of this fact, but she should know that.

[*English*]

The member for Ontario should know that as well, because I am sure the member for Ontario was aware that the Prime Minister made that promise. Both he and his colleague from Winnipeg sitting across the way, who are preparing right now presumably to destroy this good piece of legislation, should know that what my colleague has proposed is a mechanism to achieve that which the Prime Minister himself promised to Canadians.

If promises of the Prime Minister mean anything—

Some hon. members: Be more accurate.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, could you imagine Tories asking others to be more accurate? The Prime Minister told Canadians that he would look at this issue. If the member across is convinced of what he is saying then let this bill proceed to committee. Let him and any others who still want that tax speak before the parliamentary committee that will deal with it.

If his argument has any sense at all he can make it before all the parliamentarians on the committee. I will make a prediction that the hon. member and others would not risk that. Instead, it is gong to be easier to kill the bill on the floor of the House of Commons than to muster up the intestinal fortitude necessary to defend the policy before one's colleagues in a parliamentary committee. That is the sad reality that we are faced with this afternoon. It is easier to kill the promise of the Prime Minister on the floor of the House than trying instead to defend what it is that the Conservative members are saying they will defend before a parliamentary committee.

• (1650)

We will see in a few minutes just where the strength is of those members. They could right now agree to the motion that my colleague moved earlier today to refer this issue to a parliamentary committee and to study it. They will hear the witnesses from the book publishing industry. They have that opportunity. They have that power this afternoon. They have the full authority to do that. Let us see.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired. The hon. member for Winnipeg South.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my hon. colleague across the way whose bill we are debating this afternoon. I know that he is an educator and a person with a great deal of concern for people in general and particularly for students.

I want to ask him something before I launch into the rest of my remarks. Perhaps he could cogitate over this. How would he differentiate between what is educational and what is entertainment? Would he exempt from tax such publications as *Penthouse* or perhaps commercial catalogues. Those are all books and things that people read. Would he exempt from taxation music or adult videos which are educational tools? Videos are educational tools, but some of them perhaps are not educating people in the way that the hon. member has intended in his bill.

There are complications that I would like him to think about. I do not think that he wants us to exempt *Sports Illustrated* for example from the GST. I think he should think about those things.

We all know that the GST replaced a very destructive tax. It was 13.5 per cent and we all remember those days. When I was the president of the chamber of commerce and in business, business people came before us all of the time saying: "Get rid of this pernicious, underground, hidden tax on manufacturers". At the time that the tax was rescinded and the GST was put in place, it was 13.5 per cent. It was called the silent killer of jobs and there was good reason for that because indeed that is precisely what it did.

The GST actually replaced something that Canadians had been asking for a long time to be replaced with a 7 per cent tax. It is a point of sales tax on a broad base and it is a much fairer way of providing much needed revenues for all of the programs and services that we want in this country. One of these things in particular is education. My hon. colleague across the way would agree that this is a very worth-while activity for governments to engage in funding.

There are exemptions of course to this value-added tax that we put in place to replace the 13.5 per cent manufacturers' sales tax and they are important exemptions. These are exemptions that occur for residential rents for example, and prescription drugs and day care

services. None of these things have the GST applied to them.

In addition to that we have done more. There is a refundable GST credit for families that are earning under $30,000 a year. These are low and modest income families. This credit makes many of those families better off now than they were before the GST was imposed. All of these measures are very helpful to making sure that Canadians on low and modest incomes can access all of the books that they need in order to improve their education.

I think that even the members on the other side of the House will recognize that the GST is a modern and efficient way of raising funds that are needed by governments in order to carry on the business of government and to provide the kind of services that my hon. friend across the way—and the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who has just spoken—will recognize as being things that they themselves taught Canadians to expect.

Certainly we have to find the funds now to pay for these things. The GST is a fair way of doing this.

Of the world's most highly industrialized economies, members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 19 out of 24 countries rely on a value-added tax system in order to do the same things we want to do. That is to have a fair system, one that is modern and meets the needs of a modern world.

Hon. members know that Canada is just one of 48 countries, among them Sweden, Germany, even Japan, which have a value-added tax system. They have come to realize that this is a reasonable way of raising the revenues required to carry on business.

We have to recognize that this is a new world. This is a global community that we live in now, a borderless world. It is no longer possible to live in economic isolation. We can no longer have internal policies and programs that separate us from the the world economy. Therefore, we would not want Canada to fall out of step with those major competitors we have in the rest of the world.

This tax is part of that. This is part of a comprehensive measure that the government has in place to modernize Canada's economy, to make us more competitive so that in the long run, Canadians will be more prosperous.

Canadians will be more highly educated because they will have access to more educational materials, including books. This is just one of the measures which will make it possible for Canadians to realize the full potential of the wealth that exists in this country in a more fair and even-handed way.

The GST is undoubtedly the key to strengthening Canada's economy and to working out the fiscal problems which have occurred and grown over the past two or three decades as we taught Canadians to expect more and more from their government.

It is just one of the programs that we have created to try and produce a better standard of living for all of us. Since 1984, we have introduced many measures that would really enhance our economic viability in this country. Even my hon. colleagues would acknowledge that the GST is a more fair and sensible tax. I saw them vote in favour the other day of keeping this intact.

The GST has removed a tax burden from Canadian businesses that is enabling them to become more efficient. I might say that because the federal sales tax was levied at the manufacturers' level, even books suffered to some degree from the underground effects of that tax. If manufacturing equipment was bought on which to print books, federal sales tax and provincial sales tax were paid on that equipment. Or it was paid on inks or on hand cleaners, depending on what was being done. So there was a component of the tax in publications.

In addition to that, it is true that there may be an emotional appeal to removing the GST from books. But as I began by saying, it is an administrative nightmare to try and make a subjective judgment on what is educational and what is not, what should be taxed and what should not.

I believe that most Canadians would not want to see publications like *Penthouse* magazine or *Sports Illustrated* exempt from the GST or commercial catalogues exempt from the GST.

The government has put a system in place that gives lower income and modest income Canadians some additional funds to cover the cost added to the price of a book because of the GST. It has done something, and $140 million is quite something, to support the publishing industry in order to keep the cost of books down.

In order to make sure that people who are in the business of producing books are competitive and that we produce the kinds of books Canadians want to read, we want to reduce the burden of the administration of the tax such as the GST.

My colleagues across the way would agree with us when we say that we support literacy. The GST is not a literacy issue. We have done everything that we can to alleviate any of the possibility of adverse effects of the GST. We all support literacy and the GST is a fair way to raise funds for the future prosperity of our nation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business—

An hon. member: Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that it is five o'clock. On a point of order, the hon. member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I have been denied making this a votable item twice, once by the internal committee and once again today. I have been denied having this bill sent to second reading. I think that we can address the concerns that my colleagues on the government side have voiced and explore others, such as how this might contribute to a united Canada, how much we spend in this area and how much we collect, so that we can in fact—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is debate. Does the hon. member—

Mr. Duhamel: The Prime Minister has said that he may exempt books from the GST—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is still debate. If the hon. member—

Mr. Duhamel: I just want to make this request. I seek the unanimous consent of the House to discharge the order, withdraw the bill and have the subject matter referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. members have heard the suggestion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is not agreed.

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

It being five o'clock p.m. this House stands adjourned until Monday next at eleven o'clock a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 5 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 8, 1992

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

THE CONSTITUTION

REQUEST FOR ENSHRINEMENT OF HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CARE

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Constitution should enshrine the obligation for the government to provide universal, publicly funded hospital and medical care to all citizens.

She said: Mr. Speaker, in a matter of days, the first ministers of this country will meet in the hope of drafting a constitutional accord that will be acceptable not only to themselves but to Canadians.

These ministers will collectively be the target of public wrath if they fail to reach an agreement that justifies so many years of constitutional wrangling at taxpayers' expense.

The Prime Minister will have to reconcile the crippling price that the nation paid for his pursuit of a footnote in history. The Canadian Confederation was put at risk to extinguish the regional discontent that his government resurrected and inflamed. This government opened a Pandora's box and the entire nation has been engulfed in the fall-out. Millions of dollars of taxpayers' money have already been lost while the nation's economic crisis has been sorely neglected and mismanaged by this government.

After investing so much in a flawed and misdirected process, Canadians are now demanding a return. They will not settle for a raw deal that merely shifts powers among the politicians. Most citizens see no benefit in the transfer of authority from one bureaucracy to another. In the end they will be asking whether all they got from the last several years of constitutional noise was the bill. Voters in any national referendum will be expecting an accord that is intimately relevant to their lives and their needs.

That is the reason I am proposing here today:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Constitution should enshrine the obligation for the government to provide universal, publicly funded hospital and medical care to all citizens.

There is nothing more relevant to Canadians than their health. From St. John's to Victoria, Canadians regard our system of universal health care as the most identifiable privilege of being on Canadian soil.

The right of Canadians to health care is not protected by our Constitution and consequently it must endure the deliberate efforts of the current government to pillage our health care resources to finance their experiment in neo-Conservative dogma, the abandonment of the just society.

Since 1984 this government has made seven unilateral reductions in transfer payments to the provinces for health and post-secondary education. This will represent a $97.6 billion loss to these services by the year 2000. This government's commitment to health care is clearly focused on ways to dismantle it.

On March 21 the Minister of National Health and Welfare terrified many Canadians by labelling medicare as sacred. We all know that sacred in Tory double-speak means next in line for the axe. Within 10 years the federal government will no longer be making any significant cash contributions to health care in this country. It will no longer be able to enforce the provisions of the Canada Health Act by threatening to withhold payments. This will open the door to the imposition of user fees by provincial governments.

User fees will be a decisive first step toward an American-style system of commercial health care. It is a system where those with the means to pay are served, but those unable to pay must go without or lose their homes or life savings to pay for treatment. American health care is nothing more than a half trillion dollars a

year extortion racket. Americans must pay up or risk bodily harm by being denied treatment.

In pre-Tory Canada our focus was the quality of medical care as opposed to the size of medical profits, a matter which dominates attention south of the border. Canadians are too civilized to accept the barbarism of cash and carry medicine which this government is ready to import from the United States. This is one product that all Canadians want stopped at the border.

Already under-funding of Canadian health care has caused many patients to escape lengthening waiting lists for elective surgery or specialized tests by travelling to the United States where timely treatment is available although only at a premium. Effectively Canadian governments have contracted out certain services to American facilities by not making the same services sufficiently available in Canada. Such measures threaten the comprehensiveness of health care services in Canada and make them a more appealing target for privatization.

• (1120)

Canadians need their Constitution to insulate medicare from the chills of ever-changing political agendas. Even the loud advocate of the social charter, the NDP premier of Ontario, backed away from full protection of medicare when he chose to cut health services in his own province rather than curtail his socialist agenda.

The temptation to shirk the largest and most important responsibility of his government was too great for Premier Rae to resist. The social charter now declawed and renamed the social covenant is little more than social fantasy.

If a government were to renege on its so-called commitment to medicare utterly there would be no recourse at all through the courts on constitutional grounds. However, the social covenant may lull many Canadians into being complacent about the continuing threats to their health care system. Some will believe the social covenant will morally bind all governments to preserve and promote universal health care, but most Canadians know only too well that commitments do not bind political leadership. Only the courts can do that.

Canadians do understand the difference between a legal right and a rhetorical blight. A right not protected by the courts is no right at all. A social covenant will not deter the current federal and provincial governments from discrediting our medicare system through a policy of decay that will ultimately render medicare unable to meet the needs of Canadians.

A social covenant will fail to raise the status of medicare on either the big business or the big labour agenda. Canadians are justifiably suspicious of political commitments and the politicians who glibly make them.

They understand the fate of Canadian medicare is in the hands of individuals who would never feel personally threatened by American style cash before cure health care. They know that members of this House and other legislatures across the country are in general people who have a hard time relating to the working poor in this country because they have only experienced poverty as spectators.

Many politicians cannot believe that a family would find U.S. medical insurance deductibles of $250 to be cause to postpone or forgo treatment even for their children. The struggle to make ends meet is foreign to the opponents of medicare. We in this place must understand that we are each creations of our own experiences. We must defiantly reject the message that is promoted by the right wing groups who tell us that we have shared too much and those who cannot afford are not deserving.

That is the philosophy that has created so much suffering and disharmony in the United States, but medicare is not merely a social program for the less fortunate. It is a security blanket for every member of our society, rich or poor.

Canadians do not have to negotiate with insurance brokers to be sure their children will get the care they need if they fall ill. No Canadian will have to cancel an operation because his employer laid him off and cancelled his health insurance. We as Canadians have a security, a peace of mind that cannot be found among American workers.

Unfortunately what Canadians have taken for granted their government has taken to the pawnbrokers. The enemies of medicare will not only deny the benefits that universal health care services offer to the majority of Canadians, but will also ignore the undeniable economic benefits to our nation as a whole. We have been able to

insure all Canadians using less than 9 per cent of our gross national product when it costs the United States 11 per cent to operate a private system that leaves 40 million people bereft of any medical protection at all.

Canadians understand what the demise of universal health care will mean to them and to their families. Many have already experienced the culture shock that comes with U.S. medical practices.

While sensational stories of people being denied life-saving treatment and the potential for medical refugees coming to Canada from the United States may impress television viewers, Canadians travelling to the United States experience firsthand the inhumanity of the U.S. system. Patients are treated as customers while health care workers are more bill collectors than they are caregivers.

One of my own constituents recounted an occasion while vacationing in Florida when his five-year old daughter fell in a bathtub and required stitches to close the cuts to her face. Her father was shocked and enraged when the hospital workers refused to treat his bleeding five-year old child unless he paid in advance or produced insurance documents.

Fortunately he had the necessary insurance but, nevertheless, the experience left him and his family eager to return to medical civilization north of the border.

This was not a dramatic case of life and death but demonstrated the humiliation and despair that is felt by Americans who do not have full medical coverage. Forty million people in the United States who are not covered by any insurance plan live in fear of the day that they will need medical treatment and be denied.

We in Canada like to believe that we live in a more caring and less predatory society than the United States.

It is experiences like the one I just described that have caused Canadian universal medicare to be so prized and the American alternative so despised. So cherished is medicare in Canada that there are many groups that would claim to have fathered the Canadian philosophy of universal medicare.

We on this side of the House know that medicare was conceived at the national Liberal convention in 1919 in a speech by William Lyon Mackenzie King. He envisioned more than seven decades ago that Canada should have a system of insurance against sickness. He called for effective legislation for the conservation of human health.

It was not acceptable for a worker when sick to be helpless in the matter of meeting the great problems of invalidity, said King. He and his successors as Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada fought against great adversity to implement the universal health care we enjoy today.

Opposition came from short-sighted organizations whose own economic position, they thought, was enhanced by the suffering and insecurity endured by those who could not afford the medical treatment available to those with the means to pay.

While Liberal governments braved the scorn of the intolerant, the greedy and the indifferent, the voices of those who would have us reverse our progress toward a more civilized society have not yet been silenced.

If universal publicly funded health care is not enshrined in the Constitution as a justiciable right, the implications will not be lost on the Canadian public.

The NDP Government of British Columbia has already brought in health care premiums that have caused a small but significant portion of its population to be uninsured and financially vulnerable to sickness. Effectively universal health care has already been compromised by the NDP government in British Columbia.

• (1130)

It is not surprising to find that this particular government will not sign an agreement that will make its own policies unconstitutional.

This is the dilemma that gave birth to the toothless social covenant. Canadians have learned to anticipate the worst from their governments. They know that a government unprepared to protect universal medicare is a government preparing to dismember it. That is the basis for our Liberal dissent position in the report of the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee where we advocated precisely the terms of the motion before the House today.

Unlike the other national parties we Liberals are not willing to compromise on our obligation and responsibility to uphold the principles of universality and fairness in health care.

Canadians should scrutinize the events of the next few days very closely indeed. Front page promises and back page retractions have formed the strategy of governments of the day for too long. The entrenchment of medicare will distinguish this round of constitutional bickering by yielding a tangible and recognizable benefit to Canadians from every part of this country.

If this constitutional round were able to arrest the decay of Canadian medicare then Canadians would truly be better off through the efforts of politicians, and that would be historic.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

CONCURRENCE IN 43RD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

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 unanimous consent to move a motion for concurrence in the 43rd report of the Standing Committee on House Management.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have 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.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

REQUEST FOR ENSHRINEMENT OF HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CARE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Ms. Guarnieri (p. 11527).

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique B. Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak this morning on the federal government's commitment to vital social programs, notably health care.

I would like to assure the House that the government's commitment to universal health care services is not in question. The Canada Health Act ensures that all Canadians, wherever they reside, are entitled to equal access to hospital and medical care. The government has reaffirmed this commitment time and time again.

Our commitment to health care is only one example of the government's efforts to improve the well-being of Canadians. I would like to take a few moments to describe some of the other recent social initiatives of this government.

The health and well-being of our children are a primary concern of this government. In the throne speech, we said our objective is to see our children "better educated, better protected and better nurtured so that they can make their own contributions to our future".

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the government has recently announced major initiatives to assist children and their families. In the February budget, the government proposed a new child benefit which is fairer and simpler than the patchwork of previous income support measures for families with children.

The proposed child benefit will consolidate the existing family allowances, child tax credit and dependent child credit into a single monthly tax-free benefit. It is simpler, fairer, more responsive and more generous than the current measures in place.

I would like to comment on each of these points in turn.

It is simpler. It will replace today's patchwork of measures with one monthly payment. Unlike family allowances, these payments will be tax free. Parents will know what benefits they receive and can apply their full value to meeting their children's needs.

It is also fairer. It will go to families who need it. As family income increases, the benefit received will decrease. It is also fairer because families in similar income brackets will be treated in a similar way. Unlike the present system, it does not matter whether one or both parents work. The level of benefits is based on the income of the family.

It is more responsive. Tax free payments will be received by parents every month to help them meet their children's needs.

This system is also more generous. Until now, some $4.5 billion per year has been provided by the federal government for income transfers for children. Over the next five years, the proposed child benefit will put an additional $2.1 billion in the hands of Canadian families with children. Over-all, this initiative will result in a more targeted and effective system of benefits.

The government has also been keenly aware that a child's future health and well-being can be jeopardized by risks such as low birth weight, injuries, malnutrition and neglect.

We have responded with the recent announcement of *Brighter Futures*, and with the child development initiative aimed at preventing and reducing conditions of risk among children. The government intends to devote $500 million over the next five years to this program directed at intervention in the early stages of the lives of children at risk. By children at risk, I mean children who face greater than normal risks of poor health and nutrition, mental health problems, disability or injury, or abuse and neglect.

The child development initiative will help ensure that children get a good start. A good start increases the likelihood that a child will achieve his or her full potential later in life. At the same time, our early investment in a child's development can lower costs for social assistance, health care and law enforcement in the years to come.

The initiatives I have described testify to our strong commitment to improve the health and well-being of needy children. I should add that the federal government is not alone in this commitment. We rely on strong partnerships with all Canadians to secure a better future for our children. We recognize that healthy and well-adjusted children represent an essential investment in the future for all of us.

In the context of the motion before us this morning, we should perhaps remind ourselves of the partnership which currently exists between the federal government and provincial governments for the delivery of these vital programs and services.

For example, the delivery of health services is a constitutional responsibility of the provinces. It is their responsibility to determine needs, to make services available and to manage health costs. The primary role of the Government of Canada is to make a financial contribution in support of provincial health programs. Under Established Programs Financing, transfers to provinces for insured hospital and medical services and extended health care will be $14.8 billion in the current fiscal year.

In addition, the less wealthy provinces of Canada will receive equalization transfers totalling more than $8 billion this year. Equalization is provided to provinces on an unconditional basis. Each province is free to allocate these funds according to its own needs and priorities, including medical and hospital care.

The motion before us asks this House to enshrine in the Constitution the obligation of the federal government to provide universal, publicly funded hospital and medical care to all citizens.

We have seen that this government has not needed a constitutional directive in order to demonstrate its commitment to medicare. Our commitment to providing quality health care for all Canadians is not in question.

• (1140)

Nevertheless the motion before us raises an interesting issue, one of many on which this government has consulted Canadians in the current round of constitutional negotiations.

In March the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada released a unanimous report. This report made a variety of recommendations to assist the government in renewing the Canadian federation. The committee dis-

cussed the issue that is before us today. It looked at the government's commitment to vital social programs, including health care. The committee recommended a social covenant as a means of expressing governmental commitments to social programs which Canadians see as part of their national identity.

This covenant would be achieved by adding a new section to section 36 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Among other things, the new section would reaffirm the commitment of all governments in Canada to fostering comprehensive, universal, portable, publicly administered and accessible health care. These are the commitments that are now contained in the Canada Health Act.

The joint parliamentary committee also recommended that the compliance of governments with the social covenant must be subject to public review, including public hearings and periodic reports by a specialized commission.

Therefore, the motion before us today is, in fact, part of the much broader package of issues under consideration as the government works to renew the Canadian federation. Representatives of the provinces have shown considerable interest in the idea of a social covenant. The federal government's position on this constitutional issue will always be consistent with our long-standing commitment to health care.

In closing, I would acknowledge that all members share the high priority this government attaches to the health and well-being of Canadians. The strength of that commitment is not in question.

[*English*]

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to join the debate on the motion presented by the member for Mississauga East.

I have known the member for Mississauga East for many years. We have been on several delegations together. I know she is a very bright, intelligent and well-meaning person. That is why I was so surprised at some of the comments she made in her speech. I am particularly surprised at her lack of historic knowledge.

The member tried to lay claim to medicare as a Liberal invention by stating that in 1919 at the Liberal convention William Lyon Mackenzie King enunciated the notion of a universal medical care system. While the Tories and the Liberals in the past have fought over who was responsible in terms of who is the father of medicare, it is true that the Diefenbaker government of the day appointed the Hall commission and it is true that the Liberal government of Mr. Pearson introduced the legislation, but let me tell you that the mother of medicare was the province of Saskatchewan and Woodrow S. Lloyd as its premier. They suffered the birth pains of medicare.

I was there when we had our "Keep Our Doctors" committee, when the doctors in Saskatchewan went out on strike, funded at the time by the American Medical Association. I was there when the then premier Ross Thatcher went to the legislature and kicked on the doors of the legislature. That was the Liberal history on medicare in Saskatchewan. The major source of opposition to medicare came from the Liberals in the province of Saskatchewan.

The hon. member is particularly attacking the NDP provinces. She incorrectly states that the province of British Columbia under Premier Harcourt introduced health premiums. The fact is that B.C. under the Socreds have had health premiums for years. She also attacked the Government of Ontario, Mr. Bob Rae's government, claiming that because of the Rae government going on its socialist agenda, it could not find enough money to properly fund medicare.

I know we are living in an age that George Orwell described as 1984. I have generally attributed that double-think to the Tories, but I am afraid it has also infected the Liberals. Had Premier Rae put more money into hospitalization, the hon. member would have said: "Ah, ha, that is another indication of the socialist agenda". I ask, what socialist agenda? The Ontario government inherited a deficit situation from the Liberals, accelerated by the economic policies of this Tory government. It is trying to do its best to maintain social and health programs and making certain that the amount of interest it pays on the deficit is reduced as much as possible.

It is not an easy task, but it is not their fault. It is something they inherited from the Liberals and from the federal Tory policy.

I heard the hon. member talk a little bit about the cutbacks to the EPF, the program that transfers federal funds and tax points to the provinces. The Tory action has accelerated the decrease in what the provinces are getting. Let us not forget that this was started by the Liberals when they were in government under Pierre Trudeau. Half of the cutbacks and the costs to the provinces for medicare is because of the cutbacks introduced by the Liberals and because of the ceiling on revenue sharing, the six and five. It used to be that federal contributions to health care in this country amounted to roughly 50 per cent. The reality today is that the federal contribution comes to about 30 per cent of the total costs of medicare.

Do not be impressed when you see the Liberals crying crocodile tears over medicare. That is a farce. They were responsible. Let us have a look at some of the figures. For example, in the province of Ontario the provincial government is supposed to be carrying on the socialist agenda.

Since the cutbacks in the EPF, there has been a total loss of revenue to the province of Ontario of some $12.295 billion. Almost $6.3 billion can be attributed to the elimination of revenue guarantees and the six and five. In other words, half the money Ontario has lost because of the cutbacks in EPF is the result of Liberal cutbacks.

Let us look at B.C. where it is exactly the same. There is a total loss of some $6.8 billion of which almost $3 billion was a result of the Liberal cutbacks.

In my province of Saskatchewan we see as well the cutbacks that have occurred. We are dealing with a terrible deficit situation created by the cohorts of the Conservative Party, Premier Grant Devine and his Tories. There is a terrible deficit situation. We are paying hundreds of millions of dollars every year just on the interest on the debt that Mr. Devine and the Tories out there have left us. The federal cutbacks to the EPF have resulted in the loss to the province of Saskatchewan of $1.19 billion since the 1982–83 cutbacks introduced by the Liberals.

We see and hear both government and Liberal members shed crocodile tears about medicare, yet they are responsible for the cutbacks in EPF and medicare is under threat because of these cutbacks.

Since the days of Pierre Trudeau the federal government has consistently off–loaded to the provinces. I am all in favour of entrenching the rights to basic health services as well as education, housing, food, et cetera, to all Canadians and having that in the Constitution.

In fact, during the Constitution debates in the early 1980s I proposed that my party should have stood up and insisted on a social charter. What we had from Mr. Trudeau at the time was a 19th century Liberal constitutional document. I felt we should have moved forward and insisted on a 20th century document that had as well some collective rights.

• (1150)

There is no sense in entrenching a social charter in the Constitution unless there is a guarantee in the Constitution that no future federal governments can unilaterally change programs like the EPF program. I fail to hear the Liberals talk about that.

We can entrench anything in the Constitution but if there is no financial means to enforce it, we will see as we have seen the slow erosion of medicare. If we are going to entrench a social charter and things like medicare in the Constitution, we must insist and the provinces will insist that programs like the EPF are guaranteed, that no future Liberal or Tory government can unilaterally change those legal agreements. Then we might have a chance of preserving medicare.

Canadian people watching the proceedings today should not be fooled by the Liberals' crocodile tears over medicare. They are as much responsible as this present Tory administration for the erosion of medicare in this country.

I am sure the Canadian people will recognize that what Pierre Trudeau did in the early eighties set in motion the slow erosion of medical services right across this country. I am sure the Canadian public has not forgotten.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my friend, the member for Mississauga East, for presenting this extremely important motion to the House of Commons.

I could not help but notice that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was made extremely nervous by her presentation. Perhaps it comes as a result of the fact that the three provincial NDP governments that are

participating in the present constitutional talks have really not been very active in this particular area.

Once again, I would like to thank the member for Mississauga East for realizing that this is truly a Canadian issue.

This debate is very timely since the preliminary constitutional talks are approaching their conclusion and the issue of what is to be included in the final text is the subject of serious discussion at the moment. I support my friend's demand that the protection of our health care system should be included in the Constitution.

Canadians are rightly supportive of medicare. Given recent calls for the introduction of user fees and other measures, the need to maintain the integrity of our social programs is urgent.

I know that as a member of the Beaudoin–Dobbie committee my colleague heard from numerous witnesses about the need to maintain all aspects of our medicare system. The commitment of all Liberals to a strong health care system was evident in the dissenting opinions expressed on this issue by the Liberal members in the committee's final report. I quote: "The Liberal members believe that the protection of health care is so fundamental to Canadians that they recommend that the Constitution enshrine not only a commitment but an obligation of governments to provide universal publicly–funded hospital and medical care to all citizens".

That is the difference between members of the Liberal Party and members of the Progressive Conservative government and the New Democratic Party. That strong recommendation is a clear example of my party's dedication to safeguarding Canada's health care system.

The most recent demonstration of this commitment came two weeks ago in Regina when our leader spoke out strongly on the issue.

During his speech he pledged that under a Liberal government Canadians would be guaranteed the health care they need when they need it. In a very clear manner he reaffirmed the principles that have made our health care system the envy of the world.

A Liberal government would protect the universality, the portability, the comprehensiveness, the accessibility and the public administration of medicare.

Those five principles are the foundation upon which the whole system stands. Compromise one, and the whole structure is weakened.

That is the message that the Liberal Party is sending to the advocates of user fees and other quick–fix solutions. User fees are not the answer. The system cannot be repaired by attacking those least able to pay. Users fees contradict a basic philosophical principle of our health care system which is the care for everyone, especially those who cannot afford treatment.

Instead of instant non–solutions the Liberal Party is calling for solutions that respond to the concerns of Canadians. It is necessary to examine the system to find innovative ways to provide the same quality of care that Canadians are used to without sacrificing those five principles.

There are many ways in which the medicare system could be reformed to make it more efficient and more responsive to the needs of the community.

We should look into whether or not medicare pays for unnecessary tests or medication. One medical expert estimated that hundreds of millions of dollars are wasted every year on unnecessary drugs for senior citizens.

We could also examine how we use our hospitals. Could some basic fundamental problems be handled by community health clinics instead of hospital emergency rooms? Would the elderly and the disabled be better served if they could live at home instead of in a hospital?

What Canada needs is not user fees for medical care but a greater emphasis placed on home–care programs and local clinics. They could lighten the loads with which our hospitals are presently struggling.

Community based services such as those are the way of the future. A greater degree of community involvement is called for. In recent years, governments have demonstrated they no longer have the ability to provide for the needs of citizens. By using a more co–operative approach, governments would be able to use their consid-

erable power to help redistribute and co-ordinate services and improve on how they are delivered.

Obviously, there is some resistance to the idea of decentralizing the provision of services. The resistance must be overcome because the time for radical reform of Canada's health care system is fast approaching.

Canada's population is aging and it is aging rapidly. In 1986 young people made up 26 per cent of Canada's population and the elderly only 11 per cent. By the year 2020, it is expected that the relative share of these two groups will be identical at 19 per cent. This is of particular concern to young Canadians who have the responsibility to care for the elderly. It should also be of great concern to everyone in this Chamber. We all require care and the existing system, unless it is changed, may not be able to provide this care 20 years from now.

Now is the time to make the necessary changes. We must do so in order to maintain the high level of service that Canadians now enjoy as well as to prepare for the needs of the future.

We in the Liberal Party realize that the system must be reformed but we also know that the reform must not come at the expense of the five principles our leader outlined in Regina.

Our health care system is the cornerstone of the ideals of the compassionate society Canadians have built for themselves. It is one of those principal elements that makes Canada a great nation in which to live. At the foundation of that system is its generous spirit. It takes care of all Canadians regardless of where they live, how they live or how much they earn.

Some people are now threatening to undermine this system. They are camouflaging their attempts with claims that they can no longer afford to be generous. I say to them that when we can no longer afford to care for the sick, Canada will cease to be the Canada of which I have spoken. To strike a blow against medicare is to strike at the very heart of this great nation.

Before tearing down a structure that so many other people look upon with envy, I would suggest that the apostles of privatization should look at the United States of America, a nation often used as a model. In the United States, the only industrialized country without a comprehensive government health care program, there is increasing pressure to introduce the kind of system that we have in Canada.

• (1200)

I am sure that eventually the supporters of user fees will realize how misguided they are. I am confident they will understand that our health care system requires a general overhaul, not a fine tuning.

In conclusion, we must protect medicare. That is why we should enshrine that protection in the Constitution. That is why this House should act on the motion presented by the member for Mississauga East.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-41, an act respecting the energy efficiency of energy-using products and the use of alternative energy sources, as reported (with amendments) by Legislative Committee D.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There are five amending motions on the Notice Paper concerning the report stage of Bill C-41, an act respecting the energy efficiency of energy-using products and the use of alternative energy sources, all standing in the name of the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 will be grouped for debate and a vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5.

I will now propose Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to the House.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, with the kind indulgence of the House, I would like to ask for the unanimous consent of the House at this time to place before it two amendments that I believe have been circulated to the Table, or at least the Liberal Whip and House leader and the government House leader or Whip. That was my understanding at least.

The fact of these motions not being before the House in the proper fashion at this point is entirely my fault for which I do apologize and take full responsibility. If, however, having understood that, the House could find it in its heart to be indulgent in this instance, I would be most grateful.

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have any problem with doing that at all but some of us who are interested in energy matters would like to see them. I have not seen them and I do not think anyone has.

Do you have to have consent now, or could we wait for a moment or two and carry on with something else in the meantime?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Meanwhile, until the House has been able to read the text of the motions, we will first proceed to consideration of the five motions standing in the name of the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso.

[*English*]

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-41 be amended in clause 2 by striking out lines 11 and 12 at page 1 and substituting the following therefor:

(b) importing or exporting energy-using products into or from Canada, or

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-41 be amended in clause 4 by striking out lines 16 and 17 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

tured to another province, or import or export an energy-using product into or from Canada, unless

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-41 be amended in the English version of clause 5 by striking out line 1 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

5.(1) Every dealer who ships, imports, or exports

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-41 be amended in the English version of clause 6 by striking out line 22 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

dealer who ships, imports or exports energy-using

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-41 be amended in clause 10 by striking out lines 7 to 9 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

owned by or is on the premises of a dealer of imported or exported energy-using products or a consignee of imported energy-using products or of energy-using products that are to be exported or there is any document or record.

Mr. MacDougall: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Could I have the consent of the House when our colleague's motions come forward to debate them all at the same time?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I think the hon. member's attention may have strayed when the Chair handed down its ruling. I repeat that all motions standing in the name of the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso have been grouped for debate, and that the vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to the four other motions. The hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso.

[*English*]

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity that is occasioned by your ruling to speak to my amendments as they have been grouped for debate and to the thrust and the substance of those amendments.

I would like to remind the House that Bill C-41, the energy efficiency act, is a bill to primarily set minimum energy efficiency standards for a variety of residential energy using products such as fridges, stoves, washers and driers, and household appliances of that nature.

This bill was discussed in committee. I might add that the discussion in committee was very favourable. There was a wide degree of consensus among all parties in committee as to the thrust and the importance of this legislation. In fact, members of the committee generally supported extending the scope and the meaning of the legislation into other areas. There was general support

for that even from the minister of energy when he appeared before the committee as a witness.

We support the thrust of this legislation on this side of the House although we have problems with some of the particular aspects of it. My amendment addresses a very specific deficiency in that legislation, something which was omitted. I believe my amendment is timely, given the discussions which are currently taking place on the environment in Rio de Janiero this week.

Bill C–41 restricts the interprovincial trade and movement across provinces of products that do not meet the energy efficiency standards provided as regulations to this bill. It also prevents the importation of products which do not meet those standards.

What the bill does not do is this. It does not address the issue of the export by Canada of products which do not meet the minimum energy standards which we will require in Canada should this legislation become law. In fact, if we look at clause 4 of this bill, it says:

> 4.(1) No dealer shall, for the purpose of sale or lease, ship an energy–using product from the province in which it was manufactured to another province, or import an energy–using product into Canada, unless
>
> (a) the product complies with the energy efficiency standard; and
>
> (b) the product or its package is labelled in a prescribed form or manner, if any.

The other clauses that my amendment addresses would simply add export to the other provisions in clause 4 and the other related clause.

• (1210)

What my amendment does is require Canada to extend to other countries the same rigorous standards which we would want to apply to ourselves concerning the use of energy efficiency standards, and by extension the emission of greenhouse gases that are produced in the process of producing that energy.

My amendment would extend this discipline to other countries; the discipline we are requiring ourselves to abide by using these amendments.

We can ask the first question as to who would be affected by this amendment. If we look at the exports of these types of appliances by Canada, we would see using the 1990 trade statistics for major appliances of this kind that there were $153.5 million worth. Of that, the bulk or 82 per cent of those exports were to the United States, which already has higher energy efficiency standards than we have in Canada.

The remainder of those exports would currently be 4 per cent to Europe, 7 per cent to Asia, and another 7 per cent to other countries. There is a small portion of our exports that would potentially be affected by this legislation according to these statistics.

The amendment I propose, if it is restrictive in any way to those manufacturers of these products outside of the United States, would be to a very limited degree at the present time. However, that does not deny the importance of the amendment because essentially what this amendment would do would be to require Canada to set its standards in its exports to other countries, standards that it is maintaining for itself.

For that reason it would create a signal to the international community in a very small but important sense that we are prepared to practice what we preach internally in respect of our trade to other countries.

We would be saying with these amendments that we will not export inferior products from an energy standpoint to, for example, a country that could potentially be in the future a very large consumer of these products. We would provide products in those countries that meet an energy efficiency standard. That is what this amendment would do.

I realize we are dealing with, in a sense, a policy dilemma here. The dilemma we face is whether or not we should apply our standards to other countries concerning the environment or energy efficiency in this case.

The debate being brought forward at this time is that we in Canada proclaim our adherence and this government proclaims its adherence to the importance of concern for the environment and the desire to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The desire is to set an example in terms of energy efficiency, an example that it is willing to impose not only on itself but also in its relationship with other countries.

There is an additional reason for the time limits of an amendment of this kind and for having this subject brought forward for debate. We are currently in the midst of the Uruguay round of GATT negotiations. Although the environment has not been a factor in world trade discussions, clearly the environment is going to be a factor in future trade discussions on an international basis and the way in which trade law develops. It is

through the application of smaller agreements and legislation which sets that pattern in various countries.

Clearly this type of amendment sets the tone for the future conduct in Canada of its trade relations with other countries. it says in effect that we will apply to our trade law or to the aspects of our legislation that affect our trade the kind of concern for the environment that we want to impose upon ourselves. That is the point behind that particular amendment to this piece of legislation and why I am bringing it forward today.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a few concerns with regard to the amendments that have been brought forward by my colleague.

I would like to first of all say that the work done by the committee certainly indicates that members who have concerns can sit down and readdress the bill on the legislative side and come up with proposals and changes to this piece of legislation.

Very briefly on the amendment put in by my colleague, Bill C–41 was generally a Canadian market and Canadian consumer piece of legislation. It addressed the appropriate energy efficiency purposes within this country. We believe that the compliance and monitoring activities of this bill as included over the next two years in this piece of legislation when it becomes law and that the international trade policies and practices can certainly be looked at at that time.

At this point the government is not prepared to support these amendments. We certainly understand that the member has done some good work in this, but we believe that the actions of the next two years and the direction of the government and of the energy policies and practices will be that which will allow for monitoring over the next two years on the activities of the piece of legislation.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, just very briefly, the reason that the bill was brought forward, the reason we are discussing this today, is that it is widely and generally recognized that conservation and increased energy efficiencies are absolutely crucial to the reduction of energy use generally upon which the fate of the planet may hang.

In applauding the government for bringing the bill forward, for making this small but nonetheless important first step, I would like as well to applaud the member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso for bringing forward his amendments today. I think James Shaver Woodsworth said it as well as anyone could in his *Grace Before Meat* "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all".

What that means, very simply, in terms of this bill is that which we wish to achieve in our domestic market in terms of the increased energy efficiencies that we hope the bill will foster, and in fact we know the bill will at some point require, those efficiencies should not be restrained to our domestic market, but rather where we have international customers we should as well grace them with those efficiencies.

There is no reason of which I can think to vote against these amendments on their principle. On the face of it there is no cause that I can see for continuing to allow the export of domestically produced, or imported and reproduced, goods to other countries, presumably in the Third World, of an efficiency lower than those which we would tolerate in our own country. In a sense, Mr. Speaker, that is a sort of conceptual insult to those countries.

I would strongly support these motions and would urge the government to reconsider, if not today then as the parliamentary secretary held out the hope, perhaps in the near future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I remind all members that a vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5.

• (1220)

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 1 negatived.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): On that previous point of order, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the House is now ready to determine whether or not there is unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the members of the Bloc Quebecois are also willing to let the hon. member for Edmonton East table his amendments at this time, simply to prove their good will, as always.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I ask the hon. member for Edmonton East to stand and read the two motions, please.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East) moved:

Motion No. 6

That clause 20 of Bill C-41 be amended by striking out line 8 at page 10 and substituting the following therefor:

"respect to the products' energy efficiency and prescribing the form and manner of any information required to be included in advertising promoting energy using products.

Motion No. 7

That clause 20 of Bill C-41 be amended immediately after line 8 by adding the following:

"and potential for cost savings"

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): These two motions are in order. For all members who want the text of them, it is available from the clerks at the Table.

[*Translation*]

The two motions proposed by the hon. member for Edmonton East will be grouped for debate. The first motion will be voted on first. The second motion will be voted on only if the first motion is rejected.

[*English*]

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, the goal of both amendments—I will speak of both of them together—is to lend further market effect to the bill. In the first instance the amendment would have the effect of requiring that advertising of energy products include the information that the bill now requires be included in the labelling of the products. All this means is that the information, on the basis of which we hope consumers will make informed choices in favour of greater energy efficiency, will be available to consumers before they go to the shop floor. In other words, in reading the flyers that come in the mailbox or the advertisements in the Friday newspaper consumers will at that point be informed as to the relative energy efficiency merits of the product under consideration.

The reason for this was pointed out in testimony before the committee: most consumers, by the time they hit the shop floor, have narrowed down at the very least their range of potential products and often that range will be further narrowed by what is available in the store. If they have available to them ahead of time those crucial pieces of energy efficiency information, they will be able to make not only better informed but more effective choices before they ever leave their homes. That is the point of the first amendment.

The second amendment would be to require that the information presented both in the labelling of the device and in the advertising, if the first amendment carries, would be put at least in part in terms of anticipated cost savings. In other words dollars expressed on whatever basis and in whatever form the government chooses but nonetheless a presentation in terms of dollars. Brian Kelly, president of Marbek Resources, in his testimony before the legislative committee noted that dollars were the official language of Canadian consumers. We are not suggesting in this amendment that information like kilowatt hours per year be excluded from the label. Certainly that information is valuable and can be included. We are saying, as is the case in Jamaica, for example, that dollars be included on whatever base the minister or the Governor in Council may choose.

Both these amendments, therefore, are an attempt through the closer informing of consumers to give greater impact and greater effect to the principles of the bill. As such I would hope they would enjoy the support of the House.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have just a few brief comments on both motions put forward by my colleague.

With the first motion in particular, there will be jurisdictional difficulties with regard to the federal, provincial, retail and wholesale sides. That makes it next to impossible for us to consider this motion at this time.

On the second motion put forward by my colleague, cost saving is already in the bill. The cost difference across the country makes it difficult to be able to go further than we have at this time.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the two amendments which my NDP colleague has put forward. They reflect faithfully the tenor of the discussion which took place in committee and the purpose which all members of the committee wanted to see reflected in the legislation. There is the increase of information available to consumers to be able to make informed choices on the energy efficiency of the products they buy and the information which is provided is relevant and useful for that purpose.

In that respect I believe the House would do well to support these amendments.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point. It occurs to me that when I was asked to move the amendments I was not asked for a seconder. I believe the record should show that there was a seconder. Let it show that the seconder is the member for Trinity—Spadina.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The first motion will be voted on first. The second motion will be voted on only if the first motion is rejected.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The next question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

An hon. member: On division.

Motions Nos. 6 and 7 negatived.

Hon. John McDermid (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

• (1230)

Mr. Kilgour: On behalf of the Official Opposition, I believe there is no objection to proceeding with third reading of the bill now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent to proceed to the third reading of the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There is no unanimous consent.

* * *

AN ACT TO AMEND CERTAIN ACTS WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. John McDermid (for the Secretary of State of Canada) moved that Bill C–78, an act to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Human Resources envelope.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C–78, an omnibus bill to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities.

The changes contained in this omnibus bill have been welcomed by persons with disabilities. They are certainly long overdue. However, the bad news is that there are so many important things not included in the bill, so many things that persons with disabilities have been expecting for a very long time.

I have seen first hand how much these legislative improvements are needed. I have travelled from coast to coast to meet with groups and individuals in their communities. I have heard and seen some appalling situations. I have come to realize how much it really matters that we get serious about these problems.

It seems to me that what we are currently saying to many persons with disabilities is that we do not want them to play a full and active role in society. I think, for example, of the disabled person who has significant disability related expenses. If that person somehow against all odds manages to get some training and to find a job, he may find that the government immediately cuts off the financial support it previously offered. He may find that he cannot really afford to work.

In effect we are saying to that person: "We don't want you to be a proud, independent, productive Canadian citizen". Unfortunately we have a system that is full of disincentives.

I want to relate a few examples of some of the cases I have seen or heard about across Canada. I can remember when the Liberal task force on disabled persons was in New Brunswick. I met an elderly woman who lived some distance outside Fredericton. She had serious eye problems and needed to see an eye specialist regularly. She could not drive and because the government had cut VIA Rail services to Fredericton there was simply no way for her to visit her eye doctor.

I have heard cases of persons in wheelchairs who made plane reservations weeks in advance, told the airline about the wheelchair, showed up in advance at the airport, and then were told by the pilot at the very last minute that they could not board the plane. Our laws currently give pilots the authority to do that.

Some of the most disturbing stories I heard came from isolated aboriginal communities. For example, persons with disabilities often need to see medical specialists who are located only in major urban centres many thousands of miles away. They told me horrendous stories of regularly having to travel vast distances to receive care.

These are the people who are looking forward to major improvements in long awaited omnibus legislation. I do not think there is any doubt they are deeply disappointed by this legislation.

I would like to quote Mr. Jim Dirksen, president of the Canadian Disability Rights Council, who said: "If this bill were all we were going to get, we would have to register tremendous disappointment". Mr. Dirksen compared the bill to a sod-turning ceremony which is more a commitment to build something rather than substantive changes on the ground.

I would also like to quote from an article on disability issues that appeared in *The Toronto Star* on May 21. The article is entitled "Government turns its back on disabled". It examines in considerable detail how this government has neglected Canadians with disabilities. This is how this omnibus bill is described in the article: "Sweeping changes were called for by the disabled community. Elaborate promises were made by the government but the law itself is a joke. The government failed to deliver. Nobody takes it seriously".

Finally I want to quote from an editorial that appeared in *The Ottawa Citizen* on May 23. Again, this editorial outlines how the government has disappointed disabled persons in Canada. It described the omnibus bill as pathetic and as a pale and sickly shadow of the draft bill produced by the Canadian Disability Rights Council. It says the bill is a far cry from the American's disability act that went into effect in the United States in January.

These are not exactly glowing endorsements of this bill. They are fair reflections of what disabled persons feel about it. It is simply lacking in substance.

The government made a number of related announcements at the time this bill was first tabled. These announcements were promises of further action on disability issues to be taken at some unspecified time in the future after further review and consultation.

All of us in this House realize that the words further review and consultation are code words for delay or inaction.

Last fall the Canadian Disability Rights Council presented to the government a 107-page brief outlining in very specific terms the legislative reforms it hoped to see in an omnibus bill. The brief even included draft legislation for such a bill. I will be quoting from this bill today in my remarks because it illustrates so well the huge gap between what disabled persons were expecting in this bill and what they actually got.

This brief represents a lot of work on the part of this group and I want to congratulate the council on the good job it has done. Many other groups have made similar briefs and presentations to the government in recent years. This is one reason why persons with disabilities are so disappointed with this bill. It was the government that funded the Canadian Disability Rights Council to prepare this brief. This was seen as an act of good faith in the community. Naturally there was an expectation that

the government would follow through with substantive changes.

Perhaps the process resulted in unrealistic expectations. I am not sure if there is a better way of doing it. All I know is that a lot of people are very, very disappointed and I do not blame them.

Before I move on a specific discussion of the act, I want to make a few comments about persons with disabilities in Canada. We know now that there are between three and four million Canadians living with some kind of disability. That is well over 10 per cent of our total population. This is not a small group of people we are talking about. Many of these disabled persons are seniors. If we think about it we can all think of a senior we know who has difficulty seeing, hearing or walking. It may be a parent, a grandparent, a friend or a neighbour.

I would ask hon. members to remember that many of us will have to deal with these disabilities ourselves someday.

Many of these people with disabilities live in poverty in a country that prides itself on its standard of living and its commitments to human rights. Women with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged, earning on average less than half of what disabled men earn. They are even more likely than non-disabled women to suffer sexual and physical abuse.

As well, aboriginals with disabilities are much more likely to live in poverty than other Canadians with disabilities.

I hope that all members would agree that it is the responsibility of the government that all Canadians have equal rights regardless of abilities.

• (1240)

The most substantive amendments in this act are changes to the Canada Elections Act. I suspect that the government is more aware of these issues because of the $18 million royal commission on electoral reform which made a number of recommendations in this area. Presumably the all-party committee looking at the royal commission may have been planning similar amendments. Anyway, it is good to see this increased awareness.

Bill C-78 contains a number of amendments to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their rights to participate in elections. I am sure all members of the House would agree that the right to vote is one of the most fundamental and important rights that we enjoy in a democracy. It is a right that most of us take for granted but we would not take it for granted if we were blind or in a wheelchair. For many disabled persons in the past, voting has been so difficult that they have been unable to exercise their democratic rights.

Among other amendments, this bill contains changes to ensure that polling stations will have level access, that disabled persons may receive assistance in the voting booth and that special measures will be taken to assist disabled voters living in institutions. These are all welcomed changes.

I would also like to point out that we have a responsibility to assist not only the disabled voters but also disabled candidates because the right to run for public office is an important democratic right.

Bill C-78 takes into account the special financial expenses of disabled candidates that relate to their disabilities. These expenses will no longer need to be claimed as election expenses. The effect of this change is to remove an obviously discriminatory requirement from the election financing laws.

We only need to look at legislatures across the country to see that we have had a relatively low number of disabled candidates in Canada in spite of the fact that more than 10 per cent of Canadians are disabled persons.

The Canadian Disability Rights Council has recommended that the government should reimburse disabled candidates for any special personal expenses related to their disabilities and in this way encourage disabled candidates to run for office.

I would also point out that it is not only the government that has responsibility in this area. All political parties also have a responsibility to ensure that disabled persons are encouraged to run as candidates.

There are a number of other issues related to disabled persons in the Canadian Elections Act which were not addressed by this bill. Our party is hoping that some of these issues will be addressed by the parliamentary committee examining the recommendations of the royal commission on electoral reform.

I am pleased to see that the government has introduced amendments to the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act so that people with disabilities are able to request information in alternate formats. This applies to people with sensory disabilities, that is, disabilities of sight and hearing. The alternate formats could be large print, Braille or audio cassette.

I am concerned about some aspects of these amendments. For example, the amendment allows the head of government departments to determine whether a request for alternative formats is both necessary and reasonable. I am concerned about the extent to which this may limit the rights of access for disabled persons.

Improvement to these acts are necessary because Treasury Board guidelines on alternate formats have been virtually ignored by many departments. Treasury Board has previously directed all departments to set aside a fixed percentage of their publicity and information budgets for producing materials in alternate formats.

However, according to the Canadian Disability Rights Council: "The reality is that few departments have adhered to this guideline. Recent surveys conducted by the National Library of Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Commission show that little action to encourage or require compliance has been taken by the Treasury Board and that very few departments have produced or are about to produce documents in alternate format".

This shows a rather callous disregard for the rights of disabled persons. I would certainly hope that this legislative change will help produce a change in attitudes in government departments.

I was also pleased to see that the bill contains an important change to the Criminal Code related to the rights of disabled persons in court. Changes to the code will allow a complainant with a disability to give evidence regarding certain sexual offences from behind a screen or outside the courtroom.

This will only occur in cases in which seeing the accused would prevent the complainant from testifying freely.

This measure is extremely important for disabled persons but it falls far short of what they were looking for. When we think about the circumstances in which many disabled persons live, we can clearly see that they are among the most vulnerable people in our society. There is great potential for abuse, for assault and sexual assault. The government has indicated that the Minister of Justice will review other sections of the Criminal Code and the Canadian Evidence Act which have been identified by the disabled community as requiring attention.

Again, we have to wonder why the need for further review. The disability community has outlined the problems very clearly and has made some very specific recommendations to address the problems.

According to the Canadian Disability Rights Council, disabled persons are up to 10 times more likely to be assaulted and sexually assaulted than people without disabilities. Often the abuser is not charged because of the difficulties associated with the disabled person's testifying in court. The result is that people who assault or sexually assault these vulnerable people in our society are getting away with their despicable crimes. It is no wonder that disabled persons have been so anxious for the legislative amendments required to change the *status quo*.

Unfortunately, this bill omits a number of important recommendations made by the Canadian Disability Rights Council in this area. For example, the council has recommended an exception to the hearsay rule that would allow a third party, such as an attendant, to give evidence instead of the victim where no other way exists to get the evidence in court. As well, we need to be taking advantage of the technology that allows a blind and visually impaired person to identify the accused through the use of voice line-ups. Disabled persons want the current provisions in the Criminal Code that deal with abuse by those in positions of trust and authority to be extended to include protection for persons with disabilities.

When you think about these problems you realize that some of them have been with us for a very, very long time. It is sad indeed that we have not yet been able to devise innovative ways of overcoming these problems in order to ensure greater fairness to people with disabili-

ties. They are entitled to the same legal rights and the same protection under the law as everyone else.

One of the most important areas for persons with disabilities in Canada today is that of access to transportation. That is no surprise when we think about it. Access to transportation is a vitally important element of life in the modern world. It is something that most of us take for granted, something that enables us to accomplish the things we do every day. Without it we simply could not participate fully in the work world and in community life. I can assure members of the House that over the past year or so I have heard some real horror stories about the difficulties people with disabilities often encounter when they want to travel by plane or bus, for example.

For those of us who travel routinely without these kinds of problems it is hard to imagine what it must be like to put up with such frustrating experiences. Bill C–78 makes only one change to the National Transportation Act. It is a change adding the words "access to persons with disabilities" to the preamble of the act as part of the preamble's over–all description of Canada's transportation system. Again, there is no time frame, no deadlines, no specific details.

The government also indicated that the specific recommendations of the Canadian Disability Rights Council will be considered as a part of a review of the National Transportation Act to be completed next year. Next year; again there will be more delay. This change to the preamble is of course welcome but again it falls far short of expectations. There seems to be little doubt that the transportation companies will continue to delay efforts to ensure access for as long as they can get away with it.

I recognize that removing barriers to access does cost money, but at some point the government has to bite the bullet, show that it is serious about access and impose some comprehensive deadlines and mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of access regulations and requirements. That is what is noticeably absent from this legislation. It is not more fancy words that disabled persons are looking for. It is action and results.

I have mentioned some of the problems that disabled persons encounter when travelling by plane.

• (1250)

I also want to mention the particular problems associated with bus travel. According to the Canadian Disability Rights Council, the bus industry has taken advantage of the confusion about which level of government has jurisdiction over it to escape regulating access altogether. Yet the bus is a key connector between towns and the rural communities. Buses provide services to places that trains and planes do not.

It seems to me that in the face of jurisdictional confusion, it is up to the federal government to show leadership and to ensure that the rights of disabled travellers are not overlooked.

The technology to make buses wheelchair accessible has been available for a long time.

I also want to point out that in the areas of accessible bus travel Canada lags far behind other countries. For example, the United States department of transportation recently announced that all new intercity buses purchased after 1993 must be fully accessible. Many of these buses are made in Winnipeg. The accessible buses are sold to the United States. The non–accessible buses are sold in Canada.

I have heard that because the United States is so far ahead of Canada when it comes to accessible buses, there is a real fear that the Americans will dump their old inaccessible buses in Canada after 1993. I find that a real embarrassment for our country.

These measures being enacted in the United States are the kinds of measures that disabled persons in Canada have been demanding for years. These are the kinds of measures they expected to see in the omnibus bill or in an announcement that accompanied the bill. They were not expecting to hear they will have to wait until next year, the year after, or the year after that.

Finally, I want to comment about some of the important issues that should have been addressed in this legislation but have been left out entirely for reasons that are far from clear to me.

One of these is broadcasting and particularly access to television. This bill contains no amendments to the Broadcasting Act despite the recommendations of the disability rights advocates.

Statistics Canada tells us that there are 260,000 deaf people in Canada and more than 1.5 million who are

hard of hearing. For quite some time we have had the technology to make television accessible to persons with hearing difficulties.

There are several different options but the preferred method is called closed captioning. Closed captioning means that subtitles appear on television screens equipped with special decoder boxes.

I want to mention that it is possible to have a decoder chip built into the television and this costs the manufacturer about five cents. This would save the consumer from having to spend anywhere from $80 to $200 for a decoder box.

In the United States, legislation requires manufacturers to include these chips in televisions. Without legislation businesses will be reluctant to include the chip because often, the same companies that sell televisions also sell decoder boxes. Naturally, they would prefer to make extra money on the sale of decoder boxes. Sadly, we have seen no move toward this kind of legislation in Canada.

I also want to point out that captioning is not only essential for deaf people, but it is also useful for people who are learning how to read, or people who are learning a second language.

Unfortunately, broadcasters in Canada have been very slow to provide captioned programs. Last year it is estimated that only 10 per cent to 15 per cent of programs in both public and private stations were captioned. Recent licence renewals for both the CBC and CTV networks provided for only 15 hours of captioned programs per week.

The CRTC has refused to require complete access for the hard-of-hearing as a condition of licence. What the disabled community expects is nothing less than 100 per cent captioning for all programs.

Again, I want to stress that this is not a small audience we are talking about. It is 1.5 million Canadians. These are Canadians who pay taxes just like the rest of us including taxes for the CBC. They expect to be able to watch television just like the rest of us. Will they get a tax rebate if they cannot understand the programming?

It has become very clear that it is not good enough to encourage broadcasters to provide closed captioning. This voluntary approach has brought very disappointing results. The time has obviously come for the government to impose requirements and deadlines.

The government has announced that the Minister of Communications will be directing the CRTC in the areas of captioning and employment equity after further consultation with the disabled community and broadcasters.

Again, we have no specifics, no timetables and still more consultation. I am all for consultation but in this case it is quite obvious what the disabled community wants. It is equally obvious that broadcasters will attempt to do as little as possible because of the expense involved. We can only hope that the minister and the CRTC will regard this matter with the same urgency as the disabled community.

I could go on and on about all the issues that have not been addressed in this bill and all the amendments that have not been included.

As I have mentioned, disabled persons are disappointed that the bill contains no amendments to the Broadcasting Act, the Immigration Act or the Canada Evidence Act. Persons with disabilities also consider improvements to the Employment Equity Act a high priority. They are also looking for improvements to the Canadian Human Rights Act, the National Training Act, the Income Tax Act, the National Housing Act, Canada Assistance Plan Act, Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act, the Canada Pension Plan Act and the Canada Labour Code, among others.

The questions that disabled persons are asking now are: why the delay? Why is there a need for still more review and consultation? These are definitely not new issues.

There has in fact been extensive consultation with the disabled community. The community's recommendations have been quite specific and thoroughly researched. The government has had years and years to prepare this legislation. Why is it so skimpy? Why are there so many important issues not addressed in this bill?

Many of these issues were raised long ago. In 1981, the *Obstacles* report of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons, chaired by the Hon. David Smith, made 130 recommendations that touched on every aspect of the social, economic and legal

situation of disabled persons. More than 10 years later, many of these recommendations remain unfulfilled.

The feeling of disappointment is one that is all too familiar to disabled Canadians. They have been told time and time again that they will have to wait. They have waited and waited. They are tired of waiting. They are tired of being treated like second-class citizens. They are tired of having to wait for their rights.

We will be supporting Bill C-78. I suppose when you want to walk a mile and you can only go an inch, you have to accept that inch. The disabled community, all those who are friends of the disabled community and those who work with them and those of us in the Liberal Party are hoping that this really is just the sod turning, that within the next few months there will be some positive action.

We ask that the Prime Minister affirm to the disabled community that he will be taking some very positive action further than this omnibus bill in the next few months.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as Secretary of State and minister responsible for the status of disabled persons, I was honoured recently to introduce Bill C-78 in the House. It is indeed a pleasure to rise today to participate in this historic debate. It is historic because in debating Bill C-78, Parliament is for the first time ever considering a bill that focuses exclusively on the concerns of the 3.3 million Canadians with disabilities.

The importance of this is worth noting, not only because it is a first, but because prescribing the requirements of equal access in law will have an impact beyond the specific acts being amended.

The provisions of Bill C-78, and the other measures that we have announced, represent a further step forward to the full social and economic integration of persons with disabilities. It is an important step toward ensuring that all of our laws reflect the needs, interests, aspirations and rights of all Canadians, including those with disabilities.

An important feature of the bill and related policy and regulatory actions is the process through which they have become a reality.

• (1300)

My department played a co-ordinating role with the Department of Justice and the other concerned departments in facilitating a close and effective partnership with the disability community. Over the past eight months, the government has worked with the Canadian Disability Rights Council in the development of this bill, and I want to thank them for their leadership, determination and insight.

Another important partner in the development of Bill C-78 was the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. It was the Standing Committee, in its 1990 report, *A Consensus for Action*, that first recommended a review of federal legislation to ensure that Canadians with disabilities are full participants in the social and economic mainstream. The standing committee provides an important forum for the disability community and other stakeholders to clarify outstanding issues and encourage government attention. I thank the members of the standing committee for their continued collaboration.

Bill C-78 is a good example of what can be accomplished when people with a shared vision can work together for a common purpose. In considering the provisions of this unique bill, our common purpose is the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities. We are single-minded in our determination that all citizens, regardless of physical or mental disability, have a right to be full participants in their communities. Surely we can afford nothing less than to benefit from the full contribution of every Canadian.

It was with this vision in mind that in September of 1991, the Prime Minister announced the National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. Under the strategy, the federal government made a commitment to provide access for persons with disabilities, to ensure their integration in the economic life of the country, and to promote their full participation in Canadian society. A comprehensive review of federal legislation was identified as an important element of the National strategy.

[*English*]

The measures set out in Bill C–78 are a central part of the government's national strategy and will significantly improve the opportunities for Canadians with disabilities to participate fully in the community.

Bill C–78 and the changes it proposes build on the past legislative achievement in support of equality and full participation of people with disabilities. For example, in 1985 section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into effect. Canada is the only country in the world whose Constitution includes a provision designed to protect persons with disabilities against discrimination.

Other significant legislative measures include first, the passage in 1986 of the Employment Equity Act; second, a series of changes to the Income Tax Act to better address the needs of persons with disabilities; and third, amendments made to the National Transportation Act in 1988 to empower the National Transportation Agency to set, administer and enforce accessibility standards for all modes of transportation within the federal jurisdiction.

All of those legislative changes have been made in close consultation with those most concerned, Canadians with disabilities. We have been listening to them and taking concrete action to address their needs and rights.

That is why Bill C–78, in which we are proposing to amend six federal statutes to remove barriers to the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities, is so important.

Citizenship is the key to participation. Bill C–78 proposes to amend the Citizenship Act to ensure that people who have disabilities have equal access to Canadian citizenship. The amendments would remove the word disability from the interpretation section of the act and more descriptive and appropriate wording would be inserted where the term now appears.

It is also proposed that the current ministerial provision to wave the residence requirement for persons with a mental disability be deleted from the act.

The most fundamental of all democratic rights is the right to vote. However, this right is sometimes restricted by factors such as accessibility of polling stations or problems in receiving the kind of assistance required to mark a ballot. Moreover, the freedom to run for public office is sometimes limited for persons with disabilities. Candidates with disabilities who might require the services of a full–time attendant or sign language interpreters ought not to be disadvantaged as a result of additional costs. The suggested changes to the Canada Elections Act would ensure that people with disabilities can participate fully in the electoral process.

For example, proposed amendments include a requirement that all polling stations and returning offices provide level access. It would also provide the use of mobile polling stations to bring the vote to individuals residing in institutions and clarification of the definition of personal expenses to include additional costs incurred by candidates with disabilities.

Travelling without barriers is one of the most central concerns of people with disabilities. Without accessible transportation, full participation in Canadian life is not possible. For this reason, Bill C–78 proposes to amend the National Transportation Act to directly acknowledge for the first time the importance of accessible transportation. The proposed amendment to the declaratory clause of the act would ensure that our national transportation system meets the needs of travellers with disabilities.

I must add that as part of the statutory review of the National Transportation Act, a review commission was set up to study all aspects of the act and to make recommendations for further changes as required.

Like all citizens, persons with disabilities need to have full access to the justice system. Through proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, Bill C–78 would allow a complainant with a disability to give testimony from behind a screen or outside the courtroom if seeing the accused would prevent the complainant from testifying freely. At the same time, my hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice, is committed to a review of all other proposals put forward by the Canadian Disability Rights Council as part of a larger review of Bill C–15.

The availability of information contributes to an individual's ability to participate. For persons with disabilities, having access to information in an alternative format is critical. The purpose of the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act is to ensure Canadians, permanent residents and persons present in Canada the right to access personal information and records held by government institutions.

Accordingly, Bill C–78 proposes to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act to establish the circumstances under which access to information covered by the acts will be provided in formats such as Braille, large print and audio cassette.

• (1310)

The proposed amendments would also give persons with disabilities a right to complain to the appropriate commissioner if they have not been given access to a record of information or an alternative format.

Taken together, these proposed statutory changes contained in Bill C–78 will significantly improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities. On a related legislative matter, my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, will soon introduce amendments to the Immigration Act related to the medical criteria used to screen applicants seeking admission to Canada.

These would address, among other things, the concern of the disabled community that the act currently discriminates on the basis of disability. These changes will be developed through continued consultation with the disabled community.

Our work is not finished. Bill C–78 is a step forward. In fact, the bill underscores the government's commitment to continued collaboration with the disabled community toward further legislative reform.

[*Translation*]

Our work has not finished with Bill C–78. It is a beginning, a step forward, an important step, but it underscores the government's commitment to continued collaboration with the disabled toward further legislative reform.

In speaking about Bill C–78, Jim Derksen, chairperson of the Canadian Disability Rights Council, used the analogy of a sod turning. Someone has to turn the ground in order to build. Removing the legislative barriers facing persons with disabilities cannot be done overnight. It is a building process. All of us must be involved. Only by working together, as we have in the development of Bill C–78, can meaningful change take place.

We may not change the world by taking these measures. We will, however, create a world that is open to future commitments, future changes, and will have one more reason to say that Canada is the world leader in ensuring equality and quality of life for its people.

Since tabling Bill C–78 in the House, I have closely followed the discussions of the disabled and have listened to their proposals for amendments to the bill. As well, I received suggestions from the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons when I appeared before it on June 2.

The recommendations put forward by the disabled and the parliamentary committee, and in particular the hon. member for Beaches—Woodbine, will strengthen those clauses in Bill C–78 dealing with the assistance provided to enable persons with disabilities to exercise the most fundamental of democratic rights, the right to vote.

The proposed amendments will ensure that any elector with a disability will receive the assistance required to mark his or her ballot. The changes will streamline the language in the bill, making it as inclusive as possible.

I am therefore pleased to support a proposal to amend clauses 25, 26, 29, 30 and 31 of Bill C–78 with regard to the Canada Elections Act.

[*English*]

In closing, I think the Chair will find that there is unanimous consent to complete second reading, Committee of the Whole and third reading of Bill C–78 today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The members have heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Carried.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C–78. I must say that in many ways I feel like speaking about what is not in the bill as opposed to what is in the bill.

As I look through this piece of legislation I recognize that almost all of it deals with changes to the Canada Elections Act. In other words, out of about a 15–page act, less than five of those pages deal with any legislation other than the Canada Elections Act. Unfortunately that symbolizes the problems that exist with the bill. The government, in its desire to be seen as doing something for the disabled community of Canada, decided to do a

lot with regard to the Canada Elections Act but did very little in other areas of concern.

It is ironic that this piece of legislation spends so much of its time dealing with the Canada Elections Act and the amendments that the minister is about to make when we go to Committee of the Whole. They are strictly on the Canada Elections Act and are being done at the same time that we have a committee which I also serve on, a special committee which is dealing with the Canada Elections Act.

In one room later today we have a committee that will be discussing the Canada Elections Act. At the same time we have this bill, which is supposed to be concerned with a whole number of concerns that the disabled community has, being dealt with in the House. Those two items are being dealt with in isolation to each other.

We have one bill which deals with the Canada Elections Act, we have a committee which deals with the Canada Elections Act, and unfortunately the two have not been married and there has not been very much consultation between the committee and those clauses that are in the bill and those amendments that the minister just spoke of which he will be making later on this day.

It is unfortunate that this bill is so restricted. As I have checked the history of this legislation, it is not what the disabled community has asked for. Over two years ago the idea of omnibus legislation was presented to the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. A coalition of disabled groups, including the Canadian Association for Community Living, the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped and the Canadian Disabilities Rights Council, made that presentation.

The earliest version of the proposal included a real effort to make the laws of Canada reflect the spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This first version of omnibus legislation that was produced by the disabled community proposed changes to the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Broadcasting Act, the Copyright Act, the Access to Information Act, the National Transportation Act, the Immigration Act, the Canada Elections Act, the Public Service Employment Act, the Employment Equity Act, the Canada Evidence Act, the Criminal Code of Canada and the Income Tax Act.

In terms of action to complement legislative change, the disability coalition pointed out that the administration of such programs as the Canada Assistance Plan, the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons program and the Established Program Financing, which authorizes federal–provincial activities, results in administrative measures that create impediments to the equality of persons with disabilities.

In addition, the federal government has delegated its authority in certain instances, such as interprovincial bus transportation, in which administrative bodies are not required to ensure the accessibility for disabled persons.

As I mentioned, two years ago this initiative for legislation had finally come from the community itself. This was late in the game, many, many years after the charter had come into effect. Why did it take so long for the government to begin to address the issue of inclusion of people with disabilities?

The New Democratic Party has long supported the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society, especially in our laws.

• (1320)

For too long the concerns of people with disabilities have been treated as add–ons to government programs and to laws. This means that their concerns have been treated as special rather than as a fundamental part of the legal and governmental system.

Whenever people are given this type of special treatment it can be seen as a favour and once granted it can also be taken away. That is not the approach that we would advocate.

For over 10 years my colleague, the member for Beaches—Woodbine, has worked on this very issue. When the Liberals were in government and when the Conservatives were in government he was our representative on the various committees that we had, including the special committee on the disabled and the handicapped which in its *obstacles* report made over 130 recommendations to include the concerns of people with

disabilities in the fabric of government policies, programs and laws.

The member for Beaches—Woodbine participated actively in the parliamentary discussions around the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to make certain that people with disabilities were guaranteed equality in section 15 of the charter. Currently, as a member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons, he works constructively with the government and with the Official Opposition to promote this progress.

For those people like the member for Beaches—Woodbine who are concerned with this legislation and for the disabled community there is a great sense of disappointment. Instead of the comprehensive list of legislation that was asked for in front of the committee and that the committee proposed to this House two years ago, the government has presented a very modest list of amendments to a very few acts of Parliament.

As I said earlier, if you take away changes to the Canada Elections Act there is not much left in this legislation.

Our party cannot understand why the minister was unable to include changes to the Immigration Act that the community wanted. Why is section 19(1) of the act not included in this bill? It would send a signal to all Canadians if this section of the Immigration Act were repealed because it prevents most persons with disabilities from getting landed immigrant status and from entering Canada.

According to the Disabled Rights Organization, this provision alone serves to perpetuate the misconceptions and misunderstandings about the abilities of disabled persons.

If I can add a personal note to this intervention, I know, as a former classroom teacher and a member of Parliament for 13 years, it has been that constant communication from the disabled groups within our country that has certainly educated me in terms of their ability to serve and participate in our nation. All too often there is a perception in the public arena that these people must be excluded for their own protection, that these people are not able to participate and that they would be taken advantage of.

Unfortunately, clauses like the one in the Immigration Act which I referred to help perpetuate that myth.

We would like to see this act amended. We would like to see the government commit itself to some long-term, major changes to federal government laws and regulations as they affect the disabled.

We have been asked by the disabled groups to help the passage of this legislation through the House to ensure that it is passed today, but these same groups have also said that this is basically the first step, the first move in dealing with legislation that is required. In other words, they have been promised that a second piece of legislation would be coming down later that would deal with the more substantive concerns.

I always get nervous when I hear that because I have often heard governments make that type of promise, especially when their mandate is about to expire. It is very easy to move on a piece of legislation now which is very limited in scope and say we will deal with the major items one, two, three years down the road. Unfortunately history will tell us that in this House of Commons those second pieces of legislation often never appear on our Order Paper, or if they appear on the Order Paper at all it is just prior to an election and they are not passed.

I share the concern of the disabled communities when they say that they need some guarantee from the minister as to when that legislation will be tabled and when the government expects to proceed with it to ensure that it is passed before the next federal election.

Again, the minister referred to regulations when we all know that when there are changes to legislation, it is the regulations that follow and that quite often are the mechanism which make the legislation work.

When will those regulations be brought into place? When will they actually exist? Is it going to be one year, two years or three years from now? Again, why can the government not make a commitment to ensure that those regulations will be put in place and give the people, especially the disabled communities, a firm deadline as to when that would happen?

We have a lot of concerns with regard to the legislation. We are concerned especially with regard to the fact that so many areas were not dealt with. Earlier I read

from a list of legislation that the disabled communities wanted amended. It is not dealt with in this legislation.

There are a number of other concerns as well that I would like to put into the record at this time. They include the fact that changes to the Access to Information and to the Privacy Act would mean that fees for people with disabilities which other Canadians do not have to pay would be required in order for disabled people to use that legislation effectively.

We are concerned with the exclusion of senior citizens from the changes to the Criminal Code. We are concerned with the fact that the closed captioning which we are used to seeing with our television sets will be dealt with by cabinet order to the CRTC rather than being brought forward as part of changes to the Broadcasting Act. Government will do this in isolation with no public input and with no discussion through the House of Commons as legislation is being passed.

On the government's failure to follow through on previous commitments, the Minister of Transport promised that if the provinces did not make intercity buses accessible, the federal government would intervene. It has not done so. The government failed in the proposed amendments to the National Transportation Act to include a timetable for regulations that would ensure accessible facilities within the shortest possible time.

We have a lot of these concerns. We know that there are very few sitting days left before the House of Commons breaks for recess and perhaps for a referendum followed by an election. We believe that in the 10 years since we passed our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, there was more than ample time to deal with the major legislative barriers to the disabled people of Canada from participating fully. We believe that the government could have done a much better job had it wanted to. We believe that this legislation, although we will support it in order that it pass the House very quickly, has so many shortcomings that it is not an adequate answer to the concerns of the disabled people of Canada.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, all of us in this House know that there are groups in society that suffer, unfortunately, from discrimination and inequality.

The federal government has been given the task of combating and defeating discrimination, intentional or not, wherever it might exist in our country. Until people are judged throughout Canada by personal characteristics that are within their control, there will be a role for this House and for the national government to seek out and destroy discriminatory behaviour.

The approximately 3.2 million fellow citizens who are disabled are without a doubt targets of intentional and unintentional discrimination. We have all seen that happen.

• (1330)

Over the past two or three decades Canadians have gradually become more receptive to the needs of mentally and physically disabled people. Canadians have not even begun to imagine the more subtle yet equally challenging obstacles which disabled people face in 1992.

As many as 40 per cent of the physically and mentally disabled Canadian women, according to one disability awareness group, will be sexually or physically assaulted. It is a staggering figure but when one thinks about it in more detail it is perhaps not surprising. After all, women are often seen as vulnerable members of society by those who subject them to actual abuse or threaten sexual and physical abuse.

Disabled women are even more vulnerable for obvious reasons. It is a proven fact that those people who feel it is their right to abuse women are always looking for the most vulnerable targets.

This brings me to Bill C–78, which is this government's sorry attempt to introduce omnibus legislation to deal with discrimination against disabled people. We on this side of the House will support Bill C–78 only because it is better than no legislation at all on a very important subject.

If the government really believes that it will adequately deal with the problem of discrimination against disabled Canadians, it is even more out of touch than most of us thought possible. What is worse is that the bill was introduced in this House last May, less than three

months after the government had axed the Court Challenges Program in its most recent budget.

If there was ever a tool for disabled people to exercise their rights under the charter—I sat on the human rights committee last year when we strongly and unanimously endorsed the Court Challenges Program and asked that it should be continued—it was that program because the courts will have to do what those opposite in this government will not do.

As we also all know, very few disabled citizens have the financial clout to sue for their right to have the charter apply to them.

A program that cost this government $2 million a year but was essential for less privileged Canadians to achieve equality in the eyes of the law has been thrown out the window. I wonder which member opposite will get up and defend that policy. It only cost $2 million, which is about the same amount of money spent yearly by the Prime Minister's Office to monitor the media.

The right hon. gentleman might think it is all right to put the livelihood of his spin doctors ahead of the principle of legal equality for all citizens of Canada, but most of us in this land do not share his priorities.

When we look specifically at the plight of disabled Canadians we see a large group of people that has been effectively disenfranchised from society's main stream for far too long.

Bill C-78 addresses a select few of the problems faced by disabled persons. I would like to focus specifically on what it does not do. Like so many other pieces of legislation introduced by this government, Bill C-78 is merely a smoke-screen, a temporary diversion from the real issues that affect disabled Canadians.

Like so many other pieces of legislation introduced by the government, Bill C-78 will likely stand out as a feel-good bill and nothing more. Those opposite may want to refer back to this bill when they visit their constituents this summer and say they know all about the obstacles faced by the disabled and are doing something about it.

The truth is that it has taken the government almost seven years to act on many recommendations forwarded by various disabled rights groups. The foot-dragging was taken to a point last year at which the Canadian Disability Rights Council was obliged to draft its own omnibus legislation. How can those on the other side of the House take any pride in a bill when they forced a non-profit extra-parliamentary group to go out and produce the framework for this legislation in the first place?

Going back to the contents of Bill C-78, or lack thereof, I would like to point specifically to the amendments made to the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. These amendments state that a person who cannot see or hear will be able to request government information in an alternative format such as Braille, large print or radio cassette. It sounds good, does it not? When we look at it further we find that the head of the government agency from which the alternative format information is requested can determine whether the request is necessary and reasonable.

To further complicate things, we find that there are no timetables or deadlines for the federal government to follow relating to implementation. I have seen a good deal of legislation go through this House since 1979 and I can say with some confidence that if targets, timetables, deadlines and other coercive forces are left out of some legislation then such legislation is destined to fail.

Recent surveys conducted by the National Library of Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Commission have shown that Treasury Board, under its present management, has not gone out of its way to encourage compliance or even simple preparation for this alternative format amendment. It looks as though this promise for alternative formats is likely destined for the trash heap of platitudes this government has built up over the past eight years and if there is one thing we do not need, it is new platitudes and new clichés from those opposite.

As I mentioned earlier, disabled Canadians, especially women, are doubly vulnerable to abuse in Canada; consequently it has become important for the federal government to give such people the tools to fight back against abuse.

Bill C-78 amends the Criminal Code to give judges and justices the power to allow mentally or physically disabled complainants to testify away from the courtroom or in isolation from the accused. I salute that part of the bill.

Bill C-15 which makes revisions to the Canada Evidence Act, addresses the problem of testimony from the disabled to a certain extent as well. However, neither piece of legislation addresses the broader recommendations made by the disabled community. Neither bill

provides for alternative evidence such as voice line-ups to prosecute assault cases more effectively.

More important, certain sections of the Criminal Code which provide for punishment of those guilty of abuse who occupy positions of power and authority are not extended to those in charge of caring for disabled people.

One could go on and on and on, poking holes in this bill.

Bill C-78 also amends the National Transportation Act to include transportation accessibility for disabled persons in the preamble of the bill, but we have no timetable or deadlines by which to do this. Does the government expect our transportation industry, in serious economic problems at the moment, to simply act on this half-hearted commitment based on a one-line amendment to the transportation act?

There does not seem to be any substantive commitment to making inter-city bus transportation accessible to disabled people. The member from Oxford knows, as the chairman of the human rights committee and the committee dealing with the problems of the disabled, that has been on the top of the litany of complaints by disabled Canadians for several years now, but Bill C-78 does not even mention it.

I mentioned at the outset that the Official Opposition is willing to support this bill only because it is a little bit better than doing nothing.

I would conclude my remarks by saying that if those opposite in the government think that this is the last word on equality legislation for disabled Canadians, it is deeply mistaken. Legislation like this would be almost laughable if it were not for the fact that so many other people out there want and deserve more from this particular House of Commons and this government.

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly pleased to be able to participate in this debate on Bill C-78.

I would like to begin by expressing my extreme pleasure at the process we are going through here today. I think this represents parliamentary tradition at its best; namely, where the government brings in legislation and the opposition parties take their time to express the shortcomings of the bill without obstructing it. I want to congratulate all of my colleagues on the opposition benches who were willing to see this bill go through the three stages later day in a fairly rapid process.

It is an indication that the needs of the disabled community in Canada are appreciated by people from all sides of the House, regardless of which party one happens to belong to. That kind of feeling is well received by the disabled community which likes to think that all of us here in the House of Commons have some concern for their needs.

• (1340)

Having said that, I do not want to repeat what the minister said or what my colleagues on the committee, the members for Hamilton, Edmonton Southeast and Beaches—Woodbine in Toronto, have pointed out.

All have indicated the shortcomings in the legislation. All of us on the committee are aware of that, accept that, and indeed, the minister would be the first to indicate more has to be done. I think more will be done.

I want to speak a bit this afternoon about the history of the committee, what has been achieved in the recent past, and put the present bill into that context, indicating the course we will be moving on in further aspects of this in the years ahead.

Members will recall that in the short life of the Clark government in 1979, a decision was made to institute a special committee on disabled and handicapped persons. The decision was taken but the committee never got off the ground before the election was called.

Subsequent to the election in 1980 the then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau established the special committee on the disabled and handicapped which, under the very capable chairmanship of Mr. David Smith from Toronto, gave us excellent leadership in coming up the following year, in 1981, with a report called *Obstacles*.

That report, with 130 recommendations, set the base line and the standard for what was needed by the disabled community. The acceptance of that report by people in Canada who knew the field and by people outside of Canada was such that the report went through

three printings. There was a great demand for that report.

I have to add that the member for Beaches—Woodbine and myself are the two remaining members in the House who were on that special committee so we do have a special interest. I am sorry he is not with us today. He has other commitments in the riding and his presentation was ably taken care of by his colleague from Churchill.

In the same year that we reported, the UN denoted it as the International Year of Disabled Persons. In response to that, Canada established a special committee, as I have indicated, on the disabled and the handicapped which identified the key obstacles faced by people with disabilities in Canada and outlined practical actions to overcome these obstacles. These were identified in the committee's report entitled *Obstacles* which as I say had about 130 recommendations in it.

The year 1982 began the UN Decade of Disabled Persons which by the way we just celebrated the close of a month ago in Vancouver. At the same time the Government of Canada included persons with a physical or mental disability in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That was a major step forward in the movement toward full equality for all Canadians.

Among industrialized nations, Canada alone has included in its Constitution a clause which states:

> Equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on mental or physical disability.

As the decade moved on Canada progressed along with the thinking and the changes that took place. In 1983 we note one of the key recommendations from the *Obstacles* report, was that the Secretary of State be designated minister responsible for the status of disabled persons.

This was a significant shift because it moved disability from being a health issue to being one with a citizenship perspective and that was very significant for the concerns disabled persons from Canada had.

In 1984 the Canada Labour Code was amended to ensure that people with disabilities were paid no less than the minimum wage.

In 1985 there was also a movement to protect the rights of people with disabilities. The Canadian Human Rights Act was changed to remove discrimination on the basis of disability whether mental or physical.

The Prime Minister's declaration on the Decade of Disabled Persons was also made in 1985. It was based on the work of federal and provincial representatives setting out a number of principles to guide government activities. This declaration is viewed as a bill of rights by disabled persons.

I draw special attention to principles 5 and 6 which declare: "Individuals with disabilities shall be assured access to fundamental elements of daily life that are generally available to the community" and goes on: "Persons with disabilities shall be encouraged to engage in all aspects of society and to participate in social change to fulfil themselves and to meet their obligations as citizens".

In 1986 the Employment Equity Act came into effect making the economic integration of disabled persons with disabilities a priority for Crown corporations and approximately 375 federally regulated employers. Also in 1986 the government established the Federal Contractors Program, the Transportation for Disabled Persons Program and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. Each of these programs were designed in consultation with disabled Canadians to deal with disability questions.

In 1987, following Rick Hansen's Man in Motion world tour, the government declared National Access Awareness Week an opportunity for communities to assess the level of accessibility and plan for and make changes in the five key areas of transportation, housing, recreation, education and employment.

Over 850 communities now participate in this National Access Awareness Week which, by the way, was just completed for this year at the end of this past week.

A standing committee of the House of Commons was established by all-party agreement in that same year with a unique mandate to examine and encourage greater efforts by all Canadians in advancing an agenda that addresses all aspects of disability.

I should say that the terms of reference as laid out in the House of Commons rules are very interesting because they give the mandate to the committee in four areas, namely, to propose, to promote, to evaluate and to monitor. These are four areas of work that other

standing committees do not have. It is interesting that we have this for this particular standing committee.

Now we have the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons as a permanent committee that consults persons with disabilities on an ongoing basis and makes recommendations to Parliament.

In 1988 the National Transportation Act was altered to give the National Transportation Agency the authority to issue regulations improving accessibility to federally regulated airlines, railways, bus systems and ferry services.

In June 1989 the standing committee released its report entitled *A Consensus for Action*, which called upon the government to work together with all sections of society to ensure the integration of people with disabilities.

In 1990 Environment Canada through the Canadian Parks Service began a comprehensive program to make national parks and historic sites accessible for persons with disabilities. Statistics Canada announced that it would carry out a post-sensal survey on disability in 1991 in order to establish a national database on disability related issues. Public Works Canada further announced a program to upgrade and improve accessibility to Crown owned and leased property.

In 1991, recognizing that people with disabilities have expenses related to disability, the federal government introduced new tax measures. These include modifying the disability tax credit and the medical expense credit.

Bringing us up-to-date, in the federal 1992 budget, eligible expenses were expanded once more and new deductions were added to the list of deductible expenses for disability related modifications to businesses.

Much progress has been made in removing the barriers to enable persons with disabilities to participate more fully in the community, but a great deal has been indicated here this afternoon and more remains to be accomplished. That is why in September 1991 the Prime Minister announced the launching of the National Strategy for the Integration of Disabled Persons here in Canada.

This five-year strategy involves financial commitment of over $158 million and addresses such issues as access to employment, training, housing, transportation, communications, public sensitivity and community integration.

This strategy is a unique partnership of federal departments and agencies working with the disabled community to achieve the goals of equal access, economic integration and effective participation. The five-year national strategy will enable Canadians with disabilities to participate more fully and more fairly in the work force in their communities and at home.

• (1350)

This omnibus bill, as it is called, Bill C-78, is a legislative proposal and is just one more step in our efforts to make equality a reality for Canadians with disabilities. It is part of our agenda for progress, bringing Canadians together to remove the barriers to full integration. It will create a greater awareness of disability-related matters and provide opportunities for new partnerships that will permit Canadians with disabilities to take their rightful places in the mainstream of the life of the nation.

In conclusion, as we reflect on the progress made during the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, we look forward to the next decade of new ideas which will make full participation in Canadian society a reality for everyone. I do want to finally say that I think members of the House are right in supporting Bill C-78. The members of the disabled community in Canada want us to support that bill but, at the same time, they want the standing committee, this House and the government to move ahead in coming years to make even more effective changes that will enable disabled people to be more fully integrated into society in Canada.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-78. I would like to begin by speaking to the House about a personal experience that I had two weeks ago in my riding.

I was approached by one of my constituents, a Mrs. Katerina Vlahof. She was telling me about an experience her daughter had just gone through with a company in the city. Her daughter, Zoe, I should mention, had only

20 per cent of her vision. She was saying that Zoe was totally frustrated and crushed because she had been working for a company in Toronto for about nine or ten months and according to all of the reports that were handed into the supervisors, Zoe was doing a terrific job. One day the principal of the organization came into this particular section where Zoe was working on computers, answering phones, taking messages and distributing orders. He noticed that this young woman had her eyes right up close to the screen. He asked what was going on. The supervisor said Zoe, who does a terrific job, only has 20 per cent of her vision. The principal of the organization could not handle it. He turned to the supervisor, and I do not know exactly what was said, but it led to a situation in which Zoe lost her job.

One of the reasons why Zoe lost her job was the concern that the principal of this organization had regarding Zoe's looking right up close to the screen, would possibly cause further damage to her eyesight, and he did not want to take the responsibility of being sued or being liable, even though there were doctors' certificates on file that would certainly have exonerated the corporation from being responsible if something like that had happened.

Naturally you can imagine a mother, who is so attached to her daughter, feeling the emotional disappointment when she loses her job for a reason like that.

She asked me if I could have a chat with her to see if there was some other place where we could get Zoe working. We walked over to their apartment where I sat and had a chat with this young woman.

First, I want to say that I could see that Zoe did have difficulty, with only 20 per cent of her vision. I must say that in terms of her intellect, her communications skills and her energy and enthusiasm, there was nothing wrong with Zoe Vlahof. She related the story of her employment with this company. I could see that really what we had here was a situation in which a lack of knowledge, a lack of sensitivity and a lack of real caring by this particular organization led to an insensitive action which was so unnecessary.

When I think that there are 3.2 million disabled Canadians in this country, probably many of whom are in the same condition and the same position as Zoe Vlahof, and when I think about why this is happening, it seems to me that one of the reasons is that it is easy to look the other way in many of the cases in which people are disabled. However, with the proper assistance, instruments and tools they can do a job every bit as well as anyone else.

I listened to the member for Oxford earlier giving his speech and he referred back to the special committee on the disabled and handicapped in 1980–81, chaired by my good friend, the Hon. David Smith. The member for Oxford sat on that committee. He is absolute right. He is actually being very humble about his assessment of this committee. This is finest piece of work that has ever been done anywhere in the world on problems, solutions, recommendations for people who are disabled. I know a better piece of work cannot be found anywhere in the world on this issue. I salute the member for Oxford because I know he was an active member on that committee.

I urge all members to get a copy of this book. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. It is all here. What is the problem? The problem is political will. This is a perfect example of where there is no political will to address this problem in a substantive way. Every now and again we tinker. I do not want to suggest to this House or to the people of Canada that nothing has happened since this report was tabled. I know there have been many recommendations, some of which have been implemented and some have been partially implemented. However, many of these recommendations have not been implemented.

What is lacking here is political will. I would suggest to all in this House, if each one of us had a son, a daughter, a nephew, or someone close to us who was disabled, we would be on this report constantly.

• (1400)

It is very tough competing today with an economy that is going through a lot of pain. It is very tough competing for time on the national stage with a constitutional and national unity crisis. It is very tough, but this is an issue we cannot ignore.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will resume debate after Oral Question Period. It being 2 p.m., the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

MICHÈLE OUIMET, JOURNALIST

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, I have something to say today to Michèle Ouimet, a journalist from *La Presse*, who had the nerve to write last Saturday a piece of garbage in which she said that "Abitibi is not beautiful, it is even ugly", that "Amos is definitely an ugly town with its cathedral" and that in Abitibi "people are slightly hypocondriac".

Mrs. Ouimet, the judgment you made shows that you are abysmally ignorant and that you suffer from a total lack of culture. Let me help you in that regard by telling you that the cathedral Sainte-Thérèse d'Avila in Amos, which is Roman-Byzantine, is unique in all of North America. Let me also tell you that we are all very proud of its spherical dome, with its round and full lines that make it a gem of Greco-Roman art in Abitibi.

I also hope that Michèle Ouimet did catch in Abitibi the hypochondria that she says everybody suffers from. This will enable her to be more concerned about her intellectual and cultural state, which should be good for her as well as for her future articles.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Monastery, Orangedale, Mabou, Petit de Grat, and now Judique. These communities read like a Canada Post hit list.

Last week I was informed by Canada Post officials that the post office in Judique was falling under review. In other words, it has been targeted for closure. The postmistress, Kay MacDonald, retired recently and the postal assassins in Ottawa have wasted no time moving in for the kill.

The residents of this proud Scottish community on the west coast of Cape Breton are happy with their post office the way it is. They receive good service and they do not want it to change or disappear.

Judique is miles from the next post office, and indeed from many other services which many Canadians take for granted. As in several other rural villages across Nova Scotia, the post office is the heart of the community and represents the only federal presence.

I am preparing a private member's bill which, if passed, would make Canada Post consider these very important factors when it decides which post offices will live and which will die.

To the residents of Judique I say this: I will support—

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but his time is now up.

* * *

MICHÈLE OUIMET, JOURNALIST

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Madam Speaker, I would like to rise against an article published in *La Presse*, on Saturday June 6. In spite of its misleading title, the article written by Michèle Ouimet says that the Abitibi—Témiscamingue area is not only not beautiful but even ugly.

To present our region as a haven for motels, bars, beer, and to talk about an ugly main street, a village in the middle of nowhere, a hick town, dilapidated houses, the end of the world, and a small world where culture is not obvious, is to revel in a mythical vision of our region and insult a population that has worked very hard in recent decades to establish a comfortable, pleasant and friendly environment that is a measure of the pride of our people.

I urge Mrs. Michèle Ouimet to watch a movie made by André Melançon and entitled "*Le soleil se lève au Nord*". This documentary will provide her with a balanced, credible and contemporary description of our region.

* * *

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, as a member of Parliament representing a province which has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country I wonder, as do thousands of my constituents and thousands of unemployed persons across the coun-

try, where the relief is for the problems facing this country.

What is the government going to do for the people who cannot afford to buy food for their children?

The government concedes that employment will not appreciably increase this year, but again it holds forth promises of jobs, jobs, jobs, a cry we have heard time and time again from this government. I would like to point out that saying it and doing it are two entirely different things.

The people of Canada want action now. We now have more soup kitchens and more food banks than we have ever had in Canada under any government. Yet the Minister of Finance proudly tells us that the government intends to continue on the same path that brought us where we are today.

I tell you one thing, I am very glad the Minister of Finance is not my doctor.

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ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE CONFERENCE

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, no one can deny that Canada has its problems. However it is interesting to note the reaction and comments of delegates to the Organizing for Social Change conference sponsored by the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres as they toured downtown Toronto last week.

"If that is inner city it is nothing like we know inner city," said one American. "I am seeing blacks and whites and orientals all together. You do not see that in Cleveland." Another delegate said: "I feel pretty safe and secure anywhere I walk. I have yet to see any slums in Toronto".

Those comments underline the fact that the United Nations says that Canada is the best country in the world. However we must not be complacent. If we are going to keep it that way, each of us in our daily lives must practice, not just pay lip service to the principle of equal treatment for everyone. We must continually strive to narrow the gap between the more and the less advantaged in Canadian society.

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EARTH SUMMIT

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, I want to draw to the attention of the House yet another shameful example of this government saying one thing on women's equality and doing another.

At preliminary meetings at the United Nation's earth summit in Rio de Janeiro, the government agreed to a target that all delegations should consist of at least 40 per cent women.

Sadly, the government missed the target and missed it badly. Only 5 out of 27 people in Canada's official delegation are women which is less that 20 per cent.

What is worse is the government's scandalous decision to leave at home Canada's international development minister. To top it all off, two other female cabinet ministers were not invited to the earth summit, the Minister of State for the Environment and the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

What else can other countries conclude but that the Canadian government is run by the good old boys who think that the environment, development and external affairs issues are unrelated?

In closing, let me point out that while the Liberal Party's delegation is only 25 per cent female, the New Democratic Party has once again lead the way in gender parity by sending a delegation that is 50 per cent women.

* * *

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, the Alberta caucus is concerned about the Young Offenders Act. It has recently established a committee to pursue this issue with a view to making some necessary changes.

We have serious reservations about the act as it is constituted today. Society is changing rapidly. While the recent amendments improved the Young Offenders Act somewhat, the amendments did not go far enough.

I recently met with concerned family members of victims of young offenders who are circulating a petition in Edmonton. I pledged to do what I could to meet their concerns.

* * *

FIRE–FIGHTERS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Canada's fire–fighters. These brave men and women often risk their lives for the benefit of society.

A few weeks ago, they were here and brought to the attention of parliamentarians a number of issues of great importance to them.

First, they would like to have a computerized national emergency response information system so that they can know what hazardous substances they are handling before they needlessly risk their health and welfare.

Second, they also would like to be notified by any emergency response personnel of possible exposure to infectious diseases when they deal with the casualties of those particular accidents.

Finally, they reminded us that they live dangerous and stressful lives. They would like to have parliamentarians look at the public safety officers' benefit plan and at possible early retirement. They point out that others who lead less dangerous lives than they do have these benefits.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, there are encouraging and accumulative signs that our economy is slowly but surely picking up speed.

Last week, Statistics Canada released figures that indicate the recession is coming to an end with a net increase of 31,000 new jobs in May creating a combined increase of 41,000 jobs in the past two months.

Further adding to economic recovery is the fact that prime interest rates are at the 20–year low of 7.25 per cent. The gross domestic product went up 0.3 per cent in March.

Bankruptcies are declining and manufacturing shipments are increasing. According to Royal Bank economist, Gerald MacDonnell, these numbers indicate a mending economy. Recessions end, and ours is ending.

* * *

• (1410)

CHILD CARE

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, Canadians are in shock and mourning following the recent revelations of repeated child sexual abuse at an unlicensed, unregulated child care facility in Martensville, Saskatchewan.

While the children and families affected by this horror must deal with the tragedy, the Government of Canada has a responsibility to protect the children of Canada.

While studies and reports to the government offer ways to prevent child abuse, at minimum there is a need for safe, regulated child care available for every child who needs it.

At present, only about 10 per cent of children who need licensed child care have access to it. In other words, over one million children of working parents are in potential situations of risk at unregulated facilities. Yet the government has shelved its child care program.

I know that the Minister of National Health and Welfare considers stemming child abuse a priority. The events in Martensville clearly show the role of safe, licensed, accessible child care in the prevention of abuse.

I call on the federal government to take the lead in caring for Canada's children by making a commitment today to a national child care strategy.

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HALTON—PEEL SURVEY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, I would like to share with the House some more of the valuable comments and advice that my constituents are offering me.

G. Rayner of Burlington writes: "Four thoughts of many I have about how we can make the future brighter are: one, reducing debt; two, accountability for welfare assistance, in other words work for welfare; three, giving parents back responsibility for their children, day care

should only be for single parents in other words; and four, accountability for medical visits".

Clarence Gilkes of Bolton writes me: "I believe that a Constitution should enshrine as many individual freedoms as possible. The right to quiet possession of my real property through protection from unwarranted or excess use of any government's right of expropriation is something I feel should be constitutionally protected."

Finally, D. A. Cutten of Burlington has some comments on the GST. "The timing was horrendous, but it is here and to a degree working. The rate of 7 per cent should be lowered but made to apply to everything. There are too many refunds and the GST particularly must be integrated with the provincial sales tax."

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing my constituents' voices to be heard in Parliament.

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CANADA GEESE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, on March 19, 1992 I wrote to the Minister of the Environment concerning a very serious problem for farmers in eastern Ontario, namely the damage caused to agricultural lands by Canada geese.

The agronomist for Prescott county has estimated damages to fields to be in the order of $240 per acre. Unfortunately, the Minister of the Environment refused categorically to help farmers of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell with this problem.

First, we need a crop insurance system that will cover those kinds of damages. Second, we need to reserve lands for the spring migration of the birds, and third, we need to permit as in the past a limited kill of the birds, one or two per farm, in order to scare off other animals.

We must protect the Canada geese, but we must also protect another endangered species, the eastern Ontario farmer.

GASOLINE TAXES

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Madam Speaker, I rose quite recently in the House to report that in March of this year there was a month after month decrease in cross-border shopping. This is definitely a good sign, but the sheer numbers show that we have a long way to go in addressing this problem.

Sunday shopping was pointed to as an impetus for cross-border shopping in Ontario. Now we have Sunday shopping so it will help.

I still believe, however, that a crucial element in the same-day shopping problem is gasoline. Our high federal and provincial gas taxes are consistently giving Canadians a good reason to cross the border. Sure, we have taken important steps on other fronts, but Canadians have said more than once that they cross the border for gasoline.

I encourage some action on the issue of gasoline taxes. Perhaps the federal government could revisit a gasoline tax benefit for communities near the border, like mine, where our retailers are getting hit the hardest.

Gasoline taxes are an issue we have to deal with. Lower gasoline prices would give our residents another reason to shop at home.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, when the government came to power in 1984, it promised jobs, jobs, jobs. In 1984, on Cape Breton Island the unemployment rate was 14 per cent. Now the latest statistical information places the rate at 22 per cent.

The government is now openly considering the possibility of closing the cod fishery. Although fishermen in Cape Breton are dependent on the cod fishery, they have not been mentioned in any of the aid packages that have been proposed by the government.

The government proposes business aid for new industry and then cuts the amount available. They propose unemployment and job creation programs and then cut the amount available. When is this government going to realize that the people of Cape Breton Island are having an extremely difficult time. The present economic situa-

tion is inexcusable. Now is the time to do something, not cut existing programs. The people of Cape Breton are waiting for the government to do something on their behalf.

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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, article II of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child says the following: "A child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities by law and other means to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration".

The Canadian government taxes child support payments, unlike what we find in the U.S., Australia, Britain, Sweden and in many other countries. While the average child support order covers less than half the minimum cost of raising a child, the government deems it fair to take perhaps up to one third or more of support payments that are meant to help feed and clothe children. It is time that this stopped and that justice and fairness be brought into our tax system, particularly in the area that influences the future of children.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

WOMEN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

A full 40 per cent of federally appointed judges have not availed themselves of gender sensitivity courses. As former Supreme Court Justice Bertha Wilson agrees, until the judiciary, nation-wide, truly understands the experience of women there can be no assurance of true justice for women.

Will the minister finally make mandatory such courses for federally appointed judges?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, the hon. member will know, because she is a lawyer, that there is a constitutional relationship between Parliament, the executive and the judiciary and that is a relationship on the part of the judiciary of independence that has to be respected.

This government has sought all of the ways that are consistent with respect for that independence to provide support and encouragement for judicial education, first by creating the Canadian Judicial Centre which is the vehicle for creating judicial education programs for the federally appointed judiciary.

In addition to that we have funded and supported the creation of course materials for gender sensitivity training and those course modules are now mandatory for judges who take those courses. They are mandatory, not at the requirement of the Government of Canada which I think would be inappropriate, but mandatory as a result of the decisions made by the judiciary itself.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for her answer. I think the women of Canada find it hard to believe that the Minister of Justice and her department cannot exercise a little more influence than that over 40 per cent of the sitting federal judges.

Escalation in the murder rate of women by their partners in Canada is truly frightening. Canadian women wait, on average, three weeks for peace bond hearings or restraining order hearings. Sixty per cent of men who murdered their partners over a period in the province of Ontario are already in the police records for violence against their wives.

What emergency action is the Minister of Justice prepared to bring in immediately to assist women in imminent danger of death?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, regrettably I do not have the jurisdiction over the administration of justice throughout Canada. This is emergency action. If she wants such action it would be required to be done by the provincial Attorneys General. With respect to that one area where I do have responsibility for the prosecution of the criminal law, and that is in the territories, we

have taken action precisely to bring in the polices with our prosecutors as she is suggesting.

One of the things we did that was within our legislative jurisdiction was to ensure that in Bill C-17, the amendment to the Criminal Code relating to firearms, we have required the courts in all applications for bail hearings and for restraining order hearings to consider the presence of a firearm in that situation. It is to ensure that in cases of domestic violence, which are very often the cases that generate the restraining order applications, the court will address itself to the presence of the firearms and get firearms out of those very dangerous situations.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, 60 per cent of the women who are murdered in Ontario are killed by their partners. These murders represent 60 per cent of the cases where the murderer had a police record. Obviously, the system does not protect women.

What does the government intend to do?

• (1420)

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, we intend to continue our activities to deal with violence against women and families. Responsibility in this area is shared by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the Solicitor General and myself. We have set up programs to deal with family violence, but we will also keep working with our provincial counterparts to ensure that Canadian women do not become the victims of violent acts by their partners.

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[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

It has been almost seven years since an all-party committee of this House unanimously endorsed a recommendation calling for the inclusion of sexual orientation as a prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

The minister has consistently evaded the issue and has not given any consistent answers on this topic.

I would like to ask the minister when she plans on bringing forth these amendments.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, the government's response to the "Equality for All" report in 1986, in making its various commitments, it also pointed out the difficulty of some of the issues.

We have been working very hard on those issues and I am expecting to bring forward amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act. It is my hope to be able to table the amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act before we rise for the summer.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the minister's comments on this because we have consistently heard that she is fleshing out or she is seeking more input or doing this or doing that.

I would like a firm commitment from the minister that these proposed amendments will be before this House before it rises on June 23.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, that is not a commitment I can make because it depends to some extent on the co-operation of opposition parties in terms of the other business of the House.

All I can say is that I am working very hard. I am sorry that the hon. member finds such things as meetings with equality-seeking groups across the country as fleshing out, consulting and things that she does not consider worth while. I think they are very worth while because they have enabled us to do better work with respect to this very important file.

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CHILD CARE

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Earlier this year this government broke its promise on establishing a national child care program in Canada and accepted the continuation of unlicensed and unregulated child care across this country.

The tragic child sex abuse charges that we have seen at the unlicensed day care in Martensville, Saskatchewan, serves as a striking example of the kind of results of an unregulated system.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister: will his government consider again introducing a national child care program with a national child care act, establishing minimum standards so that never again will any of Canada's children be placed at risk?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I am very surprised by the question of the leader of the New Democratic Party, trying to tie the problem of sexual abuse of children with the question of child care and day care systems.

I would even say that from the NDP it is totally irresponsible. I have to tell her something that she should know. Day care and child care are provincial matters. Normally we do not know where the NDP are at that level. What fits the federal level, it takes over and what does not fit goes to the provinces. This is a provincial matter first.

Second, the leader of the NDP should know something. The violence issue is not related to the child care problem. We face violence against children everywhere. With the unfortunate example mentioned, we see that it can happen anywhere. We will not close schools because we have problems with violence and so on.

I just want to ask the leader of the NDP to recognize that the problem of violence against children is a society problem. As said by the representative of the Liberal Party, we cannot afford what you can afford.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, that is a shocking statement and an abandonment of Canadian children and Canadian families who need a child care program.

The federal government certainly does have a responsibility. It has a responsibility to bring in a national child care program with minimum standards. This government made that promise in the last election. It broke that promise.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister again: will he and this government listen to the mayor of Martensville, Saskatchewan, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women? Will this government listen to the Canadian Child Care Federation and the New Democratic Party, bring in a national child care program and show that all Canadians care about Canada's children? We are prepared to make an investment in the future.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, the NDP is in power in three provinces. Why, except in Ontario, has it not put more money into its budget for child care and day care? Why did it not do it?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): The problem once again is that the NDP spends money it does not have. It makes promises when it is in opposition. When it is in power, it does as other governments do. It cuts the budget to face reality.

Ms. McLaughlin: Madam Speaker, I remind the minister that it was this government that made a promise in the last election to have a national child care program. It is this government that should be implementing a child care program, stop ducking its responsibilities and off-loading them as it has on everything else.

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[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

As the minister is aware, women's groups which are fighting for equality want to take part in the constitutional debate. One of their demands concerns participation in the First Ministers' Conference.

Is the minister prepared to consider these demands and as a start allow these groups to make a presentation at the constitutional meeting which starts tomorrow?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Madam Speaker, the question was answered earlier this morning.

The Minister responsible for the Status of Women here in the House and I had a chance to meet these groups. The question was raised, and I indicated that the First Ministers' Conference is a conference for governments, and that no groups can be added to the conference.

However, I promised to ask my colleagues to meet privately for about 30 minutes with a group representing the National Action Committee, and to have an exchange of views, since the group is here in Ottawa. The various government ministers will be here as well. However, I made it clear this would not be a precedent.

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[*English*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, this government has axed the Court Challenges Program and the Race Relations Foundation.

It has cut Canada's tools of equity. When will the government address the real issues facing the cultural communities: justice, access and full participation in Canadian society?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, since 1988 we have had a program to bring forward integration and equality, and to fight racism and racial discrimination, a very high priority.

In fact, it was a first initiative by any government when we brought forward that program in 1988. I am surprised the member is even asking such a question because it is one area where there is a genuine consensus across the country in support of the direction the government has taken in this particular program.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Visible minorities and cultural communities are suffering greatly under the Conservative government. The unemployment rate is twice as high among young people in those groups. The government should do something about equity and social justice and not just talk about it.

Could the minister tell us what he intends to do to help these young people find work?

• (1430)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, the hon. member will admit that after major changes in this country's employment programs in 1986, when we set up the Canadian Jobs Strategy, we made a point of channeling all funds under this program to the groups that needed it most. All these groups, these minority groups, have a priority under all these programs, as part of the Job Labour Force Development Program, so that there is no need to change the thrust of the programs at this stage.

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[*English*]

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Canadian consumers are shocked and somewhat angry to learn that in its haste to fast-track the approval of new drugs for the marketplace, health and welfare is effectively using Canadian consumers as human guinea pigs.

Experts at the minister's own department have warned that since 1987 the government has been dismantling the checks and balances that help keep unsafe prescription drugs out of the marketplace.

Why has the minister decided it is more important to keep happy the large multinational drug companies than to protect the health and welfare of Canadian consumers?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, the Canadian drug approval process is safe and recognized around the world as one of the best.

Recently we had two comments, one from the *Winnipeg Free Press* which said we were not moving fast enough in the approval of drugs, and today *The Gazette* which said we were approving drugs too quickly.

We are trying to keep the system as safe as possible. That is why I asked Dr. Gagnon from Laval University to review the process of drug approval and to make recommendations. We will see what we can do in light of those recommendations.

Once again I want to reassure Canadians the system is one of the best in the world and we want to keep it working.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, that is not terribly reassuring. It may be one of the best in the world but it is simply not good enough.

An internal memo from 21 doctors at the Human Drug Prescription Bureau warned the government that this fast-track approach, coupled with medically inexperienced managers at the department would "interfere with the health department's mandate to ensure the safety of drugs prescribed by Canadian physicians".

My supplementary question for the minister is this. How can the minister possibly stand by and do nothing when his own experts have warned that to allow this flawed system to continue one more day would put at risk the health and safety of Canadian consumers?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I repeat what I said before. The system is working. It is a very complex operation within the department. The Health Protection Branch deals with a great many requests concerning compliance with regulations.

Now we are requested to move more quickly or less quickly. It is why I asked for an analysis from experts. They will report to me and in light of their recommendations we will attempt to do the best to maintain the system. It is normal that sometimes we face questions about the operation. As I said before we will answer the questions.

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EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

This government talks about eliminating racism while it continues to practice systemic discrimination with its own employees. According to the Canadian Ethnocultural Council only 3.6 per cent of government employees are persons of colour compared to about 7 per cent in the general work force.

When will this government amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to give a stronger mandate to the commissioner to enforce employment equity in the Public Service as well as in the private agencies so that racial minorities and other target groups will have fair and just employment opportunities?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, I believe every employer can make progress. I would not disagree that the federal government can make more progress as we go along.

I would like to state that the figures that have been used by the organization she refers to are based on targets that are very mobile. We do not agree with the numbers that have been used.

I would suggest that the hon. member look very carefully at the numbers we have for each of our four designated groups to see that over the last four years, for example, we have made more progress than ever before in the history of the Public Service in Canada.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, I am not interested in statistical games. The fact is there is systemic discrimination by this government against its own employees.

I want to go back to the Minister of Justice. It is her responsibility to bring in new legislation in this field. Commissioner Yalden has called for a strong mandate in this regard.

My supplementary question has to do with the review of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Victims of racism now have to wait between two and three years to have their complaints considered and dealt with by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Since 1987 complaints rose by 100 per cent while the resources of the commission were only increased by 25 per cent. How can they do their job?

In view of this, will the minister undertake a review of the Canadian Human Rights Commission and provide adequate resources to deal with both systemic discrimination and individual complaints of discrimination?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, with respect to the operation of the commission, I am not aware of the kind of backlog that the member discusses but I am very interested to hear about it.

We are addressing some questions in the operation of the panels in upcoming amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act. In fact, there is a review of the Employment Equity Act going on that will provide a

better context for understanding what should be done when it is completed next fall.

I am also hoping to bring forward in the fall provisions relating to the operation of federally appointed administrative tribunals in general to try to make them work better and to clarify some of the terms of reference with respect to their appointment.

With respect to the comments that the hon. member has made, I would be very interested to hear the kinds of concerns she has about backlogs and unacceptable delays in terms of people getting their disputes resolved because of course the whole purpose of administrative tribunals is to try to speed up the resolution of these kinds of disputes.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Madam Deputy Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Sein Win and Mr. U Bo Hla Tint, Burmese Democratic Representatives.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

Canadian steelworkers in Hamilton and in Nanticoke in my riding are watching their jobs disappear day by day while this government fails to get the Americans to act responsibly. The minister will be in Washington to deliver a message, but Canadian steelworkers want less talk and more action.

What specific action will the minister institute to protect Canadian workers and their jobs the very minute the Americans institute any action against our steel exports?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend is well aware that the Prime Minister addressed that in the House last week. If there is an action it is likely to be initiated by the U.S. steel industry.

We have made it very clear to the U.S. administration that we think such an action would be quite unfounded because of the very integrated nature of the steel markets of the United States and Canada. We do not believe there has been dumping by our industry into the U.S. market. Indeed the share that Canada has of the U.S. market is some 3 per cent, whereas the U.S. has a 14 per cent share of the Canadian market.

Tomorrow when I meet with Mrs. Hills I will be expressing these concerns to her. I will be advising her that we will be fighting this issue with our industry as hard as we can to provide the support it needs, but we believe that this is an action which is unfounded and that our industry would be able to win.

• (1440)

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Madam Speaker, the problem with the minister's response is that the steel workers have heard it all before and they are still losing their jobs.

The government keeps saying that it is going to get tough. The question is, when is it going to get tough? When is it going to tell the Americans that any trade action against our Canadian steel industry will lead to an immediate response by this government?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I indicated that the actions likely to be taken will be actions taken by the United States industry.

It is quite likely that our industry would respond in kind because of the figures I set out just a minute ago.

If that is the case, certainly there would be the utmost of support for the industry in fighting this battle. We think there has not been dumping and we believe that the best thing we can do as an industry is fight the action as hard as we can in consultation with the provinces and the industry involved.

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NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Madam Speaker, the Minister for International Trade said last month: "A North American free trade pact could exclude sensitive Canadian industries such as textiles and agricul-

ture", predicting that a final draft agreement could be signed by the end of June.

Is Canada pursuing a bilateral agreement with Mexico in these or in any other sensitive Canadian industries? If so, when will the text and the impact studies be made available?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I do not believe I said it would exclude. I said it might be done on a different track and I did use the examples of agriculture and textiles.

As my hon. friend knows, there has been an arrangement agreed upon in principle between the Mexicans and the Americans on the question of textiles. We have some very fundamental disagreements with it and have so advised them.

It is on that basis that we are seeking some greater access to the market through a quota system, a tariff rate quota, but there have been other proposals that have been put forward by the apparel industry in particular. We are following both of these as options. At this point our options are open until we complete the consultations and also pursue the negotiations further.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Madam Speaker, with the U.S.–Canada Free Trade Agreement well into its fourth year a major gap remains. There is no definition of a subsidy.

Is this crucial element now being defined in the North American free trade negotiations or is a definition simply going to be lifted from the Uruguay round and placed in the NAFTA?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend is correct when he points to the fact that there have been some very good negotiations undertaken through the Uruguay round.

The Americans and ourselves have agreed that we would get the broadest possible package of rules on subsidy and countervail and apply those to the U.S.–Canada Free Trade Agreement.

By taking the broadest possible package, as has been developed through the Uruguay round negotiations, we have seen a package that probably is broader than my hon. friend or many others, would have anticipated when the Uruguay round commenced some five or six years ago.

We are hopeful that we will see a successful Uruguay round and be able to apply those directly to the FTA.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MINERAL EXPLORATION

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Recently, the Quebec finance minister changed the flow-through shares plan in order to stimulate mineral exploration in Quebec. Last month, the unemployment rate in Abitibi-Témiscamingue was 17.6 per cent.

Will the Canadian government wait until the known reserves in Abitibi-Témiscamingue are exhausted to find new deposits that can be mined? Will the Deputy Minister and officials in the Department of Finance in Ottawa realize the gravity of the situation for the mining industry, which is going badly?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know that the mining industry is experiencing some difficulties and the impact it is having on the region of Abitibi.

However I want to advise the hon. member that a number of initiatives were taken in the budget.

Canada does have a very favourable tax regime for the mining sector. There has been a major decline in interest rates which has a direct impact upon mining enterprises. We have the lowest interest rates now in almost 20 years. There has been some strenghthening in commodity prices. The moderation in the value of the Canadian dollar has had a positive impact for the mining sector as well.

I can assure the hon. member that we will continue to explore with the provinces ways and means to improve the climate for the mining industry.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, black women and other women of colour are among the groups that are most vulnerable to violent sexual assault. Racial minority women feel marginalized by the government's panel on violence against women.

Will the Minister responsible for the Status of Women accept three new appointments to the panel from the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women and the Congress of Black Women to ensure that the panel is truly representative of all women, including women who are most affected by violence?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is aware that the panel was established last year to give us a real sense of the nature of this issue on a national basis and to assist us in developing a national action plan. We indeed consulted with women's organizations for representatives on that panel and most of the members have come from the grassroots, including visible minorities, aboriginal women and francophone women.

In addition, the advisory committee to the panel includes an even broader representation from national women's organizations, including the Black Women's Congress, including NOIVM and including the disabled women's network.

The mechanism is there. The panel is going to be looking at how it can best utilize that mechanism and deal with any gaps in terms of its input.

If there are ways I can be helpful I have asked them to let me know and I would be very pleased to respond.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, there has been a precedent set with the royal commission on reproductive technologies. When the government was not happy with the make-up of that royal commission it sent in new appointees. There is a precedent to do this.

These women have said they have been humiliated by a panel they do not feel is representative of them. Will the minister remedy this situation by ensuring that the panel itself is representative of all women?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I have full confidence in the members of the panel. My hon. colleague knows many of them. They are Canadians of incredible expertise and I am sure they are going to undertake an excellent job.

The panel is going to be meeting with women's organizations to listen to those concerns. If they feel there are ways in which they need to expand the representative nature of the panel, I am sure they will let me know.

For example, the aboriginal circle which was my idea was something that we needed to focus on the needs of aboriginal women. I understand it has worked extremely well and has had a tremendous response from aboriginal communities.

I am always open and I am hoping the panel will discuss this with me very shortly.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism.

From information obtained in Washington from the Securities and Exchange Commission we have learned that the federal government loan guarantee agreement for the Westray project provided what is known as a sweetheart deal for one Mr. Clifford Frame.

The agreement states very clearly that millions of dollars were transferred to C. H. Frame Consulting Services, a company owned by Mr. Frame, even before one ounce of coal was mined from the Westray coal mine.

Can the minister explain to the House the reasons why the Government of Canada would enter into such an agreement that was so beneficial to one individual?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, we should remind

ourselves of the facts. In this particular instance, the Government of Canada extended a loan guarantee for 85 per cent of the term loan of $100 million. The federal government also participated in a buy down of interest to the limit of $3.75 million.

The Government of Canada did all this in accordance with the Atlantic Canada Enterprise Program, which required 20 per cent equity to be put in place by the participating companies.

• (1450)

This we did, and we did it because of a tremendous number of representations to us on behalf of Pictou county: mayors, reeves and others. In fact the member of Parliament for Cape Breton—The Sydneys under Standing Order 31 earlier brought our attention to the high level of unemployment in Cape Breton. We were concerned about the high level of unemployment in Pictou county. That is why we participated through the loan guarantee.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, the record should show that the minister did not respond specifically to the question. Either the minister was aware of the contents of that agreement or the minister was not aware, and he should come clean with the House.

The agreement entered into by the Government of Canada and the Bank of Nova Scotia and Curragh Resources honoured a commitment whereby Westray would transfer millions of dollars in management fees to C. H. Frame Consulting Services.

Will the minister inform the House of the exact amount of money that was transferred? Will the minister now table all the documents pertaining to this sweetheart deal?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, what the hon. member is trying to do is to make sure the government somehow in every internal financial transaction within a company in which it gives a loan guarantee must in fact say yes or no to the individual financial transactions.

What happened in this case was very, very clear. There was a public offering of stock. The proceeds from that were received, and with those proceeds various debts and other things were paid off. The public offering was before the opening of the mine, yes, but that gave an injection of new equity to the company to give it a more solid balance sheet. Based upon the contract with the Nova Scotia Power Corporation that public offering was a success.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the same minister. I must say this is an incredible performance today.

For weeks the minister has been arguing that the primary concern and responsibility of the Government of Canada is not in the area of safety—and we would contest that—but rather has been in the economic nature of this agreement and this project.

I want to ask the minister whether he would describe as normal the nature of the agreement that allowed the Westray mine to be used to create instant millionaires even before one tonne of coal was mined.

I also want to ask the minister why the Government of Canada entered into such an agreement, why the Government of Canada exposed the taxpayers for $80 million in an agreement that created a millionaire, transferred millions to one individual before even one tonne of coal was ever mined. Why that agreement?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, let us take an example from the hon. member's own part of Canada, Hibernia.

Is he saying that if the federal government gave a loan guarantee or an interest buy down in the case of Hibernia and somebody made some money, this would be wrong?

In fact this company had a public offering and raised millions of dollars on the stock exchange. It improved its balance sheet. It put this new equity on its balance sheet to be a stronger entity, and with that it also paid off a number of debts. That is what happened. That had nothing to do with the federal government.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, so the record is straight, this party does not envy success. It celebrates it.

What we are talking about here is a deal in which $80 million of taxpayers' money was made available by way of a loan guarantee, the result of which was a mine that made no sense economically, that was highly questionable from the safety point of view, and whose only result

was to create a millionaire before a tonne of coal was ever mined.

Is the minister advertising now all across Canada that this kind of proposal is normal, that the Government of Canada is prepared to provide $80 million—in this case it will lose $80 million—of taxpayers' money in a venture that transferred millions to one individual before one tonne of coal was ever mined?

Is this normal? Is this proper? Is this the kind of—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the question has been put.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I am sorry to see that the old rat pack is back. Those kinds of questions are totally uncalled for, especially by him and his colleagues from Cape Breton. The federal government, for example, has put over $1 billion over the years into Cape Breton to help Devco. Perhaps millionaires were made through those particular subsidies, most of them under the Liberal government.

Our job was to guarantee the loan, to make sure that they were in full compliance with safety as carried out by the provincial government. This we did and further injections of equity in the company came through a public offering.

That is something that we in the Government of Canada not only do not interfere with but believe that it strengthened its balance sheet.

* * *

BREAST CANCER

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Every day 40 more women are diagnosed as having breast cancer and sadly the rate is increasing. In 1991 Canada spent $750 per death from breast cancer, compared to $450,000 per death by AIDS.

Will the government consider changing its spending priorities and shifting funds from say government advertising to breast cancer research?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I believe breast cancer is an important matter. In Canada we put about $10 million a year into cancer research and for breast cancer research it is about $1 million.

I know we put a lot of money into AIDS research, but I believe the House will concur that it was a matter where a lot of energy and resources had to be put.

I have to remind my colleague too that a subcommittee of the status of women committee is working on recommendations, which I should receive soon, in terms of the way we should deal with the problem of cancer research. Depending on those recommendations, we hope to take the direction that will respect those recommendations.

* * *

RACISM

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice.

There has been a general resistance on the part of the judiciary, even when criminal acts or violent attacks against individuals were racially motivated, to take racism into account in sentencing.

Is the government prepared to introduce amendments to the Criminal Code that would make the implication of racism in the commission of a crime an aggravating factor in sentencing?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, what is very important now in the criminal law is that the state of mind of the accused is in fact a very important factor, not just in terms of the conviction that may or may not be obtained but in terms of the approach that the court takes to sentencing. All of those circumstances are quite bona fide.

We are bringing forward amendments to the Criminal Code relating to sentencing. We will be for the first time putting into the Criminal Code a statement of principles of sentencing. I would invite the hon. member at the time when we table that legislation, which should be early in the fall, to address the question again.

That may in fact be the appropriate context—it will be part of the Criminal Code—to address the question of

how those factors should be considered in sentencing. What we want to clarify for the courts is the social purpose to be served in sentencing. That includes not only providing a mechanism for the convicted person to pay his or her debt to society but also to satisfy society's needs to feel that the appropriate messages are being communicated by the use of that sentencing discretion.

Mr. McCurdy: Madam Speaker, I hope the minister appreciates that the judiciary has the same difficulty with the concept of racism as it has had with sexism. I would hope that the government itself would take the initiative.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question departs from that subject only slightly. I was surprised when I heard the minister indicate in response to one of my colleagues that she was unaware of the huge lag time being experienced by those who enter complaints with the Human Rights Commission. It seems to me that there is a good deal that we need to know about the implementation of employment equity in the federal Public Service.

For example, we have a federal court challenge because of frustration with the Human Rights Commission. We have several complaints in CIDA, health and welfare and NRC.

• (1500)

Would this government be prepared, with respect to the question of employment equity for minorities, to commission a task force such as that which prepared the document beneath the veneer with respect to employment equity for women, with respect to the question of employment equity for minorities?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I believe in fact that the operation of the Employment Equity Act is under review and we are waiting the results of that review which I think is expected in the fall of this year.

When we receive that review, I will be open to any constructive suggestions to ensure that difficulties that are identified in that review are addressed expeditiously by this House.

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism. It concerns his answer to a previous question on the Westray mine.

In the minister's answer I believe I heard him say that the loan guarantee that the government made with Curragh Resources provided Curragh Resources 20 per cent equity on that loan. Will the minister share with this House what the composition of the equity for that loan was in precise terms?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, does the hon. member want us to do all his homework for him? It is all in the 2,000 pages that were tabled last week. If he cannot find that material in the 2,000 pages, I would be glad to find it for him.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism).

We have seen C. H. Frame Consultants Ltd. make millions of dollars through the arrangement. There was also a payment for hundreds of thousands of tonnes of coal whether they were produced or not. What I want to know from all this and what we have not seen so far in all of this arrangement is where do we see that the government had any reason to believe this company knew anything about coal mining or would follow appropriate safety procedures?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): I am amazed, Madam Speaker, that the hon. member, who is from a coal mining area, would not know that this company of course has been in major mining developments in the Yukon and also has major interests in other parts of the world in mining. It was very, very well versed in the whole field and my hon. friend knows that.

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GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and is in relation to our position at the GATT.

As we know the minister in the past four weeks has met with the Director General of GATT, Arthur Dunkel, and he has also met with European Commission President Jacques Delors.

Based on those meetings, I want to ask the minister what message he has taken to those members. What stage are we at in the GATT round? What progress is being made in relation to the Canadian position in the GATT round?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is accurate. I, other ministers and the Prime Minister have met with officials, including Jacques Delors and Mr. Dunkel.

I believe right now he has asked the position of GATT. It is at a critical stage. The reform of the common agricultural program in the European Community has, I think, gone a step in the right direction in taking some of the pressures off the subsidies. There is still that area to explore.

The message that continually is passed to all those who we negotiate with is Canada's balance position, that trade distorting subsidies must be removed and that Canada's position of strengthening and clarifying article XI must be respected.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

SUPPLY AND SERVICES

TABLING OF CONTRACTS

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I am pleased to table, in both official languages, supply and services contracts by electoral ridings for the fiscal year 1988–89 through to 1991–92.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

BILL C–69 – REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C–69, an act to amend the Criminal Code (air and maritime safety), without amendment.

BILL C–70 – REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C–70, an act to amend the Criminal Code (jury), without amendment.

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

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PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–349, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (confidence votes).

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

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, briefly, it is a pleasure to introduce this bill, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act in relation to confidence votes. I do not think there is a member in the House who has not been confronted in recent years by constituents who are very upset with the way Parliament now operates.

One such matter which shrieks for reform in my view is the confidence vote. This bill would clearly indicate which matters should in future be considered to be votes of confidence, such as the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, a motion to the effect of expressing non–confidence or specifically, if this bill is adopted, it would I believe allow all members of the House in all corners of the House to better serve their constituents rather than serving party Whips. To designate, as we do now, nearly every single vote that comes up in this House as potentially a matter of confidence seems to be truly Draconian at the end of the 20th century.

I hope my colleagues will agree when we debate this matter at a later date.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Mr. Kilgour 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

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Madam Speaker, I rise to seek leave of the House to present the following motion, which I think you may get approval for:

That, notwithstanding Standing Orders 132 and 140, the petition for a private bill from the Royal Society of Canada, presented on Tuesday, March 31, 1992, and reported upon by the Clerk of Petitions on Wednesday, April 1, 1992, be deemed to have been filed within the required time limit and received by this House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the member to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

• (1510)

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, I have the privilege and honour to present a petition signed by many constituents who I represent in the federal riding of Brant. They call on the House to enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government. They want 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.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I have four petitions today dealing with the Court Challenges Program, a program which we all know made it possible for individuals and minority groups to have their constitutional rights as they relate to language and equality rights clarified by the courts.

These petitioners maintain the Court Challenges Program was and should still be an essential instrument in the evolution of our constitutional rights and that all Canadians must be given equal access, whatever their income, to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The petitioners want Parliament to consider reinstating the Court Challenges Program which gives all Canadians equal access to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Madam Speaker, I too like the member for Brant would like to present a petition on behalf of 56 constituents who call upon the government to hold a national referendum on any constitutional change.

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 which has been certified correct as to form and content.

These many petitioners come from Red Deer, Black Falls, and Penhold. They are concerned about religious broadcasting and the CRTC and point out that the CRTC's legislative mandate includes providing programming that reflects Canadian attitudes and values and that Christianity has played a fundamental role in the building of Canada.

I therefore ask that this House direct the CRTC to re-examine its religious broadcasting policy with reference to its legislative mandate and actual Canadian values.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my first petition deals with the goods and services tax on books and reading materials.

These petitioners from Manitoba ask that there be no tax. They point out that there has not been a tax since the beginning of our country. They also underline that reading is a cornerstone of our society, of a democratic vibrant country such as ours, and they ask that the tax be removed.

RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my other petition deals with petitioners' requests from Manitoba that Parliament ensure that the CRTC regulate the use of foul and inappropriate language on radio and television. They feel it is not necessary in order to inform or entertain and they believe that it counters the efforts of the family.

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I present my final petition with respect to education.

These petitioners from Manitoba point out that when one attempts to respond to issues such as globalization, increased productivity, enhanced competitiveness, that any reductions in transfer payments are inappropriate.

They deplore the 3 per cent tax that has been added to student loans and the six months' additional interest. They point out that the transfer payments were cut last year by almost half a billion dollars and $250 million this year. They want education to be for everyone.

JUSTICE

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, I have several thousand signatures on petitions. The petitioners feel there are serious deficiencies in the criminal justice system and that there are many vulnerable persons who have little protection under the current system. Women, children, and disabled persons are at particular risk.

They call upon the government to further reform the Criminal Code of Canada, the Bail Reform Act of 1972, and the Parole Act accordingly.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents from the city of Kamloops and the surrounding communities in central British Columbia.

They point out that under the Unemployment Insurance Act biological mothers are eligible for 15 weeks of maternity leave and that adoptive parents are eligible for 15 weeks of adoptive benefits.

However they say that any amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act under Bill C-21 will alter the current 15 weeks of adoptive benefits. The amendments propose to reduce the benefits available to adoptive parents to 10 weeks and offer an additional 50 weeks of maternity benefits to the biological mother only.

This bill has now proceeded. I simply want to announce on behalf of the petitioners that they consider this initiative to be discriminatory, regressive and inequitable as it is proposed. They urge the government to reconsider this initiative which they believe is a slight against adoptive parents.

* * *

[*Translation*]

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 ask that all questions on the Order Paper be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall the questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

AN ACT TO AMEND CERTAIN ACTS WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. de Cotret that Bill C-78, an act to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Human Resources envelope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): At the suspension of the debate, the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood had the floor. He has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, before Question Period I was talking about the fact that if more of us in this House had friends or family with a disability there might be a lot more political will being exercised on this particular bill. Also before Question Period I was referring to the 1980-81 *Obstacles* report of the Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped chaired by David Smith.

During Question Period I happened to notice in the recommendation section some remarks that were made by the minister responsible at that time for disabled persons, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. When he appeared before that committee in 1981 he made the following statement:

> Unless you are connected with a big line department with a lot of a clout and a lot of ability, you are limited strictly to a role of persuasion.

Referring to being responsible for disabled persons, he continued:

> The portfolio should not be isolated because it would weaken the position of the minister.

I think that is what is happening in this House. We just do not have enough political will being exercised.

The recommendations in this report were made almost 10 years ago. Earlier I referred to the member for Oxford. I recognize that some of the recommendations in the *Obstacles* report have been implemented. There are others in process. However it is not a front-burner issue.

We are talking about a large number, about 3.2 million disabled people, most of whom very rarely complain about their disability. My experience with disabled people is that they are sort of resigned to their disability. They are not as forceful as some of the other disadvantaged groups in our society.

As we have said in this House many times before, we are not here to speak for those who are advantaged in our society. We do not ignore anyone, but are here to speak for those who are disadvantaged. When we have a bill such as Bill C-78, an omnibus bill on persons with disabilities, it is very important to reassure disabled persons, their families and their friends that this government, this House of Commons, is committed to reviewing the *Obstacles* report and its recommendations.

• (1520)

I was moved when I met Zoe last week. As I mentioned before Question Period, there are employers out there who are almost nervous or afraid to hire disabled people. They are afraid of accidents. In the case of Zoe, when the employer saw that her eyes were so close to the computer screen he was afraid it might cause even more damage to her eyes. As a result he quietly let this young women go, a women who has so much talent and energy.

These are the kinds of things we cannot just let happen in our society and forget about. We cannot only talk about the Government of Canada addressing this issue in terms of our employment standards and practices. We have to urge the 1.7 million enterprises out there to take a chance, to get involved and get to know a bit more about disabled people in our community who have ways of counterbalancing their disabilities with other skills.

I know, from a personal experience I had in the last two weeks, of a young woman who had only 20 per cent of her vision. She has intellect, passion and knowledge. Some day she wants to be a lawyer and I am absolutely confident she will be. It is important that all of us be receptive to people when they are trying to become part of the mainstream.

I did notice in the amendments to this act that the bill establishes a complaints procedure for persons with disabilities who are dissatisfied with the handling of their requests for information. The government, after this bill has passed through the House, should somehow organize a way of communicating that fact to the families and friends of those people. If they do run into frustration with not just the government but even with the community, they should know there is a complaints procedure.

It does not say here exactly what that complaints procedure will be. Maybe through proper communication we could explain what it is going to be. Perhaps all members of Parliament should have that complaints procedure listed in our constituency offices and in our Hill offices so that when we are asked about this we have information readily available.

If not only government departments but businesses in general knew there was a system of accountability for those organizations that abused disabled people, I think they would think twice. I would not name the organization on the floor of this House which in my opinion was terribly insensitive to this young woman, but I can say that it is a corporation which has 99.9 per cent of its work with consumers. If its buying public knew that its principal had an attitude toward disabled people that was a little less than charitable, it would really surprise its market and have a profound effect on business. This amendment in the bill is a good one.

Another thing that is good about the bill is that people with sensory disabilities, that is, a sight or hearing disability, can request government information in an alternative format. The alternative format can be Braille, large print, diskettes or audio cassettes. These things are good and are heading in the right direction.

As the member for Oxford said earlier today, we are all working together on this issue. Naturally we would like to see much more attention, much more front-burner action on this tough issue to capture imagination with. It is important because it involves many talented people in the country. If we took this issue and made ourselves a model for the rest of the world, it would say a lot about the character of our country not only to our community but to the world community.

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise in the House to participate in this historic debate on Bill C–78, an act to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities. It is a central element to the government's national strategy for integration of persons with disabilities.

[*Translation*]

Many efforts have been made to eliminate obstacles and to allow the disabled to participate more in the life of society, but much still remains to be done. For this reason, the Prime Minister in September 1991 officially launched the National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. Under this five-year $158 million strategy, we are acting on issues related to social integration, public awareness, employment, training, housing, transportation and communications.

The purpose of this quite unique partnership between federal departments and agencies and the disabled is to ensure equal access, economic integration and participation by the disabled.

[*English*]

The key element of the national strategy includes a comprehensive review of federal legislation. As recently stated by the Secretary of State and the minister responsible for the status of disabled persons, the barriers preventing people with disabilities from becoming full participants in society are coming down.

The tabling of Bill C–78 is a major step toward removing many of the barriers that still exist. Taken together, the proposed statutory changes in Bill C–78 will significantly improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities and provide us with a springboard for future actions.

However, the legislation alone is not sufficient to remove the barriers. That is why the impact of Bill C–78 is being reinforced by a series of regulatory and policy actions to promote equality and full participation in the key priority areas.

• (1530)

Two sets of regulations under the National Transportation Act relating to the air transportation and personal training were published in the *Canada Gazette* earlier this spring.

These regulations require air carriers with aircraft with 30 seats or more to provide standardized services to persons with disabilities travelling in Canada.

In addition, owners and operators of terminals in federal jurisdictions will be required to provide a level of training to their employees who offer physical assistance to persons with disabilities such as guiding a person who is blind, handling a wheelchair and transferring persons from their own wheelchair to that of the carrier.

That is why the government will give careful consideration to amending a section of the Criminal Code to extend the practice of videotaping evidence given by people with disabilities in cases in which this would assist in their testimony. Moreover, the Minister of Justice is committed to review all other proposed amendments to the Criminal Code proposed by the Canadian Disability Rights Council.

This review is part of a larger parliamentary review of Bill C–15, which has already begun and is expected to report back to the House by the end of 1992.

In addition, coupled with an omnibus bill are related irregularity and policy actions on provisions of government publications in alternate formats and in the area of access to television programming. With regard to the former, adequate information is essential in order that the public may understand and respond to government policies and programs.

The Broadcasting Act gives the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, the CRTC, the authority to licence all broadcasters and to make rules and regulations regarding the services they provide to these people.

As a parallel action that relates to Bill C–78, we are currently examining a way in which policy direction to the CRTC on closed captioning and employment equity can be used.

[*Translation*]

In another area related to the status of the disabled many tax measures were introduced.

In 1986 the eligibility criteria for income tax credits were expanded to include all Canadians who must overcome obstacles in their daily activities.

In 1988, the deductions were changed into income tax credits and increased. The total amount of income tax credits rose from $125 to $700 in 1991 and in 1990, about 410,000 taxpayers took advantage of these disability tax credits.

Since 1984 more than 20 items have been added to the list of tax credits allowed for medical expenses.

The Income Tax Act was amended in 1991 to allow companies to deduct expenses in the year they were incurred for certain renovations to make their premises more accessible to the disabled.

More recently, the federal budget of February 1992 proposed broadening the definition of "income" for RRSP purposes to include disability benefits from the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans.

[*English*]

The introduction of Bill C–78 is a result of a close and effective partnership with the disabled community. Throughout the review the Secretary of State and the other departments consulted regularly in order to identify issues of priority to disabled communities. These measures are included in the bill, combined with the related regularity and policy actions and the commitment from the Secretary of State that we will not rest on our success to date and will respond to priority issues identified by the Canadian Disability Rights Council.

To the disabled community Bill C–78 is recognized as the first federal legislative initiative that especially deals with disability issues and is seen as a sod-turning on which to build for the future.

The bill underscores the government's commitment to continued collaboration with the disabled community toward further legislative reform.

[*Translation*]

In concluding I would like to add that this morning, I visited an association for the mentally handicapped in my riding and I even gave them a hand. That is why I am particularly pleased today to be able to take part in the debate on this bill. It is indeed a memorable occasion.

[*English*]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my comment is that the government comes out with an omnibus bill to give the public the perception that it really is doing something for the disabled and the handicapped. A lot of the things that are there are already being put into practice thanks to a special task force that was struck here by the Liberal government back in 1981, I believe it was. It was a task force of seven members of Parliament from all three parties who travelled across the country and came up with the report *Obstacles*. I refer the government members to that report. It was an attempt to remove the obstacles for the handicapped in every field, everywhere in this country, be it in transportation, communication and so on.

A lot of the things that are being put into this omnibus bill are already practised out there.

What I would like to ask the hon. member, since the government is so considerate in helping the handicapped, is has it put anything into this legislation or is it coming up with any legislation to address the issues of people with head injuries? I have a constituent who was in a car accident. He has a bit of brain damage but there are no physical signs that he is handicapped. I have another one who was beat up on the subway coming home late at night. Some people jumped him, beat him up on the subway and he has brain injury. Again, there are no visible marks that this person is handicapped.

No legislation that I know of, be it federal or provincial, looks after these people.

Why is it so important? Because of the invisible head injury some of these people have slurred speech, they think slower, they act slower, and sometimes they are mistaken for being drunk on the streets. The police pick them up, they get harassed and so on.

Surely in 1992 the government has thought of addressing the handicapped, the people with head injuries. If it has not, then the government has not done its work.

Mr. Della Noce: As I said at the end of my speech in French, and maybe my hon. friend did not get the translation immediately, I was very proud to be here to present this bill as the parliamentary secretary because this morning I was with a group that had these kinds of problems. I was very proud to be there and I know how much we should do for these people.

I must tell the hon. member that it is in the bill and we are doing many, many things in the bill and I hope we will continue to sit on this bill, as I said before. I must tell my friend that there are all kinds of victims in this world. I have preached for the last six or seven years in my area where I have five jails, in case my hon. colleagues do not know. We have a lot of protection for all these victims—handicapped or not handicapped, I call them all victims. They have nothing, they have absolutely no protection. For the handicapped, it does not matter how handicapped they are, visually or otherwise.

• (1540)

What the minister announced, and I was with him in Montreal, was $158 million. This is a continuation. This does not mean that this was started by the Liberal Party. We are here to continue. It is never enough, if my hon. colleague wants to know. I have some of these groups in my area. I did not believe there were so many. I had to be in the field to see that. At 10 o'clock this morning I realized how many there were. Usually the people who get involved unfortunately have a disabled person in the family. I am lucky to have two children without handicaps and I hope those who are as lucky as I am will get more involved with people who have handicapped children. This is why we are bringing forward these kinds of changes.

I think my hon. colleague will understand that we do have a lot of changes. Bill C-15 is coming back before the end of 1992 I hope. I think the handicapped are waiting in the field to have this bill passed today. They are really waiting for it. I wish I could bring that kind of gift to all the handicapped people in my area and in the rest of Canada.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, what is crucially lacking in this omnibus bill are specific timetables for the achievement of desired goals. Without those specific timetables for the variety of aspirations that the disabled have told us about, I think this bill suffers greatly.

In fact, the term omnibus, if I recall my Latin, means the total. If the government is saying that this is the total bill for disabled Canadians, this is really a serious hypocrisy. For example, it has failed to adopt a specific timetable and enforcement mechanisms to guarantee access to Canada's transportation systems. It has failed to amend the Evidence Act. Instead, it will review it only. It has failed to amend discriminatory sections of the Immigration Act because apparently the act is now under review.

I would like to use *The Toronto Star's* issue of May 21, some two weeks after the bill was tabled, which stated that this bill is a joke. Would the member reply to that and admit the serious omissions in this bill and that the time has passed from fine words to really fine action, particularly in the areas I have alluded to?

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Speaker, out of the respect I have for this House and my hon. colleague, I do not think this bill is a joke at all. It is not a joke because a lot of people are waiting for this bill. These people make up the community that really needs it, and if they like it, why not give it to them?

Of course it is not a total bill, I agree with my hon. colleague. In eight years in my area some wonderful progress has been made. Everything is accessible in my city now which was not eight years ago. I am not playing politics here. I am not trying to be partisan. My city did a lot and we have to begin somewhere. I can tell you that in 1984 you could not even have a wheelchair going down a sidewalk. Today I can guarantee to my hon. colleague that all sidewalks in the city of Laval are accessible to all disabled people.

Who started this and who did the continuation? This is not important because it is a success for the disabled. What is most important is that if it is not a total bill, let us pass this one through and bring in some recommendations. We do have some amendments that we will be proposing which are very interesting. Let these people have access to vote, to make an *X* if they can and how to do it. This bill will provide that to them.

My hon. friend says that this bill is a joke. I do not think it is a joke at all. It is a very serious bill for many people. They are waiting in the field and I must tell the hon. member that I try to get involved as much as I can, even if my children are not handicapped by any means. I do have a lot of respect for these people. I know they need our help and our help would be to pass this bill today.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on Bill C–78 today. I want to make a number of points. It would seem to me that the more important fundamental issue whenever we present legislation, particularly legislation of this type, is to attempt to improve the human condition. What is that condition today among disadvantaged and disabled people? We know that we are talking about three million to four million Canadians. The numbers are very difficult to specify with any great deal of accuracy, but it is in that ballpark. We also note that they are among the poorest of the poor.

When we look at the situation in Canada today, for example if we were to look at unemployed Canadians, we would determine rather quickly that they have a disproportionately high number, not because they are unable, very often not because of their lack of skills or educational standards, but because of the attitude that we have toward the disabled and because of the systemic barriers that are there.

If we look for example at post–secondary education, colleges and universities, we recognize there again that we have an under representation of disabled Canadians and again, it is attitudinal and it is a series of systemic barriers. If we look at elementary and secondary education throughout Canada, even though there have been great strides made with respect to the integration of handicapped Canadians, there is still a long way to go. In fact, there is much more road to cover than that which has been covered, even though we have gone a long way.

If we look at those disadvantaged Canadians or disabled Canadians to whom I have already referred, and if we look at certain segments within that population, for example women, aboriginal peoples, and visible minorities, we recognize as well that the situation is even more serious than the one that I have just mentioned.

We have to remember a couple of things. First of all, progress has been made here and I applaud that. At the same time we have to look at it within the total context, the total context of what is happening in government.

[*Translation*]

If we consider the budget cuts that were made in a number of areas, it is clear that although the government gives a little here, and has taken away a little more in many areas, if we add it all up, it is a lot.

Consider transfer payments for education, for instance, which affect not just Canadians in general but also this particular group. Clearly the enormous cuts between 1986 and 1995, which will total from $9 billion to $10 billion will have a negative impact on this group, which is unfortunate.

[*English*]

When we look at the Court Challenges Program, my colleagues know that this was of great potential benefit to disadvantaged Canadians.

[*Translation*]

What happened? It was cut and then eliminated altogether. This is a shame, because many Canadians took advantage of this program to ensure that their rights under the charter were not mere words but rights to which they had access.

[*English*]

Therefore, I want to point out that the government has given a little here, but it has taken a lot in a number of other areas that I have mentioned. I make just a couple of examples, the transfer payments for education and that affects also training and retraining in a number of other areas such as of course the Court Challenges Program which I find unfortunate.

If the government had wanted to be as progressive as it has suggested it wanted to be, I would invite it to look at what is happening in the U.S. where there has been recent legislation that has covered a number of sectors of society with very specific timetables and with teeth in the legislation that will ensure that that which is in legisla-

tion with respect to transportation, communications, education, services of various kinds, will in fact occur.

[*Translation*]

Perhaps the approach taken by the United States—I do not often take the United States as an example—deserves to be looked into and perhaps adopted as well.

[*English*]

As I have indicated, there are some positive changes here. There are some problems. I think it has been acknowledged by all sides of the House. This particular community of Canadians has waited for a long time for something to happen and there has been a great deal of impatience. They would also say I believe that there is some progress but not nearly enough in terms of their needs, not nearly enough either in terms of what not only that which they need, but not nearly enough in terms of the times for which they have had to wait for what is happening. We recognize there have been no changes in housing. In fact that is another area that has been cut by government and goes back to the point that I made before. You make progress on one front but if you remove it from several other fronts, what is the total? The total is not great if you look at it in an integrated, comprehensive kind of way.

• (1550)

I am disappointed that with respect to immigration there have been no changes. I recognize that it is not always easy to look as openly as one might at immigrants who might have certain handicaps and bring them into Canada.

We have to recognize that not all people with handicaps are a burden to the state. Quite to the contrary, they can and often do make major contributions.

I have a friend who has been admitted to Canada, at least temporarily and I hope it is permanently, who is an artist of some note and of great talent. He has a full-time job in a hospital and is in fact doing some meaningful work for himself, for his family, and for Canada. That is but one example out of a number of examples. If you were to meet my deaf mute friend, at first glance you might wonder whether or not he would become a burden to Canadian society. I have no doubt that he will not become a burden to Canadian society, that he will be a major contributor to Canadian society, not only because of his artistic talents but because of his commitment to hard work, his desire to earn his own way, and his eagerness to excel at whatever he undertakes.

I do want to share with my colleagues as well a fear and it is always a concern that when one is critical one does it for partisan reasons. I do not. I want to stress that. I want to try to be constructive. I want to be sensitive to what the government has done. I have acknowledged some of the progress, but I have also pointed out that in this bill there has been just a little progress. When you take a look at everything the government has done, I am not sure there has been any progress.

I want to refer to my colleague from Hamilton Mountain who indicated that it was a timid and toothless piece of legislation that has taken seven years to prepare. Some people might say that is a partisan comment. I am not sure that it is because if you look at *The Toronto Star*, the edition of May 21, 1992, you note a headline that says: "Government turns its back on the disabled". I do not think that it would be accused of being partisan.

If you look for example at *The Ottawa Citizen* of May 23: "Disabled, Rights but no Laws". I think it is often forgotten—

[*Translation*]

—that people with certain disabilities still have the same rights under the charter. Those rights are there, not just for us but for them as well. They have rights, and those rights are guaranteed.

The purpose of this bill and I hope that will be the case in other sectors as well, is to ensure that all rights under the charter are respected, and not only respected but implemented, so that people can enjoy the benefits of rights which are theirs.

[*English*]

I want to point out as well that when you wait for so long for so little that there is a frustration that is built up and that is a malaise that has crept up in government. We often do not react until we have to and then we do so in order to try to counteract that which is happening.

I would like to caution us all to try to act before it is necessary to do so because it is only when we do that, it is only that we are indeed proactive, that we can in fact defuse the kinds of problems that we could create otherwise.

[*Translation*]

As I said earlier, I welcome the progress that has been made, but I do not want people to think this is enough. In fact, we have a long way to go. We have made some progress, but we have a long road ahead of us.

I think it should be said that, although we have made some progress at this point, the fact that a number of programs have been cut, as I mentioned earlier, means that there have been some setbacks for the disabled, in spite of the progress that has been made.

[*English*]

I would like to terminate my remarks by simply saying that while it is welcome, it is long overdue. Unfortunately, there ought to be more meat to this bill, more precision in terms of time lines, and more teeth to the legislation.

You are not without knowing as I do that the progress has been extremely slow, and that builds up frustration. People feel powerless, they get angry. They feel as if they are not being accepted fully as they should be. That is really unfortunate because our country cannot afford to have any Canadian, man or woman, whether he or she has a handicap or not, whether it is a visible handicap because most Canadians do have handicaps, not be a full contributing member of Canadian society.

I would hope in the very near future the government would move forward in ensuring other pieces of legislation that need to be changed in order to meet the needs of our handicapped Canadians, those who are among the poorest of the poor, those who talk and complain very very little about their plight, can in fact be met.

I would applaud such a bill and I would support it wholeheartedly.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague from St. Boniface. As usual, he presented his debate with great care and eloquence. I recall that he once served in the provincial government advising ministers on issues. He mentioned the absence of time lines for the implementation of our goals to which I alluded earlier as well.

I would like to ask the hon. member whether he is seeing a pattern. We heard in the past about the absence of time lines for employment equity, absence of enforcement mechanisms, as well as for the accreditation of foreign obtained credentials, for example, that truly is a big issue among the new citizens in this country. Could the hon. member please comment on that?

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his comments and his questions. He actually raises a number of important points.

One that I want to stress is related to an issue I had raised. We must not as parliamentarians wait until there is so much pressure that we cannot resist. Whether we talk about women's issues, ethnocultural challenges, problems that are directly related to handicapped Canadians, it does not matter what the issue is, we need to be much more proactive than we are.

Unfortunately what happens is there is a mental set where very often parliamentarians sit back and wait until there is nothing else to do but react. In the meantime they have created a very *mauvaise ambiance*, people are angry, and dialogue is not easy and neither is compromise.

What happens is just before elections, and I suspect we are going to be seeing a series of these, and it is not just this government, it is a pattern that happens in many many governments, they become extremely generous. They will bring forward legislation, make promises, new programs, augment the funding even though they have some serious funding difficulties. I think that is wrong. If I as a Canadian have a need today, surely that need must be addressed as quickly as possible. We must not wait and we must not just do it when it is most profitable politically.

I recognize this is politics but I also recognize that good politics is when you have the power to do something, and it is right to do that, then you do it. You do not wait until you are pushed over the edge.

I recall when I was the deputy minister and needed to deal with a number of issues, such as the ones that have been discussed today, I was forever battling those who wanted to wait. They were forever, forever, trying to say, "Let us do it because it is the right thing to do," as opposed to waiting until we have to do it at which point you sometimes lose control of the agenda. You sometimes can no longer control the cost.

In fact, you pay a very dear price, not only in terms of what you have done because you should have done it some time ago, but in terms of soured relations, in terms of your inability to dialogue and to come up with some meaningful creative solutions for the group that you are dealing with.

• (1600)

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak in the House today on second reading of Bill C–78, an act to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities.

This bill was introduced on May 5, 1992 and it proposes to amend six laws at one time in an effort to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in a number of priority areas by attempting to give them better access to Canada's national transportation system, acquiring citizenship, testifying in criminal courts and access in alternate formats to records and personal information under the control of government.

This attempt at bringing about meaningful change for persons with disabilities is a noble gesture, but this particular legislation falls a little bit short both in expectation and in meeting the very real needs of disabled people in Canada.

I want to make it quite clear that the amendments are welcome. It is about time. However, the people affected by this legislation, our disabled Canadians, are very disappointed that many important changes required to overcome discrimination have not been included in this bill.

The government consulted with the Canadian Disability Rights Council, CDRC, which is a national advocacy organization working in the area of disability rights and the law. In 1991 this organization put forward a document entitled *Legislative Reform for People with Disabilities: Proposals for Change*.

This report contains specific proposals for an omnibus bill. The government is trying to hide behind its own rhetoric when it claims that it consulted widely with disability groups. Yet its long awaited bill, Bill C–78, does not contain many of the recommendations made by the CDRC and other disability groups.

I would like to point out some of this bill's more serious deficiencies. Bill C–78 amends the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act so that a person with sensory disability, that is a sight or hearing disability, can request government information in an alternative format which would mean Braille, large print, diskettes or audio cassettes.

The bill also allows the head of the government institution from which the information is being requested to determine whether the request is necessary and reasonable. As well, the bill establishes a complaints procedure for persons with disabilities who are unsatisfied with the handling of their requests for information.

There is a danger in leaving open the possibility for abuse by both government and persons with disabilities. There can be requests for excessive amounts of material by persons with disabilities. As well, heads of government and institutions can unreasonably deny access to information.

In a related announcement, the government stated that Treasury Board will strengthen and promote its policy on the availability of alternate formats of government information already available to the public. No timetables were announced.

Treasury Board has previously directed all departments to set aside a fixed percentage of their publicity and information budgets for producing materials in alternate formats. Yet according to the CDRC the reality is that few government departments adhere to this guideline.

Recent surveys conducted by the National Library of Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Commission show little action to encourage or require compliance had been taken by Treasury Board and that very few departments produce or are about to produce documents in alternate format.

The amendment to the Citizenship Act that the requirement to take an oath in order to obtain Canadian citizenship may be waived for "any person who is prevented from understanding the significance of taking the oath of citizenship by reason of a mental disability" is no doubt welcome. However, it was certainly not considered a priority by disability groups.

Higher on the list of disabled groups would have been movement on the need for amendments to the Immigration Act which discriminates against disabled persons seeking to immigrate to Canada.

Bill C-78 amends the Criminal Code to allow a person with a mental or physical disability to "testify outside the courtroom or behind a screen or other device that would allow the complainant not to see the accused, if the judge or justice is of the view that the exclusion is necessary to obtain a full and candid account of the acts complained of from the complainant".

Bravo, that is a very important amendment but it is but one of many amendments to the Criminal Code and the Canada Evidence Act which have been recommended by disability groups.

The government has indicated that the Minister of Justice will review other sections of the Criminal Code and the Canada Evidence Act which have been identified by the disability community as requiring attention. This has begun as part of the parliamentary review of Bill C-15.

According to the Canadian Disability Rights Council, people with disabilities are up to 10 times more likely to be physically or sexually assaulted than people without disabilities. Often the abuser is never charged because of the difficulties associated with a disabled person testifying in court.

Bill C-15 made significant changes to the Criminal Code and the Canada Evidence Act to facilitate the testimony of child witnesses and people with mental disabilities. However, disability groups believe that these changes did not go far enough in protecting the rights of people with disabilities in court.

The Canadian Disability Rights Council made a number of recommendations in this area which Bill C-78 omits. I quote:

> An exception to the hearsay rule that would allow a third party, such as an attendant, to give evidence instead of the victim should be provided where no other way exists to get the evidence in court. New ways of identifying the accused through the use of voice line-ups for people who are blind must be allowed. Finally, the current provisions that deal with abuse by those in positions of trust and authority must be extended to include protection for people with disabilities.

Bill C-78 contains a number of amendments to ensure that many persons with disabilities will be able to exercise their right to participate in elections by ensuring that polling stations have level access; providing mobile polling stations for persons residing in institutions; implementing public education programs to make the electoral process better known to persons with disabilities. They would allow election officials, friends or relatives of disabled persons to accompany them into the voting compartment to assist them in marking the ballot; providing blind or visually impaired voters with a special template to assist them in marking the ballot and amending the definition of personal expense for candidates with disabilities so that expenses related to the candidates' disabilities are not required to be included as election expenses.

A number of issues have not been addressed in these amendments. For example, the residence requirement in the bill discriminates against homeless people, many of whom are people with mental disabilities who have been deinstitutionalized.

The government has indicated that some of these outstanding issues may be addressed by the parliamentary committee examining the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing.

In its amendments to the National Transportation Act which will add the words "accessible to persons with disabilities" to the act's preamble as part of the over-all description of Canada's transportation system, the government is not truly dealing with the problem. For example, there is no mention of a timetable for making transportation systems to provide more accessible services within a reasonable period of time.

This is a major shortcoming of this bill. Many types of transportation are still not accessible to people with disabilities. We are far behind many other countries. For example, in the U.S. there is now a specific and ambitious plan to provide accessible bus service for persons in wheelchairs. The government has again deferred any real action by saying that specific CDRC proposals for improving transportation accessibility will be considered as part of a review of the National Transportation Act which will be completed next year.

• (1610)

It has deferred also amendments to the Immigration Act. At some unspecified future date, says the government, the Minister of Employment and Immigration will be introducing amendments to the act related to the

medical criteria used to screen persons seeking admission to Canada.

Section 19(1)(a) of the Immigration Act excludes most persons with disabilities from being granted landed immigrant status or Canadian citizenship because they put excessive demands on Canada's health and social service systems.

This applies to potential immigrants applying from other countries as well as persons applying within Canada for refugee status. The act presently fails to recognize that many persons with disabilities are able to be productive members of society and that they are eager to make a meaningful contribution to the Canadian economy.

The disability community has indicated that it considers amendment of this act to be a high priority. The government has indicated for seven years that it would introduce a definition of medical criteria for immigrants.

There are many other federal acts which require amendments to ensure equality for persons with disabilities which are not addressed in Bill C-78.

For example, there is the National Housing Act. The CDRC points out there are too few accessible rental units for disabled persons in Canada. Waiting lists in some cities are extremely long, in some cases three years or more.

The National Housing Act must be amended so that a greater percentage of all rental units built with funds from CMHC are accessible to disabled persons.

The Canadian Human Rights Act must be amended to enable, among other things, the Canadian Human Rights Commission to deal with complaints alleging discrimination in the provision of goods, services, facilities or accommodation in the absence of an identified victim.

The Income Tax Act must be amended to ensure the fair treatment of persons with disabilities by taking into account their medical expenses and disability related expenses.

The National Training Act must be amended to ensure that persons with disabilities are adequately represented in federal training programs.

Why are these issues so important? It is because there are 3.3 million Canadians with disabilities. That is 13 per cent of Canadians. All face obstacles in their daily lives in areas that most Canadians take for granted such as employment, training, transportation, communications and housing. All want to contribute in a meaningful way to Canadian society. All we need do is remove the barriers. This legislation clearly does not go far enough.

In closing I would like to urge the government to review this legislation to ensure that priority needs are met and to place timetables on further initiatives. Otherwise this is "feel good" legislation which actually does very little to help those who need help the most.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Unemployment Insurance; the hon. member for Moncton—National Defence; the hon. member for Don Valley East—Small Businesses; the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Perley Bridge; the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing—Child Poverty.

[*English*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief because I know time is very important.

I would like to congratulate all the speakers, particularly the hon. member for St. Boniface who made a very good speech and comments. He agrees that we are making some progress.

I say to my hon. colleague who just spoke that she must understand that the government acknowledges that section 19(1)(a) of the Immigration Act requires revision.

My colleague must also know that the proposal falls into two categories. The good news is—there is some good news—if we pass this bill as soon as possible, because these people are waiting for it, my colleague, the Minister of Justice, has already indicated that she will fully consider the CDRC for the proposal which is Bill C-15. Also, the Minister of Employment and Immigra-

tion has agreed to collaborate and to amend section 1901. We know that and this is good news, as my hon. colleague from St. Boniface said. We have a lot of kilometres to go and we are proud to sit with you in the same car to do this for the people we love and we would like to have this because it is their proposal that we are listening to. Of course there are some changes and we are going to keep listening to them, because for the government and for you on the other side these people are very important.

I want to thank my hon. colleague for what he did for them and for what he is saying, that it is very important that you know there are two categories and we will do the next part. Our two ministers have already expressed their views that they will do something, which is the article 1901.

Mrs. Gaffney: I appreciate the point of the member opposite. I did say several times in my comments that this bill was a very, very important bill and it was carrying it up to a certain level of importance but there were still a few more things to be done. I did recognize that.

I felt good about his complimenting my colleague from St. Boniface. I thought he gave an excellent and very positive speech.

I did not mean to give the impression that the bill should not go through. I want this bill to go through and go through swiftly. We will move on to the next step and hopefully we will achieve that in a short period of time.

Mr. Ronald Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure here that I was not misunderstood. I said *un petit peu de progrès*, a little progress. I said let us look at *l'ensemble* and I did say that there were cutbacks, for example in transfer payments, that had an impact and the Court Challenges Program had a negative impact as well.

When you look at the whole it was *un petit peu de progrès*. I recognize the advances made in the area of elections and I think that is good, but we cannot deny that housing, transportation and the whole area of communications have been cut back. We still need to go much, much further. The whole notion of closed captions is not well addressed with a great deal of precision.

[*Translation*]

There has been some progress indeed, but let us not go too far with this, because on the whole, very little progress was made.

[*English*]

I wonder if my colleague heard that message. Perhaps my other colleague did not hear it quite that way. Is that the way you heard it?

Mrs. Gaffney: Yes, I absolutely did hear that message, although my colleague from St. Boniface certainly said it in a much more demonstrative way. He is much more demonstrative and much more eloquent than I am. I really think that we were saying the same thing, that a lot more needs to be done. The message was just put in a different manner.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

[*Translation*]

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 100, I do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and by unanimous consent the House went into committee thereon, Mr. DeBlois in the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: House in Committee of the Whole on Bill C–78, an act to amend certain acts with respect to persons with disabilities.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 6—

Mr. Flis: Mr. Chairman, the old definition in clause 6 reads: "Disability means the incapacity of a minor or a person who is mentally incompetent". The new bill would repeal that definition totally. What definition are we giving people for a disability? I think now of people with a learning disability, an emotional problem, et cetera.

Mr. Della Noce: The answer is yes.

Mr. Flis Mr. Chairman, my question was what is the definition? You say it has been replaced but what is the definition? Does the new definition cover people who are not necessarily blind or deaf but do have a learning disability? There are thousands of individuals with these disabilities in our school system now. There are people with emotional problems whose communications can be affected.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman I apologize to the member. We do not have to define it any more because it is now included in the act. We defined it completely in the act. It is in clause 7.

Mr. Flis: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could read the definition as it is in the act.

Mr. Della Noce: Yes, I was going to do that. The purpose of this clause is not to permit the repeal of the disability definition in the interpretation section of the Citizenship Act and enable its replacement with more appropriate wording where the term appears.

Ms. Mitchell: It is my understanding that my colleague was asking the parliamentary secretary to actually quote the definition. I would certainly be very interested in hearing that; the definition he referred to which is now in the act.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, there is no definition *per se* any more. The circumstances are described in clause 7.

[*English*]

We have the definition. We do not define any more. The definitions have changed. We give all the definitions here in clause 7, which I can read for the hon. member if she wishes.

Mr. Flis: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to take up any more time of the House but I want it to be known on record that we now do not have a definition for disability.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, that is correct. There is no definition. We describe in clause 7 the circumstances.

Clauses 6 and 7 agreed to.

On Clause 8—

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if I am out of order on this but just listening to the exchange in terms of definition, can the parliamentary secretary give us a reason why there is no definition?

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, the definition was outdated and offensive. That is why it has been removed, for a better definition.

Clauses 8 and 9 agreed to.

On Clause 10—

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Chairman, I just want to express some reservations about this.

There is a special committee of this House appointed to deal with electoral reform and the report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing. That commission made numerous recommendations with respect to persons with disabilities as part of its report and appropriate changes to the Canada Elections Act.

The Special Committee on Electoral Reform is charged with this responsibility and was mindful of the fact that this bill had been introduced in the House. I may say that 10 pages out of 15 in this bill deal with changes to the Canada Elections Act.

Some of the changes that are in this bill, it is expected, might be superseded by amendments that are made by this House after the committees had an opportunity to go through the report of the royal commission. We have been actively working on that report for some time and I was very surprised to learn today that an arrangement had been worked out to adopt this bill in all stages today.

I have been through the bill with some care and I do not object to any of the changes that are proposed in the bill—far be it from me to do so. I do indicate to the Committee of the Whole that I think this is an inappropriate procedure for such an important piece of legislation. I think it would have been better to refer the bill to a legislative committee so that the Special Committee on Electoral Reform might have had an opportunity to review these amendments with some care and make suggestions as to possible improvements in what is proposed in this bill.

Some of the improvements would have made some changes in the electoral law to make it easier for persons to vote than is contemplated in this bill. We are studying those and we will continue to study them. It may be that additional amendments are brought forward in due course.

• (1630)

I have no objection to any of the amendments that are proposed to the Canada Elections Act. I understand that the government is going to correct the language in several of those amendments. I have reviewed the proposed changes as well and, as I say, I have no objection to them.

I want to express my unhappiness at the fact this procedure has been adopted on this bill, to rush it through without appropriate study in a legislative committee, particularly when it is on a subject that is so important.

While there may be some urgency, as there always is, in passing any bill in this House, the provisions respecting the Canada Elections Act are no more urgent than many of the other changes we are studying, many of which are encompassed in this bill, and it would have been better to do them as part of an over-all change to the act, which I am optimistic will be forthcoming, in a timely way before the next election campaign whenever that may be.

I want to say that these changes are all worth while. I reiterate that and I thank the committee for the opportunity to make these brief comments with respect to those portions of the bill.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, if I may answer my hon. colleague.

The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Finance included that proposal as part of its report in February. I am amending the act now to address the needs of Canadians with disabilities to ensure greater access, and at the same time send a clear signal that persons with disabilities will be full participants in the electoral process.

The proposed amendments to the act have been developed in close collaboration with Elections Canada, which has indicated it would be in a position to implement them for the next election and they can be easily implemented that way.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

On clause 25—*Prohibition*

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, I move:

That clause 25 of Bill C-78 be amended by striking out lines 41 to 43 on page 9 and substituting the following:

"vote in the manner prescribed by this act because the elector is unable to read or is disabled".

Mr. Flis: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if we could get clarification. I have just been notified of this amendment now in Committee of the Whole. Does being unable to read mean a new Canadian or does it mean because of a physical disability or a mental disability, since we now do not have a definition for disability. Could we get clarification? A person who is unable to read, what does that mean?

Mr. Della Noce: That is a good question. It is already in the act, and it is for alphabet-illiterate persons.

Mr. Flis: I know of many new Canadians who have their Ph.D.s and are very literate, but not in English. Would that person be defined by this amendment?

Mr. Della Noce: If I may describe it in a better way, it is for somebody who needs help to read during an election that can get that kind of help.

Mr. Flis: If I could just toss out a positive suggestion then. If the amendment would have read "is not able to read in one of the official languages", then we would know what we are talking about. This way we do not know what we are talking about.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, it already exists in the act. The people at Elections Canada would like to keep it that way because otherwise other changes would have to be made. The Official Languages Act provides for people who need help in either language and they are already protected in the act. They are very comfortable with that.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Chairman, let us get this clear. What the change as proposed does is remove the words "blindness or visual impairment" and I believe the word "physical" from the act with respect to disability. In other words, it says that any person who is unable to read who suffers from a disability is not to be helped in voting by the Deputy Returning Officer unless that is the problem.

I can understand why the minister has decided to take out the words "blindness and visual impairment" because there is an effort to try to treat this as a bill that deals only with disabilities and those are considered disabilities. There is no definition of disability in the elections act to my knowledge.

As I say I agree with this amendment. I am not disagreeing with it, but one of the principal proposals put forward by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing was to make the elections act more intelligible to people who had to read it. It was a people's act. It is one that thousands of Canadians have to work with in the course of an election campaign and they do not want to have to hire a lawyer every time they read a section.

I suspect the parliamentary secretary could give us his rationale, but the problem with taking them out is that the word disability will have to include this problem of visual impairment, which is fine, but it would be better frankly if there was some definition of it or if there was some explanation of what was intended. The past history of this act is that persons who suffer from visual impairment or blindness have received special arrangements at the voting booths. These arrangements will now have to be covered by the words persons who are disabled. That is fine but there will be a lot of Deputy Returning Officers who do not understand that and that is my fear. We are fiddling with the words of this act in a way that may lead to confusion and trouble at polling stations across Canada and there are thousands of them in every election as you know.

• (1640)

I just want the minister to make sure that this is clear and in taking these words out he notes there is no definition of disability in the Canada Elections Act. There could be some confusion on election day which I think would be unfortunate.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is right. There is no definition in the Canada Elections Act but this was changed to help anyone who really needs help that day, especially because elections only happen once in a while. These people can get help immediately. This was included in the Canada Elections Act. They tried to cover all issues and they are very comfortable with it.

Mrs. Phinney: Mr. Chairman, I would like to comment that the original version is unnecessarily restrictive. In some of its definitions the new version allows all persons with disabilities to benefit from changes in the electoral act.

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Chairman, there is not much I can say except that the hon. member is correct.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the amendment carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Amendment agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 25, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

[*Translation*]

On clause 26—*Assistance by deputy returning officer*

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship) moved:

That clause 26 of Bill C-78 be amended:

(a) by striking out lines 4 to 7 on page 10 and substituting the following:

Assistance by deputy returning officer
"135. If an elector is unable to vote in the manner prescribed by this Act because the elector is unable to read or is disabled, the deputy returning officer"

(b) by striking out lines 12 and 13 on page 10 and substituting the following:

Template
"135.1 If a disabled elector so requests, the deputy returning"

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the amendment carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Amendment agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 26, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 27 and 28 agreed to.

On Clause 29—*Voting procedure where elector unable to mark ballot paper*

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship) moved:

That clause 29 of Bill C-78 be amended by striking out lines 26 to 30 on page 11 and substituting the following:

Voting procedure where elector unable to mark ballot paper "(2) Where the elector is unable to vote in the manner prescribed by sections 130 to 138 because the elector is unable to read or is disabled and the elector does not wish to"

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The amendment is in order.

[*English*]

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

On Clause 30—*Disabled electors*

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship) moved:

That clause 30 of Bill C-78 be amended:

(a) by striking out lines 2 to 4 on page 12 and substituting the following:

"elector is unable to vote in the manner prescribed in these rules because the elector or dependant elector is disabled,"

(b) by striking out lines 16 and 17 on page 12 and substituting the following:

"lected by the disabled elector or dependant elector,"

(c) by striking out lines 21 and 22 on page 12 and substituting the following:

"ence the vote of the disabled elector or dependant"

(d) by striking out line 28 on page 12 and substituting the following:

"ballot paper of a disabled"

(e) by striking out lines 31 and 32 on page 12 and substituting the following:

"the presence only of the disabled elector or dependant elector."

(f) by striking out lines 36 and 37 on page 12 and substituting the following:

"when the ballot of the disabled elector or dependant elec—"

• (1650)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The amendment is in order.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

On Clause 31—*Disabled electors*

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Chairman, I move:

That clause 31 of Bill C-78 be amended:

(a) by striking out lines 1 to 4 on page 13 and substituting the following:

Disabled electors

85(1) Where an elector is unable to vote in the manner prescribed in these rules because the elector is disabled,"

(b) by striking out lines 15 and 16 on page 13 and substituting the following:

"selected by the disabled elector, who is able to read"

(c) by striking out line 20 on page 13 and substituting the following:

"of the disabled"

(d) by striking out line 26 on page 13 and substituting the following:

"ballot paper of disabled"

(e) by striking out line 28 and 29 on page 13 and substituting the following:

"the presence only the disabled elector"

(f) by striking out lines 33 and 34 on page 13 and substituting the following:

"whom the ballot of the disabled elector is cast."

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The amendment is in order.

[*English*]

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 32 to 38 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported and concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (for the Secretary of State) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I will only take a few minutes to congratulate the parliamentary secretary and all members who were on the committee putting this bill through.

I would just like to leave a little suggestion with all members and a reminder for myself. If we are serious about helping the disabled in this country we have to set an example. One way is to begin with our communications. Most of us send four parliamentary reports or householders, as we call them, to our constituents every year. How do we send them out? Are they in French or English? Some go out in Italian or Portuguese. This is great, but how many of our reports go to blind people? Not many. I would not expect anyone to print or duplicate in another format 40,000 copies of a householder.

On some of my householders—I toss this out as a suggestion—I included a little phrase to the constituents indicating that if they knew of a friend, relative or a neighbour who could not read the report because of a visual disability to send in his or her name and address and we would send a cassette.

• (1700)

You may get one request and you may get no requests, but at least we are making our parliamentary reports accessible and available to all our constituents, including the people who for some reason or another cannot see.

Another suggestion is that we are lucky in Ottawa to have our business cards printed in Braille. How many members sitting right here have their cards printed in Braille? There are quite a few. I am impressed, but that is another way that we can set an example.

As members of the federal government, we should be setting an example and maybe with the beginning of Bill C-78 we can start doing this.

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking all our colleagues on both sides of the House for their co-operation.

This is something very nice that has been brought to visible persons. It is not only a start but a continuation of what has been done in the past. This is an excellent bill and we have a lot of support from these people. It deserves to be passed without delay. I must say that with the kind of co-operation that we have here today, it is a beautiful gift that we bring to these people.

My friend was talking about business cards in Braille. Last week I was fortunate to do the opening of one of the biggest schools in Canada which is called Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille in the city of Longueuil, which is south of Montreal in my hon. colleague's riding of Longueuil.

I was very impressed to see this beautiful family of blind people. These disabled people tried to help each other. When the international president from Paris started to read 15 pages of speech, the way he read it was impressive. He did not look one minute at his speech.

I said to my friend and colleague from Longueuil: "He could be a very good politician because every time he reads a 10-page speech, nobody knows it". He was looking at us in our eyes and it was just great. I am doing this for them, and I appreciate what my hon. colleagues did for us in giving us their co-operation. I thank them very much.

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.

* * *

BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof as reported, (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There are 42 notices of motions set down on the Notice Paper for the report stage on Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 1 to 27 inclusive standing in the name of the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs seek to delete all clauses in Part I of the bill. These motions will be grouped for debate and a vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to the remaining motions in this group.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 28 standing in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt was moved, debated and withdrawn in committee. Therefore, under the authority of Standing Order 76(5), I will not select Motion No. 28 for debate.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 29 and 30, standing in the name of the hon. member for Algoma will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 29 applying to Motion No. 30.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 31 and 32 standing in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt will be grouped for debate and voted upon separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 33, standing in the name of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 34, standing in the name of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and Motions Nos. 35, 36, 37 and 38, standing in the name of the hon. member for Dartmouth, will be grouped for debate. An affirmative vote on Motion No. 34 will obviate the need for a vote on Motions Nos. 35, 36, 37 and 38. A negative vote on Motion No. 34 will require a vote on Motion No. 35 which will apply to Motions Nos. 36, 37 and 38.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 39 standing in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 40, standing in the name of the member for Nickel Belt, will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 41 standing in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 42, standing in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt, will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

I will now call Motions Nos. 1 to 27.

• (1710)

[*English*]

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 1.

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 3.

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 8.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Motion No. 9.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Motion No. 10.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Motion No. 11.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Motion No. 12.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 13.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

Motion No. 14.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 14.

Motion No. 15.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 15.

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 16.

Motion No. 17.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 17.

Motion No. 18.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 18.

Motion No. 19.

That Bill No. 19 be amended by deleting Clause 19.

Motion No. 20.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting clause 20.

Motion No. 21.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 21.

Motion No. 22.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 22.

Motion No. 23.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 23.

Motion No. 24.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 24.

Motion No. 25.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 25.

Motion No. 26.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 26.

Motion No. 27.

That Bill C-22 be amended by deleting Clause 27.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have moved that the first 27 clauses of Bill C-22 be deleted. Briefly, hon. members are aware that these are the clauses that pertain to provisions for the Wage Claim Payment Act.

No one disputes the importance of the principle of wage earner protection. We all agree on the need to enable employees to obtain wages and expenses after a company has gone bankrupt. There has been considerable debate, as my hon. friend from Nickel Belt knows, about what would be the best method of funding such wage claim payments.

[*Translation*]

I am not giving up and do not intend to give up the objective of protecting wage earners. This is a priority of mine as Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but this bill cannot be held up indefinitely while we look for ways to finance the program to protect workers, not when one Canadian in ten is looking for work. We must therefore act immediately to pass Bill C-22 to encourage companies in difficulty and help them survive.

[*English*]

I will have more to say about how Bill C-22 will help save companies and preserve jobs when it comes up for third reading.

The provisions for commercial reorganization, consumer proposals, consumer bankruptcies, secured creditors and receivers, Crown claims and priorities and the protection of unpaid suppliers will all help. These provisions are not affected by the deletions I have proposed.

The only clauses to be removed are those relating to wage claim payments. I would like to reiterate what I told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations last month when I notified it of the government's intention to split Bill C-22.

[*Translation*]

The protection of wage earners will be a priority for discussion when the Bankruptcy Act is reviewed in three years.

I hope that consensus will be reached during that review and that we can start working on it immediately, since unfortunately we do not have consensus now. I therefore encourage all members of this House to continue their efforts so that we on both sides of the Chamber can find a way to improve worker protection in future amendments to the Bankruptcy Act.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, amendments 1 to 27 in particular on this bill are indeed unfortunate amendments for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to have moved.

We all know in this House the Bankruptcy Act is an outdated piece of legislation going back to 1949. There have been many attempts previously to try to amend this particular act so that it offered a better balance between the various interests in a bankruptcy situation.

Each attempt in the past has failed and it has failed for a whole number of reasons but particularly because there are so many different interests involved it seemed that any change, no matter how positive, would always affect somebody in a negative way. As a result, each attempt at bankruptcy reform has failed.

This minister in particular has come forward and he had a novel approach to the bill. He brought in a bankruptcy bill, Bill C-22, which sought not just to reform and rebalance the Bankruptcy Act, but the bill recognized there was a particular interest in the assets of a bankrupt company. There was a particular debt owing in the form of unpaid labour.

It is not just called the Bankruptcy Act, it is called the Wage Claim Payment Act. It covers two quite different things. The minister did not seek to rebalance within the Bankruptcy Act, recognizing the legitimate interest of the workers here who many times find themselves the last in the line to get paid when a company goes bankrupt, well behind the banks, the other creditors and the last in line to get paid when a company goes bankrupt and the assets are divvied up.

Instead of rebalancing the Bankruptcy Act and coming forward and saying you are right, the workers have an interest here and we are going to put the workers interests ahead of everybody else's interest here, the minister said that would be too complex, too difficult, maybe the big banks would not like it, maybe the big financial institutions would not like to have their security interests lessened in any respect.

Rather than rebalancing the bill, he had a novel approach to creating the wage claim payment fund. Out of that wage claim payment fund the minister recognized up front right in the title of the bill that the workers have an interest in the assets of the bankruptcy.

Further, he recognized that they should get paid their wages, up to $2,000 in back wages that are owed. He did it by way of a new program, not by saying we will recognize in the Bankruptcy Act, by way of something like super priority, that the workers wages must be paid. He wanted to come in with a new social program, basically. It is called the Wage Claim Payment Act.

We did not think on our side of the House this was the way to go about it. We figured it should have been done right in the bill. We said the minister and the government should stand up to those banks, tell those big banks they would have to lessen their interests just a little bit so the workers who might have been owed $500, $700, or $800 would get paid and get paid up front.

The minister said he was not prepared to stand up to those big financial institutions and what he was going to do was set up a separate fund. That in and of itself may not seem like a bad thing to do but then we get into how this government was going to fund it. If there is any government anywhere in the western that should be afraid of the words new tax, it should be members opposite.

They saw their popularity, which was not that great in the first place, plummet over the last few years because they taxed Canadians out. They taxed medium and small businesses to the *nth* degree and put many of them into bankruptcy.

The government came in with the GST, a God-awful tax that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business called a nightmare on main street. The government came in, did not learn its lesson and it would not rebalance the bill. It wanted to set up a separate fund and it was going to fund it by a new tax on every payroll in Canada.

The government said at that time do not worry about it because it is only a small tax. It is only a few cents or a few dollars here and there. It does not really make much difference.

• (1720)

There were fundamental flaws in the application of the tax. First of all, it was a tax that should not have been implemented at a time when we were in deep recession. Second, there was no level of confidence in the business community that this government would hold its word not to increase that tax.

The universities, the school boards, the hospital associations, every public corporation in this country which cannot go bankrupt was going to be charged a tax, a tax for a program that none of their employees would ever be able to access as long as they worked for a public corporation. The all-party committee pre-studied this bill.

I want to make sure that everyone knows that this was a unique effort to try to bring some harmony to this place and to try to put some respect back into the way we do our business. We had a pre-study well before second reading. The bill had not even been approved in principle. We sat down collectively and we looked at this thing. Even the Tories, even the Conservative members on the committee said: "You are right. This is the wrong way to do it. We should not have a separate fund in recognition of the legitimate interest of workers who have not been paid wages. What we should have is super priority".

My colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and I, along with some government members opposite, discussed it in a non-partisan way. We looked at it and said that makes a lot of sense. In the interest of fairness, super priority is the way to go. We reported the bill back to the government prior to second reading and said it is almost unique. We have unanimous consent of the committee to tell the government that we think super priority is the way to go because we cannot impose a new tax on those groups that I just mentioned, particularly small and medium sized businesses in Canada.

The government did not listen. It said: "No, you cannot do that. We cannot deal with the big banks. They are too powerful. They scare us too much. We are more concerned with our coffers at the Tory party headquarters than with rebalancing legitimately this bill". That is what it did. We all know that. We sat through those committee hearings.

Then the government put the muscle on its committee members who had agreed to the report and sent them scurrying like scared children because the big muscle came on at that point in time and party discipline was the way to go. Forget about this novel, noble adventure of non-partisan discussion and debate on trying to better a major piece of legislation.

The government came back in October or November and particularly the businesses, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and all these people said: "We know it is small tax, but we do not count. We cannot trust this government not to raise this tax unilaterally without coming back to Parliament". Each and every time, and the record shows it clearly, that somebody said that at committee, one of the minister's mandarins jumped up in his place and said: "Look at it. Look at the way it is worded in clause 29 of the bill. We cannot unilaterally raise this tax. We have to go back to Parliament for approval".

At the eleventh hour, at the end of November, the government came in in its usually under handed, dark and devious way and proposed an amendment that was going to ostensibly have the Treasury Board, through the Consolidated Revenue Fund, fund the program. There would be no tax, it said, for the first year or two of the operations. We smelled a rat and asked a lot of questions.

My colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell asked the key question: "Are you going to fund this out of general revenues or are you giving a loan?" Then all the truth came forward. We found out that all the government was doing was giving a loan. In addition to that one little clause in the amendment, it was also going to give the Governor in Council the ability, without ever coming back to Parliament, to raise the tax, to raise the premium, which was exactly what every business said. They said they cannot trust this bunch at its word and it will raise the tax.

We fought it at committee. We argued procedural points. The chair of the committee, a Tory, ruled in our favour and said that the amendments were out of order. The government was stuck. We did not sit back and say that is it, I guess the bill is going to die. We came up with other options which my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is going to talk about. We came up with a number of options to try to get the government back on track.

We recognized that if the government did not know what to do, we in the opposition had a responsibility to try to put this bill back on track to help those individuals and companies out there that were going belly up because of this government's economic policy.

We put four proposals forward to this minister on how he could have a program that could be funded without a tax. We even talked about using the UI system. We talked about a number of different processes such as a new tax on the assets that were being disbursed in a bankruptcy to the big financial institutions because they do not pay any fee now to the superintendent of bankruptcy. This government said no.

We have a situation here in which the government has decided that its much heralded interests in the workers of Canada and its interests in bankruptcy legislation have rung hollow. It has come through with 27 amendments that show that it was not prepared to put its money where its mouth is, and this party will not vote for these amendments that effectively strip the rights of workers out of this bill.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a sad performance by a minister of the Crown, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

There were two major principles in any amendment to the Bankruptcy Act; on the one hand there was the principle that workers who have lost their wages because of a bankruptcy or an insolvency are entitled to be compensated for their wages. They ought to get those wages.

If the workers had been paid on the Friday and the company went bankrupt on the Monday, the major creditors do not come back and say to the company, "go and get those cheques back that you paid the workers".

There is a principle that a worker is entitled to be compensated for the effort and the commitment that he has put into the job, for his labour.

That is one principle. The other principle in the Bankruptcy Act was to allow for reorganizations which may result in saving some companies from going down the tubes because we have a financial institution in this country that acts more like a coyote when it smells blood. It moves in and takes the security.

Those are the two major principles, and we have been operating with a Bankruptcy Act which was passed in 1949. For 43 years we have made no major changes even though the whole marketplace, the society, has changed.

This government recognized those two major principles. It is bad enough that the Liberals were unable to do anything at all when they were in power. They did not have the courage to do anything. At least this gang brought in Bill C-22.

The major stakeholders—the minister keeps talking about the major stakeholders—in the bill are the creditors. The major stakeholders are the suppliers, the farmers, the fishermen. The major stakeholders in the bill are the workers.

In this bill I looked for the balance. Do we provide a balance for the stakeholders in the bill? The bill was balanced when it had a wage protection plan. I did not like the idea that it would put another payroll tax on the economy at this time. I did not like that.

Since this government came to power in 1984 it has taxed Canadians 34 times. Canadians, particularly workers, are well aware of the unemployment insurance premiums, which in January went to 24 per cent. They know while it starts with the price of a cup of coffee it ends up that you are buying the whole urn of coffee. In my view nobody would support the small business community and the public sector as well. School boards, hospitals, universities and municipalities will not countenance another payroll tax.

We said to the government that we recognized that we have to maintain the balance in the bill.

• (1730)

One of the ways to maintain the balance of the bill was to ensure that workers go to the front of the bus, the same as the banks go to the front of the bus.

What is the difference between any of the big financial institutions in this country having a secure credit on some assets of a company that has gone bankrupt and a worker who has given his time and labour? That is just as secure as a bank, any other financial institution or any other creditor.

So we wanted a super priority, so to speak, for the workers. The committee at pre-study stage agreed and recommended that to the government. The government said: "No, we cannot do that. It means we would have to be challenging the powers of the large financial institutions." It backed away from that. The minister is shaking his head. The fact of the matter is that he got eyeball to eyeball with them and he backed away.

When we got into committee study of the bill, we then proposed that we should pay it out of general revenues. We said: "Look, it is $61 million." In a total government budget, Canada's budget of $145 billion, it is $61 million. We said: "Take it out of general revenues."

The Government of Ontario responded to the same problem with having a wage protection plan that is paid out of general revenues. The government said no to that.

We then came back and suggested to the government that it tax the assets the creditors are realizing when they enforce their security in a bankruptcy. After all, we are going to pay all of the major banks employing 500,000 people in the country and would be putting $3 million into the government's wage protection plan. Surely if they wanted to maintain their super priority at the head of the bus, why would they deny workers $61 million? Last year, the total amount of assets in bankruptcy situations was $4.3 billion. The financial institutions got $3 billion of that. We are talking about $61 million for workers. Again the government said no.

The committee turned that proposal down, lead by the Conservative majority on the committee. Now this minister said to workers in his opening remarks: "We have no intention of abandoning workers". Well, it took us 43 years to get to this position.

I want to tell you now that you do not have the element, the other voices in this whole business of bankruptcy are arguing for changes. Workers who have lost their jobs as a result of bankruptcy and are not getting paid, can you see the impression they are going to make on this government to correct that anomaly, to correct that injustice?

In this bill, we have looked after all those other stakeholders, to use the minister's term. Look at what we are doing in the bill. We are allowing the farmers to come and get their carrots, chickens and whatever else. We are allowing the fishermen to come and get their cod, whatever other fish or turtles they have sold. If it is there, they can come and take it. It is called revindication of goods. They have a super priority.

We heard the bankers who came before the committee when it was proposed in the bill. They all said: "Well, you cannot do that. We are going to have a credit crunch." It is done in Quebec and it did not create any credit crunch.

Now suppliers can revindicate their goods. Look at who gets in the line-up and who gets their cut. First we have the secure creditors, banks and financial institutions. They get their cut. Then we have the government getting its cut. Government has to get its cut with all those UI premiums, CPP premiums and income tax owing. The lawyers get theirs. All those who are trustees get their cut off the top. They are super priorized. The superintendent, whatever charges he has, he takes his off the top, but you cannot put the workers in.

I say to the minister, to this government and to all those who are watching that the minute the workers were separated from the rest of all those who have vested interests in this bill, the minute the workers were taken out, then there was no reason for anybody to change things to put workers back into the picture. That is it. All of the powerful stakeholders have been taken out. They are satisfied. Who is going to be the voice crying out in the wilderness to put workers back on the list?

The minister is telling the workers he will not forget them. As soon as the ink is dry on this bill they are forgotten. This minister will stand condemned by history as having turned his back on one of the major stakeholders in bankruptcy, the workers.

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 26(1), I move:

> That the House continue to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment for the continuation of report stage of Bill C-22, an Act to enact the Wage Claim Payment Act, to amend the Bankruptcy Act and other acts in consequence thereof.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): A technicality in the Standing Orders requires this kind of motion to be presented as part of an intervention or debate. I therefore ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to ensure that his motion is presented in accordance with the rules.

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I listened attentively to what you previously stated. In fact, the hon. member across was to have had the floor during debate. No debate took place, nothing happened.

Subsequent to your ruling you then asked for the vote on that which you had indicated some uncertainty, at the very least, as to whether or not it was in order to start with.

Could the House get a clarification from the Chair as to whether or not the motion is admissible? We could then vote on it at that point. Could the Chair enlighten us in that regard?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): To make it quite clear, I gave the floor to the hon. parliamentary secretary because he rose on a point of order, but his point could only arise as part of an intervention or debate. I see that the hon. opposition whip can perhaps enlighten the Chair further.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised at the parliamentary secretary because I was under the impression that the three main parties in this House had had talks to reach an agreement for allowing about an hour of debate at report stage. So we would not have seen the clock, so to speak, and I thought that was what the parliamentary secretary was about to propose. However, I see that he has just moved a motion to extend the hours. I do not understand at all. Sometimes we waste a lot of time that way. Therefore, to avoid a needless waste of time, I would like the parliamentary secretary to tell me if he intends to abide by the talks held this afternoon.

[*English*]

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, in the interests of permitting other members to contribute to this debate, I did shorten my contribution to the debate. I could overcome that now by saying what it was that I left out of my speech. There is a good deal I could say about this bill, as my hon. friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell knows. I thought that I would just refrain from saying those things and put the motion.

• (1740)

My hon. friend, the opposition Whip, is quite correct in the sense that there is an understanding from his quarter at least that we would not go much beyond an hour. That is the intention. We are hoping that we will be able to complete report stage this evening, and that was the purpose of the motion. I trust you will find it in order.

If it would help and if I were to contribute to the debate, I would be prepared to do that in order to restore it to an orderly state.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is anything symbolic that a form of closure or another was in fact invoked twice within 30 seconds in this House of Commons today.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I have some difficulty with this motion.

There was a telephone call placed to me by the parliamentary secretary asking whether or not we would agree to sit an extended period of time. The extended period of time in the subsequent conversations that I have had with members opposite, with my Whip and with the member for Nickel Belt was that we would sit for one hour. If it is my understanding that that is not the intent of the motion, then I would have to say that that is not—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but I have no option than to call the members to decide on the motion.

Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their place.

Fewer than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2), the motion is adopted.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

NOTICE OF ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING STAGE OF BILL C-80

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to apologize to the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I would have liked to take care of this before he got started on his remarks.

An agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to an allocation of time for second reading of Bill C-80, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act, to amend certain acts in consequence thereof and to repeal the Family Allowances 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 allocating a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at that said stage.

* * *

BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-22, an Act to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations; and the motions of Mr. Blais.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is anything symbolic that a form of closure or another was in fact invoked twice

within 30 seconds in the House of Commons today. I must say that the parliamentary secretary just a few moments extended the sitting of the House for this evening. That in itself is not objectionable. What is objectionable is the fact that an agreement previously arranged to have the House sit an extra hour has in fact been breached or superseded by what was moved earlier today. In any case, I hope that it is a technical breach only, that we will complete our discussions within that hour and that the whole discussion will be academic.

When this bill was debated in committee, it was initially debated or discussed in what is referred to as a pre-study. That was a brand new instrument. I do believe our Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations was the first to use it to deal with Bill C-22, the Bankruptcy Act and the Wage Earner Protection Act. My colleague, the member for Dartmouth and I and other colleagues handled the bill very well.

Initially the government told us that it wanted to apply a payroll tax in order to fund the wage earner protection program. I must say that in the beginning I did not find that particularly objectionable myself, but many Canadians said: "Wait a minute, this is not right. We have already had taxes increased almost three dozen times since the Conservatives have been in power. Notwithstanding the fact that that payroll tax is going to be very small, we do not like it because we cannot trust these people". You know, Mr. Speaker, they were right. Canadians who contributed toward the process had it dead on. No sooner had we turned around than the government started to introduce amendments of its own. In those amendments one of the things that the government was trying to do was to remove the provision whereby Parliament had to decide if there was to be a change in the premiums of this wage earner protection program. In other words the government wanted to amend its own bill in order to give itself the power to increase the premium that it had just levied without asking Parliament.

Canadians who had contributed at the committee had it right. We were faced with the situation that Canadians did not want a new tax. I can appreciate that. I think they were quite right in saying that no new tax should be invoked.

That does not mean that we should not have a wage earner protection program.

[*Translation*]

My colleague from Dartmouth and I sincerely believe that there is a real need to implement a wage claim recovery mechanism for workers who lose their jobs.

[*English*]

In my own constituency of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell I will never forget the 1984 election campaign. I was the incumbent provincial member, the MPP for the area. In the middle of the election I got a phone call at my campaign office. This phone call was from a group of women working at an assembly plant in Hawkesbury where garments were put together. The workers were saying: "Mr. Boudria, the owner is trying to remove the sewing machines from the building. He has not paid us our holiday pay. He still owes many of us wages and he is trying to take off with the machines".

I immediately phoned the police and told them what was going on. I instructed people at my office to get in touch with someone at the legal clinic to seek to get an injunction preventing the man from doing this. I went and joined the workers personally in order to stop the people who were trying to take the machines away. That would have been the last that those people would have heard of their money. They would never have it. The guy would have just taken off with his equipment, packed up and started some place else at some point down the road. That makes the point as to why we need wage earner protection programs like this.

• (1750)

My colleague from Dartmouth together with myself proposed a number of alternatives to the levy the government was proposing, the payroll tax. He proposed the wage earner protection fund be funded by a levy on the dividends paid to secured creditors.

There were amendments brought by the government but the amendments were such as to exempt the bank from virtually anything in so far as levies are concerned for the services given to them.

We also proposed as an alternative to financing the wage earner protection fund, the unemployment insurance fund for a period of time. My colleague and I, when the government did not want to understand any of this said, let us make a deal, we are reasonable people in this committee. Let us have the government fund this program for 18 months out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and after 18 months we will devise something better to fund this. This was certainly one way in which it could have been done. The government would not listen to it.

All proposals made by the Liberal opposition were defeated by the government. The government did not want to see a wage order protection fund of any kind seemingly, other than the kind the government could fund directly by one of those premiums, those same

premiums that they did not even want to consult Parliament about before establishing the rates.

That is why my colleague and I support the principle of having a wage earner protection fund. We did not support the payroll tax proposed by the government in Bill C–22. We do not support Motions Nos. 1 to 27 because they would remove everything from the bill that gave the workers their protection.

What the government should have done instead is introduce amendments. There would have been Motions Nos. 1 to 27 or something like that, but those motions would have proposed an alternative to the wage earner protection fund instead of simply deleting the clauses and saying they will be back at some point in the future in order to offer protection to workers.

We could discuss a number of other issues as they involve this wage earner protection fund but the point remains the same. The minister should address both of these issues. I do not want this bill delayed because there are many businesses that could be rehabilitated with a new bankruptcy law. In so rehabilitating those businesses, we will not have any new ones shut down or at least not as many of them. We will not have as many people losing their jobs and as many people without a wage earner protection fund. The right way of doing it is to have both a wage earner protection program and a new bankruptcy law in this country.

I am with the minister when he says we need a new law and we need it soon. That is quite true. Where he and I part company is when he removes all the clauses to the wage earner protection program and replaces them with nothing at all, only with blank spaces. Blank spaces do not provide much of a pay cheque for the people who have lost their wages.

We are not asking for charity here. Those people have earned that money, their salary, they have earned their vacation pay and they have earned their pay cheque that has not been paid to them in four or five weeks because the boss comes in and says "Gee folks, can you wait a little while for your pay cheque because we are having a rough time in this enterprise", and the workers buy it. Many times they should. When it is all over though, the money that is owed to the workers should be paid.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a word on these motions, but first I want to point out that once again the Bloc Quebecois was ignored and not consulted regarding the extension of sitting hours. I point this out, because today I had decided to be a good girl, to co–operate and to give consent regarding Bill C–78.

So when unanimous consent was required, I gave that consent out of the goodness of my heart. Then, afterwards, the other parties are asked about extending sitting hours, but not the Bloc Quebecois. Therefore, they should not bother asking for my consent anymore, because this is it. I will not give that consent anymore. I hope that the government will not need my consent, because I have had enough for the time being.

Regarding the bill itself, I find it regrettable that the government did not have the courage of its convictions. After having promised since June 1991 that workers would have an act on wage claim recovery, this government has unfortunately decided not to go ahead with its project. Rather, it has listened to its conservative members and I mean conservative in the literal sense of the word.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs says that he will keep trying to ensure wage claims protection. Again, this is only wishful thinking. This reminds me of the wishful thinking expressed last week by the member for Jonquière regarding the Referendum Act. This seems to be essentially a similar situation, since the minister does not have the support of his party to go ahead with this wage claim act.

We know very well that the existing Bankruptcy Act goes back to 1949. I doubt very much that this legislation will soon be reviewed.

Once again, the Conservative government backed off under pressure. I would like to talk more specifically about clauses 7, 8 and 11, which the minister wants to delete with the motions that he tabled. I will discuss those clauses from a very specific angle, and I mean the quality of the French version as well as its wording. Regarding this issue, I will refer to the report submitted in September 1991 to the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations by the committee of the *Barreau du Quebec* on bankruptcy, insolvency and wage claim recovery.

In its report, the Barreau tells us about all the problems in understanding the French version of the sections of that act. I will simply quote section 7 of the act at page 6 which says: "Les prestations ne peuvent être cédées, grevées de privilèges, saisies, assorties d'un exercice anticipé, ni données en garantie, et toute opération en ce sens est nulle."

I believe that the Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs has a degree in law and perhaps he could explain to me the meaning of "assorties d'un exercice anticipé" as the French version says. Even the *Barreau du Québec* does not understand that expression. I really wonder where it comes from, unless it is a very bad translation as we suspect it is.

• (1800)

Section 8 is just as bad. It says:

> Lorsqu'un versement est fait à un particulier au titre de la présente section, Sa Majesté du chef du Canada est subrogée dans les droits de ce particulier sur le failli, la personne insolvable ou tout administrateur d'une personne morale et sur tous biens.

Of course they mean "sur les biens du failli", but you have to read the section several times, and this is true, as I said, even for people who have a law degree and who are used to reviewing bills rather frequently. I will end by reading paragraph 2 of section 11, on page 7, line 24:

> La demande est à présenter, selon les modalités réglementaires—

Of course, we know that it should be "la demande est présentée".

Once again, and I have done it several times over a period of a few days, I point out that the French language is really not treated properly in this House. It is very easy to see that we only get translated documents and in fact, they are very badly translated most of the time.

I will carry on the same vein regarding the clauses left since there are now 27 fewer than originally in this famous bill. I will keep criticizing the substance as well as the quality of the French version regarding those other provisions.

[*English*]

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few remarks on the record with respect to this legislation. I consider it a black eye for this institution to not have a wage earners' protection fund included in this bill.

At this time when the economy is in trouble and we have witnessed a lot of bankruptcies, a lot of closures of plants and offices of one kind or another, we should take the opportunity to support workers, to show we are really behind them and we are committed to them. Yet we see that we have failed in that commitment, if we ever had it at all, particularly from the government's perspective.

Workers will have reason to be deeply disappointed with us not coming up with a mechanism to give them more protection.

I want to say that all workers very often, certainly in the employment context, have to offer is their labour. That is their means of livelihood. That is how they make a living. That is what they give to their employers. They give their employers their hands, their minds and in return, their employers pay them a wage, a salary.

Surely at a time of financial difficulty for firms, workers should be given top priority. For workers most often, just about always, that is the only source of income they have. That is the only financial leg on which they stand, the income from their labour. We should do everything possible to protect that, to give them the dignity to be paid their wages.

That is not the case with the banks and other lending institutions. They have many sources of income. Sure, they deserve protection as well. They cannot just lend money in a crazy fashion without any regard for security, any regard for collateral or they too will go broke.

However, if a plant closes, if a plant goes bankrupt, for the worker that is his only source of income. It is not for lending institutions. They lend to many, hundreds or thousands of borrowers. So very often when a plant closes it is not a catastrophe for the lending institution. However, if the worker does not get his wages, be it for two or three weeks or perhaps even more, that is calamitous. That can be a catastrophe.

As parliamentarians, on behalf of the broad society, we should reflect a strong commitment to workers to give them that protection.

The legislation that is being amended goes back a long time, to 1949, as I understand it, and the economy has changed tremendously in more than 40 years. Conditions for employees have changed tremendously in more than 40 years.

The time has come to show a greater priority and a greater commitment to workers so they are not left in an unprotected position and not left in a way whereby they cannot even provide for their families. Surely we have to show more dignity for them. It is lamentable, it is terrible that we do not have this wage protection fund that was proposed.

Our party made several proposals, none has been accepted. It is a black eye for this institution. We have let Canadian workers down. We are going to have to change the situation as soon as possible because we cannot leave workers in this tenuous situation. We have let them down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I will remind all members that a vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to the remaining motions in this group, Motions Nos. 2 to 27 inclusive.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion No. 1 agreed to.

• (1810)

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma) moved:

Motion No. 29.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 46 by striking out line 33 at page 38 and substituting the following therefor:

"persons and, where applicable, may be accompanied by a report in respect of the insolvent person provided by a review panel appointed by the Farm Debt Review Board under the Farm Debt Review Act;".

Motion No. 30.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 46 by adding immediately after line 33 at page 41 the following:

"(12) For purposes of subsection (5), the trustee shall, where applicable, consult the Farm Debt Review Board in respect of the debtor and where, in the preceding twelve months, a report in respect of the debtor has been made by a review panel appointed by the Board under the Farm Debt Review Act, the trustee shall consider the findings of the Report and where the findings are helpful to assist the debtor in the presentation of a proposal, the trustee shall make the findings known to the creditors at the meeting of the creditors."

He said: Mr. Speaker, these two motions really come from a recommendation of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. It filed a report in July of 1988 called *The $22 Billion Problem*. In that report it was recommended that where the Farm Debt Review Board is unable to reach an agreement to maintain a farmer on his farm, that a report be filed for the use of the farmer.

This recommendation is a very good one because often where the Farm Debt Review Board, which really has very little power itself to reach an agreement because it has only consultative powers or mediation powers.

Often when a farmer is going through extreme financial distress or approaching bankruptcy, it is only one of the creditors which is holding up an agreement. Under this bankruptcy legislation, it is provided that where 66 per cent of the value in each class can reach an agreement on a proposition, then the bankruptcy commissioner can order that agreement. It is somewhat like the chapter 11 in the United States.

What my amendment really provides for is where the Farm Debt Review Board fails to reach an agreement for reducing the debts or extending the credit arrangements for a farmer. A report is made by the Farm Debt Review Board that the trustee acting on behalf of the farmer facing financial difficulty would be able to put that report, if it was favourable to the farmer, before the creditors for his benefit.

It not only strengthens the position of the farmer facing bankruptcy or using the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act, but it adds tremendous strength to the Farm Debt Review Board. Where a creditor is being unreasonable, he faces the prospect of the Farm Debt Review Board issuing a report after the negotiations which would suggest that some individual creditor in those negotiations is being totally unreasonable and so there is increased pressure there.

In 1988 the Standing Committee on Agriculture of the House of Commons did a report which suggested that there is a $22 billion problem for Canadian farmers. In fact, today the problem is not $22 billion; it is $24 billion. The agriculture committee did a further study in 1990 which said that there was something like $6 billion worth of debt which is not serviceable.

We have to take into account the extremely low prices for grain. Last year we had grain selling for $2 a bushel which cost $4 to produce. The debt problem overhangs the entire grain and oilseed industry, especially in western Canada and especially in Saskatchewan. Yet often the Farm Debt Review Board has very little power to deal with that situation. My amendment this evening would increase the negotiating position of the farm review board. In fact if a farmer is applying under this bankruptcy legislation for a reorganization then it gives him the power to do so.

Back in the 1930s we had two important pieces of legislation to cope with the desperate and terrible situation in the country at that time. One was the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act to assist farmers in reorganizing their debts. For the business community we had the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act.

It is a sad piece of information for Canadians that we still have the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act. In my own constituency Algoma Steel just used the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act to write down hundreds of millions of dollars worth of debt to reorganize or restructure that whole company so that workers could keep their jobs.

However the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act has been discontinued and is not available. We do not have the same tools.

The United States recognizes the serious problem facing the agriculture industry back in 1986 or 1987. It brought in special legislation and reduced the debt of farmers from something like $205 billion to $140 billion. That debt is not overhanging that industry.

This legislation has not made much provision for that kind of restructuring of debt. We do know there is some $6 billion of debt out there overhanging the entire industry. It cannot be serviced with the current level of support and profitability of the agricultural industry.

My amendment does not change the over-all structure of the bankruptcy legislation before us. It makes provision for the recommendation of the Farm Debt Review Board to be taken into account where it would be beneficial by the trustee in his negotiation with the creditors.

I believe it would strengthen both this legislation and and the Farm Debt Review Board legislation. I would hope members of the House, and especially those of the government, would support the amendment before the House tonight.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to carry on in the same vein and talk about the quality of the French version of this bill.

Once again, I would like to refer to the report of the committee of the *Barreau du Québec*, which was submitted to the Standing Committee in September 1991. You will notice, upon reading the bill, that the Standing Committee really did not take into account the recommendations made by the *Barreau* in its report.

Here, we refer to motions Nos. 29 and 30 regarding section 46, which would be added to section 50 of the present Act. Therefore, there would be a section 50.1, 50.2, et cetera. I am now at clause 50.9, on page 40 of the act, where line 50 of the English version and line 46 of the French version do not correspond. What happens is that in English they say "if satisfied" and in French "soit convaincu". We know very well that this is not the same thing in law; it is not the same terminology and it does not have the same meaning. Therefore, the *Barreau* made a recommendation which the Standing Committee ignored, and the result is that the same mistake is still in the bill that is before us.

Now, if you go to the following page, that is page 41, it is even worse. Indeed, part of the English text has not been translated into French. I am talking lines 15 and 16, which I will read to you in English:

• (1820)

[*English*]

"or any extension thereof granted under subsection 9".

[*Translation*]

In paragraph 11 of the French text, there is no reference to what I just read; it is simply not translated.

Once again, the committee ignored the recommendations of the *Barreau*. It is as though there were no French-speaking people on this committee, or nobody that could at least read French, since the wording of the bill is still exactly the same as it was when the *Barreau* appeared before the committee.

I think it was important for me to emphasize this situation. In fact, I can tell you why the *Barreau* insists and says that in the English version of section 50.4 (9), which I just referred to, it is said that the court may grant an extension of time for filing a proposal if it is satisfied. Obviously, it is not the same thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I must remind the hon. member that we are debating Motions Nos. 29 and 30 which, I believe, are not related to the motions referred to by the hon. member.

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, Motions Nos. 29 and 30 relate to clause 46 of the bill which relates to section 50 of the former act. These are additions being made. I would point out that Motion No. 29 specifically relates to section 50.4(2) while Motion No. 30 relates to section 50.4(12).

What I am talking about here, is subsection (9) which is part of the same section. If you tell me that I cannot speak on a given subsection because it is not subsection such and such, I think this raises some questions. Right now, I am referring specifically to the clause being debated.

Are you sure, Mr. Speaker? I believe I am referring to section 50.4. Of course, I am somewhere between subsections (2) and (12), but if you insist that we do not deal with other subsections in that section, I will have to wonder why, because it seems both important and relevant to me that we pick out the flaws in this bill.

There are even parts of the bill that are not translated, where there is no French translation provided. I think it is important to mention this to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs so that he can take note. This is not meant as a criticism against him, but rather as a constructive comment to help him and this House.

If I may, I would like to add one thing and I will end on that. I mentioned that, in section 50.4(9), there was a difference between being "satisfied" and "*convaincu*", "convinced", on the French side. I wanted to end on that, but I will keep reminding the minister, when the opportunity arises, of the correct usage of French. I will be delighted to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair is going by the wording of the motions put forward by the hon. member for Algoma, which call for amendments to clause 46 both in Motion No. 29 and in Motion No. 30. Perhaps the hon. member has another version of the motion that I am not aware of, but I am going by the very wording of the two motions being debated and both refer to amendments to clause 46.

At any rate, I do not want to get into a fruitless discussion on this. I just wanted to point out that the very wording of both motions that I have just read deal with clause 46. As a matter of fact, I will have to read them again, and I would invite her to pay attention, because that is indeed the clause we are talking about.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is on Motion No. 29. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

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), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) moved:

Motion No. 31.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 60 by adding immediately after line 25 at page 67 the following:

"(4) Subsection (2) does not apply in respect of a claim under paragraph 136(1)(*d*) and moneys owed to a claimant under that paragraph shall be deemed to be held in trust by the bankrupt from the date when the amount claimed became due."

Motion No. 32.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 63 by adding immediately after line 8 at page 76 the following:

"69.5 A creditor who has a claim provable in bankruptcy under paragraph 136(1)(*d*) is not subject to a stay under sections 69 to 69.3 in respect of the amount owed to the creditor.
69.6 Except for paragraphs 69(1)(*c*) and".

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of these two motions is to make sure, even within a bill that has turned its back on the major principle of wage protection for workers who have lost their wages in a bankruptcy, that justice for these workers is put back into the bill.

How do these two motions intend to do that? They intend to protect the wages of workers in the same way and in the same manner as Revenue Canada funds from a bankrupt company, unemployment insurance premiums and Canada pension premiums are protected. In other words those contributions are set aside by the trustee. They are deemed trusts. They are not part of the assets of the bankrupt company.

Therefore we are suggesting that the wages of workers up to $2,000 be treated in exactly the same manner. They would be set aside in a deemed trust. They cannot be touched by any financial institution or creditor that seeks to come in and grab it.

It seems to me that this is fair. If the workers had been paid on the Friday and the following Wednesday the company went down the tubes, the creditors could not come to the workers and say: "Give back the cheque". In the same way we have to recognize that every worker is worthy of his hire and his labour must be respected.

That is why these two amendments seek to put that back in. After all, the Crown has protected whatever that company has deducted from the employees in terms of UI premiums, Canada pension premiums and Revenue Canada deductions. Those moneys do not get grabbed by the creditor. They are protected. All it is is extending to a logical conclusion that what is good for the government surely ought to be good enough to protect the workers as well.

• (1830)

It seems rather strange that the government will have collected its taxes from wages that were never paid to the workers because the money deducted goes into the trust. Yet they never get the net wages.

I find it passing strange that this government later on in the bill, apart from this particular priority for the Crown, gives away some $25 million of federal Crown priority money. It gives it away. And there is $15 million for the provinces, so $40 million altogether is given away of the Crown's priorities apart from those that I have just mentioned. They are considered in trust and cannot be touched by the creditor.

My amendments are very logical. I see the minister here tonight. He looks like a reasonable person. This is a reasonable proposal. Why would he object to that? After all, he said: "Look, we have to go ahead with the restructuring part because we can save some businesses. If we save some businesses, we have saved some jobs."

If that is the case, then it will cost a lot less than $61 million. We are not even talking about $61 million because if a company can be restructured and jobs saved, then it will not even cost $60 million. It will cost less than $60 million.

Now in all fairness, who of all creditors, who of all the major stakeholders would stand up and say: "The worker is not entitled to get his pay"? Who, I ask? Who is the government listening to? All reasonable people in this country would recognize that the workers ought to be treated in the same manner as the government to whom they pay their taxes is treated, in the same way as the financial institutions whom our major creditors do business with are treated.

This government can underwrite a loan to the Westray mine for $80 million and we cannot find less than $60 million. The Bank of Nova Scotia is going to foreclose and it will collect its $85 million from the guarantors. It will not be out. The government will find the money. It will find the $85 million.

Mr. Harvard: From the workers.

Mr. Rodriguez: Oh, yes, from the workers, but it will not put any money into the workers' pockets. It is a shame.

In fact these two amendments are very logical. They are fair. They put back a sense of fairness into the bill. One of the things I have always seen in drafting a bill such as this which affects so many stakeholders is you look for balance. Any government that has its head screwed on properly looks for balance.

This government throws out the principle of balance. How can it just sit there and so blithely ignore the workers? We know it is unbalanced. We know that the present act has a limit of $500 which was put into the bill in 1949. We know that only 30 per cent of workers in bankruptcies who are owed wages ever collect. Seventy per cent never get one plug nickel, not one dime. How could any government sit there and bring in a bill when it said it recognized these two major principles, one was fairness to workers and the other was restructuring and totally ignore the balancing element that should be in the bill?

Once this government gets the bill it will forget the workers. I say to this government that the workers will not forget this government. Not only has it brought them a series of taxes, 34 times, it is also making them pay for their unemployment insurance program. The premiums keep going up and up and the government lets the unemployment rate go up and up and up.

I remember Bryce Mackasey. He was the minister responsible for the unemployment insurance fund. He brought in the new act in 1971. He always went on the principle that as long as the government had a financial responsibility to the unemployment insurance program, then the onus was on it to make sure that the unemployment rate stayed down, because every time the rate went up the government also paid.

The government since 1984 has removed itself from any responsibility whatsoever for unemployment in this country. In this bill it has removed itself from any responsibility for making sure that workers, when a company goes down the tube, get some justice.

We did not even touch the thorny question of the walk-aways. We could not even look at the problem of a company that just closes the door and walks away. We just looked at this narrow principle of paying those workers in a bankrupt situation.

We did not even ask for a full coverage of benefits. It was just wages and vacation pay. Over there, government members have cold hearts. They are cruel and cold in their approach to workers in the Bankruptcy Act. They had a responsibility and they ducked their responsibility. The people will not forget them whenever that next election is called.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, there have been some consultations, and I think you will find there is unanimous consent in the Chamber for the following motion.

I move:

That when no further members rise tonight for debate at report stage of Bill C-22, then the recorded divisions on Motions Nos. 29, 31, 32, 34, 39 and 42 and on the motion for concurrence at report stage be deferred until tomorrow, June 9, at five o'clock p.m., and all other remaining motions be deemed to have been negatived on division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. members have heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I will be very quick. I want to say to my hon. colleague for Nickel Belt that once again, he shows good sense in putting forward these two amendments. What he said is exactly correct.

I want to underline for those watching that Bill C-22 was originally called an act to enact the Wage Claim Payment Act, to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof.

It was the original intent of this bill to ensure that workers had their wages protected. It was a major cornerstone, a major centrepiece of this bill.

• (1840)

This government, by negativing all of the clauses that deal with that effectively is saying that it really did not mean what it said when the bill was originally put in place. That was that the workers in Canada must be protected in cases of bankruptcy and that their wages be paid.

The member has also made a great deal of sense when he talks about how governments look after themselves. Governments certainly feather their own nests, both provincially and federally. With dollars owed to them they establish what is known as deemed trusts. When they establish these deemed trusts, they make sure they are the first ones to move in and take the money out when there is a bankruptcy.

These two amendments put forward by my colleague from Nickel Belt would ensure that those workers' wages not get treated any differently from how government treats money that is owed to it, but that it simply gets treated the same. The moneys owed to workers in a bankruptcy situation are deemed to be in a trust situation. They are no different from moneys owed to the Crown; no more, no less.

In these amendments the hon. member has certainly underlined how the government treats workers a lot different from how it treats debts owed to the Crown

and, indeed, a great deal different from how it treats debts owed to its friends in big business.

I am pleased to get up and say we will be supporting the motions that have been put forward. They truly do reflect what I thought during pre-study was the absolute unanimous consensus of the consumer and corporate affairs committee when we dealt with the rights of workers.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to support the amendments introduced by my colleague, the member for Nickel Belt. In so doing, I want to mention a quote from the father of the emancipation proclamation in the United States that I think applies to this bill. That was almost 130 years ago. The quote is: "Labour is independent of and prior to capital and, therefore, deserves much the higher consideration".

I do not think any piece of legislation cries out for the application of that principle more than does Bill C-22 now before us. Surely a principle that was so clearly stated by, perhaps, the greatest president in the history of the United States having to do with the priority of labour in relationship to capital has never been as clear as it is in the principle of the amendment my colleague from Nickel Belt has placed before the House today.

Since 1949, workers in Canada have been told to get to the back of the bus. There have been about six attempts over the last number of years to try to bring in legislation regarding bankruptcies and the priority that working people ought to have in the situation of bankruptcies into this last decade of the 20th century. How we can continue to see argued what the government appears to be arguing by its neglect of the status of employees in this day and age is beyond me.

I had thought that even Conservatives of any stripe, not to mention Conservatives who have the audacity to call themselves Progressive Conservatives cannot move beyond this stage and take us back 130 years to before Confederation in their values. It just blows by mind.

I am sure it must do much more to those thousands of workers across Canada, especially during this recession or depression, or whatever you want to call it, who have found themselves left at the back of the bus watching government collect its due and watching the financial institutions collect their due when their employers go bankrupt.

Many of my constituents, particularly in the Selma and Wilmer areas faced exactly that situation in smaller forest products companies during the last few months. How they can look with any degree of charity or understanding at the inaction of this government on this matter is a great tribute to their patience, if they have that patience.

I am not choked up because of the subject matter of the bill, although that would be enough to choke anybody. I am afraid I am coming down with a bit of a cold.

I would hope that members opposite will listen to the very cogent remarks that have been made by my colleague from Nickel Belt in committee over the past number of months. They should search their own hearts and their own consciences.

I do not know what their reason was for pulling back—simply because there was a disagreement as to the type of funding mechanism that was to be used in order to give Canadian employees the rights to which they are entitled? Did they think they were going to embarrass somebody by pulling back simply because we would not agree with their rationale at this time of deep economic recession of imposing another special tax, a head tax, in a sense, on employees across Canada?

Surely they could see the nonsense in the kind of financial proposal they had, but even if they did not the least they can do for the very small sum of up to $2,000 in super priority that my colleague's amendment suggests is to go so far as to record that very modicum, that very minimum protection to those employees whose families are already suffering enough.

If the government went without getting its money out of a bankruptcy or if a bank did not get its money out of a small business bankruptcy, no child would go hungry and no child would not be able to afford decent clothes to go to school. We would find other ways of adapting.

What the government will do if it denies these amendments is to continue to force, for the next 43 years, the same kind of situation that has affected thousands and thousands and thousands of working families, poorer families across Canada, that have seen their companies go under in hard economic times.

The action of the government is unjust. I ask it to take a second look and give a modicum of justice to Canadian employees and their families from coast to coast across this country. It is time that there was an emancipation proclamation for the working people of Canada.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to join with the other members in the House who were supporting the amendment of the hon. member for Nickel Belt, Motion No. 31.

We are talking about a relatively small amount of money here. It is my understanding that the Wage Earner's Protection Act was going to provide something like $62 million a year across the whole nation for those employees who lose their wages because of a bankruptcy.

What do we spend on unemployment insurance? Is it $14 billion or $15 billion a year? What do the banks lose with companies like the Reichmanns or Dome Petroleum or the Third World debt? They lose hundreds of millions, maybe $2 billion of $3 billion on Canary wharf and the Reichmanns alone.

Why should the banks or the Government of Canada have super priority over the little wage earner who is maybe owed $4,000 or $5,000 and he or she does not have a priority? I just want to support the motion for the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Clearly the wage earner's funds should be protected. They should have a super priority or should at least be on the same basis. Those funds are everything that individual is earning. If the banks lose a little bit, the total amount that was provided for before the government did its flip-flop on the Wage Earner's Protection Act was something like $62 million.

Surely this is a reasonable amendment that the government should accept.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Since no more members wish to speak, pursuant to order adopted by the House earlier today, the recorded vote on Motions Nos. 31 and 32 is deferred.

• (1850)

We will now proceed to consideration of Motions Nos. 33 and 34. Since the mover of the motions is not in the House, we will proceed to consideration of Motions Nos. 35, 36, 37 and 38, which have been grouped for debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth) moved:

Motion No. 35.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 65 by striking out line 31 at page 79 and substituting the following therefor:

"inventory, accounts receivable and any amount paid in respect thereof, of or held by the purchaser as of".

Motion No. 36.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 65 by striking out line 34 at page 79 and substituting the following therefor:

"claim, right or charge against that inventory, accounts receivable and any amount paid in respect thereof,".

Motion No. 37.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 65 by striking out line 41 at page 79 and substituting the following therefor:

"way disposes of inventory, accounts receivable and any amount paid in respect thereof, covered by".

Motion No. 38.

That Bill C-22 be amended in the English version in Clause 65 by striking out line 45 at page 79 and substituting the following therefor:

"realized on the disposition of that inventory, those accounts receivable or any amount paid in respect thereof,".

He said: Mr. Speaker, the intent of the motions we have before us grouped together is to offer a greater degree of protection to farmers and fishermen for the value of goods they have sold to a company that subsequently finds itself in a state of bankruptcy.

Under Bill C-22, as we studied it in committee, there was no provision to recognize the special circumstances that farmers and fishermen find themselves in. The bill sought to give some redress to those companies or individuals who have sold goods to a company just prior to that company declaring a bankruptcy.

What had happened over and over again, and we heard this from the Canadian Apparel Manufacturers Association and from all kinds of groups both during our pre-study and study after second reading, was that companies many times when they find they are just about to go belly up go and extend the credit they have from their suppliers. They would stock up on inventory,

hoping they will be able to discharge that inventory through fire sale prices or whatever they do.

They hope they will be able to liquidate, get a lot of money in and pay the bank, because it is usually the bank that is just ready to force them into bankruptcy. They can keep the bank happy and hopefully by giving it enough dollars they will be able to forestall the bankruptcy. Normally that is what happens in a lot of cases.

When individuals or companies find themselves that close to the edge sometimes they do things they would not normally do. Normally what happens here is if the company is petitioned into bankruptcy by a creditor, usually a secured creditor, again a bank or financial institution, the bank would swoop in and basically seize the assets for which it had a charge on, and there is usually a floating charge on inventory the banks have.

What the banks would do is to say you need working capital so what we will do here is give you $30,000 worth of working capital. We will take a floating charge on what we believe is the average value of your inventory during a particular period of time.

What Bill C-22 sought to do was to put some rights in there to those suppliers of goods so that they could not find themselves basically at the bottom of the line when maybe only two days before they sold maybe $50,000 or $100,000 worth of goods on tick, on credit, to a company that subsequently went bankrupt.

They could look through the window when the sheriff put the lock on the door and say they own all of those coats or they own those washers or they own those chairs in there, but they could not get those chairs back out once the proceedings on bankruptcy started.

Mostly what would happen was that when the trustee would be appointed he would go in and liquidate the assets. The bank would get the value of the goods of that company or individual. It may be even the same day. They could not get them out of there. It was inherently unfair that the banks would be allowed to do that. There was nothing that could be done.

In many cases when this would happen it would force a subsequent bankruptcy on to the company that provided the goods in the first place.

Bill C-22 came forward which said it would provide for revindication which means take-back rights. It said that if a company had sold goods to a company within the 30 days of the assignment into bankruptcy, it could go and take the goods or a portion of those goods back if that is all that was left, provided that the goods were identifiable, that there was no value added to them and that they were not altered.

It was not a perfect amendment but it did offer some protection to those companies and individuals who provided goods and found that their interest even in the few hours later was taken over by the banks' interest. It is something that everybody on the committee supported.

There was a particular difficulty with the bill. Farmers and fishermen are in an unique situation. I was told by some of my colleagues, like my colleague from Algoma, if somebody is a beef farmer and has some cattle and sells the cattle to a slaughter house that subsequently goes bankrupt the next day, it is pretty darn hard once livestock is slaughtered to identify the cattle. It is difficult when it is still on the hoof even if it is not slaughtered. Once it is altered in any way, shape or form, it did not meet the qualifications to be revindicated or to be able to be taken back.

Again, it is the same for fishermen. In the case of fishermen, if I am down in Eastern Passage or if I am down in Ship Harbour, Spry Bay or any of those places, and I sell my catch to a fish plant, as soon as I sell it, unless you do something with it, it is going to go awful bad. There will be an awful stink around there. The first thing they do is put it on ice. If that company went bankrupt that day, even if I could identify my fish—I do not think you could because I have seen a lot of fish and it is pretty hard to distinguish one codfish from another unless you are pretty good at identifying codfish—there has been value added.

Under the proposed regulations for revindication in Bill C-22, you would not be able to go in and get your fish back at all.

I spoke to the minister about this and I said this is inherently unfair. There is a special case to be made for farmers and fishermen. Why do we not give them some type of super priority, recognizing, for instance in the case of the cattle rancher, that they may sell 50 per cent or maybe all of their year's product, all of the herd, to one slaughter house at one time? They could lose their entire inventory on the farm by one sale and never get anything back. Fishermen, who do not make a lot of money anyway, could sell some of their day's catch, their lobster, and if the company went bankrupt that they sold it to, they would never be able to get it back out.

We looked at it and I talked to the minister and talked to his officials and said: "Why do we not be innovative here? Let us see what we can do as far as super priority, at least for the value of some of the goods". When the bill came back to us we went through committee. The government had proposed an amendment that would allow for a degree of super priority for farmers and fishermen that if their goods were sold within 15 days it would allow them to have super priority on the value of any inventory that remained with the bankrupt company.

I thought that was a good move. However, I do not think that it went far enough. The intention of these amendments that we have before us is to provide a little more. The intention of the amendments before us is also to provide a first charge on accounts receivable as well. Basically it says that is fine. You have gone 50 per cent of the way, government, in providing for the first time—I am certainly not criticizing the government for this—some special protection for farmers and fishermen so that they can revindicate and so that they are not forced to the bottom of the heap when we all know that by the time they get to them there is no money left. To make this a little more palatable, I put these motions forward that basically say that they should have first charge on the value of any inventory or accounts receivable as well.

• (1900)

I would urge those in the House, and the minister in particular, to look at this particular amendment. We have gone about 50 per cent of the way. I think everybody on the committee is proud, including members on my side of the House and the government side of the House, that we were able to come to an accommodation for those farmers and fishermen. We recognize the special circumstances they are in. This motion just goes a little farther to ensure that they get a greater degree of protection than what is currently offered in the bill.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, just briefly I want to rise in support of the motion by my hon. colleague and friend from Dartmouth.

Not only do I support it in solidarity and in principle, but I would argue for super priority for workers' wages. We did not get it. I would support also the super priority for those fishermen and farmers as they are the least able to defend themselves when the banks sit down with all the other creditors, with their fancy Dan, fast-talking lawyers. Lost in the shuffle are the interests of the smaller stakeholders, the smaller players.

In solidarity I would say not only do we want it for the workers who have lost wages, but we want it for suppliers. They are the workers too. They have worked to bring in that catch or to raise that product. Then they hand it in and watch through the grate as their produce is taken and sold off. Who is the big winner in all of this, Mr. Speaker? The big-shot creditors.

I have no hesitation in supporting my colleague in this amendment. It is a common sense proposal. I would hope that the government would listen to the entreaties of members on this side of the House and acquiesce to this request to put this kind of justice back into the system.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I want to add my words of support to the hon. member for Dartmouth and the motions which he has put forward. There has been unanimous support among the agriculture producers that the government's action, although commendable for what it has done by recognizing that there needs to be a super priority, is simply inadequate. There are many producers in this country, especially beef producers, who may perhaps have a pay day once a year. Their entire production, if it is a cow calf operation, may be sold in one operation. If the stockyard or the company purchasing them goes broke, they lose their entire year's production. I think that we have to look at this amendment.

I look at the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and recognize that he is the Minister of State for Agriculture as well, representing those producers in Quebec. I think back to the time when the free trade deal was going through. Producers right across this country, especially those in the supply management sector, said to him: "No, this is wrong. You are doing the wrong thing in this free trade deal. You are removing tariffs on processed food. You are going to destroy our supply management system". They even presented to him the American benefits from this deal which they knew would eventually come—God help us, I hope they never do—as a beautiful white horse. The benefits to the Canadian producers was a rabbit.

I do not want to see the Minister of State for Agriculture doing something to farmers again which is going to produce that kind of image, with the big banks and the big creditors getting everything, and the farmers ending up with nothing. The various farm groups, the Ontario Pork Producers, the Ontario Wheat Producers, the Federation of Agriculture, have all called for the amendment which the hon. member for Dartmouth has put forward.

In a letter from the Ontario Pork Producers, they specifically say that the proposed changes only allow—these are the ones that the government has so far put forward—livestock producers to be repaid from inventory on hand, which is totally inadequate, as with cattle and hogs that are slaughtered and become meat which will remain in inventory for only a very short time. Hence for this section to provide much needed help to the hog industry, it should be changed to allow claims to be secured from inventory plus accounts receivable and cash resulting from livestock originally purchased.

The member for Dartmouth as our critic for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has drafted the exact amendment which farm groups right across the country are asking for.

I would hope that the minister would have a change of heart, that he would consult with his caucus colleagues and his cabinet colleagues tomorrow before this vote comes forward. Maybe he will change his mind and think about his responsibility as the Minister of State for Agriculture, and stop pandering to the big banks, to the big interests in this country. They lose hundreds of millions of dollars with big companies but are putting the screws right down on small producers of livestock, cattle, and fishermen in the areas of our country where fishing is the prime industry.

I would hope that the minister will look at it very closely. He will be covered tonight because we have already put down a motion, but if he changes his mind overnight, I know it would be very much appreciated by the livestock producers and other farm groups who have said that the amendments which are brought forward so far are totally inadequate and that the amendments put forward by the member for Dartmouth are exactly what is needed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, for the last couple of hours I was sorely tempted to comment, especially while listening to the last speaker.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Algoma picked on me a little bit on the amendment as I am looking after my two portfolios in this particular sector.

Sure I listened, Mr. Speaker. If you look at the report of the standing committee and you look at what we brought to the House, we brought more. Even those members on the committee brought this to the attention of the government. I thought it was possible for us to do more after looking at the whole thing.

I think if we go for what the hon. member has mentioned, we will give more now to farmers and fishermen than we are giving to the unpaid suppliers. What we have tried to do is bring a balance between their rights.

What we are really doing is—

[*Translation*]

As we gave certain rights to unpaid suppliers, we realized that fishermen and farm producers, for instance, would be unable to recover the goods they had delivered, because farm produce and fish catches are often processed in a matter of minutes upon arrival at the plant. What we wanted to do is at least give them a chance to recoup their losses from inventory, like the unpaid supplier who tries to recover from inventory what he delivered within a certain period. That is what we wanted to do with this legislation.

I think this is fair and reasonable, as reflected in the proposed amendment. That is as far as we can go. Otherwise, we would have to start consultations all over again and give more to one sector or the other. In this respect, I agree with some of my colleagues who spoke today. I listened carefully to practically everything that was said since this afternoon, and I think we have a bill that contains most of the recommendations that were made and that we could accept. That is the purpose of this amendment. However, the government can go no further than I indicated earlier.

• (1910)

In fact, I think I am doing more than what my colleagues suggested in committee. That is the truth, and I think they would be prepared to admit as much. I had meetings with farmers' associations and associations of western growers. I met these people several weeks ago, and my own people at the department also met them on several occasions. I think they will be reasonably satisfied with what we have here.

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, as I rise to make a few comments here tonight, I do so being fully cognizant of the hardships that are inflicted upon farmers across this nation on a good many occasions and hardships that are inflicted upon the fishermen of this country.

When I look at the amendments put forward by my colleague from Dartmouth, I have to concur with this, especially giving some security to those primary suppliers in terms of the accounts receivable. I am very cognizant of the fact that with some of the buyers of these products, particularly with some of the very large chains and horticultural products, it is usually 90 days payment on those products. Consider the fact that the average turnover of the products on the shelves of those large chains is 27 times a year. With horticulture products it is probably twice a week. They have that money for a long, long period of time for their own use and investments and the producers are deprived of that money. If they have to wait 90 days, one of the weaknesses is the fact that they only have 30 days security on products delivered.

While I support the motion I want to point out that perhaps 30 days is not enough in a lot of cases. I would point that out to the minister. I also recognize the fact that the Ontario hog producers as well as the white bean producers and wheat producers have had first hand experience with what happens when a company goes bankrupt. As a producer, I know that as well. The inventory had been taken by the securitor, be it the bank or whoever had the loan secured, and applied it against their own debt owing. As a consequence, the farmers were left holding the bag.

I remember one case in particular where it was over several million dollars. That court case went on for a lot of years. It is with these thoughts in mind that I believe the primary producer, whether he is a farmer or a fisherman, should have priority rights in cases like this. When their product is delivered to the processor or the end user, regardless of what the case may be, they should have rights on both the inventory and the accounts receivable for their efforts on the products they produced.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Since Motion No. 34 was not put before the House, and in the spirit of the order adopted earlier today, the vote on Motion No. 35, which will eventually be applied to Motions Nos. 36, 37 and 38, is deferred.

We will now proceed to consideration of Motion No. 39.

[*English*]

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) moved:

Motion No. 39.

That Bill C-22 be amended in Clause 66

(*a*) by striking out line 32 at page 81 and substituting the following therefor:

"86. In relation to a bankruptcy or"; and

(*b*) by striking out lines 36 to 42 at page 81, lines 1 to 47 at page 82, lines 1 to 45 at page 82, line 1 to 45 at page 83, lines 1 to 47 at page 84 and lines 1 to 6 at page 85 and substituting the following therefor:

"claims."

He said: Mr. Speaker, the original bill the government brought forward, Bill C-22, included two principles. One was wage protection and the other was the restructuring of businesses on the verge of bankruptcy or insolvency.

One of the things the government was prepared to give up was some of its Crown priority. It was going to drop down in terms of being a preferred creditor to an ordinary creditor. You have the Crown as a secured creditor and then you have it as preferred creditor. The government argued that being a preferred creditor often prevented the restructuring of a business to save it from bankruptcy and insolvency because the Crown had to be paid first.

All of that of course was hinged on the fact that we had a wage protection plan and this was the balance, the government was giving up its preferred creditor status. It was giving up a value of $25 million in federal taxpayers' money and $15 million in provincial government taxpayers' money. A total of $40 million was being given up.

The argument was that there was a quid pro quo here that on the one hand there would be this wage protection fund and that businesses would be contributing to it and the government, on the other hand, would give up this $40 million from both levels of government.

The government has abandoned the wage protection plan. The workers are no longer protected. Workers will no longer get their wages. On the other hand, the government is giving up its Crown priority as a preferred creditor status. It is giving that up, giving up $40 million, and what is it getting in return? The government is getting zippo, zilch, nada, niente, zero, nothing. It has given up $40 million just like that. Yet the workers cannot get $61 million.

Since the government has wiped out and thrown the workers out the back door, my motion seeks to put them into the back of the bus again. Then the taxpayers ought to collect their $40 million. Why should we give up the $40 million that is entitled to the Crown? What a mediaeval view of government, that the government can give up moneys owing to it. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? The government is giving up $40 million, not only for themselves but for the provinces as well.

I say that the government should not give up the $40 million. This motion seeks to restore the preferred creditor status to the government so that it can collect the $40 million. Maybe that is a good place to start in the future with respect to developing a wage protection fund.

Why does the government not recognize that even at this late stage there is a chance to restore the Crown priority to a preferred creditor status? Why is it dropping down? The argument is that it facilitates the restructuring of businesses, but in fact if you have to restructure a business, the Crown has a preferred status and it has to be paid before you can restructure anything.

The government has high hopes for the restructuring of businesses in the face of potential bankruptcy or insolvency. The fact of the matter is that in the United States chapter 11 has been in effect. We know from looking at the history and the results of that chapter 11 legislation in the United States that approximately 20 per cent of all potentially bankrupt or insolvent companies ever get saved. All it does is put off the day of reckoning. The fact of the matter is that only 20 per cent that claim protection under chapter 11 in the United States get saved.

I do not want to put cold water on the government's hopes for C–22 in terms of restructuring potential bankruptcies and insolvencies, but the story is that it does not save very many.

What has the government given up? It has given up $40 million. I want the taxpayers to know that. Who are the greatest beneficiaries from having given up that $40 million? It just means that there are more assets for the secured creditors to grab. All it is going to do is make the financial institutions that may be the secured creditor even flusher. These institutions will get even more benefits from this.

We now see a flow from the taxpayers' pockets to the big deep pockets of the financial institutions.

I say to the government: repent now. It is not too late. The moment of truth has come. I say to my Tory friends: repent now. Judgment is at hand. It is not too late to do the right thing by the taxpayers of this country. Replace the Crown priority. Put the Crown back in its preferred status and let us put that $40 million toward a wage protection fund.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to order adopted earlier today by the House, the vote on Motion No. 39, standing in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt, is deferred.

We will now proceed to consideration of Motion No. 40.

[*English*]

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) moved:

That Bill C–22 be amended in clause 81 by striking out line 44 at page 90 and substituting the following therefor:

"the extent of five thousand dollars in each"

He said: Mr. Speaker, this particular motion deals with the wage refund ceiling. At the present time workers, if they can get anything at all, get $500. This was the amount set in 1949.

The minister, having totally thrown workers out of any opportunities to get justice in this bill, having given up one of the major stakeholders, having abandoned one of the major principles of the bill, having destroyed the balance which should exist in a bill of this type, tries to make it up to the workers by saying: "We have to adjust the $500 of 1949. What we are going to do is change it in the bill so that it will be up to $2,000".

It only covers wages and vacation pay, nothing else. I want to suggest to the House that if members go back to 1949 and take that $500 and adjust it for inflation over these 43 years, the amount should not be $2,000, it should be $5,000.

That is what this motion is attempting to do. It is to even up the status that the workers will now hold with the minister who has totally ignored the rights of workers in this bankruptcy bill. It at least tries to put in place a fair amount of money if they are going to collect anything that they ought to collect, up to $5,000.

It is not the solution that I would want, but the government has abandoned super priority. It rejected it, even though the committee that did the pre-study on this bill recommended to the government a super priority for worker's wages. It chose to reject that suggestion, that proposal and that recommendation of the committee. Instead, it just wiped them out completely.

This motion is seeking to adjust the 1949 dollars to 1992 dollars. It should be $5,000. I want to tell the House that I recognize it is just nothing but Canadian Tire money. Try to collect anything as I said before. Only 30 per cent of workers who did not receive their wages as a result of an insolvency or a bankruptcy have collected. I call it Canadian Tire money because their chances of getting it are practically zilcho.

Three out of 10 would be able to collect. Roughly about 29.9 per cent would be able to collect, so I would say that $5,000 at least recognizes the justice of raising the amount from $2,000 to $5,000. That is why I put this motion forward.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I want to support Motion No. 40 by my friend and colleague from Nickel Belt.

This has been a gruelling process. We started off almost one year ago with the introduction of the bill. The minister had a press conference on June 11. I was not here for the press conference because my wife was delivering her third child that day.

On that day, we had a new child and the House got Bill C-22. My child and the bill will be one year old by the time the bill is passed. It has been a gruelling process. I hope it has been a productive one.

However, one of the things that we did—

Mr. Brightwell: They've both done a lot of changing.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): One of the things we initially looked at under the original bill was whether or not the old act of 1949 clearly set out the principle that workers wages had some type of ranking in priority, in the disposition of assets from a bankruptcy. Unfortunately what it said was that they were an ordinary creditor. They are not exactly at the bottom but they are close enough to the bottom that by the time they come up and get their chance to try to get a few of the dollars they are owed, in nearly every case there is no money left because the secured creditors and the preferred creditors have gone in and have taken all of the worth out of the assets. That is pretty much what has happened.

We did an interesting thing at the time. We were still dealing at that point in time with the concept of a wage earner protection fund that would give up to $2,000 to workers to which wages had been unpaid with a valid claim.

At that point we argued that even with the wage earner protection fund, the $2,000 was not enough. What we did was a simple calculation. We called up Statistics Canada and asked them what would be the inflation factor between 1949 and 1991. They gave us a mathematical formula to figure it out. What it came out to was that $500 in 1949 would have been worth about $3,300 in 1991. Probably now it would be worth closer to $3,400 or $3,500.

We said to the government when it was still proposing a wage earner protection fund that if $500 was agreed way back in 1949 as a ceiling for wage claims, then certainly in 1991, $2,000 was not enough. Subsequent to that, we have seen and we have debated it here today, we have debated in committee and in public, that the government has reneged on his promise to protect workers wages, to give them the proper priority in the disposition of assets of a bankrupt. The government has reneged on that promise. It has walked away from it.

It has come forward and said that it recognizes that now that it has reneged on it, because it did not listen to the opposition in their wisdom on how this thing could be funded, it abandoned the concept of protecting workers wages in the assets of a bankrupt. It came forward and said: "What we will do with the existing act, they are still ordinary creditors, but instead of being able to access up to $500 we will allow them up to access up to $2,000". That is a bit of smoke and mirrors because if you look at the statistics, there are very few claims by workers that ever get fulfilled because there is very little money left and in most cases there is none.

In actual fact, the average wage claim is about $325 because that is all that is left after the banks pick the bankruptcy assets clean and the other preferred creditors get in there.

My hon. colleague has put a motion which I fully support. It says that if the government is not prepared to change the act, to do the right thing, to give super priority to workers for the wages they are owed, to say yes in the guts and the body of the Bankruptcy Act, that we recognize that a worker's input into the product or service is the labour that he gives to the company that employs him and therefore he should be right at the top and get paid for his labour. The government said no to that, but my hon. colleague has said that is fine. Even though they are still going to be ordinary creditors, most of them will get nothing because it will be picked clean. We should be realistic. As I said, five hundred in 1949 dollars is worth about $3,400 today and is still not enough.

• (1930)

My hon. colleague would say: "Let's put it at $5,000". On the outside chance that a couple of those companies will not be picked clean by the big banks and financial institutions, maybe there would be a little bit of light at the end of the tunnel for those workers who are losing the value of their labour.

The problem we have with all this really irks me. Those usually least able to afford the loss are the workers. People working at a fast food place or at a convenience store at $4.50 an hour might be owed $400 in wages.

Some $400 less is not going to make one iota of difference to the big bank. It will not make any difference at all. The banks will still make record profits next year just like they did last year in the middle of the recession. However $400 to single parents who work in an awful job for $4.50 an hour means the difference between whether or not they can put food on the table for their children or whether or not they go to the food bank or to the church to get food to feed their children in week three of the month instead of week four of the month.

If it could not find the money, surely to goodness the government could have found some other way to address that real concern. Instead of looking after the interests of the big banks and instead of telling us all the time that they are concerned about the urban poor, the rural poor, the single parents and all such stuff, it had an opportunity to put its money where its mouth is and to look after the ones at the bottom of the scale, the ones at the bottom of the ladder, and it did not do it.

The amendment of my hon. colleague will be a little bit of light but for all too few of them, but I am very proud to stand and say that the Liberal Party supports this motion. We would have liked to have seen super priority. We would have liked to have seen those individuals looked after properly. However, in the absence of that, this is a step in the right direction.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): According to the order agreed to earlier by the House, the vote on Motion No. 40 is negatived on division.

Motion No. 40 negatived.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) moved:

Motion No. 41

That Bill C-22 be amended in clause 81 by striking out lines 30 to 32 at page 91 and substituting the following therefor:

"(j) claims of the Crown not mentioned in".

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion is really consequent on Motion No. 39 which dealt with the Crown priority. Simply it was adjusting the wording in clause 81 so that it would be subsequent and consequent to what was done in clause 66.

I know colleagues on the other side would like to hear my speech again on the importance of the Crown's priority.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Rodriguez: I hear a voice crying in the wilderness, or is it a telephone call I am getting from Halifax telling me to vote? I hear a message coming over the telephones. Who is in the lead now?

I know that colleagues would love to hear my remarks on Crown priorities. I say to the government once again that the Crown priority should not be given up for all the reasons that I stated previously. This is a consequent amendment to the previous amendment to clause 66.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to order adopted by the House earlier today, Motion No. 41 is negatived, on division.

[*English*]

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) moved:

Motion No. 42

That Bill C-22 be amended in clause 81 by adding immediately after line 35 at page 91 the following:

"(1.1) Where, in the opinion of the trustee, payment of the whole or part of a claim under paragraph (1)(d) cannot be made within fifteen days of receipt of the claim, the trustee may borrow such sum as is necessary for payment of the claim or part of the claim provided that the proceeds to be likely realized from the property of the bankrupt will be, in the opinion of the trustee, sufficient to repay the loan with interests.

(1.2) In respect of a loan made under subsection (1.1), the lender has, for purposes of repayment of the loan with interests, all the rights and entitlement of the claimant under paragraph (1)(d)".

He said: Mr. Speaker, on this one I have to appeal to common sense on the other side. I now recognize that I have wound down my clock on trying to persuade the government that something has to be done with respect to workers in an insolvent situation or in a bankrupt situation where their wages have not been paid.

We know that under the current practice only 30 per cent of those workers ever collect anything. I want to make it crystal clear that I do not consider the workers' wages being paid either through a super priority or a wage fund as some sort of social program. It is not a social program.

I remember the member for Mississauga South kept repeating in committee that somehow or other by paying workers what they had worked for, earned and were entitled to but were never paid was somehow or other a social program.

If that is a social program then I would suggest it is social welfare to pay the banks what is owed them when a company goes bankrupt.

An hon. member: There is no difference here.

Mr. Rodriguez: As my colleague says, there is no difference, absolutely no difference. It is money that is owed to workers.

Having fought this battle all along in committee and having arrived at this point workers under the present regime, even the 30 per cent who are collecting, ought to be able to collect it with dispatch, with expediency.

This particular amendment would allow for that expediency so that there are no delays for the 30 per cent to go and collect from Mr. Bumble the shekels that are owed to them.

I can just see it. They would have to go to the trustee and apply and the trustee would establish whether they were entitled to get something. They are in the 30 per cent. Lo and behold after long periods of time, months, they would then get whatever they are entitled to.

This amendment proposes to allow for some flexibility in the system. It would allow the trustee to borrow the money that is owed to the workers because he may not have liquidated the assets and within 15 days to pay the workers.

That is not a difficult concept. That could very well bridge the period between when the company was closed and their eligibility for unemployment insurance.

What are workers supposed to do while they are waiting for the trustee to dispense these few shekels Mr. Bumble is offering them? They are supposed to go on welfare, I presume. I presume that the state now has to support them with welfare when they have wages they are entitled to and did not get. Unemployment insurance does not activate the claim under the present rules.

On this side of the House we were so forthcoming with positive proposals. It is not as if we just hung on to the super priority and that was the only solution. In fact one of the solutions we put forward to this problem of workers' wages was an amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act that would allow workers to activate their claims.

This government wanted solutions. Our committee and individual members—I know my colleague from Dartmouth and I did so—approached the minister with solutions. It is not as if we were just opposing for opposition sake. We were positively critical. We met with the minister. On every one of the proposals we put forward it was nyet, nyet. I almost thought he was playing on a Soviet hockey team. He had learned his lessons well. Nothing, nothing, nothing was acceptable.

We had the best talents this House could assemble on the committee. We had proposed several possible solutions. Every single one was turned down. We started to ask ourselves the question: Was this minister really interested in a solution, or was he simply just marching to the drums of the people in the ivory towers on Bay Street? Was he listening to Main Street or was he listening to Bay Street?

• (1940)

I kind of like the minister. He is a likeable fellow. He has a lot of good qualities that need to be developed, but came to the sad conclusion—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Rodriguez: The Ayn Rand of the Tory caucus sat in our committee when we first studied this bill. She went from one success to another. She left us to go on to the Constitution committee, now known as the Dobbie—Beaudoin committee. I heard she was equally successful on that committee as she had been in the initial stages of our committee. After she left we did it all.

An hon. member: Ayn Rand?

Mr. Rodriguez: Ayn Rand of the Tory caucus. It is sad to say that I have to come to the conclusion that the minister was not really interested in a solution for workers. It is a sad commentary that in fact he has taken one aspect of his portfolio much more seriously than the other. He is known as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but I have to say that he has taken the corporate part of his portfolio much more seriously than he has taken the consumer side of his portfolio.

There should be no joy in the minister's heart. He has totally left out one of the major stakeholders. If we do not do it now, another 43 years will go by and we will never ever correct this injustice for workers who have lost their wages as a result of a bankruptcy.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Nickel Belt has said that he is sad. I am sad too, listening to what he says.

I think my hon. friend is fair. We have worked together a long time to try to bring this bill before the House. We tried to respond to and to address concerns of Canadians on this legislation.

I do not want to be too specific on this particular element. I spoke to my hon. friend privately and I will repeat it. On the 15-day proposal, we all know that trustees have the right to borrow money and they do so often. There is a technical problem, and my hon. friend understands it. It is not that easy to force trustees to do anything when they enter a bankruptcy or a business that is going bankrupt.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, to repeat what I just said, it is somewhat unrealistic to allow a period of two weeks and oblige people to stick to that timeframe. It is practically impossible to meet this kind of deadline. Let me explain.

The right to borrow money is there. It was in the act and still is, and I am sure that right will be respected. We have made a number of improvements that will speed up the process, as the hon. member is aware, and the timeframe will probably be tightened.

In most cases, bankruptcies are settled in a matter of days. Some are settled in a matter of months or years, but these are not the majority.

I expect that most cases will take less time to settle, thanks to new procedures and changes in the legislation. I will not repeat all the amendments that were proposed, but I just want to mention that particular one, like the previous one, on which I did not comment specifically. The hon. member wants the ceiling set at $5,000, while the average claim is now around $1,000. That would be useless, considering the average is $1,000. With a ceiling of $2,000 we would be able to cover most claims.

Basically this is a very good bill. It was improved with the help of the hon. member for Dartmouth and the hon. member for Nickel Belt, who worked very hard. I realize they made some nasty remarks about me today, but that is all part of the game. I appreciated their comments throughout this process, a long and sometime arduous one, but as I have said before, I can take criticism, depending on the situation.

When we made some major changes in the bill, I said I accepted their criticism. Hon. members are aware there is a provision in this bill which stipulates that the legislation is to be reviewed within three years, a relatively short period of time for a bill. However, the government is committed, and we will review the bill, and I hope that once the bill comes into force, we will be able to work together to finally find a way to deal with the remaining issue of workers unpaid wages.

Together we will consider how this should be done, and I am sure we will succeed.

[*English*]

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the words of the minister. I thought he certainly had a much thicker skin than what he just gave us a glimpse of. He said that his colleagues are being very unkind to him.

I want to tell the hon. minister that if his colleagues on this side of the House are being unkind to him, he would have drowned in this bill a number of months ago. When his bill floundered because of some of the nonsense that was being played back in November by sneaking in amendments at the last minute and holding little press conferences, my hon. colleague from Nickel Belt and I could have left him to flounder on the rocks.

We got into a committee and when we got into that committee there was an amendment put forward and we argued, my colleague from Nickel Belt and my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and I, that the motion was out of order and the motion was deemed out of order by the chair after he consulted with the clerk. At that point in time they were prepared to move a motion to effectively overrule the chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary over there knows it was the opposition members who said before if you do anything on this, you had better recess the committee and consult with your people because you may kill the bill. If it were not for the comments made by the members of the opposition, this bill could have come back here and been ruled out of order.

When the minister talks about whether we have been kind or unkind to him today, when he could not find any money through the Minister of Finance to fund the wage earner protection fund, which we are talking about here, so that workers' wages could be paid, it was my colleague and I who went forward and met with him on a number of occasions and tried to help him out of his bind with his colleagues. His colleagues would not listen to him when he tried to get some money.

We sat down and said: "You told us early in the bill that you wanted a wage claim payment act because you felt that the interest of workers were not being looked after in the old bill. You said that you need a mechanism so there was certainty of payment and immediacy of payment". Those were the two criteria: certainty and immediacy of payment. My colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and I went forward and gave them a number of solutions.

They did not want to listen to super priority so we were innovative. We were very kind to the minister. We did not abandon the minister. We were not partisan. We sat down and tried to get him out of the shemozzle that he got himself in.

One of the things we said was take it out of general revenues so there was certainty and immediacy of payment and a balancing of the bill *vis-à-vis* the workers rights. We said: "Take it out of it for 18 months, Mr. Minister. Go to your Minister of Finance and say you will pay for it out of general revenues for 18 months and during that period of time put a body or a board in place to come up with a permanent funding mechanism". Maybe at that point in time it would be a tax and maybe the Tory's economic policies would have changed, or the government would have changed I hope, and we would be back into good times. We would not be in a recession any more.

• (1950)

The minister said that would not do. In order to make sure there was immediacy and certainty of payment which this amendment of my colleague seeks to do right now, we said to the minister what he should do.

Last year, 1991, a record year for bankruptcies because of this government's policies, there was $4.3 billion worth of assets from those bankrupt companies and bankrupt individuals.

I went to the Superintendent of Bankruptcies and I asked: "Is there not a fee charged on the assets as they get paid out?" They call them dividends. As the dividends get paid out to the creditors you charge a fee on them. The Superintendent of Bankruptcies said: "Yes, we do". I asked: "How much money do you get in?" The superintendent said $6 million.

I am not very good at math but it would appear there is a problem here because there was a 1 per cent or 2 per cent floating charge depending on how much; if it was $1 million, or under, or over. It did not make any sense to me so I asked if that got charged on all assets? He said: "No, Mr. MacDonald, it does not. The assets or dividends paid to secured creditors", which means the banks, "we do not charge them a fee". The only fee that gets charged is a fee charged on dividends paid to ordinary and preferred creditors. That is the only one.

We said to the minister that in order to get certainty and immediacy of payment, we will support a tax on the dividends that are paid out to financial institutions like the big banks.

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): If you would put a 1 per cent charge on it, you would raise more money than this program would cost the government in five years. We told him that and he said: "That is innovative but I do not think we can do it". He did not have the political will to do it.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): If you want certainty and immediacy of payment for those poor workers at $4.50 an hour, as my colleague said, that are going to be forced out on welfare when they do not get their last two weeks' wages, we said go to the UI fund and all you have to do in the UI fund is look. We thought the act was broad enough that the minister could have given authority to individuals with UI. It could have back dated the claim to the last pay period they actually got paid for. It is not going to take any money.

"No," he said "we cannot do that because it is on the UI system". We both said: "Well if you want us to pass this bill you are telling us it is going to save all of these jobs of these workers and, if that is the case, the UI system has saved a lot of money".

What is so wrong with trying to get some immediacy and certainty of payment for those people, the poorest of the poor, the dispossessed, those workers on the plant floor getting $4.50 per hour who cannot even pay their rent, who live below the poverty line? The minister never listened to any of it. I do not know if he did not have the political clout or what.

I want to tell the minister we did try to help him out. We are not being unkind to him. He listened. His colleagues did not listen to him. That was the problem. I want to support Motion No. 40 and the last motion we are dealing with, Motion No. 42.

The minister could not get his colleagues to agree on all of those good proposals we put forward in the spirit of non-partisanship in private meetings over and over again to get this thing done. All this motion does is basically say for those very few cases under the existing law, those 30 per cent of cases that might get something out of the assets of a bankruptcy, do not let them wait six months. By that point in time they are going to be pretty hungry.

All he said is that the effect of this motion would be to allow the trustee in bankruptcy, when he or she believed there was sufficient assets for fuller partial payment of wages—when they get down to ordinary creditor status—where there was full or partial payment available, to borrow the money and to pay those poor workers. That is all it does. There would be promptness of payment; maybe not the certainty we sought, but promptness.

I would like to support this. The minister may think he is having a bad day. I think he is actually having quite a good day. We have been extremely helpful on this side of the House in allowing this debate to go on a little longer.

We do want to see these positive changes to the bill, but we have to in this final hour once more show the government that there were other ways to proceed with the wage earner protection fund. We hope that over the next 24 hours, it reviews the positions that we put forward.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to order adopted earlier this afternoon, the vote on Motion No. 42 is deferred, and all votes will be taken tomorrow afternoon at 5 p.m.

[*English*]

By unanimous consent, the taking of the deferred division at the report stage of Bill C–22 stands further deferred until five o'clock p.m. Tuesday, June 9, 1992.

[*Translation*]

It being 7.55 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 7.55 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 9, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

NORTHERN PIPELINE AGENCY

TABLING OF 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, on behalf of the right hon. Joe Clark, President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, I am pleased to table in this House today, in both official languages, a copy of the report of the Northern Pipeline Agency for the period ending March 31, 1992.

* * *

[*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 five petitions.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

BILL C-49

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-49, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault), with amendments.

* * *

[*English*]

BILL C-55

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on 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, with amendments.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps you would permit me one moment to say how very pleased I am to report this bill. We had quite a number of meetings on it as it is a very technical bill. I want to commend the members of the committee for getting along so well in getting this bill through.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSE MANAGEMENT

44TH AND 45TH REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 44th and 45th reports of the Standing Committee on House Management.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 113(1), these reports are deemed adopted and laid upon the table.

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

Routine Proceedings

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ADDRESS OF BORIS YELTSIN

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I move:

• (1010)

That, notwithstanding Standing Orders 24(1) and 30, on Friday, June 19, 1992, the House shall meet at 2 p.m. and proceed to Statements by Members, Oral Questions, Routine Proceedings, followed by its usual business pursuant to the Standing Orders;

That the address of His Excellency Boris Yeltsin, President of Russia, to be delivered in the House Chamber on Friday, June 19, at 11 a.m. before the members of the Senate and the House of Commons, together with 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;

And that the address of the President of Russia, together with all introductory and related speeches be made available to the media for transmission in the usual way by the House of Commons broadcasting service.

Mr. Speaker: Does the parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION TO EXTEND HOURS OF SITTING

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 27(1), I move:

That the hours of sitting and business of the House commencing on June 10 to June 23, 1992 shall be as follows:

(1) Wednesday, June 10 and 17, 1992, 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Private Members' Business from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

(2) Thursday, June 11 and 18, 1992, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Private Members' Business from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Standing Order 38 proceedings from 10 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

(3) Friday, June 12, 1992, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Private Members' Business from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

(4) Monday, June 15 and 22, 1992, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Private Members' Business from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Standing Order 38 proceedings from 10 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

(5) Tuesday, June 23, 1992, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Private Members' Business from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Standing Order 38 proceedings from 10 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

(6) Friday, June 19, 1992, 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., Private Members' Business will be cancelled.

Mrs. Marleau: Mr. Speaker, for the record, could the minister tell us what legislation the government aims to bring forward and what it will be calling during these extended hours of debate in the House of Commons?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the legislation is on the Order Paper. We have been having discussions with the offices of the House leaders of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party concerning the scheduling of business.

The desire is, as is customary this time of the year, to look at that legislation which it is expeditious to have passed and put in place. Some is time sensitive in that there are implications in terms of taxing policy, benefits coming at an appropriate time and so on.

It is certainly my intention to discuss this with the opposition parties and other members in the House to facilitate the treatment of this legislation and also to make it possible for the appropriate critics to schedule their time so they can be here to participate in the debate on the bills that are of interest to them.

Mrs. Marleau: Mr. Speaker, can I have it confirmed there will be no motions, other than those presently on the Order Paper, discussed.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I am unable to give the hon. member an absolute assurance. There is the possibility of bills being introduced that may require some treatment before we adjourn, but that is not the intent of extended hours. The intent is primarily to deal with the current Order Paper.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

REFERENDUM

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to present to the House this morning concerning the holding of a referendum.

The Government of Canada put forth proposals for amending the Constitution earlier on. It established a citizens forum to ascertain the views of Canadians on numerous matters. Committees were set up to consult with the people of Canada concerning the proposals.

It should be noted that the Supreme Court has held that the Constitution of Canada belongs to the people. My constituents believe that consultations should extend to and include approving or disapproving constitutional amendments.

I would hope that the government would take this into consideration when it is bringing forth these proposals in the days ahead.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition concerning gasoline prices.

Gasoline prices are significantly higher in the Ottawa region than in other parts of the province. To that extent my constituents are calling on the government to take whatever action possible to correct this injustice to Ottawa motorists.

ABORTION

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition that was circulated by Give Life Canada on the issue of abortion.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to formulate and legislate a law to protect life from conception, a law which seeks to save the lives of both mother and child.

This petition is signed by several hundred petitioners.

REFERENDUM

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 36 of my constituents calling for the presentation of a referendum on the Constitution and requiring a majority of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada, together with a majority of the provinces with the territories being given the status of one province.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition signed by several hundred of my constituents criticizing the government for promising to freeze unemployment insurance premiums for three years and then reneging on that promise.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to request that the government immediately act to freeze unemployment insurance premium rates for both employers and employees for no less than one year.

They also request that the government forgo any further cuts to unemployment insurance benefits.

CANADIAN RACE RELATIONS FOUNDATION

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present three petitions from British Columbia stating that the Canadian race relations foundation is a federal government initiative passed by the House of Commons as Bill C-63 almost two years ago and demonstrates its commitment to eradicating racism.

The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to urge the government to consider the advisability of establishing the Canadian race relations foundation this fiscal year.

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition which requests that Parliament recognize that crimes of violence against the person are serious and abhorrent to society. It asks that the Parliament of Canada amend the Criminal Code, the Bail Reform Act, 1972, and the Parole Act accordingly.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition signed by a number of people from my riding asking that Parliament enact legislation that would protect the rights and the dignity of victims of sexual assault and counteract the prejudice and sexism surrounding the crime of sexual assault.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition to the House today under Standing Order 36.

It is a long-standing opposition by residents of northern British Columbia to the goods and services tax. This petition is signed by residents of northern B.C. in a number of communities, in particular Fort St. James, Prince George, McBride, Mackenzie and other communities.

• (1020)

They continue to call upon Parliament to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

LIGHTHOUSES

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from constituents living on the coast of British Columbia.

They ask that the federal government not proceed any further with the de-staffing of west coast lighthouses, that it implement the terms and conditions of the FURL report, *The Future Role of Lightstations* report, that it restore the person-years that have been removed from this program, and that it restore the budget cuts that have been put in place in anticipation of the de-staffing.

TAX BENEFITS

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition, again from residents of northern Vancouver Island who are extremely concerned about the cuts for rural and remote communities removing the isolated tax benefits.

They would ask that the government restore those tax benefits to people living in rural and remote areas as soon as possible.

* * *

[*Translation*]

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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Shall the questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER SECOND READING STAGE OF BILL C-80

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and 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 allocated to the consideration of the second reading stage of the bill; and

That, fifteen 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 stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

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:

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. 182*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell

Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bourgault	Brightwell
Browes	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Cook	Corbett
Couture	Danis
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Dick
Domm	Dorin
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fretz
Friesen	Gibeau
Greene	Guilbault
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hockin
Hogue	Holtmann
Hudon	Hughes
Jacques	James
Jelinek	Johnson
Kempling	Landry
Layton	Littlechild
Lopez	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Masse
Mazankowski	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
McLean	Mitges
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Oberle
Plourde	Porter
Pronovost	Redway
Reid	Reimer
Ricard	Richardson
Roy-Arcelin	Saint-Julien
Schneider	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Tétreault	Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van De Walle	Vankoughnet
Vézina	Vien
Vincent	Weiner
White	Wilbee

Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—110

NAYS

Members

Althouse	Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Barrett
Bellemare	Black
Boudria	Brewin
Butland	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Chrétien
Clancy	Copps
Crawford	Duceppe
Duhamel	Ferguson
Finestone	Flis
Foster	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gardiner
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hovdebo
Jordan	Kaplan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kindy	Lee
MacAulay	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
McCurdy	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Mitchell	Nunziata
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parent	Phinney
Proud	Riis
Rodriguez	Samson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Speller	Vanclief
Venne	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—64

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Boyer	Charest
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
Dionne	Dobbie
Duplessis	Karygiannis
Keyes	Martin (Lincoln)
Nault	Rompkey
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)	Walker

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*English*]

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, June 1, consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski 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 second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Calgary Southwest has one minute remaining in the debate.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will just conclude my speech with regard to Bill C-80 and the new child benefit package which puts $2.1 billion into the benefit package for families right across the country.

Not only is it going to be fair and more efficient, it is going to target funding at those who really need it. We will merge the family allowance program, the refundable child tax credit and the non-refundable dependent child tax credit into this new package.

I certainly look forward to the debate for the rest of the day. This is a move forward to streamline the government package and indeed put the moneys where they are most needed.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member a question. The new bill deals with some sort of increase when it comes to the working poor as well as when it comes to middle income families. However, there are certain aspects of the bill when it comes to families on welfare.

According to a study which was done by Ken Battle, president of Caledon Institute of Social Policy, it was indicated that the current legislation in terms of indexation would cost welfare families up to about 17 per cent of their—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but it is just a point of clarification. Are you in the period for questions and comments?

[*English*]

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, it is a question I would like to pose to the hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): You have the floor.

Mr. Harb: Could we get some answers to the statement made by Mr. Ken Battle when he referred to the fact that the new legislation would kick in when it came to increases in allowances only if the inflation rate was over 3 per cent a year? In other words, families on welfare would not receive an increase at all unless the inflation rate was over 3 per cent.

If that were the case and if the inflation rate were below 3 per cent we would see a decrease in benefits when it came to welfare families rather than an increase.

I would like to hear the hon. member's comments on this particular statement. In fact it is a valid analysis.

• (1110)

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, there were a couple of good points that my colleague from Ottawa Centre put forward.

One thing I want to make perfectly clear with regard to families on welfare is that they will not have any of their benefits cut under this new program in Bill C–80.

As I mentioned in my closing remarks, it will be $2.1 billion of new funding that will go into this particular program. Actually, there will be 2.4 million families that are going to have their annual child benefits increased.

With regard to Mr. Ron Bell, I do believe he did come out initially with some negative comments, but it will be noticed that there has not been anything later with regard to comments. Once he has reviewed the program and taken a specific look at those families on welfare, he will be assured that there will be no cutback.

On CPI, the indexation for most government grants, contributions and the benefit packages are over the 3 per cent. This is not knew. Even the family allowance was cut back on the indexation back in the years of, I believe, 1974 to 1976. That is not to say that the government is not aware of the escalation of inflation, if there is one. It would be taking a yearly look at the benefits going to all Canadian families, not just specifically those on welfare.

In conclusion, I have to say that over the last couple of years, fighting inflation and getting it down to the lowest rate that it has been in 20 years—I believe last month it was 1.7 percent—is something that all people should be working toward. It means that a dollar today is worth a dollar tomorrow.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, in many of the town hall meetings and other public meetings I have had in my riding my constituents consistently over the last couple of years have been asking me: "Can the government please take an initial step to end universality of social programs?" People have said that it makes little sense to them that the government provides social programs or provides cheques to families only to turn around and tax it back.

It seems in a common sense mode for a lot of people in my riding that the government should change this. Yet the Government of Canada has been on record as saying that social programs or universality has been a sacred trust.

I am wondering if the member can address that. Does she see this move in this new program to a more common sense attitude toward social programs, in other words a targeting of precious government resources to those who need them and perhaps an end to this concept that we must be all things to all people?

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for actually putting a very straightforward question: Can the government be all things to all people.

With regard to the precious revenues that we do have, there is only one taxpayer in Canada. Whether he or she is paying the municipal tax, the provincial tax or the federal tax, that taxpayer is the one who appears to get nailed.

What we are doing in this particular child benefit package is combining many family benefits into one monthly cheque that is non-taxable. It will be based solely on last year's tax return.

The hon. member is quite right that those in need, those who do need assistance from the government will receive it. It is actually over $76,000 a year on total income that it will be completely phased out. Those under $50,000 will lose nothing. Those over $50,000 will be slowly phased out, directly proportional to the income for that year.

I want to thank the hon. member for his assistance in working with the family caucus and the finance committee to see how we can become more streamlined in making sure that the funds we have go where they are needed.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member about this $500 added credit that a single parent would receive.

The purpose of this particular $500 credit described in the bill is to encourage mothers to move off welfare and back into the work force. They have actually been given another $500 credit. Is this what the legislation reads?

Mrs. Sparrow: Yes.

Mr. Mills: Yes. Do you really think $500 is a sufficient enough incentive to encourage people to stay in the work force, especially those at the lower income end of the spectrum, when they receive all of those medical expenses and all other expenses are basically covered while on welfare?

In other words, I am hearing from many single mothers in my community who would like to get back into the work force that it does not pay them to go back to work and that $500 over a year works out to less than $10 a week. That is hardly enough incentive to really put them back into the work force.

Mrs. Sparrow: Mr. Speaker, if I can interpret the question put forward, my colleague for Broadview—Greenwood feels the incentive should be larger.

There is no doubt about it that what we are trying to do here is to assist those people who are in the work force. Indeed, people on welfare are very needy people. Of course they will lose nothing under the child benefit package. Those people who have jobs will receive a tax incentive.

This should be combined with the program the Minister of Employment and Immigration put forward a few weeks ago. It is a pilot program dealing with single mothers in New Brunswick and British Columbia to top up their salaries. That is, for single parents on welfare who go out and find a job, we will top up their salaries so they can come closer to living within the community and be able to sustain not only their home and children, but also lift themselves out of the welfare system.

With these two programs in place, we will see a far greater incentive to get people off welfare. Obviously, it is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on Bill C-80 and to start, I would like to make a simple comment.

When it comes to the impact of Bill C-80 on the poorest family, there would be no increase. A family on welfare under the old system used to receive approximately $120 per month per child. Under the new benefit program, that family will receive the same thing.

When we are talking about those who are hit the hardest, there will be no extra money coming in from the proposed government bill. When we talk about those poor families, for example, when we look at single mothers on social assistance, they also will receive absolutely no additional funds as a result of the proposed legislation.

I had the pleasure of attending an annual meeting in the Ottawa area of the Our Kids organization. This organization has a mandate to build a better future for the children of the Ottawa-Carleton region.

It has a few purposes. One is to raise the priority for children in the eyes of the community. Another is to fund projects which meet children's basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, and education. As well, it encourages like-minded groups to work together on behalf of the children of the Ottawa-Carleton region.

• (1120)

I would like to commend this organization. It is two years old. It just elected a new board of directors. For the record, I would like to commend Janis Machin, who was elected as the president, Denise Mattok who was elected as the vice president, Diane Blenkiron as the secretary, Uttra Bhargava who was a member of the board and decided not to run again this year, Louise Allard, Stephan Klovan and Bernard Muzeen.

Last year these very capable people in consultation with the corporation and about 35 national and regional children's organizations managed to raise the profile of children in the Ottawa-Carleton region. Over 20,000 people visited the displays and facilities in an effort to create awareness in the community.

This is not the only thing that has taken place in my community. There is also St. Andrew's Church which in consultation with other community groups, business organizations, and church groups has embarked on an excellent partnership against poverty. As well, they are working collectively in order to promote awareness and do what they can as members of the community to deal with the subject of poverty in our society.

Recently, Our Kids sent a letter to the Prime Minister inviting him to attend one of its events some time in October 1992. In its letter it asked that Canada, or this House, designate a special day for children in Canada. We have Father's Day; we have Mother's Day; we have Canada Day. We have all sorts of days designated for special purposes. I want to echo those sentiments and add my voice to this organization in calling for the establishment of a national day to acknowledge our children, a child's day in Canada.

It would be appropriate to have that day on the anniversary of the meeting of the international community in New York on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I would like to congratulate Our Kids and all the different organizations in my community that are working tirelessly in order to do what they can to help solve the question of poverty.

We hear a lot in the media about the city of Ottawa being a fat city. In fact, that is absolutely untrue. Simply put, just a few blocks away, child poverty is no different from any other part of Canada.

In fact, in excess of 24 per cent of the children living in this city are poor. In excess of 55 per cent of all families under the age of 25 with children are poor. One out of every three single mothers in this community is considered to be poor. In excess of 78 per cent of all poor in this region have children.

It will be seen that while many people call our city a fat city, there is another side which is the poor side.

Why do we talk about child poverty? Why are we interested in child poverty? It is part and parcel of a bigger problem and that is the health of the nation as a whole.

When a child is poor, more than likely the health of that child is affected. In fact the impact of poverty on child health is that there is two times the normal risk of dying before the age of 20. Simply put, based on mortality, a poor child has twice the normal infant mortality rate. These deaths are from injury, fires, drowning, pedestrian traffic accidents and so on, as well as an increased rate of chronic illness, particularly between the ages of four and 16 years.

There are other problems associated with child poverty, such as increased psychiatric disorders and physical and mental disabilities. These are all problems associated with and resulting from child poverty.

While we are dealing with poverty, the health of those children is also affected. Children have poor health simply because they have a poor start in life. For instance, women in low income groups have twice the risk of having a baby born too soon or underweight. Therefore, the baby is doomed even before he or she is born.

The cause of this is maternal stress, substance abuse, poor nutrition, and lack of social support. The result is children with physical and learning disabilities, as well as developmental delay.

As well, the child's housing situation may not be adequate or safe. Child care arrangements may not be as appropriate as they should be. In our national capital region there is approximately a two-year waiting list for subsidized day care. In Toronto, there are in excess of 7,500 people on the waiting list for child care. Obviously that is part and parcel of the over-all problem that must be addressed.

When discussing child poverty and what the government is trying to do to deal with it the first thing to do is take the legislation to those who are experts, those who deal with child poverty, to get their reaction to the government's proposal. The child benefit program proposed by the government has not been given much encouragement by the different groups involved with child poverty.

For example, Sue Wolstenholme of the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association said: "This and other examples from the budget indicate once again that either the federal government still does not grasp the problem of child poverty and child care which Canadian families face or they really do believe they can trick the public with yet another illusionary tactic".

Mr. Gerard Kennedy from the Canadian Association of Food Banks had this to say about the bill: "It is the most deceptive and cruel thing coming from government that we have seen in a long time, and a tremendous blow to the hope of low-income people".

Patrick Johnston from the Canadian Council on Social Development had this to say on the bill:

> There's no question that the potential benefits will be completely offset by the lack of indexation. And it's done invisibly—that's the worst part of it.

Ms. Lise Corbeil from the National Anti-Poverty Organization criticized the proposed child benefit because it is inadequate as an anti-poverty measure and it favours the working poor at the expense of the non-working poor. She called the proposal a discriminatory package.

There are at least another seven or eight different organizations that deal with child poverty and every one of them has opposed the proposal and said it is inadequate in dealing with child poverty.

The media has also not reacted very favourably to the government proposals. A report in *The Globe and Mail* on March 10, 1992 said: "Report blasts child benefits. Says new system lowers incomes". It goes on to say:

> Single parents and other low income families will eventually lose as much as 27 per cent of their income as a result of the new program, the analysis shows.

• (1130)

The key element, which referred to the fact that there will be a loss in revenues, was indicated in the question that I proposed to the hon. member. Mr. Battle, who analyzed the proposals, indicated that if the inflation rate is at 3 per cent, for instance, there will be no revenues coming to welfare recipients and poor families.

In fact they will see a decline in their revenues. He indicated that if the inflation rate is 5 per cent the child benefit would only increase by 2 per cent. By the year 2000 many of the families who are now right at the poverty line will fall way below the poverty line.

Mr. Pierre Fortier, who is a senior official in National Health and Welfare, acknowledged that there will be slippage in the value of the child benefit. He said: "There is a loss in each year where the inflation rate is greater than zero. I do not dispute that".

I could not understand why the assistant to the minister would refute these comments in stating that the working poor in this country would see a decrease in their benefits from this bill rather than an increase. There is a correlation here. I am trying to build a case to demonstrate that we must do more if we are to deal with the poverty of our children.

This is true particularly in one area, which is education. Simply put, if we examine parents and their children who live in poverty it is more likely that the parents will not have a high educational level and that the children will have difficulty with school teachers and those who are assisting them in the community.

Let us examine the Ottawa-Carleton region and its people who are under the poverty line or may not be in a position to help themselves. Based on the 1986 census 25 per cent of poor families with children had less than grade 9 education.

That means that one out of every four people who are poor are poor because they have a lower level of education. Twenty-two percent of poor finished between grade nine to 13, 11 per cent have a diploma or certificate, and 9 per cent have a trade certificate or diploma.

Approximately 67 per cent of the people who live on or under the poverty line do not have a high school diploma or degree. There is a direct correlation between the level of poverty and the level of education.

These figures are for the national capital region and are no different from the statistics provided to us by metro Toronto, for instance. In metro Toronto 75 per cent of those who are going to food banks do not have a high school diploma.

The problem clearly is quite alarming. In order to deal with child poverty we have to attack it on not one but a number of fronts. I would like to move on to make some of the recommendations that my party has been putting forward.

First, we must deal with the heart of the problem. In many of our inner cities in Canada children are going to school hungry. Those children are not in a position to learn. Empty stomachs have no ears.

Therefore, our party has recommended that the federal government immediately participate with provincial and territorial governments, through their boards of education, in conjunction with community volunteers, in the provision of nutritionally balanced breakfast, lunch and snack programs in schools throughout Canada. That must become part and parcel of our educational system and it must take the form of a partnership with the community, both the business and the voluntary sectors.

We have also made a proposal that the federal government re-design the tax system to make it more equitable to help families cope with the added expense of raising children, and that it simplify the federal child benefit system as soon as possible. We are obviously not talking about the kind of simplification or complication that the government has done in Bill C-80.

We have called on the government to immediately announce its intention to create an accelerated job creation program for students and youth so that it can be put in place for those who finish their school term and are looking for some sort of job for the summer period.

We have also called on the federal government to increase the federal minimum wage from $5 to $6 an hour by January 1, 1993.

These are some of the many recommendations that my caucus has put forward. I want to echo those sentiments in saying that we cannot really afford to ignore this problem because children are our future. Only through a proper strategy to deal with the educational system, to deal with a proper child care program, that goes right to the heart of the problem and that is a system of taxation, that addresses the question of housing for many families in inner cities across Canada and in some cases in rural Canada, can we say that we are dealing with the problem and that we are finding solutions to it.

It is really a shame that we live in one of the richest countries in the world and yet we still have child poverty at the rate that we are seeing. There is no reason that this government, along with provincial governments and municipal governments, cannot put together some sort of national conference at which all the different partners could sit together and try to set up a strategy to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000. After all, it was a decision of this House to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000.

On a final note, Mr. Speaker, despite the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was ratified by this government, we have yet to see tangible proposals and strategies to attack child poverty right at its roots.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre made a great point about expecting people to absorb the first 3 per cent of indexation, as set out in the Income Tax Act.

I want to put on the record of the House, before I ask him a question, the information that when this government took over, the child tax credit was $384 a year. In 1985-86 it was increased to $454 a year, to $489 a year in 1987, to $524 a year in 1988, to $559 a year in 1989, and it is presently $601 a year. The turning point, or the point, when the threshold would change, was changed back in 1985.

What has happened is that notwithstanding the provisions of the act, the government has successively changed the child tax credit proposals by changing the amount of benefit to more than compensate for inflation.

So much for all of the criticism this government has received from the hon. Ken Battle.

• (1140)

If he would pay attention to what has happened since 1985, he would find that the government has always honoured the requirement to look after children.

What has he got against an increase of $500 over the $1,020 presently available to those earning over $10,000 a year? Has he got something that he finds distasteful that a monthly payment should be made to parents? Does he think that is wrong or does he think that parents ought to get the benefit to support their children out of filing income tax deductions so that they will have to discount those tax deductions to a tax discounter? Does he think a tax discounter is the way people ought to get their money or does he think that a cheque coming monthly is more appropriate than the present system of redistribution?

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, for the record, if you look at the family income since this government took office in 1984 up until now, and if you draw a curve, you will see how simple it is to realize that the incomes of both middle-income as well as lower-income families have dropped substantially.

While the Minister of Finance has claimed that the new system will increase the total federal child benefit by $400 million per year, a Senate committee report has indicated that since this government has taken office, there has been in excess of $3.5 billion taken out of the child benefit system between 1986 and 1991.

If the hon. member is telling me that with Bill C-80 a mother who is on welfare is getting more than she was getting before Bill C-80 was introduced, I think he is mistaken. Simply put, she is not receiving any extra benefits. A mother on welfare still receives the same type of benefits.

When we talk about the other increases of $500 or so for those who meet a certain threshold or are below a certain threshold, that is something different. That is when you divide it by the number of months or by the number of days. I can assure hon. members there is nothing one can say. It is enough to solve the ongoing problem. What needs to be done is that the over-all system of taxation has to be reformed in order to help both those who do not have enough and those who do not have at all.

If the hon. member is telling me what is the best way of doing this, I would say that we have to go right to the heart of the problem, and that is our system of taxation.

Just recently, it was clearly indicated that in this country, the middle-income and the lower-income earners are perhaps paying more taxes than in any other industrialized country anywhere in the world. If we are to deal with the heart of the problem, that is an area that we can tackle.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-80 will implement the new child benefit announced by the government in the throne speech. It is part of a program of improved benefits for children and one of the results of a considerable amount of work by the Senate, the House of Commons subcommittee on poverty which I chair, our caucus committee on family issues, the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of Finance.

It is not a new idea to roll all child benefits into one benefit in order to rationalize and simplify child benefits. But the method by which this one has been accomplished is quite creative and will make the system more fair, particularly in the long run.

The subcommittee on poverty recommended the roll-up of child benefits with the transfer from other personal tax credits. The subcommittee also recommended a guaranteed earned income supplement which would ensure that income received from employment would be greater than that received by social assistance recipients.

The department has been able to introduce a benefit which establishes structure which will achieve this objective for some families now, but also sets a framework to achieve this objective for more families in the future.

The majority of our subcommittee agreed that it was important to have a social assistance framework that helps people to work. That is the best way to escape poverty and that is the way most social assistance recipients also think. I think it is fundamental, and I am certain most Canadians agree to that.

I once participated in a survey of social assistance recipients with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and found that almost 100 per cent of social assistance recipients have the same values that all Canadians have. They too want to work and really appreciate help in achieving that objective.

I am very disappointed that there is not some more money in this program for welfare recipients who are unable to work. However, there are benefits for welfare recipients. They will receive their benefit monthly and will not be resorting to tax discounters.

It should also be noted that the child benefit is discretionary income and should not be used as a substitute for an adequate social assistance income.

Our committee also recommended that there be standards for basic social assistance and supplementary benefits that would ensure that the basic needs of children and adults are met. Only Ontario and Prince Edward Island currently have systems that provide such standards. However, under the current structure of social assistance in Canada, this is provincially initiated.

I understand that the minister is having discussions with his provincial counterparts. It seems to me that issue has to be pursued. I think that if in fact we cannot get provincial agreement that we should seriously look at some kind of guaranteed annual income across the country similar to the system in place for senior citizens that would ensure that there is a national standard for social assistance. I think it is a shame to this country that in fact we do not have that now and that in some provinces the gap between basic needs level assistance and what they are getting is enormous. It is quite unacceptable.

This particular benefit should cover discretionary needs. The earned income supplement should recognize the additional costs of working and compensate for the fact that earned income does not consider the number of children in the family, unlike welfare income. There needs to be that kind of support in order to, at least in the long term, ensure that the people are better off financially working.

I am, therefore, pleased to support this bill as major progress on two of the recommendations of the subcommittee on poverty. I have already mentioned the social assistance standards. I think that is the key in order that children in Canada have an adequate opportunity to develop and participate in the many benefits of this society. Improved minimum wages, education, retraining programs, job opportunities and programs specifically targeted at high-risk children as well as more subsidized day care are other things that must be pursued in order to improve the situation of poorer children.

The opposition has raised a number of arguments against this particular benefit, some of which other members have already answered. I would just like to make a comment on the arguments about universality. I would rather have universal opportunity for children in Canada. My riding, which is a fairly high income one and will have a substantial number of families that will lose benefits, I believe supports this benefit. I have circulated a lot of information on it. We have had a lot inquiries and I have only had positive response.

I think the vast majority of Canadians who are well off want to see a dramatic improvement in the lot of the poorest children.

In addition, the opposition has slammed many of the recommendations of the subcommittee on poverty. I noticed the NDP opposition critic on television Sunday night after *Venture* again slamming us on these particular issues. I find that rather extraordinary because the response to the subcommittee's report from the social community, the social issues community, the many agencies that have appeared, has been overwhelmingly positive. I have had letters from various agencies that appeared before the committee. They support the recommendations.

• (1150)

I often think surely if these agencies supported these recommendations, and if in fact the opposition really cared about children, they could have been far more supportive on that particular report. What in fact has the opposition offered? First of all, it wants all transfer payments to the provinces restored as if it were feasible to continue on the spiralling expenditure increases that have been occurring, principally in Ontario. That is nonsense. We have to live within our budget and spend our money better on those who need our help and in such a way that we do not encourage long-term dependency.

Recommendations of the opposition include a national school lunch program in schools throughout Canada, a huge expensive program that gives to everyone whether they need it or not. I will tell you in my community we do not want it. It has been discussed thoroughly at metro council and so on. Local communities do have programs and I think that is fine. I think where the community wants to put in a program in a particular school, that is great, but a massive nationally run program I do not agree with at all.

I know for example in the schools in North York we have a great number of people from different ethnic communities who do not eat the same and do not want their children to be provided with food at the school. However, we strongly encourage things like nutrition programs where the children learn about proper nutrition. That is basically what the poverty report encouraged.

I think helping people who need help rather than helping everyone is the much more effective and much more sensible way to proceed, rather than creating dependency.

On the issue of the food banks, if you speak privately to some of the NDP members of the provincial government in Ontario, they are not too crazy about food banks at all. They create further dependency and that does not help people in the long run. The whole prospect of people lining up for food is in fact something that is very shameful in our society. Eliminating food banks is the way to proceed.

Winter works programs, public sector youth employment programs, universal broadly targeted programs that dramatically increase taxes result in little improvement for the neediest members of our society. Having been in municipal politics previously, I am very much aware of these winter works programs and who goes out to get those particular jobs. They tend to be men. If we look at poverty, it is predominantly women who are affected. They are also short-term jobs. They tend to increase municipal costs because of the supervision and they are not long term. They stop people from working because in fact they are not available to go out and get real jobs.

Then there are the pie in the sky policies, like the critic for the NDP who spouts his full employment policy and who cannot tell us how he would accomplish this. Every government has a full employment policy. Unfortunately, the NDP one in Ontario is not working any better than ours at the moment.

One thing is for certain, our government will not follow the model of the Liberal Party, which in 1981 to 1982 tried to spend us out of a recession, which resulted in the enormous deficit and debt treadmill that we are currently battling with some success. There are no magic answers and very few people are fooled by such propaganda.

Long-term, sensible economic policies, controlling debt, spending within our means and targeting our social spending to really help those in need is the way to proceed.

This child benefit and the child development initiative which will allow many of the community-based prevention programs targeted at high-risk children between the ages of zero and seven will make major progress on this most important issue of child poverty.

As a member of Parliament, I will continue to pursue other measures such as improved access to day care, particularly for high-risk children, standards for social assistance, improvements in the minimum wage and indeed, improvements in this program over the long run. We have to recognize there are no magic solutions to these problems. There is a need for hard work to endeavour to try and solve, to work at some of these areas, to make progress.

I have been associated with these issues in Toronto since 1972. I do see a lot of progress in Toronto and I hope to see a lot more progress at the national level.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member for Don Valley North. I agreed with a lot of what she said in her speech and I support the attempt to try and simplify the system.

I am having great difficulty with this $500 a year added credit for those people who are in the work force. I will tell the member for Mississauga South why I am having this difficulty.

I have in my riding 25 per cent who are single parents and most of those people are women. A lot of them are working and a lot of them are not. Last week I had a number of them say to me that $500 or $10 a week is not really that great an incentive to move them off the welfare rolls and into the work force.

The problem is there is no incentive to stay in the work force because $10 a week does not really cover their drug problem if they have a child or two. In other words, when you are on welfare all of those costs are covered.

My question to the member is whether she really believes that $500 is a sufficient enough credit. Does she not think maybe we should do something that is a little bit more dramatic in terms of providing incentive to move people from the welfare rolls into the work force where they can not only regain their dignity and become retrained? Under the current system they are almost entrapped in poverty and I am not sure this is enough.

Ms. Greene: Mr. Speaker, first of all this is not a panacea. This is a start. It is $500 worth of help for the working poor. It is not intended to cancel out any of the existing programs, such as the Step program in Ontario that does provide supplementary benefits until the income of the family is above a certain level associated with the poverty line. Those programs will still be in place but this provides additional help. The combination of this program plus the Step program is very positive. We have improved things a bit.

In the long run I would like to see a more careful analysis of this because I think it will lower the number of people in poverty. If you look at the statistics, they are income related and it will take a few more people off the poverty rolls who are working.

Mr. Mills: How does it?

Ms. Greene: It does because if you look at the poverty line in the poverty report, it explains how it works. It is basically the amount of money required depending upon the area, whether it is a large city or a small city, to cover basic needs, plus about an additional 40 per cent to cover discretionary needs.

This $500 per family will remove some people. I am not sure how many. You would have to get Statistics Canada to actually work it out, but it will drop a number. They will be people who are working that are poor and under that line. It seems to me that it is an achievable objective to at least get people who are working full time in this country above the poverty line. The amount of dollars necessary varies by province. It varies by the minimum wage in a particular province. In Ontario they are at the poverty line for an individual right now. They are not at the poverty line for an individual with children. The single parent, of course, is confronting the issue that there is only one income. If you had two incomes you would probably, at the minimum wage, be at the poverty line for a family with one child.

• (1200)

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to comment on one of the points the hon. member raised in her remarks having to do with school lunches. I gather that she is not that close to some of the school lunch programs because she certainly characterized them very differently from my experience.

In Vancouver East, a multicultural community with a very, very high percentage of poor children, our schools in co–operation with the community have developed excellent school lunch programs. We work very hard to try and get federal interest in them which, unfortunately, has not happened. We do now have some provincial subsidies.

The results of this are quite astounding. I would ask her when she is in Vancouver to come and visit these programs. In a relatively inexpensive program there have been remarkable changes in the way that children can remain in school. Their interest span has increased and their achievement in school programs has also improved. Many of them, of course, were kids who came to school with no breakfast and perhaps went home at night to maybe just a bit of junk food if they were lucky, and were simply not getting the kind of nutrition they needed. By supplying a simple and not terribly expensive but very nutritious hot meal at noon, these children have shown remarkable improvement in health and in their school participation.

The point I want to raise is that the member gave the impression that these were very expensive programs. The families who can pay the full amount. Those who cannot, pay when they can or do not pay at all. It is all done in a way so there is no stigma attached because nobody knows what any other child is paying. It is an excellent program.

When you add to that the kind of ethnic outreach that is done from the school, the kind of public health programs that are added to it and the head start programs that should be there at the pre-school level, it is a tremendous investment in anti-poverty measures as well as measures that are healthy for all children. It does not cost very much per child.

I would like to commend all the teachers and people who work on these programs, the many volunteers and many parents in Vancouver East.

My question, however, is related to child care. I know the member has done a lot of research on the needs of children and she cares about this very much. But I wonder if she shares my concern, having been on the child care task force which documented over and over again in communities across Canada and with extensive research the need for child care across this country, the urgent need. This was a number of years ago and it has increased since that time, I am sure she would agree. The Prime Minister twice promised Canadians there would be a national child care program in 1984 and 1989. Now the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister of Finance say we will not have this program. Therefore, it is a complete denial, both of need and of the Prime Minister's promises.

I would ask her to honestly say that in caring for Canada's children, does she not feel this is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order please. Your time has expired. You have one minute left on the question.

Ms. Greene: Mr. Speaker, first of all on the question of the school lunch program, while I think a community based program with people participating is terrific and I think if it is something that community decides to do it is great, I do not think it should be done at the national level. There are many, many families that want to send their children to schools with lunches they have prepared.

On the question of day care, I am very disappointed in the decision of government, which quite surprised me. I think the program as recommended in this report, which was endorsed by the national day care lobby group, is one that is affordable. In the long run, it will develop the kind of system that we need.

I still intend to pursue the matter, particularly the refundable child care tax credit because that is a benefit which could go directly to families to enable them to access some of the licensed day care. Only 8 per cent of children in Canada have access to licensed day care.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-80, whose purpose is to merge family allowance, the child credit and the refundable child tax credit into one monthly benefit, will also end the universality of family allowance.

According to the government, its motives are entirely honourable. And on the face of it, the proposed legislation seems quite acceptable. We are talking about simplifying income tax returns, maintaining more generous benefits for children under 7 and for large families, increasing the incomes of families with an income of less than $50,000 and increasing federal benefits by $2.1 billion over the next five years.

[*English*]

It does seem that the government is trying to do something decent, but when one looks closer, something is wrong. Under this great plan of the government lies quite another reality. Nearly one million Canadian families work very hard to make ends meet on incomes between $30,000 and $50,000 each year. If the amount seems reasonable, let us keep in mind that this revenue is much smaller, net, thus giving minimum leeway to face the everyday needs and demands of a growing family.

The government will offer these families a fantastic amount of $4 a month more under the proposed child tax benefit. Is that not great?

[*Translation*]

The Conservative government, the same government that keeps repeating that children are the future of this country, forgot to tell us that between 1986 and 1991, it withdrew more than $3.5 billion from child benefit programs. And today? It is still taking money out of the pockets of Canadians who have trouble making ends meet.

This is a government that ignores 2.5 million Canadians who are on welfare. This is a government that watches as plants close, stores go bankrupt and people are laid off. Then, like in the Christie commercial, says: "Whoops", hoping a miracle will happen to save the day.

Let us face the facts. The government must take the bull by the horns and do something to save the human potential our children represent before it is too late.

[*English*]

Where is the so desperately needed national day care program? Once again, this government has found an answer: Place it on the back burner. The reason given this time: The government wants to help abused and hungry children.

I must admit I do not understand its way of functioning. For the past seven years, this government has cut back on every support for these same abandoned children, and it wants us to believe today that it is working toward making their future more secure and bright. What a joke.

[*Translation*]

The fact that in 1992 we are still talking about national day care proves the Conservative government cannot be trusted. It proves the government cares very little about the real needs of Canadians. And it proves above all the government certainly does not want to get involved in a program that will not reap political benefits in the short term. This government is afraid of investing in the long term. It does not understand that child tax benefits do not deal with the problem of poverty, drop-outs and illiteracy. How can we expect children to pay attention in class if they come to school with empty stomachs? How can we expect children to go to school without shoes? How can we expect young people to have a trade if we do not remove these barriers?

• (1210)

[*English*]

I would like to quote the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration who said on March 10 of this year: "Must I repeat for this House that we believe our children represent the future of our country and that through this budget we are helping families who need social and economic assistance, particularly one-parent families who need additional help. Too often we forget to mention that this budget contains benefits for families and children and that day care services will be maintained through other programs and other measures".

Is that not interesting? What the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration forgot to say was that the net child benefits for a family with an average income are worth barely half of what they were worth seven years ago.

[*Translation*]

If the government thinks it can fool Canadians with a bill like C-80, it is mistaken. It may make a few people happy and give the impression it is being fair by taking money from higher income groups and giving some crumbs to the less fortunate in this country, but this is just a drop in the bucket.

The need for national day care, a program promised so long ago we have almost given up hope, is becoming increasingly critical. We must face the fact that for so many of our young people the future looks very grim indeed.

Not long ago, for many people it marked the beginning of their education. Our society felt it was essential to develop a healthy mind in a healthy body. Today, for many children a healthy body is something they cannot afford.

National day care is not a frill but a necessity. The money this government makes available to families in need is no guarantee that children will find space in a day care centre. In some cities there is a three-year waiting list.

Children need to be loved, nurtured and fed properly and to grow up in a healthy environment. Parents—often there is only one—know that today, those who have trouble making both ends meet need help. Promises for a better tomorrow are useless because it will be too late.

[*English*]

This government, by offering so little, is trying to clear its conscience. This way it can try to sell the notion that it has done all it could to help families in need by giving a few bucks more.

What people need is dignity. That comes through work not hand-outs. What children need is an introduction to society through security. That comes from day care centres, not because the home cannot provide it, but because the fact is that in 1992 most parents must work to make ends meet. What teenagers need is a future. That comes through an education adapted to the 21st century and an economy on the rise.

Those are the priorities this country should have. Those are the priorities that must be addressed soon. Time is against us, and if we do not act now, tomorrow will be very grim.

[*Translation*]

Although it may look good to give families a few dollars more, let us not forget what this government spends on public relations and advertising. I realize the two are necessary, but perhaps some spending restraint would be in order.

A truly responsible government that tries to deal with the fundamental problems and save our young people would be willing to tighten its belt, review its priorities and act accordingly.

I think it is high time for us to take a close look at the system of pension benefits available to members of Parliament and paid for by Canadians, because there is a double standard here. I agree everyone is entitled to a pension, but always payable upon reaching retirement age. This is really the icing on the cake. Other Canadians have to work long and hard to earn a minimum of pension benefits, and they have to wait until they reach a certain age to receive those benefits.

This is just one example of the government's lack of conviction in looking for other ways to get this country out of its financial mess, to create national day care centres, stress retraining and get the economy back on track. A responsible government is not afraid to cut certain non-essential benefits enjoyed by a chosen few.

[*English*]

I am convinced this country can be pulled together again and that we can get the economy up, but it is essential that our 292 food banks disappear. The government must start making that a priority today. It is unacceptable that in 1992 in Canada so many people must rely on food banks to survive.

This government keeps telling Canadians that it has great training programs. It keeps announcing how many jobs have been created. It keeps forgetting to say how many jobs have disappeared for good.

[*Translation*]

If the present government is at all serious about economic recovery, it should act. It should start at the bottom with day care, to ensure that all children have a fair chance. It should invest in education so that all Canadians have the tools they need to make a living and can do without the financial crutches offered by the government. It should establish a short-term and effective action plan to wipe out poverty.

Is this not the same government which announced that by the year 2000, in less than 8 years, child poverty would be a thing of the past? Today, at this very moment, nearly one million children go to food banks. Is that normal? If the children have reached that stage, it means the parents have as well. What is being done in concrete terms to deal with the problem? How can these people believe things will get better? Is Bill C-80, which will give them a few dollars more, going to make a difference? I doubt it.

A country is not built on poverty and desperation but on faith in the future and hard work. Canadians are not afraid of hard work, but first they must find work. This country was built, and it is still growing, thanks to the labour and sacrifices of people who thought it was worth while to invest in Canada. Today, now that times are particularly hard for people at the bottom of the ladder, it is up to the government to do its share. It has received a lot from its citizens. Now it is up to the government to cut its profits and tighten its belt. It must act now to put back some of what it has received.

[*English*]

There are at least 2.5 million Canadians who depend on social welfare. This is not a choice but a necessity. The number of homeless who do not collect any other revenue than what they get from begging is growing day by day. Violence is on the rise. Drugs are the escape. Suicides occur daily among people of all ages. The picture is grim.

The government does not want to see it. The government does not want to address it. The media barely mentions it but it is a fact. Canada does have problems. Canada has a major problem if it has so many of its citizens in need.

• (1220)

A bandage answer like Bill C-80 will not help solve anything. It might add a few dollars, but with inflation and taxes you cannot go very far on that.

In a country as rich as ours how can we accept the fact that so many children live in poverty? Where are the grassroot programs to give people the tools to make it? Of course there are some training programs, but how do you get there when you cannot find a babysitter or, even worse, you cannot afford one?

This government has to get its priorities in the right order or this country will simply not make it. People need a sense of value. They need to know that they are doing something worth while. They need to earn a living. No one wants a handout. It is when no one believes in you that you fall apart and cannot contribute to society. Too many have already fallen into this trap.

This government must get the country working again. It must make the citizens of Canada proud of themselves again.

[*Translation*]

The Conservative government must understand what is happening in this country. There are some very real problems and the government must act now. If it has not yet understood what Canada's priorities are, the people of this country will be glad to remind the government of those priorities in the next election.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): The member in her remarks, Mr. Speaker, made a comment about the fact that the benefits to children in the Income Tax Act had been reduced by this government. I was wondering if she could spell out what the benefits were in 1984 and what they are today, bearing in mind that under this bill a family earning $25,000 will receive $211.66 a month tax free? That buys a lot of babysitters, a lot of lunches and other assistance as well.

I was wondering what tax-free allowances she could tell us about that were paid in 1984 because I do not believe there were any. But maybe she has some and she can tell us how much better the former Liberal government was with respect to children.

Mrs. Maheu: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the member for Mississauga South has not had to require the services of a babysitter lately.

Is the member aware that it costs $800 a month for a babysitter in the metro Toronto area? Mississauga is part of that. Most of the families earning $25,000 could not afford $800 a month for a babysitter. Let us hit them on the head. Let us give them $4 and make them feel that this government is doing something. It is a farce and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville for her remarks.

I want to continue to pursue this feature of the legislation that the government seems to be so proud of, this $500 credit that it talks about for people at the lower end of the spectrum. In the papers the government released, it is suggesting that this $500 will be an incentive for those people in the work force to stay in the work force. I am talking about people making $14,000 to $16,000 a year. The government thinks that this $500 credit is sufficient to maintain their interest.

There are many single parents in my community who are out of work right now because of the economy. If they were on welfare they might receive around $10,000 to $12,000. If they went into the work force and made $16,000 or $17,000 by the time the taxes were taken off they would probably receive the same amount as they would on welfare.

Yet the government thinks that this $500 tax credit is really sufficient to keep them motivated to stay in the work force. Five hundred dollars in a nice glossy brochure looks like something. We do not emphasize the fact that it is not going to kick in until 1993. We are talking about legislation today but it is not going to kick in until 1993.

That is $10 per week or to be more specific, about $1.50 per day. What happens if all of a sudden there is a medical bill and a person needs prescription drugs? I just cannot understand why the government thinks that this $500 credit is a meaningful sum of money to those who are at the lower end of the income spectrum. I was wondering if the member could take a little time to elaborate on that particular issue.

Mrs. Maheu: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Broadview—Greenwood.

I was present when the civil servants presented this child benefits program to us. I looked around the table and tried to figure out roughly how much money these

fellows were making. I thought that they might have salaries of $80,000 per year. They were saying that they had income tax problems as well, while discussing the pros and cons of this bill with us. I wonder how many of them had got to the point at which $1.50 a day became important in their lives. It was as though by giving this $500 they were doing a wonderful thing for the single parents of Canada.

I agree with the member. When a child is sick one week's medicine is not covered by the $10 parents are getting for a week. Actually it is not $10 per week but about $9.50.

There is no incentive for them to get back in the work force. The $500 is not going to mean a thing. Most of them are better off on welfare. Five hundred dollars is not enough to pull them off the welfare rolls or to keep them off the welfare rolls. It is all very well to say that a lot of women are making $14,000 to $16,000 a year but the jobs they are in are jobs that will very soon be affected by a new free trade deal. It is going to hurt them even worse and then the government will just sit back and say: "Well, we gave you $500". I hope that answers your question.

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to speak in support of this landmark legislation to strengthen Canada's income assistance measures for children and families. Bill C-80 recognizes our commitment to financially assist with children's needs through a child benefits system that is fundamentally fair, simple and generous.

It contains the most sweeping improvements in federal benefits for children since the child tax credit was created in the 1970s, and arguably is the most important change since the first family allowance was paid in 1945.

Bill C-80 has three major elements. It amends the Income Tax Act to create the new child tax benefit, it introduces the Children's Special Allowances Act and it repeals the Family Allowances Act.

This initiative is part of the federal government's over-all strategy called "Brighter Futures", a preventive and multi-faceted program directed primarily at intervention in the early stages of the lives of children who are faced with greater than normal risks of poor health and nutrition, mental problems, mental health problems, disability or injury, abuse and neglect.

"Brighter Futures" is composed of four main program areas: prevention, promotion, protection and partnerships. Through this strategy the federal government will spend another $500 million over five years in the fight to protect Canada's children from poverty, neglect, abuse, ill health and unsafe living conditions.

The bill before us today is a very important component of this call to action on behalf of Canada's children.

To discuss and examine the new child tax benefit it is necessary to understand our present child benefits system. Currently, the federal government spends $4.5 billion each year on three major programs for children: family allowances; the refundable child tax credit; and the non-refundable dependent child credit.

• (1230)

Family allowances are delivered in monthly payments of $35 per child to all eligible Canadian families. They are taxable and must be declared by the spouse with the higher income. Payments are then partly or completely recovered if one parent has a net 1992 income above $53,215.

Under the family allowance program a special allowance is also payable on behalf of a child under 18 years who is institutionalized or in foster care.

The second component of our present child benefits system is the refundable child tax credit. This consists of an income tested benefit claimed through the tax system. The maximum payment of $601 per child is reduced for families with incomes above $26,000. Two-thirds of the credit may now be prepaid in November, depending upon the family income.

The third component of our present child benefits system is the non-refundable dependent child credit, also administered by Revenue Canada. This non-refundable credit is a reduction of taxes for the parent who is the higher income spouse. Its annual 1992 value is $71 for each of the first two children and $142 for each additional child. The dependent child credit applies only to families with sufficient income to pay income taxes.

One may ask as to what is wrong with the current child benefit system. Let me explain what I consider to be the key problems. The most important is that the system provides inadequate support for low income working families. These are the families who are most often faced with employment related expenses and the possible loss of provincial social assistance benefits by choosing to work.

The present child benefits system does nothing to reinforce their incentive to work. Families with children receiving social assistance and services may actually be getting thousands of dollars more than families with children who are surviving and yet working at low wage jobs.

It is true that the current system directs more benefits to low income families than to high income families but it still does not do enough to target child benefits where they are really needed the most.

There are two problems here. The first is that wealthy families continue to receive child benefits even though they have relatively little need for such benefits. If we are to provide increased assistance for children in low and modest income families then we can no longer afford to pay benefits for those in high income brackets.

The second problem is that family allowances are directed on the basis of individual income instead of family income. This is true both in their taxability as income and in the repayment required for higher income individuals. This means families with similar total incomes may receive different levels of child benefits. As a result, children with similar needs may be treated differently. Family income is a much more equitable basis for directing assistance to children, and the new program is aimed exactly in that direction.

The delay in delivery of the benefit under the current system is another key problem. For many families the refundable child tax credit represents more than half of their federal child benefit, but being an annual payment it often fails to meet their immediate needs when those cash requirements occur.

The full amount of the credit is paid only after tax returns are assessed. This delay in payment is difficult for families with modest incomes. They must pay for their children's needs every month but they frequently have to wait more than one year to receive the full credit.

This was partially addressed in 1986 by introducing a prepayment of a portion of the credit in November each year. This advance payment provision was brought about to assist families in need, especially those who required the money so much that sometimes they even sacrificed their pending credits to tax discounters.

Even with this small improvement the system is still too slow to address the changing dynamics of family structure. For example, a child born in January or February does not receive a child tax credit until more than one year later.

The current system is a patchwork system. Benefits are delivered in various ways. There are different eligibility requirements for each program.

For example, family allowances are based on individual income while the refundable child tax credit is based on family income. It is confusing to have a different income system for each benefit. As well, having to fill out all of the calculations on the child tax credit form, which is effectively a new application each year, adds complexity to the system.

Furthermore, the government continues to pay family allowances to all high income families although they are subject to repayment of those benefits through the tax system. Many are asking what the purpose of paying these benefits is if they are only taxed back.

This policy was designed to ensure that the benefits of the family allowances program would be better targeted to lower income groups and it did achieve that end. However, of course we continued to consider whether a better way could be found, one that would not require any repayment and one that would avoid the additional administrative costs generated by first making payments and by then recovering them.

I point out these weaknesses not to undermine the value of the programs that have existed up to now. They have done a valuable job in helping Canada's children over many decades, at a cost of billions of dollars that were largely spent. Now we must recognize the need for fundamental improvements to that system.

There is no question that the new child tax benefit put forth in this bill before us today is a significant advance over our current system. In light of today's complex society this bill proposes an enriched benefit which is streamlined, responsive and better targeted. It is one that incorporates suggestions from two recent parliamentary committees, one here and one in the other place, from many non-governmental social policy groups and many individual Canadians.

For the benefit of my colleagues I would like to repeat the key features of this child tax benefit. The proposed benefit will be a single monthly payment for children under 18. It will generally be made to the mother. This new benefit will be based on family income rather than on individual income. These single monthly payments will neither be taxed nor recovered at tax time so that what families receive they will get to keep in full.

There are two major components of the proposed child tax benefit. The first is a basic monthly benefit that replaces the present family allowance. It also replaces the dependant child tax credit and refundable child tax credit, and includes extra benefits for children under the age of seven and children in larger families.

The second is a new federal earned income supplement that will increase the basic benefit by up to $500 per year for low income working families with children. The actual benefit payable will depend on family earnings and income, as well as the number and ages of children in the family. Entitlement will be calculated automatically based on the previous year's income tax returns, eliminating the need to fill in a special form every year as is now required by the child tax credit.

It will be composed of a base amount of up to $1,020 per year for each child, with a $75 supplement for the third and subsequent children. The base amount is increased by a further $213 per year for each child under seven if child care expenses are not claimed at tax time. The basic child tax benefit amount will be paid in full to all families with incomes up to $25,921. The benefit will gradually reduce for those with incomes above that amount.

In addition, there will be an earned income supplement of up to $500 a year for working families. The earned income supplement will be phased in for families earning above $3,750. This supplement will reach its full amount of $500 when family earnings are $10,000 or more and will only begin to reduce over an upper threshold of $20,921. For families making a total of $25,921, the upper threshold, or more the earned income supplement will be eliminated.

What does this mean to a Canadian family? A single mother with two children over the age of seven with a family income of $30,000 would receive $153.25 a month beginning in 1993. She would be better off, compared to present circumstances, by approximately $300 per year.

Another mother with three children over the age of seven with a total family income of $22,000 in 1991 will be eligible for a basic amount of $261.25 plus an earned income supplement of $32.68 per month. This means that she will receive beginning in January 1993, a total of $293.93 in benefits each month. She will be better off, compared to her current circumstances, by about $400 per year.

• (1240)

This new system is intrinsically more fair. It is based on family income and not individual income. It is targeted at those who most need it so that assistance is focused on low and middle income families. The child tax benefit will be gradually reduced for families with incomes above the designated thresholds. The entire benefit will be paid monthly, making it vastly easier for families to budget properly. It will also be much less likely that when there is a change in custody the benefit will be paid to the wrong parent.

It is not only the fundamental design of the new system that demonstrates the government's commitment to the social well-being of families with children. This new system will be more generous than the current one. Over the next five years the government has committed an additional $2.1 billion to assist families with children through this program. Over 2.4 million families will have increased child benefits. Over two-thirds of them will be families with incomes of less than $50,000. No family with an income below $50,000 will lose any benefits.

The new income supplement will provide special protection for some of the most vulnerable members of our society, families with low earnings. The new earned income supplement will help these families stay in the

work force and meet the needs of their children. This new supplement will also help families on social assistance to deal with the loss of those social assistance benefits as they move into the work force. It is one step toward, maybe not as generous as we would all like to see, dismantling the welfare trap.

Single parents have the greatest need for child assistance because they bear the combined responsibility of earning a living and caring for their children. In addition to the new child tax benefit single parents will retain the present equivalent to married credit for their first child. For many this is worth an average of $1,445 in reduced federal and provincial taxes each year.

Overall, this new child tax benefit will be much simpler and more efficient to administer. It consolidates three current programs into one. The child tax benefit will be jointly administered by the Departments of National Health and Welfare and Revenue Canada taxation. National Health and Welfare will be responsible for receiving initial applications and providing general information about the program. Revenue Canada will determine entitlement based on family income to calculate the amount of the tax credit each month and will authorize the payments.

I would like to turn for a few minutes to another aspect of Bill C-80, the introduction of the Children's Special Allowances Act. Currently, the Family Allowances Act has a provision to assist with the care of children in foster homes and other institutions. It is most important to this government that we continue to provide for these children, many of whom are being cared for in this way, because they are children at risk. Any department, agency or institution that is entitled to apply for a special allowance under the existing Family Allowances Act will continue to receive that benefit under the new Children's Special Allowances Act.

However, we have gone further. From a point of view of equity the government feels that it is important that payments on behalf of these children in care are equivalent to those for all other children. Therefore, the monthly special allowance payment will increase from the current $52.03 to $85.00 per month. It is not a great increase in dollars but nonetheless it is an increase of 60 per cent in the support we are providing for these 30,000 children.

The bill before us today underscores this government's commitment to social and fiscal responsibility. The child tax benefit is the end result of an extensive review which stressed the need for considerable change. Consolidation of three programs into one represents a sound and socially responsible solution. The improvements will be greatly appreciated by most Canadians.

With this new child tax benefit families with low and middle incomes will gain. The earned income supplement will provide extra support for those with low wages and will reinforce incentives to participate in the work force. Virtually all single parent families will enjoy increased benefits.

The dedicated staff of both of these government departments charged with the implementation of the new program are already deeply involved in their work, switching some 3.7 million files into the new program structure. Of course their work can only progress to a certain point, pending the decisions of this Parliament.

I am sure that hon. members in their deliberations on this bill will bear in mind how important it is for Canadians to receive their first monthly payments on time in January 1993, especially since most of these monthly payments will be significantly larger than they would be under the current legislation.

In closing, I am pleased with the new directions we are taking to assist families with children in low income circumstances. In total there are approximately 6.6 million children in Canada and it is a staggering fact that over one million of them, 17.5 per cent, are presently at some form of risk because of poverty, ill health, poor living conditions, abuse or neglect.

With this bill we are taking an important step forward in maintaining and improving the well-being of many of those children. The child tax benefit is one measure among a wide range of initiatives being developed for the children of Canada.

The future of this world belongs to our children. Let us work together in this House to ensure that the future for Canadian children remains the brightest in all the world.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit concerned about the timing of this initiative. Perhaps the hon. member who has just spoken can assist me.

His government has been in office for some eight years. I am wondering if he can explain whether it is pure coincidence that this initiative is taking place now on the eve of a general election campaign. Can he indicate why it took this government eight years to realize that Canadian families and Canadian children were in desperate need of assistance from the national government?

Can he explain the coincidental timing of this particular initiative? Would he not agree that Canadians could be justified in concluding that this government is more motivated by its desperate desire to be re-elected than by a sincere concern for the children of Canada?

Mr. Bird: Mr. Speaker, the obvious answer, which every Canadian knows, is that when this government took office in 1984 it was saddled with a quarter of a trillion dollars in debt that the former Liberal government had left behind.

It left deficits ranging close to $40 billion a year and a recession brought about by those circumstances. That made it absolutely impossible to find any flexibility for the kinds of initiatives that are being introduced at this time.

It has only been through the fiscal management of this government, through the reduction of government program spending from 13.5 per cent for 15 years of Liberal rule to 3.9 per cent over the last eight years, through the realization of a program surplus in our operating account that we are able to contemplate the kind of expenditures over the next five years that are set out in this bill.

If the hon. member had stopped to think about the real cause that has inhibited our government and our country in serving its citizens as they deserve he would be embarrassed to have asked that question.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who just spoke referred in his remarks to the needs of children. He particularly mentioned the high priority needs of single parents raising children on their own, most of them single mothers.

When he talked about those needs did he not mention the need for child care? Does he not realize that this is a burning need for most parents, that when both parents are forced to be in the work force they need reliable licensed child care? Even greater is the need of single mothers for child care.

The child benefits program that he is talking about gives a special incentive, a special bonus, which is really a two-tiered philosophy that is rather regressive. The good working poor will get an extra bonus if they go to work but those who are forced to stay on welfare will not.

In particular the single mother will have very little opportunity to get off welfare and seek employment, even in the minimum wage jobs that are probably the only ones available. A mother cannot go to work if she does not have reliable child care for her children. Why did he not take this into account and what does he feel about this?

• (1250)

Mr. Bird: Mr. Speaker, the issue of child care is a complex one and certainly one of the great social questions that we face. This bill, in the structure of the child tax benefit, in the structure of the earned income supplement and in the structure of the tax credits available to single parents, does attempt to take cognizance of the fact that the single parent is charged with the responsibility of both caring for the child and of earning the family income.

It is always desirable that we should want to do more. However, in addressing the issue of the child through this child tax benefit and in increasing the benefits to low and middle income families, and particularly to single parent families, we are inherently addressing the subject of child care. We have maybe not done so to the extent that we all would wish but within the circumstances and resources available to us. I think it points in the direction that will serve Canadians, particularly those who have child care expenses to bear.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): I was wondering if the member could explain the supplement on top of the very generous payment that will be paid to people with children under seven. It is my understanding that for a family earning $20,000 a year with one child under seven the payment would be $1,733 a year. That is quite a bit more than the basic. For two children it would be another $426 a year, or nearly $3,000 a year in total.

Would the member confirm that those arrangements are the way they are? This payment on a basic basis for a family with two children earning $20,000 a year is $211.66 a month tax free. If the children happen to be under

seven the total amount spread out over the year is increased by $213 per child for each child under seven.

Mr. Bird: Mr. Speaker, I do not have the precise calculations that the hon. member has corrected. However, the notes that I do have indicate that this new special allowance will be paid monthly and the institution must use it for the benefit of the child. Also, the net benefit in dollar terms will increase from the current $624 per year to $1,020 per year.

There may be a provision that he is addressing that I have not properly understood or for which I do not have the information. I certainly will endeavour to seek him out following this debate and provide him with the information he has requested in full.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member would want the record to stand when he mentioned that this government inherited a debt of a quarter of a trillion dollars when it was actually $180 billion. I know that a 30 per cent exaggeration is not his custom.

My specific question concerns those people at the lower end of the spectrum. We are not dealing with the credits for those who are advantaged and who have a higher income. I would like to focus on this $500 credit.

I am hearing from many single mothers that the $10 a week credit on the lower income spectrum is really not going to change their lifestyle. It is not a great incentive when they have a choice between either a welfare cheque or a work cheque for approximately the same amount. In other words, $500 is not that great an incentive. I know that in the hon. member's province there is a special pilot project going which will perhaps give some added training to those single parents at the lower end of the spectrum.

Is the member satisfied with that $10 a week? Does he not think that for that sector we should have been a lot more generous to move them from the welfare side of the equation?

Mr. Bird: Mr. Speaker, I have heard the hon. member previously in his questioning demean this $500 earned income supplement. What he fails to recognize is that this is a new and additional benefit for people who are working, for people who insist on maintaining the dignity of employment rather than receiving and accepting welfare. This $500 is important. It represents 5 per cent of income for a person making only $10,000 a year.

No, it is never enough. If you boil it down to a dollar and some cents a day or $10 a week or whatever, it is not enough. It is not a significantly large amount of money, but it is more than has been paid up to the present time. It is more than his government has ever done. It is moving in the direction of doing away with the welfare trap, of giving some recognition, however small, to those who prefer to work rather than living on welfare.

I think it is important as a symbol, if nothing else, even though I admit it is modest.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I see we have only a few minutes but I would like to really—

An hon. member: Call it one o'clock.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could call it one o'clock?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent for the Chair to call it one o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 12.58 p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon, pursuant to Standing Order 24(2).

At 12.58 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

CJSS–CFLG

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, the CJSS–CFLG radio station strike in Cornwall, Ontario has been in progress for nearly seven months. The strike has caused considerable hardship for the station and its employees, and it is in no one's interest for it to continue any longer.

In any strike, conciliation and compromise are required from both sides if a resolution is to be obtained. I call upon the Minister of Labour and officials in his department to use every means at their disposal in order to bring management and labour together to begin constructive negotiations aimed at obtaining an acceptable and equitable conclusion to this labour dispute.

It is clear that the employer and employees of radio station CJSS–CFLG need outside assistance if they are to end this debilitating strike.

It is my hope that Labour Canada can bring the two parties together and help them reach a mutual acceptable agreement that will put an end to this damaging strike which has gone on far too long.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO FÉDORA AND FLORENT FORTIN

Mr. Guy Saint–Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute today to my constituents Fédora and Florent Fortin and their 13 children, who were just honoured at the 93rd provincial convention of the Knights of Columbus as family of the year in Quebec.

The reputation of Florent Fortin and his wife Fédora goes far beyond their native village of Launay. In Taschereau, Amos or Val d'Or, from Témiscamingue to the northern tip of Abitibi, many remember spending a happy evening at the home of Florent and Fédora, this couple whose hospitality is legendary.

In my region of Abitibi, no association, initiative, community undertaking or celebration has not benefited from the enthusiastic contribution of the Fortin family.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Fédora and Florent Fortin for their dedication to community service and their exemplary success in family life.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, the federal cabinet is to spend $4.3 billion on helicopters to combat a Soviet threat that no longer exists. The government also plans to spend $100 million for a referendum whose answer will not be binding. The same government is spending millions on a PR campaign that says Canadians can do it.

One thing the government has not been able to do is to deal with the disgraceful shortfall in housing aboriginal people.

A 20,000 unit backlog is responsible for social problems which take an enormous toll on aboriginal families who often live 20 at a time in houses without indoor plumbing or clean water.

For example, $1 million was recently spent in Arviat on Hudson Bay to treat the health effects of an epidemic related to poor sanitation. One million dollars spent on housing in that community could have eliminated that problem.

Canadians are asking: "If Canada can do it, why can this government not get its priorities straight?"

* * *

SAFE BOATING WEEK

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, this is Safe Boating Week in Canada.

This campaign by the Coast Guard and the Safe Boating Council is an attempt to emphasize the importance of boating education, the prevention of drinking and boating, and over–all safety on the water. I commend this effort.

However more needs to be done. Boats on the market today travel at ever increasing speeds. All one has to do is head down to the local waterfront and witness the tremendous danger that can be involved in pleasure boating.

Over 50 per cent of search and rescue efforts by the Coast Guard are in response to pleasure craft accidents. Yet, unlike automobiles, a person does not have to be licensed in any way to operate one of these craft. Anyone from the age of one to 100 is permitted to drive a pleasure boat regardless of experience or ability.

I call on the Coast Guard during Safe Boating Week to establish new regulations governing pleasure boating that include mandatory licensing for all operators.

S. O. 31

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women has called for a complete restructuring of the blue ribbon panel on violence against women. This is neither practicable nor possible at this late date.

It may well be that the membership of the panel was not as representative of the diversity of Canadian women as it should have been. However the members of the panel themselves are tried and true workers in the battle against violence. To blame them for the shortfalls in the terms of reference goes against principles of fairness and seriously jeopardizes the good work that has been done.

NAC makes the mistake, as does the government, of thinking that the panel is the only vehicle in the fight against violence. We in the Liberal Party want to see its reports before we make a judgment. We also want to remind all of those engaged in the battle against violence that we must stand together and that we must continue to press for mandatory training of judges, appropriate police protocols and emergency courts for women in crisis. We do not serve ourselves or Canadian women in general by fractionalizing our own movement.

The panel has made some mistakes. Surely we are all human. I call on national women's groups and all women to stand together in this battle. Let us not throw out the baby with the bath water.

* * *

JOBSTART PROGRAM

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, among the many valuable job training initiatives which the Government of Canada has been taking in recent years, few would appear to be more uniquely successful than the Jobstart Program which has been conducted by a volunteer community organization in Oromocto, New Brunswick.

Over the past several years the continuing track record has been maintained of all young citizens who have completed Jobstart training. The results indicate that employment stability of more than 70 per cent has been maintained by Jobstart graduates during that time.

The special features of the Jobstart concept are those that teach the work ethic in a full-fledged employment scenario. The participants are not called students but rather employees and they learn the disciplines of holding a job on a first-hand basis. In addition, of course, they receive general training in the fundamental skills and habits necessary to survive in the work force.

The innovative training program is also very cost effective for society because it has a high record of helping people break out of the welfare trap.

The Jobstart Program deserves a continuing place in the training structure of the Canada employment system.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, on June 4 of this year the right hon. Prime Minister received a letter from the premier of the province of British Columbia, the hon. Michael Harcourt. I will quote three paragraphs from this letter. It starts by saying:

> After much consideration, the Government of British Columbia has determined that Canadian interests would be best served by Canada withdrawing from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations and not signing a NAFTA.
>
> It is clear from the actions of the Government of the United States over the past few weeks that it is not willing to live by the spirit of the commitments made in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA). These actions include the recent softwood lumber dispute and the Honda case, both of which are clearly politically motivated trade disputes that violate the commitment to fair trade between the two countries.
>
> Therefore, I believe strongly that it is premature to consider entering another preferential trade agreement with the United States given the problems associated with the FTA.

I want to congratulate the premier of the province of British Columbia for taking this position. I want to say to the federal government that it should either pay attention to this letter or suffer the peril in the province of British Columbia.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post first tested supermailboxes in my riding of Fraser Valley East. Through a good communications campaign and a willingness to consult, supermailboxes were a success.

Now, to the surprise of many, in the municipality of Matsqui in my riding Canada Post seems to have forgotten its own secret to success. In a very high-handed way Canada Post has decided to locate supermailboxes in the middle of people's lawns. I am not kidding.

A simple notice to say it is coming was issued. No consultation took place; no recourse was available. The next thing we know, trees were ripped out, holes were dug, a water main broken, Canada Post's reputation was shot, and 300 people were signing a petition.

Things are moving fast here, but what we really need is some common sense and some understanding. Residents and Canada Post alike want to get rid of the old green boxes and want some improved service.

I encourage Canada Post to stop its high-handed and arbitrary actions in the McMillan Heights area of Matsqui and meet with the residents affected to reach an amiable agreement suitable to all parties involved.

I have now been assured by Canada Post that it will meet with the people affected.

* * *

• (1410)

JOB TRAINING

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, for quite some time the government has been telling Canadians they have to be well trained to compete globally. However it seems the Tories are unwilling to take their own advice.

Thousands of Canadians across the country are looking for training assistance. The government says it has poured millions of dollars into the UI fund to help provide training. Sadly for those many Canadians whose UI has run out they are ineligible for help.

For our young people in universities learning the skills of tomorrow, the Conservatives have cut funding for post-secondary education. The resulting higher tuition has forced many youth to give up on a university education.

The government should listen to its own advice and help Canadians get the job training they need to enter the 21st century.

PENSIONS

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on a subject that is very dear to us in this Chamber, perhaps too dear. I am referring to the pensions that you and I will receive as members of Parliament. I believe there must be some changes to the pension rules.

First, no one should be eligible to receive a pension until they are at least 55 or 60 years of age. Second, no one should be permitted to draw an MPs pension and also receive a salary from a government job. Third, I believe MPs should be eligible after four years of service but should not start drawing the pension until they reach retirement age.

My constituents want to know where we stand on this issue. This is where I stand and have stood there since I was elected. I ask all members to consider what I have said very carefully.

* * *

ELLIOT LAKE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the Elliot Lake Retirement Living Caravan is stationed on Parliament Hill. It is located near the west members' entrance.

The caravan is a travelling information display which tells all about Elliot Lake retirement living, a non-profit housing program offering rent to seniors from just $285 per month. Since its inception in 1987 the program has attracted over 2,000 seniors to this beautiful city on the north shore of Lake Huron.

More than 1,100 housing units in Elliot Lake are now occupied by seniors in the retirement living program and there are some 400 more units available for rent this year.

Over 2,000 senior citizens from many parts of Canada have discovered the enjoyment and economic freedom of living in this friendly city of 13,000 with excellent community facilities and low housing costs.

The caravan is funded through a grant from the FEDNOR program. I invite all, including all MPs and senators, to visit the Elliot Lake Retirement Living Caravan today on Parliament Hill to learn what an excellent opportunity this is for affordable housing for our senior citizens.

S.O. 31

VICTORIA CROSS

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that our government should Canadianize and restore the Victoria Cross medal as the highest accolade for an act of valour in the face of the enemy.

In 1972 when the previous government brought in the new Canadian orders of bravery the Victoria Cross was omitted. I believe it is time this policy was reversed. The Victoria Cross should be reinstated and awarded by the Governor General on the advice of the government of the day.

After listening to the many views of many veterans on this issue, I strongly believe the Victoria Cross should once again resume its position as a distinguished part of Canada's awards for gallantry.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in response to my leader, the Minister of National Health and Welfare implied that provincial New Democrat governments were no better than his when it comes to child care. This is unfair, insulting, and shows the minister's inadequate knowledge of child care in Canada.

In my home province of British Columbia the New Democrat government chose to add $17 million for child care support programs including additional funds for infant and toddler care.

In Saskatchewan, a province reeling from debt left by the previous Tory government, the New Democrats chose to create a child care advisory board and chose to allocate over $14 million for child care.

In Ontario the New Democrat government chose to create a child care task force and $75 million has been targeted over five years. Knowing it is essential for individuals seeking training to have access to child care, Jobs Ontario includes the creation of 20,000 new spaces.

The New Democrat government in Yukon also chose to bring in child care reform.

What have the Tories done? They chose to cap the Canada Assistance Plan for B.C., Ontario, and Alberta, and have limited the funds to child care.

* * *

HALTON—PEEL SURVEY

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, recently I asked my constituents for their advice and suggestions. I would like to share some of the responses with the House.

Dave Cannon of Caledon East has this advice: Keep interest rates below 10 per cent; keep inflation low; reduce taxes, especially the GST; fund public works projects; reduce unemployment; and increase funding for education and retraining.

O. Schewchun of Campbellville writes: The Canadian future I believe will improve when we elect people who truly represent the majority view of constituents and do not blindly follow and support their political party line. Politicians must remember they are elected to represent, not elected to lead.

Elaine Lawlor of Palgrave writes: We want to stay proud Canadians. We want the tops in education and medical research. We want to work for our future. We want our children to know how to work rather than to be handed too much. We want safety in our cities. We want our children to be able to play in the parks again. We want alcohol advertising prohibited and we want French in Quebec and English in the rest of Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing the voices of my constituents to be heard in Parliament.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, the government wants to keep the Canadian family as the basis of this country, but is demolishing everything that could help it get out of hard times. This Conservative government denies that many families are headed and financially supported by single women. One parent families are a reality in 1992.

[*English*]

Eliminating tax breaks for common law couples, killing a national day care program, introducing a targeted system of child benefits are not what is needed to help

those who care but struggle to keep their families as an entity.

[*Translation*]

This government is doing nothing to help create a future for the thousands of children who survive thanks to food banks. It believes only in the traditional type of family and forgets about the others.

If we want a strong nation, it is high time to stop living in the past and to face today's reality of the very large number of broken families that are asking for the help promised by this government. This situation must change.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a question. Speaking to mayors from all over Canada on Sunday in Montreal, the Minister of Transport told them that the government could not participate in a program to rebuild the cities' infrastructure and create jobs immediately, because it did not have money. Today, we learn that the government is preparing to spend $4.3 billion to buy 50 helicopters for the Canadian forces. These helicopters will not even be made in Canada; they will be made in Europe.

I therefore ask the Prime Minister why the government is considering spending $4.3 billion to buy military equipment when the government does not have a single dollar to help unemployed Canadians.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think that the Leader of the Opposition is mistaken. The government must make decisions on Canada's national security and national defence on the basis of recommendations from the military authorities. We shall see if it is necessary to buy this particular equipment. If so, the Minister of National Defence will report to the House of Commons in due course.

As for the statement made by the Minister of Transport in Montreal, he stated the obvious fact that we do not have $14 or $15 billion to spend on municipal infrastructure. As the hon. member for Halifax said yesterday, you in the Liberal Party do not have the money to finance a national child care program. That is realistic. Our position is rather like that. We cannot spend money we do not have. But in his budget, the Minister of Finance spoke of government involvement in road infrastructure, and we are looking into it with the provinces. I have the impression that within a few days or weeks, there will be an important statement about it.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not want to create a bad impression.

[*English*]

But it is not a program of $15 billion by the federal government. It is a program of $1 billion per year for five years. The provincial government will pay one-third, the municipalities will pay one-third and there will be jobs created right away.

• (1420)

Coming back to this question of buying 50 helicopters for $4.3 billion at this time, this program has been under discussion for 10 years. The government should know that the world has changed a lot in the last 10 years. I would like to know if the Prime Minister would reconsider this decision and make sure that other priorities come first, like the creation of jobs and having money for programs and the training of the unemployed so they will be ready when prosperity returns to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the Leader of the Opposition that the only decision which has been made in this regard was made by his government about fifteen years ago, and that was to replace our frigates.

Now, those frigates will require helicopters, since those in use at present are nearly 30 years old and need to be replaced. The government has the matter under advisement. A decision will be made and the House will be apprised of it in due course, as the Prime Minister has said.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Finance.

As I said earlier, that decision may indeed have been under consideration for 10 years, but it is the normal result of a situation which, at the time, made new frigates necessary. But the world has changed completely during that time.

That is why I would like the Minister of National Defence to tell me whether those billions of dollars might not be better spent meeting urgent societal needs now that the cold war is over.

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, if I am to take the Leader of the Opposition literally, we should cancel the frigate building program now, including those under construction in New Brunswick and Quebec. I do not think that the government, in its wisdom, will make such a decision.

Second, as far as on-board helicopters are concerned, we are aware, just like the Leader of the Opposition, that the world has changed. That matter will be among those raised by my cabinet colleagues, as the minister does himself in his department, and in due course a decision will be made and the population will be informed.

[*English*]

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that there is a big difference between the frigate program approved by the Liberals and this program. The frigates are made in Canada and these helicopters will not be.

I understand that in fact the jobs created by the Sea King replacement program will be 3,000. I understand that the same amount of money spent on public transportation would create 40 times as many jobs and if spent on education, would probably create 75 times as many jobs.

Can the minister stand on his feet and tell this House and the Canadian public that, given the state of the world, the Canadian economy, the state of our infrastructure, education and public transportation, that the government's priority is right at this time?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the honourable member that it was decided 125 years ago that one of the reasons there should be a Canadian confederation was to defend our territory together.

That in my view is one of our basic responsibilities under confederation. The government equips our Armed Forces in accordance with recommendations made by professionals in that field, and this is what the government is going to do.

The honourable member may rest assured that the government will not make any decisions without consulting the experts nor without having asked all the essential questions, including details regarding this important project.

[*English*]

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the minister had to say. It did not really address the question that I asked though. If I could ask a supplementary. This works out to $1.4 million a job. That is a pretty expensive job creation program, if you look at it that way.

I want to remind the House and this government that there is a likelihood of tens of thousands of Atlantic Canadians being out of work if the northern cod catch program is going to be shut down, as the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans suggested it might have to be.

The government is looking at $45 million for those who may be unemployed because of this, $45 million for over 30,000 Canadians. That is going to be very hard to explain in Atlantic Canada. Can the minister tell this House that the government can truly afford the Sea King replacement program and at the same time afford adequate compensation for those Canadians who will be unemployed in the not too distant future in the fishing industry?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the honourable member that Canada allocates 1.8 or 1.9 per cent of its gross domestic product to defence, whereas other western countries earmark 4 per cent for this purpose, or even 6 per cent in the case of the United States. To what extent can we avoid providing for the defence of our territory and still remain an independent country?

[*English*]

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, on the question of the submarines, the threats these helicopters are designed to meet according to all reports is a threat that has collapsed, in case the government has not noticed. It has collapsed along with the Berlin wall. It has collapsed along with the Soviet Union. It has collapsed along with the Warsaw Pact. In fact, the government is inviting Boris Yeltsin to lunch over at the Museum of Civilization next week.

Will not the government concede that the *Hunt for Red October* was last year's movie?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I was impressed with the enumeration of various threats that had disappeared by the NDP. They ticked off a threat that had gone here and a threat that had gone there and a threat that had gone somewhere else. It was very impressive. Yet, when a real threat emerged in Iraq, the NDP did not see it.

When it came time to take a position on a real and genuine threat that existed, the NDP did not see that threat. As the minister of defence is pointing out, Canada cannot afford the kind of imprudence suggested by the NDP. We must be ready to meet legitimate threats when they occur, threats that affect the national interest of Canada or alternatively threats that affect our obligations as members of the United Nations.

When the United Nations called and asked for democracies to respond to the challenge, the NDP said no. The Liberals said: "At the first sign of gun-fire, we are calling the troops home". Well, that is not what Canada wants.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is an expert, not only on *Red October* but red herrings, because on the whole issue of Iraq, of course, he has missed the point.

The issue here is, first of all, the Prime Minister is saying this is a necessary purchase and then minutes later the Minister of National Defence is saying they are going to consult experts and make a decision. I think it is important for the government to be absolutely frank with the Canadian people here. Has a decision been made to proceed with this atrocious and ludicrous expenditure of public funds or has it not?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the government has not yet arrived at a decision in this regard. The Minister of National Defence has not reported to his colleagues, nor has he submitted any proposal concerning the acquisition of helicopters. A proposal will be made by the minister in due time and cabinet will take it under advisement and make a decision. This is not the exact opposite of what the Prime Minister has said. The government has a national defence policy and we implement it.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that before the government makes a decision it can agree that there should be a full public discussion with the experts involved coming before a committee of this House. It finally boils down to a question of priorities.

[*Translation*]

How can the minister explain to hungry children in Montreal why he has decided to spend $91 million for a single helicopter and $4 billion dollars for the entire project?

[*English*]

How can he explain it to a battered woman seeking help in Victoria or families out of work all across Canada? Is it not the time for all parties in this House to come together to achieve a real peace dividend for Canadians as other countries are doing all around the world?

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, if we consider the professionalism of our troops and their dedication, Canada's peace dividend for the past 20 years has been the highest of any country in the world.

The percentage of Gross National Product spent on national defence in this country was the lowest of any country in the world.

In any event, the peace dividend has been paid for the past 20 years, and you are already cashing in on the interest.

[*English*]

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister.

Twenty-six men have lost their lives at the bottom of the Westray coal mine. Taxpayers are going to lose millions of dollars and certain other persons will benefit handsomely as a result. Now the Government of Nova Scotia is about to flaunt the Westray coal mine.

Will the Prime Minister indicate to the House as to whether or not he is prepared to have a parliamentary inquiry into this particular matter and if not, why not?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of the letter from the House leader of the Liberal Party in respect of that. I am sure he is aware that the main issue of safety is the provincial responsibility of Nova Scotia and there is a judicial inquiry going on. I am sure he would not want us to prejudice that inquiry.

The member recognizes, as he acknowledged in his letter, that the government has been forthcoming with all of the background documents necessary for people to examine what has occurred and reach their own conclusions. I am also sure he would recognize that having another separate so-called study would not really serve any useful purpose at this time.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the minister who responded.

The minister knows and I know that what I am suggesting will not interfere one iota with the judicial inquiry in the province of Nova Scotia. In fact it would buttress and facilitate that process.

Week after week we have heard from the minister of state for small business who sounds like a broken record: "Don't ask me. Ask the people of Nova Scotia." He is right. There are certain answers the provincial government can give, but there are also certain answers that ministers of the federal Crown ought to give.

I ask the Prime Minister again. Is the Prime Minister not prepared now to proceed with a parliamentary inquiry to get to the bottom of a national disaster which has caused the loss of 26 lives in this country?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House was very concerned and hurt when news of this disaster occurred.

There was an accident. We do not know at this point in time whether there was laxity in terms of safety precautions or whether in fact the regulations were appropriate or inappropriate. These are the fundamental questions that are being examined by the judicial inquiry in Nova Scotia which will ascertain and undoubtedly produce recommendations that will reduce the possibility of that kind of thing happening again.

If the member has concern about establishing the facts behind how this accident occurred, I think he would agree that the judicial inquiry going on in Nova Scotia is the proper vehicle for making that determination. We ought to await that rather than try to interfere with it.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

One month ago today, 26 miners lost their lives in the Westray disaster. One month later, we still have not received a straight answer from this government as to how it could have financed this unsafe project. What this government has done instead is to throw up road-blocks in the path of the truth. Enough is enough.

Will the Prime Minister not now agree to our call for a special parliamentary inquiry to look into its role in this tragedy?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, we really do need some perspective on this. Over the last 30 years, most of it under federal Liberal governments, over a billion dollars have been poured into coal mining in Cape Breton. Tragedies have occurred there.

The hon. member is a member of Parliament from Cape Breton. He thinks that the only place where coal mining is dangerous is in fact outside of Cape Breton. The fact is that it is a dangerous occupation generally. The federal government has supported it in Cape Breton as well as elsewhere.

In answer to his question of yesterday, I hasten to tell him that last week we tabled 2,000 pages of evidence. The answer to every question he asked yesterday is in that evidence.

I ask him not to call for a parliamentary inquiry but to read what we have tabled.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, the Westray mine would not have opened and the lives of 26 miners would not have been lost if Clifford Frame and Curragh Resources had not received a generous deal from this government. That is the deal we want an inquiry to look into.

Canadian taxpayers now stand to lose up to $80 million as a consequence of that transaction. They want answers. Why is this government refusing to call this inquiry? What has this government got to hide?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member and his colleague from Cape Breton made these allegations about a so-called deal for Curragh Resources and perpetrated very serious misunderstandings first of all about the consulting contract.

It was true that Curragh Resources received a consulting contract of over $6.1 million. That was to be spent over a series of years and it was. It was used by a group of engineers, accountants and managers to plan the mine, to operate the mine and to put it in place.

The hon. member wanted to make this contribution look like it was just money in somebody's pocket. In fact, those were the funds used by the consulting firm to plan and operate the mine. Dozens of people were hired and worked under that contract so he is perpetrating a very serious misunderstanding when he says that it was anything other than an ordinary transaction.

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CHILD CARE

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and it is in regard to the priorities of his government.

While attention is recently being focused on child sexual abuse in Martensville, Saskatchewan, the government's special advisor on child sexual abuse estimated that across the country some one-third of males and over one-half of females have been sexually abused at some time in their lives. He recommended new cost-sharing programs with the provinces to deal with this problem.

The government has ignored this advice and the plight of thousands of Canadian children. Instead, it has off-loaded billions of dollars in social programs and transfers to the provinces.

I ask the Prime Minister how much more evidence does his government need before it takes adequate and effective action to protect Canadian children from the horrors of sexual abuse?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the allegations regarding the sexual abuse of children in the Martensville, Saskatchewan area are absolutely reprehensible, unacceptable and devastating.

There is not one person sitting here in this House nor indeed anybody in Canada who is not absolutely taken aback and disgusted with the situation.

Children are a natural asset and one of our best resources. The interesting thing has to do with regulation and child care centres across the country are under the strict jurisdiction of the provincial governments.

We have worked toward solutions for the problems with sexual abuse. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women with her new task force on violence against women takes in problems with senior citizens as well as children. The $136 million that we brought forth in January 1991 will go toward this area.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary deals with the need for a national child care strategy. Most experts have agreed that this is what is necessary to best protect children at risk.

The Minister of National Defence when he was talking about defence policy and the purchase of helicopters said that he was listening to his advisors and experts when it came to the purchase of helicopters.

I wonder why this government does not listen to its advisors and experts when it comes to child care. The National Council on Welfare, the government's own advisory agency, said: "Child care is an essential service for the majority of Canadian families with children. No strategy to combat child poverty can succeed without an adequate and affordable child care system." Why does the government not listen to its experts on child care?

• (1440)

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the regulatory responsibility for child care is a provincial jurisdiction. It is a provincial responsibility.

I must say that the government has acted over the last few months. It ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on December 11. Also there was the announcement by the Minister of Finance of the child benefit package on February 25, which we are taking through the House today. It will put $2.1 billion into the hands of families. It will put new money into the hands of families over the next five years. The Brighter Futures program is another $500 million.

We care about children and we are putting the money where it counts.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister who is about to leave to attend the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

Yesterday in Rio the environment minister of Germany publicly committed his country to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, which are responsible for the greenhouse effect, by 25 per cent to 30 per cent by the year 2005. Yet our own government's only stated commitment is to stabilize CO2 emissions even though this country emits more carbon dioxide per capita than virtually any other country.

I want to ask the Prime Minister: Will the government follow the initiative of Germany and commit to a significant reduction program of carbon dioxide emissions beyond the year 2000?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend may have missed an editorial in *The Financial Post* this morning. The headline is "Canada is a Leader on Greenhouse Gas Issue". It indicates that Canada's commitment to sign the climate change convention at the Rio summit puts reduction in gas emissions firmly on the political agenda.

It is generally recognized that for the last number of years beginning with the Montreal protocol, Canada has played a pretty progressive role in this area. Minister Charest has indicated in Rio our intention to maintain quite an impressive record for Canada.

There are things that we can do more quickly than others. This is a very important point. We are going to try to make sure that we are in the forefront of resolving the problem.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would know that the convention on climate change that Canada said it will sign is devoid of any timetable. It does not require the obligation of signing any firm measures. In other words, it is just generalized, vague statements with no strategy and no program attached. It is now up to individual nations to take the initiative.

I want to ask the Prime Minister again: Under his leadership, will the government initiate immediately consultations with industry, with NGOs, with other interested parties and with the provinces so that a concrete national strategy and timetable on carbon dioxide reductions can be put in place at the earliest opportunity?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we would like for the convention on climate change to be viewed in the way that the green plan is for the following reasons.

I quote Mr. Tolba, the executive director of the United Nations Environmental Program who said: "Canada's green plan is a model for the whole world to study. What I really like are the goals and targets that are costed over specific periods of time. I thought the green plan was a most courageous move".

We want the same kind of thinking to go into the convention on climate change. Indeed, the Government of Canada was prepared to sign a much stronger convention on climate change. In the course of negotiations among some 175 countries, some of the provisions were diluted.

We are in the process of putting in train a program immediately post-Rio that would have the effect of building on what we will have achieved, imperfect though it is, so that some of the ideas to which the United Nations director made reference can be incorporated into the convention on climate change to give it more teeth.

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STEEL INDUSTRY

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

While he was perusing the editorial in *The Financial Post* he may have noticed the front page headline which states that Dofasco in Hamilton is about to shed another 2,250 potential jobs, added to the 937 people who last year took voluntary retirement in an industry that was supposed to be a big winner under the trade agreement.

The Prime Minister is no doubt aware that in six days the Americans are about to declare war on the Canadian steel industry. Yet yesterday his Minister for International Trade said that the Canadian government does not plan to launch its own investigation into U.S. steel even if Canadians are named in the anti-dumping investigation.

Will the Prime Minister overrule the ridiculous statement made by his Minister for International Trade yesterday and will he at least be willing to put the muscle of the government behind the fight to save the Canadian steel industry?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I take the liberty of answering the question simply because my hon. friend asked me if, as Prime Minister, I would overrule the minister. It is not needed.

If my hon. friend will consult *The Toronto Star* article, she will see a faithful restatement of what the minister said in regard to this very important issue.

It is the intention of the Government of Canada, with the stakeholders and with the industry, to fight what we consider to be a pernicious side-swipe action against the interests of Canada and the Canadian steel industry. We hope to carry that fight on to victory as we have under the free trade agreement in a growing number of cases.

The free trade agreement is beginning to throw off an important number of victories for Canada. We believe that this will be another one.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, what are being thrown off are the victims of free trade who are on the scrap heap of the Canadian steel industry.

The Prime Minister met with the President of the United States weeks ago and he said that he had a direct line to Washington.

If the Prime Minister has a direct line to Washington, and if he raised the steel issue with the President of the United States, why is it that as of last week according to the chairman of the Canadian Steel Producers Association, not a single American steel firm had even been contacted by the U.S. government on this issue? Who is actually telling the truth on this one?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, there is not much I can add to the Prime Minister's very pertinent response but I would like to tell the hon. member that in this particular field, counteraction against U.S. steel companies has always been a decision for the industry to take. The Minister for International Trade has made it clear that he will support the industry and the decision it takes.

More important, when the hon. member speaks about knuckling under to the Americans, we have just been informed that we have won a chapter 18 binational panel unanimous decision just rendered an hour ago on the CAMI mortgage interest question.

This was a unanimous decision in our favour, proof once again we have equality with the United States when we have a dispute and we are winning in the free trade agreement.

Oral Questions

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

As I mentioned earlier this afternoon and as the minister knows, there is a very successful training program conducted by a volunteer community organization in the town of Oromocto called the Jobstart Program.

It has been designed primarily in an employment scenario to teach the work ethic on a broad basis and to provide a basic level of general employment skills to young Canadians.

The Jobstart concept has been uniquely successful with the continuing employment record of more than 70 per cent since its inception. Although the Canada Employment Centre has continued to support Jobstart, unfortunately the nature of this unique program apparently does not meet the present criteria of a national program curriculum.

Does the minister and the department support the Jobstart concept of general skills training in an employment scenario and, if so, will he initiate measures to have the Jobstart criteria included as an eligible and continuing program in the general Canada employment training structure nationally?

• (1450)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member points to a very important aspect of the training requirements in Canada. That is why under the prosperity initiative we have included this topic for discussion by Canadians and by stakeholders in the whole economy.

As soon as these discussions are completed and we get the action plan of the steering group I hope that my department can make these programs intended for Canadian youth even more relevant.

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YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, unemployment has nearly doubled since 1989 among youth in this country. The rate of poverty among those living alone is over 55 per cent. Drug convictions have risen by 96 per cent since 1984. Since 1984 property crime among youth has gone up 158 per cent, violent crime committed by youth by 239 per cent.

My question for the Prime Minister is this. Is it not a pretty stupid policy to be even thinking about buying more helicopters to hunt Soviet submarines in view of the real crisis in the cities of this country?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member, if he is not familiar with national defence policy, that there are plans to purchase submarines as well as helicopters, as part of our national policy. The government has various responsibilities and one of them is national defence. Another responsibility is social policy. Yet another is economic policy. The government is responsible for allocating taxpayers' money to these various priorities. I believe Canada's defence policy is a fair response to our allies and to Canadian taxpayers.

[*English*]

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is simply this. In view of the serious crisis among young people in this country, is it not about time that this government gave up its $5 billion helicopter fetish in favour of the kids in this country?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the program also contains a search and rescue component, since some of these helicopters will be used for that purpose. I suppose a few years from now, the same member will accuse the government of shirking its responsibility to Canadians if it fails to acquire the necessary equipment to provide for research and rescue operations in this country.

The government cannot afford to bow to the pressures of the media. It must have a sound policy, and it does.

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Many Albertans are deeply concerned with the application of the Young Offenders Act.

Is the minister, perhaps with the Solicitor General of Canada, prepared to undertake consultations with provincial governments on the application of this act? Briefly the objective would be to have provincial governments issue clear instructions to Crown prosecutors and judges to deal with these serious crimes in a firmer manner. Would the minister be prepared to consider that kind of initiative?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right in recognizing that the implementation of the Young Offenders Act regime requires the co-operation of three levels of government. We have ongoing consultations with the provinces now with respect to further amendments to the Young Offenders Act.

As the hon. member will know, the Government of Canada prosecutes young offenders only in the territories. I have developed a prosecutor's desk book which I will be discussing with my federal prosecutors in a couple of weeks precisely to put into place the kind of guidelines that the hon. member would seek in applying the law in this area and others.

I will be pleased to review the nature of the consultations we are having with the provinces. The deputy ministers will be meeting in a couple of weeks to prepare for the federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers this fall and I will ensure that that subject is dealt with at those federal-provincial meetings.

* * *

STEEL INDUSTRY

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, with reference to the steel issue raised in the United States, the minister has said that there is a dispute settlement mechanism in place which will ultimately resolve the issue.

He knows that in the meantime Canadian steel producers will be seriously harmed by U.S. trade actions while the panel decision is awaited and the prospect is that Canadian producers will lose further market share during that time.

He knows also that under the existing agreement it pays U.S. steel producers to launch trade remedy actions even if it is likely they will lose under the dispute settlement mechanism.

Is the government taking the occasion of the negotiations of a North American free trade agreement to correct the anomalies in the free trade agreement with the United States? Is it taking the occasion of the NAFTA talks to renegotiate those anomalies in the free trade agreement?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I do find it very disturbing. The hon. member admits he thinks this country could not win a dispute with the United States on the steel matter. I do not know why he is so defeatist.

Essentially what I was saying in response to the steel matter was that the Minister for International Trade will support our steel industry with regard to that dispute.

I did not say, and he has not said, that we are going to go into a chapter 18 or chapter 19 mechanism. However, he has not ruled out "initiating an anti-dumping or countervail claim".

What I was speaking about was another chapter 18 decision which was just tabled about an hour ago. It indicates that non-mortage interest is now to be included in the CAMI instance and it will have a very good influence on the upcoming Honda decision. All of this is positive proof that the free trade dispute settlement mechanism is working and the over-all agreement is working.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, that was not what I was asking. I was not asking about an automobile dispute resolution; I was asking about the steel issue. Let me try it once more.

Back in 1988 the Prime Minister said that his highest priority in the trade agreement was to end "the threat from U.S. protectionists who harass and restrict our imports through the misuse of trade remedy law".

Point of Order

If anything exemplifies the misuse of trade remedy law it is the threatened U.S. action against steel exports. We are not talking about CAMI. We are not talking about Suzuki. We are talking about steel exports. Yet there is nothing in the existing free trade agreement which prevents this kind of protectionist harassment.

I take it from the minister's answer that that is the reason he does not foresee the government will go to the binational panel. What then is the government proposing to do in the case of the steel issue? It says it is not going to the binational. It has no policy on how to support the Canadian industry and does it not acknowledge there are serious—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has put his question.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, this is the strangest line of questioning. The hon. member stood up and said in a defeatist tone that we could never win a chapter 18 or chapter 19 dispute with the U.S. on steel. That is what he begins with, and then he asks us to do it anyway, or asks us not to do it anyway. What is the hon. member asking for anyway?

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

In his budget last February the minister bragged that the communications budget was to be reduced by some $75 million this year. Canadians now find out that the TV ad budget alone for the first six months of this year will be $24 million.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance why is it there is no money for training, no money for youth, no money for Court Challenges, but all kinds of dough when it comes to rewarding Tory advertising companies?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely shocked to hear that the advertising budget for the first six months is only $24 million. That is one-third of what was spent in a full year when the Liberals were in power. That is one of the lowest ones we have had in the last eight or ten years.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, too bad the minister was not listening. That was the cost of the TV ads alone, not the advertising budget. The TV ads were referred to as "an electronic monument" by a government official. It is a monument all right, a monument to Tory waste and patronage.

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

I wish the minister would tell us when the government will stop its futile exercise in patronage and propaganda and finally put its money where it is needed, by helping young unemployed Canadians and training the Canadian labour force, not by rewarding Conservatives.

[*English*]

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Once again, Mr. Speaker, we are struck with a gale of wind on this side of the House from across the way. Advertising has been a part of government activities for a long time. I even remember when the government used to fly geese across the screen and put out millions and millions of dollars. Remember? That was the Liberal Party that was doing it then.

If you have any accusations, make them; other than that, it is good government.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Some two weeks ago the Minister of Supply and Services promised in this House—actually it was on May 11—to table documents in relation to another answer. On page 10516 of *Hansard* he promised to give details about government contracts. He said, and I quote:

> I will put it together and have it tabled.

He gave that commitment to the House. I want to know if the documents have been tabled and, if so, when.

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member was prepared to do his homework he would have found out that that will be tabled on Monday.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I regret that I did not bring this matter to the attention of the House sooner, but in our gallery today is Miss Chu Chen, celebrated human rights activist and member of the National Assembly of Taiwan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski 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 second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on 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.

This government's record in support of Canada's children and Canadian families is abominable. While extolling family values, the Conservatives have dramatically and repeatedly cut family benefits since they were first elected in 1984.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It is agreed on both sides of the House that people who watch our debate should also be able to listen.

Ms. Mitchell: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is difficult to be heard.

I would like to review the various steps that this government has taken in eroding family programs, particularly programs for children.

First of all, when first elected, you will recall, it killed the child tax exemption, an exemption which was an income tax deduction of $710 for those taxpayers who had children under the age of 18.

This change in the tax policy penalized middle–class families particularly. It was unfair to those families because those are the families who did not get the child tax credit. It also meant that taxpayers who did not have children were in effect paying the same amount of tax that those families paid who had very high child rearing costs. I ask, was this fair? I do not think it was.

The second step was that the government introduced the child tax credit. Of course, as it is wont to do, it said this was a way to transfer benefits to those most in need. We heard that theme again today. It is a theme we have to watch out for because if you look underneath that rationale, what it is saying is: "We are going to take money out of general funds and give just a little bit of token money back to the very poorest people so we can say we are do–gooders".

Only a part of the savings from the child tax exemption, which as I said really penalized middle–class families, went to the new child tax credit which was directed to poorer families, and it was not all that much money either.

During its first term the government also began its policy of partial deindexation. This has proven to be a very insidious, secret way of reducing the value of family benefits and also, I might say, of old age pensions. It applied this vote to the family allowance and the child tax credit. Over the years this means that the child tax credit will go down in value each year. By the year 2000 these credits will be quite insignificant in terms of that they can buy for a child or a family.

The third Conservative government anti–family policy was to destroy Canada's basic universal social program for families. Of course, I am referring to its action which in this bill will take away the universal family allowance program. First it did it by stealth and now in Bill C–80 it is having the final execution of family allowances, the final termination.

Canada's family allowance program has been a progressive social program that made us proud to be Canadians. It was recognized the world over as a very progressive kind of family program. It treated all children equally and it really recognized the importance of children to all Canadians, whether we had children or

not. It recognized that as a society we had a social responsibility to help care for the next generation.

My party I am proud to say pioneered this family allowance program. We felt very strongly that the family allowance originally should have been higher and would have been a very good way to compensate families who had children.

The family allowance went to all children. We know also that this is the only program where the cheque when it existed went to the mother. It was often the only cheque that many women received in their own name. In 1986, when the government tried to deindex and tax back the family allowance, we put up a big fight in this House. It was very, very difficult. I will be frank about that. Children, unfortunately, do not vote. Therefore, children do not count in the political scheme of things with this government.

When the old age pensioners came to Parliament Hill and objected to deindexing and were worried that there was a threat of universal programs being removed, in particular the old age pension, they fought very hard and won their point of view. It will be recalled that at that time the Prime Minister said, and he repeated it later, that universal programs are a sacred trust and his government would never affect universal programs. Unfortunately, as I said, children were the victims and he betrayed our families once again.

The government introduced the budget this year and Bill C-80 which we are debating today. It will terminate altogether Canada's wonderful family allowance program. It was not quite so wonderful this past few years because the government was taxing it back. We felt that also was an unfair measure because again families with children were being penalized, whereas those families without children were not treated in the same way.

Once again the government used the same rationale and would not admit it was doing this partly because of the deficit and partly because of its philosophy which is definitely against universality. It said once again: "Oh, never mind. We are just doing this so that we can put the money in for the poor, for those who need the most benefits".

• (1510)

I want to say that we certainly do not object to special child benefits that are targeted to low income families. They are always welcome and always needed. But I want to say that we object very strenuously to the termination of the universal family allowance program which was there for all of Canada's children and was a basic, solid social benefit as part of our social security system in Canada.

The new child tax benefit which is also proposed in this bill provides $1,020 per child for families earning under $25,921. It offers an extra incentive for parents who are working. This supposedly is to encourage people to go off welfare and seek work. It is rather a patronizing point, but it is also extremely impractical.

The government, for example, fails to say how these parents who have been unemployed, not through choice but because they could not find work or could not find work that would bring in enough money to feed their families, are going to find jobs. Also, how can these people even begin looking for work when no child care is available? This is the very government that has, over and over again, promised a national child care program and now refuses to do anything about it. It completely abrogates its responsibility.

Doing away with the family allowance means that all children of Canada, both now and in the future if we think to the years ahead, have lost a precious family allowance program, a universal program that the Prime Minister himself said was a sacred trust. So much for the word of our Prime Minister.

Conservatives also refuse to recognize that today the situation in most families, if it is a two-parent family, requires that both parents work. The number of single-parent families in Canada has greatly increased. This government refuses to acknowledge that there is a tragic lack of licensed day care homes or day care programs for young children. This means that many children are at risk. Many are in inadequate babysitting arrangements and many have no care at all. We know that latch-key children are still coming home from school to empty homes.

In both 1984 and 1988 the Prime Minister in his election campaigns promised faithfully—I can just see that solemn expression on his face—that he would bring in a national child care program for Canadian families.

He acknowledged to the women of Canada in particular that this was a priority need and a priority of his government. However, once elected of course each time the promise was broken and this was the lowest priority.

We now hear from the Minister of National Health and Welfare that the government will do nothing, it is not important, it is not needed and we are not going to ever have a child care program under this government. That is why of course we must change this government and change it to a party that has a long record of supporting universal, non-profit quality child care.

Mr. Milliken: The Liberal Party.

Ms. Mitchell: The Liberal Party unfortunately, my friend, does not propose that.

Most working families will have to continue to use unreliable babysitting arrangements. Let us look at those who have higher incomes and who are paying taxes. What happens to them? Of course they are the ones that government recognizes and will give special advantages to so that they can hire nannies. The wealthier families now have had the child care expense deduction doubled twice. It is now up to $4,000 to $5,000 that can be deducted from their taxes for any of their child care expenses for children under seven and between $2,000 and $3,000 for children a little bit older, under 14 years of age.

In contrast of course many single parent men and women have little choice when they have young children but to go on welfare because there simply are not the adequate reliable child care services available. If they are available, they are not affordable. The fees are far too high.

What does this government provide to parents that stay at home? We understand there is a new—maybe it is not so new—family caucus now that is reinventing the traditional old family values. They are fine and were fine in our parents' time but do not really recognize the real situation of families in this country today and the great diversity of family groupings as well.

The government did make a token gesture for a parent that stays home to care for children. This is extremely important work that should be highly valued. What do they get? They get a token $213 a year for children under seven. I say it is a gross insult.

Millions were spent on two child care reports, first the K. D. Cooke report and then the all-party child care task force under the Minister of State for Transport. Both of these reports documented the very urgent need for adequate quality care for children.

We travelled this country many times and heard from so many groups the stories of what was happening to kids and the tremendous stress on families, particularly in the poorest provinces of Canada.

We recommended specific suggestions for a comprehensive national child care program. It was not as rich as I would have liked, but it was a lot better than what we have now. I see the former minister is in the House today. He took a long time to look at these suggestions and eventually he came up with some very modified proposals. Even those have been refused by this government.

Community groups across this country which are experts on child care have continued to advocate that we simply must get on with a program for Canada's children. This week the National Action Committee on the Status of Women made this one of its priorities.

I would like to go back to one of the main points of focus of Bill C-80 which is to establish the new child tax benefit. When it was proposed in the 1992 budget, it was said that this tax would be simpler, fairer and more generous. It is none of these. The child benefit is supposed to help low income families escape from poverty by providing a child benefit which will supplement the minimum wages if they should go off welfare and find a job that pays minimum wages.

How can this goal be achieved when there are no child care services available so a parent can start looking for work or perhaps get into training programs? We know the Canadian Jobs Strategy program has been cut by $100 million. How can this goal be achieved when parents on welfare really cannot find a job?

There are very few jobs around and most of those only pay minimum wages which gives the parents practically no advantage over their present situation. I do not have to say how much it costs to raise children today.

The child benefit is based on what I would call an 18th century philosophy of welfare, which is of course the typical Tory philosophy on social welfare programs generally. It establishes two classes of the poor.

First of all, we have the working poor. They are the deserving poor. They are the poor who will get an extra $500 for their children if they go out to work. Then there are those who are on welfare. They are the second class poor. They are the poorest of the poor. There is no recognition at all of what their real needs are or why they may have no alternative but to be on welfare or why they are caught in the welfare trap which will go on from generation to generation because of inadequate social programs and few alternatives.

At the same time that this government is taking the family allowance away in this bill, we have to remember it is also taking away from low income families co-op housing programs which are desperately needed to have an affordable quality shelter for Canadians. It has terminated federal transfer payments to provinces for health care, for post-secondary education and for social services under the Canada Assistance Plan, which has been cut for three provinces. One million dollars was cut from the Canadian Jobs Strategy. All these moves will contribute to the poverty, the hardship and stress on children and youth in this country.

• (1520)

The Conservative philosophy of partially deindexing social programs, which incidentally has already reduced increases in old age pensions, also applies to these child benefits. It means the value of benefits will go down each succeeding year. Deindexing is a secretive Tory plot to gradually reduce the value of benefits. By the year 2000 many of these benefits will be practically out of existence or they will have very little value.

As New Democrats, we would have a very different approach. My time is almost up so I do not have time to outline this in detail. We believe that the first thing we must do to counteract poverty is to make every effort to create jobs. Full employment should be a major priority of government.

This means we must have government intervention. We must have government leadership. We cannot tie unemployment to the rate of inflation and interest rates and allow the unemployed to be the victims of a reverse economic situation. It means that we must have not only jobs but we must have jobs with decent rates of pay and pay equity. Along with that must be quality, affordable child care, non-profit child care. This is the best antidote to poverty and to chronic welfare dependency.

We must maintain our universal social programs. We must reinstate family allowances so that children of all families will be recognized and so all of us who pay taxes will be contributing to the next generation. After all, these are the children who will be paying the old age pensions for their parents as they get older.

Children must have the care, love and opportunities to grow and develop in health. Children may not vote, I tell the Conservatives, but they must not be ignored. Canada must eradicate child poverty by the year 2000. This is not going to be done with platitudes and words. Jobs, decent family incomes and quality child care are the pillars to a better future for this and future generations of Canadian children.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some care to the hon. member for Vancouver East and in particular when she mentioned that her party was in favour of increasing family allowances. I wonder if by that she means they would increase them right across the board, for people earning above $70,000 a year as well as for those earning less. If so, I wonder how much she would increase them.

There is only so much money available in any pot and particularly the present pot. If she was not thinking of increasing them across the board, would she have increased them more for lower income people than for higher income people? If she did that, her party would have arranged a system of graduated benefits, not that much unlike what we have.

I was also a little confused by the comment that one of the reasons she deplores the family allowance having been eliminated and replaced with this very progressive system was that under the family allowance the money was paid to the mother. Does she not recognize that under this new system there is a much more significant transfer of money within families to usually the mother, the responsible adult under the family allowance system, because the new proposed payment will also be paid through the existing family allowance system.

Would she not celebrate that move because it is a very significant transfer of the refundable child tax credit to mothers usually from the father in the family?

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for allowing me to elaborate on those two points. If he looks back at the "blues" he will see that when I mentioned it we had been—it was in the past tense—in favour, or would have liked to have seen family allowances raised. I was talking actually in past history terms.

It was Stanley Knowles who was one of the earliest activists and advocates for family allowances. Initially we saw this in those times and that is what I was referring to as being one way that you could share the burden, if you like, or the cost of raising Canada's children.

I do not happen to have children but I feel very strongly that I would like to contribute through the tax system to the raising of all—I cannot afford all—of Canada's children but certainly we should be contributing just as much as parents who are paying for their own children. That, I think, is a social responsibility. I was referring to that really in conceptual terms.

Over the last two platforms that we have had, we realized it was not possible at this time to raise family allowances. We have always said that any universal program is balanced out a bit through our tax system because those who pay more taxes, and the same goes for the old age pension, get the universal payment but they are taxed more for it.

I think the other point had to do with the cheques going to the mother. I know there were many women who spoke to this point a few years ago when we had hearings on child and family benefits. In a way I thought it was a bit sexist because there are many fathers who are also the main parenting person in families.

Perhaps we should not necessarily hold to that virtue. There is one thing I do agree with in the proposal for the present family benefit proposed under this bill and it is that it is monthly payments. I think that is a sound way because people have to pay the rent every month and they have to feed their kids. Waiting until the end of the year does not solve that problem.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate on Bill C-80 which proposes to merge the family allowance program, the refundable child tax credit, and non-refundable dependant child credit into the new child tax benefit program and the children's special allowances program.

As members will recall, the proposed child tax benefit program was announced by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, in his February 25 budget speech.

There is no doubt that benefit programs for children and their families touch all of us in one way or another. As the Minister of National Health and Welfare said when introducing Brighter Futures a call to action on behalf of Canada's children: "We can only build a brighter future for Canada by cherishing all our children".

I am very pleased that these two ministers and colleagues of mine have recently taken the type of actions they have, not only in developing this program but in developing other programs that support and benefit children.

These two ministers have been especially cognizant of the needs of families and they have listened very carefully to their colleagues in caucus. All of us appreciate very much the way they work with us to bring these changes about, particularly the ones we are talking about today.

In assessing the importance of this legislation I believe it would be useful to take a few minutes to look at what has gone before, to reflect on the evolution of federal child benefit programs, which began modestly after the First World War and took a considerable step forward with the family allowances program in the 1940s.

We will see a logical progression which brings us to the new child tax benefit program.

The concept of a family benefit related to children goes back as far as 1918 when an amendment to the Income War Tax Act introduced the child tax exemption of $200 for each child under the age of 16.

The importance of this step lies in the fact that it recognized in principle the income needs of families with children.

• (1530)

In 1927 the child tax exemption was increased to $500 and extended to all children under 21. It was also at this time that the equivalent to married exemption was introduced.

These tax measures related to children continued to evolve in the twenties and thirties and were converted to tax credits in the early forties. At the same time the idea of family allowance began to surface. It was first raised in this House in February 1929 when a member made a motion to the effect that: "The question of granting family allowances should be studied".

The House of Commons select standing committee did consider the question of family allowances in 1929. Unfortunately the Depression of the 1930s, followed by World War II, postponed further consideration of such a scheme until the early 1940s when it was studied by the House of Commons reconstruction committee.

The work of the committee was guided by a policy which fell into three broad divisions: demobilisation and re-establishment, economic and employment aspects, and human well-being and health. The notion of a family allowance was seen to relate to all three of these areas. It would provide cash regularly to families who needed it most, creating a continuous demand for basic necessities which would encourage production and steady employment.

The federal government also began to think about a long-term social security plan for the country. This had been spurred on to some extent by the release in November 1942 of a report to the British Parliament by Sir William Beveridge titled *Social Insurance and Allied Services*. The Beveridge report proposed, among other things, a children's allowance to counter what its author saw as the failure of the wage system to take account of family size.

In December 1942 the Canadian ministers of pensions and health asked Dr. Leonard Marsh to develop a plan on social security. Dr. Marsh's *Report on Social Security for Canada*, popularly known as the Marsh report, was presented to this House in March 1943. Dr. Marsh believed that one of the major causes of poverty was the fact that wage earners with large families had insufficient earnings and that since wages took no account of family size the state had a legitimate role to play in adjusting disposable income to reflect family size.

We must remember that there were few social welfare programs in Canada in 1943. Assistance for needy families most often came from churches and private organizations. Although all provinces had introduced mother's allowances programs for women and children who were alone and in need these programs were so restrictive that they often excluded the very people that they were supposed to help.

Over all, the payment of a benefit on behalf of children was seen as an investment in the future of the country and particularly in the country's most valuable asset, its children.

The government announced its intention to introduce a family allowance in the Speech from the Throne in January 1944:

> The family and the home are the foundation of national life. To aid in ensuring a minimum of well-being to the children of the nation and to help gain for them a closer approach to equality of opportunity in the battle of life, you will be asked to approve a measure making provision for family allowances.

Although the family allowance program was payable to all families with children regardless of income its main focus was to improve equity by assisting children in lower income families. This is clear in the statement made by the Prime Minister of the day in introducing the bill to Parliament. He said:

> The adoption of family allowances means the recognition of the right of children of poor parents to what is already recognized as the right of children whose parents are in more fortunate circumstances—
>
> Already this Parliament has recognized that, with respect to families, there is an obligation upon the state to assist in the upbringing of children. This has been done in the interests of the parents and the family itself, but more particularly in the interests of the children. But, up to the present time, that obligation has been recognized only with respect to the more fortunate in our country, those who already have an income large enough to be taxable to entitle them to exemptions according to the number of children in the family. In other words, where the need has been least it has already been recognized. The purpose of this bill is to recognize a similar obligation where the need is obviously greater than it is in the other cases.

It is interesting to note that although the debate was lengthy, and a look through the *Hansards* of the day indicates that it was also rather spirited, when the vote was finally taken there was not a single dissenting voice. Thus, in 1945 Canada had established a program by which the federal government could provide a supplement to family income. This was seen as a necessary and positive step forward in spreading the cost of raising children more equitably over the whole population.

Furthermore, this new benefit was intended to help equalize opportunity for all children insofar as the state was justified and obligated to do so.

The family allowance was established as a universal program. It was believed that providing the allowance to all children was the simplest and cheapest way of providing a supplementary family income. However, there was to be no duplication with the child tax credit. Therefore, higher income families who were eligible for the child tax credit would return some or all of the allowance at tax time.

At the same time, the family allowance provided a measure of equity to families whose incomes were below the tax paying level and therefore did not benefit from the tax exemption for children. In essence, we had a system of tax credits for dependants that gave equivalent benefits to all income classes, supplemented by family allowances which were income tested through the tax system.

However, the system that was required to adjust the family allowances to the income tax allowances for children proved to be unreasonably cumbersome for everyone—taxpayers, employers and tax administrators alike—in an era when computers were still the stuff of science fiction. Therefore, the tax on family allowances was repealed in 1947, tax credits were abandoned, and tax exemptions were reinstituted.

Over the years, further changes were made to the tax system with respect to families with children. In 1972 the child care expense deduction was introduced, recognizing the child care costs incurred by working parents. However, the Family Allowances Act was not changed significantly until 1973.

Interest in a new direction and emphasis for the income security system in the late 1960s and early 1970s resulted from a growing dissatisfaction with what was seen as a large and costly social security system co-existing with a disturbing incidence of poverty. A number of studies revealed a high degree of inequality in the distribution of income.

For example, the Senate committee's 1971 report, *Poverty in Canada*, emphasized the plight of the working poor who it said numbered close to two million in 1967. The report denounced the existing social security system for not providing more assistance to, and I quote, "that vast army in the labour force whose income is grossly insufficient".

Thus, on second reading of the 1973 bill on family allowances, the then Minister of National Health and Welfare said:

> The original family allowances program was introduced for the purpose of giving a maximum measure of income support to families to help ease the financial burden of bringing up children and to provide a measure of equal opportunity for children regardless of a family's economic situation. The objective of the new family allowance program is to provide a supplement to the income of Canadian families in such a way that those with the greatest need will receive the greatest benefit.

This approach provided the direction for subsequent child benefit measures adopted during the 1970s and 1980s and the greater focusing of efforts and benefits on low income families. I believe it is important to take note of the fact that while the new Family Allowances Act of 1973 maintained the broad concept of universality the selectivity of taxing the benefit was fully supported by this House.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare of the day acknowledged that the new program was designed to provide greater benefits to families with the lowest income. He said:

> By taxing family allowances we will bring about a substantial degree of selectivity in the amount of the benefit because a large part of the allowance will remain in the hands of those who need it most—the lower income families who do not earn sufficient income to pay taxes or who earn just enough to be taxed at the lowest marginal tax rate. On the other hand, families in the higher income tax brackets will receive a benefit that progressively reduces as income rises.

Child benefits were again restructured in 1978 in response to the concern that there continued to be a disproportionate benefit to higher income families. For example, tax exemptions and deductions were of little or no value to low income families, many of whom had no taxable income.

• (1540)

To address this concern a new child tax benefit, the refundable child tax credit, was introduced and the level of family allowance benefits was reduced. The child tax credit program was designed primarily to provide assistance to low and modest income families. It provided a maximum benefit of $200 per child per year and the benefit was reduced for families with income above $18,000.

During the 1980s a number of measures were taken to better target benefits to lower income families who needed them most. For example, the child tax credit was increased in 1982, 1987, 1989 and again in 1990, bringing it to a total of $559.

In November 1986 the government began prepaying two-thirds of the child tax credit to lower income families. In 1990 an additional $200 supplement was provided for children under seven years whose parents were not claiming the child care expense deduction. The limit on this deduction was raised by $4,000 for children six years and under and for children with special needs.

I think my hon. colleagues will agree that we can see a certain progression in the development of children's benefits in this country. When the family allowance program was introduced in 1945 it was done in recognition of the need to provide equality of opportunity to all Canadian children. It was introduced at a time when families were expected to deal personally with almost every contingency, no matter how serious.

If assistance was required in desperate circumstances it was expected that relatives, friends, neighbours, the community and the church would provide it. It was only after all these avenues had been explored and exhausted that a family received carefully rationed public charity, which incidentally was rarely in the form of cash.

The introduction in 1945 of family allowances, together with the unemployment insurance program, marked the beginning of the planning of a comprehensive social security system in Canada. With the creation of this new family benefit the state recognized and accepted its role and responsibility in sharing more equitably across the whole Canadian community the cost of raising our children.

We must continue today not only to share this responsibility but to ensure that those most in need receive the most assistance. This is the direction in which child benefit programs have been moving in Canada, and the proposed child tax benefit is a major step along this path.

The new child benefit addresses the changing circumstances of Canadian families in several ways. It simplifies the present patchwork of programs and benefits. Mr. Speaker, if you were following the long list of complicated plans we have in the present tax system you would agree that simplification should be a major goal of this government in every part of its endeavours.

The new benefit provides a supplement to the earnings of low income working families and it provides a greater responsiveness to individual family situations.

The key element of this program that makes it so different from all other programs we have had is that it is the first time in Canada that a social support program is delivered through the tax system according to income and is universally available to everyone. I admit that not everyone gets it every year, but it is available without application simply by filing an income tax form.

I would also like to add that a number of speakers on this bill have suggested that families with incomes between $30,000 and $50,000 will receive an increase of only $4 a month or $50 a year. These comments are misleading. Under the proposed child tax benefit families with incomes between $30,000 and $50,000 will receive an average increase of $250 a year in child benefits. This is five times more than the increase suggested by some members.

Under the child tax benefit a typical two-parent family with one child and a total income of $40,000 will receive an additional $300 a year in benefits. A single parent in the same situation will receive an additional $400 a year.

The child tax benefit will increase assistance to children by $2.1 billion over the next five years and about 80 per cent of this increase will go to families with incomes below $40,000. The proposed child tax benefit builds on Canada's social policy tradition. As a matter of fact, I believe that it is founded on values and principles very similar to those articulated when family allowances were first introduced in the forties. Such fundamental values and principles are the recognition of the interdependence of Canadians, commitment by the state to help families in the care and nurturing of their children, recognition of children as the future of Canada, the need to assure Canadian children of greater equality of opportunity.

I have no doubt that all members of this House will, upon reflection, agree that this is the only reasonable and just direction to take.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for a rather comprehensive and in-depth address with respect to this bill and its background.

My concern is as follows. Yesterday I addressed Bill C-78, the omnibus bill that dealt with disabilities. While I was pleased to say publicly that there were pluses with respect to that bill, for example in the area of elections it will now be easier for people with disabilities to participate, there were also minuses, for example the direction to the CRTC with respect to closed captions was not clear and was not precise and had no timetables. I raised a more fundamental question. If you look at that bill again, I want to draw a comparison of Bill C-78, and the pluses that it brought forward in relation to what has occurred in that whole area. If we look at housing, for example, it has been seriously affected by the government's last budget, as well as a number of other areas. Are there really over-all pluses?

My question would be very similar with respect to Bill C-80. If we look at the pluses, there are some obviously. We had a family allowances program, we had a non-refundable tax credit as well and we had income tax deductions for certain child care. While we have retained the latter in this new legislation, my understanding is that we now have collapsed it. We have made it a bit simpler, if you wish, in that there is a program that replaces the other.

I applaud that because it is complex out there, not knowing exactly what you are going to be getting. I know that it will be paid monthly and that is going to be helpful. If we look at the last five, six, seven or eight years and the reductions in transfers to programs that affect children, and I am not even talking about the reductions in transfers for health and education or the caps on social assistance to provinces such as Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta, if we look at it over all, if we control for inflation as well, my understanding is that there is not an over-all gain for the children of Canada.

If I am wrong, I would very much like to be corrected. I wonder if my colleague could answer that question.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the hon. member's question. I have a considerable difficulty with it, considering the role that his party when it was in government played in bankrupting this country. When we were as a caucus committee working to develop this program to find ways of making the government's contribution to families more effective and so on, we were extremely limited.

The first instruction we had from our hon. colleague, the Minister of Finance, was that we should do this without any additional money. Later on, when he brought the program forward, he was able to sweeten it with some $400 million, not by any means as much as we would have liked to have seen in terms of redirecting funds to families in need.

My hon. friend talks about our having to hold the line. Our government has for over seven years now held its expenditures below the rate of inflation, year after year after year. When his party was in government, over a 10-year period I believe the rate of spending went up an average of 14 per cent a year to the point where we were $200 billion in debt.

• (1550)

Now he is trying to suggest that when we are trying in a very constructive and careful way to make things a little better for families, because throughout the system we have had to tighten up in so many different places that somehow there is not a positive benefit. Certainly since our party formed the government in 1984 there has been no benefit to Canada of having been saddled with what was a $200 billion debt and from interest, additional loan has increased to well over $400 million now, despite the fact that our government has managed to improve the operating accounts so that there is now a surplus of some $12 billion a year as opposed to the $16 billion of operating deficit they were running under when they formed the government.

For him to be trying now to discredit this very positive action by relating to the stress that our country has been in in trying to cope with the debt and the size of the deficit that his party left us with I think is inappropriate in the extreme.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to be supportive. I am sorry that my colleague may have misunderstood my remarks. In fact I was trying to be sensible and sensitive and as supportive as I could be under the circumstances.

My colleague did not answer the question as to whether or not if one looks at the advances that have been made here, and I noted some of them, there is over all more money if one controls inflation and other factors if one goes back seven years. He simply did not answer the question.

I am rather disillusioned that my colleague should use facts that are inaccurate. I would have thought that coming from government, he would have access to the information.

I have a letter from the then Minister of Finance, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre, indicating that the deficit at the end of fiscal 1984, and they came into power on September 4, 1984, was less than $168 billion. Now either the member knew what in the world he was talking about or he did not. I have that written document. I would like to point out that $168 billion is less than $200 billion.

If they are trying to suggest that they would have been more generous if the Liberals had done a better job is just not good enough. That was not what the issue was. He is trying to make political hay out of this. If he wants a political debate, I would be delighted to have a political debate on this or any other issue.

Is there more money now over all if one looks at the last seven years as a result of these changes? Yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this is a pretty straightforward question, and I would like an answer. I do not want to know the total deficit or debt before 1984. If he wants to use those figures, then he should at least make sure they are accurate.

[*English*]

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I would not argue with the member as to what the debt was when his party left power or what it was not. When expenditures are increasing at the rampant rate of 14 per cent a year, it takes some energy and will on the part of any government to turn it around and bring it under control and certainly to drop it below the rate of inflation, which is what we did.

He asked the question as to whether or not there is more money or less money. In my own personal circumstances I would say that considering the increases in taxes that we have had to bring in and the cuts in expenditures, I have the gut feeling that I am less well off today than I was in 1984. I do not think there are many people in Canada who would disagree with that. How that is distributed certainly has a very severe effect on the family. That is why we brought this program in to try and make things better for families, particularly families with children.

I think that the real issue here is that we are focusing our efforts on improving the lot of children. I think that he and other members should applaud that in what are in fact very difficult circumstances due, in my view, entirely to the legacy of debt which his party left us.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on 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.

Yes, it is, to enact the Children's Special Allowances Act and at the same time to repeal the Family Allowances Act as though the child is not part of the family, as though child poverty is not the consequence of family poverty.

Indeed Bill C–80 is an incredible act of sleight of hand. It is dishonest and mocks Canadians, especially the neediest Canadians.

The government is spending $500,000 to say this government package is simpler, fairer, more generous and more responsive. In fact many needy Canadian families will not see any increase in benefits at all.

This bill sells us something that was ours to begin with. It sells us child benefits and convinces Canadians they are getting a bargain. It pits the working poor against the poor who cannot find jobs. It pits child care against child poverty, oblivious to the fact that lack of adequate child care breeds child poverty. The government, through this bill, has turned its back on universality, a principle woven throughout our social assistance system to ensure there is no stigma attached to it, to ensure there is continuing universal support for it.

Since 1986 the Mulroney government has stealthily eroded the value of the family allowance by refusing to index it to inflation. The allowance lost ground and will continue to lose ground through the new child benefit package. These benefits will only be indexed for inflation over 3 per cent.

When the increase in the cost of living is lower then 3 per cent they lose benefits, getting no increase in family allowance. When inflation is higher than 3 per cent they will only receive the amount over 3 per cent. In times of inflation, high or low, they are clearly the least able to cope. Canadian poor are at the mercy of inflation.

The government adds another insult. It claims the benefit package is worth $400 million a year or $2.5 billion in five years to Canadian poor. Yet in the past seven years—and the figures speak very clearly—over $3.5 billion have been stripped from social programs by this federal government.

One of the best analyses of the dishonesty of the federal government's package comes from *The Catalyst*, a publication of citizens for public justice. It states in its April 1992 issue:

> Under the current system the poorest Canadian families, those families receiving social assistance or unemployment insurance payments will not receive an increase in their benefits. Under the current system, these families receive annual family allowance payments of $419 per child, and a refundable tax credit of $601, for a total of $1,020 per child.
>
> The new child tax credit will give them $1,020 per child, exactly the same benefit as the current system. The only additional funds are in the form of an earned income supplement for families who are employed and earn more than $3,750 annually. For every $100 earned over $3,750, these families will receive an additional $8, up to a yearly maximum of $500. Once annual earnings reach more than $20,921, the earnings supplement will be decreased and will disappear completely at the point where annual income is $25,921 or more.

• (1600)

Obviously this scheme does not give benefits to those families receiving social assistance or dependent only on unemployment insurance payments. What a sleight of hand.

The new package gives $1,300 less per year for the average family than if this federal government had not whittled away the existing programs over the last seven years.

I submit the proposed child benefit package is not a bargain. The money it gives back to Canadians is essentially the same money the government has hoarded by hidden cuts since coming to power.

Through this package the government only provides a conveniently timed, camouflaged surge of benefits, no doubt to be eroded again immediately after it has served its electoral purpose.

The Mulroney government has proposed a new plan that looks good on the surface, just in time the government hopes, to dupe many families into re-electing the very people who have cut back their family support consistently over the last seven years.

The government has spent thousands, up to half a million, to advertise the child benefit package, making a key claim that the new plan is responsive. It will include immediate changes of benefits for the birth of a new child or other changes in family status. While this is commendable, it will not respond however to reflect the rising cost of living when under 3 per cent.

And not only is the amount of the benefit not fully indexed to inflation, the threshold income above which no benefits will apply is equally as unresponsive. Not only will the amount of support available to families decline constantly from the time the plan is instituted, but the number of families eligible for it will too. The new plan also does not take into account tragedies like job loss in the middle of a year.

The lack of indexation of the new benefit package shows that the government has ignored one of the key recommendations of the December 1991 report of the House of Commons subcommittee on child poverty.

The majority of membership in this subcommittee, I should remind the government, came from its own side. Thus the government ignored even its own members. I wonder how these government members of the subcommittee, including its Chair, will finally vote on this bill.

The government also flouted a second key concern of the subcommittee, that the regressive child care expenses deduction be replaced by a more responsive

credit which would actually benefit all needy families working or unable to find work.

The subcommittee proposed that the child care expense deduction be replaced by a refundable tax credit of 50 per cent of child care expenses, which should be payable in advance. But for those unable to put out that money in the hopes of a tax deduction a year later, there is no improvement. The approach recommended by the subcommittee would help the needy, the needier and the neediest.

The proposed new system is commendable—and I give credit where credit is due—in its component that provides income supplements for work related expenses. However, let us not forget that there are over two million Canadians who cannot find jobs. Many of them live below the poverty line.

The government has given more to those who have something but neglects to pull out of poverty those who are most deeply embedded in it.

This raises the question, naturally, of the government's aims in this new child benefit package. Is the government's concern the welfare of children, the support of parents, or the redressing of poverty problems resulting from failures of its social programs, or the ideological elimination of universality of the family allowance program?

Shall I remind the government that the family allowance program stemmed from a shared Canadian conviction "that parents with children should pay less tax and should receive greater benefits than taxpayers without children, precisely because of the service they in the future render to society as responsible citizens and workers"?

The universal family allowance program already assures the most benefit will go to those most in need of it because it is taxable. In addition, it allows mothers a regular cheque which, for some women, is the only cheque they will receive during their lifetime.

If poor children are the true focus of this proposed program then why has this government failed to adopt a comprehensive plan of action to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000 as earlier resolved in this Chamber, in this House of Commons?

To sum up, Bill C-80 admittedly is simpler. But is it more fair? No. More generous? No. More responsive? Again, no. This bill fails the test of fairness, generosity and responsiveness. It is at best a half measure.

May I give this government a prescription. If it truly aims to be fair, generous and responsive, the government should amend this legislation to index benefits fully to the cost of living, to include an increase in benefits for families on social assistance and unemployment insurance, to convert the child care expense deduction into a tax credit and at the same time retain the universality of the family allowance program.

Our nation's children deserve more than half measures. They do not deserve this sleight of hand. They are innocent and honest, wanting only to grow up safe and secure. Canada's children, the future of our nation, deserve our full commitment.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very strong and comprehensive address on this particular question. He is obviously very knowledgeable.

I want to raise three questions if I might. I have some notes here and I want to make sure they are accurate. I am sure that my assistant who prepared them for me would like to have that assurance as well.

The notes read as follows: "The government claims that child benefits will increase by $2.1 billion over the next five years". Then there is an addendum: "It is estimated that the government slashed child benefits by $3.5 billion between 1986 and 1991".

My first question is: Are those the correct ballpark figures? If they are, they answer the question that my hon. colleague just a few minutes ago refused to answer by attempting to become rather political.

The other question I want to be absolutely certain about, because it seems rather contradictory to me, is it would appear that the program totally ignores the poorest children, those whose families earn less than $3,750 a year. I just cannot understand what the rationale for that would be.

The third point is that the government always—and lately more frequently—talks about controlling expenditures. My own thesis is that that those expenditures are controlled as a result of serious off-loading to the provinces. It simply transfers fewer funds for health, education and social assistance. Therefore, yes, the government controls its expenditures but it turns them over to someone else. It is as if I were to give my debt

away this afternoon and all of a sudden stand up and say: "I am debt-free" or "I have less debt than you have".

I wonder if my colleague would make a comment on that as well.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind words and his usual perceptive analysis of the issue, as well as for noting to this Chamber that the member who spoke before me had failed to answer the question that was raised.

• (1610)

It is understandable the previous member did not address the issue of the difference between the $2.5 billion in five years that this new program will provide to the Canadian poor and the $3.5 billion that this government has—I use the word advisedly—stolen from the Canadian poor. When Canadians are told of this basic analysis they will realize there is nothing new in this program. In fact, there is less.

On the question of whether, in fact, when one receives $3,750 annually, yes, when that income is reached by those receiving benefits from this program, there will be a decrease in benefits for every $100 more earned. In other words, the benefit will disappear from the benefit package program when the ceiling of $25,921 or more is reached.

That component is acceptable providing there is incentive to work. I must add and keep emphasizing there are many Canadians who cannot find jobs. They want to work and they will not benefit from this benefit package. That is a very fundamental question this government must address if the government truly cares for the children of our country.

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, occasionally in this House we debate legislation that touches the very fabric of Canadian society. Bill C-80, an act to implement the proposed child tax benefit is just such an act. It reflects the fundamental Canadian tradition of redistributing scarce resources for the general benefit of Canadians, particularly our children.

In the white paper on the child benefit, the Minister of National Health and Welfare noted that Canada's future well-being and prosperity depend on our children. They are our greatest asset. It follows then that we must attend to their current well-being to ensure they lead happy and fulfilling productive lives. We must strengthen our efforts now.

Assistance to children is a continuing priority of the Government of Canada. This past December, the Prime Minister announced that Canada had formally ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The convention is aimed at protecting the rights of children around the world.

The Brighter Futures initiative announced recently by the Minister of National Health and Welfare further confirms this government's commitment to children, their parents, and care givers. The initiative is a series of steps we can take now in order to achieve a brighter tomorrow for Canada and our children.

The child tax benefit is one of those steps. When implemented, it will simplify the tax system and streamline and substantially enrich the government's support for families with children. Over the next five years the child tax benefit will provide $2.5 billion in increased child assistance.

This is a substantial amount especially given the pressures on the government's fiscal position. As a result, Canadian families of low and modest means will be better able to meet the challenges of their daily lives.

Let me emphasize that Canada's assistance to families with children is already among the best in the world. Indeed, assistance to children has long been a cornerstone of Canada's social commitment to its people.

Currently, the federal government spends $4.5 billion a year on the three largest and most direct forms of support to families with children. Those include the family allowances, the child credit and the refundable child tax credit.

Moreover, additional federal support to Canadian families is provided through the goods and services tax credit, the child care expense deduction and maternity and parental benefits under the unemployment insurance program. Under the Canada Assistance Plan the federal government also cost shares expenditures by the provinces and territories on social assistance and services, including subsidized child care.

To provide the context for the child tax benefit, I want to explain briefly the three major federal programs of support for Canadian families.

The family allowance, introduced almost 50 years ago in 1945, is familiar to most Canadians. Often referred to as the baby bonus, it provides $1.9 billion a year of net federal benefits to about 3.7 million Canadian families with children under the age of 18. Payments are about $35 per child a month for a total of $419 per year and are generally paid to mothers. To assist the government to control expenditures and better target resources, the payments are taxable and are partially or fully recovered from high income Canadians.

The child credit is an annual deduction from the federal tax owing of $71 for each dependent child 18 years or under at the end of the tax year. For third and subsequent children the credit is increased to $142. The accumulated net benefit of the child credit to Canadian families is $400 million. The credit has existed in one form or another since 1947.

Finally, to increase assistance to families with low and modest incomes, the refundable child tax credit was introduced in 1979. The credit has a maximum value of $601 and is provided for each dependent child age 18 or under at the end of the tax year. As well, a supplement of up to $213 per child under age seven is provided to families not claiming child care expenses. These benefits are reduced for families with incomes exceeding $25,921 per year. Total federal payments under the refundable child tax credit amount to $2.2 billion per year.

The 1992 report of the United Nations Development Program ranked Canada first in the world on a range of factors assessing a country's human development and quality of life. The federal programs I have outlined have contributed significantly in this regard.

Nevertheless, difficult living conditions remain a fact of life for many low income Canadian families. For these children we must do more to ensure that their parents have adequate resources to meet their basic needs. We must enhance our support to ensure that these children are raised in conditions that promote healthy development.

The child tax benefit will assist us to provide that enhanced support. In a moment I will explain how. However, I first want to focus briefly on the problems that necessitate its implementation.

As Canada's major programs of assistance for Canadian families have grown over the years, shortcomings have appeared. Accordingly, the government has been urged to improve this patchwork system of child benefits. In particular, two parliamentary committees, social policy groups outside the government and many individual Canadians have identified the following faults with our current system.

• (1620)

First, benefits are delivered piecemeal in three different ways and at different times of the year. This delivery patchwork is confusing for many Canadians because each program has different eligibility criteria. As well, for 600,000 higher income Canadians, family allowances must be partially or fully repaid to the government when they file their income tax returns.

Second, benefits are not targeted adequately. In particular, because family allowances are recovered on the basis of individual incomes, families with similar total incomes may receive different levels of benefits. Family income is a better basis to direct assistance to children most in need.

Third, independent support creates barriers to work for low income families. These families are faced with employment related expenses and a possible reduction in social assistance when they choose to work.

Finally, the delay in the delivery of the refundable tax credit is difficult in many modest income families. While it represents more than half of the federal child benefit, for many families it fails to meet their immediate needs. For example, although they must pay for the child's needs every month, parents may have to wait a full year to receive the full credit. As a result, many families sacrifice part of their benefits by resorting to tax discounters to obtain badly needed cash.

The proposed child tax benefit is designed to address these structural faults and strengthen the federal support for Canadian families. It responds to the recom-

mendations for change that have been urged upon the government.

The benefit is streamlined, responsible and better targeted. It provides enriched benefits that will be delivered on a more timely and less complicated basis. The increased benefit is a social dividend financed by the spending cuts the government announced in the 1992 budget.

Canadians believe that fiscal progress should result in increased assistance to Canadian families. Our government agrees. Over the next five years, the proposed child tax benefit will increase assistance to Canadian families by an average of $400 million a year from $4.5 billion to $4.9 billion.

Under the new system, the basic amount of the benefit will be $1,020 per year for each child. The current annual supplement of $213 will be continued for each child under the age of seven. Where no child care expenses are deducted, a $75 supplement will be provided for the third and additional children.

Low income families will also be eligible to receive an earned income supplement of up to $500. This means that low income families will receive up to $1,733 for their first child and up to $1,233 for each subsequent child. The child tax benefit will be provided to all families with annual incomes up to $67,000 per year.

For families with three or more children, the benefit cut-off will be higher than $67,000. The basic benefit will be reduced at a rate of 5 per cent of family net income over $25,921 for families with two or more children, and at a lower rate of 2.5 per cent for families with one child. The average annual benefits for families with incomes below $50,000 will be $250 higher.

As with other elements of the tax system, the child tax benefit will be automatically indexed to changes in prices in excess of 3 per cent. However, as in the case with the child tax credit which has been enriched five times since 1984, the benefits will be reviewed over time and adjusted as fiscal conditions permit. These previous enrichments have ensured that the level of federal child benefits paid to low income families have more than kept pace with inflation.

Clearly under the new system these benefits will be more fairly and effectively targeted than under the current system.

The greatest benefits will go to low and modest income families. About 80 per cent of the total increase in benefits will be directed to families with incomes below $40,000 per year.

Single parent families face particular difficulties due to their combined responsibilities of earning a living and caring for their children. To further assist single parents the equivalent to married credit will be continued for their first child. This is worth an average of $1,445 in reduced federal and provincial taxes for many single parents.

The government designed the child tax benefit to reinforce the incentives for low income parents to participate in the work force. Often they face financial barriers, such as employment related expenses and possible reductions in social benefits, which preclude them from seeking employment. Accordingly, a new earned income supplement of up to $500 will be available to working families who receive little or no social assistance.

I want to emphasize that the new child tax benefit will be progressive. Benefit limits will be determined according to family income not individual income. This means that families at a given income level will be treated the same regardless of the number of income earners. This will better ensure that the assistance be directed according to family needs. The new approach will also be simpler.

The three major programs of assistance to families will be consolidated into one benefit. This means that the three sets of delivery systems and eligibility criteria will be reduced to one. This will be much less confusing and time consuming for Canadian families.

To further simplify the system the payment levels will be calculated automatically. Parents will no longer be faced with completing separate schedules on their tax forms for child benefits, nor will they have to calculate the recovery of child benefits when they complete their tax return.

In addition, the new system will eliminate the waste and inefficiency of the current system. High income families will no longer receive payments that currently have to be recovered by the federal government at tax time. I am sure that all Canadians will be happy to know that this will simplify the basic income tax form.

The new child tax benefit will also be more responsive to family needs. Changes in family status, such as the birth of a child or the breakup of a marriage, will be reflected in adjustments to the monthly payments. This will be particularly beneficial for low income families who now resort to tax discounters to get an early payment of their year-end benefits to meet their immediate needs.

For example, the up to 16 month wait they currently endure to receive their child tax credit after the birth of the child will be reduced to one month. Benefits will also be quickly extended to newly arrived immigrant families with children.

The child tax benefit is a major advance in federal assistance for children. Members will be interested to learn that over 175,000 Canadians have responded to the government's public information campaign on the child benefit white paper.

• (1630)

Most comments have been quite favourable, especially concerning the targeting of money to children who need it the most. The government proposes to implement the child tax benefit on January 1, 1993, at which time the monthly cheque will be made to eligible Canadian families.

Monthly payments for the first six months will be based on family income reported for the 1991 taxation year. In July 1993 and each July thereafter payments will be updated to reflect information from the previous tax year.

To summarize, the monthly payments will provide assistance as it is needed to help with the expenses of caring for children. Approximately two million Canadian families with annual incomes under $50,000 will receive larger monthly payments.

Unlike the family allowance the new benefit will not be taxed or recovered at tax time. The single monthly payment will mean a system that is simpler, more efficient, and more responsive to the family's immediate needs than the current system.

To help ensure a more adequate standard of living for Canadian families of low and modest means I fully support this legislation and encourage all hon. members to do the same.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak on the proposed Bill C-80 dealing with the child tax credit.

The proposed bill is intended to replace the current social welfare benefit system—including family allowances, the child tax credit and the non-refundable dependant child credit—by providing a single monthly payment to the recipients of family allowance.

In eligible cases the amount of the benefit will depend on the earnings and income as well as the number and age of children within the family. The benefit is to consist of two elements. They are a base amount of $85 per month and an earned income supplement which is not to exceed $40 a month per family up to a maximum of $500 a year per family, both of which are non-taxable.

The intention in creating the benefit was to target more generous financial assistance to low and moderate income families by allotting an additional $2.1 billion toward assistance programs over the next five years.

This proposal sounds too good to be true, because it is. I would like to know, where has the $3.5 billion that was snatched from the child benefits over the past five years gone? The government benevolently claims that: "The poor people on social assistance will continue to get family allowance". What has it done with the other benefits it was receiving? Are they all to be slashed?

In Canada today over 2.5 million people have been forced onto social assistance. This is a matter of crisis proportions. What will happen to them? What will happen to the assistance which provides the most basic necessities for the nearly 60,000 students who are parents?

Where do the refugees, new immigrants, and aboriginals on reserves fit into this bill? How will they be affected?

Moreover, the economic model proposed as a basis for Bill C-80 completely omits single parent households which rely on some form of social assistance. I would like to know why. I ask this question: why?

I draw the House's attention to page 4 of the research report, the *Financial Implications of Child Support Guidelines*. One of the methods used to estimate the costs associated with children was to ask: "How much do parents spend on their children?" How can anyone put a price on a child? All children are different. There is no norm by which to classify them.

The report indicates on the same page that the Department of Justice participated in the contribution to a group of specialists tasked with producing an independent review of the proposal. However, the results of their work have not been included in the report due to time constraints and fundamentally disparate views on the subject.

Forgive me, but I thought that the reason these specialists were chosen was to express their different views. Why then have their views not been published in the report? Why have the expert views of the department's legal specialists been stifled on the basis of time constraints? This proposed bill should not be a quick fix when dealing with such vital matters, when dealing with the future of our children.

Why does it hold back? Did the specialists produce a review so unflattering of government policy that the family law committee chose not to allow it the light of day? It is curious that while the views of the three economists chosen by the committee were included those of the legal specialists were not.

The government stresses that its social programs and priorities are committed to families and children, but the only priorities I can see are the ones set on the spending of another $500,000 on public relations to promote its image and longevity in government. The government places a high priority on creating a legal loophole for the wealthy. Yet on the other end of the scale it would have us believe that through its gracious benevolence it is providing more income for low income workers, claiming that families will have an additional $2 billion to spend in the next two years.

However, the grateful $3.67 extra a month will certainly vanish within the next 12 months due to inflation. The supposed long-term miracle the government is trying desperately to peddle is, if anything, a short-term fix only as far-sighted as the next election.

I draw the House's attention to page 4 of the white paper report, to an article that states, and I quote:

> In choosing to work, low income families with children are faced with employment related expenses and possibly a reduction in social assistance benefits.

Why then does the government insist on burdening ordinary Canadians who struggle to build a better life for the family, to add insult to injury, with a lower standard of living for choosing to work? With all the money the government is reaping from here and giving there why does it not have the wherewithal to contribute at least some of it to the food banks? That is where more and more Canadian children are finding themselves.

It is due to this government that Canadians find themselves in want of the basic necessities of existence. When this government took office there was one, and I stress one, food bank in Canada. Today there are 292. It is time for this government to bear the responsibility for the impact of its destructive economic policies and put its support behind Canadians.

I see this bill as another quick-fix scheme that serves no useful purpose in resolving the growing incidence of Canadian poverty.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to enter into this debate. I believe there is just a brief amount of time left before this House has the opportunity to pass judgment on this legislation.

We are debating a very important measure here today that was introduced by way of Bill C-80, which the government introduced as part of its budget procedures. It has been sold by this government to a large degree as an attempt to ease and simplify a very important component of many of our social programs in the country, namely the child benefit program.

It has been clear from many of the questions and comments raised in this House, as early as Question Period today, and from the comments from members on this side of the House, that this debate is about more than just a piece of legislation to arrange the regulatory and financial measures to provide the kind of benefits to families in this country that people have rightfully come to expect from the Government of Canada. It was brought on by the approach this government has taken in this legislation and in terms of many of the comments members of the government have made over the past little while.

If we examine some of the background of this particular legislation we can see that since the Conservative government came into office in 1984 it has cut family benefits dramatically. It killed the old income tax deduction of around $710 per child under age 18 and brought in a tax credit worth far less. It is now worth around $71 per child.

• (1640)

In the 1992 federal budget, the most recent one, the government announced an end to the existing family benefits, to be replaced with an extremely targeted so-called child benefit. The new benefit consists of a basic benefit of $1,020 per child with benefits being reduced at a threshold of net income of around $25,000. The bill and the measures that the government introduced went on to deal with a number of other issues in that regard.

What is wrong with the Conservative approach on this? We heard recently of what they call the family caucus or the family compact as it is more likely called. The vision of Canada that we see coming from some members on the government side is very right wing. What we are starting to see is that some members on the government side do not like the direction their own government is going. This is causing some dissent and members are obviously lobbying to try and have their agenda met.

While the Conservatives argue and want us to believe that this new child benefit is simpler, fairer and more generous, it is none of the above. The system means an end to universal family allowances and thus the end to the principle that the task of raising children is recognized in all families regardless of income level. The family allowance recognizes that all children, rich and poor—an important point—are of equal value to our society and its universality ensures that it is non-stigmatizing.

In the whole debate we have had from time to time in this country, this government has very surreptitiously, most people would argue, eroded the concept of universality in Canada. It would rather have us line up at the welfare offices and go down to the United Way to try and get help for our families. That is not the approach that we want to take in this country. It is a vindictive, nasty approach in a particularly sensitive and important field: the whole question of the family support and support for children across this country.

For many women the family allowance was the only money they received in recognition of their unpaid work and valuable contribution to society. For many women the family allowance was their only independent source of income.

As well, the government is suggesting that the new system of child benefits is a simplified system that would make low income families better off. It always sounds good, does it not? The new system is comprised, it says, of four sets of benefits as opposed to the five in the old system.

The new system is so complicated that the government, not the individual families, will have to calculate the benefits. What is created, I suppose, is an additional bureaucracy for administering many of these programs. The government has gone about developing this, as I have said, in a vindictive and backward way in the delivery of these programs.

Let me quote from a document prepared by some of my colleagues. It is a very revealing document in terms of just what is behind this question. It raises the point of fairness. It states:

> The new system is the first government benefit which distinguishes between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor. The $500 earned income supplement will add $500 to working poor families earning between about $10,000 and $20,921. This was described as an added incentive for social assistance recipients to "get out of the welfare trap". However, with child care costing between $6,000 and $12,000 per year, an extra $500 will not go very far.

That is an important point which was made by a previous speaker. All of us see it in our ridings, single parents, in particular women, attempting to get jobs. Who is going to take care of the child at home? We need day care programs as well as other programs. This government made a commitment at one time for a national day care system which it is now backing down from. We have seen many single parents attempt to get jobs, but how can we blame them if they do not when we add up the whole cost of day care and transportation. They cannot afford it.

In conclusion, this is legislation we do not need to see in this House. I am proud that our party did so much work on this issue. Let us make sure that the government members on the other side get the message tonight during this vote.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised this evening at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Immigration; the hon. member for Willowdale—Publishing; the hon. member for Malpeque—Employment; the hon. member for Don Valley East—Small Business.

[*English*]

It being 4.45 o'clock p.m., pursuant to order made earlier this day, in accordance with the provision of Standing Order 78(3), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading 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 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. 183)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Browes
Cardiff
Chartrand
Cole
Corbett
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Friesen
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horner
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Layton
Lopez
MacKay
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek- Assiniboia)
Winegard—103

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cook
Couture
de Cotret
Dick
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fretz
Gibeau
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Arseneault
Barrett
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin
Boudria
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Dingwall
Duhamel
Flis
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Kindy
MacAulay
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
Milliken
Mitchell
Parent
Prud'homme
Riis
Rodriguez
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Speller
Vanclief
Whittaker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

Anawak
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Breaugh
Butland
Chrétien
Crawford
Duceppe
Ferguson
Foster
Gardiner
Harb
Hopkins
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Marchi
Mifflin
Mills
Pagtakhan
Proud
Rideout
Robinson
Samson
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor
Venne
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—66

PAIRED MEMBERS

Boyer	Charest
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
Dionne	Dobbie
Duplessis	Karygiannis
Keyes	Martin (Lincoln)
Nault	Rompkey
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)	Walker

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order.

[*English*]

On a point of order, the hon. member for Winnipeg—St. James.

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I was a couple of minutes late. I was unavoidably detained. Had I been here I would have voted with my party.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed, from Monday, June 8, 1992, consideration of report stage of Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereofy, as reported with amendments by the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House will now proceed to the deferred divisions on the motions on report stage of Bill C-22.

The first vote is on Motion No. 29, standing in the name of Mr. Foster. The result of this vote will apply to Motion No. 30.

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

(Division No. 184)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Arseneault	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barrett	Bélair
Bellemare	Berger
Bevilacqua	Black
Blondin	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boudria	Breaugh
Brewin	Butland
Callbeck	Chrétien
Clancy	Crawford
Dingwall	Duceppe
Duhamel	Ferguson
Flis	Foster
Gagliano	Gardiner
Gauthier	Grey (Beaver River)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Kaplan	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kindy	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLaren	MacLellan
Maheu	Marchi
Marleau	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Mitchell	Pagtakhan
Parent	Proud
Prud'homme	Rideout
Riis	Robinson
Rodriguez	Samson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Speller	Taylor
Vanclief	Venne
Whittaker	Wood
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—68

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bourgault	Brightwell
Browes	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Cook
Corbett	Couture
Danis	de Cotret
Della Noce	Dick
Domm	Dorin
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fretz
Friesen	Gibeau
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Horner	Hudon
Hughes	James
Jelinek	Johnson
Jourdenais	Kempling
Layton	Littlechild
Lopez	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Mazankowski
McDermid	McDougall (St. Paul's)
McKnight	McLean

Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—101

Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White

PAIRED MEMBERS

Boyer
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Dionne
Duplessis
Keyes
Nault
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)

Charest
Crosby (Halifax West)
Dobbie
Karygiannis
Martin (Lincoln)
Rompkey
Walker

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare Motion No. 29 lost. Therefore I declare Motion No. 30 lost.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you will find the unanimous consent of the House to apply the result of the previous vote to Motions Nos. 31, 32, 35 and 42.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The next vote is on Motion No. 31, standing in the name of Mr. Rodriguez.

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

(Division No. 185)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Arseneault
Barrett
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin
Boudria
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Dingwall
Duhamel
Flis
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Kindy

Anawak
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Breaugh
Butland
Chrétien
Crawford
Duceppe
Ferguson
Foster
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Hopkins
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)

MacAulay
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
Milliken
Mitchell
Parent
Prud'homme
Riis
Rodriguez
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Speller
Vanclief
Whittaker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Marchi
Mifflin
Mills
Pagtakhan
Proud
Rideout
Robinson
Samson
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor
Venne
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—68

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Browes
Cardiff
Chartrand
Cole
Corbett
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Friesen
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Layton
Lopez
MacKay
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—101

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cook
Couture
de Cotret
Dick
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fretz
Gibeau
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White

PAIRED MEMBERS

Boyer
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Dionne

Charest
Crosby (Halifax West)
Dobbie

Duplessis
Keyes
Nault
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)
Karygiannis
Martin (Lincoln)
Rompkey
Walker

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost. The next vote is on Motion No. 32, standing in the name of Mr. Rodriguez.

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

(Division No. 186)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Arseneault
Barrett
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin
Boudria
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Dingwall
Duhamel
Flis
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Kindy
MacAulay
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
Milliken
Mitchell
Parent
Prud'homme
Riis
Rodriguez
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Speller
Vanclief
Whittaker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)
Anawak
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Breaugh
Butland
Chrétien
Crawford
Duceppe
Ferguson
Foster
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Hopkins
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Marchi
Mifflin
Mills
Pagtakhan
Proud
Rideout
Robinson
Samson
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor
Venne
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—68

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Browes
Cardiff
Chartrand
Cole
Corbett
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Friesen
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cook
Couture
de Cotret
Dick
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fretz
Gibeau
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Layton
Lopez
MacKay
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—101
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Members

Boyer
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Dionne
Duplessis
Keyes
Nault
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)
Charest
Crosby (Halifax West)
Dobbie
Karygiannis
Martin (Lincoln)
Rompkey
Walker

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost. The next vote is on Motion No. 35, standing in the name of Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth). The result of this vote will apply to Motions Nos. 36, 37 and 38, standing in the name of Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth).

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

(Division No. 187)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Arseneault
Barrett
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin
Boudria
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Dingwall
Duhamel
Flis
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Anawak
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Breaugh
Butland
Chrétien
Crawford
Duceppe
Ferguson
Foster
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard

Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Kindy
MacAulay
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
Milliken
Mitchell
Parent
Prud'homme
Riis
Rodriguez
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Speller
Vanclief
Whittaker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)
Hopkins
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Marchi
Mifflin
Mills
Pagtakhan
Proud
Rideout
Robinson
Samson
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor
Venne
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—68

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Browes
Cardiff
Chartrand
Cole
Corbett
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Friesen
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Layton
Lopez
MacKay
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—101
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cook
Couture
de Cotret
Dick
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fretz
Gibeau
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Members

Boyer
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Dionne
Duplessis
Keyes
Nault
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)
Charest
Crosby (Halifax West)
Dobbie
Karygiannis
Martin (Lincoln)
Rompkey
Walker

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 36, 37 and 38 lost. The next vote is on Motion No. 39, standing in the name of Mr. Rodriguez.

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

(*Division No. 188*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Black
Breaugh
Butland
Gardiner
Mitchell
Robinson
Samson
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Venne
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—21
Barrett
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Brewin
Duceppe
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Riis
Rodriguez
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Taylor
Whittaker

NAYS

Members

Anawak
Andre
Atkinson
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Belsher
Bernier
Bevilacqua
Bjornson
Blais
Blondin
Boudria
Brightwell
Callbeck
Cardiff
Chartrand
Clancy
Cole
Corbett
Crawford
de Cotret
Dingwall
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Ferguson
Flis
Fretz
Gagliano
Gibeau
Guilbault
Halliday
Harvard
Anderson
Arseneault
Attewell
Beatty
Bellemare
Berger
Bertrand
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bosley
Bourgault
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Chrétien
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cook
Couture
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Duhamel
Epp
Feltham
Ferland
Foster
Friesen
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Harb
Harvey (Chicoutimi)

Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Horner
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Kempling
Layton
Littlechild
MacAulay
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
McDermid
McKnight
Mifflin
Mills
Monteith
Nicholson
Pagtakhan
Plourde
Proud
Redway
Reimer
Rideout
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sparrow
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—147

Hicks
Hogue
Hopkins
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kaplan
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lopez
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacKay
MacLellan
Marchi
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Milliken
Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Parent
Porter
Prud'homme
Reid
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Soetens
Speller
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vanclief
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White
Wood

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Members

Boyer
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Dionne
Duplessis
Keyes
Nault
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)

Charest
Crosby (Halifax West)
Dobbie
Karygiannis
Martin (Lincoln)
Rompkey
Walker

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost. The next vote is on Motion No. 42, standing in the name of Mr. Rodriguez.

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

(Division No. 189)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Arseneault
Barrett
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin
Boudria
Brewin
Callbeck
Clancy
Dingwall

Anawak
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Berger
Black
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Breaugh
Butland
Chrétien
Crawford
Duceppe

Duhamel
Flis
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Kindy
MacAulay
MacLaren
Maheu
Marleau
Milliken
Mitchell
Parent
Prud'homme
Riis
Rodriguez
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Speller
Vanclief
Whittaker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

Ferguson
Foster
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Hopkins
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Marchi
Mifflin
Mills
Pagtakhan
Proud
Rideout
Robinson
Samson
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor
Venne
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—68

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bourgault
Browes
Cardiff
Chartrand
Cole
Corbett
Danis
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Friesen
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Layton
Lopez
MacKay
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Moore
Oberle
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Saint-Julien
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—101

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Brightwell
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cook
Couture
de Cotret
Dick
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fretz
Gibeau
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
Plourde
Redway
Reimer
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Boyer	Charest
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
Dionne	Dobbie
Duplessis	Karygiannis
Keyes	Martin (Lincoln)
Nault	Rompkey
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)	Walker

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)) 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 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. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, you may find unanimous consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this motion.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Kindy: Mr. Speaker, I would like my vote to be applied against the concurrence motion.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I think the vote taken on Motion No. 39 applied in reverse would be appropriate. We would certainly concur with that.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 190*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak	Anderson
Andre	Arseneault
Atkinson	Attewell
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Beatty
Bélair	Bellemare
Belsher	Berger
Bernier	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bird
Bjornson	Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blais	Blenkarn
Blondin	Bosley
Boudria	Bourgault
Brightwell	Browes
Callbeck	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Chrétien
Clancy	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Cook
Corbett	Couture
Crawford	Danis
de Cotret	Della Noce
Dingwall	Domm
Dorin	Duhamel
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferguson	Ferland
Flis	Foster
Fretz	Friesen
Gagliano	Gauthier
Gibeau	Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harb
Harvard	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Hopkins
Horner	Hudon
Hughes	James
Jelinek	Johnson
Jourdenais	Kaplan
Kempling	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Layton	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Littlechild	Lopez
MacAulay	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
MacLaren	MacLellan
Maheu	Marchi
Marleau	Mazankowski
McDermid	McDougall (St. Paul's)
McKnight	McLean
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills	Mitges
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Oberle
Pagtakhan	Parent
Plourde	Porter
Proud	Prud'homme
Redway	Reid
Reimer	Richardson
Rideout	Roy-Arcelin
Saint-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Soetens
Sparrow	Speller
Stevenson	Tardif
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt	Vanclief
Van De Walle	Vankoughnet
Vien	Vincent
Weiner	White
Wilbee	
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard	Wood
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)—147	

NAYS

Members

Althouse	Barrett
Black	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Breaugh	Brewin
Butland	Duceppe

Gardiner	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kindy	Mitchell
Riis	Robinson
Rodriguez	Samson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor	Venne
Whittaker	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—22

PAIRED—MEMBERS

Boyer	Charest
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
Dionne	Dobbie
Duplessis	Karygiannis
Keyes	Martin (Lincoln)
Nault	Rompkey
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)	Walker

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

The House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

EMPLOYEE SHARE PURCHASE PLAN ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Unfortunately I have not had an opportunity to confer with my colleagues in the other parties, but since this is Private Members' Hour and we have now used up half of that one hour, could I seek the unanimous consent of the House, and again I make the point without consultation, to extend the time for Private Members' Business to allow at least one full hour for debate? In other words, I am asking to extend the time until 6.30 today.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I think in the spirit of co-operation and in view of the fact that it is Private Members' Hour and a half hour has been used with regard to votes that have been taken, our party would have no difficulty in giving unanimous consent to extending the time for an additional half hour and go until 6.30 this evening for the purposes of Private Members' Hour.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, it appears we are on a roll here. I would not want to obstruct it. I would agree with the suggestion of the hon. New Democratic House leader.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Venne: Mr. Speaker, in order to show our good faith and cooperation, the Bloc Québécois will also accede to the hon. member's request.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie) moved 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.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concurrence of the House to proceed with the full hour. It was much anticipated, therefore, I would prefer the full hour to just a half hour of debate.

The bill is C-327 and if I could read it into the record:

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.

It takes a long time for a bill to get to this point. It is particularly gratifying and I feel very happy and privileged to be able to speak to the bill at long last at second reading.

I believe the ability of employees to not only work in an environment but to perhaps own the working environment would be a step forward for the country. It is a much delayed step forward for the country since many other countries in the world already have legislation in place that allows employees to become majority shareholders in the company for which they work. We believe it is a democracy that can stretch from the shop floor to the boardrooms of the company.

In order for the bill to get to this point, it is indeed a trying circumstance. Certainly there have been several members who have written me personally and suggested that the bill would be out of order since only a government can propose a tax bill. Fortunately the legal counsel has indicated to me and to all those who might care that

the bill does not in fact increase income tax. It may in fact decrease income tax and therefore it is perfectly legitimate for a private member's bill to come forward as it has done.

May I suggest that this bill was supposed to be a forerunner rather than an after-runner to the Algoma Steel Corporation employee buy-out that has now been consummated and hopefully will lead to a positive future for Algoma Steel.

Given that fact it is unfortunate but nevertheless it points out that a corporation the size of Algoma can be purchased by the employees not without the consideration of, in this case, a parent company without the consideration and the spearheading by the United Steel Workers of America, not without the involvement of the Ontario government, not without the involvement of the banks of this country, and I must say not without the involvement of the federal government.

I will say in their participation in this restructuring and reprofiling of Algoma Steel, the federal government was reticent and hesitant and came in yelling and screaming, but in the end it did participate and I salute it for that. We do appreciate the fact that the federal government was an integral part in the final restructuring of the plan and I think the community of Sault Ste. Marie would also send out that thank-you.

Nevertheless, I want to say that this type of legislation has come its time. Rather than dealing with the issue on a crisis by crisis situation, or putting out a fire here in Ontario, or one in Manitoba, or one in British Columbia as there is every possibility that the governments of this country will have to face, rather than doing it in a piecemeal way, let us have a strategy in place so that we can deal with companies on the verge of closure, on the verge of bankruptcy, or in other cases where sometimes the parent company says: "This company that we own is not making enough profits and we wish to cut the ties with the company". In all of those cases and all of those scenarios it would be much better if we had legislation in place so that we can deal with it in an orderly fashion, rather than dealing with them on a one by one situation as in Algoma.

I want to point out, that this bill will give tax credits to the employers, to the employees, and to the lending institutions so that all the participants can become involved and form a partnership in the new company. It does not pit one individual versus another. I think that is a key instrument of this bill.

In speaking to the cost of the bill, I want to say that if you deal with a situation like Algoma, it has cost the Ontario government millions of dollars. It will cost the federal government millions of dollars. It will cost the employees, collectively, millions of dollars: $2.89 per hour for every employee in the corporation.

There are sacrifices to be made by individuals and governments, and in this case so too for the banks. If the government were to say that this bill would be too costly, I suggest that the alternative is not acceptable to anyone. The alternative, if Algoma were to close there would be 5,500 to 6,500 affected, depending on the employment level at any one time. The cost to all levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—would be astronomical. First of all, everyone would go on UI, and afterward, unfortunately, many would be on the social assistance program, which would be very difficult for the municipality, under terrible duress already. They just could not handle it, the impact upon a community like Sault Ste. Marie with that number of people being laid off in one fell swoop.

• (1740)

It was pointed out that a city of 80,000 population would decrease by 20,000. I think you can apply this scenario to any community, any constituency, any industry, small, medium or large across this country. May I suggest that from day to day to day we read in the newspapers that "another company is on the verge of", "another company has already closed".

This legislation would allow the people who work within that company—the owners, the employers, the employees and everyone—to get involved together, to take one last crack at making a company viable yet again. It is proven in the United States, Italy, Israel, Germany, and many countries across the world that employee ownership can make an unsuccessful company viable, successful and profitable.

All of us may be faced with that scenario in our constituencies. That is why I hope that all parties will set aside whatever differences they may have and see fit to support this bill that again speaks of new partnerships, really unknown to this point. In our community the unions, the two levels of government, the banks, the employer, and the employees, got together and made it

work. We are hopeful for the future. May I suggest once again that it was an *ad hoc* dealing with the situation rather than a strategic plan that can deal with the situation right across the country.

We suggest that government has to have a role. If it is to have a role, why not in the best form that we know, and that is the form of legislation? Put it in a legislative form.

The provincial governments in Manitoba and Ontario have what I believe is legislation in place or about to come into place whereby rather than acting against what I am proposing would be complementary to what I am proposing. This federal legislation could be put into place and not seriously take away or detract from provincial legislation. I think that should be pointed out here.

The corporations in the province can opt in or can opt out of the regulations in Bill C-327. I think that is important to point out as well. We are not stepping on jurisdictional toes by putting this forward.

If the company is allowed to proceed with this, it gives not only the community new life, but it also gives the company new life. It gives the community new life as it did in our community. It brought people together. It gives time for the community to, hopefully, diversify. It is a lesson for Sault Ste. Marie and it would be a lesson for many other communities. Kapuskasing is another recent example that was dealt with by the Ontario government, the employer and the employees. It was a totally different set of circumstances, handled totally differently by the governments. Why not standardize it? Getting back to my point, it gives an opportunity for the communities to realize that you cannot depend on one industry for your future. You must diversify. I do not want to paint this as a time-buyer, but it does serve that purpose.

I want to say that six or eight months ago when I was pursuing this without any bill in place, I asked the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology in Question Period if they supported the concept of employee ownership. They both replied that they did but "it was up to him as to whether or not this government would support that. We do not know what you want us to support. We like the idea, but we do not know what you are asking specifically".

The specifics are now there. We are asking for changes in the Income Tax Act. I think everyone puts their arms up in a bit of trepidation about taking on the Income Tax Act. I want to say that in the United States the handling of this legislation is much more convoluted than I am suggesting in this bill. It impacts on a whole series of statutes, regulations and income tax acts which I will not bore anyone with by reading, but I want to assure you that this is a much more simplistic way of dealing with the problem rather than the American style. I want to say that what the American Income Tax Act does is it facilitates and motivates people to participate.

I am sure the government will suggest that we have some legislation in place that will assist, but there is no facilitator and no motivator. It really gives no one the impetus to go forward and really pursue it.

With regard to Bill C-327, it would not be my first wish to have ministerial override, but I do not want to be politically naive. Perhaps it is a good idea in a private members' bill to say: "The minister has to be convinced that this is a viable option for this small, medium or large company". I think it is important that the government has that option. As I said, it would not be my choice but, under the circumstances, I think it is appropriate that I put that in.

I should also suggest, and I have mentioned it once before, that it should not be only for companies that are in dire circumstances like Algoma with $800 million in debt. Those are the most dire of circumstances. Perhaps we can address small, medium and large corporations, industries or businesses that have not reached that stage yet, where there is potential for addressing situations before they reach that degree of severity of economic hardship. The bill suggests a way of getting that under way is that at least 50 per cent of the employees have to sign a petition saying: "Let us take a look at this possibility". That is the way of getting it started. It starts on the shop floor with the employees and it ends with the minister. It runs the whole gamut, I suppose, of the political or non-political spectrum from grassroots to the people who make the decisions in this country.

I hope that it can appeal to employees and I hope it can appeal to the government.

• (1750)

How common is employee ownership in the United States? As of 1987 it was estimated about 7,000 to 8,000 U.S. companies had employee stock ownership plans with approximately eight million worker participants. About 1,000 to 1,500 of these companies are 51 per cent to 100 per cent owned by their workers, who probably number around one million. Perhaps as many as another million workers are in firms that are 20 per cent to 50 per cent employee owned. About 100 to 250 employee stock ownership plan firms are the result of worker buy-outs of failing companies or successful subsidiaries of large concerns.

As far as political endorsation and non-political endorsation, I am glad to say that our local chamber supports it. I am glad to say the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is actively looking at the bill now and I hope to get the financial institutions to take a look at it because, as members know, this bill will come before us again in the fall. I hope in the summer months to build up some national support because I think it is a cause that can be readily supported by all areas and sometimes provide a new direction. I think everyone knows a new direction is required because perhaps what we are doing right at this present moment is not that successful.

Far be it from me to read endorsations from the United States, but I want to say in the United States as unlikely an endorser of this motive was ex-President Ronald Reagan. I am not so sure I should say this but I can use it to my own advantage. I quote:

> Could there be anything but widespread misery where a privileged few control the nation's wealth, while millions laboured for a pittance, and millions more were desperate for want of employment? It should be clear to everyone that the nation's steadfast policy should afford every American of working age a realistic opportunity to acquire the ownership and control of some meaningful form of property in a growing national economy.

I think the ex-President is saying: "Yes, I endorse employee ownership".

A more likely endorser was a gentleman now deceased on the opposite end of the spectrum, Hubert Humphrey.

> Capital, and the question of who owns it and therefore reaps the benefits of its productiveness, is an extremely important issue that is complementary to the issue of full employment. . . .I see these as the twin pillars of our economy: full employment of our labour resources and widespread ownership of our capital resources. Such twin pillars would go a long way in providing a firm underlying support for future economic growth that would be equitably shared.

In closing, this bill is social democracy in action. It does empower the workers. It empowers the workers though not at the expense of anyone else. It is a shared ownership of a small, medium and large corporation business industry and I would encourage that the government side and the Official Opposition support this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the member on his decision to introduce a bill to promote employee shareholding in the corporation that employs them.

I agree that in some cases such participation may lead to increased productivity and as a result help strengthen our global economy. However, although enhancing co-operation between company management and its employees is praiseworthy in itself, I do not think it would necessarily be wise to adopt Bill C-327.

I would like to take this opportunity to give hon. members my views on the bill and help them decide whether the bill is acceptable in its present form.

Perhaps I may clarify the contents of Bill C-327. The purpose of this legislation is to help employees purchase shares in the company that employs them.

To that end, the bill proposes to amend the Income Tax Act to provide that employees and the employer may include in deductions from taxable income 50 per cent of their investment in an employee share purchase plan and 50 per cent of the interest paid to a financial institution for the purposes of such plans. To take advantage of these tax incentives, employees must purchase a controlling shareholding in a given corporation.

Hon. members may recall that in 1984 the previous government, in a document entitled *Gain Sharing for a Stronger Economy*, proposed a program that would provide a tax credit, shared between employees and employers, for the percentage of the profits allocated to employee compensation.

The purpose of this program, like most employee ownership plans, was to improve labour management relations and increase employee productivity. Further analysis of the proposal raised some doubts as to whether those objectives were realistic. The proposal, which was not well received by labour and management circles, was dropped by the government and replaced by other policies.

At this point I may add that the Income Tax Act now includes provisions that provide incentives for employee investment. More specifically, the government encourages employee investment by giving preferential tax treatment to employee share purchase options and the labour-sponsored venture capital corporation plan, which was enhanced in the last budget.

Combined with the lifetime capital gains exemption, these programs offer employees a strong incentive for investing in Canadian corporations, without introducing a bias in investment decisions.

I may add that the provisions relating to national labour-sponsored venture capital corporations restrict the percentage of the assets of such corporations that may be invested in a single business, thus reflecting the old adage that warns against putting all one's eggs in the same basket.

In the case of Bill C-327, the eggs include not only the employee's investment but also his job. I think hon. members will agree it would be inappropriate for the government to urge individuals to take such risks.

I would also like to point out that a number of provinces already have programs under which employees may purchase shares in the corporation that employs them. The federal government provides passive support for these programs by administering them under the tax collection agreements and by not counting the province's contribution as taxable income. In some cases, investments under these programs may be eligible for RRSP treatment.

Eliminating initial tax incentives like the ones proposed in Bill C-327 was one of the main thrusts of the 1988 income tax reform. One of the primary objectives of the reform was to encourage decision making in terms of economic merits as opposed to specific tax benefits. Achieving this objective involved eliminating a number of special tax benefits that were only available to a small group of individuals.

The resulting broadening of the tax base made it possible to reduce income tax across the board. In addition to introducing greater fairness, this approach, with its broader tax base and lower tax rates, has the advantage of not influencing investment decisions and thus encouraging long-term economic growth.

Bill C-327 does the opposite, in that it would encourage the use of public funds for the benefit of a small group of individuals who wish to acquire a controlling interest in the corporation that employs them.

There was another reason for restricting the use of initial tax incentives like those proposed in Bill C-327. Experience, both in this country and abroad, has shown that a considerable share of the tax credits used in this way is applied to activities that would have taken place even if the tax credits had not been available. The activity directly due to these incentives is often insignificant. Furthermore, such tax incentives often tend to have a poor cost-benefit ratio, in terms of achieving the desired objectives.

This brings me to my other point. The adoption of Bill C-327 could have a major impact on the deficit, since this generous tax treatment might encourage many businesses to restructure their employee compensation plan so as to take advantage of this incentive. Given the importance of controlling the deficit, it would be necessary to raise the taxes of all other Canadians to support the stock acquisition plans.

• (1800)

In this regard, it is important for my colleagues in the House to realize that Bill C-327 proposes income redistribution, to some extent. I wonder whether such redistribution is appropriate, in view of the lack of evidence to support the alleged benefits that would flow from the bill, if adopted.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate my colleague on taking the initiative to present this bill in the House. I believe that I speak for all Canadians when I say that increasing the productivity of our workers and improving labour-management relations are important factors in helping this great country to succeed.

Nevertheless, I really fear that Bill C-327 would not necessarily do much to achieve that. Not only would it be costly and unfair but it would not reach the objectives for which it was designed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to discuss this issue in the House and I hope that my colleagues can use this information to make a justified, fair and equitable decision when the time comes to vote on this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to say a few words about Bill C-327 which is sponsored by my colleague and friend from Sault Ste. Marie. The bill deals with the whole question of employee ownership, which in Sault Ste. Marie and in the Algoma district we see as the only solution really to the Algoma Steel problem which faced us one year ago last February.

On that cold winter morning we were notified that Dofasco had a debt amounting to some $800 million at Algoma Steel. I must say there was great concern. We had just been through a long and costly strike in the summer and fall of 1990. We faced the prospect of the company going into receivership and the complete destruction of the economic viability, not only of the company, but of Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma district.

As we look back at it now, in some ways it is miraculous that the working together of Dofasco and Algoma Steel personnel with United Steel Workers of America, the banking institutions and the two senior levels of government, a new Algoma has arisen out of that situation with everybody suffering, as the member has said, massive losses. The workers lost some $2.82 an hour in wages. The banks have had their equity or their investment chopped. Dofasco has lost most of its equity position.

It is hard to know whether this was inevitable or whether it was just a combination of circumstances. Clearly if there is any way for this company to survive, it is with worker ownership.

The steel industry is in a terrible situation. It went through great hardship in the United States during the 1980s when it went from about 500,000 employees to 180,000. We are going through that dramatic restructuring now. The only thing is that if the governments in this country get involved in the direct financial support of the steel industry, it means that those companies will be subjected to a countervail by the United States steel industry. They are probably going to be subjected in the next couple of weeks to an anti-dumping duty just because the United States companies want to protect themselves.

The kind of massive financial assistance by all levels of government in the United States has not been provided to Canadian companies. That is not to say that the Government of Canada will not lose hundreds of millions of dollars in the Algoma case because all the losses will be written off against the taxes of the main financial banking institutions that have massive profits against which to write them off.

It does seem to me that for many industries the idea of employee ownership is very desirable. I do not presume to suggest what that exact mechanism is. Clearly government incentives are one idea.

I look back at the budget that was delivered here in the House of Commons on February 15, 1984 by Marc Lalonde. In that budget he said: "I am therefore proposing today to encourage this process with tax assistance for a new employee profit participation plan. The government will provide a tax credit of 10 per cent of the profits shared under the plan; 60 per cent of the tax credit will go to the individual workers, 40 per cent to the employer. The employee profit participation plan is designed to complement the collective bargaining process, not replace it. Experience has shown that to succeed, profit sharing cannot be a substitute for competitive wages".

We are talking about profit sharing. Mr. Lalonde proposed a whole series of tax incentives to encourage profit sharing.

The ultimate objective is to lower the tension, lower the adversarial situation which exists in many industries between employers and employees. Surely there is no way to do this better than through employers and employees owning the company.

If you cannot make the company competitive when the employees own it, you probably cannot make it competitive anyway, assuming you have good management in each case, and it is an industry which is properly capitalized and modern enough in structure.

A few weeks ago we had a conference in Sault Ste. Marie on the future of Elliot Lake. One of the principal speakers at the conference was from Tembec which is a diversified forest products company in northern Quebec. I was very impressed with not only the employee ownership in that situation but the attitude toward training and retraining of the workers. Its average training amounts to some 84 hours a year where the Canadian average is only some two hours.

It was the company that stepped in in the Kapuskasing situation where there was an employee buy-out. I was very impressed.

I think profit sharing has a long way to go in Canada because we do tend to have very adversarial relationships between employers and employees, although I do think that the hard, tough economic times that we face right now perhaps reduced that to some extent.

Employee buy-out is one mechanism. Employee participation in profit sharing is another way. Assuming that the Tory government will allow this bill to go to committee, it would be a very worth-while experience to review exactly how the incentives would be provided, whether they would be adequate or perhaps how costly they would be. I think that is the kind of thing we would learn in a committee study of this bill.

I hope the government will support the bill going to committee. I think it is an area that must be further explored.

• (1810)

I do not expect this government to be very generous in encouraging employee ownership or employee participation but I think it is something that is going to happen. There are many industries in this country that are going to have great difficulty surviving in the kind of modern global economy in which they are competing with low-cost producers in other countries. We must have the very maximum of co-operation between employees and employers.

There is a great value in this bill going to committee to see the details of how it could work and how well it would work. I hope that enough government members will support it to see it studied in committee. Perhaps this is the final solution and it can become the law of the land. If that happens and it is judged by the committee and the House to be the solution, that is great. If it is not perhaps it can be amended, or perhaps the government will ultimately see that there needs to be a mechanism for employer ownership so that it is necessary to operate with the *ad hoc* arrangements which we had in Kapuskasing and Algoma.

The bill should get the support of the House to go to committee for a very thorough study. We are going through a change in industrial relations in this country and in the world. Employer-employee ownership is one mechanism to ensure that many of our companies, especially our resource companies, survive in this country.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on this private member's bill, Bill C-327.

This bill proposes a 50 per cent tax deduction for investments made by employees, employers and financial institutions to finance employee takeovers of the businesses for which they work.

When assessing this bill we should examine it from various perspectives. Is the proposal good for the employees? Is it good for business? Is it good for taxpayers? I have asked myself these questions and have come to the conclusion that on the whole the proposal would not represent a clear step forward.

I shall now elaborate on why I have reached that conclusion. First, consider how this proposal would affect employees. Canadian employees work hard for their money. Out of their pay cheque they must provide for their current needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, transportation and, if they are lucky, perhaps some entertainment. The remainder of their hard-earned pay, when set aside in the form of savings, provides for the future. Employees must decide where the best place for that nest egg is.

Each individual is different in that respect. Some are prepared to take substantial risks in making investments, knowing that high rewards often accompany high risks. Others place a premium on security, sacrificing a little return in order to sleep soundly at night in the knowledge that their money will be there when they need it.

Neither the government nor I can tell these employees as a group where it is best to place their savings. That decision depends on the individual's own experience, character and perspective.

However, a 50 per cent deduction sends a strong message that the government views a particular investment, acquiring a controlling interest in the employer company, as the preferred alternative. The bill suggests that the program is intended for cases in which the financial viability of the employer is in some doubt. Such turn-around situations constitute high-risk investments, not necessarily bad investments but certainly not everyone's cup of tea.

The government should not lure employees into a risky investment with a 50 per cent tax deduction when the employees' instincts and analyses would lead them in a safer direction. Even in the absence of a tax inducement many employees may find investments in their employers to be a good home for their savings. Clearly, the government should do nothing to stand in the way of such decisions nor discourage them through punitive tax treatment.

Just as clearly the tax system should not favour a particular risky type of investment, as this bill proposes. The tax system should play a neutral role if it is to serve the employees of Canada well.

I would now like to turn to the question of whether this proposal would be good for business. The idea of employees acquiring control of their employer's business is in vogue at the moment. A recent *Globe and Mail* article dealt with what it described as the largest experiment in worker ownership in North American history, which is the employee acquisition of Algoma Steel Corporation Limited. Therefore, it is understandable that this bill is sponsored by the member who represents Sault Ste. Marie, the home of Algoma Steel.

When the results of this experiment are in it may turn out that employee ownership was the ideal business solution for Algoma Steel. Certainly the employees' union representative held out high hopes. Mr. Leo Gerard, the Canadian president of the United Steelworkers of America, is quoted as saying that the Algoma restructuring "shows what imagination and a willingness to take risk can accomplish. High value-added production and a well-trained labour force need not be unrealized dreams or academic exercises". Cuts in wages and benefits were necessary to make the package work and this may well have been facilitated by the involvement of Algoma's employees.

Employee ownership may turn out to be the ideal business solution for Algoma Steel. It will not be so in all cases in which businesses are faced with a decision as to change in control. Existing owners may be best placed to continue operating the business given their experience and the stake they already have in making the business work. Alternatively, an outside group constituted of neither employees nor existing owners may bring fresh ideas and new business connections and therefore offer the greatest opportunities for success.

The very complex question of who is best placed to control a business so that it works well for its employees, customers and shareholders is usually answered in a simple fashion. Existing owners when faced with an offer for acquisition of control will consider whether the terms of the offer are attractive. When considering multiple offers they will decide whether the most attractive one is sufficient to convince them to relinquish the control they have. Generally, the most attractive offer will come from the source that has the best plan for the business. If existing owners have the best plan they will accept no alternative offer.

If one group is provided with tax support for their offer while others are not the decision will be tilted in a direction that is not necessarily best for the business. For example, if employees are provided with a 50 per cent tax deduction available neither to existing owners nor to outside groups, employees' offers will be attractive even if they do not make the best business sense.

We all wish to ensure that the best business decisions are reached when questions of corporate control arise. When a business thrives Canadians benefit, as employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders or simply through participation in a prosperous economy. Therefore, we should all agree to avoid using our tax system in a manner that would lead to bad business decisions in the important field of acquisition of control.

A level tax playing field is essential if we are interested in business success. Unfortunately, this bill would tilt that field.

Finally, let us consider what is best for the taxpayers of Canada. Certainly, a 50 per cent tax deduction sounds very attractive but it would be available only to a select group, the employees of target companies and others who helped finance the take-over. There are millions of Canadians who are not in the labour force, who are unemployed, self-employed or employed in the non-corporate sector. There are millions more who lack the means or the desire to invest in their employers. None of these Canadians will benefit from the proposed tax deduction. Yet these same Canadians will be called upon to foot the bill when it comes to replacing the lost revenue from this new tax deduction.

Is it fair to ask the large majority of Canadians to pay higher taxes so that a select few can benefit from a 50 per cent tax deduction on investments that may pay off handsomely? I would say no.

In summary, whether this House considers the bill from the perspective of the employee, the business or the taxpayer it will find some problems. I am confident that the House will display its usual good sense in disposing of this measure.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to participate in this debate, which is limited in time, on an excellent initiative from one of my colleagues, the member for Sault Ste. Marie.

• (1820)

This is an example of initiative taken by a private member. As most people who follow the proceedings of Parliament will know, one way that private members, members not in government, have an opportunity to present proposed legislation and to develop some ideas is by way of a private member's bill.

This is one particular bill where there is reason enough, I would hope, from the government side and all members of this House to vote on favourably when it does come to a vote and to send the bill to committee. Given the nature of the subject of this bill, it would present an excellent opportunity to review a very exciting and interesting subject matter.

Of course I am referring to the bill presented by my colleague, Bill C-327, and I will read the title which will explain it further. It is 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.

Basically, it is an opportunity for us to develop in Canada a formal and structured process for employee buy-outs or to provide incentives that would make it viable as an attractive option.

This bill presented by my colleague would be the first federal legislation to specifically encourage or facilitate employee ownership. That is an important concept for us to look at.

I could go on, as some members probably have, given the difficulty that our economy is facing in Canada, and particularly in the manufacturing sector, given the pressures of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which many have labelled a failure, and of course the plans by the government to get our country into a trilateral free trade agreement.

But leaving those arguments aside for now and just talking about the whole nature of the development of industry and business in Canada, and indeed throughout North America, it is clear that those modern and progressive corporations are taking a look now at being successful. And how is it that they are successful?

One of the ways they are successful, and we all know this, is to ensure they have a valuable and trained work force and given the future outcome of this particular bill, an opportunity then for those employees to share in the ownership of a particular industry. It is those innovative and new ideas that are the kinds of proposals that really do make for a successful and progressive economy in North America.

We do have some examples across North America and here in Canada on employee ownership. One of the examples cited by my colleague is a company by the name of Weirton Steel in Ohio which was to be closed in 1982 by its parent company because of low profits. The employees decided to purchase the plant which accounted for one-third or 8,400 of the total employment of that local community. Since the buy-out the plant has performed relatively well, especially in view of the depressed market for steel. We all know, of course, about the debate between Canada and the United States now on that whole particular field.

In raising that specific example, the point is that it has been demonstrated that a decision to close a plant or a facility does not necessarily mean that the operation is economically non-viable.

Business decisions are made for a vast number of reasons, not always because the plant is not profitable. We have seen a number of such transfers given our branch plant economy in Canada. We have seen the closure of branch plants in Canada and movement to the United States. That is clearly an example where employee ownership might play a role in terms of the development of industry in Canada.

Mention is made in the notes about Kapuskasing. There is a very recent success in an employee buy-out and of course in my colleague's riding, there is Algoma Steel.

It is important for us to think about that because it gives workers the opportunity to share in the development of that particular plant or industry in that sector. One comes to mind. In Saskatchewan I believe there is a brewery owned by the workers which has had incredible success, if I recall from one of the business programs that was on. It is an example of the kind of ownership route I think we ought to try to take our industry in giving the employees an opportunity to have that share in the ownership and in the direction of a firm.

I might add that in my mind it is probably the subject of another bill, legislation or debate about Crown corporations. In many ways we might need to take a look at how to get our Crown corporations to be responsive to the needs of consumers. It has been a tool that really has been accepted by all parties in Canada. It has been a tool for economic development, much abused I would say by Liberal and Conservative governments. It is an abused model that can work.

We have to ensure that when we use the services of either CN or Petro-Canada we are getting something out of it or that there is a clear return to the public treasury. I do not know if at times we have been successful at showing that. In any case it is along the same lines, I suppose, of employees having some say in the development of those particular operations.

This bill will go some distance toward dealing with the issue. It deserves the support of the government, at the very least, to vote and pass the bill. Then we could get it to committee where there could be a fascinating look at the whole concept of employee ownership. This bill could spur that discussion. In committee there could be very reasonable discussion. There could be witnesses from a number of these plants and facilities where it has worked.

Let us hear from the opponents of the idea who do not think it will work. Let us hear from the chambers of commerce and the trade union movement as to their views. It would be a very interesting study. That is reason enough for the government to try to move this legislation through and into committee.

Let me just mention a few other points in the bill just for detail so that the people who read this debate later will have some background. Part of the bill's plan is for half of the employees' or corporation's contributions plan to be deducted. Borrowing by a plan's trustees to purchase shares would be made easier by allowing lending institutions a tax deduction of half the interest earned.

The bill requires—and I think this is important—that the plan be agreed to by all parties involved: the management and the shareholders. Of course the Minister of National Revenue must agree in terms of the implications on the Income Tax Act in this case. Most important, we are seeing some support of initiatives in this particular case.

This particular initiative brought forward by my colleague has been endorsed by many groups including the Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce and various labour groups. Obviously there is the work here. I hope members of the public after hearing, will write their letters of support to the member for Sault Ste. Marie urging government members and other members of the House to support this legislation.

It will be a real opportunity for employee ownership whose time has come and for Canadian employees to be given the opportunity to save their jobs and work together to keep Canada strong.

I would encourage the government to offer its support to this bill, to send it to committee where all these issues could be surveyed and to say yes to a good idea from the member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as has been noted, the subject of debate before us today is private member's Bill C–327, recommending that this government encourage the financial participation of workers in the firms in which they are employed.

I begin by thanking the hon. member for raising the issue of improving the relationship between management and labour. This government shares the hon. member's concerns that to remain competitive we need increased co–operation between labour and management. This will be critical in the long–term growth of the Canadian economy.

• (1830)

As members may be aware, Bill C–327 recommends that the Income Tax Act be amended to provide a 50 per cent deduction from taxable income for employee and employer investments in employee share purchase plans and on interest income earned on loans by financial institutions to such plans. It is important to note that the purchase of shares is not enough. Under this proposal employees must in fact acquire control of the target firm.

Mr. Speaker, as you will no doubt recall, a similar proposal was put forth by the previous government in 1984. That program would have provided a tax credit shared between employees and employers for employee remuneration paid in the form of a percentage of profits. Like the current proposal, the objective of that plan was to enhance worker productivity through improved relationship between labour and management. You may also recall that both labour and management groups expressed dissatisfaction with that proposal. After careful study by this government the plan was rejected.

This should not come as a surprise to anyone who is aware of the objectives that this government espoused in tax reform. As members are aware, one of the primary objectives of tax reform was to encourage decisions based on economic merit rather than special tax preferences. This was accomplished by the elimination of numerous preferences, preferences that in many cases were available to only a small group of people. At the same time many deductions were either eliminated or replaced by credits.

The combined effect of this base broadening permitted the reduction of tax rates. As a result many Canadians, particularly low income recipients and seniors, enjoyed a reduction in their tax liabilities.

Most important of all was the fact that tax reform was a major step in reducing the distortions in economic decision making through the income tax system. This broad based, low rate approach to income taxation left savings decisions undistorted thus encouraging the long–term growth of the economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I apologize for interrupting the member but the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped from the bottom of the list of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

PRINTING INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly today on Canada's printing industry. As we know it is Canada's fourth largest industrial employer with 78,000 employees working today in Canada.

This industry is comprised of 4,300 different establishments, which means that the average work force in each one of these establishments is under 20 employees. This industry is really a Canadian industry. It is 96 per cent Canadian owned. A lot of them are family owned and have been in business for many years.

What has happened recently is a disaster. Like many of our other industries the printing industry has been hit very hard by the recession, but even worse by free trade.

Last year my province of Ontario lost 5,500 printing jobs. There is 14 per cent unemployment among printers themselves. In the rest of the country we lost 4,700 jobs in just one year in this industry which is quintessentially Canadian. In just one year, last year, we lost 10,200 jobs. The people who work in this industry are proud and fine people.

What has this done to our trading relationship with the United States? We do about $750 million annual trade both ways with the United States, but our deficit in trade with the United States in 1988 was $106 million. Last year it was $332 million. This was an increase in our trading deficit of 213 per cent. This is not good for Canada. The loss of jobs is not good for Canada. There is the loss of foreign exchange.

Now why has this happened? The printing industry has analysed its plight. It cites the high Canadian dollar. It says that under free trade because the industry is small, under 20 employees per firm, the industry needs it more than the five year phase-out of tariffs under the free trade deal. The printing industry asked for the 10 years and did not get it. So consequently, it has been left at a competitive disadvantage. The higher taxes in Canada are cited, including lower capital cost allowances to invest in new machinery and equipment.

One of the interesting facts is the actual working of the free trade agreement itself under the country of origin markings. Since free trade, because of this factor alone $160,000 in sales and 1,700 jobs have been lost.

The U.S. laws are more stringent. They are enforced with greater zeal and there is a buy American program. Our printers simply want a level playing field. They are prepared to compete but they are not getting it from our laws or from our enforcement of the free trade.

We have to support our industry. It has come up with its own buy Canadian program, a printed in Canada logo, proudly Canadian. This is the industry's answer to the buy American program. Let us get behind our printers and give them the support that only government can and which they so richly deserve.

[*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): Mr. Speaker, I will gladly answer the hon. member for Willowdale by telling him that Revenue Canada Customs and Excise is in charge of enforcing the marking of imported goods order requiring that the country of origin be marked on some imports when they come into Canada.

As regards the marking of printed material, requirements are as stringent in Canada as in the United States. Generally, there should be a country of origin marking on all stationery items, lithographic prints and printed matter.

In response to the concerns of the Canadian Printing Industries Association, our officials have undertaken a review of how we enforce the marking of imported goods order.

We are working in particular on administrative directives regarding the size and location of the country of origin markings as well as on amendments to current exemptions for printed matter.

We expect these guidelines to strike a balance between the Canadian requirements and the American ones. We met with the Canadian Printing Industries Association in April to give a progress report on this.

Before any change is implemented, the importing community and the printing associations will of course have to be advised of the changes we plan in terms of the enforcement of the marking requirements.

As far as the enforcement of the program by Customs is concerned, I can assure you that our officials enforce the order most cleverly.

Moreover, complaints from the Canadian Printing Industries Association have been investigated and, when required, corrective measures have been taken.

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, June 5, I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration a question regarding the dismal unemployment statistics released that day.

I received a very unsatisfactory answer. It was unsatisfactory not only to myself, but also to many Canadians across this country and especially people who are unemployed.

The figures announced that day gave the unemployment rate at 11.2 per cent for the month of May. Now the prospect of finding a job in my province of Prince Edward Island is even worse because the unemployment figures there are 19.1 per cent. That is the highest monthly unemployment rate ever reported by Statistics Canada in my province. There is a personal face behind all these statistics.

• (1840)

People need jobs. They need jobs for their self-respect and for their dignity. Certainly these people are looking to the federal government to change some of its economic policies because these policies simply have not worked. Although inflation is important, job creation must also be a part of the federal government's economic strategy.

Perhaps more than anyone else in this country, Canadian youth is paying the price of this government's economic policies. The unemployment rate among youths in this country is 17.8 per cent. There are 114,000 fewer young people employed this year than in May of last year. Right now many students are looking for work and they have little or no hope of finding summer jobs.

In Atlantic Canada the youth unemployment rate is 30.3 per cent. That figure is unacceptable. I am astounded that this government does not recognize the need to act on this very serious situation.

Many of these students were planning to work this summer to pay for their expenses at college or at university next year. This government has simply let them down because it has not taken any action to provide the much needed jobs.

At the same time this government is hurting students in other ways. It has not recognized that the cost allowance for students under the student loan program has not been increased since 1984 even though tuition fees and other expenses continue to go up every year.

I want to end by saying there is no question that we need a change of leadership. We need new economic policies. We need policies that will create jobs.

For the sake of all Canadians, let us hope that this change comes sooner rather than later.

[*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): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I am pleased to provide the hon. member for Malpeque with some more information on the questions she herself raised here in this House on June 5.

The government cares about the difficult situation in which Atlantic Canadians find themselves. That is why the government commits $425 million on average every year for regional development projects in the Atlantic provinces.

Furthermore, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency continues to draw up and implement programs that promote economic development in the Atlantic region. By the end of March 1992, a net amount of $745 million had been committed in grants and contributions under ACOA's action program.

The government developed strategies to rebuild and diversify the fishing industry in the Atlantic region. Under the Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program, the Government of Canada will commit a total of $584 million to the fishing sector; $120 million will be allocated to a program to help fish-processing plant workers adjust; $146 million will be spent to help diversify the region's economy; $150 million will be used to reconstitute the fish stocks; $130 million will be allocated under the Labour Force Development Strategy to community development programs and projects intended to help older and aging workers adjust.

Finally, under the Labour Force Development Strategy, unemployment insurance funds for labour market programs have increased 280 per cent, from $500 million in 1990 to $1.95 billion in 1992. These funds will be used to help the unemployed acquire new skills and to encourage the private sector to provide more training for its workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): 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 6.45 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 10, 1992

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

CANADIAN FORCES BASE CORNWALLIS

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people in the Digby, Annapolis area who have seen the economic spin-offs from CFB Cornwallis slowly eroding.

Over the past year we have seen the continuous reduction of jobs, resulting in the closing of businesses, the threat of school closures, and the downsizing of a base to a station. All this activity is taking place without the government being honest in stating that the base is gradually closing.

Today we have a group of non-partisan politicians from Nova Scotia presenting to the government, parliamentarians of all stripes both in the Senate and the House of Commons, the need to find some activity for Cornwallis until the Department of National Defence starts recruiting English speaking new recruits again.

This is a cruel process to impose on the people of South West Nova. People already have been adversely affected by the bad economic policies of this government in this area.

I call on the government to stop this downsizing and to act on the proposals put forth in the past and today by this group of non-partisan politicians from Nova Scotia to keep Cornwallis working both for National Defence and the people of South West Nova.

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, there are increasing signs that the Canadian economy is expanding. Production rose during the first quarter, and exports reached record levels last March. Operating profits also rose during the first quarter of this year.

In May employment went up by 0.3 per cent. The manufacturing sector showed the most significant improvement with an increase of 41,000 jobs over the past two months.

In 1991, despite economic problems, business productivity increased by 1.5 per cent, the biggest annual gain since 1985. As a result the cost of doing business went down, which in twin makes us more competitive.

What is particularly welcome, is the permanent aspect of Canada's economic recovery. Thanks to this government's economic policies, economic recovery will accelerate during the months to come and, more important, we have the assurance of durable and non-inflationary growth of the Canadian economy.

* * *

[*English*]

SIKHS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, Canada is home to the largest population of Sikhs living outside India. Canadian Sikhs have declared this week a week of mourning in commemoration of those who lost their lives during the vicious attack by the Indian army on the Golden Temple at Amritsar which took place on June 4, 1984.

The Indian government's two-day military assault resulted in the deaths of thousands of Sikh men, women and children. To this day the Indian government contin-

ues to engage in activities that violate the most fundamental of human rights.

Amnesty International reports that Sikh prisoners have been detained for months or years without trial, that incidents of torture during interrogation are common, and that the arrest and detention of some detainees remain unacknowledged for weeks or months.

This is a damning record for a country that billed itself as one of the world's largest democracies.

Canada has very good relations with India. I would ask the minister of external affairs to urge the Indian government to cease its persecution of Indian Sikhs. India's actions against its own population are deplorable and thought should be given that present or future bilateral aid to India be made conditional on the commitment of the Indian government to solve its internal problems peacefully.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, now that the last chance constitutional talks are getting started, the federal government and the provinces should agree to enshrine in the Constitution a provision that guarantees the growth, promotion and protection of Canada's linguistic minorities. It is essential to amend the Constitution to include a clause recognizing the equal status, rights and privileges of francophone and anglophone linguistic communities in New Brunswick. Equality must extend to the right to have separate educational institutions and the cultural institutions that are needed to protect and promote these communities.

I hope the Government of Quebec will agree, without reservation, that our new Constitution makes it possible for Francophone minorities across the country to take their rightful place in Canada's great bilingual multicultural family.

[*English*]

CANADA–U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the free trade agreement again has proven itself to be a great asset to Canada in a trade dispute with the United States.

Yesterday the minister of trade announced that a dispute settlement panel voted unanimously in favour of Canada's position on yet another important trade issue. Canada has strongly opposed the U.S. position over how to deal with the interest costs in determining the North American content of Canadian built Japanese cars.

We have said from the beginning that these costs were indeed a part of the calculation and once again we have been proven right.

This victory will have very positive direct results on the GM Suzuki combined car assembly factory in Ingersoll, Ontario. The decision is also an important step down the road toward a positive resolution to the Honda dispute.

This panel decision again demonstrates the FTA dispute settlement mechanism works and works well.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CANADA TRAINING CENTRE

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, in September 1988 the government made an announcement which stated that it was going to construct a new residence building at the Emergency Preparedness Canada Training Centre in Arnprior.

It was to be completed by December 1990. Nothing has been done yet. From time to time rumours have been floating around to the effect that the government was going to move the training centre to another location. In recent months this rumour has been very strong and seems to be coming from very valid sources.

The community was upset. The employees were upset. People from across Canada who had taken courses there were upset. Over the weekend the mayor of Arnprior and I organized a meeting for Tuesday evening, June 9.

Mayors, county councillors, other elected people and a large segment of the population and media came to the meeting. Recent publicity on last night's meeting obviously brought the rumour mongering to a halt because the Minister of Supply and Services as the regional minister sent a letter to the mayor late yesterday afternoon stating that the Emergency Preparedness Canada Training Centre would remain in Arnprior.

• (1410)

I congratulate all concerned and I thank the minister for his help.

* * *

CANADA–FRANCE MARITIME BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, not only have we won an important dispute under the free trade agreement but we are winning in other international forums, as we said we would.

On behalf of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, I am very pleased to inform this House that the International Court of Arbitration rendered a decision today in New York City on the Canada–France maritime boundary dispute. The decision has largely confirmed Canada's jurisdiction over the disputed waters located south of Newfoundland and St.Pierre and Miquelon. The court has awarded France very little of the area that it had claimed. France had claimed an area outside the 12 mile territorial sea of 13,703 square nautical miles. It was awarded 2,537 square nautical miles, part of it in the deep waters of the Laurentian Channel which contains virtually no fishery resources.

The elimination of the large disputed zone means that the management of the groundfish resources in subdivision 3PS is now under Canadian control.

* * *

DAKOTA OJIBWAY PROBATION SERVICE

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Canada's only native run probation service will die this Friday and its case files will be handed over to the province of Manitoba if the Solicitor General will not renew its funding.

The Dakota Ojibway Probation Service has served native communities in southern Manitoba for seven years, recording success levels 5 to 10 per cent higher than the provincial average, according to a University of Manitoba study.

Native parolees are counselled and supervised in their aboriginal languages, referred to drug and alcohol treatment programs in their own language, and receive guidance from their elders in a traditional way.

Manitoba is willing to continue funding on a 50/50 basis but the federal government refuses to renew funding because of a manufactured jurisdictional dispute with the province over probation services on reserves.

If the federal government could find just $180,000 out of its massive constitutional or PR budgets, it could fund this probation service for a whole year. If it had its priorities straight, it would fund the program permanently.

* * *

CANADA–FRANCE MARITIME BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Mr. Ross Reid (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, today in New York the arbitration panel adjudicating the boundary dispute between Canada and France rendered a very important and historic decision.

The decision reassures Canada and the world that the position the Government of Canada has taken has been accepted. About one-sixth of the St.Pierre bank will be under the control of St.Pierre and Miquelon and the French, and less than 20 per cent of the claim made by France outside the territorial sea has been accepted.

There will be no groundfish controlled by France off the south coast of Newfoundland. It is in 3PS, an area depended upon by the fishermen of the south coast of Newfoundland. Canada has achieved effective control over this area and its management system will be held intact and unchallenged.

* * *

JOB TRAINING

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to condemn this government for removing without notice funding for two important job training programs for mothers on social assistance in metro Toronto.

The government removed funding on April 1 for the YWCA's Focus on Change and the Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Centre's STEP program, and it did not give either program an opportunity to find alternate sources of funding.

By its decision to gear job training programs only to those who qualify for unemployment insurance payments—and I believe this program is the creation of the minister responsible for that area of the city—the government risks creating systemic barriers to job training and permanent welfare statistics out of these women.

If these two job training programs for sole support mothers are lost, choices for women will be seriously limited. The decision to cut funding defies reason and shows a lack of compassion.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO JULIE PAYETTE

Ms. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Ahuntsic, I am very pleased, on behalf of my constituents and myself, to congratulate Julie Payette who is originally from Ahuntsic, on being chosen from among 5,330 male and female candidates as Quebec's first and Canada's second woman astronaut—no doubt the youngest woman ever to participate in the space shuttle program.

Ms. Payette is an important symbol not only for women but for all young Canadians, whether they live in Quebec or any other province of Canada.

I want to point out the great scientific, intellectual, artistic and athletic abilities of my riding's new heroine. Good luck, Julie. We are very proud and honoured in my riding.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, on April 1, I met with the Prime Minister regarding Mrs. Henriette Haddad, a Canadian citizen taken hostage in Lebanon in 1985 and not heard of since.

This meeting was held in the presence of Mrs. Haddad's son and friends of the family where the Prime Minister promised he would do everything possible to locate Mrs. Haddad and obtain her release.

To the Prime Minister's credit, he did write to the presidents of Syria, Lebanon and Iran requesting their co-operation and the government also sought UN assistance.

Consequently I was shocked yesterday to read a report that authorities were working to obtain the release of the last two western hostages in Lebanon, two German citizens, with no mention of Mrs. Haddad.

I plead with the government to follow this up immediately to make sure that Mrs. Haddad, the only Canadian hostage, is not forgotten and that a release is actively pursued.

* * *

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, research and development lay the groundwork for industrial success and Canadian companies are proving that the policies of this government have provided an environment where innovative technology can flourish.

Since the implementation of increased patent protection for pharmaceuticals five years ago, Glaxo Canada Inc., based in Mississauga, has increased R and D funding to nearly $30 million annually.

Over the next five years, Glaxo expects to spend over $270 million on R and D in Canada. These investment levels far exceed the commitment undertaken by pharmaceutical manufacturers to spend 10 per cent of sales on R and D.

Increased investment has meant increased employment opportunities for Canadians as Glaxo's work force has increased from 400 to more than 1,000 in the past five years.

Glaxo's commitment to Canada continues. In April the company inaugurated new corporate headquarters in Mississauga and broke ground on the same site for a $70 million manufacturing facility slated for completion in 1995. I congratulate the people of Glaxo Canada Inc.—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

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

Yesterday the Prime Minister confirmed that the government was indeed considering spending $4.3 billion to acquire military helicopters designed for fighting Soviet submarines, a threat that no longer exists today. Furthermore, these helicopters would be made in Europe, contrary to what the Minister of National Defence suggested yesterday to reporters.

Does the Acting Prime Minister not find it strange that the government is preparing to spend billions of dollars to fight Soviet submarines, when next week he will dine with Boris Yeltsin, the President of Russia? At that time the Russian president will ask for money not to fuel his submarines but to feed his people.

[*English*]

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, the minister also indicated yesterday that no decisions have been made on this matter.

Obviously we take into consideration the change in the global situation as we look at our requirements. It is important to recognize that what we are looking at are replacement helicopters for our search and rescue missions over the oceans.

I am sure my hon. colleagues would agree that is a very important mission for our Canadian Armed Forces. I think there were over 200 lives saved as a result of those missions in the past two years. We must have capable equipment.

On looking at any decisions of this nature we will take into account not only the global situation and the capability but obviously the cost effectiveness of whatever equipment may be required.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday when asked about whether we even need these helicopters the Prime Minister said: "I have not the foggiest idea".

That is the problem with members of this government. They do not have the foggiest idea what they are doing in this file and many other files. When we ask for money for infrastructure they have none, but when it comes to high-tech toys they spend money like drunken sailors. To be fair, drunken sailors spend their own money, not taxpayers' money.

• (1420)

How come there is money for helicopters like that and none for infrastructure when a lot of experts say that of course we will need some helicopters sooner or later but not these very expensive helicopters? They are not needed any more to fight Soviet submarines.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, first, with respect, I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition would want to reflect on the words he used to describe sailors. Men and women who serve in our navy are honourable and outstanding representatives of this country.

Second, I would also suggest to my hon. colleague: Is he saying, for example, that we should not have safe, capable equipment to provide search and rescue over the oceans? Should we not have safe helicopters that we can provide the fisheries patrol which I know is so important to members from the eastern provinces?

All of these are ongoing tasks of our naval requirements. We will be going through a process of review. The Minister of National Defence will be making recommendations in due course to cabinet about what the most appropriate equipment should be, taking into account all factors in order to meet those needs.

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

When asked about infrastructure programs the government has the habit of saying—and I have heard the Minister of Finance saying it in this House—that the municipalities do not have money to pay their one-third.

At the conference in Montreal the Federation of Canadian Municipalities did a survey and 87 per cent of the people there said that they were in favour of this program of one-third, one-third, one-third, and 83 per cent of them said they would have no problem finding the money to do the job at the moment. By a margin of five to one they said that the problems they were having in the cities today with their infrastructure were hurting business opportunities.

What do we need more at this moment: to help our cities, to create jobs in Canada and not in Great Britain, or to buy expensive helicopters that are not needed, that type of helicopter, at this time?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows very well the security of our nation is clearly the responsibility of the federal government. Our defence capability is clearly the responsibility of the federal government. Those are clear priorities the federal government has to observe and has to implement.

Obviously he knows very well that the kind of infrastructure program he is talking about is essentially the responsibility of the provinces and the municipalities. I indicated to the hon. member on many occasions that he wants to go on a spending spree. He wants to go on a spending spree, suggesting that the provinces put up one-third, the municipalities put up one-third and the federal government puts up one-third.

There is only one taxpayer. The priorities of this government are to respond effectively in those areas of responsibility and jurisdiction that are clearly within the domain of the federal government.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. It is not a matter of spending but a matter of priorities. Yesterday the Minister of National Defence said that those criticizing the government's priorities regarding the acquisition of the British helicopters were guilty of appeasement. What an outrageous analogy.

Are 1.5 million unemployed Canadians across Canada who want jobs guilty of appeasement? Is the mayor of Montreal who wants jobs for the unemployed in his city guilty of appeasement? Are one million children who line up at food banks guilty of appeasement? Are 8 million Canadians who do not have adequate sewer systems guilty of appeasement?

[*English*]

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, if I could iterate once again, I am sure my hon. colleague is quite aware of the national defence policy which came out last fall and was updated. It clearly set out what are the roles and responsibilities of national defence.

We have a budget within which we have to operate. Part of that budget goes for capital equipment. One of our approaches is to increase the amount of our existing approved budgets for capital equipment in order that our men and women will have the appropriate equipment. One of the projects within that existing budget is replacement helicopters.

This is a question of how we are going to deal with the issue within the Department of National Defence, recognizing that our budget has been constrained over the last few years and will continue to be constrained.

Nevertheless, we do believe that the replacement helicopters for search and rescue, for fisheries patrol, for drug interdiction, for all the new roles that our navy will be taking on, are very important priorities.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, in order of importance are the 1.5 million Canadians who are looking for work not important to this government?

What about the one million children right now who are lining up at food banks? Are those children important to this government? What about the eight million Canadians who do not have sanitary sewers?

We ask the government once again: Would it not be a better priority to put money into a public works program now to get Canadians working and help rebuild our cities? Is that not a question of real government priority?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member suggesting that the Government of Canada should put Armed Forces personnel into equipment that is unsafe?

The helicopters that are proposed to be replaced are 35 years old. Surely she should take that into consideration.

In order for our men and women to carry out their responsibilities, to carry out and preserve the security and integrity of the country, we need not only personnel but equipment to do the job.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, further on the helicopters, I give government members the benefit of the doubt and suggest that they do not know what they are talking about rather than suggest they are intentionally misleading the Canadian people.

The helicopters that are being proposed and publicly recommended by the chief of defence staff are EH–101 helicopters specifically designed for anti–submarine purposes. That is why they are so expensive: $91 million a crack.

Those helicopters are simply not justified now that the Soviet threat is over. I call on the Minister of National Defence or the associate minister to kill the program today.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make clear to my hon. colleague, who I know is a member of the national defence standing committee and is very knowledgeable in matters of national defence, that whatever choice of helicopter is made it has to meet certain requirements that we have. It has to be capable and it has to be cost effective.

The EH–101 has some of those capabilities. It may or may not be the helicopter that would come forward as a final proposal to cabinet. No decisions have been made. No recommendations have yet been made, and we are going to be looking at all these factors.

I think of the bottom line. I hope my hon. colleague would agree, because just recently in British Columbia there was an incident, a very sad incident, involving the use of one of our old Labrador helicopters. We have to move to replace them with modern, safe, effective equipment not only for our own men and women in the Armed Forces but to ensure we maintain the safety of Canadian lives that may be at risk from time to time on the oceans off both our coasts.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, if the government spent its defence dollars on maintaining equipment that was used for search and rescue instead of on cold war weaponry that is completely useless, then it would have the support of this side of the House.

Yesterday, in trying to defend the indefensible, the expenditure of $4.3 billion on these Soviet seeking helicopters, the Prime Minister said: "We must be ready to meet threats that affect the national interests of Canadians".

• (1430)

Will the Deputy Prime Minister not agree that with the end of the Soviet threat the national interest of Canadians is best served not by wasting $4.3 billion on these helicopters but on having Canadians fully employed, our young people properly educated, and our children properly fed?

An hon. member: And the NDP would wipe out the armed forces. An interesting policy.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I feel the hon. member is really giving the wrong impression. It is not a choice of one or the other.

The question is within the Department of National Defence, within our budget which is allocated and which the hon. member approved at committee, how we will spend those moneys most effectively to meet our missions.

In the National Defence policy statement which we put out we talked about the new roles for the Canadian navy, not the old role of fighting the Soviet Union. We know that is gone, we all know that. There are new important domestic roles: the protection of sovereignty, the protection of our coastal resources, drug interdiction, search and rescue. All are important missions that I am sure all hon. colleagues would support us on.

We need to ensure we have the capabilities to provide those missions and to provide the equipment for them in the best and most cost effective manner.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, the minister must surely know that if the role is as she defines it, search and rescue, fishing patrols, then a totally different helicopter is required.

I come back to the Minister of Finance.

[*Translation*]

How can the government justify this kind of expenditure when it was unable to find $40 million to finance summer employment programs or $2.7 million for the Court Challenges Program or $20 million for housing co-operatives?

[*English*]

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member recalls the budget when it came out earlier this year. Within that budget the government set out expenditure priorities for a whole range of activities.

One of those activities that is clearly within the federal government's responsibility and a major priority, is the defence of our country. Within our budget, which has been allocated despite the reductions we have had to take over the past few years, one of the priorities in terms of capital equipment is the provision of new modern helicopters which will enable us to undertake the tasks we have been mandated to do.

I am sure my hon. colleague would agree with that and will be working toward providing that equipment in the most cost-effective manner possible.

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CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Canadians living in our large urban centres are becoming increasingly fearful over the rising tide of crime which is undermining both public safety and quality of life. In fact, since 1984 violent crime in Canadian cities has risen some 40 per cent.

Given that our national government spends very little on crime prevention programs in comparison with per capita figures of many other countries around the globe, when will the minister finally reverse this trend? When will she begin to lend greater support to existing preventative organizations like Block Parents and other possible creative solutions so we can assist municipalities in winning back their communities?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada does participate in these kinds of programs. We funded a research project recently by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to develop strategies for crime prevention.

As the hon. member will know, if he has been in the House over the last few months, I have been working actively with the caucus of big city mayors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I have been meeting with police chiefs across the country to develop a strategy to create a national strategic and co-ordinated approach toward the questions of urban crime, urban safety, broadly based urban justice issues.

I welcome the input of the hon. member on how he may be able to discharge that function more effectively. It does require the co-operation of all three levels of government, each exercising discretion in its own jurisdiction as effectively as possible.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

A major component of that rising urban crime is directly related to the chronic problem of drug abuse. Unless local municipalities, police forces and community groups, which are on the firing line of this battle on drugs, get immediate and urgent assistance this war will never be won.

When will the government finally amend its proceeds of crime legislation so as to ensure that moneys secured from drug seizures, which last year alone amounted to over $38 million, will be shared with local municipalities and organizations rather than going exclusively into the federal coffers? It has been promised many times by this government. When will it finally act?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it is not simply a question of legislation under the level of the federal government. The provinces themselves are extremely resistant to direct payments by the federal government to the municipalities in this area.

As my colleague, the Solicitor General, has indicated in the House on a number of occasions, we are reviewing this to try to find a way to answer that question.

I also point out that I think my hon. colleague exaggerates the amount of money that is available through the proceeds of crime to distribute.

Recently we have established three task forces in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, the three major drug trafficking centres of the country, to make sure that we get the most benefit out of the proceeds of crime legislation. We are looking to maximize the receipts from the proceeds of crime. Then we can address the question that the member quite rightly raises of the fair and equitable distribution of those proceeds.

I would also point out that in fact the lion's share of the costs of implementing the drug legislation to fight drugs in Canada is borne by the federal government.

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VISIBLE MINORITIES

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Justice.

Canadians are tired of endless studies on the relationship between visible minorities and the justice system. We need people on the bench who share or at least understand the experience of visible minority youth in our big cities. What will it take for the minister to recognize this and when will she do something about it?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in 1987 our government established for the first time in Canada a Canadian judicial centre to provide education to federally appointed judges across this country. Among the kinds of courses that are offered are courses in gender sensitivity and in cultural sensitivity.

In addition I have worked very pro-actively to try and expand the range of people who sit on the federal bench. If the hon. member were to go through the law schools in most Canadian universities she would see that until recent years there is a remarkable absence of visible minorities graduating from law school.

She will also know that one must have been called to the bar for 10 years before being eligible to be appointed to the federal bench. I expect that within the next 10 to 15 years the variety of candidates available for judicial appointment will be much greater and much more consistent with the proportions of people in society in general.

I welcome suggestions from anyone about competent and able people who would be capable to go to the bench and who could illustrate what has been one of my major priorities as Minister of Justice and that is inclusive justice to make the system reflective of all Canadians.

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[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board.

For five years we have been asking the government to enforce the Employment Equity Act in the Public Service. Why does the minister not stop dragging his feet and take action now?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not agree with the hon. member's description of the work being done by Treasury Board.

I will give her some figures, I know opposition members are not very fond of statistics but it is the only way to evaluate the progress we have made. In each of the groups that were designated we have made significant progress. The recruitment rate for women, for instance, has gone up from 42.4 per cent in 1987 to 44.9 per cent in 1991. For native people, there was an increase from 1.8 per cent to 2 per cent; for the disabled, from 2.6 per cent to 3 per cent; and for visible minorities, from 2.7 per cent to 3.6 per cent, in 1991.

This kind of progress may not be satisfactory but it is significant.

* * *

[*English*]

JOB TRAINING

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Over half a year ago, the task force on professional training in the arts in Canada delivered its report. This task force, as I am sure the minister remembers, was established in April 1990 by his ministry and the Ministry of Communications. It was recognized that improve-

ments had to be made in professional training for the arts in Canada. Yet the minister and his department have not responded to this important report and recommendations.

• (1440)

Can the minister tell us when and if he will respond to the report on professional training of the arts in Canada?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the evaluation of that report is ongoing in the department. I have had conversations and contacts with the Minister of Communications who is responsible for the arts sector in Canada. I cannot give a definite date when we can respond or when we will, but we are well advised of the recommendation and are looking at it.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker a supplementary question to the same minister.

Mr. Minister, your department through its labour force training programs play a vital—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members know that in this Chamber we do ask hon. members to put the question through the Chair. I know the hon. member would want to do that.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister. I am sure the minister is aware that his department through labour force training programs plays a vital role in the professional training of the artist.

Yet people in his department whose expertise is with the cultural sector are not having their contracts renewed. Arts organizations have not been able to meet with the minister or his deputy. In fact, it is being stated that the job of the department is to shut doors to the arts community, not open them, and that the minister has no interest in the arts.

Can the minister tell us if he has any commitment to the arts and if he recognizes the special needs of the artists as well as the important economic role the arts play?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, yes, I do.

FISHERIES

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

In 1968 the northern cod stock catch was 815,000 tonnes. Last year it was 127,000 tonnes. This year it is likely to be zero. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans talked about the possibility of his having to close down the fishery for one year, two years or maybe five years.

This means that the plants are going to be closed, the doors locked, boats are going to be tied up and secured, and 30,000 fishermen and fisherpersons will have no jobs and no income.

I ask the minister what contingency funding does the government have to compensate for this lost income?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this is a hypothetical question. No decision has been made in that regard.

Fishermen and plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador can be reassured by the record of this government to help these persons when in need. Without conjecturing on what can happen in the future, the hon. member can be assured that if the circumstances call for measures to be taken to help these people, we will be true to our tradition as a Parliament and as a government and will do it.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, the government was responsible for managing the fishery for the last eight years. It has failed and it is responsible for the fallout.

The minister talks about a hypothetical situation. The government is preparing, as has been discussed in the House, to commit $4.3 billion to something that may or may not happen. By its own admission the government expects and is not prepared to commit one cent to it. That is not only inconsistent, it is also incredible.

I would like to ask the minister one more time, would he consider telling this House what contingency funding, what action plan he has for these Atlantic Canadians who are going to face a situation, possibly, that they have not faced in 500 years?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my answer. This is exactly the same question he asked the first time. I told him and I repeat to members that there is no point in trying to answer a hypothetical question. If he wants to measure the degree of caring of this government for the fishermen in Newfoundland and Labrador and all of Atlantic Canada he has only to recall all the programs we put in place to help these people. If the need arises we will be there again.

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WATER

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a question with the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

As the minister would know, the United States is currently draining about three times its regular flow from the Columbia River basin, causing major economic loss and very serious water shortages in southern British Columbia.

The premier of British Columbia stated that they are now engaged in short and long term negotiations on water exports to the United States but our own external affairs officials said we are not even involved.

On such a crucial issue as the export of Canadian water, why is the federal government not directly involved to ensure the protection of Canada's national interest.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would know that this issue relates to the Columbia River Treaty. The treaty I believe is effective to about the year 2024.

I want to assure the hon. member that we take seriously our responsibilities concerning the treaty and want to assure him that while the chief parties are the Bonneville Power Administration and B.C. Hydro, the officials that I have named with responsibilities under the act and under the treaty, are closely involved in the discussions that are taking place.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, just a small correction. The minister should know that the Columbia River Treaty is up for renegotiation in a matter of a few years.

The British Columbia government will be taking off the moratorium on water exports in a matter of a couple of weeks. We have the New Democratic premier of British Columbia talking about water exports to the United States. Yet there is no study of the impact on jobs, recreation and wild life.

I want to ask the minister today if the federal government will initiate a major assessment of the impact on the water basin, particularly in the Columbia River, on jobs, recreation, hydro power as it affects Canada before serious and irreversible decisions are taken by the government of British Columbia.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member says is correct. We need to preserve water and also protect it for both farming and recreational purposes in the areas affected.

I point out to him that my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, also has been active in this regard. Officials of the federal government will address the issue at a meeting with their U.S. counterparts in Washington on June 12 and will outline a proposal for resolution at that time.

I thank the hon. member for bringing it forward and also giving us an opportunity to say what we are doing.

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TRADING CARDS

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, for years in this country Canadians of all ages, but mainly young Canadians, have collected trading cards. There were hockey cards, baseball cards, cards on antique cars. It was a healthy hobby.

But a new card which is produced in the United States has started to make its way on to the market. These cards feature serial killers, mass murderers, and gangsters. To say that this is disturbing to me is putting it mildly. I find it disgusting and sick and I ask the Minister of National Revenue what he plans to do to stop the importation of these cards into Canada.

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. This sort of material is obscene, disgusting, and has no place in a civilized world. In fact I believe this sort of thing breeds violence.

I can assure the hon. member that since this matter was brought to my attention by our colleague, the hon. member for Burlington, I have instructed all customs officers at all border points to be on the lookout for these cards and other similar material. I for one and others on this side of the House are going to make every effort and take every step necessary to make sure this sort of material is not allowed into Canada.

* * *

• (1450)

AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of industry.

McDonnell–Douglas near Toronto has cut over 1,500 jobs and plans 1,200 more lay–offs in the next year. These 2,700 job losses seem to be tied to the planned sale of 40 per cent of the commercial operations of the U.S. company to a corporation backed by the Taiwanese government.

Given this government involvement and the pressure that could exert on where supplies are purchased by McDonnell–Douglas, I want to ask if the federal government will intervene to fight these job losses as part of the strategy to maintain a high–tech aircraft industry in this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, certainly my hon. friend is aware of the importance which this government attaches to the existence and the growth of a high–tech aircraft industry in Canada. That was exemplified by the support we provided for the acquisition by Bombardier of de Havilland.

We have been in touch on an ongoing basis with the representatives of McDonnell–Douglas Canada Ltd. and continue to be in touch with them to follow what steps might be being taken by their parent company in relation to the Taiwanese interest and what the implications might mean for Canada. At this point I am not in a position to be more precise than that but I appreciate the hon. member raising the question.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, in fact the local CAW union has today faxed a letter to the minister outlining how hard workers are being hit by this situation and requesting an urgent meeting.

I want to ask the minister if he will commit himself to meet with this union in order to try to save these thousands of jobs that are so important to the economy of Toronto and Ontario.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, it is curious that my hon. friend would have a copy of that letter before I would have it.

I will look out for this letter. Obviously the maintenance and increase in the number of jobs in that part of the country is very important to the government. I might say on a personal note that it is very important because it is very close to my own constituency. That is why I take an ongoing interest in it, as my colleagues from Bramalea—Gore—Malton and Brampton ridings do as well.

I look forward to receiving a copy of that letter and making some decisions accordingly.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The recession was supposed to be over in March 1991. However, for thousands of Montrealers, Quebecers and Canadians who are still unemployed, the situation has not improved. According to the latest issue of the magazine *Commerce*, large Canadian companies in the resource sector have been severely hit by the recession.

Does the minister hold out any hope for better days in this industry?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

There were a number of initiatives in the budget that are beginning to show positive results to complement the medium term macro economic policy that we have established of price stability and sustainable growth.

She will note that there has been positive growth in the first quarter of this year. There has been a tremendous upturn in merchandise trade, $12.8 billion in the month of March, which establishes an all-time record. There has been increasing activity in the manufacturing sector. Orders are up by 9 per cent. Shipments are up by .8 per cent and .9 per cent. There has been an increase in the number of jobs in the manufacturing sector of 41,000. There has been a total increase in employment by 31,000, as registered last month.

While the recovery is not as robust as we would like to see it, there are clear signs the positive measures in the budget that we have brought in are taking hold and producing positive results.

* * *

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

He will know that the Canadian share of the U.S. steel market has remained at about 3 per cent from 1988 to 1991, whereas the American's share of our steel market has climbed from 7 per cent to 16 per cent in the same period.

Will he tell the House how he expects to defend Canada's steel jobs under the free trade agreement as it is now, when a binational dispute panel would be limited by the FTA to deciding only if the Americans had applied their own trade laws correctly?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that my hon. friend puts down the successes of the dispute settlement panels.

We just had one announced yesterday in the acceptance of the Canadian position on non-mortgage interest, a very important feature for a matter that has been raised by members on his side in relation to the Honda Motor Car Company.

I raised the very same issues, the very same statistics, with Mrs. Hills yesterday. I sought her assistance and encouraged her to make sure that the industry there was aware of the integrated nature of the Canadian and the United States industry, and in that way, hopefully, head off some of the actions that could be taken by the U.S. industry.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, you will appreciate that the minister did not answer the question or even grapple with the question.

IPSCO Steel Company, which is based in the west, during the eighties transferred a good deal of its production and jobs to the United States because of a countervail of 30 per cent.

Unless the subsidy negotiations are completed, how will the minister defend Canadian steel jobs now when the U.S. Congress can, under FTA article 1902, amend its trade laws without the consent of Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the point my hon. friend has just made is quite valid. It underscores the strengthened position that Canada has in comparison to any other country in the world.

The point that my hon. friend made about IPSCO is only part of the story. The other part of the story is that they have just recently announced they had very successful operations last year.

Regarding the negotiations on countervail and the definition of subsidy, my hon. friend is very well aware that these have been carried out in the Uruguay round. We are hopeful that we will see a successful Uruguay round and the features of the Uruguay round that apply to the definition of subsidy and countervail will be applied to the free trade agreement to our benefit.

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WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The minister's own department, through CANMET, did a study on the Westray mine. That study revealed various concerns which related to the ventilation system and to the risk of spontaneous combustion.

I know the minister shared these concerns with his cabinet colleagues. Did he share these concerns with the Nova Scotia government? If so, did he get any assurances as to safety from the Nova Scotia government?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the CANMET review is not a study; in fact, the CANMET review is a review of all the other mining consulting studies that went before—the Dames and Moore study was prominent among them—but there were four or five studies, all of them well known to the Nova Scotia authorities.

It was on the basis of those studies that they made their determinations, and it was on the basis of those studies that we decided to give a loan guarantee to the bank for this mine because of the job creation potential that was there.

In fact, the CANMET study did not do what the hon. member refers to, it gave a very balanced review of all the previous reviews and said that this mine was technically feasible, economically feasible, and that the dangers to which the hon. member refers are not uncommon in all coal mining enterprises. They were to be looked at and accommodated when the mine was developed.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the concerns raised by CANMET were in the documents that the minister released to the House. Surely he cannot deny them.

• (1500)

Bearing these concerns in mind, all we want to know is: Why did he not go to the Nova Scotia government and ask for assurances that these safety concerns would be addressed and what the Nova Scotia government would do to address these concerns?

Will the minister tell us what the Nova Scotia government said and, if not, will he please agree to a parliamentary inquiry so that we can get to the bottom of this?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, let me help the hon. member with the chronology. The next step after the review would be to have the mine developed.

When the mine was developed it then became the responsibility of the province, not only to inspect the mine on a regular basis for safety and for health but also to make sure that what was being done there was in compliance with all provincial regulations.

The CANMET review was very helpful in pointing out various things that the inspectors and the Nova Scotia authorities would look to when they did their inspections of safety and health. But the CANMET review was only one brief document of many more important documents which of course were also available to the provincial government.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Zsolt Zetenyi and Mr. Gyorgy Szilasy, members of the Hungarian Democratic Forum Party.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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THE LATE SENATOR GEORGE CLIFFORD VAN ROGGEN

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak on behalf of all British Columbians and to express our sadness at the loss Monday night of a great British Columbian, Senator George van Roggen, who died in Vancouver at the age of 70.

Senator van Roggen and I did not share the same party, but I think all members in this House agree that there are people in public life in this country who transcend the definitions of partisanship and who win the respect, admiration and affection of all who come to know them and have had the opportunity to work with them.

George van Roggen was part of a long tradition of British Columbians who have excelled both in the law and in public life. He not only lived up to that tradition but he advanced it.

He was born of a Dutch family and attended the University of British Columbia for his undergraduate and law degrees. Despite a physical disability, he served his country in World War II with great distinction as a member of the Canadian Scottish Reserve.

As a young lawyer who practised law in Yukon, he often referred to his Yukon years as among the best of his years before the bar. Back in Vancouver he rose to a partnership in the very distinguished Vancouver firm of Douglas, Symes and Brissenden.

During his successful legal career, Senator van Roggen always held a passion for politics. For 30 years he nurtured the Liberal Party in British Columbia both provincially and federally. His many friends of all parties will remember his efforts and achievements to make politics more relevant to the concerns of all British Columbians and to ensure the quality of public debate and service.

Prime Minister Trudeau brought Senator van Roggen to Ottawa in 1971. Much is said these days about the Senate, but let me say that Senator van Roggen worked as hard as any person in Ottawa to bring B.C. concerns to the national stage.

His interest extended beyond just domestic issues. He thought deeply and wisely about Canada's role in the world. He served as chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs from 1974 to 1988 and served as co-chair and member for the Canadian Inter-parliamentary Committees for Europe and the United States. He was no less aware of Canada's potential role in Asia and travelled to Japan in 1976 as a member of a Canadian parliamentary delegation.

It was his devotion to the interests of British Columbia and his perspective on Canada's role in the world that made him an articulate spokesman for free trade. He may be best remembered recently for his support of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and his eloquent analysis of the threat to Canada of international protectionism.

We remember George van Roggen as a man of service, as a man of commitment and as a man of courage. I might just say that last evening when I talked to members of the British Columbia caucus about my plan to rise in the House today to pay tribute to George van Roggen, I was struck by the warmth and the spontaneity of their remarks about this remarkable man and how much they see him as really an outstanding figure on the national stage and how much they regret his loss.

That is a sentiment shared by all British Columbians and all members of this House who I know will join with me in extending personal condolences to his wife Jane and his two children Norman and Trish.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate fully the members of the Official Opposition with, to use their own words, the warm and spontaneous tribute which the minister has paid to our colleague, the late Senator George van Roggen.

Senator van Roggen was hailed yesterday in the Senate by one of our colleagues as a prince of a man. He was refined but with a common touch. He was wise but not pompous. He was thoughtful, articulate and a thorough gentleman. He was highly esteemed and greatly respected among all our contemporaries.

The reason why Senator van Roggen earned that tribute, which I am sure we all share, was out of his deep conviction and his deep commitment to the future of Canada. His participation in the political process was of long standing. It was productive, imaginative and it was rewarded in due course by the possibility of participating in the upper Chamber. There he made his reputation in a very short time as a most capable chairman of the foreign relations committee of the Senate.

He took a leading part in the review of our trade policies in a way that not only has been evident in his participation in the free trade discussions, but on a much broader scale as well with his interest in Asia and the Pacific in particular which arose in part from his deep love and commitment to British Columbia.

As a fellow Vancouverite, I share his commitment to the interests of his native province and his native city and I want to associate very much with the minister's tribute to George van Roggen today. We will miss him. We will miss his wisdom, his very real courage in bearing a personal handicap. We want very much to send our condolences and our sympathy to Mrs. van Roggen and their two children on their loss, which is not only a personal one but a loss to all of Canada.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament from the lower mainland of British Columbia, I had the privilege of knowing Senator George van Roggen and working with him as one of the senators from our province.

When you knew George van Roggen, you were struck by his tireless work for Canada. He was a man who was interested in Canada and Canadian affairs and was a tireless advocate of the positions he took.

I knew him and worked with him on the Canada—U.S. Parliamentary Group, one of the most important groups we have in this Parliament. We get a chance to work with American senators and other members of Parliament in dealing with the great issues between us and the Americans.

Senator van Roggen had strong views on issues, especially the trade issue, and he advocated those views very effectively, to some of us on the other side almost too effectively, but he advocated them and one admired that and saw it as the work of a very good senator.

He was a long-time member of the B.C. and Yukon bar associations. I am told that at one point he was the only lawyer in the town of Whitehorse. Of course, he did that job very well.

He had a long-time practice with a large Vancouver law firm and he practised there, I am told, from 1957 until 1981. Mr. Speaker, you and I practised law in Vancouver over the same period and we shared memories, times and work with Senator van Roggen.

When he went to the Senate in 1981, he was interested in areas of foreign relations, trade, Asia Pacific, matters that really concerned the people of British Columbia. He took on those issues and advocated his position very effectively. To his wife Jane, son Norman and his daughter Trish, I want to extend the sympathy of the members of my party, the New Democratic Party, especially those members from British Columbia, for their loss and a loss to all of us of a very dear distinguished Canadian.

• (1510)

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I want to add just a few comments about the loss of a very great British Columbian.

Senator van Roggen was a forthright, powerful person in political life in the province of British Columbia. Like all British Columbians, he did not hesitate to share his opinions, whether they were contrary or in favour of where you stood in public life.

During the brief period of time that I was premier of the province of British Columbia, Senator van Roggen and I disagreed on almost every single issue. In every instance he was a perfect gentleman. I hope people can say the same about me.

There is a spirit of British Columbia that perhaps separates us from other regions as their spirit separates them, but in our province bluntness, frankness and openness is a hallmark of some of the tremendous leaders in our province.

The one comment that I want to make on the area that we agreed on completely was in the expansioned Asia Pacific. Senator van Roggen was a forceful speaker throughout Canada for our position and its peculiar needs in Asia Pacific.

Senator van Roggen will be greatly missed, but he will be remembered lovingly as the kind of British Columbian who comes to the province, becomes totally absorbed in Canada and in British Columbia and gives full measure of his life to the area that he comes from and to all people in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, firt of all, I want to thank you for your kindness in giving me this opportunity to say a few words about Senator van Roggen, whom I have known since 1964.

He was a proud citizen of your majestic province. To know him was to know the other person's point of view. The previous speaker, Mr. Barrett, said that one could disagree with him, and I know he himself did. However, although one could profoundly disagree with some of Senator van Roggen's positions, in the process one came to understand the real meaning of democracy and friendship.

I had the good fortune to know him as far back as 1964, and in 1968, at the convention where we were both on the same side—not on the winning side, I admit—I started to understand what was meant by western pride. In all modesty, I hope that our friendship also helped acquaint him with the point of view of a French Canadian from Quebec, which I am, have always been and shall remain.

I think students would do well to read the lengthy reports of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs which the senator chaired so brilliantly. The reports on Canada's relations with the Middle East and on free trade are still very topical and also interesting for what they reveal about the personality of Senator van Roggen, whose passing we mourn today.

We wish to extend our sincere condolences to his wife Jane and his children, and we hope that many parliamentarians will be able to take the time to show their regard and appreciation for the true aristocrat we learned to know so well.

[*English*]

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I mourn as well personally for the late Senator George van Roggen and want to add a word about my own contact with him over the decades, not as a close friend but certainly as one who was a great admirer of his.

Senator van Roggen has been spoken of here today as a great Canadian and as a great British Columbia and, of course, he will be remembered in those regards.

I think of him also as a great Liberal, one who contributed to the stream of thought which characterizes the evolution of ideas within the Liberal Party.

George was a great contributor of ideas, a stalwart who stuck to his guns, had a very firm view of how this nation should evolve, and whether our party ended up agreeing or disagreeing with him he remained loyal to us. At a time when Liberals were strong in Toronto perhaps but not so strong in the west, he remained one who would always stand up and carry our banner forward. I think in that all members would agree, in keeping any political party strong and helping to strengthen the democracy of Canada.

I will miss also a man of great personal courage who was constantly in pain, yet constantly ready as someone in the other place said like a teenager, constantly ready to come forward with enthusiasm to put his ideas on the table, to debate them, to engage your own ideas, to try again and again to carry forward his own Liberal vision of our country.

He was a wonderful example and I was inspired by him when I first arrived. As I got older and older, I watched him remain as young, enthusiastic and committed to putting forward ideas and winning arguments as ever.

He was a pioneer in his part of the country. He is an inspiration to young Candians, he is an inspiration within our party, someone of whom we will always be very proud, and someone whom we shall miss.

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 20 petitions.

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

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SITUATION IN YUGOSLAVIA

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to report to the House today on the latest developments in the situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina and on my recent meetings in Europe.

I want to talk about peacekeeping in this context and in the context of the UN Secretary General's efforts to secure the Sarajevo airport. I will also talk about our continued participation in the peacekeeping operation in Cyprus.

The situation in Bosnia–Hercegovina has deteriorated to the point where even relief convoys are attacked with impunity. This is a direct challenge to the credibility of the UN's current peacekeeping operation. For this reason and after considerable thought, we have agreed to a request from the UN Secretary-General that in the event the ceasefire holds he reassign Canadian peacekeepers to keep the Sarajevo airport secure to allow humanitarian relief to reach the general population.

[*Translation*]

The mechanized infantry batallion of 850 Royal 22nd Regiment soldiers will be redeployed from Croatia once circumstances permit.

The first phase of the Secretary-General's plan for securing the Sarajevo airport is already underway with the deployment of 60 unarmed military observers today under the command of Canadian General Mackenzie.

On the basis of the mission's assessment, the security council will decide if conditions permit entering into the second phase of this operation. These conditions were established by the UN last Friday with Serbian, Bosnian moslem, and Croatian parties to the conflict: That artillery and anti-aircraft weapons capable of reaching the airport be withdrawn and placed under UN supervision.

[*English*]

We fervently hope the mission can achieve the conditions necessary for the deployment of UN forces.

• (1520)

This may continue to be a difficult situation to manage. As on numerous occasions since the beginning of the Yugoslav conflict, risks of the cease-fire collapsing are very high. It is also imperative that the UN protect the humanitarian operation once forces have been deployed.

Dangers will still exist in Sarajevo, but our Canadian forces leadership has determined that these difficult assignments are feasible provided initial conditions can be satisfied. I believe that Canada had to respond favourably and actively to the Secretary-General's request, after considerable thought about the implications.

His decision is consistent with our commitment to bring an end to the fighting in Bosnia and bring relief to the innocent. It is also consistent with the statements we have made and the calls to action that we have given to the United Nations throughout the tragic series of events over the past months.

It also confirms that our commitment to security in Europe remains undiminished. I was able to reinforce this commitment during a series of meetings in Europe last week.

NATO made an historic decision in Oslo. In the past, NATO's role was to provide security against attack on alliance members from the countries in the east.

Today, those same countries in the east look to NATO for security from attacks by each other or from ethnic and nationalist violence resulting from the breakup of the Soviet empire.

We trust that our common commitments to the principles of the CSCE—democracy, the peaceful settlement of disputes and, above all, the legal acceptance and tolerant treatment of minorities—will be a formula for peace. However, if there is a need to resolve conflicts through peacekeeping all of Europe welcomes the application of NATO's unique abilities to provide real resources and expertise.

In Oslo NATO agreed to consider just such CSCE requests. In my view this could well prevent Yugoslav-type tragedies from occurring in the future.

Canada was one of the originators of the concept of peacekeeping. Since the 1950s Canada has served in virtually all UN peacekeeping operations. At this moment Canadians serve around the world, in the Middle East, Cyprus, Central America, Europe and Cambodia.

[*Translation*]

The most important test of the effectiveness of peacekeeping is the length and strength of the peace once the peacekeepers have gone. Our troops have been with the UN peace-keeping force in cyprus for 28 years. Clearly this is not a model for peacekeeping.

The absence of peace must not be allowed to contaminate the relations between new generations of old rivals.

[*English*]

I have just visited Cyprus and discussed the situation there with its president and with my colleagues in Ankara and Athens. I said that unless there is progress toward a solution Canada would withdraw its forces.

I can report that in this case there is some progress. Over the next few weeks, and the next couple of months, a set of ideas will be discussed among leaders to establish the basis for peace without peacekeepers.

As a result of this positive development Canada will not completely withdraw its forces this year. However, we must take this opportunity to force the search for a definitive settlement of a long-standing grievance, which has gone on for far too long.

While in Cyprus I had the privilege of visiting the Canadian forces assigned to Nicosia in their role as peacekeepers. I also had a chance to visit the troops on duty and in their barracks right in the peacekeeping zone, in the buffer zone in Nicosia.

I was able to see firsthand the very high degree of professionalism that they display and the fact that it is recognized and appreciated by all of the parties to this dispute, by all sides. All Canadians should be very proud of their actions and the honour that they bring to our country.

However, the risk of conflict in the world in the coming years remains real. Our challenge will be to make the UN and regional organizations respond in timely and effective ways. We are very sensitive to the fact that some of these decisions will be difficult and that risks to the safety of soldiers and civilians will be high.

The financial burden will also be higher than in the past. Canada may not be in a position to participate in every mission as it has in the past.

How we contribute to peacekeeping missions in the future may also vary. However, we must encourage changes in the international institutions and in the international management of peacekeeping, and we must be flexible in our support of peacekeeping operations.

Canada has a long and distinguished tradition of leadership in peacekeeping and we intend to retain that position in the UN, in NATO and in the CSCE. However we must also build on those efforts in the newer area of peacebuilding and the negotiated settlement of potential conflicts before they erupt into violence. We look to the CSCE summit in Helsinki this summer to consolidate progress in peacebuilding for Europe.

[*Translation*]

In the months ahead, as our Canadian peacekeepers continue to provide a measure of stability in troubled areas of the world, we must work vigorously to identify and resolve the underlying motives and forces which generate conflict in the first place.

[*English*]

We must not squander the opportunity that history has afforded us. I can assure this House and all Canadians that Canada will continue to be in the forefront of the movement toward global peace. I will continue to report diligently on our progress toward that end.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, first let me say that we welcome the discussion that the minister has introduced on the serious situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina and other parts of former Yugoslavia. We appreciate the minister reporting to the House on her visit. We share, as do many other Canadians, the incredible sense of tragedy and sadness at watching the unmitigated and unrestrained killing that goes on day after day, especially of helpless people.

We also want to join in complimenting the Canadian peacekeepers who are serving that region. We often debate the role of the Armed Forces, but there can be no more significant role that our Armed Forces are playing today than in the interventions they are making in several spots around the world, such as Cambodia, Cyprus, Yugoslavia, the Middle East and other areas. It is unquestionably one of the real contributions that Canada can make to peace.

At the same time there is also sadness because the breakdown and failure that is happening in Yugoslavia represents the world's inability to make an effective response. This conflict did not just occur this week. It has been happening for well over a year. There is no question that the response of the western community—the Europeans, Americans, Canadians and others—has been far too little and far too late.

We only have to compare the reaction to the way in which the western community responded to the invasion in Iraq, when there were immediate sanctions within days. Yet it took months upon months for us to get our act together in Yugoslavia. We knew that conflicts were emerging.

In this House only three weeks ago I posed a question to the minister asking for the withdrawal of diplomatic approval of the regime in Belgrade and the minister refused to do it.

The minister was overturned in three days by the Prime Minister, but the fact of the matter is that we have been reluctant and slow in our reactions. We have not understood the important precedents that this incredible conflict sets. All those brave words about the new world order that we heard after the Iraqi conflict have given real cause to the sceptics to ask what has gone wrong.

The international community has not responded to protect the basic human rights of people in Croatia or Bosnia. I suppose we are making the same mistake in the emerging conflict in Kosovo, another part of that tragic region. Again nothing is being done to prevent the conflict from emerging.

Even last week when we again raised specific questions in the House of Commons directly to the Prime Minister, asking whether the Government of Canada was prepared to support active intervention in Sarajevo by the United Nations to deal with humanitarian relief, he refused to answer.

• (1530)

We were not prepared to take a stand or to take leadership on that crucial issue. We were waiting, holding back. Therefore, while we must pay brave tribute to the peacekeepers I am afraid that the policy makers are not giving them the kind of support they deserve. We are not responding in the way that is required to build a new regime of security.

I noticed with interest that the minister said in her statement that the meetings at Oslo this past week confirmed a new role for NATO to take under the CSCE. Once again the government was confirming that the CSCE might be able to prevent future Yugoslavias from happening.

Why is it not being asked to step in on this conflict taking place now? If there is now an agreement that NATO troops could be used under CSCE direction why is Canada not asking for a CSCE meeting immediately to discuss the problem of whether there will have to be further actions taken to stop the fighting, not just in Sarajevo and not just to provide humanitarian relief but to stop the conflict throughout that whole area?

Once again we are laying back, holding back and reserving. We are not initiating, not taking leadership, and not moving into the vacuum that is clearly there when we know that more blood will be spilled and more innocent lives will be lost.

The minister says that we must prevent further conflicts. Yet the minister's own department withdrew its funding, under this year's estimates, from the centre for conflict prevention of the CSCE. How can we stand in the House and say that we are fully committed and we are going to do everything we can to stop the conflict while the Government of Canada has withdrawn funding from one of the major new initiatives that the CSCE has sponsored?

It is hard to reconcile the rhetoric with the action or the action with the rhetoric. The two simply do not mix.

Maybe it is not the minister's fault, it may be her colleagues who are the problem. However, we cannot have the Department of Finance making crucial foreign policy decisions and nickel and diming on the crucial issue of international security. That is what is taking place.

Even in today's debate the minister said in the final part of her statement that it may not be possible for Canada to be involved in future peacekeeping because we may not have the financial support to do so.

The minister said that there may not be sufficient support or funding for these actions, yet at the same time the government is talking about spending $4.5 billion on a piece of military equipment that is already obsolescent. We are no longer engaged in anti-submarine warfare because the submarines are not there any more.

It may be that we need good helicopters for peacekeeping missions because one of the problems that our own peacekeepers found in Croatia, and are certainly finding in Cambodia, is the lack of equipment and the lack of proper logistical support. The UN Secretary General and UN officials have said repeatedly that our inability to mount full peacekeeping ventures and provide the proper support is a result of the lack of funding.

We know the Americans are withdrawing. They are in arrears by close to $800 million. Even our own government in its defence review gave only one line in the entire review to peacekeeping. The end result is that we have a minister rushing off to buy helicopters that are no longer necessary while we are not tailoring the configuration of equipment or support that our own forces will need if they are going to engage in a number of peacekeeping ventures around the world.

That should be our priority. Our primary objective should be to support international efforts and international collective security, not to be engaging in ghost conflicts left over from the cold war.

I want to raise concerns with the minister about the statements or policies emanating in a variety of ways about Cyprus.

It is not good enough to say we have been there too long. We must ask ourselves whether the fighting will resume if the United Nations withdraws? What is the point of withdrawing if the conflict has not been resolved? What do we gain by creating another serious

confrontation between two groups who have not resolved their differences?

If we are talking about withdrawing our troops, surely t.he obligation is to ensure that we are leading the initiative to try to resolve that conflict and, if need be, to stay there until it is resolved. We stood at NATO for close to 45 years to stop a conflict in Europe or a potential invasion. Surely, our patience on peacekeeping deserves the same end.

I do not deny and I do not in any way reject the minister's statement that we must be more diligent in trying to resolve the conflict but I do not think it is to be done by threatening to withdraw troops. That is not the way to build a peacekeeping venture.

I will conclude by saying that I think this whole situation and the lack of action, the lack of funding and the lack of support demonstrate that if we are not careful that great Canadian invention called peacekeeping which Lester Pearson put forward at the UN in 1956 could be in very serious trouble. It could really be in danger of losing its credibility and effectiveness to protect peace in this changing world.

I would like to recommend to the minister, because we were the authors of the original idea of peacekeeping, we should maybe author the reconstitution, the redefinition of peacekeeping.

We are going to have to get new mandates for the United Nations and for regional organizations so that troops going into dangerous situations know that there is a risk and are going to have to be prepared to accept it.

We are going to have to deal with the crucial question of funding. It may be that Canada should initiate calling a major international conference on peacekeeping so that the major countries involved can come together and discuss and decide on peacekeeping.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has 15 more seconds.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I have the same amount of time as the minister, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has had a minute and a half more than the minister has had right now. Please wind up.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I will just simply say that we should have learned our lessons at this point and without any criticism say that Canada does have a a special responsibility and a particular role to play in helping the world come to grips with the importance of peacekeeping and peacemaking.

We could initiate and take responsibility for bringing concerned countries together and put to them their responsibilities to pay for the important role peacekeeping provides and to redefine the mandate the UN should have redefined. That way it is not simply a matter of sending troops overseas; it is also making sure that the governments of this world, through the United Nations, will make sure those troops have the best equipment and the best support possible.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I too want to express my appreciation to the minister for her statement today which gives the House an opportunity to comment on some of the very serious, very important and very tragic events which are taking place in Bosnia–Hercegovina today.

I want to take this opportunity on behalf of my New Democratic colleagues to respond to two or three of the points raised by the minister and to raise a couple of other issues as well in this context.

First of all, with respect to the situation in Bosnia–Hercegovina, many Canadians have been asking themselves why it is that the community of nations has been unable to respond to the tragedy, to the bloodshed, to the violence, to the death that has taken place there and why it is, in particular, that our government to which we look for leadership has been so slow in responding to this tragedy.

It was almost a month ago that the member for Winnipeg South Centre and I urged the minister to act and to show some leadership on behalf of Canadians.

I asked the minister specifically, in view of the desperate need of the people of Bosnia for food and medicine: "Will Canada support the very urgent request by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for UN troops to protect the humanitarian convoy which will be able to bring in food and medicine to the people of Bosnia?"

That was on May 12. It is now a month later and we are finally, at last, responding to the desperate plea of the United Nations and others for assistance to enable us to get humanitarian aid to Bosnia–Hercegovina. The reality is that too much blood has been shed and too many lives have been lost while the community of nations has failed to respond effectively through the United Nations to this crisis.

• (1540)

I would note as well that the minister refused to take even the minimal steps that we called for at that time in terms of the withdrawal of our ambassador after the European Community had taken that step. It was only after the Prime Minister returned from a visit to George Bush that he announced, not the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but he announced that we were taking this action.

I have to ask: Where is the leadership? What role is Canada playing in ensuring a significant supply of humanitarian aid, particularly food and medical aid, to assist the people who so desperately need that aid? There are over 1.3 million refugees, many of whom have moved into Bosnia from Croatia and are in desperate need. I have to ask our government to do far more in terms of humanitarian aid, particularly food and medical aid, in this time of need.

There are other issues as well. There is the whole question of the very difficult situation in Kosovo and the question of the delay of this government in establishing diplomatic relations with Croatia and Slovenia. The government announced some time ago that we recognized the independence of these countries and Canadians welcomed that. But why is it that this government has failed to establish formal diplomatic relations with Croatia and Slovenia? Why is that? There is no explanation in terms of diplomatic relations.

As well, I believe many Canadians are asking for our government to exercise great caution with respect to the recognition of the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, now Skopje. Canadians are also seeking assurances that there will be full constitutional and political guarantees that there are no territorial claims against Greece and that the name Macedonia, which implies territorial aspirations, is not used. We are looking for those guarantees as well in the context of this discussion.

The minister visited Cyprus. As the member for Winnipeg South Centre and the minister pointed out, I am sure we all want to pay tribute to our peacekeeping troops who have been there for at least 28 years and to our other peacekeeping troops in Croatia and around the world. However, it does not help at all to achieve a peaceful solution to this long conflict to threaten that we will simply unilaterally pull out our troops.

I know the minister is now saying that we are not going to pull out our troops before the end of this year, although she seems to imply we might pull out some. She said: "We are not pulling them all out before the end of this year". Does that mean the minister is going to pull out a number of Canadian troops? There is a real risk that this could simply aggravate the conflict.

Our role surely is to urge negotiations and again to provide leadership with respect to a negotiated and peaceful solution.

As I mentioned, our peacekeeping troops are doing fine work, whether it be in Croatia, Cyprus or elsewhere. But it has been pointed out by Canadian military officials, in fact Sergeant Mario Grenier who has helped to train Canadian peacekeepers in Yugoslavia said: "We are sending unqualified people to do qualified jobs. We do not have enough training when it is time to get jobs like this done". He has urged that Canada provide more training for our peacekeeping troops.

I want to take this opportunity to urge our government, in the context of this debate, to look very seriously at the establishment of a peacekeeping training centre at Canadian Forces Base Cornwallis in Nova Scotia. Canada has an outstanding international record in peacekeeping and this is the kind of role that we could play effectively in Cornwallis. Indeed, we committed ourselves to that kind of role in a recent resolution which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in October 1991.

Finally I would like to say a word about the minister's ringing affirmation of Canada's role in NATO. With the demise of the Warsaw pact, with the effective disappearance of the enemy, NATO strategists, the generals, are obviously searching desperately for a new *raison d'être*.

Surely the time has come for Canadians to show leadership with respect to the definition of security, to call for the dissolution of this archaic and outdated and ultimately irrelevant military alliance, and to recognize the Citizens' Inquiry into Peace and Security which held public hearings across Canada.

We should be redefining the concept of common security. Canadian security policy should be focused on strengthening regional security bodies, strengthening the CSCE, strengthening the United Nations, ensuring that the United Nations is properly funded and that peacekeeping forces are properly funded. In Cambodia right now, the United Nations peacekeeping operation is in danger of foundering because of the lack of proper funding.

At a time when NATO is clinging to a policy of the first use of nuclear weapons, at a time when NATO insists that we in fact not adopt a policy of nuclear weapons-free harbours in Canada, at a time when NATO continues to have low-level flight testing over Innu land, surely now more than ever, it is time for us to recognize that Canada's role should be within the United Nations, a strengthened United Nations and the CSCE and pushing for a comprehensive test ban treaty.

In closing, Canada does have an important leadership role to play in Bosnia-Hercegovina within the United Nations and ultimately in redefining the concept of security on this globe to ensure that when we talk about security we are talking about the right to food, to shelter, to health care, to education, to human rights, to a clean and sustainable environment and to a world at peace.

* * *

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

TABLING OF REPORT OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the report for the special joint committee on conflict of interest as its report has today been tabled in the Senate.

The members of this House taking part in the report are myself, the member for Mississauga South as co-chairman; Edna Anderson, Simcoe Centre; J. W. Bud Bird, Fredericton—York—Sunbury; David Bjornson, Selkirk—Red River; Don Boudria of the Liberal Party and the critic for the Liberal Party on this matter, from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell; Patrick Boyer, who was the former counsel of the report filed on this matter by the hon. Mitchell Sharp and the hon. Mike Starr some years ago, from Etobicoke—Lakeshore; Mike Breaugh, the New Democratic Party member, from Oshawa; Catherine Callbeck, from Malpeque; Michel Champagne, from Champlain, Quebec; Robert Layton, from Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louise; John Nunziata, from York South—Weston; and Marcel Prud'homme, from Saint-Denis, Quebec.

Mr. Prud'homme took a special trip to Australia to go over the conflict of interest rules there and contributed greatly to the report. He is here today, smiling and wanting to make sure that I said these things because these are important considerations in this report.

Also on the joint committee were Jean-Marc Robitaille, from Terrebonne, Quebec; and the inimitable John Rodriguez from Nickel Belt.

Mr. Speaker, I have the report in both official languages and I believe this report will do justice to this House.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate very much the kindness I rise of my colleague to have mentioned my name. Yes, indeed I was in Australia, but I wish to say that it was not at the expense of the House of Commons and I brought back all the documents free of charge.

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

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• (1550)

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-350, an act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, the bill I am seeking leave to introduce today is to amend the Criminal Code in respect of hate literature. The present act provides that hate literature against an identifiable group is prohibited.

An identifiable group consists under the current act of persons or groups of persons who are distinguished by colour, race, religion or ethnic origin.

My proposed bill will add to the list of groups those persons who are distinguished by age, sex, sexual orientation or mental or physical disability.

I hope the bill will commend itself to all hon. members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Mr. Milliken 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.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House to introduce a motion on electronic voting for the House of Commons.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is not unanimous consent.

* * *

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

BILLS C-207 AND C-228

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have two bills on the Order Paper which have been superseded by events and I do not propose to proceed with the bills. They are private members' bills, but in both cases they have been dealt with by legislation in this House. I would seek leave of the House to withdraw the bills.

The first one is Bill C-207, an act to amend the Penitentiary Act (visits to penitentiaries). The matter was recently dealt with in proceedings on the new Corrections Act. Admittedly it was voted down but my bill is no longer appropriate to do the job it was intended to do. I seek leave of the House to withdraw that one.

The second is Bill C-228, an act to amend the Criminal Code (mental disorder). That particular matter was introduced by the government and dealt with in this House. The bill has become law and there is no need for my bill to proceed. Again I would ask for unanimous consent to withdraw that bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to withdraw Bills C-207 and C-228?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Orders discharged and bills withdrawn.

* * *

PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present today. One of them deals with the Court Challenges Program.

These petitioners would like to call upon Parliament to re-establish this very important program which, as we know, gave minority groups and individuals the financial assistance to be able to go to the courts and have their constitutional rights clarified.

These petitioners come from all over Canada and I am pleased to table this petition in their names.

HOUSING

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition dealing with housing problems.

The petitioners would like to draw the attention of the House to the following. Many Canadians are experiencing serious housing problems. The Government of Canada terminated the federal Co-operative Housing Program on February 25, 1992. The federal non-profit co-op housing program was highly successful in creating a healthy mix in communities. The action of this government has eliminated 2,000 co-op units for 1992 alone, along with 4,000 construction and manufacturing jobs in the same period.

Therefore the undersigned humbly pray and call upon Parliament to urge the government to reinstate the federal Co-operative Housing Program immediately and to commit the $6.1 million to the program which had been planned for 1992 and permit approximately 2,000 co-op housing units to be sponsored this year.

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present, both of which are involved with current and ongoing issues.

One deals not only with the specific murder of Nina de Villiers on August 9, 1991, but also with a move to reorient the justice system.

I know that her mother, Mrs. de Villiers, is going to be in Ottawa tomorrow meeting with the justice minister and the critics for the opposition. She has certainly been a crucial person in literally encouraging thousands of Canadians to sign the petition.

The murder of Nina de Villiers on August 19, 1991, has exposed serious deficiencies in the criminal justice system. There are many vulnerable persons who have little protection under the current system. Women, children and disabled persons are at particular risk.

Crimes of violence against a person are intolerable and constitute the most abhorrent crimes society faces.

Current criminal law does not require bail hearings in crimes of violence to be presided over by judges.

Current criminal law may require only a simple signature on a document with no money posted as surety for the release of accused perpetrators of crimes of violence.

Current criminal law does not hold agents of the Crown directly accountable to the public for their actions or omissions in permitting known offenders and accused with violent backgrounds to be free, or in failing to seek orders prohibiting possession of weapons.

Sentencing in crimes of violence does not appropriately reflect society's abhorrence of violence in order to act as a true deterrent and to protect the public by removal of offenders from society. The risk to society proposed by early releases is of secondary consideration. Statutes governing the criminal justice system in Canada must be revised.

Therefore, your petitioners request that Parliament recognize that crimes of violence against persons are serious and abhorrent to society and amend the Criminal Code of Canada, the Bail Reform Act, 1972, and the Parole Act accordingly. I know this petition has the support of literally thousands of Canadians.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my second petition in part has been transcended by events but in part is certainly very relevant to the discussion that we just underwent with respect to the desperate situation now being faced by people in Bosnia–Hercegovina.

The second petition deals with the recognition of the right to self–determination by republics like the republic of Croatia, the republic of Slovenia and indeed the republic of Bosnia–Hercegovina. It calls upon the government to condemn aggression by the Yugoslavian army and demand its withdrawal of all troops from Croatia immediately, and initiate the establishment of an international commission.

I think this petition certainly reflects the view of many people around the world that the international community must bond together to fight the slaughter that is going on now in Bosnia–Hercegovina, in Croatia and in other parts of the former republic of Yugoslavia. Certainly, the thousands of people who have signed this petition really hope that the Canadian government will act.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

One is signed by approximately 400 people in the riding of Durham who call on the government to establish legislation which would result in a binding referendum of the people on constitutional amendments.

JUSTICE

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, the second is also from the riding of Durham, and is similar to the petition just read by the member for Hamilton East.

The petitioners call on Parliament to change the Criminal Code, the Bail Reform Act and the Parole Act as they relate to crimes of violence.

NARCOTICS CONTROL ACT

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting the House with a petition collected by Mrs. Rita Hogg.

The petition deals with numerous signatures from the metropolitan city of Toronto petitioning and requesting the government to amend the Narcotics Control Act so that the profits from the seizures of drugs, which are proliferating unfortunately in the streets and communities of metro Toronto and elsewhere, will be shared with local municipalities, police forces and community organizations, which are the principals in the fight against

drugs, so that the proceeds, rather than going completely and exclusively into federal coffers, will be shared with those entities so that in fact we may win the war. It was a pleasure as well to be able to raise it during Question Period earlier today. It is hoped by this party and by many Canadians that the many repeated promises of the Solicitor General to amend the Narcotics Control Act will see the light of day in the very near future.

• (1600)

INCOME TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my first petition is from my constituency and other sectors of Manitoba asking that the taxation system be made much more clear.

The petitioners point out that the tax act is complex, unfair, and somewhat unintentionally discriminatory. They point out, for example, the child care credit that some people get while others who choose to stay home to rear their children do not.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my next petition deals with a request from petitioners, many of them from my constituency, who want the CRTC to monitor very closely the use of language on radio and television.

Many feel that there is foul and inappropriate language being used and it counteracts the efforts of the family to set a good example.

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my final petition represents petitioners from Labrador. They point out that in today's society we need the best educational systems possible, particularly to meet challenges of globalization, increased competitiveness and enhanced productivity.

They indicate that there have been serious cutbacks that will affect the education of young people in Canada and asks that all policies that could prevent young people from attending college and university and other training programs be reviewed immediately.

NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the residents of Bella Coola and Hagensborg, B.C. asking by way of petition that the House restore a full northern tax allowance to the residents of northern and remote communities.

The petitioners point out that small, remote single-industry communities pay very high prices. They do not have access to basic medical services, health care, government services, and the cost of transportation is extremely high. They ask that the full northern tax benefit be restored to those communities.

SRI LANKA

Hon. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and as the member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre, I wish to submit this petition on behalf of my constituents this petition.

It outlines the petitioners' concerns relating to issues in Sri Lanka. They request that the parties in Sri Lanka negotiate and settle differences in order that all the people in that country may live in peace and freedom.

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House a petition that was gathered and prepared by my constituent, Mrs. Eileen MacDonald. All of the signatures on the petition are exclusively from the Don Mills area of my own constituency, and most of them from 18 The Donway East.

This particular petition relates to a matter that was before the House a short time ago, that being the referendum bill. It calls upon Parliament to enact a referendum bill that is binding upon Parliament in order to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government, 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 government and the House has dealt with part of this. I trust that we will be receiving a positive response from the government and the House on the other part of it.

HOUSING

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour and privilege of presenting a petition on behalf of many residents of my riding. The petition cites the cancellation of the federal Co-operative Housing Program which was highly successful in creating healthy mixed income communities.

Its cancellation has eliminated 2,000 new co-op housing units for 1992 alone, along with 4,000 construction and manufacturing jobs for the same period. Moreover, approximately 164,000 renter households want to move into co-op housing.

Therefore the petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to urge the government to immediately reinstate the federal Co-operative Housing Program and commit the $6.1 million to the program which had been planned for 1992 and permit approximately 2,000 co-operative housing units to be sponsored this year.

[*Translation*]

RECOGNITION OF STATUS OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by residents of Montreal, Quebec City and Rouyn-Noranda.

The petitioners declare: Whereas many Canadians object in conscience to any warlike or military activity, we in no way want to participate in it, given that many Canadians refuse to be obliged to kill or be killed in a conflict which they condemn or deplore;

Whereas some religious groups are already granted the right to conscientious objector status and given, article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the resolution accepted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission on March 8, 1989 on this subject. Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes that all Canadians have the right to freedom of opinion, the petitioners ask the Canadian government to pass legislation recognizing the status of conscientious objector for any Canadian who desires it.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present another petition that was collected by the Glad Day Book Store in Toronto. It notes that in February 1985 the House of Commons mandated the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to prepare a report on equality rights in Canada.

In October that committee did prepare that report and unanimously recommended that the Canadian Human Rights Act be amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in all areas of federal jurisdiction.

The petitioners note that in March 1986 the government promised to accept this report and enact the recommendations. Yet today, some six years later, the recommendations have still not been enacted. They note that other jurisdictions including Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Yukon have such protection and that the Canadian Human Rights Commission has called for this protection.

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.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition which has been signed by residents of Vancouver, Burnaby, Langley and a number of other communities in British Columbia.

The petitioners note 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 cumulative effect of these irregularities provides ample ground for the Government of Canada to seek a remedy on their behalf. The only relief available from such 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.

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to present the following petition to the House of Commons.

It is a petition that I would have been proud to affix my name to. It is a petition gathered by the Kinsmen and Kinnette Clubs in the community of Spiritwood, Saskatchewan.

The Kinsmen and Kinnette Clubs and community members who have signed this petition indicate how appropriate it is to encourage all Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada. They indicate that the Kinsmen and Kinnette 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 are supporting 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.

I salute the Kinsmen and Kinnette Clubs of Canada for this initiative.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Northwest requests unanimous consent to table a committee report. Does he have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

FINANCE

15TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Finance.

In accordance with its general mandate under Standing Order 108(2), your committee has considered the question of deductions in respect of employees' expenses.

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

• (1610)

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. 299, 306 and 321.

[*Text*]

Question No. 299—**Mr. Parker:**

For the period 1992 to 1996, in relation to the recovery of assets related to enterprise crime as a result of the creation of the joint police force anti-drug profiteering units (*a*) what is the estimated increase in recovery of assets (*b*) what are the total amounts expected to be recovered for each year (*c*) how much money was not seized as a result of the failure to have such units in place when the proceeds of crime were proclaimed?

Hon. Douglas Grinslade Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): The joint force Anti Drug Profiteering (ADP) units are intended to provide additional resources and promote greater degrees of co-operation among RCMP, municipal and provincial police in proceeds of drug crime investigations. These units will augment the existing ADP program established by the RCMP in 1981, which has a current establishment of 85 investigators.

In addition to the identification of assets derived from drug trafficking, a primary objective of this enforcement program is to develop evidence to support prosecutions for drug proceeds and money laundering offenses.

(*a*) It is very difficult to provide a valid estimate of the increase in seizures of drug assets which would be attributable to the joint force ADP units. These units are expected to generate increased seizures and related prosecutions. Given that this function involves the enforcement of serious criminal offenses, the establishment of quotas of asset seizures will not be entertained.

(*b*) A projection of the total amounts of seizures of drug assets in Canada during the period 1992 to 1996 presents similar difficulties. Since the inception of the proceeds of crime legislation on January 1, 1989, the RCMP Anti-Drug Profiteering Program, until recently staffed with 58 investigators, seized approximately $60 million in assets, with a further $46 million in assets referred to other Canadian or foreign agencies for appropriate action. Seizures are expected to exceed this amount during 1992 to 1996; the amount of the increase cannot be predicted.

(*c*) It is not possible to provide an estimate of the amounts of assets that could have been seized in the past by a group of enforcement personnel that did not then exist. The establishment of these new units represents an evolutionary development in order to promote more effective use of relatively new legislation.

The joint force Anti-Drug Profiteering initiative will have a monitoring and evaluation component which will keep track of the actual amounts seized as a result of investigations by the units.

Question No. 306—**Mrs. Gaffney:**

What is the total amount of money spent by the Department of National Health and Welfare on the production and distribution of the video entitled *"What's Wrong With This Picture?"*

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): This video was funded in part by the AIDS Community Action Program (ACAP) of the Department of National Health and Welfare. A grant of $69,210 was provided under ACAP for the period of March 19, 1990 to April 30, 1991 toward production costs. Additional funding was provided by the City of Toronto Board of Health, the Canada Council, the Laidlaw Foundation, Theatre Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Ontario Arts Council.

The promotion of the video is the responsibility of the Second Look Community Arts, sponsor of the project.

The purpose of this community initiative was to enable young people to make informed, positive choices about high risk behaviour, thus reducing the risk of HIV infection. The video's primary target audience is street youth. These young people are often school drop-outs who have limited formal education.

Question No. 321—**Mr. Gardiner:**

With respect to the government's newspaper ads relating to the Human Development Report of the United Nations, (*a*) what was the total cost (*b*) what were the costs of production and placement (*c*) what persons or companies received contracts for these ads and what were the dates and amounts of these contracts?

Hon. Robert R. de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Insofar as the Department of the Secretary of State is concerned, the answer is as follows:

(*a*) The total cost of the newspaper ads relating to the Human Development Report of the United Nations was $1.044 million.

(*b*) The cost of production was $67,000; the cost of media purchase (placement) was $977,000.

(*c*) The production was done by PNMD/Publitel at a cost of $67,000.

The placement was done by Media Canada, the media placement agency of record for Government of Canada, at a cost of $977,000.

The dates of the contracts were:

PNMD/Publitel—April 28, 1992

Media Canada—April 23, 1992

* * *

[*English*]

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. 249 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 249 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 249—**Mr. Boudria:**

Since September 4, 1984 has the government ever utilized the services of Interpost Systems and, if so, why and which department has done so, on how many occasions, and what was the expenditure of each government department each time the service was used?

Return tabled.

[*English*]

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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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 ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, your smile indicates that you can guess why I am on my feet today.

I filed a request for the production of documents in respect of the establishment of a military supply depot in Montreal, a decision made by the Minister of National Defence in either late March or early April of this year contrary to the earlier study that was done for the department, at some considerable cost I may say, which recommended another site that just happened to be in my own riding.

There has been a subsequent study, I assume, done to justify this decision. My motion for the production of papers merely requests that that be produced.

I am certain that under the Access to Information Act it is a producible document. This is a request for the document in this House. I would hope that if the parliamentary secretary can locate the Minister of National Defence—I know that he is not often in Ottawa—perhaps the document could be turned up and produced before we adjourn for the summer.

The second motion I have on the Order Paper has been there since May 6. I raised it with the parliamentary secretary a couple of weeks ago and he said he would look into it. It deals with the expense accounts of persons who travelled with the Prime Minister on a trip to Calgary in April 1991.

This is not new information. It has been requested under the Access to Information Act. Heavily censored versions were released. We are asking for the facts. Surely this House is entitled to them.

If the parliamentary secretary has any reluctance in this regard, perhaps we could instead of transferring it for debate, where he knows it will get buried and never get called, just bring it to a vote immediately and have the question decided in the House. I suspect a lot of his own members would like to see these expense accounts too.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I seem to recall that the Minister of National Defence answered quite a number of questions yesterday in Question Period. I would be very happy to relay the hon. member's query to that minister.

With reference to the second question, my hon. friend is quite correct that it was posed on May 6. We are looking into that. I believe that our inquiries are meeting with some success and I will be able to report, I hope without undue delay, to the hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Halliday: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise under motions if I might. Am I too late for that?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry. We did pass by it. Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PETITIONS

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek leave of the House to adopt the following motion. I think Your Honour will find consent for it. I move:

> That, notwithstanding Standing Orders 132 and 140, the petition for a private bill from the Royal Society of Canada, presented on Tuesday, March 31, 1992, and reported upon by the Clerk of Petitions on Wednesday, April 1, 1992, be deemed to have been filed within the required time limit and received by this House.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CIVILIAN WAR PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs) moved that 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, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would seek and I believe you would find that there is unanimous consent in relation to 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, to proceed with all stages of that bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, we are happy to give our agreement to this. I just note the great co-operation shown by the opposition on this occasion. It is a shame that the government did not do that yesterday when it used closure.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to use the occasion to score a point off the government. I want to use this occasion to join all sides of the House in saying that we are very pleased to agree to the procedure. It has been agreed to push this bill through today. We will have a full discussion of the various points. I am not overwhelmed by the fact that we are in this position, and I will describe the details of my views on that when we get to it. But we all agree that this is an important bill and we are happy to proceed with it today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Agreed and so ordered.

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 30 minutes to 10.30 p.m.

Mr. Merrithew: Mr. Speaker, this is a day when Canada's merchant mariners will be very happy indeed. Those sceptics who believed this time would never come can now abandon ship.

The legislation we are considering today will put merchant navy veterans on a par with veterans who served in uniform during World War I, World War II and in Korea. Members will note that the bill also deals with the allied resistance members and their access to the War Veterans Allowance program. I will say just a few words on this aspect of the legislation before returning to the good news for our merchant navy veterans.

What we want to do here is to return the War Veterans Allowance program to its original purpose, that being to provide income support to qualified Canadian veterans and to allied veterans having formal military service. It was never the intent of Parliament to include those having resistance service, and indeed no other country in the world provides military benefits to allied resistance members.

[*Translation*]

Our forecasts show that if we did not make these changes, the War Veterans Allowance Program would soon benefit mainly persons who had fought in the resistance.

Obviously that is not acceptable and you will realize that the great majority of veterans agree with these changes.

[*English*]

As I said earlier, this is a day for our merchant mariners and a day to recall their magnificent contribution to the war effort. The commemoration of the battle of the Atlantic in May reminds us once again of the debt the free world owes to those who faced the perils of the sea.

One statistic from the battle of the Atlantic says so much about the courage of those who manned our merchant fleet. During July 1942 the allies lost one ship of 10,000 tonnes or more every 10 hours, day and night, for the 31 days during the month of July 1942.

The mental fortitude of those who climbed aboard cargo ships in the face of those statistics was remarkable. Their courage was not a production of an adrenalin rush. They had plenty of time to consider the risks, like the fine soldiers who went over the top in the First World War and the crews of bomber command in the Second World War, our merchant mariners put duty before self.

• (1620)

The stoker who faced almost certain death if his vessel was struck by a torpedo volunteered to risk his life. Time and again merchant mariners signed on for danger. Canada's merchant mariners earned our gratitude. That is why I would not like it thought that the Canadian people, through their governments, were ungrateful once victory was ours.

Our merchant mariners and their families have been beneficiaries of many of the finest programs in the world. Most of the veterans' programs and benefits have been available to merchant mariners for a number of years, but not all. Neither have they had the ease of access to some benefits enjoyed by those who served in the Armed Forces.

Such unequal treatment rankled them. Merchant mariners felt it diminished the importance of their role in the war. They want to be regarded and treated as veterans. Today, we are doing just that.

Bill C–84 is more than just another piece of legislation. It is an acknowledgement of the wartime contribution of some very brave veterans. This legislation introduces the designation of merchant navy veteran. It will give them full veteran status. The omissions and the obstacles are being removed.

Let me make it perfectly clear, Bill C–84 will entitle merchant navy veterans to the benefits available to their wartime comrades in the army, navy and air force, at a cost of about $100 million over the next five years.

Who becomes eligible for the designation of merchant navy veteran? The answer is basically anyone who served in a Canadian registered ship engaged in home or foreign trade on the high seas during either of the two world wars or Korea. Any Canadian with first world war or second world war high seas service in an allied ship is included. Wartime service would normally have entailed the signing of articles of agreement.

Allow me to tell hon. members about the benefits this bill will give to our merchant mariners, because that is the important thing. That is the reason we are asking for expeditious passing of this piece of legislation this afternoon.

I do not have to tell the House just how popular and effective our veterans' independence program is. There is no program like it in Canada, or as far as I know in the world. It is an economical and versatile way of helping veterans stay in their own homes with their families and out of institutions.

Naturally, many merchant mariners wanted to receive the veterans' independence program. However, as things stand now only merchant mariners who receive VIP because of their disability pensions are eligible. Regulatory amendments made in concert with this legislation will allow up to some 1,800 additional merchant mariners to join the veterans' independence program.

For the first time merchant navy veterans with a non–pensionable condition will be able to apply on an income tested basis, as are our uniformed veterans.

This brings them in step with the veterans of the Armed Forces. The average age of our veteran population is now over 71 years, and it is even higher for merchant mariners. Not surprisingly then, merchant mariners have long campaigned to have the same access as other veterans to care in a departmental medical facility or a contract bed in one of many institutions across the country.

Regulations being brought into force with Bill C–84 will allow merchant navy veterans the institutional access they have long sought. Other long–standing grievances will be removed with the passage of this bill this afternoon.

Take the six–month rule. In order to qualify for income support and some health care benefits merchant mariners have to show six months of wartime service at sea plus one voyage through dangerous waters. Merchant mariners have argued that the six–month qualifying period was unfair, and it will be removed for merchant navy veterans.

Another significant breakthrough contained in this legislation deals with disability pensions. Merchant mariners can now only qualify for disability pensions if they were injured as a direct result of enemy action. A sailor who suffered an injury while his vessel was at sea was out of luck as far as the present legislation is concerned. Any injury suffered away from enemy action was a matter for the merchant mariner and the shipping company he worked for.

Bill C–84 takes a different view of this. It recognizes that merchant mariners were covered for disability pension purposes from the moment they climbed aboard their vessel in port for a high seas voyage.

The removal of the enemy action provision will result in another estimated 230 merchant navy veterans, or their dependents, qualifying for disability pensions for the very first time. I am sure the House will agree that these are welcome changes. They certainly mirror the recommendations made by the House Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs.

I want to thank that committee under the chairmanship of the hon. member for Crowfoot, Arnold Malone, who is ill today, for the attention it has given to the concerns of merchant mariners. I might also add thanks here to all of the members who served on that committee. Some of them are present in the House today.

The committee made other recommendations that do not need legislation. I want to discuss these, however, because I want to put on the record the position of the government on these other recommendations made by the standing committee.

Merchant mariners want the names of their compatriots who were killed in wartime to be honoured in a special book of remembrance in the Peace Tower.

[*Translation*]

The government agrees that there should be a Book of Remembrance dedicated to the merchant marine and personally I would like it to be placed in the Peace Tower as soon as possible. We are now working to make this wish a reality.

[*English*]

Another recommendation made by the House committee is for the government to encourage the erection of a monument dedicated to those killed in the wartime merchant navy.

I certainly hope such a memorial will be built. The government cannot help financially, with the exception of the one monument we do own. That is the National War Memorial here in Ottawa. It has a long–standing policy not to get involved with war memorials.

The National War Memorial honours everyone who served in Canada in the World Wars I and II and Korea. Obviously, merchant mariners and merchant navy veterans are very much included with those we honour on the National War Memorial.

I might add here that this is the exact position that the major groups of veterans, like the Royal Canadian Legion and others, asked us to do.

There are many war memorials across the country. They were erected by provinces, municipalities, associations of veterans and through the subscriptions of grateful citizens. Even today war memorials are being built. I get letters from schools and other organizations proudly telling me about the memorials they recently erected with funds raised through fund raising activities and by public subscription.

Given the high esteem in which merchant mariners are held, I would think that the public would be prepared to support any campaign for a merchant navy memorial and I would certainly encourage such a campaign.

The government has given careful attention to the work of the House committee, just as we have to the recommendations of the Senate subcommittee on veterans affairs, the advice of Canada's associations of veterans and, indeed, the coalition of merchant navy organizations that worked so hard on this piece of legislation.

At my request, they got together to study the whole question. Together we gave the merchant mariner issue the most thorough policy review since the end of World War II. I am grateful for the input of all those who worked hard and intelligently to recommend solutions to the government. For the most part, the government has accepted their recommendations.

Let me say in conclusion, that it has taken 47 years for merchant mariners to get their total due. I do not intend to lay blame for that delay nor do I intend to take the blame for it. I am proud that Bill C–84 has been presented during my watch. I ask members of all parties to give this legislation speedy passage. Canadian merchant mariners have waited long enough for this day and as I said to them when we announced this in March in Halifax: "Welcome aboard".

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to rise today to take part in the debate on this very famous Bill C-84.

This bill was designed to create some very positive, but also some very dramatic changes in Canada's veterans legislation.

• (1630)

It has been my privilege to serve for some time as the Veterans Affairs critic for the Loyal Opposition. In that time I have managed to make myself very familiar with veterans legislation and with the workings of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In addressing the merchant mariners it is important to give an overview of this group of people. It all started on November 16, 1939. Two weeks after Britain declared war on Germany the first merchant marine convoy steamed out of Halifax harbour. This convoy began tracing the wartime route to England and the Soviet Union by which merchant seaman shipped vital aid to overseas allied troops and where many lost their lives.

Before the beginning of World War II, the German navy had planned a campaign to strike allied merchant ships coming from North America. In a German naval war staff memorandum dated 1939, the German high command defined the target of its principal strategy as the merchant ship. It was not only the enemy's vessels but every merchantman which sails the sea in order to supply the enemy's war interests.

The memo goes on to say that the final aim of such attacks is to cut off all imports into and exports from Britain. In accordance with this war staff memo, the destruction of the poorly armed and armoured merchant ships became the principal aim of Nazi surface warships, aircraft and submarines. German U-boats roamed the Atlantic in packs of 10 to 12 submarines to damage and to sink supply boats. German aircraft would bomb delivery ships as they neared the European coast. German warships, disguised as cargo vessels, would use their concealed deck cannons to tear into allied merchant fleets at sea. Alone or in convoys, merchant ships were vulnerable to attack on any part of their sailing route.

As these orders of the German high command indicate, merchant seamen were the focal point in this battle of the Atlantic that the minister just spoke about.

While merchant ships were vigorously pursued by enemy attack craft, allied warships were not able to track or combat the U-boats. Until 1942 the sight of a submarine tower would set a convoy into flight. The slower supply vessels of the convoy were left behind to be sunk by torpedoes. The merchant ships and the sailors were not themselves prepared for serious combat. Though anti-aircraft gunnery, gas and fire-fighting were required courses, mariners during wartime rarely could defend themselves against the torpedoes, bombs and shells of the heavily-armed enemy craft. Such was the lot of the merchant mariners during the war.

The minister has finally brought forth this long-overdue legislation some 47 years after the end of World War II. There are many reasons why this was not done earlier. It would be rather counterproductive at this point to go into all the reasons and to rehash the old arguments. What we do know is that all parties are in agreement that this is something which is long overdue and we have made this fact known to the minister by way of the all-party standing committee report which he had in his hands last fall.

I am pleased to see this legislation and I thank the minister for his efforts, but I wonder why this could not have been done six months or a year ago. When you consider the age of the potential recipients of the benefits of this legislation, any delay means that more and more will never get to reap the benefits or the recognition that they so deserve.

On this point I cannot emphasize enough the important role and contribution of standing committees in bringing such priority issues to bear in the legislative process. In contrast with the partisan, all-consuming ritual of adversarial combat so often witnessed in the front benches of this House, standing committees foster a rare collegiality among members conducive to bringing practical solutions to practical problems. Notably, when there are no party positions for matters under study, our standing committees have demonstrated a remarkably impressive record of consensus making.

The system has also shown that where there is both the political will and the personal flexibility for give and

take, constructive results responsive to the needs of Canadians can be achieved.

Structured to mirror the organization of Cabinet and empowered to initiate its own studies, the system of standing committees provides Canadians with an important mechanism to shadow the activities, the policies and the programs of each department and agency of government. It ensures that the fundamental principles of accountability and responsibility which are vital to democratic society are safeguarded. Its very ability to initiate studies, address specific questions and call witnesses also contributes greater confidence, specialized knowledge and expertise within the political system.

By enabling members to expose themselves to a wide spectrum of public opinion which would be otherwise a practical impossibility, as parliamentarians we are made more effective both in this House and in our constituencies.

Indeed the final measure of the standing committees' contribution to democratic institutions is the value of committee work in improving the relevance and the efficiency of Parliament. We have in this legislation before us today an important example of the result of this process.

Before continuing on, I would like to make one comment to recognize the invaluable professional expertise and support of the Library of Parliament research staff and those who work in the Department of Veterans Affairs for their expediency in bringing about this significant legislative action. I also want to thank the veteran's organizations for the many hours and weeks of work they have put into it.

Having said so much about institutions involved in the process, I should remind hon. members there were some benefits in place for merchant mariners over the past number of years under the terms of the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act.

To briefly summarize some of the provisions of those acts, a merchant mariner was entitled to receive a disability pension if they were injured as a result of direct enemy action. Merchant mariners were also eligible for a civilian war allowance, the equivalent of the war veterans allowance, if they had served at sea for at least six months and made one trip through dangerous waters.

The new legislation extends what is known as the insurance principle to disability pensions, meaning that as long as a merchant mariner was signed on for a voyage he was, in fact, covered if he sustained any disease or injury, not just one as the result of enemy action.

The terms service at sea and dangerous waters have been removed from the legislation and we now have a high seas voyage as enabling criteria. For the most part, I see this as a positive step because over the years many people were denied benefits because they were a few days short of service. This lead to the situation where a member of the military could go beyond the territorial waters for only a day and qualify for the war veterans allowance, while a merchant mariner could have served in the same area for 179 days and still did not meet the requirements of the act.

I hope the minister will assure us the changes introduced will not have a negative impact on the applicants who served on the Newfoundland coastal trade. Many of these people provided a very necessary and important service by being the transportation lifeline to the outport communities in Newfoundland and I would find it most unsettling to see this legislation harm them in any way. What I seek from the minister is the assurance that those people will continue to enjoy the benefits and privileges they have now.

If I may digress for a moment, I think the recognition we are extending to the merchant mariners by designating them as veterans is a very important element of the proposed legislation. I know these merchant seamen who are still with us today, some of whom are in the gallery, will be thrilled with the new designation of merchant mariner veteran and will bear this recognition with the pride they demonstrated in service to their country. Grateful for their commitment in service we, on behalf of the people of Canada, hold them in highest regard and today formally say thank you.

I have long maintained we do not honour our heroes enough in this country. These men and women we are designating as merchant mariner veterans today were heroes whose courage and conviction made a difference in all our lives and today I salute them.

I also noted when the minister announced this legislation and when he appeared before the committee said he agreed in principle—again today he said this—with a book of remembrance. I would urge him to carry on with all possible speed in seeing that such a book is produced. So many people come to Ottawa and share in that very moving part of our history in the Peace Tower. Surely the minister will make a firm commitment to include the merchant navy veterans in this hall of honour.

• (1640)

The second part of this legislation is of a different nature. It terminates benefits for a group of people who were awarded those benefits by a quasi-judicial board of the department in accordance with the 1985 interpretation of the existing legislation handed down by the Federal Court of Canada.

The bill before us specifies that resistance fighters will no longer be able to apply for benefits under the War Veterans Allowance Act as allied veterans. Those who are currently in receipt will be able to continue to receive the benefits, providing they reside in Canada after March of next year.

I understand this change in legislation came about because there was a perception by the Department of Veterans Affairs that the actual application of the provision was inconsistent with the original intention of Parliament. Moreover, since the war veterans allowance is an income tested program, it is very difficult to monitor the income of recipients who do not reside in the country. I can see justification for some of these matters but I do hope that we are not throwing out the baby with the bath water.

The minister has said on several occasions that this is part of a plan to return the war veterans allowance to its original purpose. This may be so, but I remind him that those words caused some concern when he announced them last March. The minister should also remember, and I know that he does, that the boards and the commissions within his portfolio can only interpret the words which are written in the act. They cannot decide what was or is the intent of Parliament at any given time. That is why I urge the minister to be careful in statements and very careful when he presumes to know what the people intended many years ago.

The fact remains that we have a bill before us which will in the future prevent resistance fighters from receiving benefits under the War Veterans Allowance Act. That is spelled out very clearly in the legislation and as members of Parliament we have to bear the responsibility for passing this bill.

While I have this opportunity, I would like to say a few words about the Department of Veterans Affairs in general. As members know, the head office of the department is located in the riding of Hillsborough and is a major employer in that area of my province. The people of Prince Edward Island take a very keen interest in the affairs of this department and are perhaps better acquainted with the Department of Veterans Affairs and what it does and its programs than any other area of Canada.

I must say that I am very proud of the work done by the public servants at DVA. They treat this very important clientele with courtesy, generosity and speed. The employees will go the extra mile to help the veterans and this is the way, I am sure, we all want it to be.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the relocation of the department to Charlottetown was announced during the time that the Hon. Dan MacDonald, a great veteran and a great Canadian, was the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

There were sceptics at that time who said that the head office of a national department could not function outside of Ottawa and it especially could not function in Charlottetown. A later minister who served in 1984 made several comments about the appropriateness of the move. I assure all members of this House that the move of the department to Prince Edward Island was a wonderful thing, both for the economy of my province and for the veterans and the people who work there.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is changing as its clientele ages. Hopefully young Canadians will never again have to answer that call to battle and the role of this department will be phased out eventually. This will require orderly change. It will require innovation on the part of the employees and on the part of the minister and his staff. It is most important that the service to veterans does not suffer over the next few years.

I understand there is currently a pension process review going on in the department which is an attempt to streamline the operations and to make it operate more efficiently. My advice to the minister is to carry on with the reviews but always remember that a promise has been made to the men and women who served Canada. It was first made by Sir Robert Borden and it has been made by countless prime ministers and ministers and other legislators since. That promise was to care for the men and women who served Canada. While one of them survives it is our duty to serve them as well as they served us.

At times like these when we are discussing new legislation, part of which will extend further benefits, it is very easy for us to become very smug and feel that everything has been done now for the veterans of Canada. There are still many veterans across the country, people who have served Canada in wartime, who are having a very hard time. They still require our care and our compassion.

Let us make this a part of our vow to them, that we as legislators will not forget them. Let us make sure that the Department of Veterans Affairs is maintained while there are still those who require its services.

In these times of downsizing and cost cutting, it is very much in vogue to point at one particular government department or the other and say that it could be done away with. I know that all hon. members will join me in expressing to the minister our support for a strong, vibrant Department of Veterans Affairs.

We are moving today one step closer to fulfilling our national obligation of looking after our veterans. It is no less incumbent upon us today as we recognize Canada's merchant navy veterans to continue to work relentlessly to resolve the remaining issues touching upon the lives of those who served our country.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying to the minister that he was right in his remarks that this is not his fault, it is the fault of all of us and all Canadians for 45 or more years. But at long last merchant mariners will be getting what they should have had all that time.

I am assuming that in the bill and in the regulations which the minister will bring down subsequently, there will be no exclusions. The former member for Winnipeg North Centre who now graces the Clerk's table as an honorary officer of the House first raised this issue in 1946 and there were other members from all parties who raised it from time to time.

I want to also say at this time, in light of some remarks from my good friend from Hillsborough, if there is any one committee in the whole Parliament of Canada, if there is any one item of legislation which is totally non-partisan, it is veterans affairs. I cannot recall in my 24 years in this place ever any hon. member making a partisan political issue of veterans affairs. We kicked each other around as to whether or not we were doing enough or not, but it was never partisan, it was never made a political issue.

That is also the case in this current committee and every committee before this. I want to warn the minister there is another matter that I and others will be raising—and I am sure he has already heard about it—but some time over the next several months the whole issue of benefits received by aboriginal people within DVA is equally long overdue for a review and redress. I think in particular of the Veterans Land Act.

I talked to a native person last Remembrance Day who had medals all the way across his chest. He went through everything in Italy and the rest of Europe and when he tried to buy some land under the VLA, because the land was in the reserve he could not get it. When he wanted to buy some next to the reserve, and add it to the reserve, he still could not get it. He ended up farming anyway. He found other ways of going about it.

• (1650)

This is one matter and I know this minister is the only one in all these years to have brought this to a head and to fruition. I am confident he will want to help in that matter as well.

The only complaint I have about the general thrust and principle of the bill is one that I have raised before, both with the minister in committee, and in this House. He, the department and I am afraid some veterans organizations have a mental block about merchant mariners being covered under the veterans legislation.

Why? One of the reasons given is that they were not in uniform. Hell's bells, we are paying benefits to resistance fighters who did not fight in uniform. In fact some of them fought with pieces and parts of German uniforms. After they shot them they had to have something to wear. You know this does not stand up. It does not hold water.

If that is logical that they were not in uniform, then what about fire-fighters and nurses under the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act? A lot of them went overseas and did a fantastic job and all were in uniform. They were in fire-fighter uniforms and nurse uniforms.

The merchant mariners, however, were in all their grubbies, whether they were working in the galley or down in the stokehold, or wherever. Most of these were coal fired ships. Some of them were oil fired but most of them were coal fired. It was not the class of job where you would be in a full-dress uniform, but what the hell has that got to do with the price of wheat in China? It is totally irrelevant.

I want to say to the minister now that I never understood why we have not amalgamated the legislation for veterans under the DVA and the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act under one administration. They are all treated as veterans, period.

As my hon. friend, Mr. Darling, said in the standing committee: "Damn it, they are veterans. There are no ifs, ands, or buts".

I want to thank him and my other government colleagues who are on the standing committee who were towers of strength in giving a unanimous report to the minister and to the House.

It could be under one administration. I suspect the department could even save some money. Why the heck there are two administrations—one handling civilian war allowances and one handling veterans war allowances—when they are all veterans anyway, is totally beyond me.

I know the minister inherited this, but this is another first move he could make. I hope he will take it up with his deputies and a few others around his kingdom.

The minister paid tribute to the merchant mariners. Bless him for that. One of the problems they were having was that they were not accepted into the armed forces for physical reasons, as a rule. They might also have been underage or overage. You would be surprised as to how many teenagers as young as 13 ended up as mess boys on a merchant ship during the battle of the Atlantic or on convoys to Murmansk. There were also men as old as 45, 50 and 55 years old who were working as merchant seamen only because they could not qualify when they tried to volunteer to serve in the armed forces.

I want to thank my colleague at the outset for carrying the ball for me and my caucus on this issue and because of other matters which I will not mention here. I hope the minister, when we get to committee stage, will put something in the bill about VIP benefits for merchant mariners. We have been told that it will be in the regulations. However, I have seen too many times and on too many pieces of legislation that when it comes to drafting regulations the Department of Finance and Treasury Board hung over the minister's shoulder and the regulations got narrowed down and shortened up.

The minister can have only one sentence. Will he move an amendment or will he accept one from us? This would say that merchant mariners are entitled to all the benefits available to those who are covered by the Department of Veterans Affairs Act.

I must say something about retroactivity. The government could have put in a little bit of retroactivity even on one item that merchant mariners did not get, but guys like me did get. There was the $100 clothing allowance. By the way, in 1946, for $100 I bought a new hat, a two-piece suit, new shoes, socks and underwear. The whole outfit cost $100. They were not very stylish. I forget whether it was at Eaton's or The Bay in Calgary the day after I got discharged because they gave me $100 cash.

Why not give these guys a $500 clothing allowance? It would give a lot of them a half-decent outfit to be buried in because most of them are not going to be around long. This is one of the reasons why we have agreed to this bill going through quickly. If we wait any longer some of them will not be here to get the benefits.

I want to say that if there is any one thing—and it may well be the only thing—that no taxpayer or citizen of Canada will ever object to, it is what we do for our veterans. It should not matter what the Minister of Finance and the President of Treasury Board say about any increases we bring about. The minister must fight harder and members on all sides of the House will support him for any extra money or any amount of money he needs to fulfil what we owe to all our veterans. This includes merchant mariners. It will damn well be there. There is no taxpayer anywhere in this country who is going to object to that. They may object to a lot of other things that taxes go for, but that is not one of them. It never has been and never will be.

• (1700)

On the matter of what we spend, the Department of Veterans Affairs for the past eight years has underspent its appropriated budget by an average of $47 million. It was not as though the minister of this department got to keep the money. They do not have it stashed away in Zurich.

It was just never used, therefore the Minister of Finance took it back. This occurred every year for the last eight years. I want to say, to be fair, that under previous governments the same thing happened every year. While members of this House from all sides were fighting to get benefits for veterans of all kinds from all parts of the country, poverty was pleaded, restraint was pleaded, other things took higher priority. That just cannot be allowed to go on.

I want to thank the minister for bringing this in as quickly as he has. I almost raised a question of privilege when he replied to our committee's report because that was totally out of order and the Speaker was too nice.

He got away with it, but at least he has brought in the legislation. All I can say is let us get this through by ten o'clock tonight. I encourage all hon. members to take part. We waited 47 years. It is like the guy who came from Mars and landed on earth. He was running around examining all these human beings. He finally found two of them who were making love. He watched this performance for a while and he said to the guy that was with him: "What are they doing?" The guy replied: "They are trying to make a baby". "When will they have that"? "It takes nine months". "Could you tell me what all the hurry was the last 90 seconds?"

After 47 years what is all the hurry that we cannot have a few hours on a matter such as this. I hope that the bill will pass and pass unanimously. I hope the minister is prepared to answer some questions at committee stage. He certainly will have the co-operation of my party and my colleagues in the official opposition in getting this passed.

Do not deny us our day in court to remind not just the minister but the whole country that we are finally paying some bills that are long past due. We might move amendments. We will try but will get ruled out of order because they cost money. Surely some of these benefits could be made retroactive, particularly for those who are in such terrible need for mental or physical reasons.

I do not think we should be chiselling on that. Let us go for broke. Let us make up as much as we can what we have denied several thousand Canadians for too many years.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, just briefly to put a few comments on second reading I did not understand that we had agreed to limit it, but I will not be very long.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): You can put them in Committee of the Whole.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to and bill read the second time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 100, I do now leave the chair for the House to go into Committee of the Whole.

House in committee on 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—Mr. Paproski in the chair.

On Clause 2—*Short title*

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can just explain that we have all agreed to try to see if we can get this bill through today because of the crowded parliamentary schedule.

All members wish to see the bill and the regulation through by July 1 so that the benefits can begin on Canada's 125th birthday. As part of that procedure, some of us have agreed to make our general remarks on clause 1 of the bill. I have also a number of specific comments that I would like to make, but first let me just make a few general remarks.

This is of course a very important bill. It provides, as has already been described, for Canada's merchant mariners to finally get what is due them as veterans of Canada for their service during the two world wars and the Korean war.

This day has come to this Parliament as a result of the efforts of members on all sides of the House. Already my colleague from Regina—Lumsden has mentioned Stanley Knowles. I would like on behalf of our party, however, to put on the record of Parliament the particular efforts of the member for Regina—Lumsden who has served in this House for 24 years, who has been pressing

this issue, who has introduced private members' bills and is here today to see this bill through.

I pay tribute to the minister for having pushed the bill through and for responding to the standing committee report and to the pleas of those who have felt that this injustice had to be corrected.

I would also like to pay particular attention to two other members of this House and I am going to refer to them by name. I know that is a breach of the usual rules: One is Arnold Malone who is chair of the standing committee and as has already been mentioned is sick at home. He is not here today to join in this debate. As well, there is the veteran member from Parry Sound—Muskoka, who has also contributed much to this. Further, a member in the other house, Senator Jack Marshall, is due recognition for a major contribution to having this bill introduced in the House.

• (1710)

Reference has been made to the standing committee report. The Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs studied this issue last year and produced a unanimous report recommending that Canadian merchant mariners with one or more high seas ocean-going assignments during war time be fully recognized as veterans and that veterans benefits be extended to them.

The committee also recommended that a book of remembrance be prepared and placed in the Peace Tower dedicated solely to the merchant mariners who died in Canada's wars. I am pleased to hear the words of the minister that that will be done. He said it will be done as soon as possible. I hope the emphasis will be on the soon because the issue is an important one to the merchant mariners. I hope arrangements can be made within months for that book to be opened and dedicated in our Peace Tower.

As well, the committee recommended that the Department of Veterans Affairs encourage the construction of a suitable monument to honour the memory of Canada's war-time merchant mariners. The committee also suggested a suitable site in the area of Halifax, and that has now been started.

I hope the minister is prepared to ask the government to match grants on this particular monument. I know the policy to which he referred, that the government does not usually get involved in monuments for veterans, but this is a special case. There have been years and years go by and this is one particular monument in a special location. I would ask the minister to agree to put it to the government that on this particular occasion the government would be prepared to match any contributions made toward the establishment of a suitable monument.

Finally, let me cast a slight cloud on the feeling of unanimity of this discussion. We have all said that we want this bill through today, but we have been put in a very difficult position by the government. It is our special responsibility on the opposition side to make sure that this bill achieves that which our constituents have sent us here to do.

Members of the government side also have that responsibility. They exercise that responsibility often in different ways. When a bill comes before the floor of this House we have a special responsibility to see that that happens. In fact, the procedures of this House normally provide that after second reading the bill goes to a legislative committee. At that legislative committee, experts on the bill and those who have a special interest in it have an opportunity to come before the committee and advise this House of Commons on the possible errors or omissions that there may be in the bill.

We are going to miss the benefit of that exercise in this bill. For most of us this bill surfaced just last week when the minister introduced it at first reading on June 2, 1992. It is a bill which contains 22 clauses. Some of those clauses have complicated inter-relationships with other legislation. It is very difficult to get a bill like this right the first time.

I realize that the minister has highly qualified advice at his disposal, but I practise law and I can understand that it is possible that others have seen something which one misses in the draft of an agreement or the draft of legislation. Therefore, by following the procedure we are prone to making some mistakes.

This bill could have been drafted months ago. The committee report was available last year. It took the department a very long time even to make a preliminary response.

If this bill had been introduced before the House of Commons months ago, even weeks ago, we could have had a legislative committee review the procedures and review the sections of the act to ensure that there are no mistakes.

In the course of this committee discussion we will look to the minister for the various interpretations that his officials have of this act and get him to put on the record responses to the concerns that have been placed before us as members of Parliament. All we can do in the time available is to ask the minister for those assurances.

If there are to be any complicated drafting changes it would not be possible under the procedure we have agreed to today. Therefore, we are all going to be, the minister included, in the position of putting this bill through without the benefit of third party advice, as in the process that this Parliament usually sets down for important and complicated pieces of legislation.

Therefore, I am going to ask the minister if he will undertake to keep track of the interpretations placed on the bill and the effect of it and if he will agree, on behalf of the government, to a review of this bill within two years to ensure that every intention expressed today by the government with respect to this bill meets the language of the bill and that the minister will open up the bill for revisions if necessary.

Finally, let me pay tribute to the Merchant Navy Coalition, a group including the Canadian Merchant Navy Association, the Canadian Merchant Navy Prisoner of War Association, and the Company of Master Mariners of Canada. I would particularly like to note the work of Mr. Olmstead, who is the chair. The Coalition has worked long and hard to have this day come to pass.

Winston Churchill once said, and it would apply not only to those who fought in the Battle of Britain over Britain but to the merchant mariners of Canada and other countries: "Never have so many owed so much to so few". We finally say to the merchant mariners today: "You are not forgotten".

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Chairman, I really had not planned to speak before the Committee of the Whole. I know we are anxious to get on with other business, but this is a great victory for merchant seamen, for the House of Commons, and for our process. It is one of the few victories I have seen. While some people may say it has taken a long time to achieve, I am personally delighted that the committee sat. The last committee report was signed about a year ago.

I do not think it is fair to let the proceedings continue without some kind of a poignant tribute to those merchant seamen who have achieved this victory today. I would like to take some time in the Committee of the Whole to record the reason we are about to take this decision.

At the outset of World War II the merchant navy was not very large. It had 37 ships and 1,400 people. By the end of World War II it had 180 ships and a total of 12,000 personnel. More than 70 Canadian ships were lost in World War II. To me it is very significant that the loss of life was about 10 per cent. In other words, a young merchant seaman who joined a ship and went on one of the voyages that we have discussed today had a 10 per cent chance of not coming back. That is very meaningful to me, and I am sure to all members of the House.

Most of the losses occurred from 1941 to 1943 during the period we know as the Battle of the Atlantic when the enemy forces were consolidated in the low countries, France and Norway. They were able to take their fleet out of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea and send it out to the Atlantic to attack merchant shipping during that very difficult period in time.

• (1720)

They went beyond the Atlantic. They went up to the gulf of St. Lawrence. They sank ships along Bell Isle. It was in this period that the war was brought home to North America.

I was not very old but I do remember the sinking of the *Caribou*, for example. It was a very tragic situation that will forever remain in the minds of certainly all Newfoundlanders, and I think it is safe to say most maritime Canadians.

The motto of the merchant navy was: "We deliver the goods" and deliver the goods it did. It was estimated by some that on average one ship carried enough foodstuffs to feed 225,000 people for one week. That is a fantastic statistic considering the rationing that was taking place and the fact that people in Europe were hungry. The cargoes also included strategic war materials.

These ships became a target for the enemy. When the wolf pack submarines were at sea during this period they were not out to hunt down destroyers, frigates and corvettes. They were there for one purpose, which was to kill the merchant ships and prevent the cargo from reaching Europe. This was a strategic effort that these brave men made during this very difficult period.

I would like to provide a feeling of what was involved in this. Essentially merchant navy veterans, as they are now called, found themselves in a combat role for which they were ill equipped. They did sail in convoys under the protection of naval vessels, but a convoy of 100 ships had an escort of three, four, or five escorts. I am not sure that is the kind of protection I would have felt safe under, but the statistics speak for themselves.

When they got closer to Europe long range German airplanes bombed and strafed them and they were also at the mercy of floating mines. Compounding all this was every mariner's traditional antagonist, the weather. There was the close proximity of ships in convoy formations, complex zigzag patterns governed by the clock, bad weather, and a darkened ship. The only way I can convey the feeling to the House and the audience this afternoon is to remind them of the movie *The Cruel Sea*, which depicts the convoys at sea and the torture, discomfort and even panic that they went through.

We can imagine being on one of those ships in the black of night and being torpedoed, our ship sinking in the North Atlantic, where we can only live for two minutes if we are not rescued, in certain parts of it. Some of them survived to go back to sea to be sunk again, and some were sunk a third time and still survived.

It gives me great pleasure and it is a great honour for me to be able to be part of the very historic action that we are about to take in the highest court of our country today.

There is one other thing I want to mention. I said these merchant ships were not armed but some of them were. Some of them had trained gunners who were trained by the navy in a very short course. They went to sea as boys. Not only did they serve as merchant men but they also served as gunners. They had additional duties in ships that were called DEMS, defensively equipped merchant ships.

From speaking to some merchant navy veterans I can tell the House that they were very pleased to have the DEMS in their midst. Sometimes there would perhaps be only one, two, or maybe three escorts.

The minister, the hon. member for Hillsborough, and my hon. colleague from Regina spoke very eloquently on the details of the bill and to whom it applied. That has been useful to all those who have been watching.

As a Newfoundlander I am particularly pleased that the limitation of 180 days has now been removed because in the last three years I have been involved in many cases in which there was a dispute over whether it was 180 days or 170 days. Memories fade, and there are depositions and the legalities of things. I am very pleased that there are at least three or four cases that I know of that can now be sorted out with relative ease.

I have great admiration for those merchant seaman and merchant navy veterans organizations. I am not going to list them all. They know who they are. I know who they are.

I am a relative newcomer to the business of fighting for them politically so I am not going to take any credit at all. There are people in this House and others who have fought the battle for them for over 47 years.

However, the credit goes to them because in my mind the tenacity, the determination and the skill they showed in fighting this political battle was equal to the seamanship and courage they showed during the period under discussion.

I thank the minister, the hon. member for Crowfoot and the committee for the excellent work they have done, and the others who have also made contributions. I thank the House and I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for indulging and allowing me these few moments to put on record these remarks that will be very important to the merchant navy veterans and to those who fought that fight and who I am sure are celebrating today a great victory.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to join my colleagues in support of this bill, 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.

We all know that this bill took a long time in coming down the pike. Merchant mariners have been calling long and hard for this type of action. Merchant navy veterans faced the great obstacles of weather and war to protect the supply line to the United Kingdom during World War I and World War II.

The new definition of merchant navy veteran outlined in the bill is far-reaching. The veteran is a person who had service on a Canadian ship while on a high seas voyage during World War I or World War II, or a Canadian national who had service on an allied ship while on a high seas voyage during either world war. It also includes any person who from 1950 to 1953 had service on a Canadian ship while on a voyage in dangerous waters.

As my colleague from Hillsborough and the Minister of Veterans Affairs have mentioned Bill C-84 has two main purposes, both of which are eminently supportable.

First, this bill will extend certain benefits to our wartime merchant mariners. Second, it will take away War Veterans Allowance benefits from persons who served as members of allied resistance forces.

The second point is important in the interest of fairness. It may be difficult to assess how many illegitimate claims were made to the government by people who would never be eligible. It is important to note that without legislation the resistance component of the program is forecast to take up over 50 per cent, or $60 million, of the total program expenditures within five years.

We all know that this is unacceptable when there are needy veterans out there who have served our country well and while at the same time our nation is faced with a huge debt.

• (1730)

About 5,800 War Veterans Allowance recipients are getting government money because they were members of a resistance force. About 1,700 of the total are receiving the benefit outside Canada. Personally, I do not agree with that.

By contrast, under 1,000 Canadians and allied veterans with formal military service receive War Veterans Allowance outside Canada. With Bill C-84 resistance members now need to demonstrate 10 years residency in Canada. A Canadian citizenship is not a requirement of the WVA Act.

It is good to see that this bill will make permanent the requirement that a resistance fighter receiving money from the Canadian people through their federal government must live in Canada. That only makes common sense, something that does not happen all that often in this House of Commons.

As we know, through the provisions of this bill, recipients now living outside Canada will have one year to return to Canada or lose their entitlement altogether.

When the WVA Act was first passed, it was never Parliament's intent that resistance service would qualify as military service. Through interpretation of the act by quasi-judicial bodies, this qualification arose. I wonder if those people who made these decisions were ever in battle for their lives as our courageous veterans were.

I say again that I heartily endorse the government's efforts to correct this loophole. The purpose of the resistance group changes in Bill C-84 is to restore the excellent War Veterans Allowance program to its original purpose, to provide income support to wartime Canadian and allied veterans of regular military forces.

I know that all the Royal Canadian Legions in my riding fully support this measure. I meet with the local legion presidents regularly. One thing that comes through crystal clear is that everything should be fair and be seen to be fair. God knows our veterans have confronted death and destruction and governments of every party have supported them. They want to be treated with the respect they deserve. We owe everything to our veterans.

The bill states that no new applications from resistance fighters will be accepted and the current recipients will lose their benefits if they move abroad. As well, those now living in another country are given one year to take up residency again in Canada or lose the War Veterans Allowance. All Canadians with common sense would back that as I and the members of the Official Opposition do.

I want to point out to the House that the Royal Canadian Legion will hold its 34th Dominion Convention in Quebec City later this month. Resolution No. 16, that deals with War Veterans Allowance for allies has been prepared. The resolution says that in 1930 the War Veterans Act was enacted and included payment to allied veterans, the intention being to ensure protection to those Canadians who served in His Majesty's Forces such

as the Royal Air Force, since Canada had no air force of its own during World War I.

Further, it says that Canada is the only nation in the world paying such compensation to allied veterans, and Canadians living in foreign lands do not receive anything comparable to the War Veterans Allowance from their host country.

The legion says: "There are known cases of fraud, which are now being investigated by the RCMP, of people who could be getting the benefits without the service".

The resolution says furthermore that Veterans Affairs Canada pays a large portion of the War Veterans Allowance budget to allies, and whereas there are outstanding funding requirements to meet the ever-increasing health care needs of Canadian veterans and their widows, therefore be it resolved that the Royal Canadian Legion requests the Minister of Veterans Affairs to amend the War Veterans Allowance legislation by tightening up the allied veterans provision and to ensure that the benefits are extreme towards Canadian and Commonwealth veterans and their dependents.

It also says that be it further resolved that any War Veterans Allowance payments made outside Canada should only be made to veterans of Canadian and Commonwealth wartime armed forces.

Bill C-84 answers that legion resolution. I am sure all those in attendance at the convention will be delighted.

This particular piece of legislation makes my job as a member of the opposition but more important as a member of Parliament, all that much easier when I can get up and support a government proposal. Too often we hear Canadians complaining that all we do is fight and argue while the country waits for action on the important matters. Here is an example of government legislation that is good, fair, fiscally responsible, and supported by members of the opposition.

I do add very quickly that this bill has been a long time in coming. Its full recognition of merchant mariners is long overdue, but the benefits provided will be of great help to the aging veterans.

I am pleased to have had an opportunity, how ever brief it was, to speak on the merits of this bill. As my friend from Hillsborough stated in his speech, we will be supporting this bill.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Chairman, I realize the House has agreed to expedite this legislation, something that I thoroughly welcome. Therefore, I will not speak at length on this bill which is something I would normally like to do because it is an issue very close to me.

I welcome and commend the final and full recognition of merchant marine veterans. It is something that has been long overdue. I am especially pleased to see their full eligibility for the Veterans Independence Program.

I cannot let the debate pass however without rising on behalf of the many merchant marine veterans in the South Shore area and indeed the many in Nova Scotia. I know this legislation will be welcomed by all people in my province.

This is an issue that has been close to my heart. It was one of the few campaign pledges I made when I ran for public office, to fight on behalf of this issue. This was the first issue I raised as a member of Parliament when I came here in 1988. I have raised it several times since. As the Minister of Veterans Affairs knows, I have been at his door about this for a long time. This is a very, very happy day for me and I just want to mark that occasion by mentioning it.

I wish to commend members on all sides of this House for their support of this legislation. I wish to commend all members of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs and, in particular, the chairman who is unable to be here today.

I wish to commend Senator Jack Marshall who has fought for this cause for many, many years. I wish to commend the merchant marine veterans associations who have fought for this. In particular, I wish to commend this Minister of Veterans Affairs who, after 47 years, was the minister who took up this issue, took it to cabinet, got it approved and has it before us here today.

In closing my remarks, I am pleased to quote a couple of sentences from a letter from the president of the Royal Canadian Legion who writes to the minister: "I write to congratulate you for the obviously considerable amount of time and thought that went into the production of these amendments. You can count on the support of the Royal Canadian Legion in these proposals." He goes on to say: "There is no doubt that this legislation is a major step forward towards satisfying the remaining needs of those deserving merchant navy veterans who supplied the tools and the fuel for war and the defence of democracy".

It is a happy day for all merchant marine veterans and a day that should make all Canadians proud.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Chairman, I want to echo the comments of my hon. friend from South Shore. It is not very often that we get the chance in this House, particularly these two Nova Scotians, to agree on very much in this place, but the comments that he just made are ones that I want to echo. I also want to congratulate the minister and all the members of this House who have worked so hard to bring this bill to the floor and to committee today.

Being a member from Dartmouth, the old riding being Dartmouth—Halifax East, makes this bill even more important. My hon. colleague from P.E.I. indicated in the history lesson he was giving in his speech that it was way back at the beginning of the war that the first group of merchant vessels steamed out of Halifax harbour. There are a lot of people a little older than I am who remember all of those vessels steaming out of Halifax Harbour.

There are a lot of veterans still down there and a lot of new veterans created by this bill, those merchant mariners who served for Canada and served for the Commonwealth during World War II. It is indeed fitting that finally they have received the recognition due them.

• (1740)

We must remember that the individuals who served in the merchant marine were not just regular or normal veterans. Most of the veterans who we sent over were trained in the military. They knew how to operate offensive and defensive weaponry.

When dealing with merchant mariners, these are individuals who ran supply vessels. When these vessels left and went across the ocean even with an armed convoy to protect them, many times they were the slowest boats because they were supply vessels.

When the German U-boats went after them, those vessels would be the first to be sunk. You also have to remember that they really did not have any heavy armaments on them. As a result of this, the men who served in the merchant marine and the merchant marine generally suffered the highest casualties of any branch of service in the armed forces during the Second World War.

We know that as each year passes the number of veterans diminishes. They are getting older and each year there are more and more who die. I think it is extremely fitting at this point in time that this bill looks at the whole aspect of recognition of the service that they have given to this country, not only by the provision of additional benefits but also by conferring on them a new status and a new title, "merchant marine veterans".

The word veterans means a lot to those who are still left and who served in the merchant marine. It means an awful lot to the sons and daughters of those who are gone, those fathers who served in the merchant marine.

I want to join with everybody in this House in saying that every member of this place, no matter what political affiliation, is extremely pleased to see this bill: I want to commend the minister for his stick-to-itiveness to get to this point and to bring it forward.

I also want to give some recognition to my hon. colleague from Regina—Lumsden. I think one of the first times that I can remember hearing about this issue was well before I was a member of Parliament. I was watching a debate on the parliamentary channel. That member was up very clearly and articulately stating the case for full recognition of the contribution of the merchant mariners as veterans. I am sure that it is an extremely proud day for him that this House is seized with this issue today and hopefully at the end of the day that for which he has fought so long will see its way into legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Mr. Chairman, I would also like to congratulate the minister and thank him for tabling this bill in the House. I also want to thank members of the opposition for doing everything they can to adopt this bill as quickly as possible.

When I became a member of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, I was astonished when I found out about this blatant injustice which had been dragging on for more than 45 years, in fact quite a bit more if we include World War I. For decades, the government had refused to recognize the war records of merchant seamen who had agreed of their own free will to serve on board ships engaged in supplying the troops on the European front. They had been ignored. It was felt they were not real veterans.

Today, I am pleased to join hon. members in adopting a bill that will make amends for the tremendous injustice suffered by these men who sacrificed their lives. It must be said, that of all those who served in the two great wars, merchant seamen paid the highest price in human lives. No other unit, the air force, the marines or the army, suffered as many losses as the merchant seamen.

I am pleased to see that this legislation will be adopted today, and once again I wish to congratulate the minister.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions which perhaps the minister could clarify.

First of all, in the standing committee report there was reference to the issue of merchant navy prisoners of war. The minister will know, of course, that under the basic disability pension for prisoners of war, there are steps which express the percentage of basic disability pension. For example, if someone was interned for 90 to 545 days they would receive 10 per cent of the basic disability as compensation, 15 per cent for 546 to 910 days and then those interned for more than 910 days receive 25 per cent of the basic disability pension.

In World War II, of the 2,198 military prisoners of war, fewer than 40 were incarcerated for more than three years or 1,100 days. Yet of 198 merchant navy prisoners of war, 122 were interned for periods of four to five years. The committee suggested that it would be reasonable to have the time measured compensation extrapolated beyond 30 months so that those who were interned for longer periods would be entitled to additional benefits.

I was wondering if the minister could indicate whether this comment in the committee report was considered by the government. It certainly is not part of this bill. Why not? Will the government consider that particular idea as another element of justice to the merchant navy veterans, those who were unfortunate enough to be interned for these excessive periods of time during World War II?

Mr. Merrithew: Mr. Chairman, I should just mention that I do know where that particular suggestion comes from. There is an association, not a very large one, the Merchant Navy POWs. They have been trying to put their views forward to the minister and the government over a period of time.

During the discussion of the report of the standing committee, and indeed this whole issue, we met with the president of that particular group. He agreed at the time that the priority was to get this legislation through and get benefits for all merchant mariners, including the status veteran, and that he would put off the other issue until we get this thing through. Obviously we will have to do that.

I should point out that merchant navy prisoners of war are treated exactly the same way as are the uniformed prisoners of war. The same legislation covers them. It will have to be one that will be dealt with later. That was with the concurrence of the president of the POW Association.

Mr. Proud: I ask a question of the people at the table. Under 8(c), page 5, I just wondered if it could be explained to me again what happens in this 8(c) where it says:

> (c) after taking into consideration such corroboration as may be available, the Minister or the Commission, as the case may be, is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the information in the declaration or statement is true.

I want to know what that does to the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. Merrithew: Mr. Chairman, in considering applications to the Canadian Pension Commission, in the absence of other hard evidence, the commission would have to take into consideration a statutory declaration as to the service or maybe an event that happened during the service of a veteran.

The hon. member asked what the benefit of the doubt would be. It would not affect that at all. In the case of a statutory declaration the commission would still give the benefit of the doubt to the veteran.

Clause agreed to.

On clause 3—*Status of males and females*

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Chairman, I was out getting a little assistance here. I gather there is some concern that this bill is going to take us a long time. I just want to assure the House that I see no reason why it should take us very much longer. There are very few further points we wish to raise and we are going to try to accommodate all sides of the House in getting this disposed of. Everybody can just relax and let us get this bill considered fairly.

I would like to move an amendment to clause 3 of the bill. The amendment I would like to move is in respect of clause 3 which purports to amend sections 5 and 6 of the act. My amendment would deal with one of the provisions considered for section 6 and in particular the definition of high seas voyage.

• (1750)

The definition of high seas voyage has three parts to it: (a), (b) and (c). My amendment would be to (c) and would come on page 3 of the act, line 2. I would seek to add the words to subsection (c) "or was in danger of attack by the enemy" after the word "enemy". I have those words in French as well.

Let me explain my amendment this way. First of all, the benefits that are being extended to merchant mariners by this bill are affected by clause 9 which provides that:

> The Pension Act applies to and in respect of merchant navy veterans
>
> (a) as though their service while on a high seas voyage had been military service rendered during World War I or World War II within the meaning of section 21(1) of that Act;

The term "high seas voyage" determines whether a person becomes entitled to the benefits under the act, and high seas voyage is defined in the new clause 6. It includes a voyage during the course of which the ship was attacked by the enemy.

I propose that it should add the words that I gave "or was in danger of attack by the enemy".

The way the bill is developed, a merchant mariner will become entitled to the benefits on any voyage outside territorial waters of Canada and on some territorial voyages, including those in which the ship was actually attacked. But it does not cover those who were in dangerous waters while they were in territorial waters.

Therefore it is important in my view that the coverage of the bill be extended, not only to those who were actually attacked while in territorial waters of Canada or its allies, for example within the three-mile limit of Britain. These are the merchant marines who would be on a voyage totally within the three-mile limit of Britain, or the three-mile limit of Canada, and where those waters would be defined as "dangerous waters".

As the bill has provided, you only get the benefits if your vessel was attacked. Therefore there is a distinction made between those who served in the navy and those who served in the merchant marine. Those who served in the merchant marine have to get outside the territorial limits to be assured of benefits and only receive the benefits within territorial waters if their ship is attacked.

Therefore I would ask the committee to agree to this amendment as an element of fairness to our merchant mariners.

The Deputy Chairman: I would like to thank the hon. member for Victoria for allowing the Table and myself to have a look at the amendment.

I have looked at it and I am willing to rule now. Unfortunately I have to rule this amendment out of order because it goes beyond the limitations as set by the royal recommendation attached to this bill.

Indeed this amendment will allow more sailors to be eligible under the bill but this is contrary to citation 246(3) of Beauchesne's fourth edition which states in part:

> The guiding principle in determining the effect of an amendment upon the financial initiative of the Crown is that the communication, to which the royal demand of recommendation is attached, must be treated as laying down once for all (unless withdrawn and replaced) not only the amount of a change, but also its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications. In relation to the standard thereby fixed, an amendment infringes the financial initiative of the Crown, not only if it increases the amount, but also if it extends the objects and the purposes, or relaxes the conditions and qualifications expressed in the communication by which the Crown has demanded or recommended a charge.

Therefore I must rule against the amendment.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Chairman, we of course accept your ruling. I just say that this is something we will put on the agenda for future consideration and seek in future to see if we cannot persuade government to extend the bill in this fashion.

Clause 3 agreed to.

On Clause 4—*Evidence*

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Chairman, I have more the nature of a question than an amendment. If I am a little slow sometimes getting up it is in part because the numbers are a little confusing. The clause in the bill seeks to amend sections in the act. Section 9 of the act as it will be amended provides that the Pension Act applies to and in respect of merchant navy veterans as though their service were on a high seas voyage and being military service rendered during the war, et cetera.

Later in the bill, on page 7, part 1.1, the bill makes certain provisions for civilian merchant seamen and salt water fishermen. It expressly provides that for those persons, the civilians, if they suffer or contract an injury or disease or aggravation thereof while proceeding to their ship or returning from their ship or on leave from their ship, they will receive benefits under the act.

I would like it made absolutely clear that for merchant mariners the effect of the amendment in clause 4 of this bill will be to ensure that the exact same protection—and I understand this to be the insurance liability principle that is referred to by those who are very familiar with all this—is fully extended to merchant mariners.

I would ask the minister to make it clear that the benefits referred to in the latter clause for civilians are all in every respect available to merchant mariners, in particular that they are covered while they are proceeding to or from their ship, or while they are on leave in the case of injuries or disease.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Chairman, the insurance principle is a very important principle with regard to applications for pensions under the Pension Act because it covers the veteran, in this case the merchant navy veteran, for 24 hours while he is on duty. In this case the merchant navy is going to get the same treatment as a uniformed veteran would get. If they were proceeding on the way to performance of their duty on board a ship, they would be covered under the insurance principle in the Pension Act.

It is attributable. As long as it is attributable to the service, they would be covered.

Mr. Brewin: Just to be very clear. He said proceeding to. How about proceeding from and while on leave, the precise provisions in clause 15(2)?

Mr. Merrithew: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make sure. It means if they are on the way to their service on board the merchant ship or from it they are covered, the same as they would be under the military. In the case of leave, if it were authorized leave on a high seas voyage under the definitions under clause 3 of the bill, they are covered.

The Deputy Chairman: Does the hon. member for Victoria have another amendment on clause 4?

Mr. Brewin: No, Mr. Chairman.

• (1800)

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 9—*Pension and Allowances*

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Chairman, I want to bring to the attention of the minister my concern over this section of the act.

I am not questioning the point he is making here where no new applications will be accepted. I accept readily that portion of the bill whereby more of the recipients of the allowance have to reside here in the country.

The particular problem I am facing, and I face it on a daily basis, is that I am hearing from many people in my community who were part of the resistance movement who have said that their application has been in the system upwards of two, three, and four years. As there was a re-examination in the last two years of all of the applications because of some fraudulent applicants, many of the legitimate applications were affected.

What we have is a situation now where the Government of Greece has verified the legitimacy of many of these applications that have been in the system. Now that they are back here in Canada because of the March 2 date, these people who would otherwise have been approved now find themselves caught in a situation where their applications are not being accepted.

It marks the first time that we as a country have really withdrawn a benefit from someone who has not only been in the queue, but has been in the system and is going through the process not only of verification, but in many instances this verification process has been going on for a second time.

Now that that has happened I think this part of the act is not fair. I would appeal through you, Mr. Chairman, to the minister to address this because it is causing a lot of hardship for a lot of people in my community, especially those members of the Greek resistance fighters.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Chairman, what we tried to do in clauses 9 to 11 of this particular bill was to return the War Veterans Allowance program to exactly what previous Parliaments in history—this is since 1930—intended to do. It was for our own uniformed people. No country on earth gives pensions to a foreign nation for resistance service.

I want to state that we did not make that decision as a government. It was made by a quasi judicial board and eventually by a court as an interpretation of the laws which exist. We are correcting that. We are returning the program to what it was intended for, that is for veterans who were in uniform in time of war.

With regard to the point about the people in the queue, there is no question there were a lot of people in the queue. In fact, there were 1,600 people in the queue, most of them from one particular country. Obviously, as the government dealt with that particular issue, it had to deal with additional applications from those who were also in uniform during the war who were applying for War Veterans Allowance.

The government made the decision at that time that it was not going to process any more War Veterans Allowance applications after March 2, 1992. The decision was made by the government. It did affect the people who were in the queue but it did not affect those who were in receipt of War Veterans Allowance, because they had been grandfathered. That particular group received their benefits as a result of an interpretation of our legislation. We are going to honour that and grandfather those. The government has made a decision that it is going to return this legislation effective March 2, 1992 to what it was intended for, War Veterans Allowance for the uniformed people.

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I think that the misunderstanding comes when the minister uses this expression "in the queue". These are not people who were lining up to put in an application. I am talking about people who had their application accepted by the department. They were in the system and were in the process of being verified. Had there not been this period where because of some fraudulent applications all of them ended up being reviewed, many of them would have been approved and, therefore, they would have been part of this benefit.

The point that I am trying to make is that I am not talking about new applications. The minister has made a deadline of March 2. He has said "no new applications". On those applications which the department accepted, especially those that have been in the department for two and three years and which have been verified, not only by the Government of Greece but also by other forms of verification here, I appeal to the minister to differentiate between those that were in the queue and those that were inside the process.

Mr. Merrithew: I can assure the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood that I was not mistaken and that I know which ones he is talking about. He kept saying "accepted by the department". He means where they had made the application to the department, the department had received them but not necessarily accepted and processed them.

Obviously there is an issue here, the whole process of verifying the applications. That is verifying the service in time of war in another country. It is called a validation process. This takes a long time. Obviously we have to work through a foreign government to verify that. For those people who were verified we processed them, and the ones that were not verified we set the date as of March 2, 1992 and we were going to cut off those people who were not at that time in receipt of War Veterans Allowance.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 20 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 21—*Regulations respecting merchant navy veterans*

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): My friend was very helpful and did not say *adopté*. Clause 21 provides:

> Regulations made under the Department of Veterans Affairs Act for the first time after this section comes into force for the purpose of providing merchant navy veterans and their dependents and survivors with benefits similar to those provided to veterans and their dependents and survivors shall, if they so provide, be retroactive and be deemed to have come into force on a day prior to the day on which they were made, which prior day may not be before the day on which this Act is assented to.

I do not know if anybody can make any sense out of that. The minister says that he can make some sense out of it, but what I would like is the minister's assurances, because he has given these privately, to make sure it is on the record of the House.

• (1810)

The benefits payable under the Department of Veterans Affairs Act to military veterans will be made available in exactly the same way to merchant navy veterans and that will be by way of regulation. The minister has those regulations in the works. They will be promulgated along with the act, God and the Senate willing, on or before July 1 of this year.

Mr. Merrithew: Clause 21 of the bill talks about retroactivity. We were working on the assumption that the bill would be through all stages, through the Senate in all stages, would be given Royal Assent and proclaimed, we hoped, by July 1, 1992. Assuming that could not have happened, we had to put a provision in under clause 21 that would be retroactive to that date should it be after July 1.

In the case of the regulations, I can assure the member that I ordered the deputy minister some months ago to start working on the assumption that the bill would be as we submitted it. Hopefully it will pass this House today.

The regulations are in written form and are prepared to be submitted. If I am not mistaken, they will go before Treasury Board and then a special committee of cabinet within a two-week period. That means we will be able to put this particular program into effect on July 1, 1992 as I stated when I made the announcement on the bill.

Clause agreed to.

On Clause 22—*Coming into force*

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Chairman, I have a fear that my amendment to clause 22 is out of order. In any event I am going to try it on. It is retroactive so perhaps that is the best way to deal with it.

I would propose a new clause 22 that will provide that the disability pensions payable under this act be made retroactive to the date at which the applicant became disabled. As well there are other similar retroactive benefits which I would like to see the bill provide.

It seems to me that merchant navy veterans and their survivors and spouses have waited long for this. This is not going to be a big bill to the government. It is one which I think we owe them. Therefore I would like to see if it would be in order to move such an amendment.

I have a copy of it here, but perhaps on my description of it you might be able to indicate your view.

The Deputy Chairman: I thank the hon. member for Victoria for bringing this to my attention earlier.

This amendment would infringe on the financial initiative of the Crown as it enlarges the limitations as set by the royal recommendation attached to the bill.

I refer hon. members to citation 246(3) of Beauchesne's fourth edition which I quoted earlier. I regret that I cannot accept that amendment.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported and concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Merrithew moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I say to the member for Mississauga South that I just cannot let this bill go through without putting forward the point of view of the people in my community.

There are a lot of winners in this bill. I salute that part of the bill where the winners are looked after. I salute the minister and the department. I have absolutely no debate about that particular aspect of the bill.

I have close to 7,000 people from the Greek community in my riding. I have more people of the Greek community living in my riding than in any other place in the world outside Athens. In the last two months not a day has gone by that I have not been asked to appeal to the minister by people who have served not only their country but our country as well. They have families here. They have made fabulous contributions to this country. They have asked me to appeal to the Minister of Veterans Affairs to see if there is not some way that fairness could be addressed in this particular bill.

I took this bill up in committee. The minister cannot seem to understand that the people who have been in the system and have been part of the process for three years feel that they are quite different from someone who just comes in and fills out an application post March 2. They feel that there is a big difference.

I know it is not just happening in my riding. I have heard from my colleagues from Saint-Denis, Saint-Laurent and Scarborough West. What bothers me about this bill is that an amendment is being made that asks resistance fighters who live outside the country to return to the country within a year.

No one complains about that. We accept that amendment. Naturally we are not going to cancel the benefits that have already been approved. The expectation has been created that applications will be approved as long as they are not fraudulent. That expectation is contained in documentation that has been sent out to individual people saying subject to further investigation by the Greek government and subject to further verification.

• (1820)

If I were a legitimate Greek resistance fighter and my application had been in the department for three years, and I knew it was legitimate, I would know it was just a matter of time. What is essentially being said to me with this amendment is that I am going to be left hanging. Does the minister know what is bad about this? It is that I have now been lumped in with those applications that are fraudulent, not to mention the fact that I have neighbours around me many of whom were part of the same movement. This is not just in my riding. It is the same in the riding of my colleague from Saint-Denis who is an honorary Greek citizen.

The minister cannot understand the unfairness of knowing that your neighbours are sitting there recognized and receiving the allowance and now all of a sudden because of this March 2 arbitrary date you are not.

In my riding some people believed on trust that it would ultimately be processed. Some of them went out and borrowed a little money from their banker to put extensions on their houses. Maybe they have bought new cars hoping this would eventually come through. Now they are saying: "My goodness, I am stuck. I am not getting the allowance and I have actually borrowed against it".

We are all terribly sensitive to the deficit and the debt, but this is not a question of deficit and debt. This is a question of fairness. If persons are legitimate and have been in the system for the last three years they should be accepted. The government chose to review them. I do not question the action of reviewing applications. More than once some fraudulent activity has been detected, but once those reviews have been completed people who were part of the system should be accepted. They should not be compared to someone who after March 2 knocks on the door and says: "Give me an application and put me into the system". They are two entirely different groups of people.

I ask the minister to understand that people come into my office every day and say: "Where is the fairness in this?" He has to understand that it is pretty difficult for me to give them an acceptable answer.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, in winding up this debate I just want to thank all those who have been involved: the three parties, all members of the committee who worked very hard, and the chairman, the hon. member for Crowfoot who is now in his riding. I wish him all the best and all of the people who took part,

especially those groups and veterans associations that appeared before us.

This is a great day for merchant mariners and for veterans in general.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to join in those remarks. This is a very big day for Canada. It is a very big day for the merchant navy of this country which has served us so gallantly.

It has been a long struggle for those who have kept the fight going over these many years when it must have seemed very tough to do it. I am sure they will be very pleased. It is an important day for all of us and for Parliament.

Again we congratulate all those involved. In particular I would like to join with others in congratulating the minister for, as he said, having this go through on his watch.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to drag the debate out, but I do want to comment on the remarks of the member for Broadview—Greenwood. I want to state very clearly that I understand that issue. I understand it all too clearly. I have been at it for a long time.

Since 1930 when this act was introduced no Parliament has considered amendments and since 1930 no Parliament ever intended resistance fighters to get war veterans allowance.

That was done by a quasi-judicial board, and there was later an interpretation of the act by the Federal Court of Appeal.

In the meantime those that were processed were honoured. We were even generous enough to grandfather them, and that is fair.

However, I want to say that there are an awful lot of people who do not think it is particularly fair. I can understand that as well. This government made a deliberate decision to do this. It was done after a lot of consultation with veterans groups. It was mentioned here today that there are resolutions on the floor of the convention two weeks from now in Quebec City suggesting that we return War Veterans Allowance to what Parliament always intended it to be. This government certainly intends to do so.

I would like to read a quote from the Royal Canadian Legion, which is by far the largest veterans organization in Canada, representing 600,000 veterans. It said in a letter to me: "The executive officers of the Legion also want you to know you have our unqualified support for the amendments to the War Veterans Allowance Act relating to allied resistance groups. We are of the firm belief that benefits for veterans must first and foremost be available to Canadians and to allied veterans living in Canada".

Having said that I do wish to extend my thanks to the opposition members and to my own colleagues who were so supportive on this issue over the months that we dealt with it.

I particularly want to thank my critics today. I thank the hon. member for Hillsborough, who has Veterans Affairs Canada, the largest employer in P.E.I., in his own riding. He has been very interested in veterans issues.

I thank the hon. member for Victoria, who filled in very adequately for our ailing critic from Regina—Lumsden. They all have been very supportive of veterans issues.

My thanks to one and all.

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.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

CANADA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-48, an act to amend the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Finance.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are four motions in amendment at report stage to Bill C-48, an act to amend the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof.

Motion No. 1 standing in the name of the hon. member for Mississauga South will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 2 standing in the name of the hon. member for Mississauga South will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 3 standing in the name of the hon. member for Mississauga South will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 4 standing in the name of the hon. member for Malpeque will be debated and voted upon separately.

I shall now propose Motion No. 1.

Mr. McCreath: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find there is unanimous consent following report stage to proceed immediately to third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C–48 be amended in Clause 11 by striking out lines 18 to 21 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"whether

(a) an agreement for a transaction referred to in subsection 39.19(1) is reasonably likely to be expeditiously entered into after the making of the order, and

(b) any such transaction would be consistent with the objects of the Corporation,

the Corporation may request the Minis—"

He said: Mr. Speaker, I move that clause 11 be amended on page 5 in accordance with the motion that I set down as Motion No. 1.

• (1830)

Having gone over the bill in the Standing Committee on Finance in the House of Commons, we took the bill to the Senate's committee and the Senate analyzed the committee hearings before the House committee. The Senate made a number of suggestions and those suggestions make a lot of sense.

What we came up with was Motion No. 1, which just for greater clarity provides for a better restructuring of a troubled institution. The amendment makes it explicit that CDIC's objects are there to serve as an important criteria in any decision made in a FIRP under the provisions of this particular bill.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that we on this side of the House have no problem with this motion. It simply adds a little more clarity to the splendid job we had done in the committee on Bill C–48.

I am prepared to give a nod to the Senate. In this case it has simply done a little fine tuning to what we have done in terms of the FIRPing of a financial institution.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, we in this party have no problems with Motion No. 1 and will be agreeing to it.

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 No. 1 agreed to.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South) moved:

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C–48 be amended in Clause 11

(*a*) by striking out line 21 at page 6 and substituting the following:

"assignee or successor in interest of the person who was the";

(*b*) by striking out line 27 at page 14 and substituting the following:

"member institution, or the assignees or successors in interest of those persons, and";

(*c*) by striking out line 42 at page 14 and substituting the following:

"institution, or the assignee or successor in interest of that person";

(*d*) by striking out line 20 at page 15 and substituting the following:

"(*b*) that each person who held, or is the assignee or successor in interest of a person who held, shares or";

(*e*) by striking out line 29 at page 15 and substituting the following:

"persons, or the assignees or successors in interest of the persons, who together held at least 10 per";

(*f*) by striking out line 2 at page 16 and substituting the following:

"that debt in the Corporation or, where, after the making of the order, the rights of those persons in respect of those shares or that subordinated debt have been assigned to or have devolved on other persons, those other persons.";

(*g*) by striking out line 9 on page 16 and substituting the following:

"that debt in the Corporation or, where, after the making of the order, the rights of those persons in respect of those shares or that subordinated debt have been assigned to or have devolved on other persons, those other persons."

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion is pursuant to the Senate discussions on this bill. It makes it easier for holders of shares and subordinated debt of a vested company to sell the rights to compensation attached to those shares to others.

What happens is we FIRP the company and then there is some time before the shares are either bought out by the CDIC or whether they are given back to the company that is FIRPed.

In the meantime these particular assets might be sold and this amendment provides for a sale of these assets in that intervening period. The amendments do this by permitting the CDIC to hand over shares and debt to either of their original holders or to the persons who subsequently acquired the rights to them because under the bill if the CDIC FIRPs a company, then sells some of the assets, pays itself out, solves its problems, it can give back the remainder of the company to the shareholders and the subordinated debt holders. This means the buyers of those subordinated debts or the buyers of those shares can get them in the same fashion as the original holders had them when the company was FIRPed in the first place. It is a very simple amendment.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I agree with that amendment, it is important and certainly it is needed. We will be voting for it.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, this amendment simply gives greater certainty to what happens to the assets or the shares when a company is FIRPed. We have no problem with it and we will support the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 2 agreed to.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South) moved:

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C–48 be amended in Clause 11 by adding immediately after line 33 at page 12 the following:

"(1.1) For greater certainty, the liabilities of a federal member institution do not, for the purposes of paragraph (1)(*c*), include its subordinated debt."

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is again a technical amendment arising from the Senate hearings.

It certainly is a technical amendment. It clarifies the meaning of the term "liabilities". It defines liabilities so that liabilities do not include subordinated debt because you can take all of the assets of a company with exception of the subordinated debt and the shares. You may have to pay off the liabilities of a company but you do not have to pay off the subordinated debt so it segregates liabilities and subordinated debt. It is really a technical amendment but it is an important amendment in terms of the FIRPing process.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. It is a technical amendment. It clarifies liabilities for the purpose of restructuring. I agree with it.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of House have no problem in supporting this amendment. It is strictly a technical one. As my hon. friend has said, it is an important one. We certainly have no difficulty with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 3 agreed to.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque) moved:

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C–48 be amended in Clause 11 by adding immediately after line 30 at page 20 the following:

"39.36 An order under section 39.13 shall not be made after the fifth anniversary of the coming into force of the section."

She said: Mr. Speaker, this amendment is really a five–year sunset clause. It prevents any FIRPing orders five years after the legislation we are discussing today becomes law.

The intent is to force a review of the financial institution restructuring process after five years. This legislation gives major powers to the Canadian Deposit Insurance Corporation which effectively allows it to take over a troubled financial institution.

We feel that a five-year test period for this kind of a major new power is quite reasonable. A five-year sunset clause is actually in the Bank Act, the insurance, the co-operative and the trust legislation that we passed previously.

Also there was a very low degree of consensus among the industry players; the banks, the trust companies, and the corporate lawyers. They raised many issues. With the five-year review, these issues and concerns could be brought up again and addressed.

I would urge the House to support this five-year sunset clause.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I do not see the need for this amendment.

It suggests that there could be some difficulties arising and there is a need to review the legislation. We had Justice Estey come before our committee. He had the experience with the Northlands Bank. He had recommended to Parliament that when we have to step in and take over a financial institution, restructure it or sell it off or wind it down by always going to Parliament and passing a bill, which is what we had to do back in 1985, what we needed was a more permanent and long-term solution to the problem. That is how we got this bill.

• (1840)

Surely, if there are problems arising with the bill we ought not to wait five years before we review it. If after one year or two there is a problem, I would hope that the government, whatever it is, does not sit on its hands and allow a situation to arise where one does not come back and review the thing to correct it. Therefore I do not really see the need for a sunset clause.

A sunset clause indicates that somehow or other, five years from now, you may not even need this legislation. I cannot see that as I look in the crystal ball and see what is happening in the financial institutions of this country at the moment. I see the melting down that is taking place, the problems that have arisen as a result of the recession, the real estate loans that are going down the tubes and the financial institutions that are being taken down with them. I see the need to have this legislation, but I do not see the need for an amendment. If we have a problem, surely we are not going to wait five years before we review it.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Malpeque raised an amendment similar to this at committee suggesting a three-year sunset clause. We opposed it then and we are opposing this one now because this is only a portion of the CDIC bill.

The CDIC bill itself may need to be reviewed. Indeed, Monday night the finance committee's subcommittee on financial institutions reviewed the CDIC and there are some problems that may be there and there may be some problems with OSFI and so on. There may be some problems with the CDIC in total.

I do not think that this particular part, this very small section dealing with FIRPing, ought to be reviewed by itself. We may have to have some reviews, but surely this particular section will probably never be used. It is a hammer that is there but I am not so sure it is the kind of hammer that a government will ever use. I am not so sure that it is a hammer that OSFI will ever recommend. I am not so sure that it is a hammer that a minister will ever authorize.

I believe that this hammer that is in the CDIC in this particular bill we are passing now—a minor amendment to the CDIC bill in total—ought to remain without any special—this amendment is special—sunset for this particular special provision. I think the amendment is specious in that sense and that it ought to be debated.

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.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Deblois): I declare the motion lost.

Motion No. 4 negatived.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Kim Campbell (for the Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)) moved that Bill C-48, as amended, be concurred in at report stage with further amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre) (for the Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)) moved that Bill C-48 be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): We will begin debate with the hon. member for South Shore.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to lead off today's third reading debate on Bill C-48. This bill which amends the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act has benefited from a thorough discussion by the House finance committee. A number of very helpful amendments have been made to the bill and I will have more to say about these in a moment.

It will be recalled that this bill expands the range of options available to the government for dealing with troubled financial institutions. Specifically, it gives the CDIC the authority to arrange and carry out the sale of a troubled federally regulated financial institution to a healthy institution.

These new measures which we call the Financial Institutions Restructuring Process or FIRP, were first proposed by the government in the blue paper on financial sector reform. Other major elements of the reforms set out in the blue paper have already been considered and endorsed by this House. It is time now to complete this process of reform and give passage to this remaining piece of legislation.

I will review very briefly why the restructuring powers set out in this bill are needed. As the federal deposit insurers, CDIC can be exposed to substantial potential losses when a member institution gets into financial difficulty and the institution's capital declines.

This legislation helps control CDIC's exposure to loss by giving CDIC the means to act with the approval of the minister in a timely manner to put a troubled institution back on a solid footing. In this way, the new powers will make it possible to run a more cost-effective deposit insurance system.

A fundamental goal of providing these new powers is to enable federal authorities to arrange a restructuring transaction which preserves the value of a troubled institution as much as possible. This is in the best interests of the institution's depositors and creditors and the deposit insurer.

Generally speaking shareholders want to see the value of their institution maintained. But once a deposit-taking institution's capital falls below a certain level, shareholders may find themselves in a position where they have little left to lose by the institution's further decline.

At this stage, declines in the value of the assets of the institution will be borne more and more by the creditors of the institution, its uninsured depositors and the deposit insurer.

Bill C-48 contains measures to deal with this situation and give federal authorities more control over the cost of resolving a financial institution's difficulties.

The restructuring process vests all ownership of the troubled institution in CDIC and gives CDIC the power to approve a restructuring proposal, including the sale of the shares of the institution or the sale of its assets and liabilities.

It is important to understand how CDIC will carry out this role. CDIC will be guided by the objectives set out in its act. In particular, the CDIC Act directs the corporation to promote the stability and competitiveness of the financial system in Canada and to pursue its objectives in a way which minimizes CDIC's exposure to loss.

What this will mean in practice is that when CDIC is faced with a situation of a member institution in serious difficulty, it will consider its range of options, including the new restructuring process, and make a decision based on how best to achieve its corporate objectives.

The House finance committee studied the bill very carefully and served an important role by suggesting ways in which the bill could be improved. Witnesses who appeared before the committee also made valuable contributions with their expert knowledge of the financial system.

I would like to take a few moments to describe some of the more important amendments that the committee made.

One category of change was in respect of the bill's stay of proceedings. A number of technical changes were made to this section in consultation with representatives of the chartered banks, trust and loan companies, representatives of the Canadian Depository for Securities Limited and the Canadian Payments Association.

The changes reflect the complexity of financial market systems and products, and with the benefit of the considerable technical knowledge and practical experience of these groups, the bill has been improved.

Changes to the stay of proceedings also reflected a balancing of the interests of ordinary creditors of financial institutions and the interests of financial institutions that act on behalf of other institutions in the clearance and settlement system.

Another group of changes which originated with members of the House finance committee is intended to give federal authorities greater flexibility to arrange a restructuring transaction. These changes centre on the sale of a troubled institution's assets and the transfer of its liabilities, rather than the sale of its shares. Having greater flexibility to structure a deal will mean that CDIC will be able to obtain the highest possible value for the troubled institution and minimize CDIC's exposure to loss.

• (1850)

Finally, the bill was amended to authorize the federal government to enter into agreements with provincial governments regarding provincial institutions whose deposits are insured by CDIC. We will be working with individual provinces that have an interest in the FIRP process to make the appropriate arrangements.

The latter amendment to the bill reflected a concern of the House finance committee that CDIC as the deposit insurer of most provincial institutions should have additional flexibility to work out problems with these institutions as well. I think the outcome in this case is positive for the financial system.

The amendments have improved the bill, but they do not either individually or collectively change the fundamental policy embodied in the bill.

The broad concept of FIRP was supported by witnesses who appeared before the committee. There was also broad support for giving federal authorities the power to control their exposure to loss when an insured financial institution risks failing.

During the second reading debate on this bill the need for balance in legislation such as this was noted. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the committee's contribution to the balance which has been achieved in Bill C–48.

Before I finish my remarks I would like to note briefly the other provisions contained in Bill C–48 which are not directly related to the financial institutions restructuring process.

The first of these is aimed at improving the flow of information about deposit insurance to customers of financial institutions. The new rules are an important step toward improving the public's understanding of deposit insurance coverage and the changes are welcomed by the industry.

Another section provides for an increase in CDIC's borrowing limit from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to $6 billion reflecting the growth in deposits in recent years.

Other provisions of the act give CDIC greater flexibility to make by–laws to promote a common standard of business practice and conditions of insurance coverage among member institutions.

All of these modifications to the CDIC Act were endorsed by the House finance committee.

I would like to express my appreciation for the contribution of all who participated in the debate in this House on Bill C–48 and those who took part in the study of the bill in committee. I hope hon. members will join me now in supporting this bill by giving it third reading.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C–48, an amendment to the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act.

Most Canadians do not think much about fire insurance until the neighbour's house burns down. Then they make sure they have adequate coverage. Probably the same could be said for life insurance. Most Canadians do not worry too much about it until a friend or a family member dies. Then they wonder if their dependants are provided for.

It is no surprise then with the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation that Canadians really do not think very much about it. This corporation insures deposits in banks and trust companies for Canadians so that in case of a financial fire that results in the financial death of a bank or trust company, Canadians are protected.

Canadians certainly want CDIC to have all the tools that it needs to properly do its job. That job of course is stabilizing the Canadian financial system and protecting Canadians. The legislation we are debating today certainly helps in that regard.

This legislation gives the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation the power to go into a financial institution that is just inches away from bankruptcy and to merge it with a healthy institution or to otherwise restructure it and get it on a firm footing.

We on this side of the House certainly agree that the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation needs this tool. In fact Justice Willard Estey recommended this in his report in 1986 when he reported on the failure of two western banks. The Canadian regulator of banks, trusts, loan and insurance companies, known as the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, also said that Canada very much needs this tool.

He also indicates that he has been very frustrated with the authority he has now. The situation now is that the superintendent either has to shut down a financial institution facing bankruptcy or stand by and watch it fail.

In other words, there is no in between where the regulators could help save a financial institution from going under. I guess it is something like a doctor saying that he had only two choices: to sit back and watch the patient suffer a slow death or put the patient out of his misery once and for all, even though an operation might have saved that person.

This is the situation that the superintendent finds himself in now. Certainly, as I said, he agrees that his office should have this tool or this power which we are giving through Bill C–48. Now regulators will have the option of going in and trying to get this institution on to a firm basis.

The Canadian financial service industry is one of the healthiest in the world. Very seldom do we read in newspapers stories of financial institutions in great difficulties, but recently we have had First City Trust, an Ontario trust company, in the news as well as Central Guaranty.

I suppose we could say that part of this is due to the recession because a recession brings high unemployment and high bankruptcy rates. In my province of Prince Edward Island the unemployment rate is over 19 per cent, the highest ever recorded in that province since Statistics Canada started keeping records.

As well as recessions taking their toll on the unemployment rate, they certainly take their toll on financial institutions. Customers of financial institutions are the people who buy cars and homes or borrow to run businesses. When people lose their jobs in a recession it means that many of them cannot make their payments on their cars, their houses or whatever they have borrowed for. They may lose these assets and lose their hope along with them.

Last month the unemployment rate in Canada was 11.2 per cent, the highest since November 1984. The lost jobs and the lost wages I have been talking about will lead to loan payments not being made. If that happens and if enough large borrowers cannot make their payments then financial institutions could be in trouble.

Certainly we saw Standard Trust go that way last summer. This summer Central Guaranty and First City are struggling to avoid Standard's fate. This legislation will help to avoid that by giving the regulator the power to go in and to operate or to help keep the financial institution from going under.

In so doing, we are protecting the 400,000 Canadians who are employed in the banks and in the trust, loan and insurance companies. We must preserve these jobs because we have approximately 1.5 million Canadians out of work. Every job in this country is important and must be protected. As I said, I appreciate the need for this legislation and I agree with what the legislation is going to do, but I certainly have serious concerns about

the whole process this government followed to reach the stage where we are today.

• (1900)

First, this legislation is not just needed today. It was also needed five years ago when Mr. Justice Estey recommended it in his report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but it being 7 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

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved that Bill C-342, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (teachers), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on Private Member's Bill C-342.

As my colleagues in the House know very well, the Conservative government has said many times that for it, education is the cornerstone of Canadian society. The Prime Minister even said that it is important to improve the quality of education in Canada if we want to be competitive internationally.

I believe that the bill I introduced gives the government an excellent opportunity to ease the tax burden on those who have the admittedly huge responsibility of educating our children. The purpose of Bill C-342 is to amend the Income Tax Act so that teachers across Canada can deduct some employment expenses in calculating their income.

For example, they could deduct expenses incurred to take part in professional development days and travel expenses to attend conferences. Let me now give the reasons why teachers should be allowed to deduct some employment expenses.

First, teaching at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels is an occupation that requires higher than average expenses to obtain material, services and facilities related to their teaching duties and to upgrading their academic qualifications and professional skills. While curriculum related material is normally supplied by the employer, teachers must often buy books, periodicals and other written material particular to the teaching profession.

Second, many teachers must pay considerable costs for professional development through on the job training courses, to buy computers and software to be used at home for educational purposes and also to buy classroom material.

Mr. Speaker, you will agree that these expenses help teachers to improve their methods and provide superior instruction. I think it is quite unfair for the Income Tax Act and regulations to allow self-employed professionals and business people deductions for operating expenses and improving their office or business and to refuse these same tax breaks to members of the teaching profession.

Since teachers have considerable employment expenses and play an important role in society, the government must give them the treatment they deserve.

[*English*]

I am presenting this bill this evening as a result of conversations I have had with members of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association, the Canadian Teachers' Federation and teachers themselves who are concerned with expenses. I have a background in education so I can speak from my experience as well.

Elementary, secondary and post-secondary teaching is an occupation which requires larger than average expenditures by teachers on materials, services and facilities related to their jobs and to their professional improvement.

While curricular materials are normally provided by the employer, other equipment and materials related to the professional practice of teaching must be supplied by teachers. Many teachers incur considerable expense for in service professional improvement. They purchase computers and software for educational use in the home and for use in the classroom. As a result of these outlays for these kinds of goods and services, teachers are able to

improve their teaching methods and extend to their students a better quality of service.

It is unfair that self-employed professionals and business people are permitted under the Income Tax Act and regulations to deduct expenses of operating and improving their businesses while teachers are denied similar tax benefits.

The cancellation in 1988 of the standard deduction for employment-related expenses—20 per cent of employment income to a maximum of $500—has served to reinforce this sense of injustice.

There are membership fees for professional organizations in addition to annual professional and union membership dues required to maintain professional and/or employment status which are deductible at present. These are all expenses that should be allowed under this bill and should be allowed in the Income Tax Act. There are expenses for attending teaching conventions when attendance is mandatory and when a convention is held outside the city or town of residence. Other expenses that could be incurred and should be covered are registration fees for professional conferences, expenses for attending up to two conferences or conventions per year for professional growth and expenses for attending professional in service programs. As I mentioned before, the cost of purchasing teaching materials is certainly a major expense.

To be fair and honest, sometimes the perception of teachers is not always positive. Many people in the public sometimes think negatively towards our teachers. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and others who are listening, that quite often these perceptions are unfair, unfounded and are based on a lack of knowledge.

Mind you, there are some bad teachers out there but I say to Canadians in general that the majority of teachers and educators are honest, sincere and dedicated to education. I say also that if there is a bad apple out there, then you get rid of it. If there are bad teachers in the system, then you have them removed. I am sure teachers' associations and federations stand by that as well. I do not think we should punish the majority just because of a few bad apples.

I would like to speak about a few specific examples of the involvement of teachers and the expenses they have. I know of a teacher here in Ottawa who teaches kindergarten to children with special needs. At the present time she goes around and collects a lot of materials that can be used in the classroom and pays for it with her own money. She has now been teaching for a number of years. She has even gone so far as to collect so much material that there is no room at her house any more and she has rented a garage to store some of those materials. That is a cost that the public does not realize.

Take a drive around on Saturdays and Sundays to garage sales and see who is at those garage sales. You will be amazed to see a number of teachers. It is not because they are looking for a bargain for themselves. Often, they are looking for a bargain for their students. They are looking for second-hand materials that can be used in a classroom.

One might ask what is wrong with the school system or what is wrong with the school boards? Do they not have money for materials? Yes, they do, but it is not enough. Quite often the material that is supplied is generic material. It is not stimulating to the student. The textbooks and support material are quite often out of date. This is a way of allowing teachers to get new material into the classroom, but it is costing money to these individual teachers.

• (1910)

I would also like to mention that we hear the common statement that teachers have two months off in the summer. Yes, they do. They are in a very stressful job.

Many of the teachers also use those two months—not the full two months because they do take holidays as well—to attend summer courses. Again, that is an expense that translates into a very positive expense because it is going to be beneficial to our citizens of tomorrow who are our youth. As we know, education has been a major topic of late and a major concern of many especially when we talk about competition and the ability of our labour force to be well trained.

I have taught from grade 1 to grade 12. In my 12 years of teaching I had to attend various workshops. I lived in northern New Brunswick and most of these courses were away from our community. Quite often we had to travel by car for most of these courses. Quite often we car

pooled, obviously. We had to travel and it was an expense. We had to pay for our meals. We had to pay our hotel rooms, but again it was an expense that we met very gladly in the sense that we knew it was going to be beneficial not only to us, but to our students in the classroom.

I should also mention that when I speak about northern New Brunswick, the same can be said about any province in Canada. Quite often these courses are held away from the smaller communities and that is where the cost really lies.

Some of the school boards do pay for these expenses, I admit. If they are paid for, so much the better. Then, obviously, the teacher would not have to claim them under this bill.

I would also say, as I mentioned before, that school boards do have a lot of supplies, but they are under a lot of pressure these days to cut here and there. We see that in many provinces. The thing that I found with teaching, especially in the years I taught, is that we did not have enough resource material for the students or the teachers.

I married a woman from this area—originally from my home town, but her family was here—and quite often we would come here during the summer. At that time it gave me the opportunity to buy books in this area. It also gave me the opportunity to use the university resource centre here to make photocopies.

That is an expense that I did not mind and I am sure a lot of teachers do not mind. It comes to a point, however, where one can compare it to other professions and say that if they are allowed to deduct certain expenses then teachers should be allowed those deductions as well.

I am sure we will hear some opposition to this. I am sure if you look at the bill that it is a nice bill. You may say it goes too far, but what I have done is to put forth a bill as close as possible to what would be desirable. As anyone knows, whenever one negotiates something, one always puts forth one's best. One asks for the most hoping to receive just a little less.

I agree there may be some criticism of expenses for an office in the household, but we are also dealing with university professors here as well. That might be a little far-fetched but I am open to amendments.

I think it important that we look at the bill as a just bill because other professionals have similar types of deductions for income tax.

Another comment might be how about the poor tradesmen who have to buy tools to work. I say to those who make that argument that there is no reason why teachers cannot have their deductions just because someone else does not. Two wrongs do not make a right. We have to start somewhere. If we feel that there is also an justice in that area, there is nothing wrong with making the appropriate changes.

The problem is that the whole Income Tax Act is very unfair and must be amended somewhat. We must work within the system that is in place. We must work with the Income Tax Act, so that is exactly what we are doing. That is why this type of bill has been put forth.

I should also mention that teachers are quite often considered to be in the middle income range quite often. Therefore, they have a heavy tax burden. I should mention that the two deductions of the greatest value to teachers have been eliminated recently, the $500 employment expense deduction and the $1,000 interest and dividend income deduction.

That $1000 interest deduction also has affected many other Canadians, and I speak on their behalf as well tonight. The government should possibly re-examine that decision in the light of senior citizens who sometimes had a little bit of savings money and used that little extra interest they gained to do a little extra shopping or for a few extras that they had looked forward to. I would say that the government should also reintroduce that deduction.

I have received indications of support from a number of MPs from all parties. I have received indications of support from citizens out there. I have received indications of support from teachers' associations. I thank them. In fact I have received a number of letters. The bill was only tabled about a month or so ago and I have already been receiving documentation in support of the bill. I have received copies of letters that have gone to ministers supporting the bill.

[*Translation*]

I have a letter of support from the president of the Association of French speaking Teachers of New Brunswick, local 32. The letter is addressed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and it supports the bill. I have another letter from a school in Neguac, signed by many teachers. I also have a letter from the president of the Association of French speaking Teachers of New Brunswick, Anita Hébert, local 7.

[*English*]

I have a number of letters from kindergarten teachers. I have a letter from the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. Mr. David McCready, the secretary of a district, has written in support. I have a letter from the Grand Manan Elementary School supporting the bill.

[*Translation*]

I have another letter from Pâquerette Michaud, president of local 1 at Alexandre G. Savoie Comprehensive School.

[*English*]

I have another letter from Tyne Valley in Prince Edward Island and some others from Prince Edward Island. I must single out the Regina Public School Teachers' Association. Its members have written to me in support and I have tabled their signatures.

I would like to thank those people who have acknowledged the introduction of this bill. I look forward to my colleagues this evening, if not totally supporting the bill, at least looking at the possibility of sending it to committee and making adjustments in committee.

I am very open to seeing amendments made to the bill, if hon. members feel that amendments are needed. Thank you.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-332. I must admit I agree with some of the comments made by the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur. However, there are other areas where I think he has taken the wrong approach.

If we consider the education system in this country, we must admit it is one of the best in the world. It is also a fact that our education system is our assurance of progress. In the long run, it makes for the best possible economic growth.

I think all members of this House will agree that for any country education is a priority. As I said before, we are privileged in that respect here in Canada.

However, the bill introduced by the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur raises a number of problems from the point of view of fiscal justice and fairness. If we go back to the time before our 1988 tax reform, every employee across the country was entitled to a lump sum deduction of $500. As long as we had employment income on our return, we could deduct $500. It was a deduction. As a result, Mr. Speaker, depending on the individual's employment income, the $500 meant an after-tax saving of $100, $150 or $250. If my income was taxable at 50 per cent, I would pay taxes on that amount less $500, which would mean a saving of $250. However, if my income was taxable at 25 per cent, the $500 deduction would mean a saving of only $125.

The 1988 tax reform made the tax system fairer and more equitable. We eliminated anything that could be qualified as a deduction and replaced it with a tax credit. In determining the amount allowed for the basic personal tax credit, we took into consideration the old $500 deduction. As a result, anyone with an employment income in Canada has a basic tax credit which does not depend on the individual's tax rate but on the fact that he has an employment income.

For instance, if the basic tax credit is $1,000, whatever my employment income happens to be I will pay $1,000 less in taxes. Whether I earn $50,000 or $100,000 or $20,000, I get the same tax credit. My point is, Mr. Speaker, that a tax credit is subtracted from the tax payable.

This means that all Canadians are equal for tax purposes. Whatever the rate at which they are taxed, they have the same tax credit, and that is important.

The hon. member opposite says it is not true. I would advise her to take a course in taxation, and maybe she will understand what is happening in Canada's tax system. It would do her a world of good to take a course on the subject.

In any case if she wants the floor, she can have it as soon as I finish. Meanwhile, she could at least let me proceed.

As I was saying, the system has made the Income Tax Act more equitable. The hon. member's proposal suggests adding eight specific deductions to the Income Tax Act, targeted exclusively to the teaching profession. However, this would put unfair practices right back into the Income Tax Act.

This evening, I speak both from my experience as a tax expert and as a professor at the University of Quebec in Trois-Rivières and in Sherbrooke. When I was teaching, I could only deduct expenses as provided under the Act. That was normal for anyone who had an employment income. Given the privileges my colleague demands in the Income Tax Act, Canadian teachers could specifically deduct eight items he identified as teaching related expenses. I would be quite glad for the teachers, but what will we do about the workers who regularly buy tools for their work and are on salary, or have employment income? What will we do about mechanics who work in a garage, have an employment income and must buy all kinds of tools every year to do their job?

Mr. Speaker, you will understand that I could name any occupation where people are paid a salary and have to buy goods for their work in order to earn employment income. Mr. Speaker, you will see that that is where the unfairness lies. In Canada, we cannot think of giving more to one kind of occupation than to another.

My colleague from Restigouche—Chaleur gives me the example of lawyers. I am glad he does, because I will tell him that lawyers have employment income or a salary and are entitled to no deduction except the one now provided for in the Income Tax Act, which is the same as for teachers. Notaries who are on salary are entitled to no other deduction than what teachers have. We could go through all the professions when we compare employment income with business income.

A lawyer who opens an office or starts a business is entitled to claim business related expenses. What the hon. member forgets to point out is that a lawyer who has his own office may not have any income at the end of the year either. He may run a loss. He has no assured income. He has no salary. He has fees if he works and earns them, but if he has no clients. He has no income. Even if he could take all the expenses in the world—

Mr. Plourde: If the clients don't pay.

Mr. Vincent: My colleague from Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, ever the good manager, points out that if the clients do not pay, it comes to the same thing.

We should not confuse what—

Ms. Clancy: In what country do you live? That is not true.

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, could you tell my colleague that she will have her turn to speak. Would you please tell her?

Ms. Clancy: That is not true for lawyers. We are three lawyers here. In what country do you live?

Mr. Vincent: My colleague will find out that we are four lawyers, because I am one too. If she would be so kind as to let me finish my speech it would be appreciated.

We must not confuse what the Income Tax Act considers employment income, a fixed, assured, guaranteed salary, and business income, whether it is a lawyer's office, an architect's office or any profession where the rules for deductions are different. The Income Tax Act is clear. Any expense to earn business income is deductible. The law is there to help people earn a living, but the teacher or lawyer on salary does not have work related expenses. They are assured of a salary that comes every week.

Employment income and business income are treated quite differently in the tax system.

In conclusion I would like my colleagues in the House to think of the injustice that would be done if this bill were passed. Again I agree with what the hon. member said about the work done by teachers in Canada. I have no problem with that, but we have a big problem with tax

fairness, if we allow one category of people with employment income to deduct some items they buy for their work, when no one else can do the same.

• (1930)

We would do a grave injustice to all Canadians.

I see that my time is up. I will close by asking hon. members to think carefully about this subject.

[*English*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to support this bill put forward by my colleague and friend, the hon. member for Restigouche--Chaleur.

It is time a bill of this nature was brought forward, and since we could not get it from the government side, then it is only right it should be brought forward by a caring and thinking member of the teaching profession such as my colleague.

I was astounded at the remarks of the parliamentary secretary because I do not know what country he is living in. He made comments about deductions made for some professionals and not for others that are just not true in many cases.

What we have to understand most clearly about this particular situation is who we are talking about here. We are talking about the profession that spends its time, professional life, working time, in dealing with young Canadians, teaching them, moulding their minds and setting an example for them.

Although sometimes it may be hard to believe, every one in this Chamber went to school for some period or another, and we all had teachers. We all know the tremendous influence, the tremendous amount of effort over and above what is required in the job description that teachers put into their jobs.

I have to admit to a bit of special pleading here. I taught for one year and I was also a substitute teacher in the springs of my university years. Most particularly, my mother was a teacher and a principal for 41 years in the school system in Nova Scotia.

I know at very close hand the kind of commitment and sacrifice members of the teaching profession put into their daily lives. There are very few teachers who work solely from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or whatever the school hours may be. There are endless hours of preparation, endless hours of correcting, endless hours of dealing with students, counselling them, assisting them, being *in loco parentis*, being surrogate parents to their students, frequently dealing with social problems and difficulties that the home is not prepared to deal with. Our school system, much suffering from cutbacks, is unable to deal in an extra-professional sense and the teachers deal with this as well.

Teachers get a bad rap in the country because, yes, there is no question it is a secure job, and it is a well paid job; but not necessarily the be all and end all of pay. Not when you put it up against the hours that are spent after school is closed in volunteer projects with the students, the hours that are spent during summer vacations in volunteer projects with the students, on weekends, Christmas time, March break, and on and on.

My colleague's bill, which gives teachers, a bit of break, particularly in this overtaxed atmosphere we have in this country today, is not a great deal to ask.

I look in particular at the section of the bill that relates to professional expenses. I find it utterly unbelievable that professional expenses are not deductible for teachers. My colleague on the other side talked about the fact lawyers only get to deduct those expenses which relate to their business. That is not true. Lawyers get to deduct their professional fees no matter what they are doing. They get to deduct their memberships in their bar societies; that is a deductible fee. There are other deductible fees as well.

An hon. member: Or union dues.

Ms. Clancy: Or union dues. You are absolutely right. Union dues for teachers should be deductible as well. Absolutely. A wonderful thing, why can you not move it a little further and do professional fees as well? Why can you not do it for mandatory travel expenses on in service days that no one else is paying for but the teacher? No one else is taking care of their hotel bills and no one else is taking care of their travel expenses. Everyone else in a profession gets that kind of relief.

The teachers in this country deserve a better break and this bill is the kind of a break that can give it to them.

My colleague, having been a teacher himself, understands this. There are colleagues on the other side of the House who you would think would understand this as well. This is not something that is going to add immeasurably to the deficit of this country if you pass this bill. This is not something—

Mr. Dorin: $500 million a year.

Ms. Clancy: Five hundred million a year. Show me where you find your figures. I would like to know where you find your figures. I would suggest that he is using an etch-a-sketch rather than a calculator.

This is a fairness issue. If one group of professionals are permitted to behave in this way and to deduct certain things, another group of professionals should be allowed the same thing.

Therefore, it is with the greatest amount of fervour that I say to all members that the private member's bill brought forward by the member for Restigouche—Chaleur deserves the support of this House, deserves the non-partisan support of both sides of this House. Let us see a little fairness for teachers who do so much and do not get, contrary to a lot of people's opinion, a great deal in return.

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to enter into this debate.

I want to say at the outset that earlier this afternoon, as chairman of the finance committee, I tabled a report where we had examined a proposal put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg—St. James. In his particular case he was suggesting that mechanics be allowed to deduct their tools. During the course of that study we also heard from real estate agents who were suggesting that they should be able to deduct the cost of home computers and car telephones and certain other particular things that they are not able to deduct.

This bill by this particular member is along those same lines. It gives me concern for a number of reasons. First of all, almost everyone suggests that the tax system is too complex, its complexity creates unfairness and in many cases—

Ms. Clancy: CAs get to deduct everything.

Mr. Dorin: Not when they are employees they do not.

If we begin down the track of defining a particular tax regime for every type of occupation whether it is mechanics, teachers, real estate agents, what we are doing is not creating fairness, but creating unfairness. Moreover we are creating enormous complexity because virtually everyone will be treated differently within the tax system. One of the primary objectives of the tax system is that people in similar circumstances will be treated the same.

Members of this House will know, and you will know for certain, Mr. Speaker, that for a male member to speak in the House he must wear a tie. It could be argued that because you must wear a tie to do your job as a member of Parliament, ties for members of Parliament should be deductible. We might have to ask what limit we should put on the price and the amount of deduction; over what period of time should we depreciate them.

I know that that is a bit of a facetious example, but it illustrates the difficulty in trying to determine for particular occupations the types of deductions that might be applicable to them and how one would ever draw a line.

I suspect we would even have to spend a great deal of time trying to define what is a teacher. At first blush one could suggest that teachers are persons employed by school boards or post-secondary education institutions.

• (1940)

There are many other types of institutions that employ teachers in various ways. There are many types of educational institutions, so we would again be in a situation of having to determine who would be eligible for these deductions.

I can tell the member after eight years of experience on the finance committee of this House and several years experience in business before coming to the House involved in the tax system, once you start trying to create those definitions and those delineations you have a great many problems.

I should say it is true that employees, teachers, mechanics and others, have expenses involved in their employment. It is also true that up until 1987 there was a general deduction available for people up to a limit of $500 available to all employees to compensate them basically for those types of expenses without having to try and enumerate which particular occupations, teachers, real estate agents or others would be eligible for them.

That deduction was eliminated in the 1988 tax reform along with a number of other deductions. The employment expense deduction and the $1,000 dividend deduction were eliminated also. They were eliminated to do two things; first, simplify the tax system and second, lower the rate. That is the reason they were done.

They were accepted at that time and received good support among the Canadian people. I should mention in passing that the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood has put forward a tax proposal that he calls the single tax. His proposal would go even further in eliminating even more deductions and would attempt to achieve a single tax rate.

Many people speak quite favourably of that, but I am not certain that it could be achieved. In a survey I did in my own constituency from which I have just been counting the replies, that was one of the questions that I asked and a majority of the respondents suggested that we should have what would be called a flat tax.

In other words, we should be eliminating deductions rather than trying to create new ones. In so far as I am concerned, that is the direction we should be trying to go.

There are other difficulties involved in trying to determine deductions for individual groups of employees or occupations.

In our report tabled today, which I think hon. members would find of interest if they are interested in this particular subject because it is applicable to teachers as it is to mechanics and to people in the real estate business, we have listed the various problems and tried to come to some resolution concerning them.

We came to the conclusion that at the end of the day, the only real resolution would be a deduction that could be offered to all qualifying employees. In other words, they would not be segregated by occupation. The deduction would have to be available to employees in general to meet certain expenses that are involved in their employment.

If we are simply going back to giving everybody a deduction of $500, we could simply lower the tax rate and everybody would be just as well off. I am not so sure that that gains what is being suggested here.

However, it was our recommendation, after analysis and consideration and hearing from witnesses in this area, that the Department of Finance make an attempt again to try to come to some definition of what exceptional expenses could be allowed to be deducted by employees in the course of their employment.

It was suggested a little while ago that lawyers, chartered accountants and other professionals are allowed to deduct the kinds of things that are being sought here. To some degree, that is true but that is only when people are self-employed. There is a distinction.

Employees, receive fixed salaries monthly, weekly, annually; they have income. They also have many other types of benefits that go along with that. They are eligible for unemployment insurance, for example. They make the contributions and if they become unemployed, as former employees they can receive unemployment insurance benefits.

People who are self-employed have no such benefits. They are not available to them and they have no guaranteed salaries. In fact, what they have to do is determine whether or not they can find sufficient income to cover the expenses they have.

In some cases, the expenses that they incur may be more than the revenue they take in and they may actually have a loss on the year or even lose money on the year.

That is not the case for employees. They do not lose money during the course of the year. They may lose their job and thereby their income but they are not obligated to lay out money in advance for expenses that are required in order to earn that income. A lawyer or a doctor may have to do that to rent an office and buy equipment. They might have to spend many thousands of dollars in the hope of earning income, but with no guarantee that they would have the income that is provided when one has a fixed job.

I could speak further on this. It is a subject that we spent a great deal of time on in 1987 in the finance committee when we did the 1987 tax reform. It was generally concluded at that time that we wanted to eliminate as many deductions as possible and reduce the over-all tax rate. That was done in 1987. I believe it was the correct move. I believe it would be a step backward to create again individual deductions aimed at particular groups or particular individuals, which this bill and the earlier bill of the hon. member for Winnipeg—St. James suggested.

We want to be very careful. I would suggest that he consult with his colleague in the Liberal Party, the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood, who is going in the opposite direction. In my opinion he is going in a more preferable direction because it would be a system that would be applied to all taxpayers on a basis that would be equally available to them all without determining the particular occupation they are involved in.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak very long today as I understand the limited time that members have to debate this bill.

There were two things that I wanted to mention. First, I would like to respond to my friend from Edmonton Northwest who spoke about the self-employed versus the employed workers in terms of tools. It reminded me of the position of people who work as carpenters in rural and northern parts of this country. Carpenters for all intents and purposes are self-employed but the only work they can get on a steady basis is working as subcontractors on projects contracted out to general contractors. The general contractors will hire individual carpenters as employees but require them to own their own tools.

For all intents and purposes these carpenters are self-employed but for income tax purposes they are very much an employee. As a result the requirement for the job and the expense is treated much differently than if they were self-employed and paying the taxes, as the hon. member for Edmonton Northwest suggested.

I intend to have a very careful look at the report that the member discussed in his remarks. We will certainly provide him with some input from northern Saskatchewan and the perspective of the individual workers in northwest Saskatchewan. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to do that.

Second, regarding the matter at hand, Bill C-342, I want to commend the member who raised this issue today for his communication skills. Obviously teachers throughout Canada are very much aware of the bill today.

Prior to the bill being introduced this evening I received a couple of letters by fax from teachers within my constituency who indicated their awareness of the matter before us and wanted to communicate their support.

• (1950)

I would like to take this opportunity to put on record the communications I received today. One is from Elaine Yaychuk, who represents teachers in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. She indicates the support of the teachers of Meadow Lake for this bill. The second is from an individual teacher named Robert Krismer from North Battleford, Saskatchewan. He is a teacher in the separate school system in North Battleford who communicates his support.

I will read a couple of paragraphs from Mr. Krismer's letter to indicate to the member who put forward this bill and the government the support for this bill that exists among some members of my constituency.

My constituent writes:

> Dear Mr. Taylor, I am writing to you with regard to the bill being introduced to the House on June 10 of this year by the Member for Restigouche—Chaleur, New Brunswick, Mr. Guy Arseneault.
>
> As a teacher, I feel quite strongly that our profession has long been disregarded in this area. Certainly, consideration for deduction of expenses incurred in our area of work would not be a precedent setting move as many other professional, white collar and blue collar workers have been granted this type of concession, in some cases, for quite some time already.
>
> Further, it is not unrealistic to think that many teachers do incur expenses that enable them to be more effective in the classroom, either with the purchase of materials that are used directly in their classrooms or as equipment that help them to plan and prepare for their classes.

He outlines some of his personal expenses like the computer systems he has purchased. He teaches computer literacy classes for grade nine and uses his equipment for storing some of his students' notes. He goes on to say:

> In addition to the purchase of this hardware, I have purchased software so I am able to do this work.
>
> As I said earlier, I think it quite reasonable to conclude that, just as many other professions and occupations purchase materials which assist them in their line of work and are able to claim these as expense deductions, teachers should also be considered for such deductions.
>
> I was happy to learn that Mr. Arseneault had advanced such a piece of legislation and I am asking that you support this bill for me and the several teachers I represent as their councillor here in the Battlefords. I thank you.

Realizing that time is short and members wish to speak I simply want to communicate this information to the House.

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I will try to split what time we have left with my hon. colleague from Moncton.

I would begin by saying that I too have received many pieces of correspondence dealing with this particular issue. As a matter of fact the pile is quite thick. It is not an issue that is strange to me.

What is the issue? The issue is somewhat confused. In some of the letters there is a request that professional fees be covered under the Income Tax Act. Of course that has already been done.

I believe the nub of this issue to be, and I have full and total sympathy for this position, a situation in which teachers are required to go beyond that which is normally defined by the boards of education as a requirement of their jobs.

Teachers are extremely professional in every sense of the term. I know because my wife happens to be a teacher. Not only that, but through her I have met many other teachers.

The mere mention of good teachers versus bad teachers caused me some concern because I think that all teachers are essentially good teachers. They not only convey that which they have learned to tomorrow's leaders but in so doing convey a bit of their hearts, souls and consciences.

What got me involved in this particular subject was a presentation made to me on behalf of a particular teacher who while teaching in a mixed culture school saw that it was an advantage for cross-cultural purposes to teach the children how to make bannock. The school board budget did not permit her to buy flour, sugar and whatever else was needed to make bannock so she brought these materials from her kitchen at home. I wondered whether or not this was going a little bit above and beyond the call of duty. Recognizing that a teacher was doing this, I had to admit teachers would do this normally. Their expectation is that the Government of Canada through the Income Tax Act would some day soon, hopefully sooner than later, recognize this contribution that they make to our upcoming communities. I have no difficulties with that expectation. I do not think it is greedy at all. It is something that I am hopeful we will see happen very soon.

We talk about moneys being made available for these kinds of programs. Someone said that it was a matter of priorities. Someone asked is it fair that where we are today is where we should be? Should we not have progressed further? Today, as a matter of fact, you will recall that merchant marines performing in World War II have now been classed as full veterans with all veterans' benefits, the sort of thing that I am sure all of us felt should have happened a long time ago, not possessing though the necessary financial mechanics to make it happen. It happened today. I would venture to say that what the teachers are asking for, which will as well affect all those who require tools of the trade or expenditures over and above that which a normal salaried person is required to provide to their job, will some day be recognized. Again, I hope that it happens sooner than later.

I would just take one or two minutes more and say for those not knowing the background of government funding that does occur, through two systems of funding known as EPF and CAP the federal government grants this money to the provinces, which in turn take traditionally used EPF money for education and for hospitalization. The strings are no longer attached to EPF that way. EPF is used by the provinces as they see fit. In negotiating with teachers, with school boards, I would have to ask: Is it fair to expect now that this money has come from the federal government to the provincial governments that they should look at the broader picture of education? Education goes beyond books and pencils, reading, writing and arithmetic. It goes into society, as I have explained earlier.

Is it fair that maybe the school board should pay greater heed to some of these extra costs? Certainly I think we all agree in this Chamber that it is not fair for the teachers themselves to be expected to take their professionalism into the classroom, dig down deep into their pockets and supplement an educational system that will help all of us.

The matter before us is not whether or not the *status quo* is fair. I think we all agree that it is not fair. Who said that taxation was ever fair? We can only hope to strive to continue to make it fairer. I would hope that the thrust of what we have before us today becomes law in the not too distant future.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for sharing part of the time with me so that I can have an opportunity to speak on this particular bill.

I should say that when you listen to what the government says, in most cases in the response you get you wonder about its commitment to education and its search for excellence in education. If you look at some of the things that teachers are talking about that they would like to have, some relief as far as the tax system is concerned, there are things like educational improvement expenses, such as registration fees and cost of books and travel and living expenses. Or, they want the cost of purchasing teaching materials for audio-visual and those types of things that are not supplied by school boards, and the cost of purchasing equipment such as computers and computer software and the cost of books that are necessary for them to do their jobs.

When you look at those expenses and then you hear some of the members opposite with their excuses, you wonder where their commitment is. If their commitment is to education, obviously their commitment has to be to the teachers, because they are the vehicles utilized in part for this search for excellence in education. We need to show a strong commitment to education and show that commitment to the teachers who are the integral part of delivering that service.

On top of that, a tax system has to be fair and must be seen to be fair. As I listen to the objections, I come to the conclusion that the teachers are talking about fairness as the excuse of continuing to be unfair, rather than trying to correct the unfairness in the system. That could be achieved, quite frankly, by taking a look at this type of exemption. If some day somebody should see the wisdom of doing a flat tax, then all would be treated equal and there would be fairness in the system. We would not have to be requesting these types of items.

I know that my time is short, but I think that it is time to become proactive.

• (2000)

Let us do something positive. Let us send a clear message to teachers in this country that we are with them and we are supportive of them.

I have heard some objections and some concerns as to what may happen. There are some nuances and there are some changes, and those types of things. Maybe the best place for this would be at a committee to really go through and take a look at those.

If I could get unanimous consent of all my colleagues, I would move a motion that this be referred to a committee, perhaps even the finance committee, to review this bill. I would ask for unanimous consent for a motion that this be moved to the finance committee for study.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. McDermid that Bill C-48, an act to amend the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof, be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I will continue my remarks on Bill C-48.

As I said earlier, I support the legislation but I certainly have some very serious concerns about the process the government followed to reach the stage where this legislation is today.

First of all, this legislation was needed as much five years ago as it is today. It is five years since Justice Estey recommended this type of legislation in the report. It has taken five years for this government to bring in the legislation. The result of the government dragging its feet may have been the failure for at least one trust company, Standard Trust. Standard was closed with a regulator last summer even though it might have been saved by forcing a merger with a healthy financial institution.

That option was not open for Standard Trust because this legislation had not been passed. Of course, Standard was forced to close its doors. Now we are seeing the same threat of failure facing Central Guaranty and perhaps First City.

After five years, the government decided to table the legislation. After tabling the legislation, the government decided to consult with the banks, the trust companies and all those affected by the legislation. It decided after it had tabled it that it should get their views on it.

Needless to say, the best time for consultation is before legislation is tabled, not after it is tabled. After the legislation was tabled, the Canadian Bankers' Association indicated to me that it had very serious and substantial concerns about this legislation.

A lot of these concerns could have been avoided if the government had consulted with the industry before tabling the legislation. After the government tabled it, it is very interesting to note that the finance officials told us in a briefing that there were only minor technical concerns about this bill. The concerns were only minor and technical and therefore we should pass it right away.

Certainly there was no lack of opposition to this bill. When we started to study this bill in the finance committee, we heard witness after witness criticizing the bill, saying it was poorly drafted, it was poorly thought out and it was in need of a lot of revision.

Many of these concerns and problems certainly could have been eliminated if the government had consulted the industry, as it should have, before it tabled the legislation.

I am sure many Canadians read some of the headlines in the newspapers concerning Bill C–48. For example, on February 3 *The Globe and Mail* headlined "Ottawa Moving Quickly to Give CDIC Sweeping Powers". On February 15 *The Toronto Star* headlined "Bankers see Gaping Holes in Proposed Law".

As I said, the government was really trying to ram this bill through. Commenting on that was *The Globe and Mail* on April 27 in an article entitled "How Not to Rush a Reform Bill Through Parliament".

Those headlines certainly highlight a very flawed process. It was flawed because the government did not adequately consult the groups involved: the banks, the insurance companies, the other financial institutions. The lack of consultation led to misunderstanding and even mistrust.

What happened was that we in the finance committee spent a great deal of time in our meetings discussing details that should have been resolved long before the legislation was ever tabled. All the while we were never told why the government was so insistent on passing this legislation right away. The government wanted it passed the minute it was tabled, even though it had delayed the legislation for five years.

Some people said that it was to save Central Guaranty Trust. If that had been the case, a private member's bill could have been introduced to take care of that situation. There was no excuse for the government trying to rush this legislation through, especially when it gave no explanation even when we asked. There was no excuse either for the government not consulting with the finance industry, the banks, the trust and loan companies. Certainly there was no excuse for waiting over five years to table this legislation in the House.

Even though I said we had many concerns about the process the government followed, nevertheless the finance committee, the finance department and the industry worked together to co–operate on this bill.

It is important legislation. We feel it is very important that the Superintendent of Financial Institutions has the power that Bill C–48 will give him.

We made a lot of amendments in the bill, amendments which we feel will strengthen and give CDIC a better chance to help a troubled financial institution.

I want to take a minute to talk about the CDIC. The Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation was established in 1967 to provide deposit insurance to people who had deposits in financial institutions that belonged to this corporation. It was to promote stability in the Canadian financial system which is so important. Certainly we realize that when we read the newspaper articles and magazine articles about what is happening south of the border. CDIC is financed by premiums paid by banks and trust companies who are CDIC members. As I mentioned, they will guarantee up to $60,000 for the depositors, for financial institutions that belong to the corporation.

• (2010)

As well as that, CDIC will also guarantee or co-sign loans to unhealthy financial institutions that need backstop money to keep operating. They set standards for sound business and financial practices for financial institutions.

Bill C-48, as I mentioned earlier, really gives the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation the power to take over a troubled institution and to work out some kind of a restructuring deal. That could involve selling the financial institution whole or simply selling off parts of the institution to get it on a more secure footing. That is giving a lot of power to the regulators. Therefore, we felt it was very important that the situation and the conditions under which the regulators can go in and take over that financial institution be spelled out in legislation. This is so that they cannot just walk in and do it. There are very specific situations spelled out in the legislation.

The committee made important amendments to the bill. First, we gave CDIC more flexibility for the kind of restructuring deals it can do. At the same time, we also restricted it somewhat by giving it the power to seize an institution only when it believes it has a buyer. Therefore, if CDIC cannot find a buyer but seizes the institution, then the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation would end up running that financial institution. However, that is not its job. That is why we wanted to amend the bill so that CDIC cannot seize it unless it feels there is a good chance to sell it or get it on a better financial footing.

It is certainly not an easy job to find a buyer for a troubled financial institution. It was indicated in the press that First City Trust had contacted 45 prospective buyers and only 20 were interested enough to look at its books. Only 1 out of the 45 prospective buyers came forth with an offer. That was North American Life.

The amendment that we made in committee was to force the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation to look for potential purchases of a failing financial institution before moving in on that institution.

We then opened up the bill in committee to the provinces so that if a provincial finance minister has a financial institution that is in financial trouble then he or she can ask the CDIC to take it over and merge it with a healthy institution or simply take it over and sell off part of the assets and liabilities to put it on a firmer basis.

We want the federal government to work closely with the provinces. We also want Ottawa and the provincial governments to eliminate a lot of this red tape in regulations that really adds to the cost of doing business. Of course, that cost is passed on to the consumer of financial institutions in the way of higher service charges and higher interest rates and so on.

The situation in Canada today is that there could be a federal trust company doing business across the country which would have to report to 11 different jurisdictions. That means Ottawa and each province. Just imagine the amount of red tape and the cost involved in that.

I want to conclude my remarks on Bill C-48 by again indicating that I certainly support third reading of this legislation. However, I want to repeat my displeasure with the whole process that was followed by the government.

There's the fact that the government took five years to bring in this legislation. It was five years after Mr. Justice Estey made his report. I want to register my displeasure with the lack of consultation and discussion that took place with the financial institutions involved before this bill was tabled. There's also the lack of progress made by this government in cutting the provincial-federal red tape for financial institutions.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to start my remarks where the previous speaker left off. That is with Mr. Justice Estey.

In 1985 we had some western banks that went down the tubes. We had no provision. There was no provision in legislation that allowed for any kind of restructuring of financial institutions in Canada.

I suppose it was not really brought home to us about the fragility of the financial institution structure in this country because after all it did not often happen that a bank went down. Banks did not very often go bankrupt in Canada. The last time, before the one in 1985, was probably 60 years ago.

Mr. Justice Estey brought down his report and he recommended that you have to have some permanent mechanism whereby you can restructure a financial institution that gets into trouble.

We solved the problems of those three banks: the Northland Bank, the Bank of British Columbia and the CCB. We solved that by passing a bill in this House, Bill C–27, in which we pumped in a whole pile of money and we paid off the depositors. Then we paid the Bank of Hong Kong to take over the Bank of British Columbia.

We did that and then Parliament went to sleep. The Department of Finance snoozed. As I used to say: "If you snooze you lose". They snoozed like the fellow in the story. What was his name? He went bowling in the forest and fell asleep. It was Rip Van Winkle.

They went to sleep. They did nothing about acting on the recommendations of Mr. Justice Estey until the recent experience of the collapse of the trust sector of financial institutions in this country. That, of course, has been exacerbated by the recession and by the fact that trust companies put a lot more of their money into commercial real estate than banks do. We all know what has happened to commercial real estate in this country.

Accompanying that were the changes we made with deregulating the financial institutional structures of this country. I want to remind the House that at that time, when we passed those bills, Bill C–4, Bill C–19, Bill C–28 and Bill C–34, we on this side of the House predicted that we were letting the animals out of the cages.

We said the first animals to be eaten would be the trust companies. We said that the trust companies were equivalent to cobras, the insurance companies were equivalent to mongooses and the banks were equivalent to lions.

• (2020)

We predicted at that time that the mongoose would kill the cobras and in the end the lions would get them all. It is not accidental that the Royal Bank's logo is a lion grasping the world to its chest. That is not just accidental, it is a sign of the times.

The whole thesis of this Tory government approach, this neo–Conservative approach, is that we have to build global competitors in Canada. Therefore if we are going global we need some sumo wrestlers not those old regular Hulk Hogans, to wrestle for us. We have to go big, and the bigger the better.

I want to put on the record what we are witnessing today. Take a look at what is happening. Take a good hard look. In the last 20 years 24 financial institutions have gone down the tubes, and most of them are trust companies. Last year four of them went down the tubes. It is not accidental. Lo and behold, Bill C–48 was tabled in this House and we had second reading. Then the phones starting ringing as the Minister of State for Finance wanted to know how soon we could get to C–48. How soon can we get it passed?

The government said we needed this bill. Of course I know why it needed the bill. It needed the bill because it had some cobras who were pretty big cobras. My colleague mentioned Central Guaranty. Of course there is Central Guaranty Trust and there is one still out there sitting in the wings, Royal Trust.

I predict that by the time the next three years have gone by there will only be two trust companies left in this country large enough to exist, Canada Trust and National Trust.

The government introduced this bill and then started putting the pressure on the members of the committee. I got phone calls almost every day from the minister's office asking: "How soon can we expedite this bill?" When we got the bill to committee I asked very straightforward questions of the officials in light of the fact that financial institutions bills do not go to the committee unless there has been consultation among the major players. Has that taken place with this particular bill? When the dust cleared no consultations had taken place at all. This bill was rushed through Parliament and it was brought into committee.

Justice Estey said this bill should not go forward until we have made some major changes to the bill. All the major witnesses who appeared before the committee gave evidence that there had to be changes to the bill.

If one were to compare this to a bankruptcy bill it is a bankruptcy restructuring for financial institutions, as compared to the bill we are going to deal with later this evening that deals with those corporations and individuals other than financial institutions. This is the bankruptcy bill for financial institutions.

I suppose that the new role of the CDIC—and we must understand the structure. I want people who are watching to understand the structure and how it works, and maybe the minister can listen for his enlightenment.

First, there is a regulator, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, better known as OSFI. He is the policeman on the block. Then there is CDIC, the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation. Its chairman is Mr. Ron McKinlay. He is the undertaker, he performs the undertaking functions in the financial institutional structure. When the patient is dead they bring in Mr. McKinlay. He makes sure that the body is properly prepared and he also hands out the estate.

This is the kind of structure that we have. Then there are the functions of the Minister of Finance.

We examined the bill. What does the bill do? The main function of the bill is that it now provides for what is called a Financial Institutions Restructuring Process, better known as FIRP. I could sing that song:

Ol' McKinlay had a bill, ee-i-ee-i-oh;

With a FIRP, FIRP here and a FIRP, FIRP there,

Ol' McKinlay had a bill.

He can FIRP off any time he wants. If he sees an institution that is in trouble he can FIRP it. He can say: "FIRP you", and it is FIRPed. He can see another one that is weak and say: "You're FIRPed", and it is FIRPed.

What does it mean when you FIRP an institution? What are the details of FIRPing? What is the foreplay involved in a FIRP?

There are 12 easy steps. It is like the *Kama Sutra* for financial institutions. There are 12 steps that must be gone through. I will not bore the House with the 12 steps, but it is a process by which the institution is taken over by CDIC.

As a socialist I do not object to this idea. This is one way that we could have social ownership of the financial institutional structure, without having to nationalize any of them. I have no basic philosophical opposition to FIRPing it.

The CDIC recommends a FIRP to the minister and the minister carries on with the FIRP. Then a deal is cut. They make it sound like it would be over a weekend, they would do the FIRP on a Friday and on Monday they would be able to carry on business as usual with a new owner.

We have no problem with the FIRP. In fact, the FIRP gives the assurance to Canadian taxpayers that it is the least costly to them, because if that financial institution had gone down the tubes it could cost the taxpayers of Canada a lot more than the FIRPing process and the pay-out under the CDIC. Mr. McKinlay said that if Shoppers Trust had gone down the tubes it would have cost the taxpayers in excess of $3 billion.

This leads us to one of the other provisions in the bill. This is why in the bill Mr. McKinlay and CDIC want to increase the amount of money that it can borrow from the Government of Canada from $3 billion to $6 billion. Obviously, it is going to be getting ready for a whole lot of FIRPing going on.

• (2030)

They want to make sure they have a lot of bucks, because if they have to get into all these others that are sitting on the sideline wavering, you are talking about bigger bucks yet to come.

The bill also includes an increase from $3 billion to $6 billion of potential borrowings by CDIC from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. That raised a question with us in the committee.

Think of the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation as a club. You want to join the club or you want your financial institution to join the club. You pay the premiums or dues into the club. Then you are a member of the club.

Now the club has some rules. One of the rules is that if you are having problems, if you are seeming to have to borrow more and more money to pay your commitments, if the thing is going down and Mr. McKinlay has to FIRP you, he can FIRP anybody in the club but he cannot FIRP a member of the club who is under provincial jurisdiction.

I want to say that if you are going to FIRP one, you have to be able to FIRP them all. One FIRP is as good as another FIRP. Let us get it straight. I have never seen a FIRP that is different. The minister said: "You cannot FIRP it". Why can you not FIRP it? You cannot FIRP it because it is under provincial jurisdiction.

Then we had the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs getting into the FIRPing act. He writes to us and says: "Dear Don and Company". He was referring to the chairman of the committee, the member for Mississauga South. He says: "Dear Don and Company, you cannot FIRP them". I did not think this thing had constitutional ramifications. I thought a FIRP was a FIRP. Now it has all of these very serious constitutional ramifications.

That was one of the shortcomings of the bill. If you want to join the club and you pay your dues to join the club, then you follow the rules of the club.

The other club members have to be able to protect themselves by being able to FIRP you. What happens is that provincial institutions can suck and blow at the same time. They can go with whatever federal rules they like, and if they do not like them they can claim protection under the provincial rules. We said: "You cannot do that".

We ended up doing a little mishmash thing here. We went half way and said: "With the permission of the provincial minister, we can FIRP them". That is the situation with the FIRPs.

Concerning the other question that arose, you have to understand what I said before. The bulk of these financial institutions that have gone down or have had problems have been trust companies. The banks came along. The lions came along and said: "Roar, roar. Just a minute now. The ones going down in this club are all those trust companies and yet they pay the same premiums as we do". They say: "This is not fair". Imagine the banks saying: "This is not fair". They did. Honest to goodness. They said that this was not fair, that those having the greater risk should pay the higher premiums. Justice Estey did comment on that and said: "There should be some sort of co-insurance".

Are you giving me the fingers, Mr. Speaker? I see it and I will try not to abuse this. I see you are giving me two fingers. Well, that is good. If you have to go, Mr. Speaker, do not feel that I am holding you up.

Justice Estey did comment on the fact that the banks had a point here. I have to say the banks had a point.

Another question the committee had to deal with was the whole question of what happens, for example, when an institution is FIRPed on a Thursday. If that institution is a trust company it will usually have a clearer, that is a bank.

Will the bank continue to clear the cheques for the FIRP institution? If the banks stop clearing the cheques will the FIRP institution go down the tubes? The banks need some assurance from CDIC or from the Bank of Canada that in fact the commitments will be honoured. We finally got that commitment from the minister.

In conclusion, there is one other thing that remains to be dealt with. Hopefully we will do that at a later date when we look again at this whole structure. We have to bring OSFI and CDIC together. This is a recommendation from Justice Estey and we have to deal with it.

I support the bill at third reading. My party supports this FIRPing and all the other restructurings that are included. We are not a party opposed to FIRPing. I will end on the words of Justice Estey: "We need this legislation because there may be something out there lurking in the woods".

An hon. member: Tigers.

Mr. Rodriguez: Tigers or lions.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, it is always difficult to follow the member for Nickel Belt as he goes through a very torturous explanation of things through analogy.

Mr. Rodriguez Torturous? It was entertaining.

Mr. Rideout: Yes, torturous. I was worried that he was going to be FIRPed. One of the suggestions I might make is that the member for Nickel Belt be FIRPed every once in a while.

This bill has really taken a very interesting course. It was brought forward. It was an important piece of legislation that had to be dealt with immediately. We all jumped to the ready to deal with it. The government said we must get it through quickly with no delay: quick, quick, quick. It had to be done.

Then we heard things like: "We have consulted with everyone. Everyone thinks this bill is wonderful. It is really going to be a great piece of legislation. All get on board and don't worry. Everything will be fine". As soon as we got it into committee, lo and behold, the brakes went on and went on hard. They remained on hard until we could get some amendments to the legislation to make it work.

The Canadian Bankers' Association and retired Supreme Court Justice Willard Estey both came to the committee and urged us to make changes. Both groups said the bill was properly aimed and it was doing the right thing.

As my colleague from Nickel Belt has said, this idea of a FIRP, Financial Institution Restructuring Process, is an important function and a power that they should have. But the bill was basically flawed and changes needed to be done. That is the purpose of committees and we performed that.

Lo and behold, we had the bill pretty well all done and then it languished on the shelf. Whatever the urgent reason for this bill, it suddenly disappeared and it languished for the longest period of time.

It is now back before the House. We on this side, as my colleague from Malpeque has indicated, are very supportive of the bill. It is a good piece of legislation, but we have to look at the reasons why. I think it was captured. I was in the finance committee on Monday. We dealt with CDIC and some of its problems. It was carried in *The Globe and Mail* on June 10 and summarized the situation. The headline read: "Sickies double CDIC's costs. Ill financial firms up significantly". The article reads:

> The "sick list" of troubled Canadian financial institutions has grown so large that the cost of running Canada Deposit Insurance Corp. more than doubled last year and its staff is more than twice as large as it was five years ago.

• (2040)

That is the problem we are facing. Our financial institutions are under attack. We have seen what has happened, the number of failures that have occurred. Part of the problem rests with their inability to FIRP. That sounds like such a terrible thing. In fact when the member for Nickel Belt was talking I wanted to remind him that there might be children listening to the analogies that he was utilizing. However, there is a need to FIRP and all of us should FIRP once in a while.

In this particular case the legislation is going to handle that major problem. The testimony of Mr. Justice Estey and Mr. MacKenzie who heads up OSFI would be most illustrative of the problem. I would like to quote first from Mr. Justice Estey: "The idea of a FIRP is an essential element now missing in our banking system. Where I would like to see more action can be expressed this way: We should not govern this country by knee–jerk special acts. We should try to pass bankruptcy acts and not special acts for each bankruptcy. We should not have a crisis every time a bank or trust company folds".

Again I quote Mr. MacKenzie at the financial committee: "The present situation is extremely frustrating for someone in my position, because a regulator at this stage cannot force a going concern solution if the owners or if other parties, for example bankers who have loaned money to a parent company, do not want to accept it. Therefore we are trying to fill in this gap with this legislation to allow the regulators to say to people: Look, if you do not face up to the reality of the situation and how bad it is and deal with *x–y* company or *z* bank or whatever to get an appropriate takeover of the whole thing, then you are going to have to do this process and we will force you".

I think that is the issue. Regulators now have a weapon called a FIRP to jump in and try to rescue the situation.

We are going to see some benefits from that. I agree with the comments made before that it is probably the threat of a FIRP rather than the FIRP itself which is going to cause the greatest good. I do not think we are going to see all kinds of FIRPing going on across the land.

There will only be the threat of a FIRP that will really force the change, make positive things happen and force companies to face up to it because no financial institution would want to have the regulators involved in their day–to–day operations if they can dispose of those assets and make the changes without that happening. We on this side see there is a benefit with respect to the threat of a FIRP.

My colleague from Nickel Belt also alluded to an interesting factor. It was fascinating to get a letter from the minister responsible for intergovernmental affairs asking us not to allow the FIRPing of provincial financial institutions.

I can see the constitutional issue, but it still does not make very much sense to me that a financial institution that is provincial in charter can stand and tell all Canadians that it has Canadian deposit insurance protection and they can put all their money into that institution and be protected. At the same time the Canadian Deposit Insurance Corporation does not have the power necessary to come in and take over that organization and protect the taxpayers of Canada and all the other people who are paying premiums to the Canadian Deposit Insurance Corporation. That to me is crazy.

I still think the compromise is not a good compromise, that we must go on bended knee to the premier of each province and say: "Can we FIRP your financial institution?"

That is going to take time and time is the essential element in this whole process. If we are to salvage an insolvent company or a company that is bordering on insolvency then we have to move quickly to arrange buyers and to make those kinds of deals in order to make it work. If part of the process is to go on bended knee to a provincial premier to ask if we can do it, and that premier is dealing with all the political ramifications associated with it happening, I think the process is going to fail and more people are going to lose money with these failed provincial institutions. I do not see the merit or concern and I do not accept that.

The guy who plays is the guy who should pay. What we know for sure is that the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation is the one that is going to have to pay. If provincial organizations want the benefit of that insurance then they should sign on for the consequences of a FIRP should they get into financial difficulties.

I am very worried about the present status when you read the headlines I referred to earlier:

'Sickies' double CDIC's costs.

If you read on in that particular article in *The Globe and Mail*, the organization is asking for a doubling of the amount of money they can ask the federal government to give them out of general revenue in order to keep financial institutions afloat.

We are facing a major problem. I am very concerned about a problem we are facing right now and I hope this legislation can facilitate that problem when it deals with the company called Central Trust. We know it is for sale. There has been a problem with that particular organization. As a maritimer or Atlantic Canadian. I feel sad about that institution being in difficulty and knowing some of the people involved in that corporation.

It was the one financial institution that had a base in Atlantic Canada. The best branches were in Atlantic Canada and it was the only institution that provided that mechanism for Atlantic Canadians to get financial support, to judge the loans partly on the individuals because they knew them from their neighbourhood. This was rather than having, as we say in Atlantic Canada, the large institutions in upper Canada tell us who is going to get a loan and who is not.

In that sense it saddens me to see what is going on, but I am even sadder by the idea that all the best branches are going to be picked. They will go to some of the other financial institutions such as North American Life and perhaps the National Bank.

At the same time the poorer branches and the problems are going to be left with Central Trust. Then the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation could perhaps be called upon to have to bail out that segment that is left. That is going to increase the costs.

I believe that Mr. MacKenzie and OSFI are going to be in a position to deal with that particular situation and use the FIRPing provisions that are here in order to bring forward the best deal. It may still be with the National Bank or North American Life or it may be with another institution, but those are the types of powers this bill will give to our financial institution regulators.

In that sense, we are pleased to support the bill. We want to see it in place as quickly as possible so that the financial institution organizations will have the necessary protections.

In conclusion I want to comment on one other minor thing. It was a recommendation from Mr. Justice Estey about OSFI. When I say OSFI, I mean the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. We deal with all these fancy little initials and nobody can figure out what they mean. That is why FIRPing has such an exciting connotation. It is really not all that great.

Look at both the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and the Canada Deposit Insurance Company and the functions they perform. Mr. Justice Estey said that maybe Canadians and the Canadian government would get a bigger bang for their buck if these were put together because they perform roughly the same functions and there is some duplication.

We do see CDIC growing by leaps and bounds when you hear their staff has doubled in the last five years and their budget has gone up dramatically in the last couple of years. You can see perhaps that there may be some benefit in taking a look at bringing those two organizations together and perhaps effecting some savings. That is something that will be left for another day. Hopefully that day will come soon so we can go back and take a look at that concept.

We are supportive of this legislation. I thank all the colleagues on the finance committee who studied this legislation because they did pick off some of the errors and some of the mistakes that were brought forward by a hastily prepared bill. I think we have a better piece of legislation. Thanks to the committee and thanks to the witnesses who came forward.

• (2050)

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, as someone who at one time, and this was quite some time ago, worked for three banks, including the Bank of Montreal, perhaps I may offer my comments on this bill. I believe I am now considered a fairly good critic, at least I hope so, of the banking industry.

[*English*]

Any legislation that will serve to strengthen the confidence that all Canadians have in our financial institutions is obviously something that we in the Official Opposition would like to support.

The fact of the matter is that this government has done more to sabotage that confidence than to build it. Bill C–48 is an exception, as just indicated by the member for Moncton. It adequately addresses many of the problems that the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation has been faced with when confronting financial institutions on the verge of failure. As my colleagues from Malpeque and Moncton have just indicated, our party will support this bill.

I would like to use my brief time this evening to speak of the absurd fiasco that has haunted the path to CDIC reform. In 1985, two banks in my own province of Alberta met a tragic and inglorious fate. The Northland Bank and the Canadian Commercial Bank suddenly collapsed under the weight of too many high risk liabilities and several bad investments. I might say the collapse of real estate in my province was a major factor in both those banks' problems.

CDIC was on the hook for $417 million in insured deposits for those two banks alone. These were the only two financial institutions to fail, other than trust companies, since the Great Depression. That was in 1985, seven years ago. The Berlin wall has come down, the Soviet Union has dissolved, yet the government has just now woken up to the fact that the CDIC needed to have broader powers over financial institutions in trouble in order to avoid the problems, the misery and the suffering of people associated with the collapse of the CCB and the Northland Bank.

The minister responsible at the time, who is now the Secretary of State for External Affairs, was very concerned, as she ought to have been then. Unfortunately, she was not able to transform her concern into meaningful action. Perhaps her colleagues would not let her.

The renowned Justice Willard Estey, now a business person, was asked to investigate the failures. He stands today as one of the main authors of the bill before the House tonight. The problem is that it is now 1992 and the matter should have been taken care of years ago.

In December 1985, the Senate banking committee reported that the CDIC should be granted broader powers to assist financial institutions in difficulty.

In an article in *The Globe and Mail* published December 26, 1985, reporter Bruce Little wrote that the Senate committee: "said that the CDIC should not take over the role of primary regulator of banks and federally incorporated trust and loan companies, but should move in when institutions run into trouble". That is exactly, thankfully, what this bill attempts to do.

To use a somewhat macabre analogy, the CDIC will now be able to act as doctor in nursing a financial institution back to health, rather than as an undertaker.

Since this bill was introduced in the House last December it has been the subject of some tumultuous hearings of the House finance committee. A bill that could have been passed expeditiously, I believe with the co–operation of our party—I cannot speak for the other opposition members—was subjected to barbs from various industry groups who had not been given the opportunity to give their input on the bill in the drafting process. That was, I believe, a major error and one that demeans

our legislative process. It was delayed, I might add, on the advice of such great consumer advocates as the Canadian Bankers' Association. This is the same Canadian Bankers' Association that wants now to reduce the maximum level of insurable deposits from $60,000 to $20,000. We know whose interests they are looking after. The people of Canada, especially small depositors who are most at risk, deserve better than that from a strong Canadian industry and the organization which speaks for it, the CBA.

I have been critical in the past of how the CDIC has dealt with certain failures only because those failures could have been prevented had this reform taken place at the right time long ago.

I would ask my colleagues to hearken back to the summer of October 22, 1985. That is when the former auditor of the Northland Bank appeared before the Senate banking committee investigating the failure of two banks.

In his testimony, Crawford Smith noted the following: "I personally think that had the public not lost confidence and begun withdrawing deposits, the bank would have survived".

This arises from the belief that the CDIC could only intervene in the operation of a financial institution if it had already failed. By virtue of its traditional role as an undertaker of financial institutions, once the CDIC appointed a curator to run the Northland Bank, it was by all accounts clinically dead.

At what cost did this occur? The CDIC was forced to compensate insured depositors to the tune of $161 million and it threw about 200 Albertans, many of them residents of Edmonton, out of work.

What other results has the outdated mandate of the CDIC wrought on our financial institutions across Canada? In 1983 the collapse of the Alberta based Fidelity Trust Company cost taxpayers $359 million to repay depositors. The 1987 rehabilitation of the North-West Trust cost the CDIC $275 million. More recently, the Standard Trust Company, the Standard Loan Company, the Bank of Credit and Commerce Canada and the Saskatchewan Trust Company will all need assistance from public sources to satisfy depositors and investors.

Central Guaranty and First City Trust are currently in dire straits. Hopefully the passage of this legislation will allow those two firms to pull out of the fire that they now find themselves in.

This bill will transform the CDIC into a body that will build confidence in financial institutions rather than take away the respirator. As most Canadians know, if there is anything that is desperately needed in Canada's economic environment, it is confidence, the more confidence the better.

Why are we on this side concerned about the sluggishness of this initiative? It is kind of like molasses flowing up a very steep hill in Alberta, in January.

If anybody has had the chance to look at the financial condition of the CDIC lately, the answer is clear. In calendar year 1990 the corporation borrowed $1.28 billion from the federal government in order to compensate depositors. Last year, in 1991, $1.9 billion was needed. CDIC debts stood at around $600 million at the end of 1991. Obviously any new action that would help the corporation aid institutions without decapitating them, without killing them, would have a positive effect on the deficit, a deficit which members know has been virtually more than doubled since this group opposite took office in 1984.

I would conclude by reminding the House that we certainly welcome this legislation on this side. But dilly-dallying around with important measures like this for years and years and years has to stop. The failures I mentioned earlier could have been prevented had the lessons of the failure of Northland and the CCB been acted upon right away with due diligence, with responsibility and with concern for the people of Canada.

Just a couple of days ago I spoke on Bill C-78 dealing with amendments to several pieces of legislation to enhance the rights of Canada's 3.3 million disabled fellow citizens. It is another bill that has been delayed, studied, toyed with and eventually watered down by a terribly discredited government. Indeed, the polls will show it is the most unpopular government in Canadian history, at least since they started taking polls, and they call the Liberal opposition obstructionist.

• (2100)

Finally, I hope the government has learned a lesson from this bill. Consumer confidence in our financial institutions of all sorts is not something that any government worthy of the name should trifle with. I do not know why the government would want to treat this matter lightly either. I think we will all stand a little taller when this bill becomes the law of the land.

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.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Carried on division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BANKRUPTY ACT AND INSOLVENCY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)) moved that Bill C-22, an act to amend the Bankruptcy Act and to amend the Income Tax Act in consequence thereof, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to Bill C-22, which proposes to reform the Bankruptcy Act. I know members opposite will agree that this bill has been a long time in coming and that our economy desperately needs this legislation.

Canada must have bankruptcy legislation that reflects the realities of 1990, not 1949. Our country needs legislation that is easy to implement, effective and less costly for taxpayers and that requires less expense and effort on the part of those who must use it as a last resort.

Canada wants bankruptcy legislation that is fair to creditors. Above all, we must have legislation that gives companies in financial difficulty more breathing space in which to reorganize their affairs.

Bill C-22 contains a number of key objectives.

First, the bill aims to strike a better balance between the rights of various classes of creditors and the rights of creditors and debtors. It will also update the legislation to make it more effective, less costly and easier to implement on a day to day basis.

The new legislation will also make it possible for individuals and businesses to restructure and, if possible, avoid bankruptcy.

The thrust of this reform is to provide a mechanism that will safeguard businesses that have the misfortune to be in financial difficulty but are still viable. It is not, as I have said from time to time, to give artificial respiration to businesses that are clinically dead but to ensure that businesses that are viable get the help they need to keep going. Thanks to this mechanism, we will save thousands of jobs.

The bill stresses restructuring, not liquidation. These changes are something we have needed for a long time. As I said earlier, the Bankruptcy Act was passed in 1949. Members on both sides of the House are aware that today's market requires legislation that provides a greater degree of equity, effectiveness and certainty.

The new series of bankruptcy provisions we have developed considers the needs of debtors, creditors, consumers and suppliers. We succeeded in getting this bill where it is today because we consulted a great many people, because we also listened to the people we consulted, and also because we provided the flexibility and initiative that were required in this process.

I realize that members on both sides of the House are disappointed that the government rejected the proposals for wage claim protection.

[*English*]

I would remind those members that in the absence of consensus on how to provide wage protection, we must move forward where there is consensus. Canadian work-

ers will indeed significantly benefit from this legislation which helps companies avoid bankruptcy altogether.

This piece of legislation is very much designed to protect Canadian jobs. It gives companies time to restructure in order to survive. Had previous Parliaments been able to pass this legislation, there is no telling how many companies might have survived this recession. There is no telling how many jobs might have been saved.

We cannot fail where Parliaments before have failed. This seventh attempt to reform Canada's bankruptcy laws must succeed. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell put the matter very well last May 22 when the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations tabled its report.

I would like to thank him for his intervention on that occasion when he said: "Hundreds of thousands of jobs are at stake if we do not get the new bankruptcy law. I do not want to see any more workers lose their jobs in the depths of this recession. We need to help workers immediately. I do not want to see this delayed any further, notwithstanding my great desire to have the wage earner protection plan which I certainly hope the government will introduce at the earliest opportunity".

The government shares my hon. friend's concern for a wage earner protection program. This issue will be given the highest priority when the act comes up for parliamentary review in three years.

The government also strongly agrees with my hon. colleague that now is the time to act. We do not want to see this reform delayed any further, not when thousands of jobs may be at stake.

[*Translation*]

Bill C–22 vastly improves the effectiveness and fairness of the federal Bankruptcy Act. By making provisions relating to restructuring more flexible and accessible, Bill C–22 helps safeguard jobs while providing businesses and individuals with greater leeway to turn the situation around without having to resort prematurely to bankruptcy. By providing businesses and individuals in financial difficulty with more breathing space to negotiate with their creditors, Bill C–22 helps avoid unnecessary bankruptcies and, as a result, helps to safeguard jobs. By expanding the rights of unpaid suppliers, Bill C–22 helps to counter the familiar domino effect.

• (2110)

By eliminating Crown priority in some cases, Bill C–22, I am sure you will agree, makes bankruptcy rules more equitable. As hon. members are aware, the new provisions are the result of intensive consultations conducted by the government and the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations.

Both the government and the standing committee consulted with industry, the unions, consumers, financial institutions, legal experts and the provinces. Mr. Speaker, this reform was not planned in a vacuum by people who never had to manage a payroll or a budget. Those with concerns about the new proposals had ample opportunity to express their views and make a very positive contribution to this final version of the bill before us this evening.

[*English*]

This legislation is the product of an experiment in sending a bill for pre–study by the standing committee. The government has accepted the vast majority of the committee's recommendations, from large policy issues such as the rights of farmers and fishermen as unpaid suppliers to questions of courtesy and logic such as making draft regulations available to the standing committee.

These amendments are a tribute to the manner in which all parties can work together to improve a piece of legislation that is vital to our country's economic health.

[*Translation*]

In line with recommendations made at the pre–study stage, we adopted the committee's suggestion to stop the clock, if I may use that analogy, for unpaid suppliers, pending implementation of reorganization measures. We adopted the eminently reasonable recommendation requiring the bankrupt consumer to engage in financial consultations as a condition for his release.

In the past, many consumers have been involved in multiple bankruptcies. Because the same consumer would occasionally be faced with another personal bankruptcy a couple of years later, it was necessary to be able to offer these people, and the system as well, the assurance that we could also help consumers find ways to reorganize so as to avoid another bankruptcy.

In other words, we made good use of the excellent report drafted by the standing committee. We carefully considered the views expressed by various intervenors who appeared during the pre-study.

Bill C-22 reflects many years of intensive consultations with business, unions, consumers and legal experts—with all the people who deal with insolvency. Where a consensus seemed possible, a consensus was achieved; where compromise was necessary, a compromise was reached; where leadership was required, leadership was given.

The result was a set of proposals that provides a reasonable and balanced response to a host of complex problems that must be dealt with as soon as possible, in order to safeguard businesses and jobs. Let us try to succeed where other governments have failed six times over.

After waiting more than forty years, Canadians can no longer afford outdated bankruptcy legislation. Bill C-22 is a basic component of the framework put in place by this government to promote a competitive and productive economy that will provide prosperity for all Canadians.

In a few days or a few hours, it will be a year since this bill was tabled for first reading, a bill that we amended with the help of my colleagues who participated in the process, like the hon. member for Dartmouth, who is in the House this evening, and the hon. member for Nickel Belt, both of whom worked very hard in committee with government members. Unfortunately we could not satisfy all the requests or suggestions made to us. The art of governing is being able to go ahead with what we have a consensus on and to implement mechanisms to help businesses first thing tomorrow morning and save jobs for thousands of workers.

I almost feel like saying when we finally pass this bill, that I look forward to next time because in a few years, we will review it in a more permanent way. With the legislation we have passed since 1984, we try as much as possible to have a mechanism in the law to review it regularly so as to avoid the absolutely unacceptable situation of legislation remaining on the books for 40 or 50 years without significant amendment.

I think that the Canadian parliamentary system now allows us to do it and this ongoing review will no doubt give Canadians legislation, including the Bankruptcy Act, that is more dynamic and can be amended from time to time over the years.

I thank all hon. members who will pass this bill tonight. I think it is a great day.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, it is high time that I finally have the chance to address this bill at third reading.

It has been one year since the minister made his announcement and tabled the bill in the House. I made a mistake the other night, or I think I did, in discussing this at report stage. It has been one year almost to the day. It was on June 13 of last year after much deliberation, after years of discussion and debate, that this minister finally made the announcement that the government would be proceeding with yet another attempt to reform Canada's Bankruptcy Act.

The minister said it well, that the act we currently have and that is still the law of this country was passed by Parliament in 1949 and it has not been substantially amended since then.

It took us one year to get to this point. June 13 will be the one-year anniversary of the tabling in this House of Bill C-22. What started off with a great deal of promise a number of times hit the shoals. It landed on the rocks. We started off and figured it would be a noble adventure.

The minister was very kind in the beginning. We sat down and talked. Because of the economic situation that the country found itself in, primarily due unfortunately to this minister's government's policies, we were looking at record bankruptcies around the country. We were seeing economic decline in this nation unlike anything we had seen since the dirty thirties.

The opposition, myself included, felt that we had a fundamental responsibility. If the government was not going to listen and change its ways and abandon the economic policies that has forced so many Canadian citizens into bankruptcy, then we felt it was incumbent upon us in the opposition to co-operate wherever we could with the government. We felt we should at least try to improve the legislative infrastructure in the marketplace to catch those being forced out of the economic

mainstream and on to the economic trash heap of bankruptcy.

The minister will recall back on June 13 when he made the announcement. I was not here. My youngest son, Stephen, was being born that very day. So I have two reasons to remember that date. I have to thank the minister and I will do it publicly now. He sent the nicest bouquet of blue flowers. I did not think you could get blue flowers but his florist found them somewhere. He sent a bouquet of blue flowers to my wife, congratulating her on the birth of our son, Stephen.

What we did at that point in time in recognition of the difficulty Canadians were finding themselves in is the opposition parties agreed to a novel approach. We agreed to pre-study the bill.

• (2120)

The difficulty we have here is that when a bill comes through the House, once it gets approved in principle at second reading, everybody digs in their heels. The job of government members on committee is not necessarily to improve the legislation, it is to get the legislation through with the integrity of the government intact. If there are any major flaws, they have to find ways that the government can change them a little later.

I believe the creativity that is absolutely necessary in this House and through the legislative process to bring back to this place any integrity lost is to allow private members to participate in the formulation and betterment of legislation.

We agreed to that on this side of the House, and sure enough we did it all through the month of September. We came back early and pre-studied the bill. It was fabulous. None of the members of the committee felt bound by any party ideology or philosophy. What we said we would do is we had a fundamental responsibility to the Canadian public as parliamentarians to go through the legislation and to squeeze out of that process of pre-study the best possible amendments to the Bankruptcy Act that we could possibly arrive at.

I have spoken two or three times on this and hundreds of times in committee. I asked dozens of questions of the minister, so I am not going to go through all the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act. My comments on them are well recorded in the *Hansard* both of committee and of this place.

There were a number of major parts of this bill. The bill sought to rebalance the bankruptcy legislation, the infrastructure legislation in the marketplace. It sought to go and change the regulatory environment of 1949 and to take into account the interests of the very stakeholders in a bankruptcy situation.

One of the first things obviously that the minister and the government saw that was out of whack was the fact that individuals who put their labour into a company or a business and do not get paid should be near the top. That is because those individuals had invested their labour and it is usually one of the last inputs into a company before it becomes insolvent and is forced into receivership or bankruptcy.

The minister and the government decided that rather than rebalance the bill and recognize right in the body of the Bankruptcy Act that wage earners had a right to be protected and they had a right to be up front in the process, it said: "We cannot do that because of the big financial institutions".

Sometimes I accuse the minister of being too good a friend of the big institutions, and perhaps that is unfair. But the big financial institutions in this country carry a heck of a lot of clout, not just over parliamentarians but over businesses as well. These institutions can make a decision based on one slight modification in the formula of the credit worthiness of an organization that may mean that it cannot access the lines of credit needed in order to carry on its business.

In the five or six previous attempts, I believe, to reform this bill we could never get it right because the big interest there, the financial institutions, which were usually secured creditors, if too much of their security was taken away in the legislation it would scare the life out of the business community. The financial institutions would then tell the businesses that they were not going to be able to lend them money any more and that they were not going to be able to have their revolving lines of credit. The business community would fall back and say: "My goodness, if the banks turn their backs on us we will not be able to do business". It is no different for political parties.

The banks have clout in this country because they are large financial institutions. They wield a lot of power. Rather than face up to the bullies on the block, the big financial institutions, the government said: "No, we recognize that there should be a rebalancing of this bill. We recognize fundamentally that the workers have to be up front here, but we are not going to do it in the body of the act because the big banks are going to squeal too loudly. Therefore what we are going to do is set up a fund called the wage earner protection fund".

In and of itself it is not a bad idea. In recognition of the fact that workers had an interest in the assets of a bankrupt company and that the wages should be paid, a fund would be set up. This fund was going to pay them up to 90 per cent of the wages and vacation pay they were owed, up to a maximum of $2,000. The government wanted to ensure that there was a system in place that provided for certainty and immediacy of payment for those workers. In many cases they were only getting $4.50 an hour and every dollar they got went to feed, clothe and shelter their children. They were the two criteria that were used.

We said we would rather see it in the bill. We would rather see some super priority given to the wage earners in the body of the bill. Recognize for goodness' sakes that that is where it should be done. The rest of the interests will just have to move on down a little bit because it is not a lot of money.

The government said it could not do that, so it set up a fund. The original name of this bill before it was amended at committee was an Act to Enact the Wage Payment Claim Act and to amend the Bankruptcy Act and related statutes. I guess I could have swallowed that. I recognized where the pressures were. I was pleased that the government recognized there was a fundamental responsibility to those workers in cases of bankruptcy to get the few dollars back that they were owed.

But the government had a problem. The government's problem was that it was going to fund this by a tax. It was going to implement a new tax. This is the government that has implemented 34 new taxes since it came to power. This is the very government that has come in and shifted the tax burden away from corporations and on to the middle class. This is the very government that at 11 per cent in the polls for goodness' sakes came in with the most unpopular tax in the western world, the GST. But this time Canadians were taxed out.

What this government was going to do was tax everybody. It was even going to tax public corporations. It was going to go to the school boards and tax school boards. Public corporations do not go bankrupt. It was going to tax hospitals. Hospitals do not go bankrupt. It was going to tax municipalities. Municipalities do not go bankrupt. It was going to tax small and medium sized businesses, businesses that do go bankrupt all too frequently because of this government's policies.

The business community came in and it said it agreed with most of this bill. When it came time to deal with the wage earner protection fund, it thought it was a great idea.

But do you know what? We do not trust this gang opposite. We do not trust governments any more when they say it is only a small little tax because we think you guys lacks integrity and we do not think you are always up front with us.

We think if you get a small little tax, to start off it is going to be 10 cents a week, and before you know it, it is going to be one of those big taxes.

They had heard throughout the GST debate about all the wonderful attributes of the GST. Do you remember it all? It was going to be revenue neutral. It was going to be transparent. You were going to be able to see it when you paid it. It was going to be single tiered. It was going to be fair. Most important, it was going to be revenue neutral.

There is nobody in the country that has an ounce of sense left in his head who would believe this government when it says it is only a small tax and it is not going to grow.

At that point the government said to every one of these businesses that came in, every organization: "We promise you that this tax will not change without coming back to Parliament". Some officials are watching this debate from various parts of the building, I hope. I can see a few here. It told them over and over again: "You do not have to worry. Trust us because this tax cannot be changed unless it goes back to Parliament".

The committee, Tories included—I know it is hard to believe it—listened to all the debate and listened to the witnesses. After all the debate and all the witnesses, after everything was said and done, we came in with the report back in September. You know what we reported? We reported that more properly the interest of the wage earner should be in the act itself. We did not believe one word that came out of the mouths of the big financial institutions, crying in their cups at the committee that they would lose money. This was at the same time that we were in the worst recession since perhaps the 1930s. It was at the same time that the big banks were making record profits. The minister knows that. They made $3.4 billion in profits in 1991. In the middle of one of the worst recessions we have ever seen, they had the highest profits they had ever seen.

The Liberals, New Democrats, and Conservative members of Parliament sitting on that pre-study committee made a recommendation. The recommendation said: "In the event that the bankruptcy, liquidation, or receivership of an employer, claims by employees for unpaid wages, for salespersons' expenses up to a maximum of $3,000, should be given priority over the claims of all other creditors, including the Crown". This priority, however, should be subject to the right of unpaid suppliers of the employer.

• (2130)

Do you know what that means, Mr. Speaker? It means an idea called super priority, which means that they take the first crack at the assets. It was recommended by Conservatives and not just left wing Conservatives. We have some members over there who even my hon. colleagues would consider right wing Conservatives.

They say: "Yes, it may cause some trouble in the financial communities, but by God this is the way it has to be done". We made all kinds of other recommendations about how this bill should be changed. The government came back at second reading, accepted a lot of the other recommendations of the committee and ignored the recommendation about the wage earner protection fund.

There was a particular problem caused at this point in time: There were at least eight members of the government benches who said: "I will not support this legislation because it implements a new tax. I no longer will support my government if it introduces new taxes".

"By God, you have made me swallow the GST and I have the scars to prove it", they told the government, "but I am not going to swallow another tax. I have finally listened to my business community and I am going to do what my constituents think is right, not what my government says is right. I am not going to support a tax".

We get to committee. We had a fine time. We were still friendly then. We were still working in a vein of co-operation, and all of a sudden what happened? There was complete discord. We had the parliamentary secretary come in, and because there was a problem with the Conservative caucus the government announced to its caucus, not to me: "You don't have to worry about it. We know this tax thing is going to give you a problem because the municipalities, the universities and the schools and the hospitals, the MUSH sector, are all on your case and they are sending you petitions. What we are going to do is we are going to fund the program out of the CRF, the consolidated revenue fund".

The government was going to pay it. We did not have to worry about the tax. We thought it was rather kind of the government to do that. Its members came into the committee and had a double-headed amendment. The first part of the amendment said that it would be funded by CRF. All the Tories were saying: "Great, no tax". I was saying: "Great, no tax. The government has listened". We recognized that the government which caused this recession should pay a small premium to try to rectify some of the damage of the recession. We thought they recognized that but obviously they did not.

Upon prying into the amendment, my hon. colleague over here realizes, we found out that there was another part of the amendment. After telling all these businesses, hospitals and universities across Canada that the tax could never be raised unless it came back to Parliament, we found out that this amendment which was ostensibly going to give a year and a half without a tax also gave the Governor in Council, which is cabinet, the ability to raise the tax unilaterally without ever coming back to Parliament.

In short, they had misled every single witness who had come into our committee, every single witness. They had misled members on the committee.

Second, upon further questioning we found out that there was no holiday for anybody. There was no freebie here. They were going to lend the money to the fund. That is all they were going to do: lend the money to the fund. At some point in the future they were going to get future employers to pay back the money for the first two years of the fund.

It was the height of hypocrisy, a sleight of hand, and dare I say, a deceit to come forward at that point in time. They destroyed the discord of the committee. We argued the point that what the government was doing was wrong. It flew in the face of the rules and regulations and precedents of this place.

Lo and behold, another miracle happened at that committee. The New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party argued that the government's amendment was out of order. I will never forget that day either. We were right, and the chairman of the committee came back and said: "I checked with the clerk and the opposition is right. You can't do this". Then the Tories did not know what to do. Do members remember that? The Tories did not know what to do. They were going to kick the chairman off the committee because he had not done what they wanted him to do.

So much for harmony, so much for co-operation, and so much for doing it the right way.

What happened then is that the government did not know what to do with the bill. That was in early December. It did not call the committee back and the bill basically got stuck in neutral. The government then ran around the Parliament Buildings trying to figure out what in the name of goodness to do next. At the same time, every day the bill was not put back into the House and every day that the government did not know what to do with the bill hundreds of Canadians were going bankrupt.

We went to the minister on a number of occasions and said: "We realize that the Minister of Finance will not give you the money to fund this fund". We put at least four different proposals as to how they could fund this particular program privately to the minister and his officials, and each and every time it was met with no response.

Finally, a bill was brought back to the House of Commons, stripped of the entire wage earner protection program.

My hon. colleague from Nickel Belt had spent a considerable amount of time with me and the minister and members of the Conservative caucus trying to be innovative. We said the bill indicated in its title that the government recognized there was a right that wage-earners had in this and therefore how could it possibly split that part of the bill? It is done and history will judge these people opposite for doing that.

We fully support most of the aspects of the bill dealing with reorganization. We support the ability of suppliers under this act to be able to revindicate or take back their goods. I must give the minister some credit because that must have been a tough one to get by some of the lobbyists from the banks because it affects their secured position. The minister stood tough and we all win on that one.

There are some other provisions of the bill, just introduced recently in amendments, for farmers and fishermen which recognize that they are a little different. The minister and the government agreed with members of the committee from all sides and included special protection for farmers and fishermen. The Cattlemen's Association did not get everything it wanted but I guess half a loaf is better than none on this particular count.

Things have changed. This bill goes a long way in taking an outdated Bankruptcy Act, because that is all it is now it is not a wage earner protection act anymore, and rebalancing it to a great extent. It takes away the right of the big financial institutions to walk in and almost unilaterally pull the rug out from under businesses that might be experiencing some cash flow problems. Businesses are not always solvent, sometimes they are insolvent but that does not mean they are not good businesses. It may be because of fluctuation in the market, it may be because of problems with cash flow, it could be for a whole number of reasons. However, all too often the banks could quickly appoint a receiver, pull the rug out out from under the business, and the business would go belly up.

They cannot do that any more, they are going to have to give notice, I think it is 10 days, before they appoint a receiver. The individual or the corporation now, rather than saying that they cannot do anything unless they find the money to pay everybody off, are going to be able to file for protection and are going to be able, just as in the United States, to put a proposal together to reorganize

without a gun at their heads. This means they can have an orderly repayment of their debts so that they can save jobs. When a business goes bankrupt we lose jobs and we lose productive people from the economy and the community.

This bill goes a long way toward fixing that. We support those provisions and they were equally contributed to by all parties in this House. Even after that rocky period in November, December and January we have shown that this place can still work and we have pulled it together, and the minister has been able to bring this back to the House.

However, we cannot sit here and talk about bankruptcy without really understanding what has happened in the last 12 months. I started off my speech by saying that in the last 12 months a lot has happened in my life. I have a new child who is going to be a year old on June 13. This bill has been in and out, up and down, and all over the place. All kinds of things have happened here. However one of the things that—

Mr. Blais: Do you still want blue flowers?

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): You can send more flowers, though make them red this time.

One of the other unfortunate things that has happened is that the recession, which this government denied was a reality for so long, continued at a breakneck pace. Between June 13 of last year and June 13 of this year about 70,000 individual Canadians and Canadian businesses have been forced into bankruptcy. There have been billions of dollars in liabilities left over by those companies.

• (2140)

In 1991 in Nova Scotia alone there was one bankruptcy for every 305 Nova Scotians. Think about that. It means in every neighbourhood in Nova Scotia, people have either lost their jobs because of a bankruptcy, perhaps have had to file for personal bankruptcy, or somehow are affected by this outbreak, this plague of bankruptcies that is spreading through the economy.

It has to be understood when we talk about the statistics on bankruptcy they are not just sterile numbers. These are real people. They are just like me or the minister. They have families, children, parents, they contribute to their community. They have some pride, integrity, and they work hard.

People find themselves up against that big grindstone of debt because they have lost their jobs, cannot pay their mortgages, their kids cannot get into sports, and maybe they cannot even feed their families without going to a food bank. They lose their integrity, that sense of community, of being able to contribute to their family and their community.

Each and every one of these cases where somebody is forced into a bankruptcy is a personal tragedy. It is not something that just goes away the day they get their discharge. Unfortunately there is a stigma attached which is with them for the rest of their lives. They have problems with their spouses, their children, their parents, their neighbours, because the emotional anxiety they go through may never be erased.

Many times they never again contribute to the same extent they had contributed when they were productive members before the stigma of bankruptcy.

There was a new record established every month for the last 16 or 17 months. We broke records in this country; not of productivity, not of employment growth, but of a growth in bankruptcies. There was a tragedy unfolding.

Since this government's made-in-Canada recession began there has been over 130,000 Canadians, individuals, businesses, which have gone belly up. It is fine for the government to spend all their time talking about their prosperity budget, $50 million here, $25 million there. These people have been the real casualties of this government's economic policies.

There is a lot of stuff we do not like in this bill. I do not like the fact the wage earner protection fund has been done away with. There are a few provisions I would like to see changed but I have some sense of what I am supposed to be doing as a member of Parliament. I think most members of this House have.

When we look at the economic calamity taking place in every corner of this nation, when we look at an unemployment rate in the province of Newfoundland in excess of 20 per cent, when we look at over 1.5 million Canadians unemployed, when we look at over one million Canadian children living in poverty and 2.5 million Canadians on welfare, anything we can do on this side of the House to offer even a modicum of relief we will support.

The members opposite are saying, why not? We are going to support this bill but my time will be spent today not just saying what is good about the bill but also telling Canadians what could have been done and how it could have been better.

There are an awful lot of definitions of bankruptcy. Webster's ninth edition says: "Bankruptcy: One who is destitute, exhausted of valuable qualities, impoverished". The Penguin Canadian Dictionary says: "One totally lacking in specific qualities". The Gage Canadian Dictionary says: "Bankruptcy: A person who is completely lacking in something".

If we get into the etymology of the word "bankrupt" we cannot help but contrast it with the activities of this government over the last number of years. This government has proven over and over that no matter what definition of bankrupt is given, this government meets the criteria. Economically they are bankrupt. They got into power on the promise of jobs, jobs, jobs in 1984 and what we have seen is rising unemployment.

In 1988 they said to the Canadian public: "We are going to come in with a free trade deal and that deal is going to open up markets in the United States. We have to get away from countervail. We have to get access to their markets and the world is going to be rosy again because we are going to create all these jobs".

We see how many jobs have been created. By some estimates, there were over 1 million jobs lost in the Canadian economy because of free trade. The manufacturing sector in southwestern Ontario has been decimated because of this government's economic policies.

It talked about spreading prosperity around. In actual fact, if you measure regional disparities by unemployment rates and by family income, you will find out quite quickly that there is no prosperity in places like Newfoundland and there is no prosperity in places like Saskatchewan, where this government is presiding over the very death of the family farm. In Saskatchewan there are more acres of farmland that are now owned by banks that have foreclosed than are owned by individual farmers. Every day, every week, every month of every year this government is in power the family farm goes further on to the endangered species list in places like Saskatchewan.

This government is bankrupt of policies. This government has gone into the management of the fisheries on the east coast of Canada. Because it does not really care about the east coast of Canada, because it does not have the electoral seats there, it has decided that in a great effort to try to cleanse itself of its bad image at home, it is going to do it by being friendly to the foreigners. It has effectively mismanaged and handed over that once great resource called the northern cod stock to foreign fleets.

In Newfoundland, which has always suffered more disparity than any other region of the country because of this government's bankrupt economic policies, we have a situation quickly developing where within the next weeks we may have the Minister of Fisheries announcing that there is no more fish because he has given it all away or he has mismanaged the stock into near extinction. There will be 35,000 jobs in the province of Newfoundland that will go with it, 35,000 jobs. It is a province of 570,000 people. In terms of Montreal or Toronto, it would be like Montreal losing perhaps 120,000 to 150,000 jobs.

Newfoundland is destitute because of this government's bankrupt policies on the fisheries. This government lacks the integrity to understand that when it is at 11 or 12 per cent in the polls, it does not have the support of the Canadian public to pursue policies with the Americans, with foreigners, or with the North American free trade deal where we are now in phase one.

It is like Freddie Kruger and *Nightmare on Elm Street*. There was a number in the series. Well the *Nightmare on Elm Street* No. 1 for the Canadian public was 1984 when it elected these guys the first time.

Chapter 2 in the trilogy was when it told us it was going to have a free trade deal with the United States. Chapter 3 was the GST and NAFTA, two issues it has on its economic agenda that will ensure that the demise of the Canadian economy will continue and that the destruction of this nation will continue unabated as long as this bunch opposite is at the helm.

This government is bankrupt of any idea of what to do with this once great nation. It has taken a nation of incredible promise, a nation that is extremely diverse but was extremely tolerant and turned it into a nation where nobody feels secure that they have any future here any more.

It has turned it into a country where anglophones are battling francophones, whites discriminating against blacks. It has turned it into a country where it has pitted region against region against region. We have race riots in Toronto and in my hometown, Dartmouth and Halifax. We have economic conditions leading young black youth to stop trusting that the system will get any better and who are taking things into their own hands.

• (2150)

We have had outbreaks of racism in western Canada against the Sikh community. We have had Canadians from coast to coast to coast who have lost that sense of Canadianism and have started to question whether or not there is even any hope for this country. That is only after a few years of this government's bankrupt direction.

In conclusion, I wish that we could apply this bill to the Conservative government. I talked about reorganization and meetings of creditors. I wish we could apply this bill to this government, because I think if we could the Canadian public would serve notice. They would give it its 10 day notice just like banks do when they appoint a receiver. They would appoint a receiver against this government and that receiver would be the Chief Electoral Officer of this country.

There would be a vote in this country by the shareholders, the stakeholders, Canadians from coast to coast to coast. They would come up with a reorganization plan. In that reorganization plan, the first plank would be that they would get rid of the board of directors which is the cabinet, and they would send the CEO south, and that is the Prime Minister of Canada.

Maybe if we had the opportunity to do with this government what businesses can now do when they find themselves in times of turmoil, we would have some future.

Canadians will never forgive this government for what it has done to this great nation over the last number of years. Perhaps the final and the most telling testament to the greatness of this nation is that yes, this nation will survive even eight years of Tory mismanagement.

Finally, I want to give a quote because I think this quote suits this government perfectly. It is a statement about how I and every Canadian feels after this government has driven this economy straight into the cellar. It is a quote from, of all people, Trotsky: "You are pitiful, isolated individuals. You are the bankrupts. Your role is played out. Go where you belong from now on, into the dustbin of history".

I can assure you that the next time Canadians have an opportunity to judge this government, they will remember that quote and this government will be destined to the ash pile of history.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I looked on with great interest as we have gone through a perilous journey with Bill C–22, the Bankruptcy Act and the insolvency act as presented by this government.

One gentleman asks if I would support this bill. Unlike my Liberal colleague, I would not support this bill. Fundamentally it is flawed, and I would not support it for the same reason I would not support the referendum. I thought that it was fundamentally flawed. Something is flawed when it does not do what it is supposed to do. If it does not give wage protection to workers then it is not worth being supported.

Just to respond specifically to the question on the other side, a bad bill is a bad bill is a bad bill.

Let me give a bit of history on this Bankruptcy Act and the insolvency act. It is very important. This goes back to 1949. The last time we dealt with bankruptcy in a substantial manner was 1949. As far back as 1970 there was a study committee. The report coming from the study committee said that the 1949 act essentially reflected the 1949 situation. It meant that the moneys that workers could get were expressed in 1949 dollars. We are looking at very little money.

What we are looking at here with this proposed law is a bill which is unbalanced. To give the minister his credit, as originally presented to us I believe that was a balanced bill. It did what it said it was going to do. There were the workers' protection funds and there were a number of articles dealing with reorganization to make bankruptcy more responsible and easier to go into and easier to avoid in many instances.

Something has happened, however. It changed along the way. We do not know why. We have our thoughts on it, but we know that no longer do we have the workers' protection fund. That is extremely important. The main reason we felt this bill was important for Canada and for workers was that for the first time it brought the amount of money they could get into real 1990 dollars. No longer were we dealing with 1949 dollars. We were dealing with more money than they were getting in the past.

As we look at the travelling this bill has done over the past year or so we see that the bill has been changed substantially to the effect that all it does is reorganize and leave the workers out in the cold. We are talking about workers who are affected by bankruptcy. We are talking about workers who all of a sudden find that the vacation pay they have coming and the back pay they are due will no longer be given.

I think it is important for us to come to terms with a certain number of definitions. There are three definitions we want to be sure we are aware of. First, we are looking at super priority. Now what does that mean? Super priority is what was originally intended in this bill. It is no longer there. What super priority means is that if you are a worker you go to the front of the line. You do not wait at the back of the line until the money dissipates and then when you come up you find that the banks, the government, the secured creditors and those other people got their money before you. Yes, you do have a right: You can claim as much money as you want, but it is not there.

That is what super priority means. You, as the worker, the person who is least able to assume the burden of the debt of this company, you get paid first with what is left when that company declares bankruptcy.

That super priority disappeared. It is no longer there. That was an essential or quintessential part of this bill. That is why we in the NDP said that we had better support this bill with the government because it is doing the right thing. Well, they did the right thing but not for very long.

That super priority for workers was tossed aside and the first priority was still given to banks and to secured creditors.

How do we define secured creditors and unsecured creditors? These are two definitions. Secured creditors are those who are at the front of the line. They are there and they get paid. They are the first ones who get paid. Generally, after they have been paid, we find out that close to 70 per cent of the time there is no money left for the others.

Unsecured creditors are those who are left after secured creditors have been paid out. Among those unsecured creditors are the employees.

What we have here is a bill called Bill C-22 which originally was going to give super priority to workers. It does not do that. It continues along the line of making sure that the banks get their money.

There is something else here in this bill which is one of the most surprising things. It is that even the government has decided to allow a certain amount of its own rights to taxes and so forth to go by the wayside so there would be more money in the fund for banks and others. It has decided to forego some of its own rights so that the taxpayer, who is counting on the government to recapture its own taxes and other moneys owing, will not be paid.

Not only do you have the workers being shafted, but you have the public in general being shafted as well.

When the government dropped the idea of super priority it proposed a tax which was going to be levied on the employers. This tax, as proposed by the Conservative federal government, was to be about 10 cents per worker. This would make it approximately $61 million in order to create a fund which would be used to pay workers.

• (2200)

We on the NDP side said: "No, we think people are taxed enough", and the government was quite surprised. It did not expect the opposition that came from the NDP and from its own members. We felt that taxing people for this fund was not the way to go and that it should come from general revenues.

When we made this representation the government was freaked out because the NDP said, as did the backbenchers of the Conservative government, that

people have been taxed enough, between the GST and all these other taxes. We said that we were not prepared to see another tax even though the government said it would only be 10 cents a week, less than a cup of coffee.

We did not believe the government. It had misled us with the GST. It said that it would be a transparent tax, but it has not been a transparent tax. It said that it would be revenue neutral and that it would not hurt, but it has hurt an awful lot. It has not been transparent, it has not been revenue neutral and we felt that this cup of coffee might sooner or later become much more than a cup of coffee. It might be a full steak dinner.

We as a party rebelled against the tax. The hon. member for Nickel Belt and myself said that this was unacceptable, and we still maintain that. When it came to the question of levying a tax we said no.

However, we did suggest that the government take this money from the general revenue fund. The government has already taxed us and the money is available. We are talking about $61 million to do an honest deal with workers. The $61 million is there. Right now the government is talking about paying $4.3 billion for helicopters that are not needed. When we talk about money being available in government we find that when the government really wants to fund some sort of a pet project, whether it be a prosperity agenda for $18 million or advertising campaigns to convince us to vote one way or another, it can find the money when the time comes.

The government did not accept the idea of taking this money out of general revenues. It said: "If we do not get this tax, which represents $61 million from business, we are going to completely drop this protection for wages of workers". The government had already dropped the super priority idea.

When it came to the fund the government said: "If we cannot tax people anymore"—and there have been 34 tax increases since this government came to power—"if we cannot have another tax you are not going to get anything".

My colleague said that Freddie Kruger came on the scene and we found that this became a nightmare on Wellington Street. It was worse than that. If we are going to look at movies I remember *Love Story*, in which it was said that being in love means not having to say you are sorry. Being Tory with this bankruptcy bill means not having to say that you are sorry or that you are wrong.

The Tories simply shifted from second to third gear and said: "No, we won't have a tax. We won't have super priority. We won't have a wage protection fund. What we'll simply do is rewrite history, change those 28 original parts of the bill that we had already agreed upon and come back with something else entirely different".

That is when we really started getting worried. At that point this bill, which seemed to be balanced and initially seemed to be fair, took on a life of its own. It became a grotesque caricature of itself and ended up not giving super priority to the worker, not to most workers. It ended up not doing what it said it would originally do, which was to provide a fund for most workers who would be needing it.

It finally ended up essentially caving in to the corporations. At the same time, the government relinquished its rights to the close to $25 million that the government could expect in receipts or in money owing to it from the bankruptcies on an annual basis.

This is difficult to take for the average consumer or the average worker who wants to believe in a government and finds out that it does not want to do the right thing. Whether you are a Conservative, a Liberal, an NDPer or what have you, you know that at the grassroots level people are hurting.

We have had thousands and thousands of people involved in bankruptcy situations who have been looking to this government to help them out. We are not talking about a benign problem where people just say: "I will take my lumps and that is it".

We are talking about a malignancy which is eating away at the fabric of trust we have in this government. What particularly irks me is that while we are talking about protecting the banks, protecting the secured creditors and making sure the bankruptcy process becomes much more logical, rational and easier in certain cases, we have left a primary person outside the protection of this law.

That is what is wrong and that is what is so indicative of this government's heartlessness. This government does not have a heart. This government cares about the bottom line, as long as the bottom line benefits or works in favour of corporations.

Our party, the NDP, originally came to support the bill because we thought it was balanced. We thought that the bill would do something for workers. Essentially the government has let us down. The government has let workers down.

It is not just myself and the NDP who are saying this. Even members on the government side have expressed their discontent with what has happened here. They have wanted to see workers better protected, and they are not. That is very obvious when we take a look at the bill.

The major weakness with this bill is when it comes time for a worker to get some protection, to get some money owing. I am not talking about charity. I am not talking about UIC. I am not talking about welfare. I am talking about money that is owed to a worker for his or her time and effort put in on the job. That worker is not in this bill.

As much as we try to get the minister to say that he has forgotten the key element he was supposed to protect, all we get back from the government side is ideology. All we get back is that this is good for the country. It is not good for the country. If the people of our country, our citizens, lose confidence in our government being able to provide for them, it is not good for the country.

At this time we are having a constitutional crisis. People are looking to the federal government to show them where it is standing up for them and protecting them with a social contract. We give up certain liberties, our taxes, and a certain amount of freedom in order get a certain amount of protection. When the other side of the contract does not come down to our level we are actually creating a disrespect, a kind of annihilation, anarchy, where people do not believe that the federal government really cares about them.

At this time when we are dealing with the Constitution and trying to keep our country together, this kind of law is working against that end.

We are going to vote against this law. We think it is bad and wrong. We will not hold our noses, close our eyes, and say the government could have done better. It did not do better. There are some small things which are wrong with this law.

The protection of workers' wages is not a small addendum. It is the principal part of any protection and it is not in there. If we do not have a law that is fair, equitable and applies to people who are most in need then we do not have a law that is acceptable to a political party or to members of Parliament.

As a member of Parliament who followed this bill through the committee stage, I believed in this government as far as this bill was concerned. I believed in you. I felt you were going to do a good thing. I felt you were going to do the right thing. I thought you really cared about the average Canadian worker. I was duped along with the other workers in this country. Unfortunately the only people who are going to benefit from this bill are those who need it the least, corporations and banks; not us, not the workers.

By betraying the people who believed in you, you are going to pay and that payment will come on election day.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 12 minutes past 10 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, June 9, 1992, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 10.12 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 11, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

RECORDED DIVISIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Before proceeding to the daily routine of business, I want to give my ruling on a matter raised by the hon. member for Calgary Northeast a few days ago.

As all hon. members know, there were some technical difficulties with the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, June 3, 1992 in recording the divisions on motions of amendment at report stage of Bill C-81, an act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada. A reprint was immediately ordered to accurately reflect the results recorded by the Clerk.

In his point of order, the hon. member for Calgary Northeast was concerned by the fact that some of the names appearing under the listing for paired members also appeared under the "yeas" or "nays".

[*Translation*]

I would appear therefore that some members whose names were paired with others indicating that they would not be voting had in fact cast votes either for or against certain motions.

[*English*]

Should or could action be taken by either the Speaker or the House in regard to this situation.

• (1010)

Standing Order 44.1 specifically deals with paired members. It explains that a register of paired members is kept at the table "in which any member of the government party and any member of an opposition party may have their names entered together by their respective Whips to indicate that they will not take part in any record division"; independent members sign in their own right.

[*Translation*]

The names of these paired members are inscribed immediately following the list of "yeas" and "nays" for each recorded division.

[*English*]

However, the Standing Orders are completely silent on the question of a broken pair; there is no penalty provided for, nor any corrective action suggested. As the 21st edition of *Erskine May* explains on page 350:

> The Speaker has ruled that agreements to pair are private arrangements between Members and in no sense matters in which either he or the House can intervene.

[*Translation*]

Although Westminster's rules relating to pairing are different from those employed in Canada, the basic principle enunciated in *May* holds true for our practice, that is to say: a pairing agreement is a private arrangement in which neither the House nor the Speaker can intervene, according to the Standing Orders as now written.

[*English*]

Any change to our current practice would require amendments to our Standing Orders. The Standing Committee on House Management which has as part of its permanent mandate the power to review and report on the Standing Orders, procedure and practice in the House, may wish to look into this question. I thank the hon. member for Calgary Northeast for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES CONTROL ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (for the Minister of National Health and Welfare) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-85, an act respecting the control of psychoactive substances and their precursors and to amend the Criminal Code, the Food and Drugs Act and the Proceeds of Crime (money laundering) Act and repeal the Narcotic Control Act in consequence thereof.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 68(2), the motion is deemed adopted.

Mr. Cadieux (for the Minister of National Health and Welfare) 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.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REQUEST FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): What I would like to do, Mr. Speaker, is introduce a motion on behalf of myself and the hon. member for Comox—Alberni on electronic voting for the House of Commons.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret there is not unanimous consent.

* * *

PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions that I would like to table pursuant to Standing Order 36. These petitions have been signed by Canadians across this country who are objecting to the government's decision to cancel the Court Challenges Program.

This particular program has allowed many individuals and minority groups to clarify through the courts their constitutional linguistic and equality rights.

They call upon the Government of Canada to rescind this decision and reinstate the Court Challenges Program. Some of these individuals come from Kingston, Ontario, and others come from New Brunswick, Newfoundland, the other Atlantic provinces, the Western provinces, Ontario and Quebec.

FISHERIES

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 wherein the petitioners ask the federal government to do everything in its power to stop drift-net fishing in the north Pacific ocean.

They point out that an ecological disaster is being perpetrated by Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese drift-net fishing fleets in the north Pacific. Sea birds and marine mammals are being slaughtered by the thousands in the monofilament drift-nets used by the above mentioned fleets.

The west coast salmon fishery is being damaged by this fishing practice. There is also a great possibility of this practice having a horrendous effect on the global ecosystem and our own environment. The petitioners call upon Parliament to do everything it can to stop this.

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I have a another petition signed by people primarily in the Ladysmith area of my riding.

The petition is to promote pride in being Canadian. 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 Kinnette 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 petitioners 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 and the advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles, and to promote tremendous pride in being Canadians.

REFERENDUM

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my pleasure to introduce a petition calling for a referendum of the people before there is constitutional change.

HEALTH

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to present a petition signed by many of my constituents in Malpeque, in places such as Cornwall, Winsloe, Kensington, Marshfield and Albany, Prince Edward Island.

Whereas scientific evidence has raised doubts about the safety of silicone breast implants and whereas the Health Protection Branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare has known of the dangers of these implants for several years the undersigned petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to establish an independent judicial inquiry into the testing and approval process of all medical devices, in particular silicone breast implants.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I rise to present a petition from a number of residents in British Columbia regarding two Canadians, Christine Lamont and David Spencer, who have been sentenced to 28 years in a Brazilian prison.

They have suffered discrimination in sentencing and parole. The cumulative effect of these irregularities provides ample grounds for the Government of Canada to seek a remedy on their behalf and there should be a request for expulsion in accordance with Brazilian law.

Therefore the petitioners call upon the government 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 home to Canada.

LIGHTHOUSES

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition representing the wishes of thousands of British Columbians.

They ask that the *Future Use of Lightstations* report be immediately implemented by the federal government, along with the return of the 10 person-years cut from the program and the return of the budget dollars that were removed. This will ensure the safety, continuation and upgrading of the west coast lighthouse system in order to ensure the safety net for the transportation of British Columbians.

• (1020)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present to the House a petition signed by a number of my constituents who are Canadians of Sri Lankan origin and reside in the Flemingdon Park area of my riding.

This petition relates to the recent Canadian human rights mission to the island of Sri Lanka and it requests that Canada take a lead to facilitate the international mediation of the conflict there.

It calls upon Parliament to express willingness to call upon the parties to the conflict in Sri Lanka, the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, to express their willingness to accept mediation of the conflict and also to commence negotiations with a view to entering an internationally guaranteed accord to establish an associated structure within which the Sinhalese people and the Tamil people may live in peace and freedom.

* * *

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, Question No. 266 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 266—**Ms. Langan:**

With respect to the survey being conducted by the Department of Health and Welfare on the experience of women with breast implants (*a*) will the Minister consult with opposition critics and the status of women sub-committee on breast cancer prior to appoint a company to conduct this survey (*b*) who is to be surveyed (*c*) when will this survey begin (*d*) when will the survey be completed (*e*) will the report of the survey be tabled in the House of Commons?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): (*a*) The selection of a contractor to conduct a survey of Canadian women with breast implants has been done through the Department of Supply and Services according to government contract policy. The process does not include consultation on the choice

of contractor with opposition critics or the status of women sub-committee.

(*b*) The survey is open to all women in Canada with breast implants. Women who respond to well-publicized invitations by calling 1-800-661-4437 will participate in the survey and/or be included on a mailing list for future information from the Department of National Health and Welfare.

(*c*) The toll-free line will be operational until July 31, 1992.

(*d*) The survey and all related work is expected to be completed in August 1992.

(*e*) The survey will be made available to the public immediately following the review of the results.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered.

* * *

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): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 308 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 308 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 308—**Mr. Angus:**

With respect to the Financial Administration Act, Section 88 and 89, for each fiscal year since April 1, 1985, has Transport Canada collected data on (*a*) the number of train kilometres travelled on each VIA service provided, per route, per year (*b*) the number of passengers carried on each VIA service, and total number of passenger kilometres travelled on each VIA service, and total number of seat kilometres on each VIA service, per route, per year (*c*) the amount of total revenues from each VIA service, per route, per year (*d*) the total of avoidable costs of each VIA service, per route, per year and, if so, for each case, what is it?

Return tabled.

[*English*]

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-70, an act to amend the Criminal Code (jury), as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is one motion in amendment on the Notice Paper at the report stage for Bill C-70, an act to amend the Criminal Code (jury).

Motion No. 1 standing in the name of the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam will be debated and voted upon.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-70 be amended in Clause 8 by striking out lines 7 and 8 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"deemed to have come into force only after the multicultural justice review and report commissioned under the authority of a reference from the Minister of Justice forwarded to the Law Reform Commission of Canada on June 8, 1990, has been completed by the Law Reform Commission of Canada and tabled in the House of Commons."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On a point of order, the hon. member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek unanimous consent in the House to deal with both the report stage and the third reading stage of Bill C-70 today.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I am not prepared to give unanimous consent at this point. I wonder if we could deal with my motion. I would like to hear the parliamentary secretary reply to it. My response depends on what he says. If he says the

appropriate words I will be prepared to give consent to finishing this bill today. However, I do not want to do that beforehand.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, there were no formal undertakings with regard to completing Bill C-70. However, I think there is a clear disposition on this side of the House that we would like to proceed with both the report stage and third reading.

I find it rather objectionable that preconditions would be established by members of this House before continuing on with debate on a particular piece of legislation. I would hope that my colleague who has raised an amendment with regard to Bill C-70 will have an opportunity to debate it. Of course the government and the Official Opposition would have an opportunity to intervene. Then perhaps an adjudication could take place and we could then proceed with the completion, if necessary, of the bill.

I want to make it perfectly clear to the parliamentary secretary that we are not trying to obstruct in any way. We wish to facilitate the debate. I find it somewhat objectionable that preconditions—in other words, a form of blackmail—would be placed on the floor of the House of Commons before we proceed. That is totally unacceptable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would hope that these agreements would take place behind the curtain. I do not consider this the place to debate this.

Motion No. 1 is now in front of the House and the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam has the floor on debate.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition House leader can call it whatever he likes but I hope he will listen to my remarks. He will see that it is no such thing. I think, and hope, that he will agree with me when I finish.

I introduced the amendment to alleviate some of the concerns that many of us have about Bill C-70 and the jury selection process. Allow me to explain to the House what the bill is and what we are trying to do.

The bill before us today is a result of the decision in the case of Regina *v.* Bain. It is a major decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. The judgment was rendered January 23, 1992. In that decision the Supreme Court ruled that sections 634(1) and (2) are inconsistent with section 11(d) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in so far as they provide the Crown with a combination of peremptory challenges and stand-bys four times the number permitted the accused.

As the court noted:

> The observer of the process is bound to conclude that, absent some control, the Crown possesses a substantial advantage and can effectively influence the make-up of that jury under partisan considerations.

Let me translate that into plain English. We have a system in which the Crown prosecutor has a different level of challenges. The Crown can follow a different process. It has a better crack at excluding people from a jury than does the defence. The Supreme Court basically said: "Make it a level playing field".

The court gave Parliament six months to bring forward a remedy. That was on January 23, 1992. I know that the parliamentary secretary has acted and the government has acted. It has introduced a bill and we have expedited it in committee.

However, the government's legislation deals specifically with the narrow and very limited recommendations that come from the Supreme Court decision, which was limited to the very specific questions that were asked in the case. I believe that it was a case concerning sexual assault and the lower court's ruling that the Crown could not use stand-asides to influence the make-up of the jury.

My concern, and I know I am not alone in this, is that we have gone through the process of drafting and debating amendments to the Criminal Code without making full use of this opportunity to really effect meaningful and innovative change that will bring the code into the modern age and into the future.

Instead, we have done the least that could be expected of us and left the real work for another day. What kind of real work am I talking about? There have been numerous studies and inquiries that have shown that the justice system is not always fair. Justice is not always equally available to Canadians as a result of procedural flaws, including the jury selection process. This is not only because of the use of stand-asides by the Crown—even back in 1980 the Law Reform Commission drew this to

our attention—but because of the nature of what we call peremptory challenges.

I will give an example. The report of the aboriginal justice inquiry of Manitoba found that aboriginal people were excluded from the jury in the Osbourne case because of their race. The defence used a peremptory challenge to exclude six aboriginal people. This was a case concerning the murder of an aboriginal woman in a community with a large aboriginal component.

As the report states:

> The jury was not representative of the community from which it was drawn and in which the crime was committed.

In modern Canada there are instances in which people have been excluded from juries because of their race.

• (1030)

It is my understanding that one of the ideals we strive for in the justice system is to provide for the selection of a jury that does represent the community. The peremptory challenge may in fact stand in the way of achieving this goal. Perhaps it should be incumbent upon counsel to provide cause for every challenge. After all, the Supreme Court of Canada in the Bain decision noted that:

> The peremptory challenge is purely subjective.

Perhaps we need greater objectivity; if you do not like the person's face or you do not like the colour of his or her skin, you can challenge and you do not have to justify why you are challenging.

This is one of the concerns we could have looked at when we opened up this part of the Criminal Code. We are going to have to do it in the near future. I know the Attorney General of Ontario—I have a letter from the Attorney General of Ontario to the Minister of Justice of Canada—is determined to see these concerns addressed and these flaws remedied. The Attorney General said so publicly just a month ago in Toronto.

We have yet to have any substantive assurance from the federal government in this regard. In fact, by introducing legislation that killed the Law Reform Commission the government has given every indication it is not prepared at all to do the kind of work that needs to be done in this area. There had been some hope when the minister asked the commission to begin work on multiculturalism and the law that we could begin the process of updating our laws.

Were it not for the articles of Mr. David Vienneau in *The Toronto Star* after he obtained a copy of a consultation paper from the Law Reform Commission which was looking specifically at a trial by jury and had drafted well thought out and researched recommendations in its final report, we would not have known that the government was even looking at this area. This is a copy of the draft consultation paper by the Law Reform Commission. It is incomplete.

I suggest to the government and to you, Mr. Speaker: just take *The Toronto Star* for today and look at the headline "Anti-Black Racism Deep, Lewis Warns Ontario". This is a very relevant issue. Mr. Vienneau of *The Toronto Star* really did us a service to get this report public and get it out. We did not even see this in our committee.

This is not the way government should work. It should not hide things from Parliament, especially when racism is such a huge issue in our major cities in Canada today.

This report has recommendations that address the issue of proportional representation of the accused's racial, religious or other minority characteristics on juries, recommendations that would improve our ability to ensure that juries represent a fair cross-section of the community, and recommendations on page 38 regarding peremptory challenges and challenges for cause. I suggest some members of the House, including the House leader of the Official Opposition who I know is a lawyer, might want to have a look at this because it deals with stand-asides and peremptory challenges.

Basically, if I can summarize, it says maybe we should look at this because it is a purely subjective standard. As I said before a defence counsel or even Crown counsel could have people stand aside because they are black, Jewish, aboriginal or whatever. They can do that.

I am not saying they are doing it, although there was one instance in the case I have cited. At least we need to have some study of that and we need to look at that. I am not trying to hold up the government's bill. I understand the parliamentary secretary has to get this done in six months, although he could go back to the court as the government has done in the past and say we need more time. If the court does not like it, he could blame it on

the socialists down here and say they caused all the problem and ask for more time.

The Law Reform Commission's report called *Minister's Reference, Jury Selection on Multicultural Issues* would provide members of Parliament with a learned impartial non-partisan opinion. That is why I do not want an in-house study by the government or by the Department of Justice. I know that the government likes that but we want a non-partisan report. We want something that can be tabled in the House of Commons. In short, we want this study completed.

If the government were prepared to say firmly that today, now in the House, I am prepared to consent to going to third reading and putting this bill through today. If not, I am not prepared to consent.

The member from Nova Scotia, the official government House leader, can call that blackmail or call it what he likes. I call it good parliamentary tactics and doing my job as justice critic for the NDP and trying to get the government committed. I know the government really is committed and I know the member from Niagara Falls, the parliamentary secretary, is committed to having these issues looked at in the best possible way.

It is my hope that we can bring this in and we can get this report completed before the law is challenged because visible minorities, women or others are excluded from juries through abuse of the peremptory challenge. We do not want this to start going back to the court.

These kinds of time constraints can only result in hastily written and often barely adequate legislation, that is the six months, the stop-gap legislation.

I suggest that Canadians deserve better. By bringing forward this amendment it is my hope that the government will agree to look at least a short distance into the future and that it will agree to at least giving us the tools, if not the time, to come back to the jury selection process and make some real and meaningful amendments that will make the justice system fair for everyone.

That is what I am trying to do today. I will be pleased to hear the reply of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, we on this side are supportive of the intent and direction suggested in this particular motion. We all recognize the problem that exists and the need for change in the area of jury selection and in particular to do everything possible we can to make the system function properly so that there is not racial discrimination within that system.

We are also faced with the problem of doing the possible. My understanding is that under the Supreme Court decision about the middle of July, July 22 or July 23, we have to correct the problem which the Supreme Court found, and that is what Bill C-70 does.

I would hope the government and the NDP could work out an arrangement to accommodate that. I would hope they would see to it that there is a commitment as to time for that report to be brought forward, a commitment by the government to act on that report and to conduct the full study necessary in order to make amendments to jury selection to accommodate what the report brings forward.

We are supportive of where they want to be as far as the motion is intended. We just do not know if it is a doable situation given the time constraints we are involved in. I look forward to the parliamentary secretary coming forward with a solution to that time constraint.

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, time constraint is the problem we have at the present time. As was pointed out in the Regina *v.* Bain decision, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down certain provisions of the Criminal Code as they relate to jury selection.

We had a specific problem on our hands at that point. The Supreme Court of Canada indicated that it would suspend the operation of its decision for a period of six months. That period of time expires July 23, 1992.

We have a situation where we are at report stage on June 11. I hope the House deems it appropriate to continue with the third reading stage of this debate so that it can pass this House and move on to the Senate.

The bill is specific. The member for Port Moody—Coquitlam talked about that and we have nothing to hide in that regard.

• (1040)

It was specifically directed toward the issue raised in the Regina *v.* Bain decision. It was not meant to be a comprehensive look or solution to all the issues or questions raised in the jury selection process. It was for this specific purpose. We did not dawdle with this. Within I believe six weeks of the decision of the Supreme Court we tabled Bill C-70. Prior to that we consulted with groups such as the Canadian Bar Association and others that were generally interested in commenting on new initiatives from the Department of Justice and took their advice on this.

As well the minister has consulted with provincial attorneys general. I can tell hon. members of the House that this particular bill has their blessing and approval. I do not think it is unreasonable they would give it.

We took this through the committee stage. At that time there were no amendments, no briefs, and no witnesses who appeared before us. I think that was a result of the consultations that took place prior to the introduction of the bill.

I hope I have addressed the question of whether the government is hiding something on this. We are not.

With respect to the motion that the hon. member makes, he asks that the application of this bill be suspended until there is a review and a report commissioned on the authority of a reference from the Minister of Justice to the Law Reform Commission.

I do not think he will be too surprised when I say that the government will not be supporting it because it puts an indefinite time period for the application of this bill. I do not think that is something the courts, the judiciary, the bar or Canadians interested in seeing Parliament act would want at this particular time.

However, I can tell the hon. member that he is quite correct. He raised issues in his comments that are of concern to the government. I believe that he and I, the member from Moncton and others at the committee stage discussed this very question in terms of a review being undertaken by the attorney general of the province of Ontario. I can tell him, as I think I indicated then, that the government will be very interested in hearing what the attorney general of Ontario, or indeed any others in this country, has to say on this particular issue.

With respect to the specific reference in the motion *vis-à-vis* the Law Reform Commission, I want to tell the member that the issue that was referred to the commission is being studied and will continue to be studied by the Department of Justice itself. The minister, I and everyone would like to see that concluded as quickly as possible.

I cannot say to the hon. member or to anyone else that we will therefore bring in amendments when we do not know what the report is. It is reasonable to see what the report is, to see what the attorney general of Ontario recommends to us in this regard and then to decide the appropriate action. But I cannot in advance of a report being completed say that we will accept whatever the conclusions of the report and therefore bring in amendments to the Criminal Code.

Mr. Waddell: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member.

I just want to point out to him so that we can expedite this matter. What I asked in my speech was that he give a commitment to this House that there be a report, an independent study, and that this study be made available to members of the House. I did not ask for an internal Department of Justice study but an independent study that is available to the members of the House. If he were prepared to give that commitment I would withdraw my amendment.

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that the issue being studied by the attorney general for Ontario is not one that is controlled or directed by the Government of Canada. He can be assured that there is independence in what the Attorney general of Ontario will be doing *vis-à-vis* the federal Criminal Code. I can only tell him what we are doing at the present time. Yes, we are having a look at it.

He is a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General as are several other members of the House. I would indicate to him that if he would like to study this as well as the study that is going on within the Department of Justice, then by all means he should propose that to members. That is certainly within his purview and that of his colleagues on the Standing Committee of Justice and Solicitor General. If they want to undertake a study that would act in parallel or in concert with what we are doing at the Department of

Justice, then by all means do so. That would be the appropriate route.

If the member is asking me to make a commitment that we will have a royal commission, all I can say is that I want to see first the Department of Justice review. Let us see what the recommendations are from the attorney general.

With respect to the attorney general for Ontario, provincial attorneys general want this bill passed and they want it passed by July 23. As far as an independent inquiry is concerned, I say to the hon. member, please go before the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General. That is his right as a member of Parliament to make that recommendation.

We heard that the hon. member for Moncton. I know my colleagues on the government side are interested in all aspects of the justice system and all attempts to create a fair justice system for everyone in Canada. I would suggest that is the route.

At this point, I do not see why it would be a good idea for us to stop the internal review being undertaken by the Department of Justice. I would suggest that we let that proceed and find out what the attorney general of Ontario or anyone else in this country has to say about it. Let us hear what the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General has to say on it and then we can formulate an action plan at that particular time.

This is very important. Time is running out in Parliament and I hope that hon. members will not proceed with this. It would suspend the application of this bill to an indefinite period of time. I hope that we will get on with it and pass this bill.

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 nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, in view of the importance to all members of this House, the judiciary, the bar, and all those involved in jury trials in this country, I would seek the unanimous consent of this House to proceed with third reading debate.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I asked the parliamentary secretary if he would undertake to continue this study that is going on, not just internally at justice department. I asked for an independent report so we would actually see it in the House and it would be tabled. He refused to do that so reluctantly I will not give my consent.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (for the Minister of Justice) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When shall the bill be read a third time?

Some hon. members: At the next sitting of the House.

* * *

• (1050)

CUSTOMS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-74, an act to amend the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act, as reported (with amendment) by the Standing Committee on Finance.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have a ruling on Bill C-74, an act to amend the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act.

There are three motions in amendment on the *Notice Paper* at the report stage for Bill C-74, an act to amend the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act.

Motions Nos. 1 and 2 standing in the name of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 1 applied to Motion No. 2.

Motion No. 3 standing in the name of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott Russell was moved, debated and negatived in the Standing Committee on Finance which studied the bill. Consequently, Motion No. 3 will not be selected.

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1 and 2.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-74 be amended by deleting Clause 39.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-74 be amended by deleting Clause 40.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first of all I obviously accept the Chair's ruling in terms of Motion No. 3. I will make my remarks to all three of the motions. I invite the parliamentary secretary to avail himself of the answers to some of the questions that I will be raising.

First of all, I indicated at second reading that it is my intention to vote for this bill and to recommend that my colleagues do the same. I want to indicate to the government that we have no interest in blocking, stalling or otherwise delaying the passage of Bill C-74.

It should be made clear to all Canadians and to all members of this House that the reason Bill C-74 is needed is because of an action by the government across the way some years ago. It decided in its so-called wisdom to make all parcels coming into Canada under $40 exempt from customs duties. In so doing, it has created an industry in the United States.

I have here a magazine entitled *The Guide to Cross-Border Shopping, Tourism and Entertainment*. This little publication comes from the U.S.A., right across the border in Ogdensburg, New York. It tells of all the great ways Canadians can cross-border shop.

I understand that Canada Post is busy right now in the United States soliciting this kind of business to encourage Canadians to shop in the U.S. We will deal with that some other time. Right now, we are going to talk about the amendments that are before us.

The bill does two things. One, it reduces the tax free amount from $40 to $20. I had proposed in the amendment that has been ruled out of order to reduce that amount to $5. The government said at committee: "Don't worry because all articles even under $20 will be subject to a $5 fee at the border by Canada Post".

That is not true, because in the bill there is what is known as a foreign certification program by which a large mail order house in the United States will be able to apply, collect the taxes themselves, and exempt themselves from the $5 surtax.

The long and the short of it is the following: A company in the United States will be able to by-pass the new $5 fee that the government is proposing by registering under the foreign certification program. Okay? Now, say a Canadian small retailer imports by mail some small article made in the United States to resell in Canada. It has no possibility of being so exempted.

What have we created? We are going to make it harder for a small business in Canada to compete with a large business in the United States because the certification program is only made available to foreign companies and not Canadian ones. We are actually creating a new device in order for foreign companies to exempt themselves from paying the $5 surcharge we are initiating in the bill.

That is why the government has to answer for this. I invite the parliamentary secretary or one of the ministers across the way to explain to this House and to Canadians why yet another loophole has been created in a law that is supposed to get rid of loopholes this government created in the first place.

We really need to clarify that. As far as I am concerned, that foreign certification program should not exist. There is no reason for it. Why are we so desperate on wanting to export jobs out of this country? I cannot understand it.

If a Canadian mail order house wants to sell something to the U.S., it has to pay $8.40 U.S. at the border in order to get the privilege of sending a parcel across the border. That is roughly $10.50 Canadian at the time we are speaking today.

We are proposing to charge them $5 for what they charge us $10 and then we are proposing to exempt most of them from paying it anyway. Do they exempt us? Likely not. We are proposing to exempt all the large mail

order houses that are able to avail themselves of this foreign certification program. I really think the government has to answer for this.

There is another element in the bill I want to address. The purpose of the two amendments on the *Order Paper* in my name is to reduce the gift exemption the government is creating. Under the present rule, there is an exemption for someone receiving a gift from offshore. If a gift is received from offshore, this particular tax does not have to be paid.

Someone was mentioning to me in the lobby a little while ago that if her mother sent her a gift from offshore, she would have to pay the $5 surtax. Well that is not so. That only applies to goods purchased offshore. If a gift is received from offshore, right now one does not pay customs or any kind of administrative fee on the first $40 of value of the gift.

The bill proposes to increase the $40 to $60 and the amendments I have proposed would delete those clauses. At the very least, let us leave it the way it is now at $40. Let us not give an advantage to companies outside of this country. Let us give every advantage we can to the ones operating within Canada.

The Minister for International Trade and a few others across the way have recited to us at length the phrase "operating on a level playing field". That is their favourite line across the way. What is level about the playing field I have just described when we are plugging up loopholes in our system and creating new ones that will not make the plugging up we are trying to do half as effective?

Again, I repeat that we want those provisions to be tight but we cannot help but wonder why the government created this new loophole in the bill under this foreign certification clause.

I have here briefing documents for people working in Revenue Canada. These are questions and answers. These are prepared questions for the officials. This information was sent to me. I do not know whether I should call this information a leak or what, but anyway I have it. The information works this way. Proposed question No. 6: Finance has announced the foreign certification program, how does it work?

• (1100)

The proposed answer for the government official who is supposed to recite those prepared lines goes this way: A foreign mail order business can apply for certification which would allow it to collect duties and taxes on behalf of the Government of Canada. It would collect duties and taxes from its clients in Canada when the Canadian pays for the good and then send a cheque to the federal government on a periodic basis. This would in turn reduce the number of dutiable/taxable parcels to be processed by customs.

Then there is a supplementary question in case the person is real nosy and wants to know more. Question No. 7 goes this way: If I understand you correctly, by allowing foreign businesses to collect duties and taxes, Canadians can bypass customs altogether along with the Canada Post handling fee and have the parcel delivered right to their door. Is this not really facilitating cross-border shopping through these American mail order houses?

Well, thank you for asking, Mr. Speaker. Listen clearly to the proposed answer the official is supposed to give because you might find that it does not quite answer the question. As a matter of fact, I submit to you it does not answer the thing at all. Here is the proposed answer the government official is supposed to give to whoever is nosy enough to ask this supplementary question. Answer: Not at all. Foreign firms of course will have to consider this option in light of the cost that they will have to absorb or pass on to perform the collection and remittance function.

That is very clear, is it not? That is the proposed answer.

Again I recommend to this House the two amendments that I propose to close in on the loophole for gifts, but in addition I ask the government to really reconsider this foreign certification program because it is itself creating a new loophole that will not make its bill half as effective as it would be otherwise.

Mr. Horner: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am seeking unanimous consent of the House to table a report from a standing committee. Could we revert to that now?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

JUSTICE AND THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

NINTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, in both official languages.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the committee has considered certain questions concerning the Christine Lamont and David Spencer case and has agreed to report it.

In its report the committee makes two recommendations: First, the committee unanimously urges the Secretary of State for External Affairs to request without undue delay the expulsion of Christine Lamont and David Spencer in accordance with the laws of Brazil and Canada's international human rights law obligations.

Second, the committee urges that the minister enhance the program of informing Canadians as to the number of Canadians in foreign jails and the importance of conducting oneself in a way so as to avoid any conflicts with laws in other countries.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CUSTOMS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C–74, an act to amend the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act, as reported (with an amendment) by the Standing Committee on Finance.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by complimenting the committee that just reported. It is another example of how parliamentarians can work together in a very complex matter and come to agreement that I think all Canadians will be proud of. I hope that the minister will respond appropriately.

With regard to the group of amendments put forward by my colleague from the Liberal Party, I want to say that I do not support them. We have to recognize that in our two countries, Canada and the United States, there are a lot of intermarriages and a lot of families who live on both sides of the border. By restricting the exemption for gifts between families, between friends, between business colleagues, to the current amount as opposed to what the government is attempting to do which is to increase it is wrong.

For that reason I will be opposing the amendment. I certainly do agree with the member in his comments about the registry and giving the opportunity for American–based direct mail firms to have an advantage over Canadians. We have to recognize that all this bill does, and I will come back to this on third reading, is facilitate cross–border shopping. It also facilitates cross–border driving because there are no fees attached to the processing when you drive across the border and bring goods in, but if you are using the mail or courier services, there are. In effect the Government of Canada has made it more attractive to drive south to buy goods than reducing that opportunity.

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, in response to the amendments of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott–Russell, I would just like to say that amendments Nos. 1 and 2 would force the gift exemption to remain at $40 instead of being increased to $60. The gift exemption was increased to accommodate families and friends sending gifts from abroad. It brings it in line with the gift exemption in other countries. Gifts must be sent by an individual, not from a company, in order to qualify for the gift exemption.

As regards amendment No. 3, this amendment would restrict the exemption for postal and courier imports to $5 instead of the $20 proposed in the legislation. Dropping it to $5 would mean additional costs to customs because it would require processing an additional nine million parcels. Dropping it from $40 to $20 would result in an additional five million parcels being processed.

The proposed changes in Bill C–74 which we are advancing is in direct response to Canadian business demands that this government make the necessary changes to existing legislation to balance the scales. Representations were received from the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Direct Marketing Association, independent retailers and other small business people.

So we have responded to these changes. Some of these changes were also requested by members of this House.

I have a response to the hon. member from Mr. Light of the department who says: "We open a number of gifts that arrive in Canada and if we find an invoice from a company in the package we know it is not an unsolicited gift. Basically, when a package is sent from an individual to an individual and the declaration declares it as a gift, we basically accept that, except where we have evidence to the contrary. Since we sample parcels on a regular basis and if we find something that indicates it is not a gift we then disallow the gift exemption".

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 standing in the name of Mr. Boudria. 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. Motions Nos. 1 and 2 are therefore defeated.

Motion No. 1 negatived.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When shall the bill be read the third time? With leave of the House, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Loiselle (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

• (1110)

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to begin today third reading of Bill C–74, an act to amend the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff and the Excise Tax Act.

This is an important piece of legislation, important to both Customs and Excise, and important to Canadian business. It is designed to enhance voluntary compliance in the importing community and also to assist Canadian businesses by ensuring a level playing field and greater opportunity to compete in the global trading environment.

This bill is composed of two main parts. The first is directed to the elimination of the imbalance that currently exists in the interest provisions of customs legislation and to introduce penalties for the lack of compliance in certain instances.

It is noteworthy to mention at the outset that Customs and Excise has a very large commercial clientele who for the most part are very familiar with and who comply with customs legislation. For these importers then the proposed amendments will have no impact on their day–to–day operations. It will be business as usual.

Rather, these measures are aimed at those commercial importers who find it financially rewarding to delay filing their accounting documents or paying their fair share of duties and taxes. Current legislation requires Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise, to pay interest on moneys owing to an importer. However, the same obligation is not required of an importer who owes money to the Crown.

These proposed interest and penalty provisions have been designed to bring customs and excise business operation more into line with current commercial operating practices and they are fair to both the importing community and to customs, as the regulator. The proposed amendments are quite straightforward. Moneys owing by either party would be subject to interest provisions. As well, to further encourage compliance, the proposed amendments dealing with penalties will provide an incentive for the provision of timely and accurate information to customs.

The second part of Bill C–74 is directed to the importation of parcels through the mail. This aspect of the proposed legislation would modify current policies

which encourage significant Canadian shopping through foreign mail order houses. As well, the system today encourages Canadian mail order houses to establish direct marketing operations outside Canada to sell back to Canadians. The net effect of the current policy on postal imports is a significant loss of revenue to the government and is a subsidy to those who use the mail to import goods.

We have mentioned the government's commitment to ensure that Canadian business has the effect of competing on a level playing field. Perhaps the most serious ramification of today's policy is that it puts Canadian business at a disadvantage in a highly competitive industry.

The proposed changes hon. members have in front of them are a direct response to Canadian business demands that this government make the necessary changes to existing legislation to balance the scales. Representations were received from the Retail Council, the Canadian Direct Marketing Association, independent retailers and other small business people. Changes were also requested by members of this house.

The necessity of these changes is well borne out in fact. Over the last two years customs has experienced a 46 per cent increase in the volume of dutiable and taxable parcels. Estimates put 1990 Canadian purchases from foreign mail order houses in excess of $900 million, almost a staggering $1 billion. All indicators point to a worsening of the situation as foreign mail order houses direct aggressive marketing and sales campaigns to Canadians.

This has become an important issue affecting an important sector of the Canadian economy, the Canadian direct marketing industry. When trying to make the argument for a case, in this instance the bill before this House, sometimes it is good to have all the facts in front of oneself. The industry over all has an annual sales volume of $7.8 billion. The catalogue direct marketing business represents $2.2 billion of these sales or approximately 28 per cent. Catalogue direct marketing represents approximately 600 firms and employs an estimated 35,620 people.

The proposed amendments before this House are critical to the health of this industry and it is our responsibility to put an end to the competitive disadvantage under which Canadian firms presently find themselves.

During second reading of this bill hon. members may recall some of the statistics that have provided further impetus to the necessity for revised legislation.

The facts continue to be alarming. Estimates are: $260 million in lost sales in 1990; 4,170 jobs lost since 1986; a once healthy growth of 7 per cent annually has declined and stagnated since 1986 at 3.2 per cent per annum. The comparable U.S. growth rate in this industry was 8.3 per cent in 1985 and a very significant 12.4 per cent through 1990. The facts are there and they speak for themselves.

Why the difference in growth rates? This has been previously explained but bears repeating. Simply put, an Ontario-based firm selling a Canadian-made article for a $40 catalogue price would deliver it to a customer in Canada for $50.26 including GST, provincial sales taxes, shipping and handling. However, the same company could ship the Canadian-made good to the U.S. and deliver it to the same customer in Ontario for $45.36 with the same dollar value of profit margin and allowing for differences in postal rates. It does not make sense and it is easy to see how the duty and tax exemptions for parcels valued at $40 or less create a serious competitive inequity for Canadian retailers competing for Canadian mail order business.

The bill in front of us today is designed to provide the Canadian businessmen with a relief from the present day onerous legislation.

You will agree, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure most members of this House will agree that there exists very solid valid reasons for the proposed legislation that would lead to the implementation on July 1, 1992, of the following changes which I would like to highlight: duty and tax-free entry of postal or courier imports valued at $20 or less; collection on behalf of Customs and Excise by Canada Post of a $5 handling fee to cover the costs of services such as collection of duty, provincial sales tax where provinces are harmonized and GST on importations over the $20 threshold; Canada Post will bear the cost of clearing priority courier items through customs as is done by private couriers; voluntary registration of foreign mail order firms for the collection of GST and duties; and, options for non-resident mail order houses to collect and remit applicable duties and taxes on all

shipments over the $20 exemption limit sent to Canada destinations.

The review of the exemptions for postal and courier imports provided an opportunity to reassess our policy on gifts and to consider the merits of amending current exemption levels to make them more liberal.

As a result of the review and in response to numerous recent representations received from Canadians, the gift exemption level would be increased from $40 to $60 under this proposed legislation.

It is important to note that the gift exemption is intended to deal with unsolicited gifts sent to Canadians from family and friends abroad.

Mr. Speaker, you have in front of you a comprehensive piece of legislation that has been carefully thought out which is designed to improve existing legislation both for the benefit of the user and the regulator. It is not the cure-all for some of the complex issues with which we are faced. Specifically here we refer to cross-border shopping. Rather, this initiative proposes fair, balanced measures to restore the level playing field and gives Canadian mail order firms the opportunity to compete on an equal basis with foreign competitors in Canada.

As well, the bill proposes to bring customs legislation more into line with other statutes administered by Revenue Canada and continues concerted efforts by Customs and Excise to streamline operations and to manage in a more business-like fashion.

Bill C-74 has been a joint effort between the department and the Department of Finance. It is the culmination of many months of thoughtful hard work, work that has been directed toward being fair and trying to balance the different interests that inevitably collide when you are in the process of change.

I would like to thank all those who helped bring the bill to third reading and to suggest that we hear from members who may wish to contribute.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in favour of this bill at third reading. I must indicate, however, and reiterate the fact that the government is only partially plugging loopholes that it says it is plugging. The difficulty is, of course, that it has created a system within the bill that will make the measure it is announcing only half as effective as it would otherwise be.

• (1120)

Let me be perfectly clear, however, that this bill even with that loophole is going to be much tighter than the present legislation. No one is denying that. Right now, a person can ship goods into Canada worth $39.90 by mail from the U.S. exempt of all duties, exempt of the GST and everything else. It means that the large mail order houses, the L. L. Beans of this world, ship into Canada several goods in individual packages. They will ship a tie in one box, a shirt in the next and so on. They will send those goods into Canada in individual parcels and completely bypass our Canadian taxing system.

With the bill, the exempt amount will only be $20. We are referring to purchases not gifts. It is still possible that many goods will be shipped into Canada duty free because the $5 surcharge will not apply to large mail order houses for the reasons that I have previously indicated.

I first brought this issue to the attention of the House on May 30, 1990. In a speech in the House at that time, I asked the Minister of National Revenue what he was going to do to plug that loophole in our law which makes it possible for U.S. retailers to ship into Canada and completely undercut Canadian retailers, not because Canadian retailers are taking too much profit but for a reason totally different. They are exempt from taxes.

The member for Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle indicated in his speech a while ago that a $40 parcel costs $50.26 if purchased in Canada and the taxes have been paid. Similarly, a $20 parcel will cost $25.13. For a U.S. company taking advantage of the registration system, when it sends a $20 parcel to Canada, the parcel will cost $20 plus postage. That's it.

Canadians selling the same goods will have to charge its customer $25.13, using the hon. parliamentary secretary's own calculation. There is still going to be a $5.13 advantage on a $20 item.

The Canadian Direct Marketing Association issued a press release on February 12, 1992. It expressed its concern about this exemption system in the bill. It stated: "The changes in the postal and courier emission policy are definitely a step in the right direction". No problem, I agree with that. The hon. member across said that a while ago. However, let us read the next sentence: "But we still have concerns about goods valued under $20

being shipped to Canada duty free, tax free and exempt of the $5 handling fee".

That is because of the registration system that I described a while ago. They will not have to pay the $5 fee in question to Canada Post. That is what is wrong with that loophole that exists.

The particular concern of the Canadian Direct Mail Marketing Association is the following, and I read the next sentence: "Many Canadian companies, those that specialize in smaller ticket items such as nursery, garden products, small tools or books will still be facing unfair competition". Most books shipped from the United States into Canada are under $20, particularly when they are sold in large quantities. When they are to be shipped across the border, large book distribution companies will obviously use the certification mechanism. They will ship their books in the mail and be exempt from the $5 fee. That is what is wrong. That is the hole in there. It will eliminate some of the cross-border shipping by mail.

Yes, a small fishing and tackle shop located in Massena may not be able to do it any more, and that is good. I accept that. I am in favour of the bill. I will vote for it. However, we are not going to eliminate the large ones because of the certification program we have created. That is the deficiency in the legislation before us. In other words, it is good but it could be a lot better had the government not put in that particular exemption.

I want to speak briefly about the damage caused by the present policy, the one that exists now, the $40 exemption. Let me read from a letter I received from McIntyre and Dodd Marketing, a company located in Hawkesbury in my riding. They sent me this letter on May 22, 1990 and it reads as follows: "I would like to draw to your attention a loophole in our laws that an American company is making use of, that if it continues may force us to close our Hawkesbury plant. Our plant in peak periods last year employed 165 people".

I had my assistant, Francois Giroux, make a phone call just recently to the company in Hawkesbury. We asked how many people were on staff right now. Here is what McIntyre and Dodd said to my assistant. They have 52 people on staff versus 165 in 1990. All these jobs have been lost in my constituency, 113 jobs lost in that one business alone because this loophole existed. That is why it is so important for us to fix it. We could fix it better if the government would listen to my last minute plea to plug this new loophole it is creating.

I read on from the letter sent to me by McIntyre and Dodd. "The U.S. company in question, Direct Marketing Enterprises out of Westbury, New York, is using Canadian media", I am almost tempted to say the Canadian Post Office, but I will not, "to promote its mail order products with a return address in Windsor, Ontario".

Get a load of this. The orders are dispatched to a fulfilment operation in Detroit where the orders are processed and shipped to the border, ready to be mailed at the closest Canada Post parcel centre.

Here is how it works. The U.S. company places ads in a Canadian magazine, *The Canadian Weekender* that we get in our newspaper and says: "Do you want to order our such and such widget? Write in giving your Visa or MasterCard number to box so-and-so, Windsor, Ontario". Canadians are first of all misled into believing they are buying this through a Canadian store, outlet or a Canadian mail distribution company in Windsor. It is not true. It is not even in Windsor.

Someone from Detroit crosses the bridge into Windsor, opens a little box, takes the orders out and brings them to the United States, fills them over there and ships them back in the mail. That is the loophole we have created and that we are trying to plug today.

That will still exist for the large mail order houses because we have only partially plugged it. Nevertheless, that is the damage caused by the previous policy, one I raised in this House over two years ago and at that time begged the government to have it corrected because we were losing all these jobs in Canada.

Now, of course, the government is partially addressing the issue in question. I say only partially because of the situation I described only moments ago.

• (1130)

The Canadian Direct Marketing Association in its press release —and I want to come back to that for a minute—told us that there were 700 member companies of that organization involved in $7.8 billion worth of Canadian direct marketing. That is the amount of sales we are talking about. This is not small potatoes. This is big business, very big business in Canada. Many people purchase goods by mail.

Some people living in large downtown centres might perhaps be under the mistaken belief the only people who use mail shopping are those wanting to avail themselves of these loopholes and buy something in the United States. It is not so.

I know my colleague from Thunder Bay represents a rural riding as I do. He will know many people order from the Sears catalogue or wherever else within Canada. It is a large business within this country, particularly in rural Canada but also in urban Canada for some people, elderly people or people for whatever reason who do not want to go out, cannot go out, or just enjoy shopping that way because it is less trouble than standing in line before the cash register at one's not so favourite store in the shopping centre. People do a large amount of business that way.

The Canadian direct marketing business is certainly a very legitimate business. There are many jobs there. They provide a very useful service to Canadians.

There is the odd person involved in direct marketing who advertises in a comic book or something and sends a little plastic piece of junk instead of the item we thought we were buying from the photograph. I am sure that is generally not the case. Those are the unfortunate circumstances we are sometimes made familiar with as MPs. We usually complain to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs when we see people using devious methods to sell products. I do not think that is the general case. As a matter of fact I know it is not.

In closing I want to say it is about time we tightened up on that rule. My speech today is not to say that it is about time we charged Canadians more taxes. That is not the point. The point is that no one should be exempted from those taxes because he or she can cross the border to shop by letter or by the mail system.

If all taxes were collected equitably it would mean that each and every one of us paying taxes would have to pay proportionately less. Those who are less fortunate than others and cannot avail themselves of the loopholes are being punished right now because they are paying taxes that others are not. That is the point in tightening up on loopholes.

The issue is not whether one is in favour of higher taxes. I am certainly not in favour of having more tax increases after this Canadian government across the way has had 34 tax increases since it came to power in 1984. That is not the issue.

The issue, I repeat again in closing, is to ensure there is fairness, to ensure that a person who owns a store in my riding, in Thunder Bay or elsewhere in Canada does not see his or her business undercut by an envelope ordering something across the border and a product being sent back using, of all things, the Canadian postal system as a method to avoid paying Canadian taxes. That is the unfairness right now that many people are living with.

[*Translation*]

I intend to support this bill, which is badly needed, although unfortunately it still contains a loophole. I predict that the big multinationals and mail order companies will take advantage of the loophole which the government put there, in a piece of legislation that is basically a good bill.

I also think the $5 fee to be charged by the Canada Post Corporation should be $10. Fees should be reciprocal. The American fee is $8.40, which is about $10 in Canadian funds. The government across the way always insists on a level playing field and wants the rules to be more or less the same on both sides of the border. That is not the case here since their fees are twice as high as ours. Fees should be almost identical for the sake of fairness. They should be about $10 and we should eliminate the loophole that allows American companies to register and by-pass the whole fee system.

Finally, I hope Canadians can soon look forward to having fairer laws, especially Canadians who own small businesses in this country and who feel they are not getting fair treatment. They are right. At this very moment Ontario's entrepreneurs are faced with federal legislation that is not to their advantage. At the provincial level, they will soon have to contend with new labour

legislation about which they are apprehensive, to say the least. I would say they are more than apprehensive about these new developments. Merchants in the riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, which is a border area, simply want a chance to do business and make an honest living. That is all they ask and I do not think that is unreasonable.

In any case, I am sure that the 113 workers at McIntyre and Dodd in Hawkesbury would rather have jobs than be on unemployment insurance or welfare. They want to be able to earn a living.

I hope the bill will be adopted today and that it will be a step in the right direction towards reducing transborder shopping. In concluding, I would like to repeat my request to the parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

The parliamentary secretary—and I will predict it now—is making a mistake by going ahead with this clause that will permit large, foreign mail order firms from using what is known as the foreign certification program.

If they want a foreign certification program for administrative simplicity, so be it, but let us not use it as a way for them not to pay the $5 fee at the border. If they want to do it all at once, fine. If they want to send one cheque at the end of the month, fine. I am not going to object to that, but if we say to those companies that they can avoid paying a fee that others are paying then I think it is wrong. That is the problem. I repeat it again for the parliamentary secretary and the government officials who are listening in the lobby.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in third reading debate of Bill C-74.

At the outset let me say that when my children were very young—and I suspect this is the same for pretty well every other parent on this continent—and they came in with a scratch or a scrape that was not bleeding but was sort of roughed up, they demanded a bandage. The parents complied and gave them a little bandage to put over the cut even though the parents knew it was not needed. However, for psychological purposes the child needed to feel secure and needed to feel that there was some kind of treatment happening.

That is what this bill does. It really is a very tiny band-aid to try to give the impression the government is taking some action to stem or stop cross-border shopping. The reality is there is so much else that can be done to reduce people's need or desire to travel across the border to buy consumer goods. They do it personally as people in my community do. They travel to Duluth, Minnesota; Superior, Wisconsin; and Grand Marais, Minnesota. People in other communities also go across the border to get goods at a price less than they can buy them in their home community.

• (1140)

This bill deals with the symptoms, not with the problem. I regret that the government has chosen not to act seriously about the real problem.

Prior to this year's federal budget I wrote to the Minister of Finance and offered some suggestions to him. One of the suggestions was that he conduct a pilot project in northwestern Ontario to take a look at the cost differentials to see what really were the causes of the higher prices in Canada.

I used as an example two-by-fours produced in Thunder Bay from Canadian trees that were available at a price in Duluth, Minnesota, which was much less than the price at Beaver Lumber that was about one-half mile away from the sawmill. I asked the minister to take a look at those input costs to see what the impact of transportation was, to see what kind of mark-up there was, to see what impact hydro costs had in terms of the over-all costs of doing business in northwestern Ontario, and to take a look at all of the inputs to see if there were any areas where we could do better, where we could be more competitive.

I premised my remarks on the basis that I did not believe anyone in the system was ripping people off, that they were all legitimate costs. The minister never replied.

However, another organization did a national study because it too wanted to find out what the causes were. The key element it discovered—and it is one this government should be reacting to and working on—was in terms of the number of times that goods were handled in Canada compared to in the United States.

In the United States there is much more factory to retail outlet direct. In Canada it goes through two or three middle people whether it is domestically produced or whether it is imported. If the government really wanted to get serious about stemming out-shopping, it could work to assist the retail, manufacturing, transpor-

tation and handling industries in terms of reducing their cost elements.

When I raise this matter with my constituents they say: "Look, I have no choice. I don't have enough money every month to get by on. If I can save $100 or $200 by buying product *x* in Duluth and get a short holiday out of it to boot, I am sorry but I am going to do that because I need to it for my survival".

Some people feel very guilty about do that because they know it is their consumer purchases in Thunder Bay that help to pay the taxes for the municipality, to pay the wages for their neighbours and what not. But they feel they have no choice.

This government could act on that. This government could also act on the high cost of the Canadian dollar. There is no question that as long as our dollar is strong as compared to the American dollar imported products are much cheaper. If we allow the dollar to go where the marketplace says it should be, somewhere between 75 cents and 79 cents, then those products from the United States will become less attractive.

There is another thing we need to look at in a serious way. We need to re-examine our taxation policies as they relate to our competitor to the south, not to give corporations a break *per se*, but to make sure that our products are affordable and to make sure that we are not really tempting people to go south of the border.

Let me specifically deal with gasoline taxes. In the same letter to the Minister of Finance I indicated that perhaps it was time that all of us, whether all of us are the political parties or whether all of us are the federal, provincial and even municipal governments, re-examine how we tax fuel. There is a strong belief that the higher the tax on the fuel, the lower the consumption. From 1981 to 1989 the total cost of automobile gasoline went up by 198 per cent. What happened to consumption? It declined to just around 3.5 per cent.

If we look at that isolated statistic and at the number of people in Fort Francis, Rainy River, Sault Ste. Marie, Windsor and Cornwall who go across the bridge or down the road to cross the border to buy their gasoline because of the big difference in price we must recognize that if we do not change our gasoline pricing system, including taxation, there will continue to be that kind of draw. While they are down there getting gas they will pick up some milk, hurting our dairy producers, they will pick up some other consumer goods, hurting our retail operations, and on and on and on.

I suggested to the Minister of Finance that he convene an inter-ministerial, inter-governmental team to re-examine gasoline taxation and re-examine how that money is used. Obviously we need tax revenue of some kind or user fees of some kind to maintain, build and rebuild our highway infrastructure. We cannot just say that we would no longer tax it, we must look at it and find a way that treats the north fairly, treats the south fairly, treats the regions fairly and so on. We need to re-examine that because therein lies part of the solution to cross-border shopping.

One of the ironies of this particular bill and the steps the government has chosen to take is that it is actually working against the environment. It is discouraging the use of an integrated postal system that has economies of scale and the ability to take in a diverse range of items into one particular method of transportation and move them short and long distances for redistribution. Compare that to a neighbour of mine driving down to Duluth to buy that same item and only that item and then coming back. Think about the difference in fuel consumption and in emissions. There will be that many more vehicles on the highways, and it goes on and on and on.

Ironically by choosing to target mail order rather than any other method of bringing the goods into Canada the government is saying that it wants us to use the less environmentally friendly way of transport. People will do that. People will drive a hell of a long way to save $5. They do it all the time, even though it may cost them more in the long term. That is how they will approach it.

Let me conclude by saying once again that this is just a band-aid and for that reason we will not support this bill. We will not force a vote on it. We will do it on division. The government needs to know that it must find better ways to deal with a very real problem that is costing Canadians thousands of jobs in both the retail sector and the manufacturing sector.

I would like to leave members of this House and the people who are watching with one final comment. Let us all go out and buy something Canadian today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

• (1150)

EXCISE TAX ACT AND INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to consideration of Bill C–75, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Income Tax Act, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Finance.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Loiselle (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to begin debate at third reading of Bill C–75, which has passed committee stage without amendment.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the members for their co–operation in facilitating the passage of this bill. I am confident that there is general agreement on the nature of the bill, and on the importance of a healthy and vibrant transportation sector in Canada.

This bill amends the Excise Tax Act and Income Tax Act to implement two key measures announced on December 6, 1991 to boost the transportation sector.

The measures included in this bill are a temporary loss offset program with a partial rebate of the federal excise tax on diesel and aviation fuel, and an exemption from non–resident withholding tax for payments in respect of cross–border aircraft leases. The temporary loss offset program will provide a benefit of $120 million in each of the next two years to transportation firms experiencing temporary cash flow difficulties.

The withholding tax exemption will provide an on–going benefit to Canada's airlines at a cost to the treasury of about $15 million per year.

In December the government also announced changes to the capital cost allowance structure and funding for an institute for research on trucking issues and an owner–operator's trucking co–operative.

These measures, along with the measures included in this bill, respond in a meaningful way to issues raised by the transportation sector. As well, the measures announced in the budget to bolster the economic recovery and build confidence will reinforce the transportation sector as more Canadian goods are shipped to markets at home and abroad.

Response from this sector to these measures has been positive. Of course, this bill does not include everything the sector requested. However, it does provide considerable benefit to transportation in a fiscally responsible way. For example, the temporary loss offset program will yield significant benefits to the transportation sector.

This program provides transportation firms with a 3 cent per litre rebate in exchange for reductions in income tax loss carry forwards. For each dollar rebate received businesses will have to reduce their loss carry forward by $10, reducing future tax deductions.

This 10 to 1 ratio was chosen in order to target the cash flow benefits to those firms that need them most. This targeting will allow the program to deliver significant cash flow benefits while still being fiscally responsible.

I would like to remind the hon. members that maintaining our fiscal strategy is the way to achieve long–term prosperity for the Canadian economy, and therefore for the Canadian transportation sector.

There is an administratively simpler option available for truckers. This option provides a rebate of 1.5 cents per litre of the 4 cent per litre federal excise tax on diesel fuel, up to a maximum of $500 per taxpayer per year. Individual truckers have responded to this program very positively.

Although some members of the opposition may differ with the government on certain aspects of these measures it is encouraging that partisan differences have been set aside to ensure the speedy passage of this worth while bill.

It is clear that all parties in this House are in agreement on the importance of transportation to the Canadian economy.

For the information of members, application for the rebate can be made at customs and excise offices across Canada. Application forms will be made available as soon as the bill has received Royal Assent. The sooner this bill is passed the sooner rebates will be received by the transportation sector.

In closing, this bill will provide a timely and substantial boost to the transportation sector while maintaining the government's commitment to sound fiscal management. This is a responsible package of measures that deserves the support of this House.

I urge members to pass this bill without delay.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to rise in this House on third reading of Bill C–75, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Income Tax Act.

When the bill was tabled in this House back on May 1 it was largely a result of the situation with respect to Canadian truckers and trucking firms. I am sure Canadians can vividly remember the situation involving truckers last summer when major highways and many of our international bridges were blocked by these trucks.

Trucks parked in front of Parliament Hill for a number of days. Truckers and their families were and still are angry and frustrated with this government because of the high cost of doing business as truckers in this country. Their business is becoming increasingly competitive, and compared to their counterparts in the U.S. doing business is much more expensive in Canada.

The protests by the truckers centred on that fact. They were demanding help from the government. This legislation is supposed to respond to those concerns. While it merely attempts to deal with a very real situation affecting Canadian truckers it falls far short of what we would have liked to have seen in this bill, in other words, practical solutions to a complicated problem.

According to the government the trucking option would be a simpler option for small truckers and independently owned operators. It would consist of a rebate of 1.5 cents per litre of excisable fuel to a maximum of $500 per year. Such a rebate would have no effect on income tax losses according to the government. It would be included in income in the year it was received which is the normal practice. I will have more to say on that aspect in just a moment.

Another failure of the bill is that it does not help those truckers with capital cost struggles at the present time. The proposed capital cost allowance on a trucker's rig will only cover acquisitions made after December 6, 1991. The thousands of trucks parked on highway 401 last summer were purchased before December 1, 1991.

We are not talking about those truckers who may encounter difficulties in the future but those who have difficulties today. Some operators might be able to take advantage of the capital cost allowance in the future. Therefore we agree with the thrust of the bill in that direction. However, we must re–emphasize our concern that the legislation does not affect those purchases made before December 1991.

Another aspect of this legislation is the temporary excise tax transportation rebate, the proposed loss offset program. A general rebate will apply to the purchase of diesel fuel used for the purposes of transportation. The second component of this scheme is the loss offset that would reduce tax loss carry–forwards by $10 per $1 of rebate received.

• (1200)

In plain English it means that while the government is attempting to provide assistance to truckers in the purchase of fuel it is pulling the rug out from underneath truckers on the other side. It is simply robbing Peter to pay Paul. Is that the responsive, responsible way to deal with the situation? While Canadians are plagued with a very high level of taxation, and as businesses fold and our economy continues to struggle, in fact some would say crumble, where is the government? While the cost of doing business is less expensive in the United States, and we know that because many of our businesses and

thousands of workers are moving south of the border, the government cannot even offer a helping hand.

The truckers are not looking for a handout they are looking for a helping hand.

As an example of this Peter robs Paul scenario with respect to the diesel fuel rebate, it will be in effect on fuel purchased in 1991 and 1992. The only way it helps small firms and independent truckers is by easing their temporary cash flow problems, which of course is acceptable. However, to cut off the program at the end of the year, if this bill is passed soon, is frankly too little and too late.

In summary, while I welcome the measures contained in this bill I am critical of the extent to which they would assist the trucking industry in regard to the depreciation of highly expensive capital equipment and the amount of tax relief on diesel fuel as it relates to the loss carry–forward provisions.

We support the bill and we will not attempt to delay it. However, the government's response to what is nothing short of a crisis in the trucking industry is very disappointing.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I too wish to make a few comments on Bill C–75. I will not take very long at all.

The need for this bill actually goes back a number of years. It goes back to the white paper *Freedom To Move* and it goes back to the deregulation of the aviation industry, the rail industry and the trucking industry.

That deregulation of the trucking industry, which was not only passed by this House but also put forward and passed by the then Liberal government of Ontario, led to the situation that we saw outside of this House, in Toronto, in Windsor, and elsewhere in this country. Block after block, if not mile after mile, of rigs stopped at the side of the road, their operators and their owners protesting against the lack of government action.

We ended up with too many trucks chasing too few cargoes. That was something that we predicted.

Under regulation there was a balance. Public necessity and convenience had to be met and people could only get into the business if there was sufficient demand for the service. While the system was not perfect it did ensure that there was some stability. It did not allow someone with a dream to invest his or her life savings into a rig on the chance that they might make a good buck.

When deregulation came into being we opened the floodgates. A lot of decent men and women decided to get into their own business. They were entrepreneurs, they felt they could do it, and they felt they could out–hussle. However, they did not count on everybody else having the same thought and everybody else convincing the bankers to give them the money and put them in hock for many years to come. They did not count on the competition from United States carriers. They did not count on the kind of consolidation that began to occur, even though there were enough warnings out there about what was going to happen. They did not count on the fact that there would not be enough work to keep them going.

They said: "Help". They demanded action from both the federal and provincial governments to make it possible for them to survive.

What did the federal Government of Canada do? It talked a lot for a long time and it had meetings and consultations. The end result was Bill C–75, a token effort.

In terms of the fuel tax rebate $500 will be a lot for my car but for a transport truck operator it is one, two, three or maybe five tanks full. I am not sure about the capacity and the costs. That is all that means, only to have it pulled back down the road, almost like sleight of hand.

In terms of depreciation, it still does not match their competitors in the states. In the previous bill I talked about band–aids. This is a band–aid to try to make the truckers feel better, to convince them that the government is really concerned about them and is going to great lengths to do something about them. I would bet that a lot of the truckers will not even agree to dance. They will not participate because it is meaningless.

As my colleague, the member for Hamilton West, pointed out quite rightly it does not do anything for those folks who already have their rigs, their trailers. It is only for new people or new acquisitions. If the existing truckers go out of business there will not be any new acquisitions. They certainly will not be buying a new rig, replacing their trailer.

It is a meaningless attempt by the federal government to do something for the truckers. If it was really serious it would re-examine its own philosophy about deregulation. It would allow the Standing Committee on Transport to enter into its own review to find a way to provide stability in the trucking industry, stability that would protect those carriers in the industry today and give them a chance to survive, but also design a system in co-operation with the provinces to make sure the chaos created by this government is never allowed to happen again, whether it is next year, in 10 years or whatever.

I will be supporting the bill because even though it is a minimal bill we must at least get it passed so those who are able can take advantage of it. If we can save one trucker somewhere out there in this country then great, but I sure wish we could have saved a lot more.

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 third time and passed.

* * *

NATIONAL PARKS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-59, an act to amend the National Parks Act, as reported (with amendment) from a legislative committee.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Charest moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS ACT, 1992

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-45, an act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have a ruling on Bill C-45, an act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods. There are two motions standing in the name of the Minister of Transport on the Notice Paper at the report stage of Bill C-45, an act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods.

• (1210)

Motions Nos. 1 and 2 will be grouped for debate and voted on separately.

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1 and 2.

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Marcel Danis (for the Minister of Transport) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-45 be amended in Clause 19 by striking out lines 1 to 3 at page 11 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*b*) any person who is responding to the occurrence or imminence of the release in accordance with an emergency response assistance plan approved under section 7; or".

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C-45 be amended in Clause 20 by striking out lines 7 to 11 at page 11 and substituting the following therefor:

"20. A person directed or required under subsection 17(3) or (4), 18(2) or 19(2) to do or refrain from doing anything is not personally liable, either civilly or criminally in respect of any act or omission in the course of complying with the direction or requirement or doing any".

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you reading the motions just to give the House and those watching an idea of what we are doing here.

I am pleased to rise at report stage of Bill C-45, an act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods. We expect speedy passage. I think there is

general agreement and I hope we will be able to continue in the fine spirit of co-operation that was exhibited in Legislative Committee E, as we addressed the two further amendments that have been proposed.

To address Motion No. 1, members will know that Bill C-45 is directed not only at preventing accidents but also at ensuring that the industry will respond properly to any accidents that may occur. To ensure rapid response our Canadian industry has established a most comprehensive and highly professional network of response teams from various companies. It is the response team nearest an accident that responds even though it may be another company's product.

In order to promote and support this industry response Bill C-45 provides such teams the measure of liability protection. It was intended in the drafting of the bill that this protection would clearly apply with respect to all the emergency response teams carrying out an emergency response plan approved by the Minister of Transport.

As unfortunately sometimes happens we have had recent advice that paragraph 10(3)(b) covers most but not all such teams as it is presently written. We want to ensure that we absolutely do cover every such response team. That is Motion No. 1.

Motion No. 2 refers to clause 20 of Bill C-45, which contains a reference to clauses 17, 18, and 19. Unfortunately, we have been advised by the drafting experts that while the words used in clause 20 do appropriately reference clauses 17 and 19, the reference does not work for clause 18. Hence, the wording of Motion No. 2.

I hope the House will be disposed to accept these two amendments. I appreciate the co-operation of the opposition parties on this bill.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Her Majesty's Official Opposition I do support those motions being put forward by the government.

I would like to rise at this point in debate on this reading of Bill C-45. The entire piece of legislation is welcomed by the Official Opposition. While not as completely thorough as we would have liked, it nonetheless greatly improves the safe transportation of dangerous and hazardous goods.

The bill provides for a clearer framework for regulating the transportation of dangerous goods and places additional emphasis on steps that must be taken prior to the transportation of those goods.

In legislation passed back in 1980 a federal-provincial transportation of dangerous goods program was established and adopted by all the provinces and territories as set out by federal regulations. The bill would make it an offence for any person who displayed a safety mark on a vehicle transporting dangerous goods that was misleading in terms of the product being transported. This aspect comes down to an important issue which the Canadian fire-fighters have been seeking within the framework of legislation.

Fire-fighters who are engaged in the containment of goods released as the result of an accident or impending release of goods as a result of an accident are rightly concerned about dangerous and toxic substances. They are, after all, our first line of defence.

They also want to make sure that the product the vehicle or any transportation mode is carrying is the same product that is appearing on the vehicle's manifest. On the outer side of vehicles is a box displaying a card with a number identifying the hazardous product being shipped. This card is supposed to be displayed from the time the vehicle is filled with the substance until the time it is emptied.

Let me give you an example of the type of goods transported and the identification displayed.

Transport Canada provides an important booklet. It is entitled the "Initial Emergency Response Guide". If an accident occurs the identification number on the vehicle is referred to in the booklet and suggested procedures for emergency response crews such as fire-fighters or police or our medical teams are set out.

For instance, identification number UN2806 refers to lithium nitride. The "Initial Emergency Response Guide" procedures say that crews must not use water or foam but should use sand, lime or soda ash to contain that fire.

If the identification label, heaven forbid, were improperly displayed, if the wrong label were placed on the vehicle, or when another product was pumped into the vehicle and the card was not removed, the results would make a very difficult situation, especially in an emergency situation with respect to a fire.

Some other products might be contained by water only or foam. Some types of accidents require a local evacuation. We saw evidence of that a few years back in the city of Mississauga in which we had a train derailment and many units of that train had turned over on their sides, some of them spewing their substances. Those substances were highly toxic and when released into the atmosphere could do great damage to the population living nearby and so the order was made to evacuate. As I recall, being a reporter and walking the streets of Mississauga on that very quiet day, the plume of smoke was in the distance and there was no one to be found on the streets and sidewalks of Mississauga.

There are many potential cases where if an accident were to occur, improper containment methods could be used. This is why fire-fighters have been pressing for legislation that would encompass the right to know what is being transported on a vehicle and what the response is.

What this means is that fire-fighters want to enhance the manual system that is now in place in which a card is placed on the outside of the vehicle in that little box and the contents of the vehicle, its manifest, are known through an electronic data base which can be accessed immediately.

Currently in our trains when the locomotive is up front and it carries the manifest of what it is carrying behind the locomotive, oftentimes, and sadly so sometimes, the main locomotive is involved in the collision or the accident that occurs on those tracks and with the damage to the locomotive can come the loss of the manifest and you can understand the concern when we or the fire-fighters or the police or the medical response teams will not know what is contained within those train units behind the locomotive.

• (1220)

What the fire-fighters have been asking for is this electronic data base and all vehicles transporting dangerous goods would be required to register on a nation-wide data base at the source of transportation and destination. Certainly accessing the most current information this way would be a vast improvement over what we have in place today.

Although the right to know is encompassed in this bill in its language, the bill does not set up such an electronic system of information. That is too bad, for we have the opportunity. Such a system would undoubtedly have be to arranged with the co-operation of labour and business and government.

We look forward to such a system eventually being put into place.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I have a few brief remarks in support of the latest amendments that the government has proposed to this bill. They are welcome and we do support them.

I will briefly comment on some of the background to the point that we have reached today. I would like to take the opportunity even at this stage to pay some tributes. One may seem self-serving but it is to the transport critic for our own party, the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, who has done a great deal of work over a long period of time on this bill and the components that go into it, including extensive public meetings and hearings in his own area and elsewhere with virtually all of the parties that are affected by this legislation in order to ensure that we got it right this time as much as humanly possible.

While there are always deficiencies in any piece of legislation, I think the efforts of all parties, the Official Opposition, ourselves and the government, on this one have been excellent. The co-operation has been excellent. There has been a willingness to horse trade back and forth, to share concepts and ideas.

I would also like to congratulate one of my other colleagues, the member for Mission—Coquitlam, who is not here today. She is out in British Columbia. She presented three private member's bills, one which touched on the same area of the right to know and the computerized tracking system that has been referred to by my colleague from the Official Opposition a few moments ago.

The basic thrust of that private bill and the amendments which the International Association of Fire Fighters has sought in its two legislative lobbies in the last two years are incorporated in this bill. The government accepted and put forward an amendment which we suggested in order to accomplish that. Again, I thank the government for its openness in that regard.

The final tribute I would like to pay at this stage is to the International Association of Fire Fighters. In the eight or nine years that I have been around this place, although it was interrupted on one occasion—time off for good behaviour, as I like to put it—I would like to pay

particular tribute to the International Association of Fire Fighters and in particular to its Canadian Director, Doug Coupar. Of all the various lobbies, especially the labour lobbies that I have seen on the Hill, I have found the association to be the most specific and the most effective of any of the ones that I have ever had the pleasure or sometimes not quite the pleasure of dealing with. It got to the point. It dealt with everybody openly and specifically on issues with which it had immediate concern and experience. It made its points. In large part the points were accepted insofar as it was within the capacity of the legislation before us to deal with those.

I am particular pleased again to have had incorporated into this legislation the wherewithal, the enabling legislation, to allow an electronic computerized tracking system to occur.

This is all I want to say at this point. I will address it perhaps in a little more at length when we get to third reading.

Again, I want to thank all parties and all individual members who have been involved as well as the staff of the Ministry of Transport which was very co-operative in giving its assistance and background knowledge in the furtherance in what I think is essentially a very good bill.

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 Motion No. 1?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt Motion No. 2?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motions Nos. 1 and 2 agreed to.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (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. Loiselle (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.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I realize it has been a long day already. You may find that there is a willingness to call it one o'clock and we can come back to government business at 3 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being one o'clock p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon, pursuant to Standing Order 24(2).

The House took recess at 12.27 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

SHOP CANADA DAY

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, the riding I have the privilege to represent, Thunder Bay—Nipigon, through the Chamber of Commerce and its Citizens Outshopping Committee led by Roy Smyth, have taken the initiative in asking this House to proclaim July 4 "Shop Canada Day".

Shopping outside Canada means billions of dollars are not spent at home, resulting in the loss of many thousands of jobs. What Canada most needs today are jobs and a return to the prosperity we once knew.

By adopting July 4 as Shop Canada Day, we can start to journey back to what we once knew as full employment and prosperity for all Canadians to enjoy.

I compliment the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, the executive director Rebecca Johnson, the president Dick Dolphin and all those involved in taking the initiative of committing July 4 to Shop Canada Day and allowing all of us to buy back into Canada.

PENSIONS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, when is an agreement between two countries not an agreement?

I believe the Canada–Italian Pension Protocol that has been implemented since January 1, 1988 has no legal authority. The protocol states: "This protocol shall enter into force on the date of the exchange of the instruments of ratification and its provision shall have effect on the first day of January, 1988".

This was confirmed by a letter to myself dated November 28, 1990 from the Minister of Finance.

The instruments of ratification have not been exchanged, leaving the agreement in limbo. The agreement allows the Canadian government to tax approximately 60,000 Canadians of Italian descent on $250 million of yearly pension benefits. The agreement is flawed, unjust, unworkable and at this moment, illegal.

On behalf of these 60,000 Canadians my question to the Minister of Finance is, what are the consequences of having collected these taxes on $1 billion of revenue if the agreement is never ratified. Are the cheques in the mail?

CITIZENS AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, young children are the heart of any great nation.

One group that is attempting to provide a better system of protection for our children is CACE, or Citizens Against Child Exploitation. This organization is headed by Mrs. Monica Rainey of Kelowna, B.C.

They have a plan that would go a long way to providing a safe environment for our children at school, at day care and in our neighbourhoods. Much like legislation already in existence in some American states, CACE proposes changes to our system that would:

(1) Establish a central registry for convicted child sex offenders in order to allow schools, day care centres and children's clubs to ensure that our children are not at risk by being placed in classrooms with known child sex offenders.

(2) Pass both provincial and federal legislation prohibiting a sex offender from holding a position of trust or authority with children.

A recent provincial study in B.C. specifies that 82 per cent of all sex offenders outside the home are in professional positions of trust. This is obviously a frightening thought for all Canadian parents. Now is not the time for further study, now is the time for action. The foremost priority of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is to protect society, and what segment of society is more in need of our protection than our children.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CONSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, when will Quebecers understand that they are a minority here in Ottawa and that they will get nothing more to help them develop to their full potential?

Let us take a look at what is happening in the constitutional negotiations. Mr. Castonguay himself had to quit because he saw the rug being pulled from under him. The same thing happened to the hon. member for Outremont who was losing his credibility on the Bélanger–Campeau commission. The same thing goes for the hon. member for Jonquière who realized that his own party did not even respect his proposals on his amendments to the bill on a renewed Canada.

Yesterday the Minister of National Health and Welfare, withdrew after being laughed at for two years although he did not know it, because here in Ottawa he can do nothing to change the Constitution.

* * *

FUTURE OF CANADA

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec–Est): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to announce in this House that on July 11 my riding will host a conference on young Canadians' commitment and attitude to the future of Canada.

This conference is part of the Forum for Young Canadians project, a joint initiative of the Government of Canada and the private sector. Its purpose is to give young Canadians, age 18 to 25, from 15 ridings in Canada an opportunity to study the economic situation of their riding and of Canada.

Following the regional conference in Quebec City in July two young people from my riding will have a chance to share with young people from the other provinces and write a national report.

These young people are expected to meet with officials from the House of Commons and the government in the fall to present proposed solutions to them.

Finally, these young leaders will appear on a special television program to ask Canadians to work toward building a more prosperous and more economically competitive nation.

I would like to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for London—Middlesex who initiated the project, and the organizers of this event. I also want to wish all the young participants great success.

* * *

[*English*]

MINERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, today, June 11, is Miners' Memorial Day in Cape Breton. This day holds a special place in the hearts of Cape Bretoners as it commemorates the work of coal miners.

The life of a coal miner has changed through the years, but danger of working underground continues to be a haunting element of that industry.

Today is a day when we recognize the hard work of our miners and remember those who have sacrificed their lives for that industry. Today is an emotional day for many. In particular one must remember the miners whose lives were lost at the Westray Mine explosion on May 9, 1992.

The coal industry has taken many of our miners. Today we reflect with respect, admiration, and a sense of loss upon those men who have died in our mines.

Today we also remember the families of our coal miners, the mothers, the wives, and the children who waited on the surface only to find their worst fears coming true.

On behalf of my constituents in Cape Breton—East Richmond I salute miners for their contributions, not only to the economy of Nova Scotia, but also to our culture, our history, and our sense of pride on our great island.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, Macedonia has always been an integral part of Hellenic history and Hellenic civilization that dates back almost 3,000 years.

Therefore the usurpation of the name Macedonia which from ancient times has been identified with Greece by a republic whose population is mainly of Slav origin is totally unacceptable and would constitute a destabilizing effect and an ongoing concern in the Balkan region.

On the other hand, a timely settlement of the question of the name of the Republic of Skopje without reference to the Greek historic name Macedonia constitutes a stabilizing factor and paves the way for co-operation and support from Greece for Skopje within a framework of security and stability in the region.

Let us hope that Skopje will follow this course of action which would assure a more peaceful and secure future for the country and its people.

* * *

[*Translation*]

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday at the annual convention of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities the Minister of Transport said that his government would not participate with the municipalities in the $15 billion project to renew urban infrastructure. In addition to the billion dollars which this government took from the municipalities in 1991, the minister had the nerve to suggest to the convention of municipalities that $14 billion should be invested in the Trans-Canada highway system instead of urban infrastructure.

• (1410)

[*English*]

The Liberal Leader at the same municipal convention called for a shared-cost infrastructure program between the three levels of government.

This new partnership would stimulate the economy, create 60,000 jobs and address the decaying urban infrastructure problem while decreasing the ever-growing unemployment and welfare payments.

* * *

THE LATE WILLIAM SMITH

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, Canadian agriculture suffered a great loss with the untimely death Tuesday of Canadian Wheat Board Commissioner Bill Smith. Mr. Smith died as the result of an accident while on a trade mission in China. He was 55.

Bill Smith was raised on the family farm at Inland, Alberta. After graduating from the Vermilion School of Agriculture, he worked his way up through the Alberta Wheat Pool from elevator agent to manager of grain sales.

Appointed a commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board in 1983 he was very active in international marketing and developed an expertise in dealing with the Chinese and Russian markets, two of Canada's major customers.

As Wheat Board Minister Mayer said: "Bill will be sadly missed. This marks a great loss for his family, friends, the agriculture industry, and Canada as a whole".

Besides his many friends and colleagues in the grain industry, Bill Smith leaves his wife Kathy and five children.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members join in extending condolences to Mrs. Smith and her family.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, on June 9 on Poundmaker Reserve in northwestern Saskatchewan about 300 western Canadian judges, lawyers and law enforcement people met as part of a six-day seminar on racial, ethnic and cultural equality.

The seminar, the first of its kind in Canada, included a talking circle that heavily criticized a court system which makes little sense to aboriginal people.

Poundmaker Chief Blaine Favel said that the non-Indian court system seeks to punish offenders while the native model strives to heal and bring the offender back into the community.

I commend the people of Poundmaker Reserve, the seminar organizers and the judges of western Canada who participated in this unique and ground-breaking seminar for their recognition that a new judicial relationship must be created and for their willingness to make the seminar a success.

The work they have undertaken is an important step in opening the lines of communication that must eventually lead to fundamental changes in structures and attitudes and a fair judicial system for aboriginal people.

* * *

SENATE REFORM

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I returned from the Eco Summit in Rio. Thousands of people from some 140 countries have gathered to try and achieve consensus on the future of the globe.

Ninety per cent of these people would give their eye teeth to have a Canadian passport because to the world Canada is the best place on earth.

Meanwhile back in Canada, rather than an Eco Summit, we have the ego summit wherein some provincial politicians have discovered that by being intransigent at the constitutional bargaining table they can become national TV stars. Now constitutional renewal has come down to the issue of Senate reform.

Mr. Speaker, I believe most Canadians would simply like to see the Senate abolished. However, if Senate reform is a priority with western Canadians then let us reform it rather than scrap it.

Reform and renewal mean compromise. Canadians are tired of constitutional bickering. They simply want their country preserved. So do I. Perhaps if our constitution ministers would hold a few sessions in Panama or Sri Lanka they would realize how trivial their pious constitutional principles may really be.

So I say to them all: Quit horsing around with the Senate. Get on with the job. Stop putting the future of the greatest country on earth at risk.

S. O. 31

DR. GEORGE CHANG

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, this week I received a visit from Ms. Chen Chu, a member of the National Assembly of Taiwan and human rights activist, regarding the wrongful imprisonment of Dr. George Chang, a democratic reformer who was jailed immediately upon his return to Taiwan last December after 30 years of exile.

Dr. Chang, a professor and dean at Cooper Union University in New York, is presently being denied proper medical attention by the Kuomintang government of Taiwan.

As confirmed by Amnesty International, Dr. Chang suffers from acute high blood pressure and a tumour which was recently discovered in his neck.

At the very least Canadians abhor the incarceration of political dissidents but to deny medical attention to prisoners of conscience strikes at the heart of our most cherished and fundamental respect for human rights.

The eyes of the world are watching now. I call on Premier Hau to demonstrate Taiwan's commitment to human rights and free Dr. Chang before it is too late.

* * *

NATIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTY

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, this coming weekend, Sunday, June 14 to be exact, marks one of the main events in Canada's 125th birthday celebrations, the National Neighbourhood Party.

In communities large and small across the country picnics and block parties are being organized to bring Canadians closer together in a spirit of pride and goodwill as neighbours and fellow citizens in this great nation.

In my own riding of Fredericton—York—Sunbury, a host of volunteers calling themselves the Fredericton Civil Pride Committee and representing a broad range of organizations and associations will put on a block party to please every age and to make us proud to be Canadians.

I am particularly pleased that we have been able to include my own annual public constituency picnic as an integral part of this 125th anniversary salute to Canada.

These national neighbourhood parties are open to everyone. Just like the future of our country, the potential of coming together in a sense of common Canadian citizenship is limited only by our own imagination.

Let us all join in toasting Canada with conviction and commitment as we celebrate its 125th birthday party this Sunday.

* * *

CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, earlier today this House passed a bill to curb cross-border shopping. At the same time, the left hand of the government across the way, namely Crown-owned Petro-Canada, was busy opening a gas bar in the well-known Canadian city of Plattsburg, New York. There displaying proudly the Maple Leaf of Canada, Petro-Canada advertises cut-rate gas, discount cigarettes and everything else that this great Crown-owned corporation can use to entice Canadians to cross the border and shop in the great U.S.A.

The milk of this U.S. cash cow is so plentiful that Petro-Canada wants to repeat the same exercise in other northern U.S. cities, namely in Vermont and elsewhere. One American is reported to have said to the media: "I can't get over your Canadian government. They tax everything so sky-high you can't pay it and then they go and open a gas bar down here. What are they trying to do?" That is what all of us are asking ourselves as well.

* * *

GROSSE ÎLE

Hon. Bob Layton (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the attention of the House to Grosse Île, an island in the St. Lawrence River just east of Quebec. The island was a clearing house for European immigrants and served as a quarantine station between 1832 and 1860. Over-population and general starvation forced many Irish families to immigrate to Canada on what were later dubbed coffin ships. Disease was rampant because living conditions were poor and in

very cramped spaces. Many immigrants were hospitalized on arrival at Grosse Île and thousands eventually died.

Since more than 12,000 Irish immigrants are buried on the island, Irish Canadian communities continue to have a special concern for its future. Parks Canada has proposed the creation of a national park on Grosse Île commemorating and celebrating European migration to Canada. Canadians of Irish descent are requesting that this historic site be attributed to our Irish ancestors.

I hope the parks department can accommodate this request.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE CONSTITUTION

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

In light of the information we are now receiving on the constitutional conference and the inability to reach agreement, could the government tell this House what it intends to do in the coming days?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we are waiting for the report from the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs. Once it has received this report the government will make a decision on what comes after.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Yesterday we saw the minister of health walking out of the conference. As everyone knows, he was named by the Prime Minister to be there to help the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is this: Was the departure of the minister of health authorized by the government or was it just another Laurel and Hardy show?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition will know, the Minister of National Health and Welfare has enormous portfolio responsibilities. He has been attending the constitutional meetings as a senior minister from Quebec. He indicated yesterday that he felt that he could contribute no more time to that process since his portfolio responsibilities required his attention. If I can quote him, he said: "I repeat once again, I didn't walk out. I didn't want to protest against anything. I just want that we realize that this step for me is over, that we have to move on to another step". He continues to be very supportive of the government's activities and hopeful, as all of us are, that the process will result in success.

• (1420)

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, how can the government believe that the people of Canada will take this government seriously in the matter when two senior cabinet ministers representing Canada at this negotiating table cannot agree? We would like to know from that side of the House what this government intends to do next and give some example to the nation that first the government will have order in its own House before trying to solve the problems of the nation.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to say what the government will do next when this step of the process is not completed. We will see what the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs reports.

One thing I can tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition is that this government will do everything possible to ensure that this country remains united.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the same minister. There has been a lot of agreement on fundamental issues of critical importance to Canadians, for example, the aboriginal question, distinct society, linguistic duality, the social charter.

Will this government now call a First Ministers Conference to try to unravel this constitutional impasse, to solve this constitutional labyrinth?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I would simply repeat that we do not yet know what the final results of this

stage of the process will be. When we do know, we will be in a position to evaluate what is the most appropriate next step.

Once again I underline that we are committed to the preservation of this country and doing whatever it takes to ensure that end.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare talked about a new approach, "a new way", of taking another step, of pursuing a new path when he left the meeting last night.

Can the minister tell us what this new path or further step to be taken is? Can he tell us what Canadians can expect from this government in this constitutional crisis situation?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is impossible to define a new approach until we know what the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs will report to the government and the House.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

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

I want to turn to the proposed purchase of helicopters at a cost of $4.3 billion. The government has defended this purchase by saying that 15 of these 50 new helicopters will be used to replace search and rescue helicopters.

There is no question that it is necessary to upgrade the search and rescue helicopters and the service we have. We know that rather than buying new ones, these helicopters could be upgraded for another 20 years of life for $200 million.

The Deputy Prime Minister often says as Minister of Finance that he has no choices. Here is a choice: $4.3 billion or $200 million. Which is it going to be?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I must advise the hon. member that quite honestly that information is not correct.

To just put this project into context, for some long period we have been looking at a replacement helicopter project, both to replace the existing Sea Kings on the ships and the search and rescue. This has been a longstanding project. It is a project that will take about 13 years to come to completion. The department has been allocating within its budget appropriate funds to provide for this new equipment.

Obviously, no decisions have been made at this point. The minister will be looking at a variety of alternatives. All members would agree that we do need to look at this in terms of what will serve our needs best over the long term, the kind of helicopter that will enable us to provide the capability to do all the different tasks that are required, that will lead us into the 21st century up to the year 2035. Indeed, it may be more appropriate to spend some money now and over the next 13 years to enable us to have that up–to–date modern capability for the long term.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Deputy Prime Minister. We know that in 20 years technology will change radically.

If we are able to upgrade those helicopters to make sure that we can provide search and rescue efficiently and with safety for those pilots, that is what we should be doing and doing it now.

[*Translation*]

My supplementary is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The other day, the Prime Minister said in the House: We can't spend money we don't have. I assume the Prime Minister can spend the money he does have. I also assume the government now has $4.3 billion to spend. Instead of spending this money on helicopters to defend us against enemies that no longer exist—the Soviets—will the government spend this money on Canada's children who need daycare since that problem does exist?

[*English*]

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, again I would ask the hon. member to look at this issue in its proper context.

We have within the Department of National Defence an allocation of funds that is required to enable us to carry out missions that the government and the defence committee agree upon. Within that budget, we try to

allocate funds between personnel, infrastructure and capital.

We have over the years, in the 1970s, not spent the amount of money on capital that is required to maintain our capital equipment effectively. We need to change that to provide the equipment that our men and women can utilize to provide the sovereignty patrols, fisheries patrols, drug interdictions, search and rescue and to protect our sovereignty on both our coasts.

If the hon. member looks at that within the context of the over-all defence budget, this indeed is going to be a requirement to replace our existing equipment such as helicopters with new modern equipment that can take us well into the 21st century and assure that we can undertake our responsibilities effectively.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, since 1975 there has been a 57 per cent increase in real dollars to defence in this country.

There are many long term investments this country has to make. One of them is in this country's children and in training for this country's citizens. We are busy fighting a country that no longer exists, the U.S.S.R. Maybe it is time to invest in a country that does exist and that is Canada.

I want to say to the minister that for the cost of one-third of one helicopter we could restore the Court Challenges Program for 10 years. We could introduce a decent student employment program for the cost of one helicopter and for the cost of 10 helicopters, we could have a real training program in this country.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance scrap this $4.3 billion boondoggle and invest the money in Canadians so that we can go into the 21st century with pride and with well-trained citizens?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that all of the outrage does not really respond to the actual situation. The government responds to all the various needs of its citizens in terms of all of our departmental responsibilities.

Would my hon. colleague indeed want to scrap the Department of National Defence to make us incapable of providing defence of our sovereignty, so that we are unable to do the kinds of operations on the east coast dealing with fisheries interdictions and unable to work at drug interdiction and search and rescue?

Can the hon. member not understand that we have a long-term planning process within the Department of National Defence. We have been planning for years for replacement equipment, a 13-year program. We will be looking at all of the options and the minister will be bringing forward recommendations to cabinet in due course.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

One day before his departure for Rio, the Prime Minister stated in this House that reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are firmly on Canada's agenda at home and at the earth summit.

However that position was contradicted by the official position taken by the Minister of the Environment at the summit when he called not for reduction in greenhouse gas emissions but rather stabilization.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is this: Which is the position of the Canadian government, reduction as stated by the Prime Minister or stabilization as stated by the Minister of the Environment?

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister arrived in Rio de Janeiro today. He was greeted by many good reports. He said that the biodiversity convention was signed this morning. We expect to sign the global warming greenhouse gas convention within the next few days.

• (1430)

But I must mention the number of people who have spoken about what Canada has done at the United Nations. It says: "For years Canada has set the example of the green country that we hope all countries will use as an example". This is the administrator of the United

Nations Development Program. Eve Savory from CBC says: "Canada's delegation has won the respect of other countries by going out of its way to be helpful".

We are going to be working very closely with other delegations. We will be signing the convention at Rio in the next few days.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, it is a good press release, but it doesn't answer the question, which was very specific.

We already know that Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Austria, Italy and Denmark have endorsed a policy for the reduction of greenhouse gases. However, there is a contradiction between the position taken by the Prime Minister on reduction and the Canadian government's official policy which wants to stabilize levels at those existing in 1990.

My question is simple: Which policy does the Canadian government endorse? The policy announced by the Minister of the Environment or the policy announced by the Prime Minister? Mr. Speaker, we can't do both!

[*English*]

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Mr. Speaker, we will be signing the global warming convention in the next few days. But I want to say that within the green plan we have the stabilization of the greenhouse gases by the year 2000 at the 1990 level.

But the green plan has gone further than that. We have allotted more than $150 million directed at the uncertainties within the global warming issue in order to reduce those at some point in time.

We are working with the provinces. We have a national action strategy dealing with the provinces as to how we are going to reduce the greenhouse gases. We are on course and we will be signing that convention in Rio de Janiero in the next few days.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of external affairs and in her absence the Deputy Prime Minister.

The justice committee this morning unanimously passed a motion asking the minister of external affairs to request the expulsion of David Spencer and Christine Lamont from Brazil. The committee heard clear evidence of a travesty of justice and discrimination against these two Canadians.

The minister continues to drag her heels. When will the minister make that request?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, I am prepared to advise the hon. member that I understand the report will be going to her. I believe she will be back next week and I am sure she will take the committee's recommendations under advisement and will be back to the House.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, that response is not good enough. The Lamont family and the minister's officials met with the judge who told them that he was under extreme pressure to bring in a clean sweep verdict.

The minister has agreed that 28 years is excessive and the trial was clearly flawed. Canadians and members of all three parties want the minister to act.

Why will the minister not do the right thing and act now?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the report of the standing committee was just tabled this morning. I think my hon. colleague must recognize that the minister and officials will obviously want to read that report and to discuss it. Upon her return next week I am sure she will have that opportunity.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

I want to read a quote from a gun store owner in Los Angeles. He says: "It's scary—they're buying guns; they are going to carry on them—Some of these people have never held a gun or even seen a gun close up". Gun sales in L.A. have gone up from 50 to 500 per cent, depending on the gun store.

Is the minister aware that British Columbians are concerned that the dramatic increase in guns being bought south of the border will spill over into British Columbia?

Is the minister aware that this week during the hearings on the draft regulations on gun control, Staff Sergeant Neal Jessop of Windsor, Ontario said that officials at the border are, and I quote: "only scratching the surface of the cross-border gun trade"?

I want to ask the minister: What steps is the government taking to prevent the flow of prohibited and illegal guns into Canada?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in case the hon. member has not noticed, a great deal has been devoted over the last 18 months to strengthening Canada's gun control legislation and bringing forward regulations and an implementation scheme that would in fact give full force to that legislation.

Among the legislative amendments are not simply amendments to the Criminal Code but also amendments to the statutes affecting customs and excise that are important.

Those who are opposed to gun control sometimes point out that no gun control legislation will ever completely succeed in preventing crimes committed with firearms or the smuggling of firearms. However, I believe that what we have done in this House in passing the gun control legislation is to increase the number of tools in the hands of police and customs officers to enable them as much as humanly possible to protect Canadians from the illegal traffic in arms.

I congratulate members of the House for passing that legislation. I thank them for the consideration they have been giving to the regulations. The recommendations of the committee will be taken into account before the final enactment of the regulations. I think we are doing as much as is possible in this House to try to make sure that we do not have the same kind of situation.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, as the minister knows, I am not talking about the good work we have all been doing on the gun control regulations here. I am talking about the guns flowing across the border.

In front of a committee of the House, here is what a customs officer said: "It is a virtual paradise for anyone who may be inclined at this point to do any smuggling of guns. As I say, you should be alarmed because we are alarmed". The government has been warned. We want a safe, gun-free country in Canada.

Is the minister prepared to toughen up controls at the border? Is she prepared to bring in tough new laws for the criminal misuse of guns and is she prepared to crack down on the illegal violation of the new gun control laws?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in case the hon. member had not noticed, we have brought in tough new sentences for firearms related crimes. We have tried to clamp down legislatively on the criminal use of firearms. Alas, we have no control over the firearms climate in the United States.

It is clear that the majority of people in the United States favour a national gun control scheme. They do not have it there. Perhaps they should consider adopting a parliamentary style of government which would enable the government to reflect the wishes of the majority of Americans, instead of people here looking south to adopt inefficient American institutions of government.

Canada and the United States have the longest undefended border in the world. In many ways that is good; in many ways that is negative. I think many Americans are looking at the kinds of decisions that have been made in this House and the ability of this Parliament to reflect the wishes of Canadians. They are beginning to seriously question the will of their own legislators to translate the concerns that Americans have into effective legislation.

The example we are providing here is perhaps one of the best ways that we can influence in an extraterritorial way the developments south of the border.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. He knows that last week a

scientific report was tabled which shows that the northern cod stock is in such poor condition that the fishery may have to be closed.

This has really come as no surprise to the people involved in the fishing industry. What is a surprise and a disappointment to them is that this government refuses to talk about specific plans about compensation.

I ask the minister, as an Atlantic Canadian, will he have compassion and show some leadership and tell us what compensation plan he has in mind with this situation?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I answered that question yesterday and that answer remains valid today.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer yesterday was that he could not give me answers to a hypothetical situation and he needed more specifics. If he needs specifics, I will give him specifics.

Specifically, in mid-February a specific plant in Port Union on the Bonavista peninsula closed down and 80 specific families were without compensation because they did not have enough time to qualify for unemployment insurance. Right now, specifically, they have no fish, they have no jobs, they have no compensation and they have no idea how this government is going to look after them.

• (1440)

I will now ask the minister as a supplementary what specific action plan he has for those specific people under this specific situation?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, specifically, the government has committed over $600 million for the fishery crisis in Atlantic Canada.

If he wants more specifics, I could send him a copy of the Fisheries Adjustment Program. I could also be specific and send a detailed account of the hundreds of millions of dollars that UI spends in Newfoundland and Labrador to help those people.

He refers to 80 people who are not in receipt of UI. Last year we had an emergency response program of some $53 million to help those very people. As I indicated yesterday, if the past is an indication of what the future will be for people that need help, they can count on the government.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced today that Canada would start negotiations with France to give France fish quotas inside Canada's territorial zone outside of the zone awarded to France yesterday in New York.

Does the government not realize it is scandalous to be giving France these extra cod bonuses when our scientists, our fishermen and the world community all agree our cod stocks are in danger of extinction?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, what is scandalous is that the hon. member will issue a press release that claims certain things will happen at the will of this government when in fact what he is asking this government to do is to ignore the words given by Canadians in a treaty signed by a Liberal minister under a Liberal government in 1972.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, this is 1992 and not 1972. A lot of water has flowed under the bridges of our fishing boats and there ain't no fish in it.

The Government of France, in these new negotiations announced today, is claiming fishing rights and this government is not disputing those rights to use ten French trawlers, each 50 metres long, with factory freezer capacity "to fish along the coasts of Newfoundland, of Nova Scotia, with the exception of the Bay of Fundy, and in the Canadian fishing zone within the Gulf of St. Lawrence". That is on the coast of five provinces in this country.

Does the government not realize that from an environmental point of view, given the state of our stocks, giving France these bonus cod stocks is nothing short of criminal negligence?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member was going to stand up and congratulate the government and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for having obtained at Rio an international conference on the failing stock.

I thought he was going to congratulate the government for having piloted this case into an international court

that gives almost a 92 per cent victory to Canada. Today he stands up and he again blows a lot of wind.

He talks about negotiations. The minister was clear this morning in Newfoundland and Labrador. The government is entering into discussions with France pursuant to the 1972 treaty that provides access for both countries to fish in the other's waters. That is all the discussions will be about.

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LUBICON BAND

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

In consequence of questions asked in the Austrian Parliament on May 5, the Austrian ambassador to Canada sought an audience with the minister during the week of May 18. He expressed the Austrian government's concerns about the situation of the Lubicon Indian people and their treatment at the hands of successive Canadian governments.

The minister being unavailable, the ambassador met with the deputy minister for the better part of an afternoon.

Can the parliamentary secretary advise whether or not the ambassador discussed what further steps, in addition to his meeting with the deputy minister, the Austrian government was considering taking regarding the Lubicon situation?

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, first I thank my colleague for notice of this question.

I can confirm that the deputy minister did meet with the Austrian ambassador at his request. They spent a long time discussing not only the current status of the Lubicon negotiation but particularly reference to the accusation in the motion from the Parliament that talked about clear-cutting.

The deputy minister made it very clear to the ambassador that while Daishowa holds the rights, they are not and have not been logging within that sensitive area.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I must thank the parliamentary secretary for an answer, although of course it was only glancingly related to the question.

Among other matters raised it is my understanding that the ambassador spoke of possible Austrian overtures to the CSCE and other European countries and, as well, consideration of Austrian imports of Canadian lumber.

In any event, let me ask the parliamentary secretary whether or not the government now is sufficiently concerned with the impact of the Lubicon situation on Canada's international reputation to undertake at the very least to provide the Lubicon people with a detailed, point by point response to the band's draft settlement proposal which it has had now since the late 1980s and to which it has never yet responded.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to win in this House. You get accused of not answering the question; you get accused if you answer too much. So I will try to keep to the question.

The minister met on June 5 with Chief Ominayak and they discussed a number of things. The most important thing is the mutual commitment by the Lubicon and by the government to seek a successful, fair and appropriate negotiation and resolution to this dispute.

Both sides have committed, first, to pursuing that result and, second, they have both committed not to negotiate in public. Certainly for me to take a step in that direction would not serve the interests at all.

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FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Several months ago the minister called for proposals to establish three research centres for family violence and violence against women at regional locations across Canada.

In a similar vein some years earlier, in 1985 to be exact, steps were initiated toward creation of such a research centre on family violence in the city of Fredericton with an alliance struck between the University of New Brunswick and the Senator Muriel McQueen Ferguson Foundation to pursue that goal. Naturally these original New Brunswick proponents strongly aspire to being included under the federal government program.

Would the parliamentary secretary please tell us what is the present status of the selection process for these research centres on family violence? Does the New Brunswick application remain under serious consideration?

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased the hon. member reminded us that proposals were put out for national research centres on violence against women and the problems of children.

Yes, the New Brunswick proposal was received. It has undergone intensive review both by the Department of National Health and Welfare and SSIRC, the Social Science Immunities Research Council.

I would also like to assure him that the New Brunswick proposal has been short-listed and will undergo another review. I would hope that within the next three or four months a decision will be made.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Unemployment in Elgin—Norfolk is higher than the national average. As such, constituents in my riding welcomed the news that additional federal funding would be directed toward retraining programs.

Can the Minister of Employment and Immigration tell the House when local Canada Employment Centres will know their share of this funding so plans can be made to retrain workers?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member noted that indeed $150 million more will be spent to train Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1450)

Mr. Valcourt: It is a pertinent question because even in the other party's caucus members have asked questions about these moneys. These moneys have to be divided into some 525 Canada Employment Centres throughout the country.

It will be done according to needs as expressed by the local work force. These decisions are being made today and tomorrow so that next week the money should be in the regions to help with training those unemployed Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The minister is aware that in Westmorland, workers must work 17 weeks to qualify for employment insurance, while in Kent they only have to work 10 weeks, although they all work in the same plants.

Does the minister intend to take steps to deal with this unfair situation since he only has to take his pencil and say that both Westmorland and Kent are rural ridings and that the people of Westmorland are not part of the city of Moncton?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the Leader of the Liberal Party that I spent a lot of time working on this issue with his predecessor, the former member for Beauséjour, Mr. Fernand Robichaud, and because of the symmetry required with respect to the statistics we get from Statistics Canada to establish unemployment insurance areas, we have already changed the entire map. I know this creates a problem for the people in the riding of Westmorland, but the hon. member will admit, knowing his riding as well as I know he does, that these people are very close to Moncton's urban area and that their circumstances are entirely different from those of the people in Kent.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is very evident the minister has not been there. Some people in Kent are closer to Moncton than some people in Cape Tormentine and places like that which are at least 45 miles away from Moncton.

If the minister knew how to do his job and accept his responsibilities, he would make sure that fishermen qualified as fishermen and the people who live in cities qualified as people of the city. He should do that now that he knows the problem. If he does not correct it, it is because he does not want to correct it. We will fix that problem after the next election.

An hon. member: There will not be any more elections.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): I am surprised, Mr. Speaker. When we were in Beauséjour not long ago to announce several million dollars in funding people thought I was doing an excellent job. It is too bad the hon. member does not share that view. But in any case—

Ms. Copps: Call an election and you'll see.

Mr. Valcourt: Be patient, Sheila. I will take the representation made by the Leader of the Liberal Party under advisement just the same. It is an important question, and as they say, nothing is graven in stone, and I am prepared to look at the situation to see how we can help everyone in Beauséjour.

* * *

[*English*]

VISIBLE MINORITIES

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship.

In the aftermath of the serious racial protests which occurred in Toronto over a month ago, the federal minister announced on May 7 in Toronto that the federal government would bring forward "an integrated plan of action to address the urgent concerns of the black community in metro Toronto in four weeks' time".

Could the minister share with this House and Canadians that federal integrated plan of action?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, the four levels of government committee has already started work with members of the black community. As we are speaking today meetings are continuing. We expect that by the end of the month we will have a report from that committee.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

While Stephen Lewis has reported to the Ontario government and while municipal levels of government, both metro and the city of Toronto, have programs for employment for visible minorities this summer, this federal government lags behind with empty words which has little comfort for anyone. There is no action plan and there is none in the conceivable future from the mayor's office this morning.

Given that the minister stated this problem was an urgent one and given that he stated and committed that there would be a federal response by way of a solution within four weeks, when can the Toronto community expect real and meaningful action from this government, not words, not more meetings and not more press releases?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): We have been carefully bringing forward this program, Mr. Speaker, for the last four years beginning in the spring of 1988. We made fighting racism and racial discrimination and programs of immigration and quality a high priority of this new department in particular.

We very quickly initiated this particular committee. It is being chaired by my special assistant, Mr. John Dennison, along with staff and officials of all levels of government.

They are working very well with members of the black community at the moment. I have every inspiration that they will bring forward suggestions for a very immediate kind of solution within our own program area and for some longer range ideas over the next six months of what we can do together.

PORT OF QUEBEC

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board in that capacity and that of the political minister for Quebec City.

As the minister knows, the port of Quebec, with the permission of Treasury Board, has leased a parcel of land on the Quebec waterfront for $28,000 a year so that a private company can build an IMAX theatre. The minister also knows that this theatre will destroy the view of the old city, which is Canada's only world heritage site, and that it is opposed by nearly 60 community groups.

My question is simple: Will the minister act and have this lease revoked?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan that this project has still not been processed because its promoters have not indicated that they want to proceed in the immediate future.

Before the approval was given, the projet went through the necessary EARP process, consultation with the municipal and provincial authorities, and everybody was in agreement that it should be processed.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that work has come to a standstill at the site, but the reality is that the people of the port of Quebec do not want a theatre such as IMAX blocking the view of the cruise shipping industry, of the marina, and destroying the *raison d'être* of the old port.

Will either the Minister of Transport or the President of the Treasury Board immediately act to take the federal government's responsibility seriously and cancel the lease so that the land can be turned back to a viewable point and access to the river and the port?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the member will acknowledge that we live in a democratic country where everybody has a chance to say their words.

This project has gone through consultation by Quebec City. It was approved by all the authorities. The fact that there are some people against it is recognized, but in a democracy it is the majority that rules.

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AIRCRAFT

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

Canada has led the way on the development of regulations which have now had an influence around the world regarding ultra light advanced aircraft.

Is Canada now ready to do the same thing for our recreational category of aircraft which could mean thousands of jobs and thousands of opportunities for Canadian investments?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to inform the member that this is a problem we have been looking into very seriously over the past few weeks.

We are making progress and hope to be able to give a valuable answer to the member and to the industry in general over the next few months.

* * *

PRINTING INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism recently unveiled the new logo for the Canadian Printing Industry Association, he was justifiably proud that this initiative was strong support for the government's own buy Canadian program.

In light of the numerous difficulties that this government's economic policies have caused to our printers, will the minister reaffirm today his commitment to do everything possible to support this printed in Canada program?

• (1500)

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that my hon. friend has raised this question about the printing industry. It is a very important part of the manufacturing sector of Canada. That is why the Minister of Finance in

his last budget increased the capital cost allowance which is of great value to this industry.

He also lowered the tax on manufacturing and processing from 23 per cent to 21 per cent.

It is an industry of small entrepreneurs and it is very important that we have kept in place the lowest rate of corporate tax on small businesses in the OECD. All of this is there to help this very important industry.

Anything else we can do through NEBS and NEXIS and export programs, we stand ready to help them out as well.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, this is a full colour, 92-page publication entitled *The Official Travellers Guide to Canada*, published in co-operation with and financed in part by Tourism Canada.

This was the minister who unveiled the printing industry logo. On page 3 of this publication beneath a smiling picture of the minister—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member knows that there is a rule here about using props. I am sure the hon. member could put the question without waving the magazine around.

Mr. Peterson: On page 3 underneath a picture of the smiling minister are the words "Printed in the U.S.A."

Some hon. members: Shame.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, if this government will not honour its own buy Canadian program, who will?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is holding up a copy of an American publication for American markets.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

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POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period I might have inadvertently misled the Minister of Justice in the House. I spoke about a gun-free Canada. I meant to say a gun-safe Canada.

I did not want the minister to think that we were not supporting strong but effective gun control and of course we are aware that we have guns in Canada. I wanted to make the point that I was talking about gun smuggling not dealing with the existing regime in Canada.

PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the House not be misled. This publication is distributed in Canada and elsewhere. If the government of Saskatchewan publishes a book for distribution in the United States but has it printed in—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I think that is a continuation of an earlier debate.

OFFICIAL REPORT

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a correction to *Hansard*. I think through some inadvertence *Hansard* misprinted a word on June 9, 1992, page 11659. It used the word "will" when it should have used the word "was".

If you check on June 8, you would see that the tabling was done the day before and not to be done in future.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, today being Thursday, I would like to ask the government House leader if he can tell us what the House business will be for tomorrow, Monday, Tuesday and the remainder of next week.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, we hope to complete this afternoon Bill C-41, energy efficiency, at third reading; Bill C-71, the Criminal Records Act, at third reading; and Bill C-7, status of the artist act, report stage and third reading. If there is time available before the normal hour of adjournment, Bill C-58, oil and gas production, at report stage and third reading.

There is general agreement that in view of the progress, and so on, we would strive to get out at the normal hour of adjournment.

On Friday, June 12, the government will call Bill C–55, Public Service Pensions Act, for debate at report stage.

On Monday the order of business will be Bill C–82, the National Housing Act, on which I understand there is general agreement and we could complete that at all stages; Bill C–49, the sexual assault act, for debate at report stage and hopefully third reading. If not completed Thursday, June 11, we will proceed then with Bill C–58, the oil and gas production act, as well as Bill C–51 and Bill C–52 which are the Northwest Territories Waters Act and Yukon Waters Act, respectively, and Bill C–79 the divorce act, for debate at second reading.

I would like to formally designate Tuesday, June 16 as the last allotted day.

In terms of the rest of that week, and indeed up till June 23, we will carry on the usual discussions among House leaders to see if we can schedule the business in a way that is to our mutual satisfaction.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Epp that Bill C–41, an act respecting the energy efficiency of energy–using products and the use of alternative energy sources, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, just very briefly I want to note that first of all we were pleased at the changes made in committee study of the bill, especially the inclusion of door and window systems in the bill's scope.

We believe there is much that is yet to be done. We believe that the bill can still be made significantly better and we are looking forward to what we hope will be amendments to what will now become the act, to be introduced by the government even before the next election.

However, having said that, we note that this is a good albeit small, step forward in the fight for energy efficiency and conservation in Canada. On that basis I am pleased to say that the New Democratic Party caucus will support the bill at third reading.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to participate in this debate this afternoon on behalf of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on the third reading of Bill C–41, the energy efficiency act.

It is of great interest to watch and see how Bill C–41 moved through the legislative process in this House. You may recall that at second reading the minister suggested that Bill C–41 was a good example of the kind of legislation that could be improved at the legislative committee stage. I am happy to say that he was right. The legislative committee on Bill C–41 has proposed amendments to this bill that will enhance the effectiveness of the legislation.

Several proposed amendments were technical in nature, related to the compliance provisions. However, most of the significant amendments approved by the committee expanded the scope of the legislation to include doors and windows.

• (1510)

The committee members agreed that the scope of the bill should include doors and windows because of their significant role in achieving greater energy efficiency in buildings and their amenability to the regulatory scheme contemplated by the legislation. I am pleased to note that the legislative committee took great care in developing the appropriate wording for this amendment.

The legislative committee also agreed on proposing amendments which would strengthen the compliance system, primarily by allowing inspectors to direct an importer of a non–compliant product to remove it from Canada, and explicitly providing for court orders as alternatives, or in addition to fines as punishment where a person is convicted of an offence under the act.

Bill C–41 has been improved as a result of the legislative committee deliberations and decisions. Useful insights were offered concerning the operation of regulatory programs under authority of this legislation. The committee's hearings confirmed the value and importance of proceeding expeditiously with this legislation. The legislative committee is also to be commended for its pragmatic review of Bill C–41 and for the useful amendments it has brought back to this House. I would

like to take this opportunity to thank members of the legislative committee on Bill C–41 for a job well done.

I would like to turn my attention for a few moments to the specifics of Bill C–41, the energy efficiency act, which provides statutory authority for initiatives related to energy labelling, minimum energy efficiency standards and the collection of statistics and information.

With regard to labelling, the bill will facilitate enhancement and expansion of the existing Energuide labelling program which currently applies to refrigerators, ranges, ovens, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers. Energuide regulations require that new appliances bear a specified label providing information on a product's use of energy. This is to encourage and assist more energy–efficient purchasing decisions.

Bill C–41 will provide EMR with statutory authority and Energuide regulations which have been the responsibility of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. EMR is redesigning the label to make it easier to read and comprehend. The department is analysing how the program could best be expanded to cover other products.

The bill will permit the government to make regulations requiring that specific products provide at least a minimum level of energy efficiency before they can be marketed in Canada. This meets requests from the provinces, territories and industry that the federal government help establish a consistent national energy efficiency regulatory regime.

I would like to stress that the regulatory actions will only be taken following consultations with affected parties. Regulations will be developed so as to avoid unnecessary costs to manufacturers and to facilitate co–ordination with provincial authorities. They will be developed with due regard for Canada's international trade obligations and the nation's ability to compete.

I feel that it is worth while to note that EMR will seek to ensure that new energy efficiency standards will be consistent with those in force in provincial and American jurisdictions.

Part II of the bill concerns the collection and use of statistics pertaining to efficiency of energy use and the adoption of alternative energy sources.

It is hoped that most of the data and information required by EMR's new efficiency and alternative energy program can be obtained from existing data bases held by Statistics Canada and others, or from voluntary surveys, so that recourse to the energy efficiency act can be avoided.

I would like to stress to this House that this government will ensure that regulation will be used in moderation in co–operation with other authorities and in consultation with those who will be most affected.

This government is confident that the energy efficiency act, along with the efficiency and alternative energy program it supports, constitutes an important and responsible step for Canada to take toward the issue of global warming. The EAE program will have net environmental and economic benefits. The environmental benefits include improvement of air quality, preservation of water and land resources and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases.

Canadian consumers who consider energy efficiency carefully when making their purchasing decisions will be able to reduce their annual energy costs, thereby freeing up some of their income for other uses.

Through investments in energy efficiency and alternative energy sources, Canadian industry can lower its energy costs, raise productivity and improve the ability to compete internationally.

There is a growing international interest in competitive products, technologies and services offering energy efficiency or employing alternative energy sources. Thus, Canadian companies responding to increased domestic demand in these areas gain international opportunities to expand their markets.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Bill C–41, the energy efficiency act, is part of a broader program to help Canadians use energy more wisely.

This government believes that the improvement of energy efficiency is an essential component of any responsible response in the use of global warming.

However, governments alone cannot resolve the issue. Individuals and organizations need to re–examine how these energies are used. This government's new energy efficiency alternatives energy program emphasizes actions that are economic in their own right.

It also emphasizes co-operation since we can only hope to achieve our global warning objectives with the help of all Canadians.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Madam Speaker, if I may, before beginning to talk on third reading of Bill C-41, I might bring to the attention of the House what happened at the energy committee this morning relating to the Westray Mine.

If my hon. friend disagrees, I hope that he will get up after and tell me if I have not given the facts to the House correctly. The hon. member of the New Democratic Party and I moved that the committee examine the federal role in what had gone on at the mine, not to look at issues of safety such as are going to be discussed by the Nova Scotia public inquiry.

Mr. MacDougall: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I believe that we are debating Bill C-41 in the House and the relevance of that bill. What happened in the committee earlier today really should not be discussed here in the House. We are dealing with Bill C-41.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Chair was listening very carefully to the remarks made by the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast. The Chair was hoping that he would very shortly come around to the bill and not bring back to the House events that took place in a committee.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, I had one more sentence because I think it is important. The parliamentary secretary was there and voted against the motion. I believe in a stronger Parliament and a stronger role for MPs in parliamentary committees. We should have been entitled to look at the federal aspects of that catastrophe and I regret profoundly that the government members voted unanimously to stop the energy committee from looking at that tragedy.

On this bill, energy efficiency and conservation now occupy a central role in the energy policy of all industrialized economies. Their importance as tools for balancing energy supply and demand has risen with each new supply, disruption or price rise.

I understand that my colleague from Cape Breton was at the hearing on behalf of our party. Most of the witnesses wanted the matters of this bill to be extended to things like windows, Canada 2000 for building homes. The government members again in committee resisted opening up the bill. Most of us on this side feel that the bill does not go nearly far enough in terms of energy conservation, particularly at a time when the conference in Rio is discussing the state of the world environment.

All industrial nations have curbed their use of energy after the 1973 oil crisis and even more after the 1979 one. During that time, Canadians "found" twice as much energy through conservation as was added in new oil, gas and electricity supplies. Experts are of the opinion that the potential for further energy efficiency is believed to remain very large. In the mid-1980s, the International Energy Agency estimated conservatively that further efficiency gains of 30 per cent are feasible among its member states.

• (1520)

For Canada specifically, Dr. John Robinson of the University of Waterloo, not far from the member's riding, has calculated an untapped, cost-effective energy conservation potential of up to 43 per cent. A 1988 update of the soft energy path analysis first carried out in 1983 by Friends of the Earth argues that Canada might achieve a 50 per cent reduction in primary energy intensity between now and 2025.

The comparison of costs of confirming electricity with those of generating it, in other words, saving a dollar by not developing a new mega project, is better than investing taxpayers money, in many cases, in new energy mega projects with all of their environmental costs.

It clearly indicates that improving electricity efficiency is more economic and reduces the demand for fossil fuels. Even if energy saving technology is available now, how do we get people to buy it? The public, our fellow citizens, must make a conscious decision to reduce the demand for fossil fuels, realizing that improved efficiency will not necessarily lead to a decline in living standards or the work environment.

The member who just came in is laughing. I assume that is because he used to be in the oil business at the pump level.

The buyer's financial criteria typically emphasize short-term benefits but more efficient end-use devices generally have a higher cost than the inefficient ones. Besides, it is common knowledge that the purchasers of residential appliances tend to place a higher priority on product characteristics such as colour and brand identification than energy efficiency. Consumer reluctance for energy instruments could be overcome through aggres-

sive marketing of high-efficiency models of appliances. New standards alone are not enough, I would submit.

Insufficient information is a powerful barrier preventing efficiency from being improved. The introduction of energy-efficient housing technologies is slower than it could be because many builders and architects are still, unfortunately, unfamiliar with energy-saving technologies. For example, "Energuide" labels which show the annual energy consumption of appliances do not translate these figures into annual operating costs. Why? Why would it not make sense to do so?

Probably few consumers are able to make this calculation and therefore the program may not lead to more rational decision making by consumers. I would sincerely hope the government is prepared to deal with the issue of promoting customer acceptance of new energy-efficient technologies.

Perhaps I can say that I very much believe that our party, when elected, will give attention to those matters. Forgive me for pointing out today that 44 per cent of Canadians indicate they are going to vote for this party to form a new government. When we are elected, if the Canadian people so will it, I believe that will be the case. I hope we will then put genuine, sincere stress on conservation and energy-efficient appliances and so on.

Have our energy planners considered, for example, the introduction of information, demonstration programs on energy efficient targets for industry in an attempt to shift market demand in favour of more energy-efficient items?

The bill is a step, a very small step, in the right direction but its scope should have been broadened in order to leave the door open for examining energy-efficient trends and other sectors, like commercial and residential lighting, improved voltage regulations, transportation mode shifts, use of waste heat to generate electricity and fuel-switching options. We should take advantage of all feasible options and there are many options available around the world. Many of them were developed in Canada and, if I may say, were cruelly defused by the budget policies of this government since 1984. I am thinking of wind energy, solar energy, alternative energy, photovoltaics and many, many others.

If we had taken advantage of all the feasible options for saving energy more cheaply than producing it, our need for new production facilities would be reduced.

If a consumer replaces a single 75-watt bulb with an 18 watt compact fluorescent lamp that lasts 10,000 hours, the consumer can save the electricity that a typical Canadian power plant would make from 770 pounds of coal. As a result, about 1,600 pounds of C02 and 18 pounds of sulphur dioxide would not be released into the atmosphere. What is Rio about if not things like that?

In 1990 Ontario Hydro estimated reducing demand in houses heated by electricity could save 1,350 megawatts. Even half of what was saved would defer and perhaps eliminate the need for a large nuclear reactor with all of its risks and hazards in the view of many people living outside of Algoma.

Increasing energy efficiency should become a priority with this government. As I said before, I believe this will be a priority with the Chrétien government to be elected as soon as Canadians have a chance to get to the voting booths.

When the U.S. introduced conservation laws which years ago prompted the manufacturing of energy-efficient appliances, our regulatory authorities in Canada did nothing. Now, instead of the threat of confiscation and destruction of private property, the government might better set an example by emphasizing energy efficiency and conservation in its overall operations, particularly in government-funded facilities.

Energy-efficient operations and cost-effective energy retrofits should be increased to demonstrate to our fellow citizens everywhere the many opportunities for improvements. After all, if the government approves of wasting energy, it should not be surprised if other people, citizens, react accordingly.

Energy efficiency could be given increased priority when purchasing new government vehicles and equipment. Madam Speaker, you deserve enormous credit for what the House of Commons is doing to try to promote energy efficiency, a green House of Commons. Perhaps the rug colour here was an early prediction of what you would be doing now in terms of the environment around this building. Could you please talk to the people in the

Senate and see what they are doing? They should be green as well.

More than 3 million personal computers are in use in our offices and the number is increasing. According to Ontario Hydro as much as 90 per cent of the energy consumed by computers can be saved by introducing more laptop models, inkjet printers, new PowerKey technology, which allows users to control computer times, peripherals, et cetera.

Industries such as appliance manufacturing are global in scope. Products are designed and manufactured to meet the needs of a market which is much broader than our Canadian market. In 1987 the U.S. national appliance energy conservation act established standards for minimum energy efficiency in 13 classes of major household appliances.

I could not agree more and most members on this side would agree as well with the view of the Canadian Manufacturers Association that the standards used in the United States should provide a benchmark so that Canadian companies are not put to a competitive disadvantage by more stringent requirements in the United States than in Canada.

A thorough regulatory analysis of the U.S. standards and provincial standards, both those currently in place and planned in the future, is needed if the bill before us now is to benefit Canadians and our economy significantly.

This issue becomes of utmost importance especially in view of the fact that our industrial infrastructure might not be able to cope with new regulatory initiatives that are too intrusive and out of step with current economic realities.

In its submission to the energy, mines and resources committee, the National Energy Conservation Association stated that:

> The industry infrastructure as it now exists in Canada falls significantly short in its ability to deliver the conservation products and services demanded by tomorrow's market.

There is unfortunately a lack of skilled trades to implement energy efficiency measures, a lack of access to capital financing for energy efficiency improvements, a lack of provincial incentives for investment in energy efficiency.

There should be some vehicles designed which would assist manufacturers, especially small and medium-sized ones, to change over to the state of the art technologies. Small Canadian producers are particularly vulnerable, as they would have to gear up their operations to deal with new regulatory standards and at the same time with a larger marketplace and stronger competition.

The concerns of manufacturers have also been the level of stringency with respect to proposed standards, deadlines they would have to meet, additional costs and so on. Consideration should be given to offering tax credits to manufacturers that exceed existing standards.

• (1530)

In fairness to the bill, regulations would phase out some inefficient equipment from the Canadian market and impose restrictions on imports of electricity guzzling appliances to Canada.

The bill will not prevent our manufacturers, as I understand it, from clearing their inventories by exporting substandard appliances to countries where government efficiency standards are non-existent or less than our own.

The widespread public concern about our natural environment which is at the heart of the debate on energy efficiency and conservation is of global proportions. Exporting inefficient equipment for instance to developing nations would only undermine efforts undertaken by Canadian consumers and manufacturers.

As the Friends of the Earth put it: "We do not want to see a repeat of the tetraethyl lead issue where lead was banned for use in gasoline here but the manufacturer is still allowed to export to developing countries". Is that not exactly the kind of thing that the developing world is objecting to both at Rio and in many other fora?

As reported in the *Scientific American*, economic projections show that if nothing is done to hasten energy technology development and to introduce existing efficiency technology in developing countries, global climate change and other major environmental problems will escalate beyond unacceptable levels.

Even if our so-called developed countries manage to reduce our LCO_2 emissions by 50 per cent, population growth and economic development in the so-called developing countries would most likely increase their

CO_2 emissions from 450 to about 900 kilograms per person annually by the year 2030.

World-wide emissions of CO_2 will then be two and a half times what they are per year now. In addition, Canada does not have specific policy objectives in its foreign aid and trade policies and programs that encourage and enhance the transfer of environmental technologies, including energy efficiency technologies to developing nations.

This legislation is a small mini-step in a better direction. If properly implemented, it could assist Canada not only in supplying other countries with such technologies but could also provide Canadians with competitive trade opportunities.

In closing—my colleague from Prince Edward Island will be speaking momentarily I believe—we will be supporting this bill but are profoundly regretful that the government did not take a large step in the right direction, rather than what I think can fairly be called a milli-step—"milli" as in millimetre—in the right direction.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to rise and speak in favour of this legislation, Bill C-41, which is the government's long overdue energy efficiency legislation.

This bill, among other things, will allow the government to establish minimum energy efficiency standards for energy-using products like stoves, fridges and dishwashers. It also will allow the government to require labelling of energy-using products to say how much energy they use. It will compile statistics and other information on energy use and alternative energy, and promote energy efficiency and alternative energy like solar power, for example.

I want to congratulate my colleague from Edmonton Southeast, who has just spoken, on his very excellent speech on Bill C-41. I also want to applaud his efforts at prodding the government to promote energy efficiency in this country.

As a former opposition energy critic, I can appreciate the difficulty he had in trying to persuade the government to increase its effort in the energy efficiency area. I tried repeatedly do this when I was the critic, but the government did not seem to get the message that energy efficiency not only helps Canada's environment but it helps the Canadian economy as well.

By using less energy, Canadian industries make their product more cheaply and that makes them more competitive internationally.

It is no wonder that the government did not get the message when you look at the record of what has happened since this government was elected. In 1990, this government allowed Canada to become the first in energy use per capita among industrialized countries. It also allowed this country to become the second in per capita energy carbon dioxide emissions.

We all know that carbon dioxide is the gas that is released when fuels are burned and which is believed to cause global warming.

This is the same government that cut the energy conservation and renewable energy funding from about $500 million in 1984 to roughly $30 million in 1990-91. It cut the funding for research on solar, wind and hydrogen energy to name a few.

This government also closed down energy department offices across this country, offices which provided information and grants for energy conservation and renewable energy projects. I know in my own province of Prince Edward Island we had an office that provided very valuable information to people living not only in my riding but in all of Prince Edward. It provided information on how we could save on energy and it also provided grants.

This government closed those offices and therefore took away the outlet that provided this very valuable information as well as the grants for conservation and renewable energy projects.

The programs to financially help people insulate their homes, to inform people about energy efficiency of home appliances and so on and to advise industry on how to reduce energy consumption were all discarded by this government.

Largely because of this government's abandoning the energy efficiency programs established by the previous Liberal government, we in Canada, as a result, have a more polluted environment and a less competitive economy.

The statistics that I mentioned earlier prove this fact, but I want to mention a few other statistics. In the early 1980s there was a 10 per cent reduction in per capita carbon dioxide emissions in this country. We also know that less carbon dioxide emissions means cleaner air. Yet over the last five years there has not been any reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by the energy industry. In

fact there have been increases. Carbon dioxide emissions have been allowed to increase by 8 per cent in the last five years.

Clearly this government has a long way to go to match the record of the previous government on carbon dioxide emissions.

I am pleased that the legislation we have before us today shows that the government has finally answered calls from environmental groups and from this side of the House. Certainly the passage of this energy efficiency legislation is necessary if the government is going to come even close to meeting the target of stabilizing the CO2 emissions at the 1990 level. We on this side of the House have been saying this all along. It is what environmental groups have been saying as well. Reducing energy demand is one of the best ways to reduce pollution.

• (1540)

In commenting on the current environmental summit in Rio, one expert said recently: "The ultimate environmental issue is how we use energy, the technology of energy for fueling our cars, heating our homes, producing goods and services".

I am very pleased today to see that the government has finally started to get this message. It has proceeded with Bill C–41, legislation which I said earlier is long overdue.

I want to turn for a moment to my home province of Prince Edward Island and to the progress that has been made there on alternate energy work.

A waste plant at Charlottetown burns the local garbage to provide heat for several nearby buildings including a hospital, a high school, two shopping malls and two colleges. The garbage that would otherwise get landfilled is turned into steam for local use. This plant was given a beautification award not very long ago by the local community. My province is extremely dependent on imported oil for its fuel needs, yet the energy from this waste plant has reduced the amount of oil needed to be imported. At the same time, it has helped to clean up the environment.

I will conclude my remarks by saying I am pleased that this government has finally moved in this direction and has brought in legislation for energy efficiency and diversity in energy. Certainly, it is legislation that is long overdue.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C–41. This bill is certainly a very minor step by the government with regard to energy efficiency and energy efficiency for Canadian industry.

I doubt this bill will actually take us to the situation we were at in 1983 or 1984. The former Liberal government had a very aggressive program for energy conservation and alternate energy use. It was a massive national program to try to take us off oil and fossil fuels.

This legislation sets some standards. It makes provisions for efficiency in appliances and prohibits the use of appliances which are traded or moved across provincial or international borders. It regulates the sale of such equipment which is transported interprovincially. It establishes minimum levels of energy efficiency for household refrigerators, freezers, ranges, ovens, dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers. It tries to do it in parallel with the United States so that whatever is produced in either country would be compatible for trade and useful in that regard.

But if we look back to where we were in 1984 before this government came to power, the Main Estimates will show that with conservation and renewable energy the Government of Canada was spending $575 million then. By 1988–89 the actual expenditures had been reduced to almost nothing. In 1989–90 it was something like $44 million. Since then there has been no commitment for energy conservation and renewable energy.

That is a tragedy. During all those years that the Government of Canada was putting energy conservation and renewable energy mechanisms in place the carbon dioxide level was falling down. Since that time, the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have been going up.

This is really one small step back to the future, back to the past. I hope that the government, having made this one small step, will move on to making more steps with regard to energy conservation. That surely is the future.

In my constituency in the last couple of years Ontario Hydro has put in place a massive program to reduce energy use in the town of Espanola which has a population of about 6,000.

Ontario Hydro operates on the basis that if one kilowatt of demand can be saved, it is willing to spend up to $3,000 because to provide that in new generating capacity the cost would be even greater. What it has done in the community of Espanola is to provide some $9 million to go through every home that is heated by electricity. A composite program is put in place in which Ontario Hydro pays up to 80 per cent of the cost of reducing the demand. It will spend up to $3,000 to reduce the demand by one kilowatt per year.

That is an excellent thought. I have heard it said that whatever the cost of the Great Whale project is in northern Quebec, if we spent an equivalent amount of money on the island of Montreal we could save the amount of power that is going to be generated by the Great Whale project.

The genius of conservation and saving energy is it is not saved once, it is saved every year. For example, one of the programs the Liberal government had back in the early 1980s provided, I think, $800 to replace an oil-fired furnace with a gas-fired furnace. I took advantage of that, along with everyone else on my street. I spent something like $800, the government provided $800 and I had a new gas furnace in my home. It was a big advantage because the oil-fired furnace was 20 years old and getting worn out in any event.

Now a typical home on that street is heated for about $450 to $500 whereas with oil it was costing at least $1,000 or $1,200 a year. With electricity it was even more.

It is not the initial cost, although that is a stumbling block. But even with the program the former Liberal government had, that cost was reduced. So in that example, at least $500 to $700 is saved each and every year. At the same time, the fuel being used does not contribute nearly as much carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

• (1550)

I am touching on the program in Espanola because, as far as I know, it is the first community in Canada and perhaps in the world where audits have been conducted in every electrically heated house to determine the heating and lighting costs.

Replacing light bulbs reduced the demand for electricity by some 70 per cent. Homes were completely reinsulated. Heating costs for hot water were cut by installing new shower heads. Windows and doors were replaced.

In this program being carried out over these past two years by Ontario Hydro the energy demand has been reduced significantly. There is a weakness in the program in that it should have been used for all homes in the community including those not heated by electricity. However, the idea of spending money on energy conservation really is a good one.

Bill C-41 of course does not do anything like that. It simply establishes standards for appliances, equipment and those kinds of things. We are running out of oil in the western sedimentary basin. As a northern nation we should be looking at ways of converting to natural gas and ways of reducing demand for electricity through conservation. To that extent, I support the bill.

In the community of Elliot Lake there are a great many homes which were originally sponsored by Ontario Hydro. Unfortunately, they were built in the early 1980s and were not particularly energy efficient.

One of the diversification projects we have planned for that community is one in co-operation with Ontario Hydro to make it a very energy efficient community. A proposal was presented to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources just this week where we would like to see the federal government establish standards for retrofitting existing homes.

The R-2000 program has been going for many years for new homes and has been very successful. I believe it is being used now in Japan.

The federal government has a responsibility and we are proposing to the minister that we should be developing those standards in Elliot Lake in co-operation with what Ontario Hydro is doing in retrofitting that community. I certainly hope that the government will look at that as an important energy conservation and an alternative energy mechanism for that community.

If Ontario Hydro carries through with what it was talking about which was in terms of $2 billion and $4 billion of energy conservation and retrofitting of homes throughout the province, it seems to me that that would be a major industry. Just as building the Great Whale

power project or building new dams, there is no question that in many circumstances we can reduce the demand and provide a lot of employment for people.

There comes a point in a free and democratic society where standards cannot be imposed below a certain level, but clearly with incentives we can reduce the demand for electricity, for our fossil fuels and at the same time help the environment.

This bill is one small step. If the government would maintain the support that was there in the early 1980s, we not only would have much lower levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere today, but we would also be a much more efficient energy user. We have one of the highest uses of energy in the world and that certainly is nothing we want to brag about.

What we were able to achieve in the early 1980s shows that if the government has the will and determination to move in that direction we can become a very efficient country. It must be a co-operative operation because it involves the general masses, giant provincial utilities like Ontario Hydro, the entire energy industry, and natural gas pipelines and so on.

I am told that the building of the natural gas pipeline to New York had a powerful impact on the State of New York and New York City deciding to cancel their contract with the Great Whale Project. It meant they had relatively cheap natural gas for energy conversion to electricity and for energy heating purposes in that state and city.

Last year we had an important seminar on the greenhouse effect and the impact of carbon dioxide. It was chaired by the hon. member for Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, who is the chairman of the agriculture committee. Many members of our committee on agriculture took part along with those in transport, environment, and energy.

No one could sit through that seminar and participate in it without believing that the world faces a quantum change in the environment because of the use of fossil fuels. We must use every mechanism whether it is converting to natural gas, which is still a fossil fuel but produces less carbon dioxide, or moving in other directions.

There is a private members' motion next week from the member for Lambton—Middlesex about the use of ethanol. Clearly that will have a powerful impact if we in this country are able to switch to the use of ethanol in our automotive fuels. We will see a dramatic reduction in the amount of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide produced by the use of ethanol as a blended fuel with gasoline.

There are many things we can do in this country. We simply must put in place the standards, incentives, and the directions we want to go if we want to reach our objective of keeping carbon dioxide levels in the year 2000 at the level they were in 1990.

I am sorry we did not maintain the momentum we had in the early 1980s to switch away from fossil fuels, but that was a decision made by the government of the day in 1984. It is regrettable but at least the introduction of this bill shows that it realized the errors it made. We hope we can get back on track and move toward a society that is less wasteful of our natural resources and more concerned about our environment.

This bill is one small step in that direction and that is why we will be supporting Bill C-41.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Debate? 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: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Motion agreed to.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-71, an Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and other Acts in consequence thereof, as reported (with an amendment) by the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General.

Hon. Jean Corbeil (for the Solicitor General of Canada), moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? With the unanimous consent of the House, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1600)

Mr. Corbeil (for the Solicitor General of Canada) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Monique Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to begin third reading debate of Bill C–71, an Act to amend the Criminal Records Act.

I would like to begin my remarks by stating that I am extremely appreciative of the spirit of co–operation that has brought us to third reading in what may be a record time for legislation of such importance.

[*English*]

These changes directly respond to serious concerns about the pardon granting process that have been raised by members of this House on behalf of constituents and by representatives of the wider criminal justice system.

[*Translation*]

I believe that the broad support of my colleagues reflects the pressing need for this legislation. Our goal was to find a way to reform the system without disrupting its basic objectives. These include providing fair and timely service to eligible ex–offenders, creating a more efficient records system, and, most important, ensuring public safety.

The government has reviewed various options for reform. We were assisted in our review by some very useful consultations with affected constituencies. These included the police, victims groups, offender–assisting agencies and provincial government representatives. They all provided excellent advice and suggestions which helped us develop our final proposals.

I would like to thank officials of the Ministry of the Solicitor General for undertaking the very important task of canvassing constituencies with a stake in this legislation. The Department of Justice also deserves a vote of thanks for its assistance and careful drafting of a bill that reflects such a broad range of interests.

I would also like to thank the members and chairman of the Justice and Solicitor General Standing Committee for their timely review and support of this bill. The government was pleased to accept an amendment proposed by the opposition during clause–by–clause review of the bill. The fact that this amendment passed with the unanimous consent of all members of the committee demonstrates once again the positive and co–operative spirit in which this committee works.

This being the government's final opportunity to address the House on this matter, I would like to again praise the work done by the member for Mississauga South who proposed a Private Member's bill which identified and sought to remedy an anomaly in the Criminal Records Act. I commend my hon. friend for the time and effort he put into preparing his Private Member's bill C–238, for our consideration, and for his ongoing interest in this government initiative.

You are already aware of the proposed changes and I do not intend to spend too much time today going over ground we are all familiar with. However, I would like to address some important points.

As parliamentarians, we have all responded to requests from Canadians to help expedite the granting of a pardon.

It is usually for someone who has been living in the community without criminal activity for many years and who needs a pardon for work or for another personal reason.

We have all been frustrated that it can take up to a year and a half for the pardon to be granted, even in the most straighforward and deserving of cases.

Why, we ask, does it take as long to investigate and decide on a pardon for a law-abiding citizen with an old record for a minor offence, as it does to investigate and determine if a pardon should be given to a person with a record for serious crimes of violence. This does not make any sense.

We have also been frustrated to learn that a person who has been granted a discharge in court and thereby has not been convicted of an offence must apply for a pardon to have the fact of the discharge removed from his record at a later date.

Why should a person who has never been convicted of an offence be put to the trouble and expense of applying for a pardon if the courts have granted a discharge? This makes no sense, particularly since the pardon has invariably been granted.

I would now like to briefly address concerns about good conduct raised by the hon. member for Brant. The government has considered the cases of those convicted of summary or less serious offences. The current system requires a period of crime-free behaviour in the community before being eligible to apply for a pardon. As well, there is a provision for a community investigation of good conduct.

We have chosen to increase the waiting period to three years from two for summary convictions but to require only that the ex-offender be without conviction during this period to indicate a crime-free lifestyle. There will no longer be the requirement that a decision be based on a judgement of good conduct in addition to the criteria of a conviction-free waiting period.

It should be noted that fewer than 100 pardon applications per year are denied. Of those denied following an investigation of good conduct, most were for people with more serious records for indictable offences. It is these offences on which the government has chosen to concentrate its investigative and decision-making resources.

Madam Speaker, I do not want to take much more of your time. I would like to add that I think the changes which are before us clearly follow a middle ground between various proposals which have been previously discussed. I believe that the changes respond effectively to the various problems in the current system.

All members of Parliament will no doubt find that the proposed changes to the Criminal Records Act are intended to create a more effective pardon system, to improve service to increasing numbers of eligible ex-offenders, to achieve cost savings and reduce delays in the granting of pardons.

[*English*]

The amendments will assist the government to achieve these goals while protecting the integrity of the system and continuing to provide protection for the Canadian public from offenders who have chosen to continue their criminal lifestyle.

[*Translation*]

That was the goal which the government had in mind as it drafted these changes and I believe that is the goal that we will all achieve when these changes become law.

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to debate Bill C-71, which deals with amendments to the Criminal Records Act.

I want to indicate at the outset that the Liberal caucus fully supports all of the amendments. It is not a begrudging "Yeah, we support it but it is sort of a weak bill". The Liberal caucus fully supports the amendments and they have been fully discussed in committee. They have been dealt with quite well by the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General.

I do want to put on the record a number of remarks to clarify some issues for the public, for my constituents and for the record because I believe that this matter will have to be addressed again in the future as the judicial system evolves.

Perhaps most members come into contact with what is known as the Criminal Records Act when constituents have difficulty accessing the pardon mechanism and encounter delays or other administrative obstructions. That is how most MPs come into contact with it, and I have noticed a bit of an increase in the number of complaints by constituents.

I suppose it does not speak so well of the past, in that people who have criminal records must come forward and acknowledge the fact that they have these records, but it does augur well for the future in that many more individuals are able to come forward and put an unfortunate part of their past behind them and approach the future fresh with a new start. That augurs well for the individual and for the community.

The changes that have been proposed and are in the process of being adopted here were all needed. There are five key areas of change. The first is a totally new process being adopted within the National Parole Board that will actually grant the pardon instrument.

• (1610)

Previously the pardon instrument was granted by a special committee of the cabinet. Given the great increase in applications over the last few years—this bill has been around since 1970—this has created a bottle-neck at the cabinet level because all the National Parole Board did was make recommendations for pardons.

You had the circumstance in which cabinet ministers were simply provided with lots of paper. They probably did not have a chance to look at it in too much detail and they probably accepted in most cases the recommendations of the National Parole Board. It created a bottle-neck. That meant that sometimes we were ending up with one and two-year delays and in some cases maybe longer in a decision on whether a pardon should be granted.

That bottle-neck now is removed because those who used to recommend the pardon are now going to be in a position to actually grant it. That is a good thing.

The second item is that the act provides for revocation of pardons where a subsequent offence is committed. This was not as clearly provided for in the existing act and most Canadians would find that very fair and most appropriate when a person is pardoned of an offence and subsequently reoffends. It would not be appropriate for that individual to say, "I have no criminal record because I was pardoned and you must deal with me as a first offender". The act speaks very clearly on that.

The third area is that the waiting period for the non-indictable, less serious offences that were dealt with summarily in the court system, is extended by one year, from two years to three years. That provides a better window for the administrators, the National Parole Board, to review the circumstances and perhaps to be more certain about the appropriateness of the pardon application.

In return for that, the process has been expedited, as we have already mentioned, so that it should not take two years to have the application dealt with.

The fourth item I have always regarded as the area that needed reform first. It was bizarre that this circumstance actually came into existence. In the Criminal Code there is a provision for granting to an offender a discharge for the offence, conditional or absolute.

The code states very clearly that when a discharge is granted, conditional or absolute, the offender is deemed not to have been convicted of the offence. That makes sense to me. In the process that developed into the Criminal Records Act that statute reversed the whole process and stated that even though you were deemed never to have been convicted of an offence, this act deemed you to have been convicted of the offence and so your criminal record was there.

That was bizarre. It meant that all of these people who had committed relatively minor offences, because the court does not give discharges for serious offences, for subsequent offenders and for multiple offenders, had this circumstance in which they were drawn back into the administration. They were brought back in to apply for pardons when the court and the judge had already made a decision that the person should not have a criminal record.

Foolishly in a bizarre twist, that was creating extra work for the National Parole Board and the special committee of cabinet. I do not know how the system evolved. I know that the Criminal Records Act was passed in 1970. At about the same time the provisions for conditional discharges and absolute discharges were passed and implemented. Somewhere in the system the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing. The government of the day let it evolve to the point at which now, some 20 years later, it is undoing that unfortunate administrative overlap.

That is a good thing. We have a conditional or an absolute discharge at the time of conviction within one or three years depending on whether it is an absolute or conditional discharge and automatically the criminal records are removed.

I guess I should not call it the criminal record. The act specifically refers to the record of the discharge being removed because, as I will point out later, there are still some problems in the field dealing with the definition of criminal record.

The fifth area is that the act envisages special guidelines now to assist the board and the public in developing criteria in relation to special kinds of offences when maybe we should be looking more closely at the process of pardons. Here we are talking about serious offences of violence and certain types of sexual offences.

It may well be that our society should be looking closely at the whole process by which we pardon individuals who may find themselves locked into patterns of conduct that are unsociable and it may be that we should look at that more closely.

The act envisages that and requires those criteria to be developed.

In the end after those five changes and some more minor changes we have a much more effective administration of the process of applications for pardons. That is better for individuals and for the community.

We also have a more expeditious disposition so that when an individual has reached the point in his or her life that time has passed, whether it be three years, five years, or whatever other period is appropriate, when they feel they are entitled to the "pardon", they can come forward and have it disposed of within a reasonable period of time so that they can get on with the rest of their lives.

If they need a pardon to apply for a job, a certain type of job, a career change, go to school, whatever entitlement or advancement they are looking for, hopefully they will see that the pardon can be there and they can move on and leave the past behind.

For the sake of the record, and not to detract from our indication of support for these amendments, I want to address some areas in the existing act that remain in my view unaddressed. In some way I want to be critical of those who drafted the law some 22 years ago because they made some errors which are visited upon this generation two generations later.

The act is called the Criminal Records Act. In point of fact, this act does not even deal with criminal records. It does not even try. It does not even use the concept of criminal records. It is an act about pardons. It is a statute that deals with pardons.

I should pause here to say that the act does not even define what a pardon is. That is a problem for the technocrats, the lawyers. I will leave that one.

I want to go back to this criminal record issue. Because the title contains the words criminal record, people tend to think in terms of criminal records, but the act does not try to deal with criminal records.

It does not even try to deal with the specific item called a record of conviction. That is the document that is created when an individual is convicted of an offence under the Criminal Code. That is called a record of conviction and it is a real piece of paper in a file and copies of it are forwarded to the appropriate filing locations in the country. Ultimately outside the original court files it ends up with the Canadian police information system, which we call CPIC.

It is regrettable that this act which tries to deal with this field of all of the records, the records of conviction, the records of the evidence, the letters going back and forth, the record of decisions by the prosecuting attorney, the submissions by the defence counsel, the records in the press—all of that—does not deal with it. It just leaves it sitting there and that is a bit of a problem which we will ultimately want to address.

• (1620)

Here are some of the reasons. The act does not deal with destruction of the criminal records. The act says you get a pardon. The layman out there and the MP right here do not really understand what that means because the act really is not clear. The act does not define pardon, but it tries to show the effect. It states what the effect of a pardon is without defining what the pardon is. One of those is that "in the case of any pardon the conviction in respect of which the pardon is granted or issued should no longer reflect adversely on the applicant's character". The verb here is should—should no longer reflect.

The individual who applies for a pardon really expects that the conviction will not or may not or cannot—not should not—affect adversely on the applicant's character.

That remains unaddressed by this. When the pardon is given you would expect something to happen to all of the records of conviction and criminal records but nothing happens. This bill does not try to do anything and the system does not either. All the records that were in the courthouse, all the records that were with the police, all the records that were in the media and all that were sent out remain exactly where they were. There is no destruction of any of the records. The record of conviction is still out there; it is still in the police files, still in the court files, and it is still with CPIC.

What happens is that the federal government requires that CPIC delete the record of conviction, delete the notation of the criminal conviction from the CPIC record. That is really all that happens. That only happens in this great Canadian computer data base. It does not happen in the province. The province does not change any of its records. Do not forget that the individual was convicted in a provincial court. The province and the court still have all the records and the police still have all their records; no changes in their computer system.

One of the other things that is still unaddressed is that when Canadian authorities convey the record of conviction or a notation of the conviction to American authorities—which they sometimes do to the border patrol, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the FBI—the policing authorities, border services and the customs services exchange this data on their memoranda of understanding which this government enters into. Those notations are given to our American friends and they give us theirs also. There is no mechanism to require the Americans to delete the notations from their records. This bill does not provide for it, there are no regulations to provide for it. That is unfortunate because most Canadians would think that when they get the pardon it is a clean slate. All they get is a deletion of a computer record on CPIC. All those other records I have just mentioned remain there, including the American records.

We are told that the Canadian authorities do not have the ability to force the Americans to delete the record. That is nonsense. We have memoranda of understanding and there is no reason why the memoranda of understanding cannot be amended to require all the parties to delete the records when the pardon is given under Canadian law.

I want to point out that this act does not affect any of the records of conviction in private hands such as insurance companies, bonding companies. All of that is still out there.

All of this is for another day when we can attempt here in Parliament, and hopefully we can do it as well as we have worked with and expedited this bill, to address in a more comprehensive fashion, with more definition and more certainty, all the areas of these criminal records.

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, I too wish to enter the debate at third reading of Bill C–71, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act and other acts in consequence thereof. As the previous speaker mentioned in considerable detail the act in a way is a misnomer. I am not saying that it misleads but it really is a misnomer.

However, despite its shortcomings my party is pleased to support Bill C–71 because it makes an honest effort at updating an act that goes back to 1970 and at least brings it into the 1990s, perhaps not as a completely as we would have liked but it does improve the present situation with respect to that act.

The government has gone some way in improving the whole pardon system. I appreciate what it has done and I thank the government for that. However, we have some concerns with this bill. The first one is that nowhere in this bill is there a definition of criminal records. We have searched the revised Statutes of Canada and have been told that nowhere is there any definition of "criminal record". Therefore, we are really talking about something that we have not clearly defined and we are amending a process of something we have not defined. We do not know whether we are in fact amending the Criminal Records Act because we do not know what criminal records are.

As the previous speaker pointed out there are records of conviction. However, there are also all kinds of other criminal records relating to a specific crime and the perpetrator of that crime that are held by the police that investigated the crime, by the court that convicted, by the newspapers that covered the trial and by the various libraries that keep those records. Probably carrying this

to its extreme, there is the memory of those who were involved in one way or another with that crime.

One could argue that it is virtually impossible to completely expunge the entire record of a criminal act. Perhaps that too is for another day.

I still think that sometime in the near future a government is going to have to come to grips with that anomaly. It is one thing to purge the record of criminal conviction from one computer bank, CPIC that is administered by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It is another thing to entirely eliminate one's criminal record after a pardon has been granted. Therein lies the anomaly. While the person receives the pardon that person still has a criminal record, even though the record of conviction has been removed from the central data bank at the RCMP headquarters here in Ottawa.

We have other concerns as well. I mentioned the lack of definition of a criminal record. I am also still not satisfied that we know what good conduct is. I know the member has gone a long way in her remarks in defining good conduct by saying that good conduct is an absence of criminality. That is what the officials said at our committee hearings. I am satisfied that is one definition, but I think it is a very limited one.

If the Parole Board restricts its interpretation of good conduct to that narrow interpretation then I am satisfied. If the person who applies for a pardon has not committed another offence, has not been charged and convicted of an offence, then I would say the person should be granted the pardon, all other circumstances being equal.

However, if good conduct has something to do with one's behaviour in society, if it is a community-based assessment, then I am not so certain.

• (1630)

I may have a neighbour who lives beside me who has not committed a criminal offence since the original crime. Perhaps he committed it as a teenager in this hypothetical case. I am asked whether I think my next door neighbour has displayed good conduct. On Sunday morning in the summertime when we want to sit out in our backyard and have a quiet cup of coffee he decides to turn on his radio full blast and play rock music. I would say that is not good conduct. I do not like it and go and tell him to turn it down or turn it off. That might somehow influence my assessment of that person's conduct.

It could be some narrow religious or moral interpretation of his or her behaviour, about which I should not have any concern because it is none of my business. I might say to somebody investigating that he or she is doing this or doing that and I do not think that is right because it is contrary to the Judaeo-Christian sense of morality. I hope it is not given that broad an interpretation.

If the Parole Board sticks to the one important criterion, an absence of criminal behaviour, then I would say that good conduct is acceptable from our point of view. I hope this will be the restrictive approach that the Parole Board adheres to.

The other point with which I still have some concern, as do some of my constituents—and no doubt I speak for virtually every member in this House—is the situation in which a young lad commits a relatively minor offence in his teens. We will say it is shoplifting. We have all heard the story. It is the same right across the country.

He grows older and he matures. He applies for and gets a job as a truck driver. On his first trip across the border he is stopped. They punch his name into the computer and out comes a criminal record. He is prohibited from crossing the border. He could be going across the border for strictly recreational purposes or for a holiday. He says: "Well, good heavens, I was granted a pardon three years ago for this". However, that does not matter because it is still in the computer.

I will go over in some detail what can still happen, even with this bill that greatly improves the Criminal Records Act. Let us suppose that John Q. Public, a Canadian citizen, gets convicted of a Criminal Code offence on January 1, 1985. I am using this as a hypothetical case. He serves two years in jail with no probation. On January 1, 1987 his sentence officially ends. He must wait five years before applying for a pardon. In June 1989 he wants to go to the United States. At the border his record is called up on the U.S. immigration computer because it is linked to the Canadian information banks because of the reciprocal agreement we have, a memorandum of understanding, with the United States. He is denied entry. This information is now in the computer memory of U.S. immigration, not only his criminal record from Canada but the fact that he

was denied access to the United States. That is put in the computer at that time.

On January 1, 1992 he applies for a pardon. Within a few months, and this bill will fortunately hurry it up, he is granted that pardon. In May or June 1992 he tries to go to the U.S. again. They will have no record of his new pardon but will see the record of his 1987 conviction. He is denied entry again. If he has the pardon documents with him it is then up to the U.S. border immigration people or officials to decide. It has been my experience that most of the time they still refuse entry.

The point is that if this person had been granted the pardon and between the time of his conviction and the time that he got the pardon had not tried to enter the United States then the information that would come up on the screen at the U.S. border would include the pardon. The pardon would be there. Then he would probably be allowed in. If he tried to enter the United States after he was convicted and came out of jail and before a pardon was granted and then subsequently tried to enter the United States after a pardon had been granted he would be stopped.

That is the point I am getting at, and it is still a problem. I do not know whether this bill could have dealt with it anyway. I do not think it could have.

I hope that government officials in the Solicitor General's office will meet with their counterparts in the United States to try to get that anomaly worked out. A pardon is a pardon. I do not think a person should be penalized for attempting to enter the United States before his pardon has come through rather than trying to enter the United States after his pardon has come through.

There are two distinctly different records kept in that U.S. computer at the border. That is the point that must be addressed if we are going to be equitable and fair to the people who are granted pardons. I know we cannot force the United States to do anything in this regard. However, I am certain that by getting together a reciprocal agreement can be worked out. After all, this works in our favour too. We do not want their criminal elements coming into Canada and they do not want our criminal elements going to the United States.

When a pardon is granted—and in the overwhelming majority of cases pardons are granted for relatively minor offences, although I think they can be granted for all offences but possibly not capital. I am not sure about first-degree murder or capital offences.

Those are some of my concerns: the definition of criminal records itself, the definition of good conduct, and the problems that Canadian citizens who have been granted a pardon often experience when attempting to enter the United States.

We are supporting this bill. We do appreciate what the government has done. However, the fact still remains that we still have this situation in which a pardon is granted but the criminal record remains. The record of conviction is gone from the RCMP computer but it is in the files of the provincial police forces and municipal police forces, and private agencies such as bonding houses and insurance companies. That record is still there.

This bill is well intentioned in terms of employment, and one of the most common reasons for seeking a pardon is for employment purposes. When this bill goes through the federal government cannot, and I think even at the present time, demand to know whether a person has been pardoned. It can ask whether they have a criminal record and if they have been pardoned they are perfectly within their rights to say, in fact they should: "No, I don't have a criminal record". If they have committed one offence and have been pardoned for it the assumption is that the record is gone. Therefore they can say: "No, I don't have a criminal record".

I am still very concerned about some components of the private sector. A small company may ask: "Have you got a criminal record?" It has checked a bonding company and knows that the person was convicted of shoplifting when they were 17 and pardoned. There is still a record there, and they do not get the job. The company will not say that is the reason they did not get the job but it still works against people.

Unfortunately, that means that a relatively minor crime, and I think shoplifting at the age of 15 or 16 or younger is a petty offence, will dog the person for the rest of his life even with this well-intentioned piece of legislation. I do not know how to deal with it.

I think we can legislate and order those other groups and organizations to purge the criminal record, not just the record of conviction but the criminal record itself, from their files so that it cannot be used for any reason. Perhaps I will narrow that down and say that it cannot be used for crossing the border and cannot be used for employment purposes, and there are no doubt several others.

I know that there are times when we will still want a record of that conviction somewhere because that person could be suspected of committing another offence later in life or a few years later.

• (1640)

Obviously the investigative authorities and peace officers would want to have some source to which they could go to verify fingerprints, pictures or behavioural patterns.

Certainly for employment purposes and for travel purposes, I think the entire record should be purged and not just the record of conviction but the criminal file itself.

That is all I wish to say about Bill C-71. We support it, and I presume it will be passed today at third reading and go to the other place.

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.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy 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 Windsor—St. Clair—Visible minorities; the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Unemployment Insurance; the hon. member for Mount Royal—Broadcasting; and the hon. member for Calgary Northeast—Calgary Airport.

STATUS OF ARTIST ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from May 13, 1992, consideration of Bill C-7, an Act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations between artists and producers in Canada, as reported with amendments) by the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question is now on Motions Nos. 1 and 2.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-7 be amended in Clause 3

(*a*) by striking out line 16 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:
"nomic interests of their members;";
(*b*) by striking out line 20 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:
"other questions concerning them, and
(*d*) the right of artists to equity through programming and employment opportunities which serve the needs and interests of Canadian men, women, and children, the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples within that society."

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-7 be amended in Clause 3

(a) by striking out line 16 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"nomic interests of their members;";

(b) by striking out line 20 and page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"other questions concerning them; and

(d) the right of artists to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation or mental or physical disability."

She said: Madam Speaker, first of all may I say it is a pleasure to finally rise to this bill and address the issue of the status of the artist in Canada. It is an issue that we have been trying to address for a long, long time.

The first amendment deals with the non-discrimination clause in the status of artist legislation to be found in the general principles and policy statement section of the bill. The principle behind this amendment is really to bring a sense of clarity and a proclamation of policy and directives that I believe all of us in this country wish to support and see brought into being.

In this particular amendment we are talking about the right of the artist to equity through programming and employment opportunities which serve the needs and interests of Canadian people. The first amendment deals, I believe, with the right of artists through programming and employment opportunities which serve the needs and interests of Canadian women and children, the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples within that society.

It is really vital that we ensure that Canadians of different cultures are seen as well as employed. The principle that we are placing before this House in this particular amendment is that it is not good enough just to have employment equity as a principle and that we would have people of all races, colours, languages and religions before us. We have to make a concerted effort to ensure that people of colour, people of different ethnic backgrounds are present and can be heard by all people.

It is in seeing the diversity of Canada on the screen, it is in hearing the different voices and the different accents, it is in an appreciation of this incredible diversity that is the reality of the Canadian picture. In fact, it is something that we have been talking about really through this whole constitutional debate, the debate about who we are as a people and what we are as a people. If the what we are as people and who we are as a people is fundamentally the differences that make the greatness of this country then you have to have those people involved, in front of the scene, behind the scene, helping us select the news and in helping us to understand the different messages that are coming because there are cultural differences. It is through these cultural differences and in the eyes and voices of these people that we are able to appreciate and understand not only local, regional, provincial and national news, but also the international milieu.

This amendment is similar to a provision that you can find in the Broadcasting Act. When the Canadian Actors Equity came before the committee they told us that we need to be able to ensure that, as an example, aboriginal cultures are not left to wither away and die not only because it would be tantamount to intellectual genocide for those who spring from those cultures but because those who do not must be able to have a knowledge and an understanding of it.

The more you see people, whether it is our aboriginal people who we are becoming more and more aware of, more and more sensitive to and have a greater and greater curiosity about their life and and their lifestyle, or it is the newly arrived Canadians be they from South America, Asia, East Timor, the islands in the Caribbean or in the Pacific, all these people come to us with a different approach and a different lifestyle. It is through exposure to these people that we will have a better understanding of our society.

Actors Equity went on to say: "We need to be able to ensure that those who came here as immigrants from different countries have access to Canada's cultural life and the opportunity to participate in it".

A 1989 study for the Department of Communications by Eko's Research found that for affiliated visual and literary artists women on average earned 63 per cent of the artistic income of men and that this is even worse for unaffiliated female visual artists who learn less than half; they earn 46 per cent of the average incomes earned by their male counterparts. Unaffiliated female literary artists earn 57 per cent of the average incomes of their male counterparts.

I would suggest that while I proposed this amendment, there is a strong sense that when you are telling a story, when you are selecting a history, when you are picking the news that should be told, people must be in the news room. They must be there and available to be talked with to enable the information to flow.

The Canadian Conference of the Arts and ACTRA expressed their support for this particular amendment.

• (1650)

We have had an awful lot of discussion around the term "cultural appropriation". If we do not want to be concerned about cultural appropriation I would suggest we need to have the kind of people who will help keep around us this mix that is Canada. People must be around, be near us, in order for us to be able to collaborate.

There is some question as to whether or not this is relevant and necessary given the nature of other legislation we have had in the House. It is my sense we would be moving in the right direction if we would ensure employment equity that would bring us to the point of ensuring artists of these different backgrounds, both men and women, are seen as well as employed was put into place in this particular bill.

As the Speaker, you have seen fit to group two amendments. The first one is on employment equity where I sincerely hope there will be a positive move on the part of the minister to consider this. It does not have a kind of legislative action; it has a hope and direction in that it falls under the policy statement. It does not fall

under an action statement. It is part of the general principles and policy statement of the bill.

Similarly the second amendment I was dealing with in clause 3 directs itself to the question of the clause of non-discrimination. It is the clause that, as you probably recognize in section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights, ensures legal equality without discrimination.

Some of the characteristics have been regarded traditionally as objectionable grounds of discrimination and they are listed in the clause. We all know them pretty well: race, national and ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, mental or physical disability. This list is by no means exhaustive. One area of serious omission is the protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

When the Equality for All task force brought forward a recommendation in 1985, it was to the effect that the Canadian Human Rights Act be amended to add sexual orientation as a prohibited grounds of discrimination. I think any piece of legislation, until such time as this government chooses to make the proper amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act, has to be noted in these provisions where they are of general principle. The general principle and the general policy is well suited to a policy statement that addresses the question of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

The government responded in 1986 that it would act but it is now six years later. Nothing has happened, and there has been no action.

I believe all members of this House will recall when the Prime Minister of Canada spoke to the issue of sexual discrimination and sexual orientation. He said in regard to the question in the future, which refers to the Human Rights Act, on April 27, 1992, page 9714 that Canadians should be judged on their merit, not on their sexual orientation. He adds:

> For my part I believe anything that discriminates against anyone's rights in any way, any discrimination of any kind, is unacceptable in a pluralistic society such as ours.
>
> The Minister of Justice and others are examining these matters very carefully to see what they can do to advance the cause of elimination of discrimination in Canada.

I would ask the minister to give very serious consideration to both these amendments. I would hope he would find favour with the non-discrimination clause and the equity for artists through employment and programming, both clauses in section 3 of the policy statement of the status of artist legislation.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, first of all perhaps I could express my thanks to the hon. member for Mount Royal for moving these amendments and giving the House the opportunity to speak to two very important matters.

I would also like to express a word of thanks, which I will repeat a little bit later when we are speaking on third reading, to members on all sides of the House who belonged to the committee for the spirit of collaboration and co-operation that has been shown throughout the consideration of Bill C-7. It has been truly remarkable. It demonstrates that it is possible to build a partnership that stretches between parties and which recognizes the important public interest which is at stake.

The degree of collaboration we have seen today and the amount of co-operation has really been something which has been very encouraging to me.

It is with regret that I have to indicate to the hon. member that the government cannot support the two motions which she proposes today, notwithstanding the fact that the gist of the motions, the substance of them, attempts to move the bill in the direction which we would like to see things going in Canada, all of us, I believe.

All of us are in favour of employment equity. As well all of us are in favour of anything that can strike down discrimination in Canada. Discrimination by its very nature is abhorrent to any of us. In my view the only thing it is acceptable to hate is hatred itself.

The fact that all too many Canadians find themselves discriminated against on the basis of irrelevant criteria is simply unacceptable in 1992. As we look at amendments to human rights legislation we have to do everything we can to ensure that Canadians are judged on their merits and what they can contribute as individuals and not on the basis of irrelevant criteria.

It has to be our goal in Canada's 125th anniversary year to promote a spirit of respect for one another and respect for humanity.

I realize that the spirit in which the hon. member poses these amendments is very much consistent with that.

My concerns about the motions are the following. As the hon. member will know Parliament adopted the Employment Equity Act which came into force on August 13, 1986 and which covers people employed by an employer that hires 100 or more employees.

Trying to extend federal jurisdiction and private contracts with independent contractors would not be appropriate, nor in some cases would it be legally feasible. One has to remain mindful of our limited jurisdiction in this area.

Further, it is hard to see how the tribunal could force a producer to contract according to equity while selection of artists is usually based upon, for example, a scenario which dictates the type of performer required or musical partition which requires specific talents. It would be very hard to understand how this would work.

As drafted, the amendment deals with employees and would therefore not apply to Part II of the bill. Since Part I is not binding on Her Majesty, it is not clear who this would be aimed at or who it would be binding upon.

Certainly if we want to see amendments made, if we want to see broadening in terms of employment equity, the appropriate place for us to do that would be in amending the Employment Equity Act and it should be in the context of that act that we raise our concerns.

Finally the charter protects to some extent Canadians with respect to their right to work. Recently the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court of Canada stated that the court felt that the charter had been under-utilized with respect to economic rights and one should expect some judicial evolution on that matter in the coming years.

With regard to Motion No. 2, again I repeat and I support enthusiastically the comments that were quoted from the Prime Minister by the hon. member earlier, that discrimination in Canada is simply unacceptable.

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to ensure that artists are not discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability.

For the most part it does not appear that this amendment is necessary because with the exception of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, all of the criteria enumerated in the motion are covered by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms already which supersedes this legislation.

The bill on the status of the artist is not the appropriate venue to introduce protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation in one area which is not included in this other legislation as it should clearly be done in the larger context such as in human rights legislation.

Let me simply indicate with regard to employment equity that it certainly is the policy of the Government of Canada that it should be our goal to ensure that both in its portrayal of Canada and in terms of employment opportunities which are offered to Canadians the media, including the arts in Canada, should do everything they can to be as representative of the Canadian population as possible.

• (1700)

That is the goal which is shared by members on all sides of this House. It is one which we are all committed to work to try to achieve. It is unfortunate that in this particular case, it would not be appropriate to include these motions in the legislation. We will be forced to vote against them if we come to that point.

But I do want to indicate with great sincerity to my hon. friend from Mount Royal that I understand the direction in which she would like to go. I am certainly supportive of that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will resume debate at report stage of this bill after private member's hour.

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*]

INTERPROVINCIAL LIVESTOCK TRADE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie) moved that Bill C-254, an act respecting interprovincial livestock trade, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Natural Resources envelope.

He said: Madam Speaker, this bill was drafted three years ago because of shortfalls in the existing Bankruptcy Act.

It is a coincidence that it has been chosen for debate at the same time as the members of this House have been debating the current Bill C-22 which also attempts to amend the Bankruptcy Act.

If producers do in fact receive protection from "inventory and accounts receivables and cash resulting therefrom" which is one of the amendments that has been proposed for Bill C-22, then there will be no need for the type of trust fund that this private member's bill would create.

Let me give a quick review. This legislation seeks to settle the problem of security for producers who sell livestock outside their own province. Most of the provinces have legislation built into their legal systems which sets up funds to avoid problems for livestock delivered to packing houses within the province. Livestock that is sold across provincial boundaries escapes that legislative coverage because it is federal legislation under the British North America Act. The amendments that we are proposing here today would attempt to provide similar protection to those producers who sell across the provincial border.

The bill attempts to set up a trust fund to which abattoirs and slaughterhouses purchasing livestock and poultry from farmers outside of the province would contribute. In the event of the bankruptcy of those processing firms, the producers would not be left wanting their money.

What prompted this legislation in part, as is often the case, was pressure and lobbying from affected producer groups. Experiences that I recall, growing up in a rural community, also influenced introducing this legislation.

I can recall when I was in my teens, one of my neighbours whose wife was a postmistress at the time decided to dispose of his tiny livestock herd. There were 18 head. They went from Saskatchewan to a plant in Winnipeg. In the process, a cheque was paid when they left the farm. The cheque bounced. The plant that purchased the livestock had declared bankruptcy. It was many months before the farmer received about 10 or 15 cents on the dollar for the disposal of his small herd.

A lot of producers, when they deliver product to the plant, are delivering one year's supply of livestock at that time, depending on the kind of production they are engaged in. Those who produce on their own farm for fattening and finishing often will send the whole year's production to the plant at one time. If that happens to coincide with the time when the plant goes bankrupt, they can be left with the loss of a whole year's work and absolutely no income, even though they still have all the bills to pay.

Ordinary suppliers to plants that might declare bankruptcy are never caught in that kind of situation because their billings take place weekly or monthly and so they do not get caught with a whole year's production on the line.

The model for this legislation is the U.S. Packers and Stockyard Act which is administered by the packers and stockyards administration of the United States Department of Agriculture. The trust fund which was started in 1968 covers all cattle transactions and has been expanded to include poultry and most perishable agricultural produce.

I understand that American legislators are now drafting protection for the dairy sector. In fiscal year 1989 the trust paid out $1.2 million to producers in the U.S. The figures for 1990 and 1991 are $4.7 million and $4.2 million respectively. Therefore, without this kind of fund and protection for producers, individual livestock growers would have been left carrying this bill and it would have effectively forced many of them into receivership or bankruptcy along with the processor to whom they had sold.

Many of the provinces in this country, as I have said, have set up similar types of protection to provide a fund for producer financed insurance to compensate livestock

producers against such losses. But these do not apply to livestock that moves across a provincial border because, as we all know, when we put agricultural trade across a provincial border it comes under federal jurisdiction and the responsibility of the federal government. Provincial jurisdiction does not apply. While the provinces have been more aware of this problem over time than the federal government, the provinces have been unable to act fully because of the reality of quite a lot of the trade in livestock going across borders.

In my province of Saskatchewan, for instance, for years and years most of the livestock processing occurred outside the province. That has turned around in the last couple of decades, but there is still a considerable amount of beef and pork that goes outside of the province for slaughter.

The plans that have been in effect in Canada work under different schemes. The Ontario financial protection plan is one that recognizes claims if the sale is deemed to take place in Ontario. It has a couple of wrinkles that provide for licensed dealers outside of the province. When we inquired there was one in Manitoba, one in Saskatchewan and several located in New York and Michigan. Licensed dealers purchasing livestock outside of Ontario for slaughter in Ontario would in those few cases be protected by the Ontario financial protection plan.

This legislation, or if the House and the Senate adopt the amendment to Bill C–22 of which I spoke earlier and which would make this unnecessary, would provide the kind of protection in interprovincial trade to which Canadian producers are entitled. I would urge the House to support the thought behind this legislation. This has not been deemed to be a votable motion.

• (1710)

When we are dealing with Bill C–22 and when the Senate is finished with Bill C–22, I hope the joint concerns of this House will be such that Bill C–22 will contain an adequate amendment to the bankruptcy laws which will protect producers of livestock and other farm products that move across provincial borders for processing so that in the event the processor goes bankrupt those farmers will receive their money.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on second reading of Bill C–254.

The issue of suppliers being unpaid after a buyer has failed financially has been a longstanding and very difficult problem not only for livestock producers but for business people throughout Canadian industry as well.

In the agricultural sector various producer organizations have been involved in trying to find solutions to this problem for quite some time. For example, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association has suggested that a program like the United States Packers and Stockyards Act be established.

Under this act meat packers must hold all inventories, accounts receivable and cash in a deemed trust until full payment has been received by any unpaid sellers of livestock. But in Canada such comprehensive legislation would be beyond the constitutional power of the federal government and in any case would address the difficulties of only one sector of the Canadian industry.

Clearly a much broader approach to the problem of unpaid suppliers is needed. For that reason in June 1991 the government introduced Bill C–22, amendments to the Bankruptcy Act.

At present suppliers who are unpaid at the time of a buyer's bankruptcy have the status of ordinary, unsecured creditors. The proposed amendments would add to the act the right of suppliers to repossess goods for which they have not been paid in cases of either bankruptcy or receivership. This right would be subject to the conditions that the goods are both identifiable and in the same state as delivered.

For unpaid farmers and fishermen whose products are often not identifiable after delivery or are quickly reprocessed, these conditions limit the usefulness of the proposed section.

Therefore an additional amendment to the act introduced under Bill C–22 on May 5 of this year would provide special protection for these producers. This amendment provides unpaid farmers or fishermen with a priority claim on the inventory of the purchaser for the full value of the goods they have supplied.

Where a farmer or fisherman sells and delivers products within 15 days before the purchaser becomes bankrupt or goes into receivership, the farmer or fisherman has 30 days to file a claim on any unpaid amount. That claim would be secured by a charge on all of the purchaser's inventory and it would rank above all other claims except those of other unpaid suppliers.

Clearly this amendment which was proposed by the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in response to a recommendation of the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs would go a long way toward improving protection for fishermen and for all agricultural producers.

On the other hand, Bill C-254 in terms of what we wanted to do is extremely limited in scope and would give enhanced protection to livestock producers only on interprovincial sales and only on sales to corporate slaughterhouses. In such cases the company would be deemed to hold any unpaid portion of the sale price in trust on behalf of the producer.

Bill C-254 does not provide a time period after which the trust lapses. Since unpaid supplier protection would be provided under all circumstances, not just bankruptcy, the bill could conflict with existing provincial unpaid supplier legislation made under property and civil rights authority.

As well, because Bill C-254 does not allow for provincial co-operation and participation, as does the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act for instance, the legislation would be very difficult to implement.

I appreciate the remarks of my hon. colleague and recognize as well that when this bill is finally passed hopefully it will deal with his concerns as well. When he says that this bill has been on the Order Paper for close to three years, that is a long time and a lot of things have changed in that period of time.

The Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations completed its clause-by-clause examination of Bill C-22 on May 13, accepting the bill as amended including a special right for farmers and fishermen. When the bill is passed into law it will be closely monitored to determine whether fine-tuning is required in the future. In fact Bill C-22 requires that the amended Bankruptcy Act be reviewed by a parliamentary committee three years after coming into force.

In the interim the amendment to the act to provide unpaid farmers and fishermen with a priority claim on inventory represents a very real gain. At present unpaid farmers are unsecured creditors. With the enactment of Bill C-22 they would be ahead of the secured creditors, which we think would be a great benefit to agricultural producers.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to say a few words about the Bill C-254 of the hon. member for Mackenzie. This bill deals with a problem that many agricultural producers face from time to time when they ship livestock to a packing company, a grower or a buyer outside their own provinces. The individual goes broke. His cheque is no good for the livestock that he has purchased. The farmer is left holding the bag with no benefits.

This bill seeks to deal with the situation where it is a no credit sale. The money would go into a fund which would ensure that the bill was paid. If the livestock or whatever produce was kept, the farmer would be paid.

I was interested in the words of the parliamentary secretary when he talked about Bill C-22. Most agricultural groups were not happy with the amendments made in Bill C-22 respecting bankruptcy legislation which was just passed this week. The parliamentary secretary said that the bill would be closely monitored, that there would be a review after three years and all the rest of it.

There has been an ongoing review for the last three or four months in which practically every farm organization made clear they did not want to wait three years for a review. They did not want to worry about monitoring. They just wanted the bill amended as it should be.

The hon. member for Dartmouth brought forward amendments to the legislation which the government steadfastly refused to accept. The parliamentary secretary glossed over the super priority where a farmer or fisherman sells his produce to a company and the company goes broke. He would have a super priority on inventory, but on accounts receivable or other accounts payable it simply would not apply. If there is inventory in the company at the time it goes into bankruptcy then it works, but if it is a claim against accounts receivable it simply does not work.

For instance, James Goodhand of the Ontario Pork Association, Pork Ontario, wrote to members of the agriculture committee. In describing the deficiencies of Bill C–22, he said:

> Specifically the proposed changes only allow livestock producers to be repaid from inventory on hand, which is inadequate. As with cattle, hogs are slaughtered and become which will remain in inventory for only a very short time.

If the inventory moves on there is nothing, but if there are accounts receivable for hundreds of thousands of dollars the farmer cannot claim that. The Tories know that, but they have their little deal all cooked up with the big companies. They are looking after them rather than looking after Ontario pork producers, beef producers or whatever other group.

Mr. Goodhand went on to say:

> Hence, for this section to provide much needed help to the hog industry, it should be changed to allow claims to be secured by inventory plus accounts receivable and the cash resulting from the livestock originally purchased.

It is most unfortunate that the parliamentary secretary is trying to lead the House to believe that the agricultural industry is satisfied with Bill C–22. The bill of the hon. member for Mackenzie deals with a no cash sale. It would provide the greater protection that is required.

• (1720)

We turn to the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board and its comments with regard to Bill C–22 which is trying to alleviate some of the same problems outlined in Bill C–254.

In a letter from David Alderman, chairman of the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board, it is stated:

> Section 81(2) of the bill was intended to protect suppliers of agricultural products from dealers who have become bankrupt or forced into receivership. It is the opinion of the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board that this protection has not been accomplished under the present form of this section.
>
> Our board, in support with other commodity organizations, is proposing the attached appendix, Minor Redraft of Section 81(2), which will help protect producers of agricultural products.

It is the same as the super priority for agricultural producers and fishermen in the bankruptcy legislation. They would be able to make a claim not only against inventory which moves on in the very nature of the production of farm produce but for cash on hand or accounts receivable.

I do not think that the parliamentary secretary was being completely fair and above board with the House by trying to present Bill C–22 as being adequate to cover the problems raised by the hon. member for Mackenzie in his Bill C–254. Clearly none of the mainline agriculture groups are satisfied with the way that Bill C–22 dealt with this problem. Surely it is inadequate and will ultimately have to be changed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: There being no further members rising for debate, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

STATUS OF ARTIST ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C–7, an act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations between artists and producers in Canada, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture; and on Motions Nos. 1 and 2 (p. 11846).

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Madam Speaker, I wish to say a few words in support of the amendments introduced by my friend and colleague, the critic from the Liberal Party.

Most of us would agree with the amendments. The first amendment talks about employment equity. As the mover pointed out, it lacks legislative action but it is a policy statement.

Basically it would come at the beginning of Bill C–7, an act respecting the status of artist. It would set forth an ideal with which no one in this House would disagree. The minister, when suggesting why the government would not be able to support the motion, felt that it should be left to other pieces of legislation.

I am certain the minister indicated in his brief remarks that he in no way disagreed with the aims of Motion No. 1 regarding employment equity. It is a policy statement.

It is a statement of ideals. It is a statement we all agree with. We will support that amendment.

The second amendment is to a clause on non-discrimination and is, as the minister correctly observed, in every way consistent with the charter of rights except that it does include one other important addition which the mover of the amendment included. That would disallow discrimination based on sexual orientation. Again we can make the argument that the battle really should be done in another way; changes to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms should be introduced and therefore discrimination based on sexual orientation would no longer be tolerated legally by our society, by our country.

One could make that argument, though the fact is that we might not move toward that as quickly as the Prime Minister has done with commitments in the past, the way that I think most members of this House would like to see us move.

Therefore, I support the mover of the amendment in attempting to include it in Bill C-7. In some ways, what better piece of legislation to pioneer this area than in the status of the artist legislation.

Artists in many ways are pioneers. They are at the forefront of social thought as well as artistic thought and cultural thought. To have that section included to ensure that there will not be discrimination based not just on race, religion, creed, et cetera, but also on sexual orientation as a reason not to allow for discrimination is an excellent suggestion.

Again, my party will be supporting that amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The first 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 will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

Motion No. 1 negatived.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The second question is on Motion No. 2. 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 nays have it.

Motion No. 2 negatived.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-7 be amended in clause 54 by striking out line 2 at page 32 and substituting the following therefor:

"paragraph 51(d), (e), (f) or (g), order an art—".

He said: Madam Speaker, the proposed amendment to clause 54 is a technical modification consequential to another amendment introduced during clause-by-clause study.

• (1730)

Clause 54 defines the circumstances under which the tribunal can make orders and take remedy against infractions to certain sections of the act.

Clause 51, which was also amended during clause-by-clause review, is one of these particular clauses which deals with the duties of artist associations mentioned in clause 54. What used to be paragraph 51(e) became 51(g). The amendment now proposed simply puts back in clause 54 the reference to paragraph 51(g) which disappeared through a renumbering mistake.

I am sure that is abundantly clear to all of my colleagues. I am confident that it will secure the support of all sides of this House.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, speaking for my party on this side of the House, we accept the amendments brought forward by the minister. They make good sense.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina–Qu'Appelle): Madam Speaker, speaking for my part of the House in this corner here, I also wish to indicate our support. I also wish to reiterate what my friend and colleague from the Liberal Party has said, it does make good sense.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 3 agreed to.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I will now put Motions Nos. 4 and 5 to the House.

[*Translation*]

However, I may remind hon. members that these two motions are grouped for debate. An affirmative vote on motion No. 4 would obviate the need to vote on motion No. 5. However, if motion No. 4 is negatived, a vote on motion No. 5 will be necessary.

[*English*]

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications) moved:

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C–7 be amended by adding immediately after line 20 at page 35 the following new clause:

"66. (1) In the seventh year after the coming into force of this section, the Minister of Communications, in consultation with the Minister, shall undertake a review of the provisions and operation of this Act and shall immediately submit to each House of Parliament a report thereon including a statement of any changes the Minister of Communications would recommend.

(2) The report submitted to the House of Commons pursuant to subsection (1) stands permanently referred to the committee of that House that normally considers cultural matters."

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal) moved:

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C–7 be amended by adding immediately after line 9 at page 36 the following new clause:

"67. (1) Seven years after the coming into force of this Act, a comprehensive review of the provisions and operation of this Act including the effect of those provisions shall be undertaken by such committee of the House of Commons as may be designated or established by the House for that purpose.

(2) Within six months after the completion of the review referred to in subsection (1), the committee so designated or established for that purpose shall submit a report on the review to Parliament including a statement of any changes the committee would recommend."

Mr. Beatty: Madam Speaker, both of these motions that are before the House seek to give to a committee of Parliament, with the responsibility for supervising this government's actions with regard to culture, the responsibility of reviewing after a period of time how this act functions.

These amendments initially were the initiative of my colleagues on the opposition side and I want to commend them for their initiative. All too infrequently we as members of Parliament put clauses in bills which trigger a review of Parliament's work and all too often what we find is that we pass legislation with the best of intent. It is very clear what each of us would like to see done with the legislation and yet we do not take the trouble years later to review the legislation and determine whether it is serving the purpose for which it was originally intended.

I gave the undertaking to my colleagues, the members of the committee at the time that we were before committee, that I would consult with artist organizations to seek their views as to whether they would agree to a review clause being in the bill. What we found was that this particular structure of allowing the bill to run for some seven years, then having the Minister of Communications prepare a report in conjunction with his colleague, the Minister of Labour, tabling that report in Parliament and sending it to the committees of the House of Commons and Senate charged with the responsibility for cultural affairs was the formulation which they felt would be the most appropriate.

I will not disguise the fact that there was some disquiet within the artistic community as to whether any review of the legislation might mean that hard fought games, which it had won in this legislation, could be lost as a result of review.

I can assure the artistic community that in this House, neither on the opposition side nor on the government side, is there any intention or interest in eroding any of the gains that have been won in this bill.

It is just the opposite. We want to ensure in this pioneering piece of legislation in which we have undertaken to make massive reforms to try to recognize the status of Canada's artists that we have done the job right and we have achieved what we were hoping to achieve. If amendments are subsequently needed to the bill at a later date which will ensure we can do the job better, those amendments will be made.

What we have done here is to say we will review Parliament's work, make a public report, give the opportunity for the committees of Parliament, which have the responsibility for reviewing artistic and cultural affairs, to ensure artists' needs are met as effectively as possible.

It is, I believe, a good amendment, one which is very positive. It could enable us to make improvements to the bill some years down the road. It in no way threatens the position or gains that have been won by the cultural communities in Canada. It does mean we as parliamentarians are accepting more fully our responsibility to examine our handiwork years from now to ensure we have done our job properly.

I would ask for support of Motion No. 4 which is moved by the government. I prefer it to Motion No. 5, although I understand the reasons for Motion No. 5 by my colleague for Mount Royal. They are entirely appropriate and consistent with the one proposed by the government.

On the government side we will be supporting Motion No. 4 because it is the one which has secured the support of the artistic and cultural community.

Mrs. Finestone: Madam Speaker, through you to the minister, I recognize you have done some consultation with respect to a review procedure and I appreciate that. It was our feeling in light of the fact this is an entirely new tribunal, a new experience, a new approach for our artists, that this will be successful in terms of the artists' economic and social goals.

It may be your finding that it would be in the best interests of the artists who have some concerns about majorities of the day and perhaps attitudes of majorities in a parliamentary committee. They seemed to have placed their sense of trust with the minister and the minister's department. That does not prevent the review procedure from proceeding thereafter to the standing committee if the standing committee so desires.

Further to that, the standing committee is really master of its own agenda and it could under its own initiative, not withstanding this particular clause, undertake such a study if it seems inclined to or if so indicated by the arts community.

I therefore feel there is a responsibility on the part of the artistic organizations that will be involved in this new undertaking of the government. They as well as standing committees of the House should be vigilant. They should certainly be prepared to respond to the initiative of the minister at the end of the seven year term and if they do not do so it would be regretfully a lack of responsibility on the part of those organizations as well as perhaps individual parliamentarians or the standing committee.

I am pleased to support the amendment of the minister and I would be pleased to withdraw if I could get unanimous consent of the House.

This has been a very collegial committee and we have worked very hard jointly on this matter. As my colleague from the New Democratic Party has been very much involved in the on-going discussions, I would appreciate it if you would allow him to speak before you withdraw the amendment I proposed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I was not going to officially withdraw that amendment which was very similar to the one presented by the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle which had not been chosen because it was actually similar to Motion No. 5.

As I said earlier, a yes vote on Motion No. 4 would eliminate the need to vote on Motion No. 5. I do not see the advantage of withdrawing Motion No. 5 at this time.

• (1740)

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Madam Speaker, we also, as you rightly pointed out, had submitted an amendment. I believe it was identical to Motion No. 5 as found in our papers. I am also quite happy in accepting the minister's Motion No. 4. I think for all intents and purposes it is almost exactly the same. Motion No. 5 calls for an automatic review within six

months. The minister's motion calls for a review by the parliamentary committee which could occur at any time.

Again there is no difference as the member for Mount Royal pointed out. The committee is in charge of its affairs. Therefore it could deal with the report almost immediately. The minister is specific in that it goes to the committee that deals with cultural matters.

Motion No. 5 is perhaps a little bit more vague on that in that it talks about the committee so designated or established for that purpose.

There is not much substantial difference at all in the two motions. To try to debate this would be, I think, splitting hairs and out of tune with how we have operated in this committee which has been very much on the consensus basis.

The general thrust is an excellent one. It is a new piece of legislation. We are pioneering a new area. The federal government is to be congratulated in having finally advanced Bill C–7. We are playing a leadership role in the world. As such it makes some sense that at a period in the future we should stand back and Parliament should stand back and have a look at how the legislation has worked and functioned.

I am sure at that time there will be some areas that will need readjusting, perhaps minor, perhaps major, but on the general basis it is always good when we introduce new legislation, exploring new areas, to build into it sort of an automatic review so that some time in the future Parliament will be forced to look at this again.

Quite often, as we have certainly seen in the past with copyright legislation, important pieces of legislation can sit on the back burner for many years. We certainly did not want to see this legislation sitting on the back burner for many years needing changes but never important enough to put on the front burner of the government's agenda.

In this way I think we have assured ourselves that Parliament will look at this or some committee of Parliament will look at this at some future time. If changes are needed at that time, I am sure the committee will recommend it.

Again, I will be voting on behalf of my party in favour of Motion No. 4.

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.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion No. 4 agreed to.

Mr. Beatty: Point of order, Madam Speaker. It is my understanding that there would be unanimous consent in the House to move immediately to third reading of this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If the hon. minister would agree with me, we might go for concurrence at report stage and then go to third reading.

Mr. Beatty: Agreed.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? With leave of the House, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Beatty moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Madam Speaker, this is a very exciting and a very pleasurable day for me, as it is for many of our colleagues in this House.

At the outset, I simply want to acknowledge that I am particularly pleased that as we call third reading of Bill C–7 that you, Madam Speaker, as a distinguished former performing artist yourself, are seated in the chair. You have contributed a great deal to the artistic and cultural life of this country and in many ways nothing could be more appropriate than to have you in the chair at the time we in this Parliament move to recognize the contribution that has been made by artists from one coast to the other.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

An hon. member: It is too bad we did not have that bill 20 years ago.

Mr. Beatty: Theatre director Jonathan Miller once said: "The artistic community is like a great forest which simultaneously alters and depends upon the composition of the air which surrounds it".

Canadians live in a society which is coming to understand that our artistic community influences our sense of identity as much as our sense of identity influences our artists. A symbiotic relationship has developed between the two which makes it impossible to separate one from the other. The artists that we encourage or discourage provide the atmosphere in which we see ourselves, raise our children and speak to the world.

[*Translation*]

I realized that the status of the artist in Canada was a crucial issue when I was Minister of National Revenue. In fact, I had occasion to work with the leaders of Canada's art community while preparing the government's response to the report of the Sub-Committee on the Taxation of Visual and Performing Artists and Writers.

Today, more than ever before, I am convinced that the contribution of artists to our society goes to the very heart of our identity as individuals and as a country.

Their creations express our deepest convictions and give them a human dimension. They amplify our voices and make them more expressive. They breath life into our culture.

[*English*]

When artists speak, whether on paper, on canvass or in clay, through the movement of their bodies or the flickering light on the cinema screen, they express our deepest thoughts. They see into the hearts of Canadians and they focus bright light on what is real and what is true. They help us to speak to the rest of the world in a voice which is distinctly our own.

While many people would acknowledge the debt that we owe to our artists for contributing to our culture, I am not sure how many people realize how much artists also contribute to our economy.

How many people realize that half a million Canadians earn their livelihood from this sector of the economy? How many Canadians understand that our cultural activities generate a larger percentage of our Gross Domestic Product than the wood and textile industries combined? How many people are aware that for every $1 of non-profit arts revenue we have the result of a spin-off of another $3 in spending.

It is a vital and thriving contributor to our identity and to our economy and yet artists are among the most poorly rewarded and the least recognized members of our community, a fact made evident in Revenue Canada's recently released income statistics for 1989.

In 1989 the highest paid group in Canada was doctors earning an average of $120,000 per year; dentists came in second with $98,000, lawyers came close behind them in third place. At the very bottom of the heap came pensioners with annual incomes of $15,000. Although this fact is disturbing it is not altogether surprising. What is surprising, however, is that second last came entertainers and artists with an average of $15,877, just $900 away from the lowest income group in Canada.

[*Translation*]

As a result, our artists have trouble supporting themselves and their families and cannot afford to invest in the future. As educated professionals they deserve to have an income that will enable their children to aspire to excellence. Under the present circumstances that is impossible.

• (1750)

Many artists must look for alternative employment which restricts the amount of time they can spend on perfecting their art. Their lives are a succession of periods of feast or famine.

Because the artist does not fit the norm, qualifying neither as an employer nor as an employee in the course of his career, does not enjoy professional status in Canadian society and has limited access to the social security programs available to the rest of the population.

It is neither desirable nor necessary to tolerate this kind of situation any longer.

[*English*]

Our artists need a framework in law which acknowledges their special and distinctive contributions to our country and which allows them improved access to certain rights and benefits which other Canadians are routinely privileged to enjoy.

This is not a revolutionary idea. We have been discussing it for as long as I have been in politics. The principles that lie behind it were established more than 40 years ago. The Standing Committee on Communications and Culture has examined it thoroughly, devoting more than 50 hours of committee time to this bill. Close to 15 key artists' organizations have appeared before them and many more have made their wishes known to me and to my department.

The time has come for us to take action. Bill C–7 underscores the important contribution made by artists in Canada to the cultural, social, economic and political enrichment of our country. It recognizes the central role played by artists in celebrating the human spirit and in giving expression to the Canadian experience. It acknowledges that artistic creativity is a vital force behind the growth and prosperity of our cultural industries.

Bill C–7 will at last articulate the policy of the Government of Canada on the status of the artist. It will establish the principles which we believe to be essential, including the recognition of the importance to artists that they be compensated for the use of their works. It will create an advisory council whose purpose will be to inform and advise me on all matters of concern to artists in Canada.

By legally acknowledging the specific working conditions of artists and recognizing their right to form associations and negotiate minimum conditions of work, this bill will finally establish a place for artists in our labour relations legislation. It will create a new agency, the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal, which will determine sectors within the artistic universe, certify an artists association for each of these sectors, and force any scale agreements into which certified associations and producers enter.

A principal advantage will be that certified artists' and producers' associations will no longer be subject to prosecution under the Competition Act simply for indulging in labour practices commonly accepted as a basic right by the rest of the labour force.

The tribunal will be granted the power to settle cases of unfair practices, ensure duty of fair representation by associations, and remedy infractions. It will allow producers and artists organizations to freely negotiate satisfactory agreements in accordance with existing practices.

Last November when we sent Bill C–7 to the standing committee, I indicated that I would be open to suggestions to improve this bill. A key issue expressed by a number of witnesses concerned the matter of closed shop practices. My officials and I carefully reviewed these concerns and with the full support of the committee we have amended the legislation to allow for a continuation of current artistic professional relations practices where preference for association members are often negotiated as part of collective agreements.

The amendments will also provide important protection through the tribunal to important artists, to individual artists, who might lose the opportunity to work because of unfair treatment by associations. I believe that our amendment strikes the fair balance between the rights of individual artists and associations that a bill always strove to achieve.

Bill C–7 will not solve all of the problems facing Canadian artists today. However, it will be an important step in a complex process designed to improve the environment for artists and the arts in Canada today. It will provide the context, the framework and the impetus for further improvements.

I have heard the criticism that the bill does not answer all of the concerns of all of the interested parties. Indeed, no bill could fully satisfy all of the divergent needs and points of view.

Let me try to put the issue into perspective by using an example from the arts world itself. A work of art is created in stages. The artist must do the planning, preparation, rough draft and revisions before the final work becomes reality. Sometimes in the artist's view, the work is never really finished. By its very nature, the creative process is never finite.

Similarly, this proposed legislation has undergone repeated and careful revisions and reworking in order to reach the final stage. However this process, by nature critical, comprehensive and creative, must be finite or there would be no point to it.

[*Translation*]

After years of discussion and months of debate, I believe that we have managed to draft a bill that strikes judicious balance between what is desirable and what is possible. I think that this bill will do much for Canadian artists; it assures them that the Parliament of Canada

recognizes their worth and wishes to improve their status.

Along with Quebec's legislation on the status of artists, it will encourage the other provinces to adopt similar legislation at the provincial level. But we do not want to stop there. Bill C–7 must be seen as a part of all the measures intended to improve the lives of artists in Canada. One might even say that it is a most important part, since our strategy must be based on the principle of fairness.

History shows that the value of artists must be recognized in law if they are to be treated fairly. We must make this bill on the status of artists a proper piece of legislation.

Another important part of our strategy is artists' remuneration. We must protect the Canadians who work in the fields of intellectual and artistic creation. Our cultural products are profitable and will continue to be so; we must ensure that their creators benefit from them. That is only fair and economically sensible.

We must revise the Copyright Act, updating it and making it fair by setting clear and effective rules that apply to both the creators and the consumers of cultural products. That will not be easy. There are many interests and many markets. We want a law that benefits everyone, a law that strengthens the rights of some without infringing on those of others. That will take time, but it is worth the effort.

[*English*]

A third element of our strategy will deal with training. Professional development is as important in the arts as in any sector and we must do what we can to improve accessibility and availability.

A fourth element will focus on marketing, giving artists the information which they need to identify those Canadians who wish to purchase cultural products.

The Department of Communications, together with all 10 provinces and with the municipalities of Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto, has just released the first pan–Canadian survey of current and potential customers of the performing and visual arts in Canada.

I am confident that this 600–page report will provide an extremely useful marketing tool, one which is sorely needed by the cultural community in these tough times.

A final focus of our strategy must be to critically examine the structure of our cultural industries, ensuring that they are forward looking and flexible, capable of competing with the best that the world has to offer.

This means continuing to move ahead with the next phase of the broadcasting summit, consolidating what we have accomplished to date. This means encouraging our radio action plan consultative committee to look for creative solutions to ensure the future of Canadian radio. This means consolidating the progress that we have made in the field of publishing by getting changes to the Copyright Act and the Investment Canada Act passed by the House.

• (1800)

It does not mean selling off Canadian culture to the highest bidder. Canadians have much more to offer the world when they speak with a voice which is truly their own. The Prime Minister believes it. The Minister for International Trade believes it and so does everyone else who understands that Canadian culture is something which is both valuable and unique. It is the reason why we did not include culture in the Canada–U.S. Trade Agreement and it is the reason why we will not include culture in any North American free trade agreement.

When you view the components of our strategy to improve the lives of Canadian artists, equal treatment, economic reward, training, marketing and structural change, you will see how a wide variety of initiatives are meant to complement each other.

The result must be an environment which encourages the arts and does not discourage them. It must be an environment which values diversity, honours creativity and fosters growth. It must be an environment which stimulates a strong Canadian voice, different from that of our neighbours to the south and secure in its own identity. Bill C–7 can only help to foster that environment.

When Bill C–7 was proposed last spring, the headline in *The Globe and Mail* read: "Proposed bill on artists' status called a cause to celebrate". And so it is, Madam Speaker.

This bill is so elementary, so straightforward, so absolutely necessary that we should not hesitate to enact it. It will, after 40 years of discussion and debate, give us the foundation from which we can move forward on a whole range of policies.

The standing committee did an outstanding job of considering this bill, Madam Speaker. All of your colleagues in the House of Commons who were on the committee from all three parties deserve credit for their thoughtful consideration of the bill and for the amendments which they made to it. They demonstrated that it is possible for people of different political parties to work well together in the public interest.

Let me simply elaborate on that by saying that for me it was a tremendous pleasure to be able to work with my colleagues, to see the commitment which they demonstrated on a day-to-day basis to the status of the arts in Canada, to see the flexibility and the genuine generosity of spirit which was exhibited on both sides of the committee and to be able to report, as I have done, to members of the artistic and cultural community across Canada that there is a commitment that transcends partisanship in this House of Commons to do what any of us can do to strengthen the arts in Canada and to give long overdue recognition to Canadian artists for what they have contributed to our society. That bipartisan support, coming from all sides of the House, is something that speaks loudly and clearly as Canadians celebrate their 125th anniversary.

As we look to our future, we will need our artists to help us to continue to define who we are as a people. But our artists also need us. They need our support here in Parliament and they need the support of Canadians from one coast to another. This bill is in one small way an attempt by members of Parliament on all sides of the House to lend them that support.

All parties represented on the standing committee have urged the government to act on the status of the artists. The arts constituency is urging the government to act on this bill and the public at large is supportive. Our homework has been done. Thoughtful discussion and consideration have been given. The time for action has come. Bill C-7 is our opportunity to paint a new and a brighter picture for Canadian artists. Let us seize that opportunity.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I wish to express to the minister our appreciation for his having brought this bill to light finally and to suggest to him that although the cup is only half full, I sincerely hope he is going to put every effort into completing the picture so that truly we can celebrate with full glasses of champagne, which I am sure the minister might want to indulge in tonight if he sees this bill finally going through.

[*Translation*]

It is with pleasure and some emotion that I participate today in this debate on Bill C-7 concerning the status of the artist and governing the professional relations between artists and producers in Canada.

I say with emotion because our creative artists who inspire us and reflect our collective soul are also, we must admit, the most poorly paid and often among the least fortunate in our society.

[*English*]

I think I can truly say that all members of our committee view this legislation as a first step in responding to the many serious needs of our arts community who are not just nation builders or educators but are custodians of the values other civilizations struggle to preserve.

To paraphrase Maria Tippett in her 1990 University of Toronto book which I have just enunciated, she expressed that very clearly. As Greg Graham said so well, even in a bill on the status of the artists, artists are marginal. This is not a bill for artists. It is a bill for arts' organizations and institutions.

That may well be, but the artist will also benefit in some measure from this bill, not to the extent that we would have appreciated, however. This bill is another step in public policy that attempts to secure the economic and social rights of the artists who are defined as you follow the peregrinations of this bill in a very circuitous route throughout the course of the beginning of the particular bill in question.

It is such a complicated route, I was going to outline it for everybody but I decided it would be far too lengthy and too complex, so I will just let it pass and let members read it for themselves and try to figure out how they are going to define themselves as an artist.

Culture is the sum of a country's shared perceptions, beliefs, conventions and values. It is what makes a country different from others. It is what indicates their uniqueness on the world stage.

In the 1979 task force on Canadian unity *Coming to Terms*, it was stated that:

> Culture draws individuals together, supports thought, judgment and action, gives a community its character and personality, differentiates it from other communities and encourages its members to seek common objectives.

A year ago, the Belanger–Campeau commission report—I see some of its members in this House—went even further in the definition of an artist and included artists in the following way. They said:

> Culture is the sum of the works which the artists of an entire people had gleaned from the collective imagination as well as from the habits, words, songs, and accents that represent the everyday expression of that people. It is its culture, nurtured and supported by creative artists and researchers, nurtured by artists, experienced by every element that breathes life into identity.

Clearly the arts help us to better understand ourselves, who we are, where we come from. Through the personal expression and performance of individual artists, we develop a better sense of our personal and collective identities. Canada's creators express the great diversity of this nation's people, and it is our strength.

A country's artists are key to its identity. They are a country's ID card and our artists are our seers. It is through our creators that society better understands itself.

As we travel the world or the world comes to our shores, it is our cultural identity that distinguishes us from other nations. They say we are a peaceful people. I hope we keep it that way, that we believe in fairness and equity. I hope we keep it that way, but that is what distinguishes us in the world of nations.

It is difficult for a lot of us if you think about it. How do you associate countries? You associate Russia and Tolstoy, *n'est pas*? I wish I could have said that in Russian, but I cannot. How do you dissociate France from Hugo, Ireland from Joyce, England from Dickens or Shakespeare and from a musical perspective we just had the world of Beethoven and his homeland rings clear as a bell in his musical cutouts.

I could go on and name many of the musical artists around the world, and you could almost immediately identify them with the country of origin. It is so easy, Rodgers and Hammerstein and American jazz. You think American jazz, do you not, when you think of the United States?

We have the same kind of ability right here. We are growing very quickly and we have some wonderful artists who are easily now identified as Canadians on the international arena.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Wallot of the National Archives during our committee hearings and in particular on *The Ties That Bind*, when we were looking at the Canadian Constitution and cultures' place within the Confederation said:

• (1810)

> The United States and France have a strong national identity. This national identity is constantly being nurtured. Through the erection of monuments, the collecting of archives, and through teaching in schools et cetera, a highly developed sense of patriotism and attachment to the nation is developed in these countries, even when deep splits exist.

During their lifetimes artists have challenged their countrymen and often were anything but celebrated in their own homelands. They were broke and they were exiled, yet they revolutionized their country's identities. Today it is our singers, performers, film makers, visual artists, broadcasters, writers, and dancers who bring culture to life. We have many successes and many stars in every field.

Unfortunately, far too often they are overlooked until they get an international reputation. They have not been seen very often as central to the formulation of cultural policies here in this country.

Paul Siren, who has been a proponent of the status of artist legislation for 20 years, is a stalwart in the field of the arts and a person upon whom we can count for wise counsel. In appearing before the committee he hit this point so eloquently. He said:

> We need to recognize the artist as a human being rather than simply as an appendage to some property rights, whether they're copyrights or the national conventions governing the insurance for the transportation of works of art, or other legislation that deals with a specific property. We want to be able to recognize the human spirit and the human contribution as an artist in the legislative sense.

That is what Bill C-7 attempts to do. However, it barely brings artists to the starting line and it only goes a small part of the way.

[*Translation*]

The former Minister of Communications described to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture the plan of action which we must pursue. He explained that the absolutely unique working conditions of artists remain an obstacle which prevents them from having access to our social benefits. Their income is small and seasonal and often artists are not eligible for unemployment insurance because they are self-employed. The same restrictions apply to the workers' compensation program and the Canada Pension Plan.

[*English*]

It has been said that the greatest subsidizers of the arts are the artists themselves. Unfortunately the numbers prove that. According to Revenue Canada professional artists are the lowest paid group of workers.

In 1988 self-employed artists received an average income of $15,877, barely $1,300 a month. Higher on the list is the $18,298 received by farmers and $22,515 received by fishermen. The only group lower on the list is pensioners.

There is little understanding that artists' careers are not comparable to others.

It is interesting to note the portrait of the artist because it identifies the uniqueness of the skills and talents and the maturity that one very often sees in the artists. They are about 44 years old and self-employed. In most cases they have acquired 17 years of experience in their artistic field. They devote 35 to 45 hours a week to their art, and merely to subsist they spend another 10 to 15 hours a week on a job not directly related to art.

The net annual income derived from their art is $13,000 for dancers, $11,079 for authors, $11,444 for visual artists, $15,210 for actors, and $18,248 for musicians. There is also little understanding that culture is also a business, and it is both information rich and labour intensive. The arts industry employs 400,000 people. It is a big business. It generates about $14 billion in economic activity in culture and broadcasting. I believe the minister gave us a figure on the fall-out, I do not remember it but it was a very significant amount.

These figures demonstrate that cultural investments has direct economic benefits too. We often forget that. It is vital to our society. It makes the wheel roll.

I see another past chairman. This place is filled with past chairmen of the standing committee: the members for Edmonton Southwest and Portage—Interlake. That is very nice. Welcome.

Mr. Edwards: Thank you.

Mrs. Finestone: When the chairman of the Canada Council, Mr. Allan Gotlieb, appeared before the standing committee he described how perilous the situation has become for the arts community in this country. I am quite sure he has spoken into the minister's ear in a very diligent manner and tried to convince the minister to go and get some dollars from Treasury Board and that tight-fisted Minister of Finance, but to no avail. If they only realized the economic fallout they can derive from a small investment. I think they could receive about 11 per cent return, if not more, on their investment. What could be better than that?

I would suggest that we go back and speak to the powers that be to see whether we can remedy some of the crisis in the Canada Council.

This bill is about artists, and therefore I think it is important for the government to note that its cutting of the financial support is a serious threat to these very artists that it says it is trying to assist in this bill. There are some contradictory messages being sent. On the one hand we support artists and on the other hand we are sort of starving them a little bit, through a lack of financing that would be very helpful for their promotion and to their welfare.

Mr. Gotlieb said that the Canada Council, whose main client is Canadian artists, is financially going backwards. Its parliamentary appropriation for ongoing grants and services has been virtually frozen since 1986-87. The council appropriation has been declining in real terms since the mid-1980s. I am aware of the fact that our side is also guilty of some cuts that were unnecessary, in my view.

However, I would suggest that we can make it up. That would be very helpful to artists because since 1987 funding has increased by a mere 2.6 per cent while inflation has stood at 21 per cent over the same period.

We have had death by decrement and that is the result, according to Mr. Gotlieb.

However, the situation is quite different internationally. It is good to put things into perspective. Some of these countries that have a long history and have made their mark in the world over time have seen how important it is to invest in the cultural life of their country from all kinds of points of view.

A study conducted by the international cultural policy group of the Department of Communications pointed out that in the late 1980s levels of art support in Canada are below that of many countries. Canada Council per capita funding in the 1980s was below that of the arts council of Great Britain and about equal to that of the Australian council. However, both of these arts agencies have received substantial increases to their appropriation since then making them better positioned to address the financial difficulties facing the arts community in the 1990s. The Canada Council has not been so favoured.

It would appear that the government had the facts and understood the problems because this bill has had a very long history in the making. There has been an extensive process for which Parliament, all sides of this House, should be quite proud.

Bill C–7 had its genesis in 1980 with Canada's signature of the UNESCO recommendations in which signatory states agreed to consider the implementation of a broad range of policies to recognize and encourage the development of the role of the professional artist within society, including funding, training, professional status for artists and access to social programs such as health care, pensions and unemployment insurance.

In 1986 a task force headed by Gratien Gélinas and Paul Siren, after extensive consultations within the artistic community, presented 41 recommendations to the government on how to implement the spirit of the UNESCO declaration.

After that the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture issued two reports on taxation and the arts. In 1989 the standing committee studied and issued another report calling for the status of the artist legislation. I believe it is as a result of some of these pressures that this bill was finally drafted and introduced.

This is an act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations between artists and producers in Canada. That title would lead one to believe that this piece of legislation deals with many artists' issues, but beyond the title and the introductory part that deals with a set of principles and policy directions there is very little.

• (1820)

It brings artists to the starting gate. There is much more that needs to be done. Pages 3 to 36 address labour relations, remaining silent on issues concerning social benefits, bankruptcy protection, income averaging, et cetera.

This bill is largely a labour relations bill and as such does not address the concerns of independent writers and visual artists who are not engaged in this field.

It provides self–employed artists the right to collectively bargain through organizations such as ACTRA, *Union des Artistes*, and the American Federation of Musicians.

In order to receive recognition for the purpose of collective bargaining, organizations will seek certification from an independent commission known as the Canadian artists and producers professional relations tribunal. The efficacy of this independent body for the management of collective bargaining will largely depend on the quality and experience of the appointments made to it by the Minister of Labour, after consultation with the Minister of Communications. We made it quite clear we would have preferred that the Minister of Communications should be charged with making the nominations.

There are serious concerns being expressed about certain aspects of this nomination procedure because the minister involved is very closely related to and involved with decisions of the Canada Labour Relations Tribunal, and that is making widgets.

Madam Speaker, as an artist you know that the manufacturing trade and assembly plants are not exactly the milieu in which you work. Your conditions of work and the product you produce is not a widget. It is not a manufactured good. It comes from the heart, the soul, and the creative energy of people involved in this very particular field. It requires a very particular skill to be

able to determine the right kind of answers in situations in which there are disputes that need to be settled.

The Canadian Conference of the Arts has pointed out that the experience of Quebec artists with the introduction of their tribunal was almost one of chaos because appointees did not have a background in the cultural fields.

During clause-by-clause I moved an amendment that would have had the Canadian advisory council on the status of the artist develop a list of appointees from which the Minister of Labour would be invited to make appointments.

This approach has a precedent in the Public Service Staff Relations Board and this amendment had the support of the artistic community that appeared before the committee. Unfortunately the government refused.

This bill also creates a permanent Canadian council on the status of the artist. This body's predecessor, the Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of the Artist, was responsible for providing the impetus to progress on this issue.

As well, this advisory council created the Canadian artists' code, which has served as a benchmark for the development of policy and legislation.

The details regarding staffing and administration of the council are not part of this bill. There have been calls for the council to be "managed at arm's length" from the Department of Communications and other government departments or agencies for it to be able to reach the highest possible level of effectiveness. Here again we attempted to provide more openness.

This bill requires the council to make a report annually to the Minister of Communications but does not require the report to be made available to the arts community or the public at large. The whole point of making a report is so that the constituents and the constituency should be advised of what is going on.

Once again this amendment was rejected even though it had the support of the artistic community. The answer was that some things might be contained within this report that we do not not want the public to know about. That is a very poor excuse for not having an open process so that artists and our creators can air their views in the public arena.

Although I support this bill in principle and certainly will pass it with pleasure, as a first step, I have argued and will continue to argue that this bill is only half-full because there is so much left to be done from a socio-economic perspective for our Canadian artists.

Simultaneously the government did do some things that were worth while. With the tabling of this bill in the House the finance minister announced tax measures that will benefit artists. These were passed by the House in December 1991. The first concerned the income tax treatment of donations made by artists of culturally significant works of their creation and of expenses incurred by employed artists in connection with their artistic employment.

The second allowed employed artists to claim a deduction in respect of actual expenses incurred in the exercise of their artistic employment of up to the lesser of $1,000 or 20 per cent of their income from artistic employment. It is not exactly going to allow them much latitude.

However, even with those two measures the artists are still waiting for this government to take action on what is called income averaging provisions. All of us know that artists have rich times and poor times. If you are in any of the creative arts fields you have a period of employment and then all of a sudden there is a period of famine. You make sales of your creative works and all of a sudden sales dry up or you have to stop selling in order to create new product.

The standing committee unanimously recommended that artists be given the right to stabilize their income by setting aside a part of their artistic income in what was called an artist's account on which tax liability would be deferred and that the Income Tax Act be amended accordingly. The government in its response to that recommendation promised in 1990 only to examine income averaging provisions. It would seem to be the government's point of view that such allowances already exist through the liberalized RRSP rules.

The arts associations' view of the RRSP solution is one that is seriously flawed according to them. They argue that RRSPs were created to provide pension income not to serve as an income averaging device.

Bill C–7 does not address the government's commitment to protect artists' royalties from the bankruptcy of producers. In its response to the standing committee the government said it was prepared to protect royalties flowing from the copyright of self–employed artists against bankruptcies of cultural industries with which they contract and to propose the best measures to reach this objective.

Since the government's response it has introduced bankruptcy legislation. That was Bill C–22 which has just gone through this House. It does not have one single word or any protection for the artist in this life even though those promises were made.

The bill remains silent on the right of compensation by the government for the public use of works of art. While clause 2(e) was amended in committee to recognize the importance to artists that they be compensated for the use of their works including the public lending of them, it does not provide any formal recognition or mechanism of that right for compensation for public use.

In 1986 a public lending rights program providing compensation to Canadian authors for their works in public libraries was introduced. However, it has no statutory basis, which is what the standing committee has recommended. This position was reiterated to Parliament by the Writers' Union, the Canadian Conference on the Arts, CARFAC, SARDEC, the Public Lending Rights Commission itself and the Minister of Communication's own Advisory Council on the Status of the Artist.

We have argued on this side for the inclusion of statutory recognition, even suggesting that if it is not done in this legislation, hopefully it will be included in the new Canada Council legislation which will soon see the formal merging of the council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Let us hope the minister will hear that plea and include it at that stage when it comes before this House.

[*Translation*]

As you know, Madam Speaker, the unique working conditions of the artists put a major obstacle in the way of them gaining access to several benefits most Canadians routinely enjoy.

The fact that artists are often self–employed also denies them access to several programs such as wage loss insurance and extended health coverage or unemployment insurance which all employees get through their employers.

That is why the Standing Committee unanimously recommended right off that this bill on the status of the artist allow those who are members of certified associations to become "employees" for the purpose of the regulation on the insurable portion of a wage–earning job and that the Unemployment Insurance Act be amended in consequence thereof. That makes a lot of sense, does it not?

Second, the standing committee recommended that the Minister of Communications look into the need to establish private group benefit plans for creative artists as well as the viability of such plans.

• (1830)

[*English*]

In the government's response to this first recommendation a commitment was made only to continue to examine the eligibility criteria of the unemployment insurance program with a view to expanding coverage to artists within the framework of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

In response to the second recommendation the government passed off the issue to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of the Artist to propose options to solve this problem.

The former Minister of Communications suggested the following possible solutions to make such benefits more accessible to artists: For example, could not the Canada Pension Plan contributions be determined according to gross revenue rather than taxable income? Could we not recognize for performing artists their status as employees under the Unemployment Insurance Act without impinging on their status as entrepreneurs under the Income Tax Act?

Has the current Minister of Communications investigated those options of his predecessor? Could he tell us what the conclusions are? What are the results of the government's promise to continue to examine the eligibility criteria of the unemployment insurance program? These matters remain unresolved. They are critical to the financial well–being of this sector of our important cultural enterprises.

Bill C–7 only applies to the National Film Board, the National Arts Centre, the CBC and federally regulated broadcasters. It does not apply to companies that receive

money from Telefilm Canada for the making of films. It is really quite a restricted number of clients within the framework of this legislation.

When the minister was asked why he did not at least include Telefilm Canada the reason given was that the operation of companies falls under provincial jurisdiction. That may well be the case. Yet Telefilm requires certain Canadian content criteria when it gives money. Therefore, why could the federal government not provide within the context of this bill that when Telefilm money is involved in a film project, the status of the artist legislation would apply? I do not have the answer to that. It would be interesting to know some day if we could do that.

In conclusion, I would like to say that this has been a very interesting exercise. It has highlighted all the areas that need to receive some attention. I know Rome was not built in a day and so the status and the health of our artists is certainly not one I can anticipate, particularly at this time and unfortunately with this government. I would like to add that working together in the best interests of the arts and the artists in a collegial and non-partisan way and if we could continue in this mode of operation and if it could be extended to other committees, I do believe the well-being of Canada could be assured. We could see through these expressions the sense of hope and the sense of future that we can look forward to in this wonderful land in which we are privileged to live.

I would like to reflect at this point on the words of a cultural nationalist for whom I have a great deal of respect, Mr. Bernard Ostry. In a recent speech at Carleton University he said:

> Only developing the mind and imagination of Canadians can we survive with influence over our life and our community. Only by that influence can we come together, even if only in the old way we know so well, the way of agreeing to differ, of live and let live.

He went on to say: "One thing remains. We have to act". I might add it is my hope that the work for the Canadian artists has only just begun and we will work and act so that it may continue and flourish and grow.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Madam Speaker, it gives me much pleasure to have the privilege of being able to add a few words on this historic occasion on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party.

First of all, I also mention as the member for the Liberal Party and the minister did, how well we worked on the committee. We worked as a team. We were not in there trying to score political points. We were trying to advance the cause and the interests of the artists and we were doing this together.

Working on the committee shows the best of Parliament, the best of our democratic traditions and of this institution. I join both with the minister and the critic from the Liberal Party in expressing our wish that if more institutions of Parliament could operate the way our committee has operated, certainly this institution would be held in much higher esteem by Canadians. I would suggest as well we would be much more effective. Part of the problem with our committee is that you sort of go bump into the bureaucracy. In some ways it would seem to me that government members, including the minister, are caught in the hands of the bureaucracy.

I suspect, although the minister has never formally indicated this to us in committee or privately, many of the things we were suggesting the minister was in agreement with, but that also his hands are tied as were the hands of the governments members on our committee who very often and very openly expressed agreement with the things we are all proposing, amendments that were being introduced, suggestions that were being made. Their hands were tied. Perhaps some day we will have a committee system in which the politicians are the representatives of the people and will again become masters of this House and its committees.

Having said that, I commend all members on the committee. I commend the minister for the work that has been done that leads to this moment and it is an historic moment. I have heard both the minister and the critic from the Liberal Party mention that it has been some 40 years in discussion and debate. Sometimes progress is slow—40 years. Let us then also celebrate. Let us also celebrate, and I will mention this later in my remarks, some of the things that still need to be done. The fact is the glass is not half empty but half full. Therefore, my anticipation is that the movement is toward filling it and not emptying it.

In Canada, more than in many other countries, we should recognize the importance of culture. Art is like a mirror. It reflects who we are and through seeing who we are we become ourselves. We become more. We begin to gain our sense of identify, a sense of ourselves as people. Nationalism and patriotism could not have existed without the arts, without paintings, without song, without sculpture and without drama. A nation could not exist.

Its identity could not exist without the artistic reflections of that nation. It is essential.

This young country is struggling in an attempt to maintain itself and its identity, culture and the arts are vital to the survival of Canada as a nation. It is not easy. The job has never been easy for Canadians stretched across this huge geographic land mass from ocean to ocean to ocean, a society with many different peoples from many races and different parts of the earth who have come and lived here and with the different geographic districts and regions.

To begin to try and bring this together into a sense of oneness is not an easy job. It is not something that the state or some bureaucratic planners could bring about. It is only through giving its people the ability of expressing themselves and other peoples and other regions and districts being able to view and experience that expression that we can finally begin to bring together this nebulous notion of Canadian identity. I think we have been successful.

• (1840)

You cannot quite define it, you cannot exactly put words to it or measure it or weigh it, but we as Canadians know we are Canadians. We know we are different. We know we share some values that are different from the values of many of our ancestors in Europe or our friends and neighbours to the south or other locations on this globe. We know we are different because we have been able to see the reflections of other Canadians in the mirror through culture and through artistic expression.

Culture and the arts are more than just creating patriotism and nationalism. They help to bring forth our individual self-consciousness. Why do artists participate in this activity? It is certainly not a money-maker in terms of economic activity. Many of them will tell you that it is the challenge and the pleasure of exploring one's own self, one's own consciousness and expanding that and moving on to newer and higher levels.

As individual artists engage in that exercise, we as a collective all benefit from that. Not only do we as Canadians benefit from the artistic productions of Canadian artists, but in this day and age of globalization, through giving artists new tools for expression, new audiences which are global, a new form of consciousness also begins to arise and is allowed to arise. It is more of the global consciousness. It is a consciousness that begins to recognize the humanity of all. The universality of the human experience is now beginning to be appreciated as it has never been appreciated before in the history of the human race.

When the Beatles, for example, in the early 1960s started to use the sitar and the harpsichord, instruments from different cultures and different time periods, bringing them together into the here and now, we began to recognize that human awareness now spreads not only over all different cultures of this globe but also back in time, in historic time.

Through these artistic expressions a new global consciousness is arising. It is exciting and new. It points to a new human relations between peoples. It destroys the mystique of different cultures in the sense that those different cultures are now understood better and appreciated better through the understanding of the universality of the human spirit.

I appeal to my fellow artists in Quebec who are so concerned, and rightly so, with the national spirit of the collective consciousness of the Quebecois, of the French experience on North America, not to isolate yourselves, caught in 19th century nationalism, and escape the marvellous experience and opportunities of a global consciousness and a global awareness in which the experience, as expressed through its culture and the arts of the francophones, can be presented on the global stage and participate with the global human family.

I make that appeal because while I understand the origin and the importance and the drama and the poetry of nationalism, we are surely also living in this tremendous opportunity of living in a post-nationalist period. Surely the artists in Quebec would do themselves a disservice and the people and audiences in Quebec a disservice if they cut themselves off from that rich possibility of a more global and a more universal form of art.

While we celebrate the passage of this legislation, and I expect I will be the last speaker and that this House will unanimously give approval to Bill C-7, things must be

said to indicate that this cup is only half full. More needs to be added.

The minister strongly indicated, and certainly the official spokesperson for the Liberals has eloquently laid before the House, the economic hardships that many artists face. While they have this important task of giving identity to themselves, they are hardly recognized in an economic sense. Next to the pensioners they are the lowest and the poorest as an occupational group in this country.

There are many things to be added. I was not entirely happy with Bill C–7. There were many shortcomings in the bill. Again, going back to how our committee worked, all members of our committee, whether they were government or opposition, recognized the shortcomings of the bill. Rather than trying to score political points and sitting here moving amendment after amendment, trying to hold up the bill and voting against it and doing all these things that opposition parties are supposed to do, we decided not to do that. We recognized there were more miles to travel.

Let us take what we have now. Let us try to approve as much as we can, given the possibilities and the state of awareness, not by the minister and the government members in this case, but by the bureaucrats. Let us go with that.

There was one very important amendment. I could not have voted for this bill and I could not have advised my colleagues to support this bill had the minister and the department not agreed to change that one section to allow for a closed shop.

The original bill was a step backward. Where a victory had been achieved, especially by the musicians to allow them to negotiate in a united way, the original bill would have forced them backwards. That would not have been acceptable to us in this party.

I am happy that the minister and the committee unanimously supported the minister and the government's amendments to the bill.

There are other problems. The definition of the minister is the Minister of Labour. Here we have the Minister of Communications introducing the bill. The bill came to the communications committee, not to the labour committee. It is the labour minister who in the end is referred to as the minister who sets up the tribunal and who is, for all intents and purposes, in charge of this legislation. This is obviously something that needs to be corrected.

We are concerned and we have expressed this. We suggested amendments. The tribunal should consist of people who should be nominated by the Minister of Communications or at least who have some input from the cultural organizations.

I am glad to see that the Minister of Communications will advise the Minister of Labour but the Minister of Labour need not heed that advice. We wish the legislation had been different and the Minister of Labour would have had to heed the advice of the Minister of Communications.

We are concerned that the Department of Labour, which is experienced and knowledgeable about industrial disputes, will look at the cultural sector in that same light. Culture does not produce widgets. The human relationship and the human dynamics are different. It is not on the industrial union model side. It is not on the industrial labour relations side. It is different. There are different practices and understandings that have been created in this field. We hope that this tribunal will understand that and will consist of men and women who fully and totally understand that and will be able to deal with potential labour disputes in this sector in a knowledgeable way and in a way that is sympathetic.

We hope that the rules, regulations and practices of the labour department will not be imposed on the cultural sector.

• (1850)

There are certainly indications around that different departments do not share the sensitivity and understanding of the arts and the cultural sector.

The other day I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration about the job training program, professional job training, an essential element for artists and the training of professional artists in this country.

There was an important task force that brought down its report on December 1, 1991. The Minister of Employment and Immigration has not even responded to that. His department is the most important department when it comes to professional training. All sorts of important

cultural institutions are dependent upon those training dollars—not a word from the department.

What I am hearing from within the department is that the people in the employment sector of that department who have experience and dealt with the arts community and the cultural community are not having their contracts renewed. The department is losing its ability, its expertise, in the cultural sector.

I am hearing from within the department that this minister is not interested in culture and the arts, that the job of the department is not to open the doors to the cultural community but rather to close them.

The arts community and the leadership in the arts organizations have not been able to meet with the minister. They have not even been able to meet with the deputy minister.

This is outrageous and I am afraid if the Department of Labour deals with the arts community the same way the Department of Employment and Immigration is dealing with the arts community, Bill C–7 might not produce the things we are all hoping it would produce today.

There is a lot more work to do and a lot to add to the glass to enable us to have a full glass of champagne to celebrate. Certainly we need more changes in the Income Tax Act to make it appropriate to the artists.

We are concerned as well, and the committee reported this in its report, about some of the constitutional changes. Are some of the politicians, provincial and federal, willing to shuttle the arts off to the side? I hope not. There is that concern.

We have concerns about the funding of artistic organizations and the artists themselves. There is concern about book publishing and the authors, trying to make certain there remains an industry in this country.

We are concerned about broadcasting and films, that Canadians are able to see their own films, their own cultural products. I go back to what I said before. A nation gets and develops its identity when it is able to see itself in the mirror and the artists create the mirror.

If Canadians cannot see each other through television and film, by reading books and magazines, if these are not available, if we all get sucked into that mass culture from south of the border and we lose our identity, as a country we have lost our soul and we have lost our reason for being. Then we begin to feel as Canadians that we are no different from other people south of the border. We really begin to lose our will of remaining as a separate nation, a separate people and a separate identity.

That would be so sad.

I believe, and I speak here as an immigrant, that what Canadians have achieved is something unique in the pages of human history. We have developed a society that has values and sensitivities and that is really the most civilized in the world.

The Prime Minister quoted that the United Nations, through some measurement, has considered Canada to be the number one place. I agree in this one instance with our Prime Minister and certainly with the United Nations. In many ways Canada is number one. We have and share values that in the evolution of our humanity are unique. It is at a high pinnacle. It is worth not just preserving but broadcasting to the world. It is a beacon of hope. The arts and the artists are the means of communicating that. These people help create and engender that.

Bill C–7 goes some way in helping them. I am certain all of us in the House will continue in our own way to make certain we begin to fill that cup so that it is not half empty but will become fuller and fuller and fuller.

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: With the permission of the House now that third reading of this bill has been concluded, I would like to tell the minister and all members who have been working on Bill C–7 for so many months and have been talking about it for so many years that it is for me—

[*Translation*]

—a very emotional moment as well as one of great satisfaction. I am fully confident that we can go the rest of the way together. I am truly honoured.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

CANADA OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–58, An Act to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act and other Acts in consequence thereof, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Madam Deputy Speaker: There are nine amending motions on the Notice Paper concerning the report stage of Bill C–58, An Act to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act and other Acts in consequence thereof.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motions Nos. 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 3 and 4 will be grouped for debate and the vote on Motion No. 3 will apply to Motion No. 4.

[*English*]

Motion No. 5 will be debated and voted on separately.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C–58 be amended in clause 8 by striking out line 24 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"environmental programs or studies or studies on evacuation systems; and"

Motion No. 2

That Bill C–58 be amended in clause 8 by striking out line 22 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"ing procedures, evacuation systems and personnel".

Motion No. 6

That Bill C–58 be amended in clause 58 by striking out line 34 at page 30 and substituting the following therefor:

"environmental programs or studies or studies on evacuation systems; and"

Motion No. 7

That Bill C–58 be amended in clause 58 by striking out line 34 at page 31 and substituting the following therefor:

"operating procedures, evacuation systems and personnel".

Motion No. 8

That Bill C–58 be amended in clause 96 by adding immediately after line 25 at page 51 the following:

"environmental programs or studies or studies on evacuation systems; and"

• (1900)

Motion No. 9

That Bill C–58 be amended in clause 96 by adding immediately after line 22 at page 52 the following:

"operating procedures, evacuation systems and personnel".

He said: Madam Speaker, I will speak very briefly to this group of amendments to Bill C–58, the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act. The purpose of all these amendments is to insert specifically reference to studies and implementation and inspections of evacuation systems.

During both committee hearings and in other discussions outside committee there was a great deal of information relayed to many of us who had become involved in working on this legislation.

One of the areas in which significant progress had not yet really been made was coming up with safe evacuation systems that could be relied on in stormy sea situations such as those which gave rise to the disaster commonly known as the *Ocean Ranger* that cost some 84 lives just a little over 10 years ago.

For this reason and considering, if we go back to second reading debate, some of the concerns expressed at that time about the importance of effective and efficient evacuation systems for offshore oil rigs in emergency situations, we felt a greater degree of specificity ought to be accorded to the whole matter of evacuation systems in mentioning it concretely within the legislation.

One example I will quote as far as Motion No. 2 is concerned, for instance, in paragraph 5.02 found on page 5 of the bill under *Safety of Works and Activities*. The amendment would cause it to read:

> The minister shall, before issuing an authorization for a work or activity referred to in paragraph 5(l)(b), consider the safety of the work or activity by reviewing, in consultation with the Chief Safety Officer, the system as a whole and its components, including its installations, equipment, operating procedures, evacuation systems and personnel.

The effect of all the other amendments is simply to bring the other provisions of the bill before us into line with that change. That fairly clearly spells out the intent. It might be argued that evacuation systems are covered by the more general wording. However, concern was expressed by many to me and to a number of my New Democratic colleagues, particularly those who attended the committee from the province of Newfoundland where this tragedy was most closely felt. They believed it was important in order for greater onus to be placed on the need to develop, test and implement safe evacuation procedures that we have specific mention of that particular problem within the legislation itself.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all my colleagues on the work that took place in the legislative committee. There is no doubt that during the hearings we heard representation from many witnesses.

I want to be very brief. Our officials and I have had the opportunity to review the amendments of my colleague. Motions Nos. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are not required on each of the activities. We would certainly be turning down the amendment by my colleague.

On Motions Nos. 3 and 4, this is going to be considered as the drafting of the legislation takes place. There is no commitment today for zeroing in on one special group. There will be opportunity when the bill is being drafted for consideration of the workers and other individuals at that time.

On Motion No. 5, this ties down too strictly into one department. There is a combination of all departments that are involved in this legislation. Rather than zeroing in on one department, we believe that it is better that it is the entire operation of all departments involved in this. Again, we would be rejecting the motion.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I have had a very close look at the amendments and discussed them with my colleagues. I think I see the intent of some of the reasoning. I did not sit on the committee, but I reviewed the four committee reports. I have been in contact with three members and I see another one waving across the floor.

Essentially I do not believe that the intent of the bill will be changed significantly by these amendments. Without grouping them separately, I do not believe there is a necessity for the amendments. While I do have some reservations about the bill which I will express in third reading, I am quite happy with it the way it is with respect to these amendments.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, very briefly I want to intervene on these amendments put forward by my colleague. I sat on the committee for one of the sessions. I have had an ongoing interest in the legislation in the safety of workers at sea, whether they be on stable platforms or on vessels. I am flabbergasted that both the government and the Official Opposition do not want to include in the bill a reference that eventually will lead us to some form of safe egress from the platforms.

All the amendment called for is adding the words "or studies on evacuation systems" which would force the government, would mandate the government, to do some work on that. It has been 10 years. The Government of Canada has done diddly as I understand it to ensure that the research is done to find a way to take the workers off a platform in the event that one of the legs buckles or the seas become so strong that the whole structure is in danger. We know that you cannot get a helicopter over in that kind of weather. We know that you cannot get a ship close enough. There needs to be a way that those workers can get off that platform, which is high above the sea, safely into the water and withstand the kind of swells that will occur. I am flabbergasted that both parties have rejected that particular amendment.

The other one in terms of the comments from the representative of the government talking about the amendments that focus things on the ministry of labour, it is my understanding that the bill gives paramountcy to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In the event there is an emergency, it is up to the minister responsible for raising oil and therefore raising revenue

who will make the decision on safety of this particular rig or this particular platform.

I argued in committee and I argued in the briefings that the parliamentary secretary gave to me that either the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Transport should be the one who is paramount. In consultations with my colleague who moved the motion, we decided that the best approach was for the Minister of Labour who has the ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of the workers. We do not feel the minister who is responsible for revenues, as it relates to energy of the economic development, should be the one who has that power.

• (1910)

Let us put a neutral person from the cabinet, from the government, in that position so that the workers will be the bottom line, not the expendable line.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have had an interest in the particular subject from some long time ago when we dealt in this House with the tragedy of the *Ocean Ranger* and the difficulties surrounding the safety issues. I would like to support and concur with what my colleague said, that it is an absolute conflict of interest for the minister of energy to be responsible for the safety of the individual on the rig when it comes to pumping oil and raising revenue versus protecting human life.

They dealt with the ocean danger before and after the tragic event and tried to deal with an American company, Odeco, benefits for the families that went through tragedy and suffering. It was just a catastrophe.

I want to add a little bit more. My colleague mentioned the dilemma of extracting people, getting them out of the operation in very dangerous circumstances. I recall the morning after the *Ocean Ranger* disappeared. The Armed Forces were out in very dangerous seas. Maybe some of my colleagues in the House will recall the event on the front page of *The Globe and Mail* when there was a Labrador helicopter with rescue specialists hanging into the water searching for survivors after that event.

I can remember at the time the pilot of that particular aircraft, Mike Clark, in the opinion of many people here deserved a medal for the kind of activity that went on in that very dangerous situation.

The current purchase by the Government of Canada of $5 billion worth of military helicopters impinges on this. If we were taking that kind of money and spending it to ensure that these kinds of recommendations were put in place, we would be far better off protecting the lives and safety of Canadian workers.

We have seen a terrible tragedy in the coal mines in Nova Scotia. We have seen marine problems, but in terms of this helicopter purchase at $5 billion, it is an absolute obscenity. I suspect that right now, today, we could probably buy the Soviet nuclear fleet and turn it into junk for less than $5 billion.

I wonder exactly why we are making this purchase when we could be putting the money to work in terms of safety for workers involved in just the kind of proposals that my colleagues have put forward.

The present Armed Forces equipment with Labradors and Chinook helicopters is absolutely adequate. They need to be refitted with engines and then they can provide the kind of safety in equipment that both the member for Kootenay and the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan have been talking about here today, and the proposers of this amendment.

The Labrador helicopters on the coast of British Columbia with the twin rotors are ideal equipment in mountain valleys where you need stability while you are trying to work in very careful environments. You need decent engines in those aircraft and those twin rotors give far more stability than the Prime Minister was trying to talk us into yesterday with a single rotor piece of equipment. They absolutely lack the stability.

At almost $5 billion, and we have seen over–run after over–run come into this, this is a disgusting proposal. I say we ought to be sending the Prime Minister to what is left of the Soviet Union to attempt to purchase the Soviet fleet. They would give it to us for less than $5 billion. We could scrap it safely. This purchase is absolutely insane.

We should be spending that money making the kind of safety improvements that we are dealing with. We do not need this purchase. I see the Minister of State for Defence here today. I would love to see her stand up in the House and justify this thing.

Mr. MacDougall: Mr. Speaker, I believe we are speaking to Bill C-58 and the amendments. I wonder if my hon. colleague would get back to the amendments and in other places he can debate other things.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): I think that is probably a reasonable request.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I have always respected my hon. colleague's interventions but one of the things I have noticed in his interventions is that he does not know when people are on the topic or off the topic.

I will try to provide a little more elaboration in my remarks so that he understands clearly how important this is and how relevant it is to Canadians.

There is one more point, and it is especially important with the Associate Minister of National Defence sitting here. This $5 billion purchase of new military helicopters is absolutely irrelevant. We should be spending the money on the kind of safety improvements that my colleagues from Kootenay and Thunder Bay—Atikokan have been proposing to this House and we should not be involved in this insane squandering of money.

At the same time she might indicate what we are going to use the Aurora aircraft for.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): I beg to interrupt the hon. member. I really do feel I would like him to come back to the topic before us. If he wishes to discuss expenditures as a whole as compared to this particular expenditure for safety reasons I think it is proper to do so.

The hon. member seems to be spending all his time on this particular issue and I do not think it is really in order.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your guidance on this matter. I would certainly be prepared to yield the floor, under your wise guidance, to the Associate Minister of National Defence who might be able to explain to us why she is prepared to take that perfectly safe helicopter and scrap it and then squander $5 billion.

The remarks of the Prime Minister the other day were absolutely irrational and it is time we had the minister make some sane statements in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): In my opinion the nays have it.

The motion is negatived on division. In consequence Motions Nos. 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are negatived.

Motion No. 1 negatived.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-58 be amended in clause 12 by striking out line 27 at page 9 and substituting the following therefor:

"isters who is representative of workers, a person designated by one of the".

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-58 be amended in clause 12 by striking out line 3 at page 10 and substituting the following therefor:

"tions, and at least one of whom is representative of workers."

He said: Mr. Speaker, the major reason for Motions Nos. 3 and 4 is to introduce into this legislation which is essentially, this part at least, health and safety legislation some tripartite representations instead of the bipartite nature of virtually all of the bill.

I must admit that one of the reasons for doing so has to do with perception. In addressing that I would like to read a letter I received in early April from the Seafarers' International Union.

It seemed almost beyond belief to me that after 10 years' investigation of this disaster in 1982 that we could have been constructing a bill dealing largely with the safety aspects arising from the *Ocean Ranger* disaster without close consultation among the government, the ministries involved, and those segments of organized labour most closely associated both with the industry and with the specific disaster which gave rise to this legislation, especially in an area such as safety which in every jurisdiction in Canada is recognized as being an area in which industry, labour and government must be closely involved, particularly in the development of the legislative and regulatory regime.

The letter I want to refer to, and it is in perhaps stronger language than I would normally use, is from the president of the Seafarers' International Union of Canada and is dated April 2.

• (1920)

He says:

> Let me firstly thank you for bringing Bill C–58 and its contents to our attention. The scoundrely attempt by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to go through a legislative back door with safety legislation without the input of labour, regardless of its content, shows the blatant disregard this government and the oil industry truly have with respect to fair representation of the industry work force.
>
> This designed attempt by EMR to usurp the mandate of Labour Canada, a federal department which does utilize the consultative process with its clientele and is responsible for occupational safety and health warrants investigation. Why were labour representatives not invited to participate? What are the government and the oil industry hiding? As employee safety is an issue, is EMR the right department to responsibly handle it?
>
> This bill should be referred to a committee consisting of labour, management and government representatives for review.
>
> Thanking you in advance for your assistance in helping to achieve this goal in getting answers to the above questions.
>
> Yours fraternally,
>
> Roman Gralewicz,
>
> President Seafarers International Union of Canada.

As I said earlier in my remarks, I find it unfathomable in this day and age that the government would proceed with safety–related legislation and not have the closest consultation with all of the parties that are involved and all of the parties that are at risk.

More than capital is at risk in the oil and gas industry, as countless families, especially in Newfoundland and other Atlantic provinces have found out to their great sorrow. Surely it is time to learn.

The administration of the Offshore Oil and Gas Training Standards Advisory Board seemed the appropriate agency to myself and my New Democratic colleagues. We also felt, not only on this board but other advisory boards, that representation should be accorded to those employees who work in the industry.

It is not only the lack of consultation in this bill but the attitude of the oil and gas industry regarding organized worker representation across Canada which has not been an enlightened one. They are very resistant to having any employee organization, whether onshore or offshore. They have failed, as in a recent industrial accident, to have the appropriate kind of tripartite consultation taking place.

One of the results of that is that we have these disasters and we do not seem to learn from them. On the day–to–day administration of safety it is vital. In the development of the procedures and the technology and in matters of the appropriate training for the personnel on offshore rigs, there should be representation from those organizations and from those employees who are putting their lives at risk every day.

That is the purpose of these particular amendments and I would hope they would receive some favourable consideration.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, in advance of my remarks I would ask for a little time to develop the context into which these remarks fit. I notice the Minister of State for Transport laughing over there, but in this matter I really support what she has done. I know that she supports my colleague here 100 per cent in asking for equity for the workers and people directly affected by the safety of a situation. The workers have the right to be involved in it.

I would like to lay out for her a very serious case about safety in the transportation field. The *Ocean Ranger* has been quoted here often, but if you go to the coast of British Columbia, extricating an individual from a marine platform is often a very difficult thing.

The development of oil and gas off the coast of British Columbia has, from time to time, been advocated over the years. These are very difficult, dangerous waters. What concerns me more than anything else is the government's proposal to destaff the lighthouses and tear up the other safety infrastructure on the coast of British Columbia while it talks about these kinds of oil and gas developments and other marine structures. We recognize that the government has made the move under tremendous pressure to postpone or to temporarily stand down from withdrawing staff from these important safety features, the lighthouses.

We urge the Minister of State for Transport as an act of good faith to stand up in the House and say that the government is prepared to implement the report done by her department on the future use of lightstations. It advocated upgrading to provide greater safety to the travelling public. It advocated improvements by returning the person years to the department that the government removed from the lightstations along the coast of British Columbia. It talked about returning the person years and the budget dollars. We are looking at $1 million. We are looking at about 10 to 12 staff returned.

Perhaps the minister could stand up and talk to us in this House about the return of lightstations—

Mr. MacDougall: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member of the NDP has been in this House for many years. He understands the legislation and the clauses we are dealing with. I think that he will have the time and many other days to discuss lighthouses and whatever. We are concerned with trying to get the clauses of this bill through tonight.

I know a lot of my colleagues have given up their evenings to make certain to be here. I wonder if he could stick with the clauses of the bill so that we could get on with third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): I would ask the member to try to keep his speech relevant to the point. I think I stood twice the last time he intervened and I have stood now. I would hope he would not try my patience too far by continuing to diverge from the topic. Please relate comments to the topic of the bill.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again your guidance is appreciated. I take the remarks from my hon. colleague in the vein and value that they were given.

In concluding my remarks, I would point out that there is rarely an opportunity where the Minister of State is in the House and is asked to make a brief comment on implementing the FURL report and restoring the person years and the cash that was removed. If she would do that, it would be a tremendous opportunity.

As the hon. Liberal member is pointing to his watch, wanting to rush to wherever he wants to rush, regardless of the safety of the people who live on the coast of British Columbia, I will try to accommodate him if we could get some small commitment about implementing the FURL report, returning that cash to the lighthouse operations and returning those person years.

Mr. Mifflin: I want the record to show that the Liberal member who was pointing at his watch was not this hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): It is on the record. Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): The only thing we do recognize is that that is probably the only member of the Liberal Party who can tell time, so there is no problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): That is not a point of order. Is the House ready for the question?

The question is on Motion No. 3. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 4.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): In my opinion the nays have it.

Motion No. 3 is negatived on division. Consequently Motion No. 4 is also negatived.

Motion No. 3 negatived.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke) moved:

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-58 be amended in Clause 15

(*a*) by striking out line 36 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"tion, where the Minister of Labour is of the opinion";

(*b*) by striking out line 45 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"safety of persons or equipment, the Minister of Labour";

(*c*) by striking out line 18 at page 13 and substituting the following therefor:

"the Minister of Labour or the Governor in Council"; and

(*d*) by striking out lines 20 to 23 at page 13 and substituting the following therefor:

"(4) Before the Minister of Labour makes or revokes a declaration under this section, the minister responsible for the federal law that, in the Minister of Labour's opinion, is in conflict with this Act".

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is the last motion we are proposing. The effect of the motion is to touch on the ministerial override clause which is at page 12 of the bill where it states:

• (1930)

16.1(1) In a prescribed emergency situation, where the Minister is of the opinion that there is a conflict between the provisions of this Act or the regulations and the provisions of another federal law, other than provisions implementing an international treaty or convention to which Canada is a party, and that compliance with that law and this Act or the regulations is likely to create a situation that would seriously endanger the safety of persons or equipment, the Minister may issue a written declaration to that effect.

The purpose of the amendment in this regard is to substitute the Minister of Labour for the minister, which in the current context is the minister of energy.

The major reason is simply that the purpose of the clause we have before us is strictly to have a ministerial override for co-ordination and direction in the event of serious endangerment for safety reasons.

There is a lack of respect for the consultative process which is recognized by the federal jurisdiction and every provincial jurisdiction in Canada. Those jurisdictions recognize there has to be tripartite development and tripartite consultation given the total lack of recognition of that by this department and by the minister of energy in the creation of this bill.

My colleagues and I feel it is appropriate in health and safety matters that the ministry of labour, which has both the experience and the expertise and the habits of good consultation because it is required by its legislation, would be the appropriate one to have the ministerial override in the event of serious endangerment of the safety of persons involved in the offshore industry.

I will leave it at that and I think that is a good point to be made.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): 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. Brightwell): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): In my opinion the nays have it.

Motion No. 5 negatived.

Hon. Mary Collins (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Collins (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my friend opposite.

I am going to be very brief. This is a very important piece of legislation. Tragically, it has been 10 years in the making since the February 1982 disaster which affected so many people in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada.

This piece of legislation has been developed with the input of a tremendous number of people, certainly officials from a number of federal departments who have carried out extensive consultations themselves. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Labour, the Department of Industry, Science and Technology and certainly the Department of Transport consulted client groups and interested parties throughout the discussions.

Discussions have been held with a number of provincial governments that have been directly involved, not only in their ongoing responsibility for resource development, but also their responsibilities particularly in the areas of worker safety and health and safety regulations.

The industry, the workers in the industry and those who over a period of years have developed either in this country or particularly in the North Sea a capacity to understand the real risks that are involved in this business were also consulted.

There have been a number of discussions about amendments. Having participated in all of the hearings in the legislative committee, we had some very interesting testimony and some very good witnesses with whom we had the opportunity to discuss a number of important things.

Two of the important things that have come up in this House and in committee are our ability to to continue to develop the newest systems for evacuation and our ability to know that we have the best equipment and the best technology available to protect the offshore workers in this very dangerous business. That technology continues. That technology is supported by the federal government. It is supported by provincial governments. It is supported by the industry and it is certainly being supported and enhanced by labour groups in an ongoing way.

I recently met with the oilfield workers in Newfoundland. Some of the things they are doing are very much on the leading edge. This legislation not only allows for that but also encourages it. It makes it absolutely mandatory that everybody understands the regulations and everybody understands the systems that are in place and that they are approved before projects can proceed.

When the bill was first introduced in the House the question of the ultimate responsibility of the minister was debated. I think all members of the House will remember that the Hickman royal commission on the *Ocean Ranger* disaster recommended that one minister be responsible.

The task force which reported in 1985 or 1986 brought together many people who looked at the expertise here in Canada, looked at comparable regimes, particularly in the United Kingdom and Norway, and recommended that it be the minister of energy who played that role.

It is a role that ensures when this process of regulation, this process of ensuring maximum safety, of ensuring the best and the most advanced systems of evacuation and protection are put in place, ultimately one minister is responsible. I asked a number of people why it would be the minister of energy. The reason is that ultimately, this is an industrial project.

There is a substantial labour component and real responsibility not only for the federal Minister of Labour but also in some situations depending on the jurisdiction, the provincial Minister of Labour.

We are dealing with a ship and all the regulations that exist to govern ships and shipping in this country prevail today in this legislation. The Minister of Transport and his or her officials continue to play a very substantial role not only in the responsibility under all the shipping acts, the Canada Shipping Act and others, but also in the role that the Minister of Transport and the officials must play in the development of regulations that govern the offshore.

Ultimately, a minister has to be responsible. Ultimately, it must be remembered that this is an industrial project.

• (1940)

Ultimately it must be remembered that the first responsibility of these regulations is the health and safety of workers aboard rigs, the protection of those who depend on the seas for their living—such as mariners, people who depend on the fishery, those who must know that not only are the seaways safe but the ocean is

clean and protected from pollution—from the tragedies that come from accidents.

All the responsibilities of the other departments come into play but when action is needed there must be one minister.

There is one other component that I would briefly like to touch on that is as important as any. All the regulations we have in place, all the systems we may put in place are of no value unless our people are properly trained in the use of those systems and fully understand their responsibilities as individuals, their responsibilities as part of a production or exploration team and their responsibilities to each other, not only for the preservation of the environment and their own lives but for the preservation of the lives of those people around them.

It is that training we must focus on. It is that training that we have done a lot of in the past. However, it is that training that needs to continue to be developed. We need to know that when those people are trained they are fresh, they are trained under the right conditions and they are trained to do the things that matter, not only in a crunch situation, when they are faced with a serious situation because of weather or mechanical problems, but day to day, hour by hour so that the workers know their responsibilities and can protect themselves and avoid the creation of accidents. It is a responsibility, in the situation I am most familiar with in Newfoundland and Labrador, that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has undertaken very seriously.

It is a situation that the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil Workers Society has looked at intensively. It has worked very hard to develop not only proper sources of training and proper courses but to ensure that their workers are as trained and as skilled and as capable as possible so they can contribute to the job they are doing that they are very proud of. Many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have been working offshore and around the world for well over 20 years, and some for longer.

We have a capacity in Newfoundland and Labrador today because we have undertaken a number of technological advances and innovations and because we have worked so hard on training. We have the potential to export that skill and export skilled workers and give them the opportunity to work around the world when the opportunity is not available at home. That is something we do not like. We do not like to have to go overseas but we recognize that it is something that is important.

This legislation will ensure that as we develop the offshore—be it off Newfoundland and Labrador, be it in the Arctic or off the coast of British Columbia—those who are actually doing the work on the site can do their job knowing that they and those around them will be safe. It will ensure that they know that the environment, which is so fragile and with which they have a balanced relationship, will be protected and that if there is an emergency they can respond in a way that is responsible and positive and that contributes to a solution to the problem not to the problem itself.

In February 1982 this tragedy brought a lot of sadness to a lot of individuals, families and communities, and to our whole province and, I would suggest, to our country. In many ways the passing of this legislation signifies the passing of a time. The hurt and the loss will never be erased or eradicated. The hurt and the loss will never be compensated. It never can be. However there should be some satisfaction that we now have in place a mechanism that will ensure the top level of safety.

We can never guarantee there will never be another accident. Anybody who suggests that we can is misleading themselves and anybody else who listens. However, we can guarantee that we have the best tools and the best skills available.

This legislation ensures that, and assures it to the people directly affected and indirectly affected, those who depend on our oceans and our frontiers.

I commend the House for the work that has been done by all parties in first and second reading and particularly commend the work of the legislative committee and the work done this afternoon. I commend this legislation to the House for its consideration.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague from St. John's East for his presentation on this bill which is very important to him, to me and I am sure to all Canadians, in particular those of us who live in the

areas where offshore oil rigs have been the order of the day in the recent past.

I would perhaps like to take more time than I would normally because this is the first time I have spoken on this bill. It is important to give the perspective under which the the bill developed, how it came about and why it is addressing what it is addressing.

Between 1970 and 1990, I do not have the figures between 1990 and 1992, 123 oil rigs were destroyed and over 1,300 lives were lost. The one that we are all concerned with mostly today is the *Ocean Ranger* tragedy. I will speak about that later because the *Ocean Ranger* tragedy is related directly to the recommendations of the report and the bill itself.

Just imagine this. In the North Sea on July 6, 1988 an oil rig called the *Piper Alpha* had an explosion that ripped through its steel superstructure. After a series of explosions and fires the rig was destroyed. One hundred and sixty-seven lives were lost but 61 people miraculously escaped by jumping 175 feet into the water and by sliding down the hoses, sometimes accidentally and sometimes on purpose, in a raging storm in the North Sea.

With that background we can understand the necessity and the concern of all members who have spoken on this bill at first reading, second reading, report stage and now. It does concern safety. It concerns life. It concerns the very reason we are here, to protect life and to make it better.

I now want to address the *Ocean Ranger*. I do not want to go into all the details of the tragedy, but on February 15, 1982 during a severe Atlantic storm a semi-submersible drilling unit, the *Ocean Ranger* which was the largest of its kind in the world at the time, capsized and sank 166 nautical miles east of St. John's, Newfoundland. All 84 men on board perished.

In response to the tragedy the Governments of Canada and of Newfoundland and Labrador appointed the joint Royal commission on the *Ocean Ranger* marine disaster. It was called the Hickman commission and was chaired by the Hon. T. Alexander Hickman, who is now the Chief Justice of Newfoundland.

In August 1984 the commission submitted its initial report that dealt solely with the facts and events pertaining to the ocean disaster. In 1985 the commission submitted its final report that dealt with the broader issues of petroleum operational safety off the Canadian east coast.

It was a comprehensive report. They were comprehensive hearings. The report contained 136 recommendations. On April 14, 1986 the Government of Canada released a status report of the initiatives it had taken in response to the Hickman commission's recommendations. This report indicated that 85 per cent of the commission's recommendations had been implemented in whole or in part.

The commission recommendations that had not been addressed included those dealing with the consistency of regulations of offshore operations and those recommending maintaining the approach of having a single agency exercise regulatory control over mobile operation drilling units.

• (1950)

At the time of the status report's release it was also announced by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that he had been given a mandate by cabinet to develop legislative and administrative procedures to address the royal commission's remaining recommendations. To assist the minister in this regard, a private sector task force on *Ocean Ranger* regulatory recommendations was appointed. The minister requested that the task force prepare proposals, not only for mobile drilling units, but for all types of equipment used in frontier land petroleum activities.

This task force to which I am referring was chaired by Mr. Roland J. Harrison and was known as the Harrison task report and was made up of three specialists: Mr. Harrison, with expertise in oil and gas law, Vice-Admiral Dan Minguay, who had recently retired as the vice-chief of the defence staff, an expert in marine operations, and Dr. Pallister, a Calgary oil and gas industry consultant and who had previously been the vice-chairman of the Science Council of Canada—all expert advice.

They consulted extensively with provincial and industry experts and they examined the regulatory regimes for offshore petroleum operations in the United Kingdom, Norway and the United States. The task force submitted its report, *The Promotion and Enhancement of Safety in Oil*

and Gas Operations on Canadian Frontier Lands, on July 31, 1986.

As a result of this report and that of the Hickman commission, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources developed the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act, a proposal for amending the legislation governing petroleum operations on frontier lands.

The effort of which I have just spoken culminated in this bill, C–58, an act to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act and other acts in consequence thereof.

This bill received first reading in the House of Commons on February 20 of this year second reading on April 9th of this year four committee reports, and now we are here for the third and final reading.

There is a lot in the bill and I do not want to repeat a lot of the excellent material that my hon. colleague from St. John's East presented. I know that he sat on the committee and although I did not sit on the committee I have reviewed the testimony of the committees. Certainly there were a number of things that would impress one, having read these committee reports. I want to bring to the attention of the House the two principles of safety that were brought out by Mr. Harrison in his report.

It is very important when you are looking at this legislation to understand these principles. The first one is regarding safety. It reflects the fact that responsibility for the safety of oil and gas operations must rest squarely on the shoulders of those engaged in the operations and of the suppliers of equipment used in the operations.

I am going to use the words of the task force report: "It is fundamentally the responsibility of industry to undertake its activities in a safe manner".

The second principle is that the proposed regime reflect the fact that safety ultimately results not from mere compliance with regulatory requirements as we have here today, nor necessarily from using the best available equipment, but rather from the proper integration of equipment, procedures and personnel. It is an integrated thing.

Those principles have to be borne in mind when you look at the bill and it was for that reason I had some difficulty with some of the amendments.

The purpose of the bill is very simple. It is designed to deal with the technical aspects of regulation of oil and gas and the safety of the installations involved.

I want to get to the main points of the bill. I want to make a personal comment and then I want to state a reservation I have but it will not prevent me or my party from agreeing with the bill. Nevertheless, it is a reservation that I would like to state.

There are essentially nine issues in my mind that this bill addresses. I will go through them as briefly as I can.

The first and probably the paramount one is related to the fact that over and above marine activity, because it happens on the seas, you have another activity, an industrial activity. Both these activities are very hazardous. Sometimes marine activity is more hazardous than industrial activity and vice versa. It is because of this that we have the difficulty of who is the responsible person. Quite frankly, the bill addressed it very nicely.

The bill essentially says that in an emergency situation in which the safety of personnel or operations is in jeopardy, the federal energy minister will override all other federal legislations in accordance and in response to the emergency. This override position will ensure that emergencies are immediately responded to in an efficient, co–ordinated manner.

I would have to add at this juncture that I will be looking forward to the regulations that will follow from the legislation once and if it is passed.

The second point is that on every petroleum facility operating on frontier lands, an installation manager who has to be expert in both marine and industrial petroleum operations will be in charge at all times. The qualifications of this manager will be prescribed in regulations and his responsibility will include the safety of all personnel as well as the safety of the facility itself.

The third point is that operators will have to obtain a certificate of fitness issued by an approved independent body in order to obtain the authorization required to conduct petroleum activities. I am not going to go back to any of the disasters. It is not my job here or that of

anybody else to go back and look at the causes of accidents. That is encompassed in the bill.

It is significant that a certificate will be required for any facility, installation or equipment defined in regulations and will verify that it is fit and complies with all appropriate regulations and requirements. The certificate will further verify that the facility, installation or equipment can be operated safely for the intended purpose without threat to the environment.

The fourth point is that operators of equipment or facilities used in petroleum operations will have to issue safety declarations to the regulator in order to obtain authorization. These declarations will verify the appropriateness of the operating procedures as well as demonstrating that personnel are qualified, competent and have received appropriate training.

The next point is that a chief safety officer and safety officers will be appointed as statutory officers responsible for independently monitoring safety standards. In other words, this is not self-monitoring. A safety officer will be appointed. There will be somebody overseeing this. I believe that is very important.

The minister must consult with this chief safety officer before issuing any work authorization through his officials. The officer will be responsible for reviewing the system as a whole as well as its components, including all the installations, individually and collectively, the operating procedures and the personnel.

The next and probably one of the more important aspects of this is that an offshore oil and gas training standards advisory board will be created to encourage the development of new training standards, qualifications, accreditation standards and course assessments for positions on offshore facilities. The appointments to this board will be made by the federal energy minister in consultation with the Newfoundland and Nova Scotia energy ministers.

Training with regard to the things that are hazardous is probably, after the regulations, the legislation and the administration are set up, the most dynamic part of this whole business. You can have it all but without the training it is no good. I have taken a personal interest in these events for reasons that my hon. colleague from St. John's East has mentioned. We have made it our business, irrespective of our parliamentary responsibilities. I have learned and I am pleased to learn that in terms of training and training standards work has been going on for the last six or seven years in developing qualification requirements for individuals working offshore.

• (2000)

Shortly after the *Ocean Ranger* disaster anyone working offshore had to have rather extensive survival training. I use that in a qualitative sense. Experts could argue with the degree. The important thing is that the training was intensive. Also it is important for people who work offshore that it is not treated as an onshore facility without proper training in things that are marine.

In addition to the other points I mentioned, an oil and gas administration advisory council will be established as a forum for inter-agency promotion of consistency and improvements in the administration of the regulatory regime across frontier lands. In particular, the council will seek to avoid any inconsistent or duplicative requirements which could jeopardize the safety of frontier petroleum activities.

Of the two final points the penultimate one is that the member of the council will be the chairman of the two petroleum boards. A representative will be designated by the federal minister and a representative will be designated by each of the Newfoundland and Nova Scotia energy ministers.

Finally, when a serious spill, accident or incident occurs as defined in these regulations, the minister must order that an independent inquiry will be held to investigate its cause. I do not think it was really that necessary to have it there, but it is always nice to dot the *i*s and cross the *t*s.

It is important to me that the province of Newfoundland in my case, and the province of Nova Scotia in the case of others here tonight, have signed the frontier development accords with the Government of Canada. The two territorial governments, the Newfoundland and Nova Scotia petroleum boards and the industry itself have indicated their support for the amendments that have culminated in this bill.

I have a reservation and it is one that I think should go on the record, but I add that I do not think it should hold the bill up. The Hickman commission emphasized the need to impose a graduated scheme of penalties for failure to comply with the regulatory requirements and to ensure the severity of penalties reflecting the significance of non-compliance.

That was not really addressed specifically in the bill. I would not say it was totally disregarded, but specifically as a series of graduated penalties it was not there. I am hoping that perhaps this could be picked up in the regulations as we develop further from the backbone of this particular legislation.

By way of conclusion and if I could be permitted a personal note, I do not mind saying that I have been involved with this bill from the night of the *Ocean Ranger* tragedy. I happened to be in New York at the time. It was a very bad February night in New York, the middle of February. I remember watching the television. When I heard what I heard I could not believe it. I said: "It is a nightmare".

In the aftermath of the disaster Chief Justice Alex Hickman was appointed as the chairman of the investigative committee. He came and sat in my office in another role I had at the time. We discussed at the very beginning of his investigations some of the aspects of the tragedy and where it may end in the sense of regulations and what recommendations would be taken. Little did I know I would be standing here tonight as the spokesman and associate energy critic for the Liberal Party making comment on it.

I then attended many of the hearings of the *Ocean Ranger* inquiry itself, read the reports, and I supposed followed the progress of this activity as it progressed.

There is criticism that it has taken 10 years. I am not going to engage in that criticism tonight. There is not a lot we can do about it. The fact that the bill is here tonight, I am thankful for and grateful for. I know it does take a lot of work and a lot of time. If it is any solace, if it is any consolation, perhaps the bill is more complete and more thorough because of the thoroughness of the Hickman report and the Harrison report themselves.

I suppose my final comment on this bill would be that on February 15 this year I attended the memorial service for those men who were lost in the *Ocean Ranger* tragedy. I had an opportunity to speak with a few of their survivors. It was a very solemn moment, but I got a message from them and from others who knew them.

They do not want to prolong the agony. It is something they want to have over. They have put their lives in order. It has left a scar on their lives forevermore, but there were two things they wanted to know. They wanted to know when something was going to be put in law. The second thing they wanted to know is when it is put in law, when the legislation does come forward, will it prevent another disaster like the *Ocean Ranger*?

I am pleased to say that the legislation is here. In my opinion, in the opinion of my party and I think in the opinion of the House, it will prevent another tragedy such as the *Ocean Ranger*.

We are supportive of this bill and I personally am privileged and honoured to have the opportunity to speak on it this evening.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I listened with care to the remarks of my colleague. I understand and appreciate that he, especially as a representative of the province which was most heavily victimized by this particular tragedy, has both personally and in his role as a public representative very strong feelings and concerns about the subject at hand.

I face a problem with this legislation. Generally we are supportive of it. We had some amendments that we utilized as a means of expressing some concerns. We do feel this is a legitimate and longstanding expression of concern by many people in government, both elected and within the bureaucracy and the staffing of the various departments involved. It was a major piece of work to achieve what we all hoped would be the goal of a safe and efficient work place in the offshore.

While my own background is in health and safety and mostly in the lumber industry, I still hold a seaman's card and worked on the ships off the west coast for a number of years. My father was a seaman for some 45 years but involved in a lot of life-boat drills. My dad was almost killed in one when a 500-pound tackle almost crushed his skull at one point.

Even though we go through all those drills in that industry, and especially when there are passengers at stake, we ever have enough familiarity with what is likely to happen in a disaster when it happens, especially a disaster such as the one that happened in the heavy seas

off the coast of Newfoundland on that tragic day a little over 10 years ago.

We cannot predict the sea. The only thing we can predict is that it will be unpredictable at times. She is a hard master or mistress, I guess as the case is, and can be very unforgiving. I would like to read into the record the remarks from one witness before the committee, Miss Cynthia Parsons, the former chair of trustees of the Ocean Ranger Families Foundation. The foundation was funded by government and private donations and was served by a board of directors drawn largely from the community and the families. The government fund ceased in December 1986. The foundation has closed its offices and has not been active since 1986.

• (2010)

Miss Parsons accompanied Mr. Clay Newhook to the committee and gave short testimony. I think it is important to put the whole disastrous matter into perspective. I will read into the record her few words. Miss Parsons said:

> In the early morning of February 15, 1982, the drilling rig *Ocean Ranger* sank in a violent winter storm off the Grand Banks, killing everybody on board. Nobody in the industry, in government, in the community, in the families were prepared in any way for the disaster. My husband Clyde died that morning, leaving me with two small children.
>
> At present, ten and a half years later, most families have put their lives back together. However, all of us carry scars from this tragedy and will never forget the experience.
>
> We found no comfort in the findings of the Hickman commission. When all of the evidence had been sifted, it was clear that with proper training and appropriate safety precautions the rig need not have sunk. Indeed, it was also clear that every corrective action taken after the first major incident only added to the certainty of the disaster.
>
> It further appears that if the rig had been shut down completely after the panel and the ballast control room flooded, the *Ocean Ranger* and its victims would have survived.
>
> It is not necessary for our purposes today to take you through the history of the *Ocean Ranger* story. However, two questions need to be asked, which is mainly why I am here this morning.
>
> First, while we are pleased to see that many of the recommendations of the Hickman commission are being reflected in federal and provincial legislation, I have to ask why this has taken so long.
>
> Second, is the committee satisfied that we have all learned from the *Ocean Ranger* incident to prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again?
>
> The Ocean Ranger Families Foundation closed its offices in December 1986. There has been no independent agency to watch over this industry and the regulating agencies, nor has there been much offshore activity off the coast of our province. However, we are poised for renewed activity both in drilling and production. We, the public, must now look to our governments and the oil and gas operators to safeguard the public interest in the hostile environment. Failure to do so would mean not only more loss of life but also that my husband would have died in vain.

The major comment I want to make is that when I first came to this place, one of my concerns was that politics was often too full of people who were still idealists and especially idealists about the workplace. While I know that the input of many public servants and politicians to this legislation has the best intent in the world, I also know and many of my colleagues know that as people who have worked in industry we recognize that the best laws and regulations, unless they have ongoing inspection and ongoing enforcement, are not going to accomplish the goals we set out.

That is one of the reasons we have continuously hounded—I think that may be the appropriate word—this government on this bill and on other bills having to do with health and safety.

There is the importance of establishing tripartite representation on a continuing basis at every level through all of the responsible agencies to ensure that the goals and objectives of our laws and regulations are lived up to on the job. For those of us who have worked for years on the job, we know that safety is never in practice the prime consideration.

Anyone who expects safety to be the prime consideration on the job quite frankly is a damn fool. The world does not work that way. It never has, and it never will, even on the part of some employees in industry who get familiar and say: "I have been doing this for years. My family has been doing this for years. We can handle this". It is the risks that go with it that tend to some time, to their own peril, adopt attitudes, and some time ignore and take short cuts that lead to these kinds of tragedies.

Our purpose in law and our purpose in setting up regulatory mechanisms is to minimize the chances of

that pattern of behaviour happening whether in employees, among management, in middle management or in government regulators.

We recently had another industrial disaster at the Westray mine in Nova Scotia. I hope that it will not take 10 years to learn and implement the lessons that we learned from that disaster. I read through the background notes on the legislation now before us, especially when it came to the description of the duties and the responsibilities of the chief safety officer, the chief conservation officer or installation manager.

My colleague from the Official Opposition a few moments ago gave quite good praise I think to the delineation of responsibilities which is fairly clearly set out in the legislation. That is set out. In every act and set of regulations there is a provision for exemptions.

One of those same kinds of exemptions I suspect will be found to have caused the most recent major industrial disaster in this country. While the laws and regulations in the province of Nova Scotia set out that there must be coal mining inspectors, the minister waived that and instead had hard rock mining inspectors investigating in that coal mine.

There is not an insistence on a day-to-day basis by representatives of both management and employees and government that keep a continuing watch on the application of the laws and the regulations that we construct.

With all the best intent in the world, and I am sure all of us here have that, we are living in a dream world to think that management, government inspectors and employees will do what is necessary to create safe work places, especially in these most hazardous potential conditions, unless there is an ongoing process where they keep tabs on each other, on their purposes and on their practices on a day-by-day and sometimes minute-by-minute basis.

We tried through a number of our amendments—again, some of them were simply there in large part to make a point—to attempt to stress the importance of developing evacuation systems. I know a lot of work has been done. We are aware of that, but we still have not developed, according to everything we heard, a system that will work.

If we want to put some priorities on human life and on human life in the work place, especially when there are large numbers of lives at risk, surely we as a society ought to get some of our financial priorities right.

• (2020)

If we can put men and women in the most hostile of environments, in outer space, and have them floating around and bringing vehicles together and pulling them apart surely it is not too much to expect that we could keep people alive in the water, evacuate them with some security and safety and get them into vessels to keep them alive for reasonable periods until we can bring them back to shore. If the will is there and if we are willing to place a high value on human life, as we do on many other objectives in this society and in other developed societies, we can accomplish that.

However, unless we set ourselves some specific targets and say that efficient, effective evacuation systems are a must then that is going to get by-passed, particularly when the overriding responsibility is with the ministry. For all the excellent people involved in it the ministry's prime objective is the production of our energy resources and the maximizing of both private and governmental revenue from those resources rather than the safety and security of people who work in hazardous industries.

In conclusion, if we want a regime that protects people's lives it must be a regime that sets up on an ongoing basis, not just sketched out in regulations or in law but in living, breathing people who we pay to be involved at the bottom level, as well as the medium and upper levels, to insist that all maximum measures are taken to comply with both the letter and the spirit of that law and of those regulations. Otherwise, we are just a bunch of flaming idealists and nothing will happen to make the oceans or the rigs any more secure for the people who work on them or for the communities they come from.

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: Could I find unanimous consent of the House to call it ten o'clock p.m. so we could proceed with the Adjournment Debate?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am doing better this week in getting unanimous consent.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

VISIBLE MINORITIES

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, I rise with respect to a question that I posed to the Deputy Prime Minister and that was responded to by the Minister of Justice as recorded in the *House of Commons Debates* of May 4.

My question concerned the rejection, until that point, by the government and the Official Opposition of a proposed amendment to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that would have provided for a commitment on the part of governments to preserve and promote racial and ethnic equality.

I take this opportunity to point out that under present circumstances equality and non-discrimination rights are provided for in section 15(1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

That provision is subject to section 33 of the charter which is the notwithstanding clause. That clause provides of course for legislatures, including the Parliament of Canada, to override the rights which are set out in section 15(1).

The essential effect of those two sections in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is to provide an explicit declaration of the inequality of the groups listed in section 15(1).

My specific reference in the question was to ethnic and racial minorities because the proposition was advanced that would amend section 27, which presently provides for the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians, such that it would provide for a commitment by those governments to preserve and promote racial and ethnic equality.

Since that question was posed to the minister, the province of Ontario has advanced propositions for the inclusion of the recognition of racial and ethnic equality in the Canada clause and in fact proposed the amendment to section 27 that I just set out.

I understand as well that the government in the negotiations which took place last week expressed some support for some form of expression of that principle of a non-contingent recognition of racial and ethnic equality in the revised Constitution which we hope will result from the present constitutional negotiations.

In my question, I identified the refusal of the Leader of the Official Opposition to support this proposition, a position that the Leader of the Official Opposition still maintains.

In fact, in recent correspondence the Leader of the Official Opposition launched upon a defence of the notwithstanding clause which did not address the issue yet to this day whether the Liberal Party is able and willing to recognize the principle about which I asked the Minister of Justice.

Therefore my intervention here takes the form of inquiring what is the present status of that proposed amendment? What is the position of the government with respect to it?

I want to make reference as well to the latter part of the minister's answer. She seemed to exhibit some misapprehension of my understanding of the role of the charter and attempted to therefore explain the implications of what I said which I fully understood in the first place and that is what I said required amendment.

The minister had an interesting final or penultimate sentence in her response. She said: "I do think that we have within the hands of responsible authorities at all three levels of government in this country enough legal devices to do the job". Now we must construe that what she was talking about was the enforcement of the principle of equality through actions of government and in legislation.

Madam Speaker, I would only say this in closing since I see that you are demanding I do so. There is much outside of that context that needs to be done but the establishment of a principle in the Constitution that all Canadians are equal is of fundamental importance. It is an issue I hope this government and the Leader of the

Official Opposition and the Official Opposition collectively will support.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I have quite detailed information from the Justice Department and I am hoping that if I am not able to read all of it into the record that the balance will be placed on the record.

The multicultural and multiracial character of Canada was officially recognized by the federal government when the federal multiculturalism policy was introduced in 1971.

Since then equality rights and multiculturalism have been entrenched in sections 15 and 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed in 1988. As well federal, provincial, and territorial human rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race and colour.

• (2030)

In view of Canada's increasing ethnic diversity the Department of Justice is taking steps to consider the multicultural nature of Canada's society in the development of policy and discharge of responsibilities.

The principles of a fair and equitable justice system are basic to the goals of the Department of Justice and apply no less to our approach to multiculturalism.

All Canadians should enjoy uninhibited access to the system including legal assistance, victim/witness services, recourse to the courts, and other legal mechanisms for redress and resolution of disputes.

The Department of Justice is committed to promoting a harmonious multicultural society.

Madam Speaker, I would like to table the balance of my response.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Would there be unanimous consent for the hon. member to give the balance of his answer to *Hansard*?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Editor's note: The portion of the response tabled is as follows:*]

Immigrant populations need to learn as quickly as possible about the laws regulating important aspects of daily life and ways to get information about the legal system.

They also need to use and to feel comfortable using the Canadian justice system. In addition to its cost-shared access to justice programs, such as public legal education and legal aid, the department conducts research and supports pilot projects in order to assist service delivery agencies to improve the delivery of justice services to members of multicultural groups.

Lawyers and judges and, indeed all justice system professionals, must be sensitized to the various ethnocultural clientele they will encounter, and the laws and legal process must be clear to all Canadians, regardless of their first language. The department is supporting the Canadian Judicial Centre and the Western Judicial Education Centre in their efforts to provide judges with training to sensitize them to cultural differences of minority groups.

Further, the department is committed to hiring practices which will increase the representation of visible minority personnel to better reflect their representation in the population. Awareness training concerning multiculturalism is being provided to managers in order to enhance the notion of "inclusive justice" which means making the justice system more accountable, more responsive, and more reflective of the interests and value of all Canadians.

I should add that the compounded inequities encountered by minority women will be considered in all research by the Department of Justice. One of the most powerful messages delivered at the National Symposium on Women, Law and the Administration of Justice hosted by the Minister of Justice in June 1991, was that visible minority women face multiple disadvantages resulting from gender bias and racism.

The Department of Justice is committed to work with the provinces and concerned groups to ensure fair treatment of all people who become involved in the system and to eliminate barriers affecting visible minorities.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I rise on the question that I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration, a question relating to an event in my riding that goes back to February 21 of this year.

I think the fish processing plant in Port Union is going to become a very well-known plant because this is about the fifteenth time that I have been up to speak on this subject. I will be up 15 more times, until I get some kind of an answer or some kind of redress to the question that I have been asking.

It is a very simple question. On February 21 this plant, on the tip of the Bonavista peninsula in the town of Port Union, closed. It employs 1,200 people and at the time all those working were laid off. The crux of the question was that are 80 families, less than that at the time because of other events that have occurred, that were not covered by unemployment insurance. Some of them had two weeks, three weeks, or four weeks.

My basic point has been that since the government is responsible for managing the fishery, it has been responsible for eight years, and since the fishery has failed dismally then it is my belief, and it is shared by others, that the government has some responsibility to those people who through no fault of their own are without work, without fish, without income, and now they are almost without food.

I am not known in this House for dramatizing, exaggerating or over-emphasizing. However, I cannot emphasize with more vigour, enthusiasm and feeling the need of those people who have no source of income.

Imagine the frustration. By the time I asked the minister this question it was question number 7 or number 8 in two months, and that is not unreasonable. I asked the minister about the families and wondered when could I expect some form of compensation. In the response this Minister of State for Employment and Immigration said that: "We could look for a way out in conjunction with the private sector".

I had to inform the House and the parliamentary secretary that there are no other jobs, there is no other industry, there is nothing. We can train people for as long as we are alive, but train them for what. They cannot even go to Toronto or Montreal because the unemployment is so bad there that people are leaving there and going somewhere else.

However, the minister did give hope and she went on to say in response to my supplementary: "For the time being we are trying to do what we can and to focus on the training and adjustment of the workers".

Only yesterday, on the same subject, the minister responded and said with respect to contingency funding that when the need arises the government will come forward with a response.

Today I was very specific. He was talking about hypothetical questions. He asked: "How can I give you an answer to a hypothetical question?"

I was very specific today, which relates to the question that I asked May 8. The specific thing was that 80 families had no work, no compensation and no idea as to what sort of compensation, support or care they are going to get from the government.

It is a very desolate situation when you wake up in the morning and have no job, no money and no place to go except to hope that somebody is going to come to your rescue.

I do not like pleading but I am pleading to the government with all the emotion that I can muster without getting loud and without becoming obstreperous.

Please come to the rescue of these people who badly need it. They are in hardship. They are in dire need and they are crying out to me for the government's help and I am crying out to the government.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I would like to respond to the hon. member's question tonight.

The situation in the Atlantic fishery has been and continues to be of major concern to the government. In this regard, a number of programs and services have been put in place to deal with the problems in the fishing industry.

I would like to mention to the House that since 1984, the federal government has directed almost $1.4 billion in unemployment insurance and training benefits to individuals in the fishing industry.

The five-year, $584 million Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program was announced in May 1990 and includes measures to rebuild fish stocks and to help those who wish to leave the industry adjust.

There have also been short-term emergency response programs such as last year's $130 million relief program to help plant workers and fishermen adjust. Another $22 million has been distributed to assist Newfoundland fishermen affected by ice conditions.

As we speak, a task force on incomes and adjustments is advising the government on issues such as the continued supply of the resource, the future stability and profitability of the industry and the achievement of stable and adequate incomes for those who make a living in the fishing industry.

The recent decision by the World Court on St. Pierre and Miquelon, the fishery treaty signed at the earth summit in Rio de Janeiro and the continued pressure on countries that overfish along the Grand Banks, all of these demonstrate that this government is doing its utmost to put the needs of the fishing industry at the forefront of its national and international agenda.

BROADCASTING

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have another opportunity to pursue a question which I raised in this House concerning the move by cable companies to remove Canadian broadcasting services like MuchMusic or TSN from Canadian consumers television sets unless they decide to take on more American stations or more American services at an additional price.

I find this a rather curious way to promote Canadian programming for all of us here in Canada. To deliver this choice, the procedure is for the cable companies advise their consumers that the onus of responsibility is on them to call the cable company if they do not wish to have and do not wish to pay for the new service. Otherwise it becomes an automatic "I accepted".

In other words if you want the service you do nothing but if you do not want it you must call. It is a very strange way to do business. Ottawa has been the latest area to take this approach and the response has been very interesting.

I would just like to quote from one area resident who wrote: "I find somewhat disconcerting that MacLean Hunter Cable Television can send out under the guise of an exciting new concept a brochure to an unsuspecting subscriber and this in my opinion, amounts to an unsolicited increase in the monthly cable charges. Particularly disquieting is that MacLean Hunter places the onus on the consumer to reply". He went on to say that he felt that the CRTC should shield consumers from such practices. He felt the CRTC has a responsibility to the Canadian populace to protect it from such practices.

This marketing technique is known as the negative option. I find it very objectionable. In fact, in the province of Quebec, the technique is against the law in the selling of products while its use with services is currently under debate.

Canadian broadcasters are concerned about the potential impact. They see this as a potential loss of income from advertising and decline in audience ratings. That is the last thing we need here in Canada as we are trying to build up our television broadcasting situation.

The president of the CBC, Mr. Veilleux in his speech to *The Financial Post* conference on April 8, 1992, said the following:

> To be blunt, we—none of us—can afford to have our audience bled from above by satellite and bled from below by cable systems who are prepared to create even greater American competition for Canadian program services.
>
> I have in mind, of course, the negative option marketing approach now being used by the cable industry—an approach in which subscribers are given the choice of dropping two or three Canadian services and saving a bit of money—or adding four or five American channels and paying more. Canadian programming—and jobs—become hostage to U.S. broadcasters. What a prospect!
>
> This effectively means "basic" cable for at least 90 per cent of subscribers, will expand by that many new U.S. services, and the further fragmentation will cost Canadian channels both viewers and commercial revenues.

• (2040)

Canadians have access to a broad array of television services. Choice is one of the cornerstones of government's policy on the Canadian broadcasting system. At present some 50 per cent of Canada's cable subscribers have access to what is called an extended basic tier, which is sort of a package of TV services that includes Canadian specialty services and TV services linked with U.S. specialty services.

The negative option marketing practice used by the cable industry to ensure higher penetration of this tier is the mechanism. However, I do believe this is not based on the principle of consumer choice or fairness. Rather I

believe it is based on silent acquiescence of the Canadian cable subscriber.

In conclusion, I call upon the Minister of Communications to ask the CRTC to investigate the financial, cultural and consumer impact of the introduction of more American channels on the Canadian broadcasting system through the use of negative option marketing strategies.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, what a pleasure it is to be re-engaged in debate on these matters with my hon. friend. We had discussions for over seven years on these matters. I am pleased to deal with this issue which results from the practice of cable operators making available to their subscribers an extended basic tier.

An extended basic tier involves providing a new service or a group of services to all subscribers on a free trial basis for a period of time, then inviting those customers who do not wish to subscribe to the tier to advise their cable company.

I wish to point out this practice is not new and has been used by cable operators, many of them in western Canada but not confined to western Canada, for some time.

The benefit of the approach to subscribers is that they are given more flexibility to choose to receive specialty services of particular interest to them at a very low cost. The Canadian specialty service available on the extended basic tier include Much Music, the Sports Network, and TV5.

Some American specialty or narrow cast services such as the Nashville Network, Cable News Network, and the Arts and Entertainment Network are authorized by the CRTC for this tier as packaging partners with the Canadian services.

The CRTC has permitted the offering of the U.S. specialty services to enhance the attractiveness of the tier in order to maximize the penetration of the Canadian specialty services. TV5 is an example of a Canadian service "that is now much more widely available than previously because of this practice".

Recently the CRTC announced that it will be holding hearings to look into the whole issue of specialty services tiering. As many members may be aware—and I am sure my hon. friend for Mount Royal is aware of it—discussions are now taking place between representatives of the Canadian broadcasting industry and the Department of Communications toward developing a long-term industrial strategy in the context of the second phase of the Canadian television summit.

The impact on the Canadian broadcasting industry of an increased number of American television services being offered in Canada is currently being studied as part of the second phase of that summit. The industry has been asked to submit a report to the Minister of Communications, and that report is expected in the very near future.

CALGARY AIRPORT

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of State for Transport for her attitude in responding to my question of June 3 regarding the obsolete Soviet flag being displayed at the Calgary airport during the North Atlantic Assembly meeting that was held in Banff from May 14 to May 18.

I found it very strange that months after the Soviet Union had disappeared and months after Canada had recognized the nations of the former Soviet Union participating in the North Atlantic Assembly, for instance Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic states, and months after Canada had established diplomatic relations with those nations, this obsolete symbol would still be displayed at the Calgary International Airport.

It indicates to me a lack of communication between the government and the bureaucrats at the lower level. It is not because we do not have enough bureaucrats or infrastructure that would respond to such an action.

Therefore we can ask ourselves: Was it because there was lack of communication, intelligence or simply negligence? I am sure all three elements played a role. It is not the minister's responsibility if a *faux pas* has been committed by one of the department's bureaucrats. This incident proves that the minister cannot be responsible for all the actions taken on his or her behalf.

This puts in question the tradition of ministerial responsibility. Those responsible should be taken to task. In this particular instance it is those at the Calgary airport. They should not hide behind the minister of state's skirt. Bureaucrats should be responsible for their actions, but if those higher up want to protect them, they should be taken to task as well. As long as this type of system exists, you will not have efficiency or good government in Canada. We will be unable to address the problems of expensive and inefficient government. This is why we have a problem with debt and debt deduction and the huge deficit of $420 billion.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this

opportunity to respond to the question by the hon. member for Calgary Northeast about the flag display at Calgary International Airport. I had the same questions when I saw those flags flying and have discovered, as the minister has reported, that the many international flags that hung until recently in that air terminal building were intended as a visual tribute to the nations which sent teams of athletes or officials to the 1988 Winter Olympics.

Although Calgary International Airport management was fully aware that the geopolitical state of the world could change over time, it was decided to maintain the original flag display to remind the many visitors to that airport of the countries which were represented in the 1988 games. In other words, it is kind of a snapshot display of the international scheme which emphasized the significance of the 15th Winter Olympics and remembered the nations which had participated in those games. It was neither intended to reflect ongoing international geopolitical changes nor to symbolize the nations which attended the North Atlantic Assembly Conference recently held in Calgary and Banff.

I understand that the airport has recently substituted the display's Olympic motif with flags from Canada's provinces and territories which is a fitting salute to Canada's 125 anniversary. The flag of the former Soviet Union has been removed and flags from nations that provide the largest number of tourists to Calgary have now been given prominence.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to the order made on Tuesday, June 9, 1992, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 8.47 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 12, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill C-70, an act to amend the Criminal Code (jury), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, Bill C-70, an act to amend the Criminal Code, is a series of amendments that deal specifically with jury selection in Canada. It is a direct response to a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of Regina *v* Bain. That decision was handed down on January 23, 1992. It struck down certain provisions in the Criminal Code as they relate to jury selection. Specifically, the Supreme Court of Canada felt that the present jury selection method as contained in the Criminal Code placed the Crown at an unfair advantage *vis-à-vis* defence counsel.

This bill that is before Parliament is a direct response to that. Prior to its tabling on I believe April 6 of this year, there were consultations with the Canadian Bar Association and other interested individuals as to what should go into this particular bill.

• (1010)

I believe that because of the consultation process that took place, this bill is as non-controversial as it is. There is a recognition within the legal community that these changes can, should and must be made. Indeed, they must be in place by July 23, 1992, because the Supreme Court of Canada suspended the operation of its decision for a period of six months. Therefore, we are under some time constraints to have this bill enacted.

When this bill went before the legislative committee, there were no witnesses before the committee. No one expressed a desire to appear. The bill passed the legislative committee without amendment and was returned to the House of Commons for the report stage.

There was an amendment by the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam that was dealt with yesterday. It concerned the multicultural justice review. I indicated to the hon. member that study would continue and that it would continue within the Department of Justice. As well, I indicated that if the hon. member wished to pursue an outside inquiry, certainly that was something that was within the purview of he and his fellow colleagues who sit on the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. They could do that.

There is some urgency to the particular bill that is before Parliament. It addresses a specific problem. It goes further than was required by the Supreme Court of Canada inasmuch as the procedure in Bill C-70 allows the selection of jurors to be done on an alternate basis between the defence counsel and the Crown attorney. That in and of itself was not called for by the Regina *v* Bain decision, but we went slightly beyond that in the interest of fairness in the judicial process. That is welcomed.

At one point, my friend in the New Democratic Party suggested that we might consider abolishing the ability of the Crown attorney to reject certain jurors. That would be going too far. Most people would recognize that the Crown is there to represent the interests of the people of this country and however else we might design the judicial system and the jury selection, there should be an even handed approach between the defence and the Crown.

Bill C–70 accomplishes that. As well, I might point out that the specific provisions that related to the territories allowed juries of six people. Those references have now been removed from the Criminal Code. That as well is a step in the right direction.

The bill was passed by the legislative committee and sent back here. The government certainly has not dawdled in bringing this matter forward.

I ask hon. members in the best interests of the judicial system, the legal system of Canada, to pass this bill as quickly as possible because this is a non–controversial bill. It is good. It is required. Every major group in Canada that has had an opportunity to either be consulted or to comment welcomed this bill. I ask the House of Commons to pass this bill as quickly as possible and send it on to the other place.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his comments. We participated, of course, in the legislative committee and I have checked with my colleagues on the subject.

Bill C–70, as the hon. member said, is a bill that essentially relates to a better system for the selection of jurors. We agree it is critical to the legal system. While it may not be non–controversial, which I can certainly agree with, it is time sensitive. We are pleased to see it here at this particular point in time.

It is in response to the charter and it is time sensitive. We have no amendments. We have no problems with the bill. We would also like to see it go forward as quickly as possible.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this bill at third reading stage on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

I should tell the House that back in 1980, the Law Reform Commission recommended changes. Governments, both this Conservative government and the previous Liberal government, never did anything about it. In fact, we see once again a government that is reacting to a decision of the Supreme Court. This is the pattern for this government.

The Minister of Justice would have us believe that she is taking a lot of initiatives. In fact, her initiatives, including the new rape shield bill which we support, are still reactions to decisions that were rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada. In other words, the government has to do something. One should see that pattern, and this is another example of the pattern.

The parliamentary secretary admitted that there is a report on multicultural issues, racism and racism in the justice system. This is a priority issue in Canada today. Just look at the Lewis report of the other day in Toronto. Look at other patterns across this country, some of which I will speak about in a minute. There was a report. It had to be dug out of this government. It was an uncompleted report by the Law Reform Commission. The government has abolished the commission now. This report was dug out by a reporter from the *Toronto Star* and we never had the benefit of considering this report before our legislative committee.

I got a lot of flack yesterday from the Conservative opposition, including some cabinet ministers—Conservative government, it will soon be opposition—when I raised the issue and delayed the passing of this bill.

I had a simple request which was that the report be completed. It is a crucial report. We just had a draft report. I asked that the report be completed and that it be done by an outside person. In other words, it should be done by a consultant, that it be continued by people who were doing work for the Law Reform Commission. I wanted that procedure so that it could be tabled in the House of Commons and made public. It would be an objective report.

We have been offered a report which will be done by the Department of Justice. It may never see the light of day. We do not have to get these reports. They are not tabled as a right.

What can I do? I could go and pursue the issue in the justice committee. That is not good enough.

The government wants our co–operation. We have given it a lot of co–operation on a number of bills. Surely my request could have been met. The parliamentary secretary could have said: "This is an important issue. The Conservative government is concerned about racism. We are concerned about these problems, we are going to complete this report and we are going to table it in the House of Commons."

This is a rigid ultra-conservative government on this issue. It does not have much interest, as shown by its actions in multiculturalism or in attacking these racist problems in our society. That is the only conclusion I can draw from that rigidity of the parliamentary secretary in this matter. He is not always that rigid, I will give him that. I do not know why he was so rigid in this case, but he was. I think the country is poorer for it.

We had a great opportunity here when we were forced to take a look at the jury selection process in the draft amendments. It is unfortunate we did not take time to examine the issues more thoroughly and we did not use the opportunity to address some of the features of the justice system which have recently come into question. I found our justice system unequal.

I will state the problem, to make it simple. We are dealing in this bill with the question of how a defence counsel or Crown counsel—and I have been both—in all levels of all courts in Canada can choose a jury. People are selected by lot, they come before the court and a jury is chosen.

• (1020)

In our system, defence counsel or Crown counsel can stand up and challenge someone, not have that person on the jury because they do not like the colour of their skins or they might think they are Jewish, Arab, aboriginal, or of some other group. We have a case directly on that point which I will mention in a moment.

We should not have a system like that. It is a challenge on a purely subjective criteria and we should at least have a look at that. That is what I am saying. It is why I was pressing for the report to be completed. I hope the government will listen.

I am on a little bit of a tangent here but the parliamentary secretary said I had suggested in committee that the Crown counsel not even have a challenge. Let me suggest to you what the argument is.

Remember the government makes the laws through the majority in Parliament. The government sets up the courts. The government chooses and pays the judges. The government pays the police. The government has such control of the system that it is not really equal.

One way of giving the accused a better break in this matter is to consider the fact that it should be only the accused person who has the challenge and not the Crown. The Crown has to take the ordinary people from the street. I put that out. Of course, we are not going to do that and it will not come for some time.

Canadians can be rightly proud of the commitment we have made as a people to the principles of equality and fairness and we have all done that. Sections 15 and 28 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantee all Canadians the right to equality.

It is because of that statement of principles we have rulings like the Bain case we are dealing with from the Supreme Court of Canada and has forced the government to make these amendments to the jury selection process. Both Liberal and Conservative governments were not going to act on their own. It took the court to force them to act. It took the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to get the court that power.

There is more to the standards we have set for ourselves when it comes to fairness or equal rights. Section 27 of the charter provides: "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians".

We as a people have recognized the multicultural and multiracial composition of our society and have stated clearly our commitment to respecting the diversity in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

We have stated clearly that all of us deserve equal treatment and equal protection regardless of race. We are not asking that anybody get unequal treatment. We want equal treatment for everyone. It seems to me it is a fundamental principle of democracy; it is certainly a fundamental principle of what my party stands for.

Canada has signed the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Clearly, Canadians believe that racism is not to be tolerated in our society, yet we also have a good indication that Canadians believe that racism or racist attitudes are increasing in Canada.

I mentioned the Lewis report. A recent Angus Reid poll for Southam News found that 55 per cent of Canadians feel that racism is increasing in Canada. What is perhaps even more disconcerting, there is growing evidence to show our justice system has elements of racism and that is a serious charge.

Unfortunately, there are some individuals working within the justice system who do not hold to the principles I have outlined. The inquiry into the killing of Leo Chance in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan revealed there are Aryan nation sympathizers in the police de-

partment in that city. Other inquiries have found individuals who promote and act on racial stereotyping in cities like Montreal. These things need to be said.

These incidents and individuals must be dealt with. Even more urgent is the need to deal with the systemic flaws which make our system racist or at the very least undermine the perception of fairness and equality. For example, visible minorities make up over 20 per cent of the population of Toronto, but only 6.2 per cent of its uniformed police. That can and should be changed.

There have been numerous studies revealing just how deeply flawed our justice system is when it comes to fairness and equality for visible minorities and even how deeply flawed and prone to racism the jury selection process can be. The jury selection process is what we are debating now.

A draft paper from the Law Reform Commission, the paper I was talking about that was only recently brought to our attention, notes that between 1974 and 1989 nine commissions investigated allegations involving racism and ethnic discrimination in the justice system and made over 229 recommendations for changes.

We will remember the Marshall inquiry, for example. We had eight other commissions and they made 229 recommendations for changes. The draft paper I spoke about states: "The repetitiveness of the proposals reveals almost two decades of", to be charitable, "slowness in reaction, a phenomenon that has been characterized as the gap between discourse and political will". That is an academic putting it. I will be less polite: we have been dragging our feet.

The inquiry into the Donald Marshall case and the Manitoba inquiry into the deaths of Helen Betty Osborne and John Joseph Harper are two of the inquiries which most of us are familiar with.

The Marshall inquiry found that throughout the entire history of the province of Nova Scotia no aboriginal person had been on a jury. This is the fair jury system we are rushing through the House today.

While the inquiry found no evidence to suggest aboriginal people were deliberately excluded from jury duty, it did strongly recommend, as did counsel for the Attorney General, a full study concerning proportional representation of visible minorities on juries. We never even considered that in this bill when we opened up the Criminal Code—and we do not do it very often—to look at the provisions on the jury. That is a shame for this House.

In Manitoba the inquiry found that on the Osborne case there was clear evidence that six aboriginal people who were called to the jury panel were excluded because of their race. All were challenged by Johnston's lawyer, Greg Brodsky. Mr. Brodsky excluded all of them through use of his peremptory challenges. The result was there were no aboriginal people on the jury that heard a case involving the brutal murder of an aboriginal woman in an area in which a large percentage of the population is aboriginal.

Was that jury really representative of the community? Was that justice the way we want to see it?

As a result of the finding of the aboriginal justice inquiry of Manitoba, it was recommended that the Criminal Code be amended so that only the challenge to prospective jurors be challenges for cause, that stand asides and peremptory challenges be eliminated.

Bill C-70 only removes stand asides and only addresses the perception of unfair advantage of the Crown. It does not address the use of peremptory challenges on the basis of race or culture. It is purely subjective. We could have another case like the Osborne case where defence counsel or even Crown counsel could make sure that the jury did not represent any people of a racial group they did not want on the jury. That is not right.

There are ways to make the jury selection process fair, ways to free the process from racist abuse. It is unfortunate that the report of the Law Reform Commission on ethnic minorities and the justice system appears to have been another casualty of this government's attack on independent thought in this country.

That is why the government got rid of the Law Reform Commission. That is why it got rid of the Economic Council of Canada. That is why it cut the Science Council. That is why it got rid of the Court Challenges Program. The government does not want independent thought. By independent thought I mean thought that

would challenge the in-house positions of government departments.

With a report such as this one, we might be able to make these changes in the jury selection process. It is not going to be easy. It will have to take some real thought to tackle this matter and that is why we needed that report.

There are suggestions on how to deal with other aspects of trial procedure and policing in the report. In particular, during the discussion of this specific bill, it would be nice to have completed the report.

There may be some useful directions from that report however. There is already a suggestion for a study of the use of peremptory challenges including the frequency of their use and reasons for an effectiveness of their use, particularly in relation to minority prospective jurors. There are in fact useful recommendations regarding the use of challenge for cause as opposed to peremptory challenge, and that is what the government should focus on.

We should be looking at these recommendations now, not in another 12 years from now when another Supreme Court of Canada, after going through all this expensive litigation, tells Parliament to make this justice system fair.

• (1030)

At about the same time the Law Reform Commission first recommended the stand asides for the Crown be abolished, the recommendation 12 years ago that foresaw the Supreme Court ruling that has pushed the government to bring forward this bill, a justice of the Ontario high court denied defence counsel for a black accused challenge for cause involving questions relating to prejudices against black people. The reasons given were that to allow such questions would have admitted to a weakness in the nation and a community which should not be acknowledged.

These are still strange goings on in the justice system in this country. Times have changed and today we are forced to acknowledge that weakness. The evidence of a system-wide injustice demands it. We should not be satisfied with a bill that simply reflects the recommendations put forward 12 years ago in an environment that commonly included rulings that turned a blind eye to racism, the kind of rulings we look upon with horror today.

We should be working on a bill that will create the kind of jury selection process that will serve us well into the future, that will ensure our justice system upholds the principles of fairness and equal treatment before the law that we value so highly.

Before I sit down I want to tell the government that one government in Canada has committed itself to eradicating racism in the justice system and changing procedures that foster it. I am speaking about the recent comments of the attorney general of Ontario, Howard Hampton. He is to be congratulated for those comments.

The commitment includes the formation of a race relations unit in the ministry of the attorney general to implement anti-racism training aggressively and to hold the ministry accountable for rapid progress on race relations initiatives. What is the federal government doing in this area? Nothing.

While there is much the provincial governments can do to improve the jury selection process, including amending their own juries acts, because the juries acts are provincial acts, in each province they could amend it for that province to ensure that a broad representation of society is available for jury duty. The attorney general of Ontario is calling upon his federal counterpart to eliminate any possibility that visible minorities are being excluded without cause as jurors at criminal trials. He has asked the Minister of Justice to look at the entire way in which criminal juries are selected, including the ability of counsel to disqualify jurors at trial other than for valid causes.

I suggest that the attorney general of Ontario is on the correct path here. He is talking about looking at the peremptory challenge in the jury selection process in a new and innovative way. Why is the federal government not doing it? Why is this House not doing it when we are looking at this bill? This is not a bill we should be rushing through.

The federal equivalent would be on the right path by calling upon the Law Reform Commission to complete the study and to see how we make changes at the federal level, but the government has not done that.

I will conclude there saying that the bill does have to go through. The reality is that we have to meet the timetable of the Supreme Court, although we could go back and ask for changes. I asked the government about

that and asked for an extension of time, but the government is not about to do that.

Reluctantly and I say reluctantly—when I started on this bill it was not so reluctantly—I was quite prepared to see the bill pass very quickly. Indeed a New Democrat, the member for Brant, chaired the legislative committee and pushed the bill through in record time. I had been prepared to let the bill go through like that.

The more I began to see what else is involved, the more I began to see that we are behind the times on this. We are reacting. We are not up to date. We have a problem of racism in the justice system, especially as it affects aboriginal people and black people. We should look at it. One area to look at is the jury selection process.

I urge the government to complete that study and not put the onus on us to go back to a committee. "We will go back to the committee. We will do that". I ask the government to complete the study that was being done by the Law Reform Commission, to be careful about doing it in-house because it gets warped inevitably by a government constitutorial point of view, to try to do it from an outside consultant and make it public so that we can debate it in this House of Commons and that a *Toronto Star* reporter does not have to go and dig out this thing. It should be out for all people to see.

Having said that, we will not put up any other speakers and will let the bill go through now.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Madam Speaker, I will be brief.

My colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception has already indicated that our party will be supporting this bill. My colleague from the New Democratic Party who just spoke has had a lot of experience with juries. I would like to to reinforce some of the points he was making.

Juries have taken a very bad rap recently because of the decision in Los Angeles. An awful lot of people and most of us in this House feel that the decision was completely unfair in the matter of Mr. King. There was untold havoc, pain and suffering inflicted because of the representation of the jury that heard the case outside of Los Angeles.

I feel it is worth making the point that when you have 12 of your peers judging the matter, if there are 12 representative men and women, in my experience you are going to get a better decision than when it is one man or one woman sitting on the bench deciding the guilt or innocence of an accused. As somebody once put it, the biases should cancel out on a jury because when it is one individual judging, even if they have been legally trained, they are all products of our environment and they tend to have biases and so on which often tend to work against the interest of justice.

It is very, very important, as the member for New Westminster indicated, that we do everything we can to ensure that the people chosen for jury panels and the people who sit on juries are representative of the community. Had that happened in the Los Angeles case—I believe all the jury members were white except for one—we could have avoided an enormous tragedy and a setback for the jury system in a neighbouring country.

I appreciate that the jury act in the provinces is the primary legislation dealing with that. There are fewer and fewer of us who are lawyers in this House and I am sure that everyone else will agree with that. Those of us who have watched panels come into courts and who have seen often how unrepresentative they are would identify with the view that we must ensure that in a community in northern Alberta, for example, or the Vancouver area justice not only be done but is seen to be done by the representation of the people who are called for jury duty.

As my colleague just indicated, more work needs to be done on this matter. I am sorry I was not on the committee that looked at this bill. I must say that I do not see that it does very much about the problem that seems to be the central problem which is that juries do not reflect the demographics and so on of the communities they should represent.

I will close by saying that I hope more work will be done both at the federal and the provincial levels to make sure that in future, wherever jury trials are held in Canada—they should be held as often as possible, not as rarely as possible—those called for jury duty will be fully representative of the men and women in the community in which the case takes place.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member. Both of us were Crown counsel together, perhaps at different times. He was first in Vancouver.

An hon. member: Many years before.

Mr. Waddell: I know my colleague has also been a defence counsel. He has been through the process.

I am very pleased that he picked up a point that I really missed and that is how good the jury system is. It is one of the great inventions of Anglo-Saxon culture, going back years and years.

• (1040)

It stood the test of time by and large and it can still stand the test of time. I agree with what the hon. member said and I am glad he said it. I am glad he mentioned the King case because it is giving juries a bad name. He put his finger right on the button, if you like, by saying for the jury system to really work it has to represent the community and that means it has to represent all aspects of people in the community and not exclude people. If it represents all aspects, it tends to convict the guilty and acquit the innocent. It can even be ahead of society, as the Morgentaler juries in Quebec were. It is a real protection both for the accused and for society.

That is why it is important that when we have an opportunity like this, as my hon. friend said, we could do so much more. I am thankful for his comments and I am sure the government was listening. At least I hope it was.

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.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration 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, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If the House would show a little patience, the Speaker will have the total ruling. I have part of it but I am told the Speaker will be with us in a minute with the ruling on the 112 motions that you can see as notices. Since so many of them were tabled later yesterday, the Speaker has just now finished.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Before I begin, I again want to let the House know that motions, that is, proposed amendments with regard to Bill C-55, total 112. Over 80 of those were received the day before yesterday and the rest were received by six o'clock last night. Members will understand that is, again, a very heavy task for the table officers and there have been attempts made to discuss these rulings I am giving with the concerned members. I hope those discussions have been satisfactory. However, it may be that because of the numbers of motions and the limited time, discussion has not been as extensive as some members would have wished.

However, my duty now is to bring to the House the consequence of my deliberations.

Therefore, I am prepared to give a ruling on 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.

There are 112 motions on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-55. Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, is extending the bill to cover an additional class of persons. In this respect I refer the hon. member to Beauchesne's citation 698(1) which states that motions that go beyond the scope of the bill are inadmissible. Therefore Motion No. 1 will not be selected.

Motions Nos. 2, 17, 36 and 72, standing in the name of the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway, will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 2 being applied to Motions Nos. 17, 36 and 72.

Motions Nos. 3, 18, 37, 69 and 70, standing in the name of the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway, appear to be going beyond the scope of the bill as it was agreed to by the House at second reading. The purpose of these proposed motions is to broaden the class of persons who would be eligible to receive benefits. As a consequence,

this concept is out of order. In this regard, I refer hon. members to Beauchesne's citation 698(1).

Motions Nos. 4, 19 and 38, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will not be selected as they are identical to Motions Nos. 5, 20 and 39.

Motions Nos. 5, 20 and 39, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 5 applying to Motions Nos. 20 and 39.

Motion No. 6, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motion No. 6A, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will not be selected as it is identical to Motion No. 6B.

Motion No. 6B, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be debated and voted upon separately.

Motions Nos. 7, 30, 31, 57 and 58, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, and Motion No. 8, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kootenay East, appear to be introducing a new concept for surplus funds which is going beyond the scope of the bill as read a second time in the House. Accordingly, I must rule these motions out of order, pursuant to Beauchesne's citation 698(1).

Motions Nos. 9, 26, 27, 28, 29, 52, 53, 54, 55 and 56, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be grouped for debate but voted upon as follows: (a) Motions Nos. 9, 26 and 27 will be voted upon separately; (b) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 28 obviates the necessity of a vote on Motion No. 29; (c) a negative vote on Motion No. 28 requires a vote on Motion No. 29; (d) Motion No. 52 will be voted upon separately; (e) an affirmative vote on Motion 53 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motion No. 54; (f) a negative vote on Motion No. 53 requires a vote on Motion No. 54; (g) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 55 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motion No. 56; (h) a negative vote on Motion No. 55 requires a vote on Motion No. 56.

Motions Nos. 9A and 58B, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 9A applying to Motion No. 58B.

Motions Nos. 10, 32 and 59, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 10 applying to Motions Nos. 32 and 59.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 11, 13, 14, 33, 60, 62 and 64, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, and Motions Nos. 15, 34 and 65, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kootenay East, will be grouped for debate with the vote on Motion No. 11 applying to Motions Nos. 13, 14, 15, 33, 34, 60, 62, 64 and 65.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 12, 61 and 63, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will not be selected as they are identical to Motions Nos. 13, 62 and 64, respectively.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 16, 35 and 66, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, and Motion No. 84A, standing in the name of the hon. member for Victoria, will be grouped for debate and voted on as follows:

a) The vote on Motion No. 16 will apply to Motions Nos. 35 and 66;

b) Motion No. 84A will be voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47 and 51, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be grouped for debate but voted upon as follows:

[*Translation*]

a) The vote on Motion No. 21 will apply to Motions Nos. 22, 23, 24, 40, 41, 43 and 45.

b) An affirmative vote on Motion No. 21 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motion No. 44.

c) A negative vote on Motion No. 21 applies to Motion No. 44.

d) Motions Nos. 25, 47 and 51 will be voted on separately.

Motions Nos. 42 and 46, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will not be selected as they are identical to Motions Nos. 43 and 47.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 48 and 50, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be grouped for debate but voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 49, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will not be selected as it is identical to Motion No. 50.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 58A, 72C, 75C and 87, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will not be selected as they are identical to Motions Nos. 58B, 72D, 75D and 88.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 67, 68, 68B, 68C and 69A, standing in the name of the hon. member for Don Valley East, will be grouped for debate but voted on as follows:

a) An affirmative vote on Motion No. 67 obviates the question being put on Motions Nos. 68 and 68B, but the question will be put on Motion No. 68C, which will apply to Motion No. 69A.

b) A negative vote on Motion No. 67 applies to Motion No. 68B and obviates the question being put on Motions Nos. 68C and 69A, but the question will be put on Motion No. 68.

[*English*]

Motion No. 68A, standing in the name of the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast, will not be selected as it is identical to motion No. 67.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 71, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 72A, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, and Motion No. 72B, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, will not be selected as a similar motion was moved, debated and negatived in the legislative committee which studied the bill.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 72D, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 73, 75, 80 and 83, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kootenay East, Motions Nos. 73B and 78B, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, Motions Nos. 74, 77 and 78, standing in the name of the hon. member for Don Valley East, Motions Nos. 76A and 82A, standing in the name of the hon. member for Victoria, and Motions Nos. 79 and 81, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, will be grouped for debate but voted upon as follows: (a) a vote on Motion No. 73 will apply to motion No. 75; (b) Motion No. 73B will be voted upon separately; (c) a vote on Motion No. 74 will apply to Motions Nos. 77 and 78; (d) a vote on Motion No. 76A will apply to motion No. 82A; (e) Motions Nos. 78B, 79, 80, 81 and 83 will be voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 73A and 78A, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West, will not be selected as they are identical to Motions Nos. 73B and 78B.

[*English*]

Motions No. 75A and 75B, standing in the name of the hon. members for Ottawa West and Ottawa—Vanier, respectively, will not be selected as they are identical to Motion No. 75.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 75D, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 76 and 82, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kootenay East, will not be selected as they are identical to Motions Nos. 76A and 82A.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 84, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kootenay East, will not be selected as it is identical to Motion No. 84A.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 85 and 86, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, and Motion No. 88, standing in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, will be grouped for debate with a vote on Motion No. 85 applying to Motion No. 86.

Motion No. 88 will be voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 2, 17, 36 and 72 to the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, thank you for your ruling. As you know, it is a very lengthy one and a very technical one. I was wondering, in view of the time, perhaps we should find it wise to suspend this sitting for a few minutes until Question Period rather than start the debate on the amendments.

We would be able to then start preparing our debate on the amendments. We could probably even start statements by members immediately if we decide not to suspend the House.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being eleven o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

• (1100)

[*English*]

REFORM PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Madam Speaker, the Reform Party is making headlines, the type usually reserved for the *National Enquirer*.

For example: "Manning would end universal medicare" or "Luxury cars on parade as Manning held court", or "Manning rhetoric like Hitler in 1939". It is what the editorial writers are saying under these headlines, for example: "Manning's stance on GST is a complete joke. He called for one of three alternatives, scrap it, replace it with a reformed tax system—whatever that is—or revise it by expanding it to food and health care".

Another quote: "Manning, the self-described champion of the grassroots everyday Canadian voter, was himself chauffeured in the back seat of a grey Jaguar Sovereign". There is this one: "This smooth talking, mild mannered Clark Kent type could just be more of a danger to Canada than was the little Austrian with a moustache, but beware of politicians who tell you just what you want to hear".

Canadians will not be fooled by this phoney leadership.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Madam Speaker, it is only the federal government that sees the reflection of prosperity in the sea of bankruptcies drowning small businesses across Canada. Businesses that spent their last votes on the promise of a Tory lifeline of loan guarantees have seen their dreams scuttled.

The government's television ads are a futile investment in its own popularity at the expense of Canadian prosperity. I call upon the government to stop trying to sell illusions and begin investing in real solutions to help the small business sector. Businesses need less flash and more cash.

* * *

CYPRUS

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Madam Speaker, UN resolution 750, approved on April 10, endorses a set of ideas proposed by UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali which reaffirms that a Cyprus settlement must be based on a state of Cyprus, with a single sovereignty and a single citizenship.

There is no question that the time has come for a solution to the 18-year old division of the island. The occupation of northern Cyprus by Turkey, or the occupation of any nation's territory by another nation, is an anachronism and strictly out of place in the emerging new world and European order as we approach the 21st century.

We hope that the forthcoming discussions at the United Nations on June 18 between Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, Cypriot President George Vasiliou and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash will be positive and will result in a genuine breakthrough toward a united Cyprus.

* * *

CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, yesterday at the biennial convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, delegates elected new leadership including a new president, Canadian Auto Workers leader, Bob White.

On behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party and in particular our leader, Audrey McLaughlin, I want to congratulate Bob White and the other officers on their election and to express our best wishes and thanks to the outgoing president, Shirley Carr, and the other retiring officers.

Bob White has shown strong, dedicated and effective leadership not only on behalf of his membership in the CAW but on behalf of all Canadian working men and women. He has worked all his adult life in the trade union movement, and in fact he was first on a picket line with his father and his brother at the age of 16.

In 1990, he was named an officer of the Order of Canada. Bob White will be a progressive and powerful voice for working men and women in Canada and internationally. Again, on behalf of all of my colleagues, congratulations and continued strength to you and all of the officers and members of the Canadian Labour Congress.

* * *

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Madam Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the House the fact that June is the month of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS, awareness month.

More commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, it is a fatal, rapidly progressing disease attacking the nervous system. Individuals suffering from this devastating disease become completely dependent on their families and friends for their every day needs.

The ALS Society has been working diligently over the last 15 years to help improve the quality of life for the ALS patients and their families, and to find the cause and cure of ALS. To mark ALS awareness month, the society will be handing out replica cornflowers in return for donations toward medical research.

I salute this fine organization and its many volunteers, and would ask all Canadians to help support the important work that the ALS Society does.

* * *

CELEBRATIONS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, a birthday marks a significant date in time. The calendar this year is full of important dates, not just one's personal birthday, for it includes as well special highlights such as the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America, Montreal's 350th birthday, and Canada's 125th.

An exciting year of celebration has been unfolding, specifically to date Montreal's grand parade and weekend fireworks with lots of choice for everyone down in the old port. All are welcome to this dynamic cosmopolitan city, so come along.

Canadians love to party and celebrate, in particular our birth as a nation, Canada Day on July 1. This year on May 1 a bill was introduced in the Quebec legislature to rescind an article in the Quebec Labour Standards Act so that we are assured that Canada Day will officially be celebrated on July 1 across our land from coast to coast to coast.

I urge that this legislation be proclaimed as soon as possible so all of us can join—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I apologize. The time has expired.

* * *

RP AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the House that this is RP Awareness Week which is sponsored by the RP Eye Research Foundation.

I commend the work of the RP Eye Research Foundation in providing information about retinitis pigmentosa,

promoting public awareness of RP and related disorders and providing funds in support of RP research.

Funds collected from this year's tenth annual "Ride for Sight" fundraising events will help to continue the advancement of knowledge about RP that is so important to thousands of Canadians and their families.

I wish to thank the volunteers of the RP Eye Research Foundation for their hard work and dedication. I encourage all Canadians to take part in the "Ride for Sight" activities in their communities.

* * *

REFORM PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I hate to criticize "Presto" Manning and the Reform Party once more since they certainly do not like examination of their policies, but I see that Mr. Manning is being chauffeur driven around Ontario in the back seat of his fancy Jaguar making speeches to fat cats to tell them the Reform Party is opposed to universal medicare and old age pensions. We know Mr. Manning does not care about minorities, but one would have thought that he would care about senior citizens and sick people.

I have called the Reform Party a lot of things. Let me add to the list: callous, heartless and dumb.

Maybe Mr. Manning in his great big limousine thinks we do not need universal medicare, but senior citizens in my riding who are waiting for heart operations do. Maybe Mr. Manning thinks we do not need old age pensions, but we happen to believe that senior citizens who have worked for 65 years to build this country deserve a decent retirement.

Why does Mr. Manning not get into his limousine and drive off into the sunset?

* * *

MUSLIMS

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, I rise today to wish Canadian Muslims "Eid Mubarak".

Eid is a three-day religious holiday in the Muslim religion, an equivalent to the Christian Thanksgiving, during which Muslim families all across Canada will donate food to those in need.

This humanitarian gesture commemorates for Muslims the ritual sacrifice of Ishmael by the prophet Abraham.

The Muslim community was established in Canada at the turn of the century with the immigration of a few hundred Lebanese Muslims. The first mosque was built in Edmonton by that community in 1935. Since then the Canadian Muslim community has grown to encompass more than 400,000 members from all over the world.

The diversity of races and cultures within the Muslim community is a testament to the Canadian dream of multiculturalism.

On the occasion of this Muslim religious holiday and Canada's 125th birthday, I want to thank the Muslim community for the contributions they have made to Canada over the past century and wish them success in all their endeavours.

* * *

THE LATE BILL SMITH

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Charles Mayer, Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds, it is with deep regret that I inform the House of the death of Canadian Wheat Board Commissioner Bill Smith.

Mr. Smith died as a result of an accident while he was on a trade mission in China.

Bill Smith had a distinguished and extensive career that began on his family farm in Alberta. He was employed with the Alberta Wheat Pool where he provided invaluable service. His many achievements and his contributions to the agricultural industry led to his appointment as a Commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board in May 1983.

Bill was very active in international marketing and developing an expertise in his marketing relationships with a number of Canada's customers including China and Russia, two of Canada's major purchasers. He will be sadly missed. This marks a great loss for his family, his friends, the agriculture industry and Canada.

• (1110)

I would like to offer my personal sympathy to his wife Kathy and their children and their families.

MPS' PENSIONS

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Madam Speaker, my constituents know me to be a member of Parliament who is not afraid to take a stand.

I want my riding to know exactly my position on pensions for MPs. Quite frankly, there must be some changes. I applaud the efforts of my colleagues, the hon. members for Winnipeg—St. James and Edmonton Southeast. Both have private members' bills that would make the pension system more fair.

I believe no one should get a pension until at least the age of retirement, after four years of service, or at age 60 at a reduced amount. Double-dipping should be eliminated to prevent someone from getting a pension while holding another government job.

The grassroots in my riding want to know where we stand on this issue. It is a difficult one that may upset some people here in Ottawa. I was elected to represent the views of the people of Kent and not have the opinions of Ottawa told to them.

As we discuss Bill C-55 in the House today, I believe we must show leadership to Canadians by making our pension system more equitable. It must be seen to be fair and—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I regret the hon. member's time is expired. The hon. member for Niagara Falls.

* * *

EARTH SUMMIT

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls): Madam Speaker, one of the things that Canadians can always take pride in is the leadership role this country exerts. Whether it is through the Commonwealth, the Francophonie or the United Nations, Canadians can always be counted on to exert a positive influence, and that role is obvious at the United Nations conference at Rio.

As you know, there have been no shortage of critics of the earth summit, yet one thing is clear, Canada's Prime Minister has done everything possible from the beginning to make this environmental conference a success. When other world leaders dithered on whether they would take part in the conference, our Prime Minister stepped forward and said he would be there.

When the United States said it had problems with the biodiversity convention, our Prime Minister again stepped forward to make it clear that Canada would sign. That kind of leadership in the environment has wide-ranging consequences. Among them is the fact that it encourages other like-minded countries to lend their support to important environmental initiatives.

Every Canadian can take pride in the role that Prime Minister Mulroney has taken in the area of the environment.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): Madam Speaker, Inuit from Nunavut who are concerned about the Great Whale James Bay II hydro project met in Ottawa this week. They are concerned because so far the federal environmental review of this proposed project has largely excluded them, yet they will be directly impacted by this project.

At particular risk is the community of Sanikiluaq located on the Belcher Islands in Hudson Bay. Sanikiluaq is situated almost directly opposite the Great Whale River, a mere 90 miles from the outfall from the project.

The Keewatin region coastal communities of Arviat, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour and Repulse Bay will also be impacted. The marine environment of Hudson Bay is the traditional food source for the Inuit people of all these communities. The environmental threat to these marine resources is real.

I urge the federal government to fully include the Inuit of Nunavut by funding them in the environmental review process. Without the full and sufficiently funded participation of the people of Hudson Bay and its western coast, the review of this project will be incomplete.

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I rise in this House today to point out to Canadian taxpayers the second most stupid proposal in the history of the world to spend taxpayers' money.

The most stupid proposal in the history of the world to spend taxpayers' money was the proposal by this government to spend $15 billion on a fleet of nuclear submarines for Canada.

The second most stupid proposal was to spend $5 billion of taxpayers' money on 50 helicopters for anti-submarine warfare. It forgot that there is no justification any longer for this expenditure. There is no longer a Russian submarine fleet as a threat.

As far as the search and rescue role, the existing Chinook and Labrador helicopters, with upgraded engines, are far superior to the present proposal.

Let us be clear: This is in fact the most stupid proposal to spend taxpayers' money since the last election.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FÉDÉRATION DES CLUBS DE L'ÂGE D'OR

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Beauharnois—Salaberry): Madam Speaker, tomorrow evening, hundreds of people will meet in Valleyfield to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *Fédération des clubs d'âge d'or du sud-ouest*, which includes 28 senior citizens clubs in the diocese of Valleyfield. My wife Colombe and I will be delighted to join in the festivities.

The Prime Minister has sent his best wishes, and today, I would also like to congratulate all members, and especially Gérard Malouin, president of the federation, and Gaston Lafontaine, the federation's director general. We also have special greetings for four members who were present at the founding of the federation 20 years ago: Rebecca Trépanier, of Valleyfield; Lucienne Goyette, also of Valleyfield; Marielle Legault, from Huntingdon; and Albert Besner from Dorion.

* * *

[*English*]

TERRA NOVA NATIONAL PARK

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I am fortunate to have in my riding one of Canada's most scenic parks, Terra Nova National Park.

It was beautifully carved by glacial activity a long, long time ago. Unfortunately the same glacial activity occurs every winter and it has taken a serious toll on the conditions of the 42 kilometres of Trans-Canada Highway that runs through it.

My constituents from the 22 communities in the immediate area have been writing to me with petitions by the thousands protesting the deplorable state of the highway. Elizabeth Blackmore, town clerk of Clarenville recently wrote me and she said:

> In past years a drive through Terra Nova National Park with its beautiful scenery was a very enjoyable experience. Today, that same drive is a nightmare.

I have written to the minister several times on this subject. I now appeal again to the Minister of the Environment, in the wake of thousands of tourists who will be celebrating Canada's 125th birthday in Terra Nova National Park, that repairs be expedited to the Trans-Canada Highway through this beautiful piece of land.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

STEEL INDUSTRY

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade, but first I would like to say that we in the Liberal Party wish the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs Godspeed in his last minute negotiations. We await his successful return to the House of Commons.

I would like to ask the Minister for International Trade about his trip to Washington this week to meet with U.S. trade representative Carla Hills. The minister was supposed to convince his good friends in Washington to intervene with the American steel industry so that Canada's steelmakers would not be the victim of a vicious American steel war.

Could the minister confirm that all he got in Washington was a great big American kiss-off?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what my hon. friend means when she uses that expression.

I did have a discussion of this matter with Mrs. Hills. I expressed very strongly the concern we have in the

Government of Canada about the impact of the actions that could possibly be taken by the U.S. steel industry. She indicated that she is continuing discussions with the industry. I asked her to make sure that these views would be conveyed to the industry.

As my hon. friend knows, if members of the private sector in Canada or the United States wishes to institute a trade action it is within their power to do so. If the Canadian steel industry wanted to initiate an action against the U.S. industry I am sure she, representing a steel city, would not want me to step in and tell the steel industry exactly what it should do. She would expect that I would convey views of other countries, which I would hope Mrs. Hills would be doing. More than that I think would probably be inappropriate.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I am shocked and surprised by the about-face of the minister who claimed as late as last week that in fact he was going to convince the American administration to get the facts through to the American steel industry.

I can tell him that what I intend to continue to do on behalf of the constituents and the workers in my riding is to stand up for the Canadian steel industry against an unfair, unfounded U.S. complaint that has already cost Canadian jobs and is going to cost further Canadian jobs.

[*Translation*]

I am getting to my question. We already know that Canadians are losing out to other suppliers. U.S. customers are reluctant to rely on Canadian suppliers because of the trade war that might start as early as next week.

What specific action does the Canadian minister intend to take to at least urge the U.S. administration to approach the U.S. companies directly, in order to stop this useless trade war which will cost us thousands of Canadian jobs in an industry that is already hard hit?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I met Mrs. Hills on Tuesday, and we discussed the issue of measures that might be taken by the U.S. industry. I mentioned that since both the Canadian and U.S. steel markets were highly integrated, the impact of these measures, if taken by the U.S. industry, would create very serious problems for our own industry. I made it clear to Mrs. Hills that it was extremely important to discuss the problems effecting the Canadian steel industry with the U.S. industry. And I hope that as a result of our meeting, Ms. Hills will discuss those problems with the industry.

The Canadian government's position is to work together with the U.S. industry to defend Canadian interests, bearing in mind any measures that may be taken by the U.S. industry.

I believe that as soon as a decision is made on the U.S. side, the Canadian government's position will be quite clear.

• (1120)

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, the position of the Canadian government may be very clear. The fact is that Carla Hills told the minister to take a hike. She has no intention of intervening to get the message through to American industry.

Since the Minister for International Trade failed miserably in his mission last Tuesday, I would like to ask the minister whether he is prepared to call upon our Prime Minister because we know the clock is ticking on this one and there could very well be action taken as of next week, formalized action.

Will he ask the Prime Minister of Canada to have a chat with President Bush while in Rio, to take 10 seconds to try to help save thousands of Canadian jobs, to stop this steel war before it starts, not after the fact when it will be too late?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, what the hon. member from Hamilton East has said is quite right. It is much, much better to avoid this type of trade war before it starts, rather than get into it and have the damage that flows from that. That is precisely the position that I took with Mrs. Hills on Tuesday.

The position we have taken all along, whether it was when the Prime Minister met with the President earlier this month or late last month I guess it was, was the position the Prime Minister took with the President.

As the Prime Minister has said on other occasions, these are issues that are initiated by the industry. We cannot stop what industry wants to do. We can make our views known, and these views have been made known very, very clearly. We will continue to do so on every occasion that we have.

TRADE

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is that Canada's special relationship with the United States just is not working.

I have another question for the same minister. The GATT report released yesterday on Canada's trade policies concluded that Canada's present recession has been prolonged because of its overdependence on a single country for its trade. In fact, Canada's share of total world trade has declined from 5 per cent to 4 per cent under this government.

Why is Canada so intent on tying our trade to one single country rather than expanding our trade to other markets around the world like these GATT countries are telling us?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend has distorted the facts. The facts are that Canada has not suffered because of the free trade agreement. Our exports to the United States in the first quarter this year were at record levels. They are at record levels in total.

An hon. member: What about jobs?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): My hon. friend from Edmonton asks: "What about jobs?" Surely he can understand that every billion dollars worth of trade adds 15,000 jobs. If we add $5 or $6 billion of trade we get somewhere between 75,000 to 100,000 new jobs in Canada that would not be there without the free trade agreement.

An hon. member: Where?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): My hon. friend asks where they are. They are in her city. I could give her some specific examples of companies that have increased their market share and have created jobs in Canada because they are taking advantage of the opportunities that are there with the free trade agreement.

My hon. friend suggests that we are becoming too reliant on the United States market. One of the considerations in entering into a free trade agreement with the United States is to expand into that U.S. market, build our competitive position by increasing our competitiveness through rationalization and specialization into the U.S. market and use that position to increase our sales into other countries. That is precisely what is happening.

Companies are gaining market share in the United States. They are using that increased competitiveness to sell into other markets.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Madam Speaker, what I am telling the government and what I am telling the minister is that other countries around the world are telling Canada that it is too overdependent on a single economy and that it will be disastrous for this economy.

Although the Asian bloc accounts for some 60 per cent of the world's population and 50 per cent of global production, Canada only does 11 per cent of its trade with Asia. It is incredible, but since 1988 our share of exports to Japan and to Europe have been declining.

Why is this government preaching competitiveness and preaching globalization yet at the same time increasing the integrating of our economy with one single country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, the simplistic conclusions that my hon. friend is drawing demonstrate clearly his total lack of understanding of how companies and countries build their competitive positions.

If my hon. friend looked at the statistics and read them honestly into the record, he would see that the reliance on the United States market started back in 1980. At that time our percentage of exports to the United States market was at about 65 or 66 per cent. They reached a peak in the middle eighties of close to 80 per cent. They have come down to 75 per cent.

The precise approach we are following is to increase our trade promotion activities into other countries. I have personally led trade missions to China, Japan and Korea. I will be in other parts of the Far East in September this year and also in Spain, the Middle East and the reforming countries of the former Soviet Union.

These are the efforts the government is taking to broaden our trade but we need a competitive position. The best way that we can build that competitive position is by rationalizing and specializing in the United States market. With access to that market companies are able to do so and are doing so right now.

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence.

Yesterday she said that the $4.3 billion helicopter deal was necessary because the existing search and rescue helicopters were unsafe.

The minister will be aware that the proposed new helicopters are single rotor and that the existing Labradors are twin rotor and are therefore much safer in the kind of terrain in which they have to operate.

Perhaps the minister is also aware that most of the $4.3 billion purchase is not for search and rescue helicopters but is for very expensive anti-submarine helicopters.

Is the minister not aware that the existing 12 Labradors, the 12 Labrador search and rescue helicopters, can be made safe and efficient for another 20 years for simply $200 million, not $4.3 billion?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Madam Speaker, there are so many erroneous assumptions in the hon. member's question that it is hard to deal with them all.

First of all I want to make it clear the existing Labradors are safe. They have limited capability and we have had to limit their operations in that respect. They do not even make Labradors any longer. They are already getting to be 30 years old.

• (1130)

We are looking now at a replacement helicopter both for search and rescue and for shipboard aircraft which will take us through to the year 2035. Is my hon. colleague saying that we should be operating 70-year old helicopters at that point? I do not think so.

We have to plan ahead. We have to look at what our needs are going to be both for search and rescue and for our new frigates which involve all of our new missions including the patrol of sovereignty. I think my hon. colleague, coming from Victoria, British Columbia, would have a very strong awareness of the importance of providing that kind of support to our navy. It is going to benefit British Columbia and the maritime provinces primarily.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, neither my party nor I have to take a back seat to anyone in our support for the navy.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brewin: I am glad the House is listening. The fact remains that 35 to 50 of these Cadillac version helicopters the government is proposing to buy are for anti-submarine warfare. That is what they were designed for. That is how they will be equipped.

Is the government not aware that the American house armed services committee has frozen a similar U.S. program because the deep sea Soviet submarine threat is over and that these kinds of helicopters cannot meet the likely threats of the future?

How can the government leave this project alive while killing national child care programs and leaving over one million Canadian young people in poverty?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Madam Speaker, as I have said several times in the House this week, there has been no decision on this matter. There has been no recommendation to cabinet.

This project has been worked on internally for the past six years. If my colleague had kept up to date with the various defence journals he would have been following the developments which have gone on in a very extensive manner looking at a whole variety of options.

I would like to advise my hon. colleague that the helicopters on our new frigates are capable of performing a whole variety of tasks. The ability to detect submarines is only one small component.

The major missions, as my hon. colleague will know from our new defence policy, will require them to be involved in sovereignty patrols, fisheries patrols, interdiction of drugs, the whole mechanism by which we maintain the navy's capability on each of our two coasts.

DRUG TESTING

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, on another subject to the associate minister. The government has announced that every employee in the Department of National Defence, no matter what the employee's duties, will be obliged to undergo mandatory drug testing. The government has said the program will be extended to other departments.

Has the government ignored the strenuous objections of the Human Rights Commission and the Privacy Commissioner, Bruce Phillips, that these tests simply do not contribute to public safety, are unnecessarily expensive and are an Orwellian infringement on individual rights? If the government does insist—

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think the question has been put or it is turning into a very long preamble.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I do not exactly consider that a supplementary. Once again, my hon. colleague has his facts wrong. There is no program to test all employees of DND.

We are in the process of introducing a drug testing program for our Armed Forces personnel. It will be phased in. We will focus first on those who have had high risk jobs in those areas where we are most concerned. Over a period of time, we will be extending it to other units.

We are having discussions. I met with the chairman of the Human Rights Commission just this week to discuss these matters with him and to ensure that what we plan to do will be compliant with both the Privacy Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, my question is to the minister of small business. Canadians need jobs and small business needs financing to help create those jobs.

The minister has stated in this House that he is concerned about the constriction of financing to small business by the banking industry. If the minister is so concerned, why has he allowed the Federal Business Development Bank to cut back on loans and guarantees to small business in this past year by over $385 million?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, last year the Federal Business Development Bank did close to 4,000 loans that the private banks would not do.

It is playing a complementary role in terms of providing credit to small business. The problem the FBDB faces is it has fewer applications than in previous years. Therefore, its volume is down. The FBDB has been very active in spite of that.

Also, I am delighted to see today the chartered banks are coming to terms with what I have been complaining about. They were in Ottawa this week and I have spoken to a number of them. They assure me that they will move in the opposite direction, away from constriction of credit.

The banks say the business level has been down somewhat for credit and that accounts for it. I do not know whether that is the case or not.

This week, two of the banks did announce a freeze on service charges to small business for the next year or two. Then we see one bank announce today it is cutting its loan rate to small business 1 per cent below prime to 6.2 per cent. I do not think we have had a rate for small business at that level for over 30 years.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, if there is a lack of demand for financing from the Federal Business Development Bank as the minister indicates, then this government should start looking for a better way to provide this service.

Many small businesses are desperate for financing. How can this minister be taken seriously when he is urging the banking industry not to be as restrictive on small business if his own government has allowed the Federal Business Development Bank to cut loans and guarantees by over 43 per cent this past year.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, first of all, the Federal Business Development Bank does not provide guarantees. I think the hon. member should understand that. She does not understand what the FBDB does.

Second, in terms of the volume of loans, her figures are exaggerated. It has moved into a venture loan program which is totally new. Its marketing and management assistance to small business has been stepped up further and has been extremely well received. As well, it

has maintained a very healthy level of loans filling a complementary need in the market.

Beyond that, this government through financial institution reform as of June 1 now makes it possible for insurance companies and trust companies to do an unlimited amount of commercial lending. That is going to put competition in the market for the banks. The hon. member speaks only of the banks and the FBDB. She should also urge the insurance companies and the trust companies to get into small business lending as well.

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CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport.

There has been a recent announcement that the Canadian Coast Guard's regional headquarters will be moved in 1993 from Toronto to Sarnia. Will the minister assure me and the House that this is not the beginning of greater centralization affecting other Coast Guard offices in Canada?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Madam Speaker yes, the regional headquarters is moving from Toronto to Sarnia this year.

This move was taken because of space requirements in Toronto and the end of a lease on the particular space we were occupying. It was a move to take the Coast Guard people closer to the those with whom they were working.

We have combined the services in Sarnia. This was a move to better provide service to the coastal and marine people. It is only one move; it is not part of an over–all move at all.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

In order to dispel the rumours circulating in my riding and reassure the other Coast Guard employees, would the minister's office issue a statement or a directive to employees advising them that the Toronto to Sarnia move of the Coast Guard in 1993 will affect Toronto employees only?

• (1140)

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Madam Speaker, I would be glad to have a letter sent to the employees in his area to reassure them.

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NUCLEAR REACTORS

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister of energy and concerns a grave situation affecting Essex county and Windsor.

On June 2 the Fermi II nuclear plant in Michigan locked out skilled unionized workers. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has said this could cause maintenance problems within several weeks.

Given two accidents at Fermi since the lock–out the Canadian consul in Detroit today tells me that she contacted Fermi and I quote: "To express our deepest concern about the operation of the plant".

Is the minister prepared to go further through the contacts which the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada has kept up with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the United States?

Will the minister tell Fermi to cease operations, to end this lock–out, to do something to see to it that Canadians are protected during the course of this labour dispute, to see that this labour dispute is in fact settled before this plant goes back to full operation?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the hon. member raises a valid point. I say to him the Atomic Energy Control Board as he has also indicated in his question has been making the point in respect of nuclear plant operation safety.

There are two points that I have to add. One, obviously the Government of Canada cannot get involved in a domestic labour strike. Two, the United States, Canada and other countries are members of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We all have agreed to various means by which we will safely operate our nuclear plants.

I will take the member's point further and check with the AECB today as to what response it has received or what further actions it is contemplating with its counterparts in the United States.

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TRADE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology.

Champion Sparkplug in Windsor has been thriving up until recently. Indeed, up until yesterday it was hiring new workers. In fact, the vice president in charge of operations said in a letter that Windsor workers were known for their efficiency and quality of work ethic in the Windsor plant. However, in that same letter the vice president says that 225 people are going to lose their jobs at Champion Sparkplug because production is being moved to Burlington, Iowa.

In the last two weeks five other plants in Windsor have closed. Three thousand men and women have lost their jobs. We have lost 50 plants.

The workers in Windsor want me to ask the minister this question: When will this government recognize the failure of its industrial policy, of its free trade agreement, and its prospective North American free trade agreement and produce an industrial strategy that will stop this haemorrhage of Canadian jobs and produce real industrial growth in this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I am not aware of the specific incidents that my hon. friend refers to.

I can tell him that Pratt & Whitney opened a $12.5 million plant that will bring some good technology into Canada and help create jobs in Canada. I can refer to a company in the Hamilton area, Linde Canada, that is going to be the headquarters for its new industrial and specialty gas distribution system.

No one is happy in raising these types of concerns. My only point in making these other two observations is that we live in a dynamic economy. There are some changes going on. There are changes for the good and changes for the bad, but I think the fact that our exports to the United States were at record levels in the first quarter of this year indicates we are having more successes than downturns.

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CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

The government is telling the Canadian public to shop at home. We all know the profound impact that cross-border shopping has had on border communities and on the Canadian economy in general.

Can the government explain to those same Canadians why Canada Post is currently supplying each of its 23,000 letter carriers with three short sleeved shirts, three long sleeved shirts and three ties; 200,000 pieces of clothing made in the United States?

Will the government direct its own Crown corporation to buy in Canada?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the minister responsible for Canada Post, I know that we have often heard the minister say here that in recent years, since it came to power, this government has taken a Crown corporation that was running a $400-million annual deficit and now we have a team at Canada Post that is one of the best in the world. So I think that people are fed up with paying taxes for money losers and I think that the whole country wins if we have policies that make Canada Post profitable.

[*English*]

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Madam Speaker, I fail to understand how buying in the United States is going to reduce the Canadian deficit.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. Canada 125 is buying outside of Canada. Canada Post is buying outside of Canada. What directives, if any, does this government give Crown corporations about cross-border shopping?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I am sure my hon. friend is aware of an advertising program we have under way called "Canada: Buy Into It".

Some hon. members: Whoopee!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): If my hon. friends on the other side would relax for a minute I will give them the answer.

This program is being presented in conjunction with a number of companies in the private sector, major retailers like The Bay, Sears, Dyelex; companies that are using the program we have introduced to reinforce their advertising and sales promotions to increase sales within Canada and, in that way, deal with the difficulties of cross-border shopping.

I am sure my hon. friend is aware that there was a significant drop in cross-border shopping in the month of April. I am sure my hon. friend is also aware that there is a 6 per cent to 7 per cent increase in department store sales. I think this is an indication of a trend of business coming back to Canada, supported fully by the activities of this government.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, my question is for the same minister.

If there is a small drop in cross-border shopping I cannot help but wonder why this government is trying desperately to bring it back up.

The minister will know that at the same time as his government is spending all that money on advertising, telling people to shop at home, the government-owned, to the tune of 85 per cent, Petro-Canada is opening up gas bars across the border in the very famous Canadian city of Plattsburg, New York with the sole purpose of getting Canadians to go across the border to buy cut-rate gas? What is the government going to do about this?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I am sure that my hon. friend would support a position of the Government of Canada whereby we are reducing our ownership in Petro-Canada so that we can use those resources more effectively to support such things as social programs and economic development here in Canada. We provide support through the provinces for education and health care through the privatization of Petro-Canada.

Once we move down that track it is not within our power to direct Petro-Canada as to where it should or should not do business.

My hon. friend and I may well agree that Petro-Canada's activity is something that we do not agree with. This is something that I am sure Mr. Hopper will be sensitized to when he watches this show this evening.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I am at least glad to hear that message and I hope Mr. Hopper gets it loud and clear.

I want to ask a supplementary question of the Minister of Energy, Mines and resources on cross-border shopping as well.

• (1150)

The Government of Canada has embarked on another patriotic adventure. It has decided to use the Dutch company Interpost to ship mail from Canada to other countries. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources uses Interpost, and I quote from the minister's documents here: "because it offered low rates and 'reliable service'".

I want to ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources why is it that his department is spending $301,237 giving contracts to the Dutch company Interpost to deliver Canadian government mail outside the country?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the minister who reports for Canada Post would probably like to have the answer as well.

Putting it very directly, I will do some checking on the file. I say to the hon. member that he has to be a little careful; I had the same type of question in Halifax on the weekend, on why for example did we—

Ms. Copps: That's a good answer!

Mr. Epp: The most the hon. member ever does is sit and make inane comments. Motor-mouth Sheila.

Madam Speaker, what we are saying to them, as for example, that energy that we got out of the ground last weekend for the first time was dropped in the Gulf of Mexico. We made good money on it. The question then becomes, well, why did we not drop it in Canada? If we can get some more money for Canadian products, we will do it. The reverse works as well.

Mr. Boudria: That was from Canada.

Mr. Epp: Precisely, but it works the other way as well. I guess that is what you do not understand about an economy.

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THE VICTORIA CROSS

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence and concerns the Victoria Cross.

Does the minister support the restoration and Canadianization of the Victoria Cross as Canada's highest medal for valour in the face of the enemy?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague's interest in this subject, but I would like to point out to him that the Victoria Cross is a British medal bestowed by the Queen. It is not a Canadian medal. Obviously Canadians would still be eligible to receive it. It is given for extraordinary valour in the face of the enemy. We hope we do not have to face such an enemy.

At the same time, within Canada we have been developing our own system of honours and awards over a number of years. The final component of that would be to develop our own awards for valour in the face of the enemy. That work is not complete but is ongoing.

I am sure that the hon. member would agree that it is important that we have within Canada a method of recognizing bravery of Canadian men and women in the Armed Forces.

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WAR CRIMES

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice and it concerns the bringing to justice of alleged Nazi war criminals who are currently living in Canada.

Recently the minister announced a cut-off date of March 1994 for completion of all current war crimes dossiers. In view of the very strong criticism of that decision by many groups, both in the Jewish community and beyond, and recognizing that there must be no statute of limitations on these crimes against humanity, I want to ask the minister to clarify to the House just how many files remain active in this area, and will the minister assure the House that her announcement will not in any way preclude further investigations based on new evidence or information on these terrible crimes?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I did not announce a cut-off date of March 1994. I indicated that March 1994 was the target date by which we had to try to complete the dossiers that came out of the Deschênes commission and dealt with World War II crimes.

This was not by any means to suggest that we would not continue to investigate after, but to recognize that those particular offences took place at a period of time which creates problems for us now in accumulating evidence. We have set that target date for ourselves as a way of allocating resources in our department, to try to ensure that we get that evidence within a reasonable period of time. We do not have an unlimited period of time to investigate these offences.

I indicated that date during the hearings on my estimates to indicate to people that we are deeply committed to this process and have set for ourselves a target, not to cut off investigations but to ensure that we devote sufficient resources to resolve those problems. In fact, we are devoting more resources to that file than have been allocated by Treasury Board. We have allocated additional resources to try and meet that challenge.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that assurance. The minister still has not indicated how many files do remain active. I trust she will answer that.

I have a supplementary question for the same minister. Respected Canadian historian, Dr. Alti Rodal, prepared five years ago for the Deschênes commission a full study on Canada's shameful record of closing the door on Jews fleeing Nazis while allowing war criminals to enter.

In view of Judge Deschênes' statement at that time, that this study deserves wide distribution, will the government finally release the full Rodal report so that the truth can be told about this shameful chapter in Canadian history?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, with respect to the first comment of the hon. member, as he will know, it is the policy of the government and of every attorney general in the country never to confirm or deny whether investigations are under way.

It is awkward because there was some misunderstanding coming out of the Deschênes commission of precisely what number of files there were that had promise of prosecution. He will know that Justice Deschênes did not have access to evidence from outside of Canada, from eastern European files, or have the ability to evaluate the viability of those files, based on the full range of evidence and availability of witnesses. Some have proved to be more promising than were expected and some have proven to be less promising.

With respect to the release of any kind of report, he will know that there are very important charter and privacy considerations that are involved in these reports. These have governed our approach to releasing that kind of information.

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HIBERNIA

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In mid-February shock waves went through Newfoundland when the news broke that Gulf Oil would pull its 25 per cent share out of the Hibernia project. Since that time there has been wild speculation, as the minister knows, both positive and negative, about the future of this project.

Since this is such a critical project to Newfoundland, indeed to the whole of Canada, I wonder if the minister could share with us what are the prospects of another fourth partner to replace Gulf and what is the possibility of success for this project.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question because he and members of the House have been very helpful on this project.

I want to say to the member that his assessment of the period post-February 4, when Gulf served notice on the consortium and the two governments that it was pulling out its 25 per cent share in Hibernia is correct and that all concerned have been working very diligently across the world in an attempt to find investors in the project.

I do not think it comes as any surprise to the hon. member when I say that it has been difficult because of the investment climate in the oil business world-wide. Returns are not as buoyant in the oil industry as we have experienced in past years.

I can indicate to the hon. member that as we speak we are in negotiations for a possible partner or partners who are examining very seriously the possibility of their entering into an arrangement with the two governments and with the consortium.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the minister's response and the somewhat delicate nature of the negotiations.

With the future of the Newfoundland economy hinging on the possibility of a shutdown fishery, the Hibernia project takes on an even greater significance, if that is possible.

The critical date of early October, when the 240 day penalty clause is up for Gulf, their continued funding until that date is fast approaching. In fact, we are a little bit more than midway there. I think the minister can appreciate how anxious people in Newfoundland are getting right now.

I wonder if perhaps he could reconsider and give us some indication of how many options are available, whether there is any likelihood of success and perhaps even more important, the dates that we may know more information.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I would like to be as forthcoming as possible. I appreciate the member's sensitivity to the timing of this question.

• (1200)

I appreciate what he says about Newfoundland having difficulties in the fishery, the announcement that Hibernia had lost a partner on February 4 and the general state of the economy. It is that reality that has doubly motivated all of us to try to get a solution on Hibernia.

I have always said that Hibernia is important, but it is important in the larger context of Newfoundland being able to develop a resource. That is why I mentioned earlier today about offshore oil coming into Nova Scotia. I saw on Saturday the buoyancy in Nova Scotia. Again, it

does not solve every problem in Nova Scotia but it does add to the buoyancy.

I can only say to the hon. member that I do not want to raise false hopes in Newfoundland because they have been dashed too many times. We are going to use this weekend to negotiate. In fact, starting tonight I will be involved personally as well as members of the Newfoundland government with a consortium and with potential investors. We will be dedicating this weekend in the hope that we can bring this to closer fruition.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHILDREN

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, following the conference on the rights of the child, the government put forward the child tax credit. In fact, this proposal will actually make children on welfare poorer, not better off.

If the government is really concerned about child poverty, will the minister promise to fully index the child tax credits to inflation?

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, I have always maintained here in this House that the best way to ensure quality of life for families and children is to reduce the deficit, improve economic growth and create jobs, and that is what we are working on.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I know that the minister is aware of this question. We have had a discussion about it and his sympathies in the matter.

Is the minister prepared to meet with representatives of the Gwa'Sala–'Nakwaxda'xw council to discuss some of the problems that it has had over the last 30 years in terms of social disintegration? Also, is he prepared to meet with his colleagues to co–ordinate the response from the ministries of health, employment and aboriginal affairs in this very important matter?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I certainly am prepared to meet with various First Nations chiefs and councils as I travel across the country.

I certainly would be prepared to meet the representatives of the Gwa'Sala–'Nakwaxda'xw council at an appropriate occasion when I am in British Columbia, which is almost weekly.

I should say that the department is reviewing a specific claim from this community on northern Vancouver Island, and we are undertaking a number of capital improvements within that community of which the member is well aware.

I thank the hon. member for bringing this matter to my attention.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

REFERRAL TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to table today in the House, in both official languages, Orders in Council announcing appointments made recently by the government.

Pursuant to Standing Order 110(1), these Orders in Council are deemed to have been referred to the standing committees indicated in the appendix.

* * *

CANADA'S SENIORS

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Madam Speaker, as Minister of State for Seniors, I have the pleasure and honour to remind all of us assembled here that at this time of the year, seniors are honoured all across Canada.

From the end of May until the end of June, all provinces and territories have ongoing activities for seniors. These activities, organized at the community, municipal or provincial level, vary from social gatherings

to officially designated events, such as the Seniors Day in the Manitoba legislature.

I am particularly happy to take part in this tribute to our seniors. As you already know, the mandate the Prime Minister entrusted to me as Minister of State for Seniors is to give a voice to seniors in cabinet and to represent their interests in Parliament.

Very early in my mandate, I decided that one of the most important contributions I could make was to become a good listener. Consequently, I have spent many hours consulting with older Canadians from coast to coast and in our northern territories. I have also talked with those who represent seniors' organizations, with self-help groups and with individuals who work with older Canadians.

The government has also commissioned a number of studies to learn about seniors' views and we can now rely on the results of two interesting studies.

The first, conducted by Statistics Canada, explored issues affecting the independence of older Canadians. The topics addressed included: preparation for retirement, employment, physical and social activities, health and well-being, life experience, mobility and travel, accidents and safety, housing, income and finances, and satisfaction with life.

The second study, by Health and Welfare Canada, was a series of focus groups exploring the meaning of independence and quality of life for older Canadians. This research and my extensive contacts with seniors have enabled me to understand what seniors expect. They expect independence, equality and recognition as individuals.

For Canada's seniors, independence is both a state of living and a state of mind. Independence, for seniors, means being free to do what they want to do, being responsible for their own initiatives.

Aging is indeed a life long process which involves a series of changes from birth to death, but unfortunately many misconceptions and myths on this subject persist.

[*English*]

Canada's seniors expect to be integrated into society, not seen as a group apart. They want to be treated as equals. They want people to take their views into account, to listen to them and involve them in decision-making. They want to have the opportunity to participate directly in the design and implementation of programs that affect them. They want to be seen as contributors to society, not as yesterday's corporate leaders, retired teachers or mechanics.

[*Translation*]

Seniors also want to be recognized as individuals, as different from one another. They do not want to be viewed as a statistic, an age group. I find these expectations very reasonable. Canadian seniors vary in income, cultural and educational backgrounds, state of health, and life experiences. They have different aspirations and fulfil themselves in many different ways. While they have many common concerns, their priorities and opinions differ.

Administrators, health care workers and elected officials often ask themselves how they can best help seniors achieve and maintain this desired independence.

In Canada, we have a number of supports available to seniors. The first major program for older Canadians began in the late 1920s, when the federal government co-operated with various provinces to finance a joint old-age pension scheme. Today, our government's concern for seniors is reflected in the fact that Canada's "elderly benefit system" is now the largest program expenditure area within government.

The rapid increase in the senior population has stimulated the development of other federal programs and services for seniors in such areas as housing and health and social services.

Worthy of special mention is the Seniors Independence Program designed to help seniors improve their health, well-being and independence and to enhance their quality of life. This program encourages seniors to get involved in designing and carrying out projects which affect their quality of life and independence.

New Horizons is another program that has encouraged and supported projects planned and carried out by seniors themselves.

[*English*]

In concluding, I would like to build on our experience in developing a new strategy that also promotes improved co-operation between departments and in-

creased partnerships with the various interest groups, including seniors themselves.

I think you will agree with me that in a world concerned with preserving the environment and making the best use of resources, it will be unacceptable to ignore the experience and knowledge of seniors.

[*Translation*]

Like many other cultures in the world, let us give our seniors the place they deserve.

• (1210)

I encourage hon. members to take part in Seniors Month and to respond to the aspirations of all of these people who have helped build our vast country.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond briefly to the statement made by the minister.

[*Translation*]

Needless to say, we all listened attentively to what the minister had to say and we support the wishes that she expressed today.

Personally, I would have some things to add. This statement is off the cuff. I would like to tell the minister that I spent almost all my life with seniors, since I was raised by my grandmother, my grandparents. Every time I hear something like what the minister said, I remember those childhood years.

[*English*]

There is no doubt that for many of our seniors the greatest enemy, if I can refer to it that way, is solitude. To that extent, programs such as New Horizons and others have contributed to getting seniors together in order to counter that solitude that so often affects our senior citizens.

It is regrettable, though, that quite often those seniors we would want to make part of a group of other seniors are often the ones who are the hardest to approach. They live perhaps in more remote areas, not in our cities and towns, or they sometimes have lived alone for a long time and they are hesitant to join groups of other seniors.

Our golden age clubs, our seniors' clubs, have succeeded in large measure in bringing the seniors together and organizing good, sound recreational activities, both physical and otherwise, in order to occupy the time of many of our seniors who have retired, particularly those living alone.

One should not stereotype our senior citizens as people who have necessarily all retired and are living alone because that is not the case.

[*Translation*]

Many seniors, of course, live very productive lives and contribute to the labour force, directly or indirectly. I for one am glad to see that the old way of looking at things, of forcing seniors to retire at 65 or some other arbitrary age, is disappearing or observed less and less.

The time has come when Canadians must consider our seniors as people who are as much a part of society as those who are younger and, of course, we must consider them as full members because they contribute so much.

[*English*]

Another thing we should consider in all of this is the aging of our work force. We must ensure strong and meaningful participation for our people who have reached some of those milestone years in their lives. They are needed components of our work force and elsewhere.

In a study I participated in some years ago about skilled trades people in Canada we were noting that some of our skilled people, machinists, skilled people in other specialized areas, were all approaching that so-called age of retirement we use to talk about a lot.

If all those peoples did retire at that arbitrary age, which granted is disappearing now, their retirement would have meant that others would have lost their jobs because they were the team leaders, the organizers, the high-tech people, the machinists, the trades people on whom others depended.

Sometimes some will say, wrongly, that if so and so retired, that would make room for the rest of them to go up that ladder. Perhaps there are occasions when that may be so, not that it would make it a credible argument. In many cases the exact opposite is true.

[*Translation*]

The same thing is happening now in the academic field. Teachers at the secondary and post-secondary level who have doctorates are almost all approaching so-called retirement age. Fortunately, we are eliminating that arbitrary age limit.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I want to indicate the support of my colleagues of the minister's statement but I want to inform the government that we certainly do not want the episode that took place some years ago in which pensions were attacked to happen again in this House. It is my hope that not only that government but any government would have learned its lesson from the attacks of that particular time.

I do not want to end on a negative note. I want to conclude, though, by saying that we consider the message of the minister to be a very positive one, one which we support but again with the caution I have expressed earlier.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today on this occasion on behalf of my party and our critic from Beaches—Woodbine, the seniors critic for our party, and express my congratulations to the minister on her statement today. It is my pleasure to be able to be part of a statement in the House of Commons, pointing out to the people of Canada and to anybody else watching the parliamentary channel the resource we have in Canada; namely, our golden agers, our seniors.

One of the things that has been brought out in the speech by the Minister of State for Seniors, and it is an important one, is the need for seniors to be and to feel they are independent.

Independence comes from a sense of economic well-being, a sense of security in the knowledge they are surrounded by friends, acquaintances, and that they have sufficient funds squirrelled away, if you will, to see them through their golden years.

When I look at the aspect of aging in the reports of Statistics Canada and others I see that 57 per cent of seniors, those over 65, are women. As it gets up into the higher age groups, those percentages increase. We look at the report of Statistics Canada and we see that women are more likely to be single, widowed and living alone and independently and that fewer women own homes than their male counterparts.

I also look at the recent study by Statistics Canada on aging and independence and see that in the ages 65 to 69, 18 per cent of males have incomes under $10,000. Of those females over the ages of 65 to 69, the figure is 48 per cent having incomes under $10,000 per year. When I speak of independence and the economic well-being that goes with independence, I point to those figures as an area that we as parliamentarians must look at carefully in deciding the course of our legislation and our thrust for seniors in the future. I know this minister has been one who has worked hard on behalf of seniors throughout the time I have been here and I have appreciated her forthrightness with me and others regarding seniors.

• (1220)

I want to point out that all has not been rosy throughout the time I have been here. As seniors critic for my party and as one who has been interested in the problems of seniors, I have noted health care cuts to various provinces, including my home province of British Columbia. Seniors tell me the GST has hurt them enormously in a number of ways that were not thought of when the GST was brought in. The clawback of old age security has hurt them.

One thing that has been brought out very graphically to me is that as people get older they need various other hygienic products. In one recent case, I am aware those particular products cost an elderly gentleman over $200 a month. There is no tax deduction and there is no way he can get these products under his pharma-care program. It is an out of pocket expense.

I know all of us as parliamentarians have had calls flooding into our offices since April 1 from seniors who get Canada pension, advising that their over all income has dropped by $8 or $9 a month.

For many of us who make reasonable salaries, $8 or $9 a month does not seem that significant. However, when you are receiving under $10,000 a year and you are scraping together enough money to be able to eat properly, $8 a month may make the difference between three full meals in a month. It can make the difference if you want to get out and see a friend that month. I want to highlight that.

Although this is a time to celebrate with seniors and draw attention to seniors, I do not think we can turn our backs on the problems that seniors have. There are also other areas we must look at.

I have travelled across the country as the seniors critic. We speak about independent living. As medical breakthroughs come along, people are living longer, but we do not seem to have proper facilities for people that require them, the wandering confused, those with Alzheimers disease, those who have had strokes that have rendered them incapable of looking after themselves. We are just starting to be able to properly and adequately look after these people. When you speak to people who have experienced the trauma of having to place their loved one in a home, it is essential that we have those homes for people and make those facilities available.

I point to the Hardy View Lodge in Grand Forks which just celebrated its 10th anniversary as an example of one that has made a community effort out of this.

I want to mention in closing that I know the minister has worked hard and I know there are many things she would like to do that cannot be done. One thing I want to emphasize as we proceed with the celebration of Seniors Month, is that we have to ensure there is more research and development done in the area of aging, gerontology and the whole process of growing old. We know that it happens. However we must deal with some of the results of aging. I want to congratulate the minister. I want to congratulate the seniors for all of the things they are doing this month. It has been a pleasure to speak on behalf of my party in this celebratory month for seniors.

* * *

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF TIMISKAMING

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-351, an act to change the name of the electoral district of Timiskaming.

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

Mr. MacDougall: Madam Speaker, on July 13, 1987 when the Electoral Boundary Readjustment Act came into effect, the riding of Timiskaming, which was noted as a north-south riding, was changed to more of a north-south-east-west, taking in a large part of the Nickel Belt riding.

Communications in Timiskaming normally followed a north-south path, and in identifying the new part of our riding it was felt that the French River, which was the most southwest point of the riding, that we would be able to change the name to recognize the new portion of the riding and to rename it Timiskaming—French River.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Mr. MacDougall moves that the bill be now read the first time and printed.

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

Bill read the first time and printed.

* * *

JUSTICE AND THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

AUTHORIZATION FOR 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 three members and one staff of the Standing Committee of Justice and the Solicitor General be authorized to travel to Halifax, Nova Scotia from August 22 to 27, 1992 to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Bar Association.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of this and I do not have to give my consent until I get some information as to who has been informed here on this side of the House. Until I get that kind of advice I will not give my consent.

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is a discussion that might be held behind curtains. It would be helpful to the House.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ELECTRONIC VOTING

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I and a number of my colleagues in the House would seek unanimous consent of the House to place a motion before the House to implement electronic voting. I wonder whether there might be unanimous consent.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has heard there is not unanimous consent at this time.

Mr. Kindy: Madam Speaker, I am sure you will now find unanimous consent in the House in view of the fact that the McGrath commission recommended electronic voting. I am sure the Liberal Party is going to give consent and you will find consent to have electronic voting in this House.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, this attempt to negotiate putting or not putting a different kind of voting system in the House is very interesting. It is normally done between House leaders of the parties, brought to the committee of internal economy if it involves an expenditure and then given to the House.

• (1230)

I am 100 per cent in favour of what is proposed by the hon. member but I am 100 per cent against the scheme he is trying to develop right now. He is trying to get the House to commit to something that his House leader is not even around to see whether or not he agrees with.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I appreciate what the hon. member is saying, and possibly that is going to be the best route to follow.

I gather from the other side that it is now likely to be under way next week. I think certainly calling attention to the situation has proved useful. Hopefully it will proceed.

Mr. Kindy: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, as the hon. member who just spoke said, I think there is agreement on the other side to have a serious look at this question of electronic voting.

I am sure that the House leaders are going to meet and try to implement that type of voting in this House.

* * *

JUSTICE AND THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably out of the House for a moment a little earlier when the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader moved a motion.

I can now confirm that there have been the usual consultations. I apologize that I had to leave the House for a moment at approximately the time that the motion was moved. I am able to confirm now that in fact the usual consultation and agreement has been sought and obtained.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Speaker, I can confirm that is the case. While I appreciate the unflagging vigilance of the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, I would not have moved the motion in bad faith. I can assure him of that.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, I never even implied that the member for Edmonton Southwest would move such a motion in bad faith. If it is in his mind that he may, then I am glad that he withdrew it.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Not only is it Friday, I think the full moon is just about to be upon us.

Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

CO-OP HOUSING PROGRAM

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Madam Speaker, I knew we would get to this portion of Routine Proceedings.

I have with me five petitions, the first one being from a group of residents in the Toulon area asking the federal government to reinstate the federal Co-op Housing Program.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Madam Speaker, I have four other petitions signed by a large number of constituents from the Portage, Oakville, St. Claude area of my riding.

The petitioners are requesting Parliament to revise the laws of Canada and replace the Young Offenders Act in view of a 15-year old who was accused of murdering a 13-year old and given a slight slap on the wrist.

They humbly pray that the government will look at these petitions.

[*Translation*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I have five more petitions this morning which are part of a campaign to persuade the government and Parliament to reinstate the Court Challenges Program.

As you know, this program has helped many individuals and minority groups to clarify their constitutional language rights and equality rights before the courts.

These people maintain that the program, which was not very costly, was very useful in that it enabled all Canadians to clarify these constitutional rights.

At a time when we are reviewing all our constitutional commitments, I think the government would do well to listen to these Canadians.

Your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to consider the option of reinstating the Court Challenges Program, which gives Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

STEVEN OGUNWUYI

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table a petition signed by residents of my own constituency of Burnaby—Kingsway as well as North Vancouver, Richmond and a number of other cities in British Columbia who note that Steven Ogunwuyi, a Nigerian, 23 years of age, was unwittingly implicated in an unsuccessful coup attempt against the unelected Nigerian president. Other people implicated in the coup have been executed after unfair trials and prisoners awaiting trial have died in Nigerian prisons because of the terrible conditions there.

They note that Steven has escaped from Nigeria, made his way to Canada, applied for refugee status and has been denied and ordered removed from Canada back to Nigeria and that he fears for his life.

Therefore, they request that the House of Commons urge the Minister of Employment and Immigration to allow, on compassionate grounds, Steven Ogunwuyi to remain in Canada.

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): I have a second petition which contains signatures gathered by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, particularly Gordon Christie, executive member, which notes that in February of 1985 the House of Commons mandated the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to prepare a report on equality rights in Canada.

That committee did report in October, unanimously recommending that the Canadian Human Rights Act be amended to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in all areas of federal jurisdiction. Despite a promise by the federal government in March 1986 to act on this commitment, there has still been no amendment forwarded. The other provinces have acted and the Canadian Human Rights Commission has called for such an amendment.

The petitioners, therefore, 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.

HOUSING

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Finally, Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition which is signed by hundreds of residents of my constituency of Burnaby—Kingsway, particularly the residents of co-operative housing in Burnaby—Kingsway.

This petition notes that recent government constitutional proposals will transfer jurisdiction over housing to the provinces, including the responsibility for non-profit, co-op housing. It notes that non-profit, co-operative

housing provides thousands of Canadian families with quality, affordable shelter. It also notes that many provinces will be unable to support a non-profit, co-operative housing program. It condemns the recent elimination of the co-op housing budget in the federal government budget.

It therefore calls upon Parliament to recognize housing as a shared provincial-federal responsibility, to support the federal non-profit, co-op housing program, to maintain the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and to restore the budget for co-operative housing.

Having knocked on many co-operative housing doors in my constituency, I know this reflects the concerns of many residents of Burnaby—Kingsway, both in co-operatives and elsewhere.

THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to present to the House a petition that is signed by 2,250 or more residents of Canada, most of them in Ontario but some of them in Alberta and Quebec. It was gathered by the British Heritage Institute of Canada. A particular moving force was my friend and constituent, George Penfold.

This petition calls upon the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada to recognize explicitly, respect and retain in the Constitution all those elements of Canada's British heritage that benefit all citizens through historical honesty, fair play, good manners and precedent, including one dominion under the Queen, the supremacy of Parliament.

It also calls for the repeal of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to ensure that the supremacy of Parliament is recognized through the majority of the elected representation.

It also calls for equality of all individual citizens. It calls for individuals' responsibilities for the consequence of their actions rather than prescriptive rights to be recognized in the Constitution. It calls for all of our basic freedoms and it calls for the continuation of the British parliamentary tradition within our Constitution.

JUSTICE

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Madam Speaker, I have two groups of petitions. There are several but I will table them according to the two subject matters.

The first petition calls upon Parliament to recognize that crimes of violence against the person are serious and abhorrent to society. It calls upon Parliament to amend the Criminal Code of Canada, the Bail Reform Act of 1972 and the Parole Act accordingly.

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): This petition calls upon the government to put forward a referendum on the constitutional amendments 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.

• (1240)

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, the attached petition is hereby certified correct.

I have the honour to present this petition on behalf of the Kinettes and Kinsmen Club of Kootenay East with over 300 signatures on it.

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 our 125th anniversary of Confederation in 1992, 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, to encourage stronger ties among all Canadian for the further advancement of Canada as a leader in world circles and promote our tremendous pride in being Canadian.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a petition signed by many of my

constituents who are calling on the government to take action in order to correct the discriminatory action on the part of some of the major suppliers of gasoline in the Ottawa area.

These petitioners want to see this injustice corrected.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table a petition today signed primarily by residents of Saskatchewan who are concerned—and it ties in very much to an announcement expected to be made today by the CRTC regarding long distance communication—that the consequence of this possible rate restructuring will lead to increases in telephone bills for nine out of 10 Canadians, particularly those in rural and more isolated communities, and will jeopardize Canada's tradition of affordable universal telephone service. They are very concerned about this expected decision.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I also have a petition that I have the pleasure of presenting to the House. It is signed by a large number of residents of Vancouver Island and the coast of B.C. It asks that the government repeal the goods and services tax.

The petition points out that the tax is regressive and punitive, that it is of tremendous harm to small business and people in lower incomes. The petition notes that the New Democratic Party is the only party to advocate the repeal of the goods and services tax.

* * *

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 stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 18 minutes, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration 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, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I will now put to the House the first group of motions which includes Motions Nos. 2, 17, 36 and 72.

I will remind the House that a vote on Motion No. 2 will apply to Motions Nos. 17, 36 and 72.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-55 be amended in clause 13 by striking out line 11 at page 13 and substituting the following therefor:

"residing with a person to".

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-55 be amended in clause 43 by striking out lines 30 and 31 at page 41 and substituting the following therefor:

"death, residing with a person to whom the contributor was not mar-"

Motion No. 36

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 72 by striking out lines 26 and 27 at page 67 and substituting the following therefor:

"death, residing with a person to whom the contributor was not mar-"

Motion No. 72

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out lines 34 and 35 at page 150 and substituting the following therefor:

"sion plan, means a person who"

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be able to rise to put before the House today this group of amendments to federal pension legislation in Canada.

The fundamental purpose of these amendments is to ensure basic fairness, equity, and justice for thousands of Canadians who are currently denied that in this country.

The amendments would amend five pieces of federal legislation which deal with federal pensions: the Public Service Superannuation Act which is the pension plan that currently covers some 312,000 federal government employees; the Canadian 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 that pension plan for members and senators; and finally the Pension Benefits Division Act which provides for the division of benefits if a marriage or common law relationship breaks down.

We are talking about tens of thousands of Canadians who are affected by this legislation. Among those tens of thousands of Canadians are lesbians and gay men who are involved in committed loving relationships.

Current federal pension legislation does not explicitly preclude the possibility of the survivor of a lesbian or a gay man within the scope of the legislation being eligible for a pension. However, Bill C–55 would explicitly amend these statutes to make it clear that we would be denying access to benefits to couples involved in lesbian or gay relationships.

We have been told the federal government is reviewing all federal legislation to determine whether distinctions which are made with respect to spouses constitute a violation of the equality rights section of the Charter of Rights based on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

We have been told the results of that review will be available in June 1993. I therefore have to ask, why is the government now moving ahead to explicitly close the door to equality and justice for lesbians and gay men in this country who would otherwise be eligible for such pensions?

I would note the Government of Ontario recently extended a series of job benefits to same sex partners of government employees, but the government was told because of current federal pension legislation it could not extend its pension scheme to lesbian and gay employees within provincial jurisdiction.

I would argue the amendments which are being proposed in Bill C–55 violate the Charter of Rights because they deny fundamental equality on the basis of sexual orientation. The purpose of the amendments which I am placing before the House at this time would be to repeal the explicit reference to families being of the opposite sex and would in fact leave open the possibility that these pension benefits would be available to lesbians and gay men involved in committed relationships.

I would have preferred to have put in amendments which explicitly and clearly set out that entitlement, but I was told such amendments would be out of order.

I would note as well that some six years after the government promised to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, we are still waiting for that basic justice, for that promise to to be fulfilled.

Meanwhile the courts have ruled in a number of instances. The British Columbia Supreme Court ruled that a gentleman there, Mr. Timothy Knodel, was entitled to health care benefits. In fact, the provincial legislation which governed the Medical Services Commission discriminated because it did not extend benefits to same sex partners. The judge noted that the two men in question were deeply committed to each other emotionally and sexually, exchanged vows and rings in a private ceremony, established a home together, pooled their finances and shared bank accounts and credit cards.

• (1250)

She noted that evidence in the case by psychiatrist Michael Myers pointed out that the type of emotional bond between homosexual couples is no different than that between heterosexual couples.

Others have made similar arguments, the case of Haig and Birch before the Ontario high court, Brian Mossop whose appeal was recently heard by the Supreme Court of Canada, seeking one day of bereavement leave to attend the funeral of his partner of some 11 years.

I would note as well that we are not talking about a major cost here to the Canadian taxpayer. Indeed, it has been estimated by Mr. Bernard Dussault who works with the federal government in this area that the costs would be minimal. In fact, Mr. Dussault who is the Acting Chief Actuary for the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions in Ottawa has said that it would add, based on the maximum possible estimate, some 1.5

per cent to the over-all cost of the pension plan if all those who were eligible claimed their benefits.

Similarly, Jim Egan and his partner Jack Nesbit, over 40 years together in a committed, caring relationship have been told that in the eyes of the law their relationship does not exist. Others have moved for justice in this area. In fact, I would note that a number of jurisdictions, including the city of Toronto, the Government of Ontario, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, the city of Vancouver, the city of Montreal, the government of the Yukon, a number of universities and a number of major unions have moved in this respect.

Frankly, I as a gay man and as a member of Parliament am tired of hearing that somehow our relationships are not just as strong and just as committed and just as loving and caring as any other relationships in our society, that somehow we are incapable of being families.

In fact, we have heard from REAL Women on this. Peggy Stacey, the president of the B.C. chapter has said: "The traditional family is a mother, a father and children. This ruling affects the fabric of our country". Well, tell that to the tens of thousands of lesbians and gay men in this country who are involved, often against considerable odds, in deeply committed and caring relationships.

I must say that I have seen those relationships, the partners of people with AIDS who have demonstrated incredible love and care and compassion in the course of their struggle against that terrible disease. I think we could learn a great deal from those couples in terms of how to love and build commitment into our relationships.

I would hope that in Canada we will see that it is time to recognize and to celebrate the diversity of our communities, to recognize that lesbian couples and gay couples have been a part of Canadian society, a part of our communities for many, many centuries and to recognize that we too pay taxes. We are not asking for any special rights or special privileges. We are asking for basic equality and basic justice, a recognition of our relationships.

As Dorothy King wrote in a letter to the former premier of Saskatchewan: "Your definition of family is a very distorted one, indeed. If you would care to look outside your own narrow concept of family, you will find an amazing array of family units and many of us, thank you very much, are doing extremely well in spite of the odds against us. My partner and I are just as concerned about our kids as you are about yours. We ski on the weekends, have pets, work, play games, do homework and communicate with each other. When my daughter comes home from school giggling over the cute boy who sits behind her in school, we laugh together and talk about her feelings. She is nine by the way. I do not attempt to make her into anything".

That is one of the many families in Canada. The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that we recognize that in Canada that among the splendid diversity of families in our community are families of lesbians and gay men as well and we should be entitled to full equality. The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that we are entitled to full benefits, pension benefits and survivor benefits. Hopefully this amendment will meet with the approval of the House to ensure that the words of the Charter of Rights in section 15 apply to all Canadians.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I just wish to say a very few words in support of this amendment.

This is an important amendment. It is an historic day in this House that the amendment is being discussed and I hope an even more historic day if it is accepted by the government and adopted.

One of the very positive things about our times is that the scourge of homophobia is slowly lifting. It has not completely lifted, but it is beginning to lift. Thus, it brings a freedom with it from a fear which those who are gays and lesbians have had to suffer for years and years and years.

I just wish to say that I give my support and I know that of many, many members of this House to this motion. It is a matter of right, I believe, that this motion be included in this bill and I hope the House supports it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 2.

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

We will now proceed with the second group: Motions Nos. 5, 20 and 39. I may remind the House that a vote on Motion No. 5 will apply automatically to Motions No. 20 and No. 39.

[*English*]

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 14 by striking out lines 37 to 47 page 13 and substituting the following therefor:

"repealed."

Motion No. 20.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 44 by striking out lines 7 to 16 at page 42 and substituting the following therefor:

"repealed."

Motion No. 39.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 73 by striking out lines 4 to 13 at page 68 and substituting the following therefor:

"repealed."

He said: Madam Speaker, I will be as quick as possible. I know we have a number of amendments today. Basically these Motions Nos. 5, 20 and 39 were put forth to remove what we commonly refer to as the gold-diggers clause in the various pension plans. What it basically does is remove the age 60 limitation on marriages in the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Armed Forces Superannuation Act and the RCMP Superannuation Act. This is for survivor benefits.

The age 60 rule is clearly contrary to the charter on the basis of age discrimination and must be removed. It is also discriminatory because of the changing demographics. I also think it is basically an insult to many of our senior citizens who receive a pension.

If I may be permitted, I will explain what the clause is all about.

• (1300)

For anyone who marries or remarries after age 60, their spouse would not be entitled to survivor benefits unless the person paid extra pension benefits to have those benefits assigned to his or her spouse. That goes back many years ago to the thirties or forties. I do not not have the exact date.

At that time governments felt that maybe people were retiring much older, in their seventies and some in their late seventies. Sometimes they were remarrying and apparently they thought that the remarriage was basically because someone was looking for some type of advantage. The younger person would marry the older person and take advantage of that person with regard to survivor benefits and whatever.

Now with the change in demographics people are retiring earlier. People are remarrying more often, in the sense that there is a higher divorce rate. This would remove that gold-diggers clause.

We had a witness appear before the committee who was a very specific example. He was part of the RCMP for 33 years. He had contributed pension benefits for 33 years. He had remarried because his first spouse had died. He had been married for 12 years. In this case his spouse would not be entitled to survivor benefits unless the person took a decrease in the pension money he was receiving and put it toward survivor benefits in another plan.

It is a reasonable amendment. We have discussed it in committee with the witnesses who appeared. It seemed to have a lot of approval, but the amendment was not put in committee because we wanted it put in the House to explain to everyone exactly what the clause was all about.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, I would like to rise in support of the amendment. I too was in the committee when this former RCMP officer appeared before it. It was a sad experience to see someone who had devoted his whole life and paid into a pension scheme have his spouse pass away before his retirement and then be told that if he wanted to include

his new spouse, even though he had a spouse and paid into the program, there would be extra expense costs to him.

It is an injustice. The amendment that has been put forward is a very realistic one. I realize that there have to be some guidelines as to how it is implemented, but I would urge the government to take this amendment very seriously.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few words in support of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur.

At the present time, pensioners who marry after the age of 60 do not have the option of making provision for survivor's benefits. Bill C-55 provides this option, because it allows pensioners to finance such benefits by reducing the amount of their own pension. The excess amount will be used to finance the pension of the surviving spouse.

Whether this puts an end to age discrimination, which goes against Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is a very moot point. The Federal Superannuates National Association, with a membership of several thousand retired public servants, supports the principle of extending survivor's benefits in the case of marriages that take place after retirement but does not agree with the proposal that would require pensioners to reduce their own pension in order to provide for survivor benefits.

Since the regulations will be determined later on and we have yet to be advised of any details concerning the amount of such benefits, I think we could reasonably expect the government to support this motion. Because so much depends on the regulations, we are still in the dark about how much it will cost pensioners to finance their pension and how much survivors will receive.

The Liberal caucus is proposing this amendment at the report stage. It would simply eliminate the rule relating to marriage after 60 as well as the need for this financing provision.

I would urge hon. members to support Motion No. 5, standing in the name of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur.

[*English*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: 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.

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: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 21 by striking out line 7 at page 18 and substituting the following therefor:

"tion referred to in section 37 or 68, and prescribing a procedure for informing bargaining agents and other organizations representing contributors and pensioners of the amounts to be paid into the Superannuation Account by these corporations."

He said: Madam Speaker, I have just a quick explanation. This amendment deals with the pension cost of Crown corporations. Government decisions to subsidize the pension cost of privatized Crown corporations, et cetera, are not a proper concern of employees and pensioners.

However it may be a different story when employees and pensioners are required to bear the cost of these subsidies in the form of lower salaries and benefits.

As a minimum, when the pension cost of Crown corporations and other organizations having employees under the PSSA are subsidized by the government, employees and pensioners should be informed of these subsidies. Accordingly they should have the necessary data to defend their interests in a collective bargaining and consultation process.

Motion No. 6 does that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 6. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

• (1310)

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 6B

That Bill C-55 be amended in clause 22 by striking out lines 33 and 34 at page 21 and substituting the following therefor:

"Account;

(w) prescribing circumstances in which a surviving spouse or child of a contributor shall receive an allowance in excess of 50 percent but not exceeding 60 percent of the annuity otherwise payable to the contributor; and

(x) generally as the Governor in Council".

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is to attempt to increase the survivor benefits on 50 per cent to 60 per cent in those cases where it is needed.

The scope of Bill C-55 does not extend to this particular issue. Legal counsel feels that the only way to bring this issue into the discussion on Bill C-55 is to provide for regulation making power, to provide circumstances in which a surviving spouse or a child of a contributor can get more than 50 per cent of the annuity.

To put it bluntly, it conforms to the benefits standards act which the government tries to make private companies follow. To put it even more bluntly, it is in the MPs pension plan and it should be in the other plans as well. It is simple as that. If it is good enough for us, it should be good enough for all of the others.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I thought members would appreciate a bit of history behind this motion and some consistency with regard to the attitude that the government takes toward public servants.

Since 1984 Canadians have become disillusioned about the political institutions of this country and the whole political process. This has been created and fostered in no small measure by this government's philosophy of do as I say, not as I do.

This hallmark of the present government's approach to public policy matters is evident in Bill C-55. The purpose of the motion before the House at this time moved by my friend from Restigouche—Chaleur is to correct a serious fault in the present legislation.

In 1985 the Canadian government introduced a pension benefits standards bill. This bill which was enacted into law set out a series of minimum standards that Canadian private sector employers required to observe and to follow in setting up and managing pension plans for their employees. This was the government telling the private sector: "Here are the standards".

One of the key provisions of this legislation that affects benefits is the requirement that employers observe the 1966 Canada Pension Plan standard with respect to

widows' pensions, namely that as a minimum widows be provided with 60 per cent pensions.

We know at this time that the widows of public servants get 50 per cent of the entitlement. In so far as we are concerned, we have tried over the years to convince this government to stick to its promise of treating public employees, their dependants and their surviving relatives with minimum attention to what this government preaches; in other words a minimum of 60 per cent rather than maintaining the 50 per cent which is presently the order of the day.

The government did not include that in Bill C–55, although it had given the indications in prior communiques, prior declarations or statements that it would.

We are talking of a fairness issue. That is why I wanted to take a few minutes to cover this. If ever there were a longstanding fairness issue, it is to treat our own employees, those who work for the Government of Canada, in the same way as the Government of Canada states the private sector should treat its employees.

I must confess that I have great difficulty in understanding why this bill does not increase widows' pensions from the 50 per cent to the 60 per cent level as promised by the government some time ago.

As I have mentioned, this feature has been in our own Canada Pension Plan for 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.

I know of no one who disagrees with the proposition that the widows of public servants should not be accorded the same treatment as those of former employees in the private sector.

The government's failure to act on this matter I find even more difficult to fathom given the assurance the President of the Treasury Board gave this House on April 17, 1985. He said: "The Public Service plans will as a minimum generally meet the requirements of the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act". That was a promise, it has not been kept, and we feel it is contributing to this atmosphere of mistrust of politicians by the population.

The only conclusion I can come to is the many words used by the government to express its concerns over the financial plight of older women in Canadian society are just that, nothing but words.

It is equally obvious the government's 1985 promise to correct this human tragedy is turning out to be as empty as many of its other promises to correct long–standing unfairness; unfair processes, unfair programs, unfair application of laws as they affect women.

In this House we should stand up and keep our word to the Canadian public and treat our own employees in the same way we expect the private sector to treat its employees.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I want to echo the words of my colleague for Ottawa—Vanier.

There are three points I would like to make. Purely on the issue of fairness, this is a very difficult amendment not to support. Purely on the issue of fairness, how do we leave this House and go out and explain to widows they will have to accept less than those in the private sector and other sectors of the Public Service?

Also, it is probably not a good basis for an argument from a logical viewpoint, but from the pure viewpoint of compassion, if there is anytime that compensation is important it is after the death of a loved one. The last thing in the world a bereaved spouse needs is to be in need of funds. This extra 10 per cent allows for flexibility. To the issue of fairness I would add the issue of compassion.

The third point is the one made by my hon. colleague for Ottawa—Vanier. If you make a promise, you should keep it. If you do not know how much it is going to cost, you should not make the promise. But if you make the promise, then you should keep it.

I would find it very hard for anybody to stand up in this House and not support this amendment on any one of those three principles.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 6B. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

We will now proceed with Motions Nos. 9, 26, 27, 28, 29, 52, 53, 54, 55 and 66.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 9.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 27 by striking out line 2 at page 28 and substituting the following therefor:

"times as determined by regulations provided that

(i) subject to subparagraph (ii), the terms of the regulations relating to the calculation and crediting of interest to the account are determined through negotiation with bargaining agents and other organizations representing contributors and pensioners, and are acceptable to a majority of the bargaining agents and other organizations representing a majority of affected contributors and pensioners, and

(ii) if an agreement cannot be reached under subparagraph (i) with a majority of the bargaining agents and other organizations representing a majority of affected contributors and pensioners on the terms of the regulations relating to the calculations and crediting of interest to the account, the matter shall be referred to an arbitrational panel under the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act for a final and binding decision."

Motion No. 26.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 50 by striking out line 38 at page 47 and substituting the following therefor:

"perannuation Account upon the coming into force of this section an amount equal to the amount of the government contribution required to meet the cost of the benefits accrued in respect of the last quarter of the preceding fiscal year, and in each fiscal year".

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, I have no problem with the principle that the Chair may dispense with reading the full text of the amendment. However, I think we should realize that although the proceedings are televised, in this case people watching have no way of knowing what is going on. I think at least one amendment should be read. If there are seven or eight, one amendment should be read, and we could then dispense with reading the rest, since the same will apply to the other amendments.

I think we have to give Canadians who are listening some indication of what we are talking about.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's comment has been noted, and I am quite prepared to read them all, every single one.

[*English*]

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 27.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 50 by striking out line 45 at page 47 and substituting the following therefor:

"Account, provided that the amount credited to the Account in respect of every month shall not be less than 12 percent of payroll, and".

Motion No. 28.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 50 by striking out line 2 at page 48 and substituting the following therefor:

"monthly balance to the credit of the Account, calculated in such manner and at such rates as the regulations provide and credited to the Account monthly, provided that the rate so calculated is not less than the rate obtained from using the method of calculating interest in force on March 20, 1991."

Motion No. 29.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 50 by striking out lines 5 to 11 at page 48 and substituting the following therefor:

"times as determined by the regulations provided,

(i) Subject to subparagraph (ii), that the provisions of the regulations relating to the calculation and crediting of interest to the Account are determined through consultation with the Canadian Forces Pension Advisory Committee and are approved by a majority of the members appointed pursuant to paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) of subsection (2) of section 49.1 of this Act;

(ii) if the approval of a majority of the members referred to in subparagraph (i) is not obtained, the matter shall be referred to an arbitrational panel under the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act for a final and binding decision."

Motion No. 52.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 78 by striking out line 24 at page 72 and substituting the following therefor:

"perannuation Account upon the coming into force of this section an amount equal to the amount of the government contribution required to meet the cost of the benefits accruing in respect of the last quarter of the preceding fiscal year, and in each fiscal year".

Motion No. 53.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 78 by striking out line 31 at page 72 and substituting the following therefor:

"Account, provided

(i) subject to subparagraph (ii), that the amount estimated by the President of the Treasury Board shall be determined through consultation with th Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Advisory Committee and is approved by a majority of the members appointed pursuant to paragraph (*b*) of subsection (2) of section 25.1 of this Act;

(ii) if approval of a majority of the members referred to in subparagraph (i) is not obtained, the matter shall be referred to an arbitrational panel under the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act for a final and binding decision; and".

Motion No. 54.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 78 by striking out line 31 at page 72 and substituting the following therefor:

"Account, provided that the amount credited to the Account in respect of every month shall not be less than 14 percent of payroll; and".

Motion No. 55.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 78 by striking out lines 33 to 43 at page 72 and substituting the following therefor:

"monthly balance to the credit of the Account, calculated in such manner and at such rates as the regulations provide and credited to the Account monthly, provided that the rate so calculated is not less than the rate obtained from using the method of calculating interest in force on March 30, 1991."

Motion No. 56.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 78 by striking out lines 36 to 43 at page 72 and substituting the following therefor:

"times as determined by the regulations provided,

(i) subject to subparagraph (ii), that the provisions of the regulations relating to the calculation and crediting of interest to the Account are determined through consultation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Advisory Committee and are approved by a majority of the members appointed pursuant to paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) of subsection (2) of section 25.1 of this Act;

(ii) if the approval of a majority of the members referred to in subparagraph (i) is not provided, the matter shall be referred to an arbitrational panel under the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act for a final and binding decision."

He said: Madam Speaker, as everyone will recognize there are a number of motions grouped together here. I will try to be as succinct as possible.

Motion No. 9 deals with interest on the death benefit account. Although this clause of Bill C-55 addressed by Motion No. 9 broadens and clarifies existing unilateral authority of the government relating to the calculation and crediting of interest to the death benefit account, it also proposes that the government will have sole authority in determining the amount of interest earned by the account. This amendment recognizes the preponderant role played by employees and pensioners in financing death benefit payments.

Motion No. 26 deals with the military and with regard to payments. Since military personnel have already made their contributions to their plan for the last quarter of 1990-91 our party felt in all fairness that the government should do likewise instead of giving itself a three month premium holiday. This is where this amendment flows from.

Motion No. 29 also flows from the military as well with regard to employee contributions to the CFSA. Military personnel should have some say in determining the proportion of their compensation in pay benefits and pensions. In this case, the amendment provides that amounts credited to the superannuation account will be decided by the President of the Treasury Board in consultation with the Canadian Forces Pension Advisory Committee. Moreover, these amounts shall be acceptable for a majority of committee members.

Motion No. 27 basically ensures that at least the minimum, the *status quo* in government employer contributions would prevail until the minister has tabled his studies and has reviewed the pension plan as promised several times over.

Motion No. 28 again is similar but deals with the next plan. The RCMP plan as well has a number of amendments to it.

Motion No. 52 again refers to the benefits and the contributions paid by the members of the plan and is more or less asking the government to put its contribu-

tions in rather than giving itself a three month premium holiday.

I believe the others are similar in nature to the other plans. I would maybe want to mention Motion No. 56.

Employers in the private sector cannot borrow from their employees' pension plans. The income tax pension registration regulations and the conflict of interest provisions of the Federal Pension Benefits Standards Act forbid such action. The federal government simply ignores its own laws in this area. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier spoke awhile ago about fairness and about the government making rules for the private sector and other sectors, but not following its own rules and not setting a standard for itself.

Motion No. 56 would ensure that the government observes the laws that it has enacted and imposed on the private sector. The regulations relating to the calculation and crediting of interest to the account would be determined in consultation with the pension advisory committee depending on which pension plan we are dealing with. I would ask the government members to review the amendments and I would ask my colleagues from other parties to review the motions as well. I ask for their support.

• (1330)

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, I too would like to add a few words on these amendments. Many of the amendments that are being provided by the Liberal Party at this time I presented when the committee was sitting.

I want to emphasize the importance of these amendments because they are tied very strongly to the bill. We have to recognize that this bill is changing the whole structure of our pension schemes for public servants, for the military, the RCMP, for members of Parliament, for spouses.

The amendments which the member put forward will give some security to these people who are contributing to pension schemes. The government is changing it from legislation to regulation. I think that has to be the context in which we discuss the amendments that have been put forward by the Liberal member—I am not sure of his riding—who has addressed the areas of concern. We should have some teeth in the bill itself so that the government cannot change all the rules through the Governor in Council or whatever group after the bill gets Royal Assent.

I urge the members opposite to look at these amendments in a more serious way. They did not do that in committee—no, I should not say that. There were areas of concern where the public servants came out very strongly with regard to the indexing portions and the Income Tax Act. There were some changes there and I give them credit for that.

I do want to emphasize the importance of some of these changes which are being put forward by both sides and I support the amendments put forward by the member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I would also like to make a few comments and express my support for the amendments to Bill C-55 proposed by the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur.

The Liberal caucus has spent a lot of time and held a number of meetings to try and understand the basic principle of Bill C-55. I think we made it clear in debate, both at second reading and in committee, that we supported the clauses that will help make our pension legislation fairer and more equitable.

We are in favour of harmonization with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as I said earlier in my remarks on Motion No. 6, but we strenuously object to the government doing to the Public Service pension plan what others are prohibited from doing.

Let me explain: There are funding: mechanisms in public and private pension plans that are regulated by federal legislation, such as the rate of return on investment. In this case, the rate of return on investments for public pension plans is much lower, over the long-term, than the rate obtained by the private sector, because we are obliged to invest this money at lower rates.

Furthermore, this government is in the habit of borrowing from its employees, in other words, from their contributions to the pension plan, to finance its own requirements.

To date, the government has borrowed $71 billion from the Public Service Superannuation Fund. I am certainly not impressed with the way this government manages our money, when I look at the reports in the Public Accounts of Canada. As chairman of the Public Accounts committee, I think I speak with some credibility.

It was debated in committee and in this House whether the government's accounts were indeed credible with respect to pensions, for instance. If I remember correctly, $1.367 billion was used to reduce the national debt, and this was not government revenue. Just the same, that money was used last year to reduce the government's deficit, which would otherwise have been some $2 billion more than it was at the time.

[*English*]

There are several areas of Bill C-65 that go well beyond the changes needed to comply with the income tax regulations. The minister has used that argument over a period of time, saying: "We are just trying to comply with the income tax regulations, which is the law of this country".

Why does the government not say: "We will comply with all the laws of this country, including the Pension Benefits Standards Act which says that you cannot borrow". The private sector cannot borrow from its own pension funds to finance its operations. It cannot do that.

Why can the government do it? I ask that question. It does it. It goes against the laws of this country. It decides what kind of interest it is going to pay on the money it borrows. That again is not allowed in the private sector. Why is it this government does it?

Here we have a bill which was supposed to comply with the laws of the land, the Income Tax Act. The minister has used that many, many times.

Bill C-55 proposes to remove Public Service Superannuation Act provisions that until now have been prescribed by a minimum government-employer contribution, minimum interest that the government must pay on pension funds it borrows and prescribed also in which pension plan deficits are to be amortized.

The government is now proposing that these long-standing provisions be replaced by a regime under which the minister alone decides how much the government, as employer, will contribute to the Public Service Superannuation Act, how much the government will contribute to the RCMP pension plan, how much the government will contribute to the armed forces pension plan.

It will do it by regulation. We do not know what those regulations will say, but I know for sure it will be a unilateral decision taken by the government without consulting with the pension people or consulting with the joint Public Service Council which oversees many of these things. Pensions, as we know, are not negotiable in the Public Service.

I come back to that principle of fairness. How can this government continue to do things which, in my view, are contrary to the laws of this land, which it forbids the private sector to do? However, it does it. I do not understand. I wish the minister would get up and break the silence of this place this afternoon.

It is only 1.30 p.m. We are going to go on for several hours yet. He can explain to us how fairness applies in this bill, because it does not. I am afraid that this is a step backwards and I am not happy at all with the way we are going on this question.

I would tell my colleagues in the House, it is certainly a step in the right direction to adopt the amendments put by my colleague from Restigouche—Chaleur and I implore members of this House to look at them seriously and to consider supporting them.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The first question is on Motion No. 9.

• (1340)

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 26. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 27. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 28. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 52. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 53. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

An hon. member: 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 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.

[*Translation*]

The next vote is on Motion No. 55, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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 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 is deferred.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved:

Motion No. 9A.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 30 by striking out line 16 at page 33 and substituting the following therefor:

"payable to any person to whom the Act applies."

Motion No. 58B.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 80 by striking out line 6 at page 79 and substituting the following therefor:

"payable to any person to whom the Act applies."

[*English*]

He said: Madam Speaker, in the process of trying to get my notes organized, I must have mislaid the amendment in question. I will do it from memory. I take it my friend from Burlington will help me get my point across.

Amendment No. 9A again deals with the question of financing of these pension plans. I would like to say, without repeating myself, that the fairness issue is again the point at hand here. Speaking for the caucus of which I am a member, we would encourage members to support the amendment in an effort to show that the government, and the purpose of Bill C-55, has at heart the future and the well-being of its pensioners.

These amendments would enhance the credibility of the government in the eyes of the Public Service.

[*Translation*]

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 said 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 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 is deferred.

• (1350)

[*English*]

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 10.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 30 by striking out line 28 at page 33 and substituting the following therefor:

"and to conform with the Pension Benefits Standards Act, make regulations".

Motion No. 32.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 58 by striking out line 9 at page 59 and substituting the following therefor:

"and to conform with the Pension Benefits Standards Act, make regulations".

Motion No. 59.

That Bill C–55 be amended in Clause 80 by striking out line 18 at page 79 and substituting the following therefor:

"and to conform with the Pension Benefits Standards Act, make regulations".

He said: Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot today about the Pension Benefits Standards Act. Basically, these three motions apply to the three different superannuation acts and are the same motion in the three of them. It asks the government to have the Pension Benefits Standards Act apply to those three acts.

It also looks forward at the process where the minister has promised a review and has promised consultation in that review. It would also permit the minister to implement some of the recommendations out of that process without using the excuse that the statute would have to be amended because it does not conform to the Pension Benefits Standards Act.

Again I come back to the fairness issue that has been talked about time and time again here today. The government has made rules that apply to the private sector and it should have to follow those rules as well.

It is a very straightforward, reasonable amendment. It is a reasonable request and it is a matter of fairness. The minister has talked about fairness, therefore the minister and his colleagues should recognize that this is one point they should support.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, again I want to talk about this amendment in terms of trying to convince the government. I do not think we are making too much headway on trying to do this, but nevertheless we will try again to convince the government to follow its own laws.

As I said, the Pension Benefits Standards Act was a bill of this government and was adopted by this House and it should be, in my view anyway, adhered to by the government.

An hon. member: Absolutely.

Mr. Gauthier: I mentioned a few minutes ago that there were longstanding provisions dealing with funding, financing, borrowing, the amount of interest that is paid on Public Service pension plans, be they the public servants, Armed Forces or the RCMP.

What I alluded to in my previous comments was that this bill takes a different tack and allows the government to unilaterally decide and determine how and when the pension plan deficit will be amortized, what kind of interest rates will be paid, what kind of contribution the government will make. In my view, it changes the rules of the game without giving us too much information in terms of regulations that will flow from this.

The levers the government is giving itself could launch a large scale financial raid on Public Service pension funds. Bill C–55, if enacted, will allow the government to pass some of its pension bills to the next government, if I may use that word, for payment. I will explain.

This bill will allow the government to reduce its budgetary deficit at the expense of an increased budgetary deficit for the next government. These proposed changes and their timing also raise serious doubts as to the sincerity of the statements made by the government that it intends to address the serious question and issues raised by the Auditor General in his reports over the years in the way that Public Service pension finances are managed by this government.

The timing of these changes also casts a long shadow of doubt on the minister's promise to carry out a review of the financial and benefit features of the program.

I was privileged today to get a copy of a letter sent recently to the hon. Audrey McLaughlin, PC, MP, in which the government makes an undertaking that it will review the Members of Parliament Retirement Allowances Act after C–55 receives Royal Assent.

The government has promised public servants that C–55 was nothing but a technical bill that was going to give public servants certain advantages that they did not have in the old law. What it does, in our view, is give a few crumbs here and there, but it takes away a lot of things that we believe were important to the pension administration programs of the government.

The implications and the issues that we tried to raise in terms of the management of the funds for example have fallen on deaf ears. The Federal Superannuates Association which presented many briefs to the legislative

committee, for example, made some rather interesting contributions and some positive, I thought, proposals. The head of the group in his testimony to the committee says: "The government's move to propose these changes before these important studies are completed is akin to putting the cart before the horse".

I also agree with the Public Service representatives when they said: "The government's move to give itself full and unfettered authority to do whatever it wants with Public Service pension finances before it carries out promised reviews raises very fundamental questions about the purpose of these reviews". We heard another today, that it is going to review Public Service pensions, but it is also wants to review members of Parliament pensions. Well, it is well time it did. We agree with that, we have asked for that and the people of Canada have asked for it.

However, are we going to be facing the same kind of situation that the cart is going to be put before the horse in terms of here is the government's plan? We decide what is good for Public Service pensions, we decide what kind of interest rate we will pay from now on by regulation and we decide what our contributions will be. Will it again tell the Canadian public that it will decide what members of Parliament will have in terms of pensions, that it will decide God knows when what kind of contributions will be made? Whether we will correct some of the faults in that program which are needed, we agree, is another question.

We received this letter that the minister sent today or yesterday with some apprehensions. We would like to see that start now, but we are not confident that this government will act in a way that will be open, clear, fair and equitable to all those who are concerned. If we rely on what has been done with C-55, we are concerned.

The experience that we are going through at this time is that this government has absolutely no ears for amendments and absolutely no understanding of what fairness is about if it pursues this bill with final approval in third reading and Royal Assent. These amendments that we are studying at this time are important amendments. They only ask the government to comply with the laws of the land. They only ask the government to do what every other company in Canada that has a pension plan has been told to do. It will not create any additional expenditures of public funds.

• (1400)

It does not oblige the government to make any regulations to apply the Public Service Superannuation Act or the other two acts, the RCMP and the Armed Forces.

If the government bought those amendments, if it did comply with the Pension Benefits Standards Act, it would oblige the government to follow the law. It would be in favour of that. It would want to give that kind of an indication by supporting these amendments, by saying it will comply, it will follow the laws of the land adopted in 1985 by its initiative. The government should not try and outwit, out do or out manoeuvre public servants, be they public servants, RCMP or Armed Forces, by having its own regulation in there all the time telling them what we the government thinks is good for them.

All we ask is fairness. We want the government to be fair with its own public servants. We want this fairness to apply to them as it applies to the private sector. We would like to see a commitment that the government will apply the Public Service pension plans to the benefits standards act.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I would like to pursue a little further the comments made by the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

We in the committee tried to get the Auditor General before the committee because in his report he identified some very serious problems with regard to the invest of pension funds and the interest accrued to those accounts and so on.

Here we have a situation in which we on this side of the House are proposing—I did in committee—that there be some protection and some methods of making sure those funds are secure and properly invested and taken through.

By accepting this amendment not only would you be strengthening the bill and making it fairer you would also be carrying out the concerns that the Auditor General had when he looked at the pension structure of public servants.

I would urge the government to take these amendments very seriously.

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. 10. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 11.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 30 by striking out lines 6 to 12 at page 34 and substituting the following therefor:

"(3) Subject to subsection (3.1), in the vent 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.

(3.1) In the event that the provision of any regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) would reduce or have the effect of reducing any benefit payable under this Act, the provisions of this Act relating to the payments of such a benefit shall prevail."

Motion No. 13.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 30 by striking out line 11 at page 34 and substituting the following therefor:

"Act".

Motion No. 14.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 30 by striking out lines 24 to 26 at page 34 and substituting the following therefor:

"payment that is payable to any person to whom the Public Service Superannuation Act applies."

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East) moved:

Motion No. 15.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 30 by adding immediately after line 26 at page 34 the following:

"72. (1) The Governor in Council may not, by regulation made under section 71, reduce or in any way diminish pension benefits that accrue under this Act before the coming into force of section 71.

(2) Subsection 71(3) does not apply in respect of subsection (1)."

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 33.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 58 by striking out lines 29 to 35 at page 59 and substituting the following therefor:

"(3) Subject to subsection (3.1), 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.

(3.1) In the event that the provisions of any regulations made under subsection (1) of (2) would reduce or have the effect of reducing any benefit payable under this Act, the provisions of this Act relating to the payment of such a benefit shall prevail."

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East) moved:

Motion No. 34

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 58 by adding immediately after line 8 at page 60 the following:

"81. (1) The Governor in Council may not, by regulation made under section 80, reduce or in any way diminish pension benefits that accrue under this Act before the coming into force of section 80.

(2) Subsection 80(3) does not apply in respect of subsection (1)".

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 60.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 80 by striking out lines 38 to 42 at page 79 and lines 1 and 2 at page 80 and substituting the following therefor:

"(3) Subject to subsection (3.1), 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.

3.1 In the event that the provision of any regulations made under subsection (1) or (2) would reduce or have effect of reducing any benefit payable under this Act, the provisions of this Act relating to the payment of such a benefit shall prevail."

Motion No. 62

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 80 by striking out line 1 at page 80 and substituting the following therefor:

"Act".

Motion No. 64

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 80 by striking out line 8 at page 80 and substituting the following therefor:

"on which this subsection comes into force and shall not be before the day on which the Income Tax Act required the making of the regulations"

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East) moved:

Motion No. 65

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 80 by adding immediately after line 16 at page 80 the following:

"42. (1) The Governor in Council may not, by regulation made under section 41, reduce or in any way diminish pension benefits that accrue under this Act before the coming into force of section 41.

(2) Subsection 41(3) does not apply in respect of subsection (1)".

Mr. Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I have a number of motions here and a lot of them deal with the empowerment of cabinet and the Public Service; higher functions of the Public Service.

Motion No. 11 deals with the government's possible reduction of indexing with the PSSA benefits by regulation. The minister in a letter tabled with the committee promised to make it absolutely clear that this could not be possible.

It is not absolutely clear. In the government's mind it seems to feel that it will not be able to do it without going through statute. Those who belong to the plan are fearful that it is still possible. It is not absolutely clear.

This amendment, and if the government is really sincere about making it absolutely clear, would make it absolutely clear.

Motion No. 13 is an even more serious amendment, not necessarily for all of the persons who benefit from these plans, but for democracy itself.

There are a number of provisions in Bill, C-55, that where there is an inconsistency, the regulations will supersede the statute. In other words, we could debate here. We have elected members of Parliament who could put forth a law, pass a law, so that it becomes the law of the land. Through regulation, if there is an inconsistency between the regulation and the statute, Bill C-55 would permit the regulation to supersede the statute.

In committee that raised a lot of concern. Some members went so far as to say it was a direct attack on democracy. It is. When the legal counsel was asked whether this was a normal practice, he said it was becoming a normal practice. In other words, the government was trying to run things by regulation. We know what happens with regulations. Quite often they are left in the hands of a few and quite often the regulations change overnight, depending on who and where and what it applies to.

Motion No. 14 would make it very clear. This amendment attempts to make it absolutely clear that the government cannot unilaterally use regulations to change amounts of pensions, annual allowances, annuities, supplementary benefits or lump sum payments.

If this amendment would have been adopted some time ago, after the first meeting of the committee, it would have prevented a lot of the anxiety of the members who belong to these plans. I cannot understand why, when the minister says he wants to make it absolutely clear, he does not make it absolutely clear.

• (1410)

Motion No. 33 is similar because we are dealing with a number of pension acts here. They follow in line. We are trying to standardize them in certain cases. It deals with that provision of regulations superseding statutes where there is an inconsistency.

Motion No. 60 would deal with the indexation again. It would again in this case make it absolutely clear, as the minister wants. I do not know why the government would not accept this amendment. It would make it absolutely clear in the case of the RCMP Superannuation Act that

the benefits would not be reduced through regulation, especially the benefits with regard to indexation.

The government says it is just getting it in line with the Income Tax Act. The Income Tax Act provides for a lot of changes through regulation, so we do not know exactly what we are getting to.

The other thing that was alluded to earlier is that we talk about these regulations as if they are already there, as if we know what they are, but they have not been tabled. I do not even think that we have started that much work on them.

Motion No. 62 deals with the regulation-making power of the government. If this were accepted, it would prevent governments now and in the future—not only this government but other governments as well—to run roughshod over certain acts through regulation.

Motion No. 11 deals with indexing and is with regard to trying to make it absolutely clear, as the minister really wanted to make it clear. Again, we are asking government members to support these amendments.

These amendments are probably the most important ones in the bill at this stage because we talk about regulation. We talk about giving the government all this power through regulation. For the members of the plans, publicly and privately, in committee, in press conferences and in press releases there was the concern.

The government kept on saying it would not do that. We know what it has done. I can assure you that there is cause for concern. If the minister actually does want to make it perfectly clear, he should start with these amendments.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pursue the amendments I put forward, Motions Nos. 15, 34 and 65.

All three are identical but we have three pension plans here. We have the Public Service pension plan, the RCMP pension plan and the military pension plan affected by this.

I want to start off with regard to clause 30 because there was some very, very positive work done. Through the agreement of all three parties, some major amendments were made to the bill. I want to commend not only the government and the Liberals but also the department that understood fully the concerns that we had in those areas. There were some significant changes made.

The fact is that this is a regulatory bill and we do not know what the regulations are going to be when the bill comes into place. Therefore, I have placed this amendment with regard to clause 30 of Bill C-55.

It says:

> That Bill C-55 be amended by adding the following immediately after line 32 on page 32.
>
> The Governor in Council may not, by regulation made under section 71, reduce or in any way diminish pension benefits that accrue under this act before the coming into force of section 71.
>
> (2) Subsection 71(3) does not apply in respect of subsection (1).

This is a very important amendment. If the government is intent on telling the public servants, the RCMP and the military that it does not want to roll back their pensions or change their pensions, then it will adopt this amendment to ensure that they will not be rolled back.

If it does not accept this amendment, those pensions are in jeopardy because future governments, even if this minister commits that he will not do it, what is to stop a future government, knowing that the regulatory powers are in this legislation, to do the things they want.

I want to urge the government to support this amendment to ensure that the pensions and the provisions that are now in place are protected.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, this whole group of amendments deals with a very important point. The amendment debated in committee, as my friend from Restigouche—Chaleur said, was highly contentious because what it proposes to do is give the government the right to do by regulation certain things, not by legislation.

We asked questions about it. I admit in the beginning in committee it was difficult to get an answer from the government. After a while they came to understand that we were concerned about this unilateral power of the government to make regulations affecting the pension plans of public servants, armed forces and RCMP.

We asked them for total assurance that none of the standard benefits, the indexing of the pensions, the contributions made by the employer, et cetera, would be changed by regulations. It took some time. It took about three weeks to a month before we got an undertaking from Treasury Board and the government, and the minister made the commitment that it was not their

intention to do certain things by regulation. They intended to follow the law.

I want to come back to the Pension Benefits Standards Act, which people are now starting to understand is wide-ranging legislation passed by this House in 1985 and which, in my opinion, the government is not following.

In addition to legislating minimum benefit levels for Canadian pension plans for the private sector, it sets out in the Pension Benefits Standards Act a code of conduct for pension plan administrators and managers by making it a condition of pension registration that pension plan administrators, and I will read from the act: "shall exercise a degree of care that a person of ordinary prudence would exercise in dealing with the property of another person". It goes on to require that administrators not be in a material conflict of interest.

I for one do not believe that Public Service employees and pensioners are being unreasonable when they ask that the many billions of dollars they have put into their pension plans over the years be protected by the same code of conduct.

Over the years this government has been in the centre of many conflict of interest situations. These conflict of interest involvements have seriously eroded public trust in governments. However, as serious as these conflict of interest scandals have been, in my opinion they pale in comparison with the conflict of interest situation that confronts the government if it refuses to endorse the spirit and the principle of these amendments.

• (1420)

They also pale in comparison to the possibility of conflict of interest that could come from the administration of Public Service pension plans. To use a variation of an expression that has been in wide use in the last few years: this will be mother of all conflict of interest situations.

We have the government refusing to say publicly in this House today that it commits itself by supporting these amendments not to use regulations to change the standards of pension plans of public servants, armed forces personnel or retired RCMP officers or personnel.

I do not understand this. Let me highlight for a few minutes the nature of this conflict of interest. As the sole administrator of Public Service pension plans, the government has a duty to protect the many billions of dollars that public servants and pensioners have put in their pension plans, a duty to get the best possible return on the billions of dollars that are in that fund. There is about $71 billion; a lot of money. The government must do its best to get a return on those billions of dollars in pension funds of the Public Service and RCMP.

On the other hand, as a borrower—and the government it does borrow the money—of that $71 billion, because the government borrows that fund to finance its operations or its deficit, the government has a natural interest in minimizing the interest it pays on those borrowings.

You can see the conflict. Furthermore, the opportunity of the government to short-change public servants and pensioners in this regard is being increased in my opinion by this bill, not diminished. Bill C-55 tightens the monopoly stranglehold of the government on the management of the Public Service pension funds.

The serious nature of this conflict of interest was serious enough that the Auditor General, an impartial person, an agent of this House, a servant of Parliament, in his 1991 report said that the bookkeeping of this government in the matter of pension leaves a lot to be desired. He did not like the way it was keeping its books and he said so. That, in my view, is a serious comment made by a very important agent of Parliament to the effect that the management of the pension fund was not taken very seriously by the government.

Over the years the government has made high-sounding speeches about doing something about conflict of interest situations. Most Canadians would agree that the time for talk in this area is long gone and the time for action is long overdue. I know that we have before this House now a study by a committee dealing with conflict of interest. I hope the government reads it and applies some of it.

I also believe that five years, the length of time since we adopted the Standard Benefits Pension Act, is sufficient time to allow for the government to get its act together and to get out, as it requires everybody else, of

the direct conflict of interest it is in managing the Public Service funds. Five years is long enough to make a decision on whether it will or will not abide by the same code of conduct it has legislated for the pension administrators of the private sector.

The situation the government is in was well described by the present President of the Treasury Board in his appearance before the legislative committee on March 17 of this year. Without getting into the question of how much blarney he was spouting that day, I do not consider it to be blarney when he said: "It would look a bit ridiculous"—this is a minister of the Crown speaking—"to ask all pension plans in Canada to conform while our own plans are away offside".

This statement was made in relation to government conformity to the 1992 income tax regulations. I hope the minister would agree the logic of his observations on March 17 apply equally to June 12 and that he will get up in his place and support an amendment which clearly sets out the position of this Parliament that the Government of Canada will not remain in a conflict of interest, but will abide by the laws of the country and follow the laws of the country.

I would therefore urge the minister and his friends on that side to bring the government on side with the code of conduct and other features of the 1986 Pension Benefits Standards Act. That is all we ask and that is all these amendments propose to do.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, we are debating a number of amendments, one of which is put forward by the member for Kootenay East.

This is the first opportunity I have had to intervene in the debate generally. The member for Kootenay East was very successful in committee in persuading the government to adopt a number of amendments that have significantly improved the bill. He has encouraged this House to adopt this amendment.

It has the very simple effect of reassuring those who are covered by these plans that under the regulations there is no way in which the government can diminish their pension benefits. It is a valuable amendment. It does no harm to the bill, and I would hope that the government would see its way clear to agreeing to it.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some short comments on the amendments that have been proposed by the member for Restigouche—Chaleur.

I think that he hit the major point of what is being considered. It is the question of regulation and statutes. It is very important that this bill should not be amended by regulation. It is extremely valuable for the pensioner to know that he is secure in what he is going to get in the future. That is why these motions should be supported by the members opposite.

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.

An hon. member: 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred. A vote on this motion applies to Motions Nos. 13, 14, 15, 33, 34, 60, 62, 64 and 65.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C-55 be amended by adding immediately after line 26 at page 34 the following:

"30.1 The said Act is further amended by adding the following, immediately after section 71:

72. Where the Minister is satisfied that as result of erroneous advice or an administrative error on the part of any person acting in an official capacity in the administration of this Act, a person has been denied a benefit to which the person was entitled or the opportunity to exercise a right to elect a benefit or to opt for a benefit, the Minister may take such remedial action as the Minister considers appropriate to place that person in the position that the person would have been in if that erroneous advice had not been given or that administrative error had not been made.

73.(1) The Minister shall provide a bargaining agent or pensioner organization with such data, estimates, projections, and other related information which may reasonably be required and requested by the bargaining agent or pensioner organization to monitor and oversee the operation, administration planning, policy analysis and development activities under this Act on behalf of its members.

(2) Where the Minister fails, within a reasonable period of time, to provide a bargaining agent or pensioner organization with information requested under subsection (1), the bargaining agent or pensioner organization may seek redress by referring the matter to an adjudicator under the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act, and if the adjudicator determines that the request made by a bargaining agent or pensioner organisation under subsection (1) is a reasonable request, the Minister shall provide the requested information within the period set by the adjudicator."

Motion No. 35.

That Bill C–55 be amended in Clause 58 by adding immediately after line 8 at page 60 the following:

"81. Where the Minister is satisfied that as a result of erroneous advice or an administrative error on the part of any person acting in an official capacity in the administration of this Act, a person has been denied a benefit to which the person was entitled or the opportunity to exercise a right, to elect a benefit or to opt for a benefit, the Minister may take such remedial action as the Minister considers appropriate to place that person in the position that the person would have been in if that erroneous advice had not been given or that administrative error had not been made.

82.(1) The Minister and the President of the Treasury Board shall provide an organization representing members or pensioners of the Armed Forces with such data, estimates, projections and other related information which may reasonably be required and requested by such organziation to monitor and oversee the operation, administration, planning, policy analysis and development activities under the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act on behalf of its members."

Motion No. 66.

That Bill C–55 be amended in Clause 80 by adding immediately after line 16 at page 80 the following:

"42. Where the Minister is satisfied that as a result of erroneous advice or an administrative error on the part of any person acting in an official capacity in the administration of this Act, a person has been denied a benefit to which the person was entitled or the opportunity to exercise a right, to elect a benefit or to opt for a benefit, the Minister may take such remedial action as the Minister considers appropriate to place such a person in the position that the person would have been in if that erroneous advice had not been given or that administrative error had not been made.

43.(1) The Minister and the President of the Treasury Board shall provide an organization representing members of pensioners of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with such data, estimates, projection, and other related information which may reasonably be required and requested by such organization to monitor and oversee the operation, administration, planning, policy analysis and development activities under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act on behalf of its members.

(2) Where the Minister or the President of the Treasury Board fails, within a reasonable period of time, to provide an organization representing members or pensioners of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with information requested under subsection (1), the organization may seek redress by referring the matter to an adjudicator under the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act, and if the adjudicator determines that the request made by the organization under subsection (1) is reasonable, the Minister or the President of the Treasury Board shall provide the information requested within the period set by the adjudicator."

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved:

Motion No. 84A.

That Bill C–55 be amended in Schedule II by adding immediately after line 34 at page 156 the following:

"10.1 Where the Minister is satisfied that, as a result of erroneous advice or an administrative error on the part of any person acting in an official capacity under this Act, a person has been denied a benefit to which the person was entitled or the opportunity to exercise a right, to elect a benefit or to opt for a benefit, the Minister may take such remedial action as the Minister considers appropriate to place the person in the position that the person would have been in if the erroneous advice had not been given or the administrative error had not been made."

Mr. Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I will speak to the three motions that I put. They are very similar and have to do with the three superannuation acts that we are dealing with, Public Service, the military and the RCMP.

Motion No. 16 deals with remedial action in situations where employees are denied benefits to which they are entitled or the opportunity to exercise rights because they have made bad decisions concerning their benefit options due to some erroneous advice or administrative errors. It gives them a chance of reprieve. Deputy ministers and deputy department heads, senior military, and senior RCMP officers, and also I must add political appointees, have that option right now. If there is removal of benefits or rights because of an error, misinformation or whatever, that can be corrected by the minister once it is pointed out to him or her.

• (1430)

The second part of the amendment deals with the problems facing Public Service unions and pensioner organizations when they try to obtain information from the government on the operation of their pension plans. This section would facilitate the obtaining of this information.

We heard the word fairness many times today. In fact I believe the minister mentioned that many times in referring to Bill C–55, that it was one of the objectives.

I say again that senior personnel, senior public servants, senior officers in the RCMP and in the military have this option. There is no reason why the every day person cannot have the very same option.

I will not speak to the three motions as the three motions just follow in line with each superannuation act. I would appeal to the justice that should be in this House. I would say it is only natural that we should accept this amendment.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I too have an amendment that is in this group. My amendment affects schedule II which is the part of the bill that deals with spousal benefits under the legislation.

This is one of the amendments which the committee for spousal and children's pensions survival and related benefits was particularly anxious for the government to accept. There are cases in which there are administrative errors made or in which there is some kind of erroneous advice given and someone loses their rights.

This amendment simply gives to the government the opportunity of making a correction. It gives to the minister the opportunity to take remedial action.

There is not a piece of legislation in the world that is perfect. In our constituencies we all face the problem from time to time where people come in after having been given wrong advice. Perhaps they did not understand the advice very well or the advice was actually incorrect. No public servant can be counted on every day of the week, every week of the year, to be sure of the information they give. They are often hurried. The issues are complicated. Perhaps the person has not explained the full story. Those of us who are lawyers will probably know those days where we did not ask a key question and it turned out our advice was not as good or as correct as it should have been. That can happen.

All we are asking with this amendment is that the House agree to give the minister authority to take remedial action. What is so hard about that? What is so difficult about that?

I hope that the government will consider this seriously and agree to the amendment.

Mr. Jean–Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with amendments that could be entitled fairness, fairness in treatment of public servants when they look forward to retiring or have retired.

The amendment before us deals with affording remedial action to employees for many reasons. In my files I have dozens of cases where public servants, either because of ill health, because of bad advice or because of the stress situation they were in at the time, decided to take an option which proved to be the wrong decision. They cannot come back and look and ask for a fair hearing.

Yet deputy heads, senior military RCMP and political appointees, are protected in this bill. If they make a mistake, they can go to the authorities and say: "Change the rules for me". My point is why is it that we do it for deputy heads, senior military, RCMP and political appointees and we refuse to do the same thing for public servants?

It boggles the mind. I call unfair legislation unfair when it treats people unfairly. All these amendments put forth by the hon. members from Restigouche—Chaleur and Victoria ask the government to show some heart and consistency and to come to grips with an issue which is something that we must address, fairness, and treat all public servants equally, be they senior administrators of the government or the average worker.

That is a request which we make in all honesty in the spirit and hope that a government will get off its fanny and do something constructive.

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 84A. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 21.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 47 by striking out lines 43 to 46 at page 44 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*a*) two persons appointed from among contributors in recept of an annuity under this Act who are nominated for appointment by associations that, in the opinion".

Motion No. 22.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 47 by striking out line 3 at page 45 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*b*) four persons appointed from among".

Motion No. 23.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 47 by striking out line 9 at page 45 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*c*) three persons appointed from among".

Motion No. 24.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 47 by striking out line 12 at page 45 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*d*) three persons appointed from among".

Motion No. 25.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 49 by adding immediately after line 34 at page 47 the following:

"50.2 (1) Subject to subsection (2), any regulation made by the Governor in Council or other regulation making authority that has not obtained approval of the regulation by a majority of the members appointed to the Canadian Forces Pension Advisory Committee pursuant to paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) of subsection (2) of section 49.1 of this Act.

(2) If the approval of a majority of the members referred to in subsection (1) is not provided, the contents of the proposed regulation shall be referred to an arbitrational panel under the Public Service Staff Relations Act for a final and binding decision."

Motion No. 40.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 75 by striking out lines 37 to 40 at page 69 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*a*) two persons appointed from among contributors in receipt of an annuity under this Act who are nominated for appointment by associations that, in the opinion".

Motion No. 41.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 75 by striking out line 43 at page 69 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*b*) four persons appointed from among".

Motion No. 43.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 75 by striking out lines 4 to 7 at page 70 and substituting the following therefor:

"persons; and".

Motion No. 44.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 75 by striking out line 5 at page 70 and substituting the following therefor:

"(c) three persons appointed from among".

Motion No. 45.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 75 by striking out line 8 at page 70 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*d*) three persons apointed from among".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Motion No. 47—

Mr. Arseneault: With regard to Motion No. 47, Mr. Speaker, I would like to withdraw that motion at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is so ordered.

Motion No. 47 withdrawn.

• (1440)

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 51.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 77 by adding immediately after line 20 at page 72 the following:

"26.2(1) Subject to subsection (2), any regulation made by the Governor in Council or other regulation making authority under this Act is void if the regulation making authority has not obtained approval of the regulation of a majority of the members appointed to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Advisory Committee pursuant to paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) of subsection (2) of section 25.1 of this Act.

(2) If the approval of a majority of the members referred to in subsection (1) is not obtained, the contents of the proposed regulation shall be referred to an arbitrational panel under the Public Service Staff Relations Act for a final and binding decision."

He said: Mr. Speaker, a number of these motions deal with representation of those who contribute to the plan. Besides the government, there are a number of individuals who do contribute. Also there are those who are receiving benefits, some of the pensioners who are receiving those benefits.

Motion No. 21 deals with the establishment of a Canadian forces pension advisory committee. This would also put forth certain points where the government could not move by regulation without consent of this advisory group.

Motions Nos. 22, 23 and 24 increase this representation on the advisory committee.

Motion No. 25, this amendment stipulates that to enact regulations the government must obtain consent of a majority of the members of that advisory committee.

Motion No. 40, this amendment authorizes the minister to establish an advisory committee for the RCMP.

Motions Nos. 41, 44 and 45 would increase the numbers on that committee. Motion No. 51 would outline the way the committee would function. In so doing, it would allow the pensioners to feel confident that their benefits would be protected by at least the advisory committee.

I would ask again that the members of the House look favourably upon those recommendations.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, just briefly on this amendment.

God knows the government needs advice. The government needs advice to manage many things, but it needs to be told also that sometimes it is good to pay attention to what is being said.

All these amendments propose is to establish a structure that would give the government advice on how to better manage these pension plans. I hope the government does not vote against this. I hope the government members see their way to accepting this motion because it makes sense.

Pensions over the years have not been negotiable. Usually the process works this way: Unions, Public Service employees represented by unions, the employer, Treasury Board and some other specialists in the field usually meet regularly and discuss the pension plans. It is called the National Joint Council.

Membership is restricted but nevertheless it is an input to the government. It is a structure which is very helpful in giving the government sound advice on many, many things. One of them is pensions.

All we are asking is that the three large components—possibly four but I will just mention the three largest ones—be well recognized and represented on boards, that the Canadian forces pensions advisory committee should be established. It makes sense that the RCMP advisory committee be established. It makes sense. The Public Service, and possibly the superannuates, who are retired people, have a commitment, a vested interest in that their funds in their pension plans be well adminis-

tered. They should be listened to occasionally by the government.

All this proposes to do, and it is simple, is to give advice to the government. I know it is difficult for Tories to take this and understand what it means, but nevertheless it would be good for once if they would come to their senses and say: "Yes, we will listen and we will approve this amendment. We will vote for it and we will give these people sound boards where they can make their contributions. We will listen to what they have to say".

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak to these amendments because we moved them in committee. We went a little further than what this amendment does. We recommended that spouses—and the government is now starting to recognize it in this legislation—be given the opportunity to sit on the advisory committee. We also recommended that retirees be allowed to sit on the advisory committee. It is very simple.

I wanted to go even further than that. If we were going to regulations, I wanted to have a management board that would have representatives from the government, from the employees who are contributing to the plan and from the various groups. They would sit on a management board and have some input as to how their money—and that is what we are talking about—was going to be invested or taken care of, but the government said that was beyond the scope of the plan.

There is an advisory board in this arrangement. This amendment calls for various things within that advisory board. We were told at the committee stage from one of the advisory board members at the present time that the board had not even sat for over two years because the government did not even listen to the recommendations it made.

Here we are with a regulatory bill and an advisory board is set up. We are asking for specific things to be done on that advisory board so that at the very least it would have the input of the retirees, of the various groups and of the pensioners coming before it in an advisory capacity only. This amendment is calling for someone to be on that advisory board to advise the government at least.

I would urge the government to accept this small watch-dog program we have put forward in this amendment.

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. 21. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 25. 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 will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 51. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 48.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 77 by striking out lines 12 and 13 at page 72 and substituting the following therefor:

"the Account;

(*i*) prescribing the terms and conditions under which the Minister may enter into reciprocal pension transfer agreements with other Canadian police agencies, commissions, and organizations; and

(*j*) generally as the Governor in Council".

Motion No. 50.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 77 by striking out lines 17 to 20 at page 72.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 48 would enlarge the regulation-making authority contained in the RCMPSA. Actually it would allow the minister, or I guess the Solicitor General in this case because we are dealing with the RCMP, some portability in the pension plans.

For instance, once the government has entered into a reciprocal pension transfer agreement it could agree to transfer the employee and employer contributions made to pension plans to or from the federal plan. This would occur whenever an individual moved to or from the federal Public Service under circumstances outlined in specific agreements negotiated by the federal government with another level of government. In short this amendment would facilitate portability of pensions. It is a common sense amendment and I would ask members to support it.

• (1450)

On Motion No. 50, this amendment removes the power to apply regulations retroactively respecting annual rates of pay, interests rates and so on. The purpose is to limit the power of the government to make regulations and then apply them retroactively.

It should be pointed out that we are making these amendments now in the spirit that it will apply to all governments; the one that is here today and those that will be here in the future.

I should also use this opportunity to point out that 112 amendments were put forth at report stage. It is a bit unusual but we can see why it is unusual. It is a very technical bill. We have gone through it with a fine-tooth comb. In committee we got the same results that we are getting here. There is no compassion, no flexibility, and quite often members opposite do not even want to look at an amendment that deals with common sense. I would ask them to look at the amendments. A number of their constituents has an interest in this matter. It has to do with justice and fairness. It starts with the minister's own words. It is the minister who came up with these words and started the ball rolling with Bill C-55.

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. 48. 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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 48 negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 50. 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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 50 negatived.

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East) moved:

Motion No. 67.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 81

(*a*) by striking out lines 34 to 38 at page 91 and substituting the following therefor:

"13. (1) Subject to subsection (2), an allowance or other benefit shall be paid in accordance with this Part to or in respect of a person who, being a member, ceases to be a member or, being a member or former member, dies.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), an allowance or other benefit payable to a former member under this Part is not payable to the former member if and for so long as the former member is employed by or receives remuneration from the Government of Canada, an agency of the Government of Canada or a federal Crown corporation.";

(*b*) by striking out line 39 at page 91 and substituting the following therefor:

"14.(1) Subject to sections 13 and 58, where a per–"; and

(*c*) by striking out line 35 at page 94 and substituting the following therefor:

"15.(1) Subject to sections 13 and 58, where a per–".

Motion No. 68.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 81

(*a*) by striking out lines 34 to 38 at page 91 and substituting the following therefor:

"13.(1) Subject to subsection (2), an allowance or other benefit shall be paid in accordance with this Part to or in respect of a person who, being a member, ceases to be a member or, being a member or former member, dies.

(2) An allowance payable under section 14 or 15 to a former member or, in respect of a deceased member or former member, to a person under section 20 is not payable to the former member or the person unless the former member has reached sixty years of age or, in the case of an allowance under section 20, the deceased member or former member would have reached sixty years of age."

(*b*) by striking out line 39 at page 91 and substituting the following therefor:

"14.(1) Subject to sections 13 and 58, where a per–";

(*c*) by striking out line 35 at page 94 and substituting the following therefor:

"15.(1) Subject to sections 13 and 58, where a per–"; and

(*d*) by striking out lines 11 to 18 on page 101 and substituting the following therefor:
"(*a*) begins to be payable,

(i) where the member or former member is sixty years of age or older at the time of death, on the first day of the month following the month in which the member or former member dies,

(ii) where the member or former member has not reached sixty years of age at the time of death, on the first day of the month following the month in which the member or former member would have reached sixty years of age, and".

Motion No. 68B.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 81 by adding immediately after line 38 at page 91 the following:

"13.1 An allowance or other benefit payable to a former member under this Part is not payable to the former member if and for so long as the former member is employed by or receives remuneration from the Government of Canada, an agency or the Government of Canada or a federal Crown corporation."

Motion No. 68C.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 81 by adding immediately after line 38 at page 91 the following:

"13.1 An allowance payable under section 14 or 15 to a former member or, in respect of a deceased member or former member, to a person under section 20 is not payable to the former member or the person unless the former member has reached sixty years of age or, in the case of an allowance under section 20, the deceased member or former member would have reached sixty years of age."

Motion No. 69A.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 81 by striking out lines 12 to 18 at page 101 and substituting the following therefore:

"(i) where the member or former member is sixty years of age or older at the time of death, on the first day of the month following the month in which the member or former member dies,
(ii) where the member or former member has not reached sixty years of age at the time of death, on the first day of the month following the month in which the member or former member would have reached sixty years of age, and".

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to enter the debate on this bill and to speak to the five separate motions I had moved all respecting the pensions of members of Parliament. As we are well aware, this is a very controversial area with respect to the bill. These amendments are extremely controversial.

I must say, however, this issue is not a new one for me. It is an issue of longstanding. It is one that has been with me for at least some 15 years, dating back to my days serving in municipal government when numerous constituents came to me and raised matters of pension concerns and particularly raised matters relating to the pensions of members of Parliament.

I have had over those 15 years constant discussion and constant correspondence with constituents who had concerns relating to the pensions of members of Parliament. I will just name one, Mrs. Margaret Hunt, a personal friend and a long-time constituent of mine who constantly over those 15 years among others has raised this issue.

Shortly after the our government took office in 1984, the then President of the Treasury Board introduced legislation to make some modifications in pensions relating to public servants and also relating to members of Parliament. There was a great outcry at that time, particularly from public servants. As a result that particular piece of legislation died on the Order Paper and was never renewed and never pursued.

In fact this is the first time since then to my knowledge that there has been a piece of legislation before the House presented by the government dealing with this particular issue.

When Bill C-55 was introduced the present President of the Treasury Board indicated that he wanted to appoint a review committee or some review body to look at the pensions of members of Parliament. He indicated that orally and he indicated that in a letter, copy of which I have with me that appears to be dated April 2, 1992.

As I understand it subsequently he wrote a letter yesterday—I have a copy which is undated—to the Leader of the New Democratic Party in which he again indicated that he intended to proceed with some sort of an inquiry into the pensions of MPs. At the same time, of course, he did not say when. He did not indicate what the terms of the inquiry would be or who would be making the inquiry.

It would seem to me, given the concerns that have been expressed about this situation and about the pensions of members of Parliament, it would have been very wise indeed for the President of the Treasury Board to have in fact at the outset of this whole entire debate on this bill set up that inquiry formally so that it would have dispensed with any question whatsoever about where we were going from here, particularly in light of the fact that things can quite logically happen along the way, and they did with the previous government bill which died on the Order Paper.

All members of Parliament know that the public has three main areas of concern, particularly my own constituents, with the pensions of members of Parliament. They include something called double-dipping. They include the whole question of indexation of the pension and they include the question of the age at which the pension begins.

These motions, and specifically Motions Nos. 67 and 68, deal with the issue of double-dipping. Double-dipping means that if an MP is already receiving a pension and then gets another government job of some sort he or she would be in a position of being paid twice for their time. This amendment would put an end to that.

The other motions I have before the House at the moment, Motions Nos. 68, 68C, and 69A, deal with the issue of when the pension begins. Right now after serving for six years in Parliament one's pension automatically begins when one ceases to be a member of Parliament. These particular motions would make it law that the pension would not begin until the age of 60.

In my view that would deal with both the issue of when the pension begins and, at least to some extent, the question of indexing because there could be no further indexing prior to the age of 60. Both those issues are dealt with in these particular motions.

There have been questions put to me as to why I chose the age of 60. I suppose I could have chosen the age of 65 or I could have chosen the age of 55 because there are pensions that fall into those categories. I chose the age of 60 for two reasons. First of all, if I had chosen the age of 55, I would have qualified immediately and I did not

think that made any logic, any sense. I thought it would have been self-serving and hypocritical of me.

• (1500)

Second, I chose the age of 60 because one is able to qualify and receive a Canada pension under the Canada Pension Plan at the age of 60. In those terms that is the reasoning behind the age of 60.

A good many people have raised concerns with me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have to go into Private Members' Business. If the hon. member would like to complete his 10 minutes I will not see the clock. You will have three minutes after Private Members' Business. If you can complete it within a minute, fine. If not, we will wait until after Private Members' Business. Is the hon. member ready to complete it right now?

Mr. Redway: I would conclude by saying many members have raised with me the issue of grandfathering and that certainly is not dealt with in these amendments.

It seems to me that there is a good argument for saying this sort of a change should not occur retroactively. On the other hand, it seems to me that it would be hypocritical of me to suggest I make a change which would not affect me but would affect others in this House.

It is with that in mind that I put the motions as they are. It seems to me these amendments would bring it in line with the kind of pensions that other people in the private sector have.

As a lawyer, I only had the benefit of registered retirement savings plans. As a member of municipal council, I only had the benefit of a pension that would start at age 65. These motions, if adopted by the House, would bring members of Parliament's pensions into line with those of the private sector.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If there is going to be continuous debate on it, I am going to have to call it 3 p.m.

It being 3 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Thursday, May 7, the motion of Mr. Hicks, that Bill C-227, an act to amend the Criminal Code (desecration of the flag), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying the other day in debate on Bill C-227, having to do with the desecration of the flag of Canada, various sources in the legal community have urged the government to exercise restraint in the application of our criminal law. The government has been urged from time to time to use the criminal law only to reaffirm fundamental values. Our Criminal Code should contain only acts which are both punishable and wrong; that is, acts contravening fundamental values and nothing more.

The criteria for real crimes are fairly clear. A real crime in my opinion is an act which is morally wrong and that threatens and infringes on fundamental social values. These values are of two kinds: those which are essential to the very existence of a society and those which are essential to the existence of our own particular society.

Generally, essential values are those without which social life would be impossible. Society is, after all, a co-operative enterprise. Its members must have some give and take, must respect each other's needs and vulnerabilities and must enjoy some mutual trust and reliance.

In other words, they must prefer order to anarchy, peace to violence and honesty to deceit. All social life therefore commits its members to such values as the sanctity of life, the inviolability of the person, the virtue of truth and the necessity of order.

Transgressions against these essential values are crimes of violence, fraud and crimes against peace, order and good government. These are the major candidates for inclusion in the code of real crimes.

Besides these generally essential values, most societies hold certain other values. For example, we in Canada set high value on individual liberty. This is by no means necessary for social life, for many societies have existed without it, and an unfree society is still a society but not a society in which we would want to live.

For us, no society would suffice without a measure of freedom, justice, tolerance, human dignity and equality. Transgressions of these important values are crimes such as false imprisonment, interfering with justice and hate propaganda. These form the second category of real crimes.

I also wish to comment on this bill from the perspective of the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms. I think that it is important that members of the House keep the charter in mind whenever considering new legislation. The charter in section 2 sets out the fundamental freedoms which Canadians enjoy. That section states that everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and experssion, including freedom of the press and other media of communications; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association.

Honourable members will note that paragraph (b) explicitly guarantees freedom of expression. Any ban such as proposed in this bill would have to be considered in light of the charter guarantee of this fundamental freedom.

For all of these reasons, this bill proposes an inappropriate extension of the criminal law. I believe that we should explore more appropriate ways of dealing with such offensive behaviour.

[*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 a few minutes to give you my views on the hon. member's bill, which deals with values and symbols.

I have always been impressed by the changes that take place in society and how our interpretation of certain actions may differ. Today, we have a generation of young people for whom certain symbols no longer have the same value they had for us.

Let me give you an example. Today, a contract is always in writing. Everything has to be in writing, whether it is signed or initialled. I know, because I was involved as a negotiator in the collective bargaining process for quite some time. Today, everything has to be exactly right and somebody's signature has to be on it. A signature commands respect. Although we are now starting to have some doubts about that, because if there were no witnesses or a person had no authority to sign— When we see someone's signature, we immediately start wondering whether they had that authority.

Formerly, it was a matter of giving your word. Our parents and grandparents felt that very strongly. When someone said: "I give you my word or I swear on the Bible", that was sacred. This ritual hardly exists any more. We still see it among some older people, but today, even someone's signature or initial on a letter may be challenged. We saw this recently, even in contracts with native tribes or societies; today, 100 years later, they say that the person who signed the contract, which according to the White man was legal, had no authority to sign. So this has far-reaching implications. My point is that our values have changed.

To me a flag is sacred. There are other symbols that are sacred as well but today we have a generation of young people that has been told, and there is nothing wrong with that, that they must express themselves. Well, they do. The way they do it is, of course, not my way, just as my way is different from my grandfather's way.

Today, we are being ask to vote on this bill and refer it to committee for consideration. I suggest referring the bill to a committee in the departmental envelope, for consideration, because it has implications that are quite substantial. We are talking about a bill that appeals to different values in a different context.

People were told to express themselves, and so they did. We had one example last year, or was it two years ago, when five or six people trampled the Quebec flag. It was estimated that the same scene was shown on television 21 or 22 times. Each time, it was always the same five or six people making the same gesture, which was meant to insult those for whom the flag is a symbol.

We must be careful here. When we vote for a bill, it has to be votable. Second, it has to be enforceable. By the way, what is a symbol? Then we get legislation that interprets exactly what a symbol is, because we cannot start defining every single symbol. The Canadian flag is a symbol of my country: Canada. But there are provincial symbols as well. There are coats of arms and any number of other ways to symbolize something or other in this country.

Today, thanks to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we have freedom of expression, which is what I am doing today. We have certain symbols in this country and there are more. Our values and our laws are changing—this legislation, for instance—but we should not let legislation make matters worse.

One of the problems we have in this country is that our communications are becoming increasingly efficient. Although that may be a good thing, there are a number of drawbacks, and some of them are quite harmful. I said earlier that we saw the Quebec flag being trampled 22 times. That is 22 times too many. It should not have been done in the first place. However, it was shown 22 times, with some kind of ferocious glee. Because we have this information overload today, people make up their minds just on the basis of a picture or perception. Of course people weren't in front of their television sets 22 times to find out what they were talking about. When the people involved in the incident apologized, the media showed them, but if you have a television set on and you are cooking or knitting or working on a puzzle or talking on the phone, you don't hear the message. The only message you get is the picture. And you say to yourself: Not again! Even if it didn't really happen 22 times, it was shown that many times on television and that was so many times too many. This is one of the problems we have today. It amplifies problems to the point that they become an irritant to people my own age, to my colleagues here in the back or to younger people. And of course with our own symbols we probably irritate young people as far as some of their symbols are concerned. It is all part of the whole problem.

This bill should be referred to committee for consideration because it contains implications for the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and we need a better definition of our symbols.

• (1510)

[*English*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate today and I want to speak in favour of the bill proposed by my colleague. I want to congratulate him for bringing it to the attention of the House.

I have a bill myself, presently being drafted, which is similar except it would also cover the flags of the provinces. I share very much the concerns the parliamentary secretary has raised. I totally agree with him.

In the French media we have seen the flag of Quebec being desecrated time after time. In the English media we have seen the flag of Canada being desecrated every now and then. Of course the reverse is seldom shown because what is shown is meant to tantalise whatever audience one is attempting to tantalise.

For that offence to have occurred once was once too many as the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry has said. To have shown one incident 22 times suggesting the incident had happened 22 times makes it that much more unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

We in this House can take action to try to rectify the situation. Our colleague has proposed a bill today, and I must tell him that I support his initiative. I would like his bill to apply to the provinces as well.

[*English*]

Once the bill does reach committee, and I hope of course it will be passed by this House and go to a parliamentary committee, I hope my colleague who moved the bill and the committee will recommend including the provinces.

There might be a technical difficulty that might be beyond the scope of the bill under our present parliamentary definitions, but with the unanimous consent of the House, I am sure we could report the bill that way and correct it in the way I am suggesting.

I have had a research document prepared by the Library of Parliament as to the constitutional authority we have to legislate in such matters.

[*Translation*]

I note here, for example, that subsection 91(27) of the Constitution Act, 1867 says very clearly that Parliament can pass legislation to protect the Canadian flag from any form of desecration. That is the opinion of researchers working for us in the law and government division of the Library of Parliament. Our expert advisers tell us that the authority to legislate in this area certainly exists, at least under the Constitution Act, 1867.

[*English*]

How did I get into this? Some weeks ago I received a phone call from a constituent of my riding. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to ask him permission to use his name in the House. I will nevertheless read his letter. Here is what the constituent said:

> I am writing in reference to our conversation this morning. My family and I were absolutely shocked when we received this advertising in the mail.

The advertising in question is the one I have here:

> How can anyone show that little respect for our Canadian flag? We are Canadian immigrants, i.e. are Canadians by choice, not chance and as such we are very proud of our flag. In our opinion this brochure clearly defaces and dishonours our flag and the companies responsible for it should be held criminally responsible for their actions.
>
> I do hope that you will be able to stop further distribution of the brochure and would appreciate it if you would inform us of the results.

This is a letter I received from a constituent. It is in regard to a brochure which I have in hand. I will not put it before the cameras, pursuant to our rules, but I will share it with you. The brochure in question shows a flag of Canada which is half red and half blue.

The reason for it is to show an alliance between Air France and Canadian Airlines. They have a merger for their travel points and will give 2,500 bonus points. In so doing, they display the flag in a manner which I find totally unacceptable. I will share the document privately with colleagues afterwards, pursuant to our rules. I will show them the information so they can appreciate what I am referring to.

I regret having to say it, but other groups do that as well. It has recently been brought to my attention that a group I support very much is using our Canadian flag in an offensive way. It is not a secret in this House I am a supporter of pro-life causes, but I totally disagree with the brochure pro-life organizations have put out. They show a Canadian flag under the heading of the Canadian holocaust and on the Maple Leaf is what obviously looks like an aborted foetus. I must say to that group, a group I agree with, I find it equally offensive, whether it is Canadian Airlines, pro-life, pro-choice or whoever else is desecrating the flag of this great country.

This is the 125th anniversary of Canada. I hope in this year we will at least pass this bill, send it to committee and ask colleagues and experts to review it. Perhaps in some small way we can show the Canadian people we as legislators feel strongly about our national institutions. Perhaps we can show them we care about the future of Canada and about those symbols and institutions that keep us together.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

The flag of our country and of all the provinces and territories deserves the respect advocated by our colleague in his bill.

I trust that we will pass this bill on second reading, send it to committee and make changes to include all the provinces and territories of Canada so as to protect their flags too, to ensure that our national, provincial and territorial flags get the respect they deserve.

[*English*]

In doing so, maybe we will contribute in a small way to showing the people of Canada we care about this country.

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, I am very honoured to participate in this debate on this private members' motion from my colleague from Scarborough East. He has introduced a very, very timely and important piece of legislation that may well affect all of us in this country in a very positive way.

As members of Parliament, we all receive a large number of Canadian flags to distribute. I am not sure about your riding but I could probably distribute 10 times the number of Canadian flags, the property of the Government of Canada, without any difficulty. A number of things have happened in the past to flags in this country, and not just to our Canadian flag. Some years ago some Canadians from the New Democratic Party in the Manitoba legislature were upset with an American

activity in Nicaragua and participated in the burning of the American flag in front of the consulate office in Manitoba. I felt very sad this was allowed to happen and no one was brought to task for it, especially since it involved elected members of a legislature participating in a flag burning.

If the law could be extended, all national flags in my view should be protected in this way. It should be an offence because the national flag is a symbol of the country. While some people may have difficulty with certain countries, I do not believe they should have the right to desecrate another nation's flag.

My colleague from Scarborough East tells me well over 80 per cent of Canadians think this is the right thing to do. I resent any member of Parliament asking the Department of Justice if it agrees with this type of legislation. We are the legislators here. We are the people who decide what laws should rule and govern us. If the Department of Justice does not happen to like it, that is too damned bad. I think this is one of the things Canadians want us to do, and we should do.

I very much want to support this. It is something that should have happened a long time ago. We would not be witnessing things happening now to our national unity where people can use that symbol of unity and try to persuade others across this land in a negative way about what is so very important.

The use of the flag and twisting it in a way is probably also done in very bad taste. My colleague for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has highlighted this and it should be done more often. If some of these organizations want to push their point, they should certainly rethink the use of the Canadian flag as they have portrayed it.

I will close by stating I hope this comes to a vote. I will assist the House in bringing it to a vote because I believe elected representatives want to decide the fate of this bill. I hope it passes in all forms.

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak as a private member and I will only speak for a couple of minutes on this.

This is a very interesting topic and I want to congratulate my colleague for introducing it. Protecting our national institutions and our symbols is very important.

With respect to this bill I would imagine there would be some interesting charter questions on this. I know in the United States the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled on a similar bill. Nonetheless, committee stage would be another opportunity for members of Parliament to have a look at this.

The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell made an interesting suggestion concerning provincial flags but the point that the member is making here is that we should protect these national symbols.

One of the speakers indicated how important and how appropriate it would be that we would want to do something to protect one of our national symbols in Canada's 125th year.

Heaven knows, there are enough attacks on Canada's institutions and enough attacks on some of those traditions and some of those things that we believe in.

Recently, the CBC ran a program called *The Valour and the Horror*. In it was a very thinly veiled attack on Canada's role in World War II, an attack on the leadership of Canada's war effort, and an attack on the role that Canada's allies played.

In the example of what happened in the Far East, in Singapore and Hong Kong, that particular program leaves the implication those who ran our allied war effort were either stupid or were just setting up our allies in that part of the world. It goes on to show and talk about the allied war effort in Europe and again portrays the individuals who ran Canada's allied war effort in a very negative way.

One of the unfortunate things about that is I notice the program is now available in libraries. It is in the library in Niagara Falls. This is now available for people to see the portrayal of what Canada did in World War II. That is a shame because Canadians should feel very proud about what Canada did in World War I and World War II.

It is unfortunate that when the National Film Board or CBC spends money, it is in a way that shows these things in a very bad light.

I watched part of a program called *Tom Alone* that was on the CBC. It showed the Mounties, another one of our national institutions, one of our national treasures, one of the legends of the 19th century and it showed a Mountie bullying some young boy. I did not know what channel it was on, but I said to my wife: "You don't have to tell me, this is on the CBC isn't it?"

I just knew it would not be Global. It would not be CTV. It would not be the private network. It would never be an American station because an American network would not show the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in that kind of light.

I knew right away that the Canadian taxpayers would end up picking up the bill for this very negative portrayal of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Of course it was not done in this wonderful story about a boy looking for his father. Toward the end just before the last spike was driven into the CPR, one of the foremen arranged it so the Asian workers who have worked to put the railway together were all blown up in a tunnel.

God knows there have been instances of discrimination in this country but as I say, leave it to the CBC to put together that kind of spin, that kind of presentation, of again one of those things that all Canadians feel good about, the CPR.

One of my colleagues told me years ago that there was a suggestion CBC might do a story on General Brock, a hero from my neck of the woods. I remember my colleague saying he did not want CBC to do anything. Please, please leave some of these heroes alone. Thank you, thank you very much. Do not do anything on General Brock. He knows what a lot of us know and that is any look at this by the CBC would have the usual negative connotation.

One of our members has come forward and suggested we protect the national flag. I know this is a young country and there are very few symbols, very few legends in a country the age of Canada. The Mounties are one of them, the building of the railway is another. Our role in the wars, which Canadians are very proud of, our flag and our national anthem are others. There are few enough in this wonderful country of 125 years.

• (1530)

I commend the hon. member for bringing forward this initiative.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of Bill C–227. It is only fair to respect one of the most noble symbols of our nation and that is the Canadian flag. Look at this country from coast to coast, at the mountains, the valleys, the institutions, the people. There is one single thing that we all think and believe in and look up to as the symbol of Canada and that is our Canadian flag.

My colleague who just spoke was talking about the importance of protecting the institutions. Unfortunately, in his discussion he moved on to attack the CBC. The CBC is a national institution. The CBC has contributed in the past, and continues to contribute to our society as a whole, to Canadian unity and to the well–being of our people.

Attacking, defacing or burning a flag is an assault on the whole nation. It is an assault on the people. It is an assault on the dignity of the nation.

Historically, going back thousands of years, whenever there was a war between two tribes, groups or families, the first thing the winners would do would be to run up their flag. Then they would burn the other tribe's flag. Simply stated, it is a put–down to burn someone else's symbol of pride.

Even now, whenever there is an international dispute between two nations, the winning nation will pull down the flag of the other nation and raise its own flag.

It does not matter whether you look back thousands of years or whether you look at the present situation, a flag of a nation or of a group is a symbol of dignity.

Nothing irks me, hurts me and burns me more inside than seeing someone tampering with the Canadian flag. I say this because it touches me deeply. I get very mad and upset about it, simply because I know what a flag means to the people as a whole, what it means to me and to the people I represent.

What sort of punishment should we give someone who burns the flag? The maximum punishment possible. I say this because anyone who burns the Canadian flag obviously is a vicious and mean person, a person without a backbone, without any kind of respect, a person who believes in vengeance.

My colleague mentioned that we are a young nation. Well, yes, in one sense of the word we are a young nation, but in reality, no. Historically, Canada has been around for thousands and thousands of years. Since the beginning of this planet Canada has been here. People

moved to this land thousands of years ago. Our native people were here. We now have a country with a population in excess of 26 million.

We have a responsibility to respect the law and protect our institutions and the Canadian flag as a symbol of unity and pride.

My colleague did not make any suggestion in terms of punishment. I suggest the person should go to jail and there should be a fine. Ten years in prison, 20 years in prison; if it were up to me, even 100 years in prison would not be enough for anyone who burns or defaces the Canadian flag. This is a betrayal of the country we live in. I know we do not have capital punishment. I do not believe in capital punishment, but it irks me to the point where I would say that someone who defaces the Canadian flag should be put in jail for life. It is an incredible offence. I know it is not my decision, it is the government's decision.

The recent event that took place in our province where people walked on the Quebec flag was reprehensible. That is a provincial flag and it is a symbol of Quebec, just as the Ontario and B.C. flags are symbols of those provinces. This event was highly unfair and I was quite upset about it. Everyone knows the uproar, the animosity and the hurt it caused people. They are our brothers and sisters and part of this great land of ours.

In my final comment, I wholeheartedly support this amendment to the Criminal Code. I do not know if anyone has moved unanimous consent to the House, but if not I would like to move that this bill be adopted unanimously by this House and be passed on to the specific committee to deal with it.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to prolong the debate, I just want to make a point.

I have noticed in the last couple of years some of the documentation coming out of government offices has been defacing the Canadian flag as far as I am concerned in my interpretation. Quite often what I have noticed is that the Canadian flag is no longer red. The government has intentionally coloured it blue.

I will give a very specific example. Not too long ago, I was invited to a special ceremony honouring our Olympic athletes who represented us in the winter games. I was very honoured to go. It was sponsored by the Secretary of State. It was right here on Parliament Hill.

In the room there was a nice big backdrop. There was a large Canadian flag on the mast, the proper Canadian flag, red with the maple leaf. Plastered in that backdrop of blue were blue Canadian flags. I even go a step further to mention the uniforms that our athletes wore in some of the Olympic games. They were representing Canada and the colours of our flag were not the number one predominant focal point of those uniforms.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and other colleagues that the Canadian flag is recognized throughout the world. I would hope that at least the Canadian government would help to preserve the true colours of that Canadian flag.

• (1540)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration 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, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to rise to speak on the motions which are now put before the House by the hon. member for Don Valley East.

I want to commend the hon. member for Don Valley East for giving the House a long overdue opportunity to debate these important issues surrounding the pensions of members of Parliament. At the same time, I want to

point out that it was my own leader, the leader of the federal New Democratic Party, the member for Yukon, who first drew to the attention of Canadians in a very powerful speech on February 24 of this year the profound inequities which many Canadians believe exist in this pension plan.

I want to make it clear that in speaking today on these motions I am speaking personally. I am not speaking on behalf of my caucus colleagues, I am not speaking on behalf of my party. I am speaking personally and I am speaking as the member of Parliament for Burnaby—Kingsway.

I know my colleague for Victoria has strong feelings on this issue as well and he may very well be participating in the debate. Because of the intensity around this issue, it is a debate which transcends political considerations. I did want to make that very clear.

Certainly many of my constituents in Burnaby—Kingsway have raised concerns about the equity and the fairness of the members of Parliament's pension plan. As the member for Yukon, the leader of the New Democratic Party stated during her speech in February, we are accountable for the public trust. We are accountable to those who elected us to make sure that what we support is fair, not less, and that each and every one of us can stand before the electorate of Canada and say that we have put in place a fair system.

That is the benchmark which surely must guide us as we examine this pension system. As I look at the pension system today and as I looked at the pension system when I was first elected to this House some 13 years ago, it is clear to me that there are inequities in the system and that certainly this House should direct an independent review of those inequities.

On December 5, 1991 I tabled in this House the following motion: "That in the opinion of this House the government should consider the advisability of establishing 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, and such commission to report within six months of its establishment.

I believed then and I believe now that kind of completely independent review of our pension plan is long overdue. The leader of the New Democratic Party, the member for Yukon, has said in her speech in February that it is long overdue that we raise the question of pensions of members of this House, pensions that at this time mean that after six years of service members of this House receive a pension regardless of age or whether they move on to employment elsewhere in the federal government.

That refers to the so-called double-dipping provisions and these are the two fundamental elements of the amendments which are proposed by the member for Don Valley East.

I welcome the opportunity provided by the motions of the hon. member for Don Valley East for a comprehensive and independent review of the pensions and benefits of members of this House.

I also want to take this opportunity to signal the fact that as a result of the leadership of the hon. member for Yukon, the President of the Treasury Board within the last 24 hours has signalled that at last he is prepared to put together an independent and *ad hoc* review of the pension scheme. It was in response to yet another letter from the hon. member for Yukon, a letter in which the leader of the New Democratic Party called upon the President of the Treasury Board to establish an independent committee, an arm's length committee, that would be able to examine and make recommendations on all aspects of MPs' pension plans and to report back to Parliament within six months of being struck.

In response to that letter, the President of the Treasury Board replied as follows: "At this time, I am developing final proposals on the terms of reference for and composition of the *ad hoc* group which will undertake this review.

There is no question in my mind that all aspects of the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act must be examined and that the study group should be made up of individuals with expertise and public credibility in the area of pensions and compensations".

I would certainly hope that it would be a completely independent review body, separate and at arm's length from members of Parliament and from retired members of Parliament.

This does give us an opportunity to review these issues. Certainly the member's motions are not likely to be adopted by the House today. As I understand it, there is some considerable resistance to the amendments. Again, this does give us an opportunity to help spur that long overdue review of the area of MPs' pensions and benefits.

Whether that review will result in proposals for change identical to those made by the hon. member for Don Valley East, whether there will be other proposals, a combination of service and age, whether there will be other proposals with respect to double-dipping, the independent commission will have an opportunity to review.

Again and in conclusion, I want to signal the leadership of the hon. member for Yukon, the leader of the New Democratic Party, in flagging this issue. I know it was a rather sensitive subject because I was in the House the day that she spoke. I remember the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for the Liberal Party and members of the Conservative Party getting up and braying that this was sacred territory; do not touch members of Parliament's pensions, for God's sake.

It was that unholy alliance that coalesces every so often in this country too often for many of us between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party.

I want to take this opportunity to commend the hon. member for Don Valley East for once again speaking out independently and in particular for underlining and re-enforcing the leadership and the courage of the hon. member for Yukon on this important issue of public concern.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, I will not debate the point but for the record, those who are watching the proceedings should be aware of the position in committee of the members of that committee.

From day one, the members of that committee have asked for an independent review and that includes the members of the government. It was the government that has gone along and has agreed to that independent review. I do not see where the NDP leader should be the great one who decided that thanks to her we now have an independent review. I do not see why she should get all this credit.

It has been an agreed direction from day one. The members of the Liberal Party in committee asked for it and agreed with it. The member of the NDP who was there asked for it. Even the parliamentary secretary at one of the committee meetings put forth the point of view that he would support an independent review and would take that message to the minister.

Obviously the minister did listen to the hon. parliamentary secretary. It is not necessarily one member who should get the credit. If I recall well enough, when the hon. member for Yukon spoke here, the hon. member changed her position not too long after, publicly, a couple of days later. She did not seem to have the same position all of a sudden. I would not be too quick in saying the hon. member should deserve all the credit on this one.

• (1550)

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Certainly if there is any uncertainty I would be very pleased to seek the consent of the House to table the exchange of correspondence between the leader of the New Democratic Party and the President of the Treasury Board. I would seek that consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there consent?

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, as the New Democratic Party critic who attended the committee meetings and sat before the minister when he came before the committee, that was the argument the New Democratic Party had put forward. Our leader made it very clear in the House as I remember and the record in *Hansard* will verify who took the leadership in this.

I want to speak to the amendment because I think I have a great deal of respect for the member for Don Valley East and I admire his courage in bringing this forward. I have a problem with his amendment and the reason I have a problem with it is that I am a former mayor of a city. I remember when we used to have to vote ourself an increase in the city and I found that appalling.

I find it appalling today that we should be putting amendments forward on our own pension schemes. I like the process of having some actuaries out there and look at the problems that members of Parliament have

because maybe we should not be dealing with those problems within a pension bill.

I came here in 1980 and in 1984 I was defeated. I stood up in this House and took on my company, CP Rail. I travelled across this country fighting against the Crow's Nest agreement. I stood up in this House and criticized the other place when the president of CP Rail was appointed as a Senator in that House and I had to go back and work for that company.

When you criticise such as we do in this party, criticize the banks, criticize the major industries on pollution and other things and try to seek employment after you leave here, there are some serious problems there.

That is why I admire the leader of the New Democratic Party when she asked for an independent inquiry to look at the situations with members of Parliament and what happens to them during that.

They cannot be impeded in any way. When you are elected to this House of Commons, the citizen's coalition can talk about comparative in employment. I want to tell you there is no comparative in employment opportunities when you are defeated after four years and you have those kinds of problems and you try to anchor back into the work force.

That is why with this independent inquiry we would be looking far over the pensions of NDP or members of Parliament and maybe at the situation of how we can address this problem.

The member who represented my riding prior to me, a government member, when he was defeated he was appointed to the Parole Board as a representative, getting an $80,000 a year job.

People on the opposition do not get that kind of opportunity. I would urge the members to support the amendment we have put forward. It is imperative that independent actuaries do the job of checking into the situation and come back with a full report.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I compliment the member who just spoke now. He gave some balance to what had been said previously and it is not easy. This is not an easy subject. I have tackled the critics of MPs' benefits and pensions probably more than anyone in this House, save the member perhaps from Mississauga South. I feel somewhat bruised by the process, but as they say, them's the breaks. I am not ashamed to be a member of Parliament. I think it is the greatest honour any Canadian can have. I started my working career on Parliament Hill as a busboy in the Parliamentary Restaurant on October 25, 1966. I looked in awe at members of Parliament, looking in awe at those people who had been chosen democratically by fellow citizens to represent them in this the highest court in the land.

Every election I would see new members come in, each one of them vested with this great honour, each one of them with every intention in their own way of best serving the people who sent them here. You sir, Mr. Speaker, will remember because you were one of the people who was here as an MP when I was a staffer here on Parliament Hill. Through much luck and probably some elbow grease, I ended up some 18 years after I first came here as a member of Parliament.

I do not mean to say this to describe my own political rags to riches story, although some others may have described it that way from time to time. I feel very proud of the fact that I am here, not for my own accomplishments, although I like to think that way from time to time but for the fact that we live in a country where it is possible for the Prime Minister to be an ex-truck driver and to eventually become Prime Minister of this country or for the busboy of the Parliamentary Restaurant to come back as an MP. There are not that many nations in the world where that could happen.

We live in one of them and I am proud of that. I work hard at it. Most mornings, hon. members will know, certainly the cleaning staff knows, I am here at 7.15 a.m. and many, many times particularly in winter, I go through days and nights without seeing daylight. I am not complaining because I enjoy my job. There is nothing else in the world that I would rather do and I am very proud of it.

I have some problems with organizations like the National Citizens Coalition, who for their own selfish interests of trying to raise funds for whoever they are, however many members they have if any, pretend that they are on a crusade against every member of this House and at the bottom of their little crusade block there is a little cut-out which says: "Want us to do more of the same? Please send us your cash". Cut this out and send it to David Somerville who will gladly take your

money to continue fighting more of this great stuff he is fighting now.

An hon. member: That is his income.

Mr. Boudria: Well, some other members have said it, that is his income, and we are catering to this. We as MPs are catering to this. I do not mean that our pensions are sacred or our salary is sacred or anything else. It is not. A recent study said that Canadian members of Parliament are paid the least of the G–7 nations. That is a fact. Maybe the pensions were 5 per cent more and the salaries 5 per cent less. Let us have that independent inquiry, that independent review the way the government has suggested. It was suggested in the heat of the night in correspondence between the government and the members in the New Democratic Party.

However, it does not matter how the process got started. The point is there is going to be that independent review. I welcome it because I am not ashamed of the salary I make or how I use the stationery I have in my office to correspond with my constituents or the photocopier or the fax machine or all other so–called perks we have to correspond with the people who sent us here to represent them to start with.

I am not ashamed of any of that. I am proud to have the opportunity to represent my constituents and I welcome that study. But let us not take off to please the National Citizens Coalition and adopt an amendment or two or three amendments just because we are afraid of the Reform Party or David Somerville or somebody else. Let us have a bit more backbone around this place for once. Let us do that independent study. I know right now what it is going to say. I can tell you that most members of Parliament work hard—not just me, not just the member for Ottawa Vanier, although he works very hard, too, but members across the way, on all sides of the House. We all work hard around here and it is time that we took pride ourselves in the greatest honour that was given to us by our constituents who sent us here to start with.

• (1600)

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the proposal for an independent inquiry into MPs' pensions, as proposed by the Leader of the New Democratic Party. It is an excellent initiative she has taken and it is long overdue.

The motion before this House from the member for Don Valley East I am afraid does not do the job because it is too rigid. I would think that the proposal he has put should go to this inquiry and be considered along with it. It does not have the necessary flexibility to cover some particular situations. Someone may be asked to do a short–term job. Someone may have a pension after six years which is minimal and which the member is entirely entitled to. That member ought to be free to accept some additional income.

The problem that the member's motion deals with and which I think is the public's concern is the person at full pension who is offered some full–time job in the public sector. That issue does need to be dealt with.

There are terrible inequities in this country in the whole pension field. Probably none is worse than the pensions of the captains of industry in this country who are paid grotesque pensions. We cannot do anything about those issues today in this bill. We can today deal with the issue of pensions of members of Parliament. It is incumbent upon us as members of Parliament to be prepared to have our pensions undergo the scrutiny of an independent inquiry.

We, too, may have to make sacrifices in this particular time of economic restraint in our country. Therefore, I welcome the initiative of the Leader of the New Democratic Party and I fully support the inquiry that she has proposed and has persuaded the government to implement.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): I think it is very important in this present economic time that we who are members of Parliament think not just of the work which we do as MPs, think not just of the sacrifices which many members of Parliament make in terms of giving up income to be MPs. I think it is more important and more sensible in looking at this question from a broad economic perspective across the country to ask where we are at in Canada today.

In my constituency just today, workers at one of our large parts plants received notices that that plant is going to be shut down. Close to 200 workers will lose their jobs. Most of those workers will have been proud of their jobs. They will have been proud of their contribution that they have made to the company for which they worked. They are going to be proud of the community of which they are part. Many of them will have worked in that company for 15, 20, or 25 years. Yet when they leave that company by September after that amount of work, they will not

receive a pension. They will have worked more than six years but they will not receive a pension.

For those people let me suggest it will be considerably more difficult than for virtually anybody in this House of Commons to be able to find a job. Those who are 50, 51 or 52 or even if they are a little younger will not find it easy at all with unemployment at 11.2 per cent in this country to go out and find employment.

They will face exactly what each of us will face if we are defeated in the next election with one major difference. For somebody who has been here for six years, seven years, for eight years as in my case or for longer as in the case of other members, they will go out to seek employment. They will find it difficult perhaps but frankly, their experience here will help them rather than hurt them in virtually every case.

They will carry with them right from the day they lose their position in this House of Commons a pension of $20,000, $30,000 or $40,000. I have had to talk with union presidents from plants that have faced this kind of shutdown. They said to me: "Steven, I have 23 years in at the plant where I happen to work and I am not going to have a pension. I do not know what I am going to do. I fought the company hard as chairperson of the union or as president of the union and it is not going to be easy for me in this community to find a new job because I am recognized as a union activist".

I say to members of this House of Commons, as I have said within my own caucus, that we have to recognize that the world is not an easy to place for many Canadians. It is not an easy place for the 460,000 Canadians who have lost manufacturing jobs in the last three and a half years.

It is not an easy place for people who find the unemployment insurance system much tougher now as a result of measures passed by a majority of members of Parliament in this House of Commons. I say that the motions which have been brought forward today by the member for Don Valley East are motions which personally I support and which I have supported before the time that I was elected as a member of Parliament.

One of the issues in the first campaign that I ran in in 1984 involved the fact that the member whom I was running to replace, the former member for Essex—Windsor, the former Minister of Agriculture, was being appointed to a government position in Rome. Yet he would receive a full pension from this House of Commons. I said at the time and I say now that it is not right. We need a good pension system for members of Parliament. There is no question about that.

• (1610)

As finance critic for our party, I also want to say that this country is hurting. There needs to be examples set. These examples should be set by this House of Commons by putting into effect positions such as those that have been put forward by the member for Don Valley East.

The member for Don Valley East would probably be the first to agree that it is not right that this House of Commons should have control over our pensions or over our other benefits. I do not think this House of Commons should be responsible for setting our salaries. I do not think it should be responsible for setting the allowances which we receive for keeping a residence in our constituencies and so forth.

An independent commission should be established to set these things out, just as is done with the setting of boundaries for constituencies in this country. We learned long ago that if we left the setting of boundaries to members of Parliament that there would be inevitably self-interested motives that would creep in to the setting of those boundaries. We must learn the same thing with respect to the whole set of benefits which a member of Parliament receives for the work which he or she does in this place, in our constituencies and elsewhere throughout the country. That is what we have to establish.

This is an important debate. It is an important set of motions which the member for Don Valley East has put forward. I hope they will be taken to an independent commission and we will reform the pension system of members of Parliament to make it fair and to make it in a context of difficult economic times for all Canadians.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few remarks to the debate.

I would like to quote from the report on the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act for the fiscal year, 1989–90. What I would like to mention is that members do contribute to their pension plan. In the fiscal year 1989–90 they contributed $2.082 million and the government contributed the same amount.

The plan that is presently in force has a surplus in the bank of over $30 million. Naturally this brings in interest so that it is self–financing, I would say.

If we look at the number of pensions ex–members are getting, it is surprising to see for instance that about 60 former members are getting pensions in the order of $500 to $3,000 and there are only seven former members who get $50,000 plus. The average is probably around $15,000 to $16,000.

I would like to mention a friend of mine who was a member here for many years, about 20 years, and who was a cabinet minister in the Clark government. When he was defeated in 1980 his pension was $14,000. At the present time he is receiving $20,000 because his pension is indexed. I do not see how he could spend 20 years in government service, been a cabinet minister and receive a pension of $20,000.

If you look at the whole issue I feel it has been blown out of proportion. The plan is self–financing, it has a surplus and it has been very well run. I think the stories that we hear about members getting huge amounts of money are somewhat false. Members who have served in this House for some time deserve a pension. These members left their professional lives and businesses. Many come from long distances such as British Columbia and the Atlantic provinces and cannot run their businesses from Ottawa.

My feeling is that members are really not getting what the public perceives they are getting. The report further states that another 15 members are getting from $3,000 to $4,000. In total there are only 332 ex–members who are getting pensions and of that only seven receive $50,000 and 27 receiving $40,000 to $50,000. It then goes down to $500.

Therefore, I believe we should have a serious look at the pension proposals. We should not be defensive about what members of Parliament are getting. If you look for instance at what some provincial members are getting you might be surprised. They get much higher pensions than we do. Some of the salaries in the provinces are double what members of Parliament get.

I do not think we should be defensive about our pensions. I tend to disagree with the member who just spoke. He talked about other institutions and double–dipping. If there is double–dipping I think it should be disallowed across the board because there are certain members who retire in other government institutions at age 50 with huge pensions and they are double–dipping as well. If we have double–dipping I think it should apply across the board.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question? The question is on Motion No. 67.

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 nays have it.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion is negatived on division.

Motion No. 67 negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 68. 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.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Negatived on division. These votes apply to Motions Nos. 68B, 68C and 69A.

Motion No. 68 negatived.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 71.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Clause 109 by striking out line 12 at page 133 and substituting the following therefor:

"into force on April 1, 1992."

He said: Mr. Speaker, when the bill was drafted they had expected it to be passed and part of the act by fiscal year April 1, 1991 and that date was selected arbitrarily as the new fiscal year. The bill will be coming into effect in a new fiscal year so rather than make it retroactive to April 1, 1991, I assume it should start April 1, 1992, the start of the last fiscal year.

• (1620)

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 nays have it.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Negatived on division.

Motion No. 71 negatived.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved:

Motion No. 72B.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out line 40 at page 150 and substituting the following therefor:

"less than two years, or".

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important amendment. It deals with the fairness issue, something which I have been repeatedly saying today. I think that our amendments over-all addressed fairness.

Prior to the change in the family law legislation, many spouses received their pensions as support. Legislation stated that the pension was an asset but it was either implicitly recognized by the courts that the spouses had an entitlement to the pension or that it was unfair that they be deprived of an entitlement especially after long-term marriages.

I could quote, but I do not want to take too much time, letters from constituents, as well as comments and statements. I want to quote briefly from a constituent of mine, Joyce Struthers, who has been very active in representing the committee for spousal's and children's pension survival and related benefits. I think we owe Ms. Struthers a vote of thanks for her presentation and her fairness.

Many spouses were married for 20, 30, 40, 50 years. They shared all the contributions, supported all the employment, carried all the family responsibilities, bore the children, lost their own employment in many cases, lost their pension opportunities as an individual because they were married to a public servant and were keeping house and doing things that were required because the spouse was away from home, sometimes in a foreign country. They often represented Canada side by side with their spouse.

These people are asking for an amendment that would fine tune the legislation, making it appropriate that since many spouses have elected to take their entitlement to the pension as support rather than as an asset in order to be able to obtain enforcement through the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act, these persons would be allowed to apply for the benefits available under the new Pension Benefits Division Act.

To them and to the Liberals on this side, this is crucial because these women were advised to take the pension this way by their lawyers, by Treasury Board officials. Many judges have made similar orders because the

Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act did not allow for a division of assets but only for support.

Those provisions under the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act are currently being challenged in the courts under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Again it is a question of justice. It is a question of equity. It is a question of fairness. All these people are proposing through us in this amendment is that this House be sensitive to a difficult situation. I could speak at length on this subject matter but I will not because I think the point has been made. We must show some considerate attention to these particular cases and adopt a motion that indeed would correct 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 nays have it.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 72B negatived.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East) moved:

Motion No. 73.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out lines 36 and 37 at page 151 and substituting the following therefor:

"intention to live separate and apart from the other and gave notice of the intention to the other spouse; and".

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved:

Motion No. 73B.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out line 37 at page 151 and substituting the following therefor:

"the other and gave notice of the intention to the other spouse; and".

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East) moved:

Motion No. 74.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by adding the following immediately after line 24 at page 152:

"(2) Upon the filing of a notice under subsection (1), no pension benefits may be paid out to the member before the application under section 7 is decided."

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East) moved:

Motion No. 75.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out lines 26 to 40 at page 153.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved:

Motion No. 76A.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out lines 28 to 33 at page 154 and substituting the following therefor:

"(5) Where a member of a pension plan and the spouse or former spouse of the member are living separate and apart and, before the coming into force of subsection 4(1), the parties entered into a written agreement to live separate and apart or a court of competent jurisdiction made an order that the parties do live separate and apart and the agreement or court order does not also provide that the spouse or former spouse shall receive a portion of the member's pension benefits or receive other property of the member in substitution for a portion of the pension benefits, the Minister may, on an application under section 4, approve a division of the pension benefits under this section."

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East) moved:

Motion No. 77.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by adding the following immediately after line 33 at page 154:

"(6) Subject to the terms of any applicable court order or separation agreement determining the rights of the interested parties under this subsection, where an applicant under section 4 is a spouse or former spouse of the member of the pension plan and while the application is pending, another person who is a former spouse or spouse of the member makes application under section 4 or submits a notice of objection under subsection 6(1), the Minister shall, as the Minister considers just in the circumstances, approve a division of the pension benefits in accordance with this section in such manner as fairly reflects the respective portions of the contributory period of the member during which each spouse or former spouse lived with the member as the spouse of the member."

Motion No. 78.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out line 37 at page 154 and substituting the following therefor:

"an amount representing a portion of".

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved:

Motion No. 78B.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out line 37 at page 154 and substituting the following therefor:

"an amount representing all or part of".

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 79.

That Bill C-55 be amended in the English version of Schedule II by striking out line 5 at page 155 and substituting the following therefor:

"the prescribed kind,".

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East) moved:

Motion No. 80.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out line 11 at page 155 and substituting the following therefor:

"or

(*b*) Subject to subsection (4), deeming a portion of the pension benefits of the member of the pension plan to be held by the Minister in trust for the spouse or former spouse until the portion is transferred to the spouse or former spouse or to such other person as the spouse or former spouse may direct and transferring the portion to an account registered under the pension plan in the name of the spouse or former spouse; and".

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved:

Motion No. 81.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out line 11 at page 155 and substituting the following therefor:

"or

(iv) a pension plan as defined by this Act, leaving the proceeds of a pension division and making the person a member of that plan; and".

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved:

Motion No. 82A.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by adding immediately after line 18 at page 155 the following:

"(2) Where a portion of a member's pension benefits are held in trust under paragraph (1)(*a*), the spouse or former spouse on whose behalf the portion is held has, in respect of the portion, the same rights and obligations as the member would have, for as long as the portion is held in trust by the Minister."

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East) moved:

Motion No. 83.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by adding immediately after line 6 at page 156 the following:

"(5) A lump sum payment under subsection (4) shall be determined with reference to life expectancy tables applicable to persons of the same gender as the spouse or former spouse to whom the payment is to be made."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise on Motion No. 73. What we are calling for here is that schedule II of Bill C-55 be amended by striking out lines 35 to 36 on page 145 and substituting the following:

"intention to live separate and apart from the other and gave notice of the intention to the other spouse; and".

The reason we have put forward this amendment is that there have been some changes in the regulations with regard to common law relationships. The bill as it stands now refers to one year living together as a common law spouse. Many former spouses are not even aware that these relationships have taken place.

• (1630)

We are saying with this amendment that it is incumbent upon the member who has the pension to notify the spouse so that she is aware of the divisions within that pension. It is a small amendment and it is one that the government should certainly accept.

During the debate in committee and during the debate in the House on these amendments, on simple amendments such as this one, not one member of the government is getting up and telling us why he or she would not consider this amendment. I think that is disrespectful to the employees of the Public Service, disrespectful to members of the RCMP and disrespectful to military groups.

We have put forward some very simple amendments. I think there should be an explanation from the government as to why it is not going to accept those amendments. I found it offensive in committee and I find it offensive in the House that we are not even getting an answer from the other side as to why these amendments are not being considered.

That is why there are 112 amendments before the House today. It is because we were not getting those kinds of answers in committee. Now we are seeing the same performance in the House of Commons. I think this is disgraceful on the government side. I say to the government: "For goodness' sake, have a little bit of fairness, a little bit of compassion for this piece of legislation". It is going to become law. We all know the government is going to win when the day is over. It will become law and the regulations will be put in place. We

are only asking for a little bit of fairness in this piece of legislation.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking to Motions Nos. 73B and 78B which I moved and which were seconded by my friend and colleague from Restigouche—Chaleur.

The purpose of these amendments is directed primarily at the Canadian forces, diplomatic services and other federal employees who may be posted in different locations across the land or outside the country.

Some of these employees have been known to live apart from their legal spouses and take on common law spouses without the knowledge of the legal spouses. This section, unamended, would not be fair to a spouse who carried on her duties raising the family and believing herself to be in a stable family relationship, and meanwhile her spouse had struck or arranged a common law association unknown to the legal spouse. In my view the legal spouse in this situation is short-changed. She is short-changed of benefits without even knowing what her legal or economic position is.

The amendment I am proposing is simply trying to require that the legal spouse be informed, and I underline that, that the couple is living separate and apart. It sounds to me like a reasonable, sensible amendment.

On that question there has been a long debate as to why the government would not come to grips with this situation, which in many cases is a tragedy. It is a tragic situation because innocent people are being hurt. We all know this could be avoided by amending the law, by making it possible to avoid serious injustice, by adopting a motion which would correct this exploitation and by simply dropping one optional basis, that is the provision for payout on marriage breakdown, and providing instead authority for making the former spouse of the public servant a member of the pension plan. It does not seem to me to be a very complicated proposal.

I take it that the spouse at home is entitled to half, at least, of the contribution that her spouse and herself make to a pension plan. That is fair. That is an entitlement which I understand to be a just analysis of the situation.

This does not belong to one spouse. It belongs to both of them. These are earnings that are put away, saved for later use. That is a pension plan. That is why we contribute to pension plans. It is earnings today that are saved for future use.

Instead of having some injustice in a situation of marriage breakdown because the spouse receiving or contributing directly to the pension plan is having another relationship, common law or otherwise, all we are saying is that there should be an additional clause that says the spouse who is legally entitled to it should receive half those contributions and be entitled to some pension plan.

In my riding many families are affected. I know families in the Canadian forces at Rockcliffe who were subjected to this kind of situation. It is not an easy thing to settle.

I dare say that the government's answer to our proposal was: "We do not want to increase the numbers of recipients or the number of pensioners". It does not sound to me like a very positive answer or a very acceptable one in that sense.

Logic would simply dictate that this amendment is not a far-reaching or very difficult one to understand. It would be one of fairness and it would be one of justice. I hope my colleagues will see their way to supporting this amendment.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, we have now moved into a section of the bill which in effect is a whole new bill to be entitled the Pension Benefits Division Act, schedule II of the bill before the House.

The bill rights a very long injustice mostly to women who are the ex-spouses of public servants, including the military, the RCMP and so forth. Under federal pension plans ex-spouses have been denied what the courts and the provincial level have agreed they should have, that is a clear recognition that through their marriage they have contributed equally to the pension plan earned by their spouses. That has already been recognized in the Canada Pension Plan. It has been recognized at the provincial level. It has been recognized by the courts, and now finally it is being recognized by Parliament. It is a change which we on all sides of the House support.

• (1640)

The member for New Westminster—Burnaby has been one of the leading spokespeople on this issue and has worked with women's groups across the country in bringing this issue to the attention of Parliament.

In my own riding there are courageous women who have come forward with petitions and requests. Some of the most poignant letters I have read have dealt with the plight they have been put in by this Parliament's failure to move earlier on this issue. They have been deprived of rights they should have. It is in this context therefore that I want to speak about the particular amendments before the House.

The member for Kootenay East moved a number of amendments in committee and made some great strides forward. He won an amendment for disclosure requiring that the non-plan member spouses will now have equal access to their spouses' pension information. In the absence of a court order specifying the period of cohabitation, the minister can and must use provincial family law guidelines in determining the period. Finally, there have been improvements in the valuation of the pension rights.

There are still a number of key points missing from the bill and issues which the committee heard eloquent pleas about. The committee for spousal and children pension survival and related benefits led by Joyce Struthers and others across Canada have made a very persuasive case for these issues.

I would just like to review them. We have already heard about some. The member for Kootenay East referred to Motion No. 73, which simply says that for calculating the period of contribution, the spouse at least ought to be given notice of the separation. That is a simple matter of justice.

Motion No. 75 which is included in this group would deal with the problem that an appeal of a court order could unfairly defer the rights to the asset which this Parliament concedes is earned by the ex-spouse.

Motions Nos. 76 and 76A in my name deal with the issue of retroactivity. The bill already provides a certain limited transitional provision. If the ex-spouse is lucky enough to have had this included in the court order or separation agreement entered into before this act comes into force, she or he may be all right.

If the court order or separation agreement does not cover the division of pension benefits, which may well be the case because of course up until this act comes into force it is not the law, then that person may be out of luck. The ex-spouse can try to go back to court, try to go back to the ex-spouse and negotiate a new agreement, but if that cannot be done, and there may be statute limitations and other reasons why that is not possible, then the ex-spouse is out of luck.

What the amendment I have moved proposes is simple and I ask the House to support it. Give the minister the authority to change the court order or pension plan and approve a division of pension benefits in appropriate cases.

I had extensive discussions with officials of Treasury Board and the associate Minister of National Defence, who is also the Minister responsible for the Status of Woman. She gave strong support not only to the bill itself, but to the thrust of the amendment I was proposing.

Somewhere deep in the bowels of Treasury Board they could not agree to this simple amendment because they are afraid their minister might have to make a difficult decision. So what did the government members of the committee do? They simply said we will only do what Treasury Board says. What is the government doing today? Silence. Silence in the face of the call for justice for women in this country who have inadvertently been deprived of a possible benefit. I think it is unconscionable for the members of the government to sit silent through this.

There are other amendments which are covered in this package. Frequently a court order or a separation agreement may recognize the spouse is entitled to more than 50 per cent because there are trade-offs, but this bill prevents the minister from recognizing that.

It is an arbitrary limit which has no basis of justice. I am amazed that the members of the government would sit silent and allow this to not be supported in this House.

We finally come to two or three other amendments. I do not know how much time I have. Two minutes. Well, in two minutes I can try to make a further pitch for those who have a case here to which the government is deaf.

Motions 82 and 82A would give the option of a trust in the ex-spouse's name. The idea here is to just provide a simple rough justice. This bill goes a long way to dealing with the problem. It provides that in the case of a proper

application, the ex-spouse will be essentially given her property, which is her share in the pension, but it establishes a relatively convoluted way of doing that. Whereas the spouse from whom she is separated gets a cheque every month from the government, that cannot happen under this bill. This amendment sets up a system to allow that to happen so she too can get a cheque from the government for her share rather than have to go through more convoluted methods of doing it.

The other amendments, Motions Nos. 83 and 84 also provide for important improvements. I call on the members of the government to listen to what the women of this country are saying, what the member for Kootenay East so eloquently argued in committee, and what the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has argued across this country. They have pleaded for the government to just open up long enough to give these additional changes the consideration they are due and be fair.

This is a very thick bill. As we already heard, it has 112 amendments and 150 pages. This bill surfaced just a few months ago. It has not had the opportunity necessary for the kind of discussion it should have. We are seeing a travesty of the report stage procedures in this House. The government has not even explained the reasons why it cannot find these amendments to make the sense I see they do.

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, as you know I had moved some motions myself to amend this portion of the legislation, which deals with credit splitting for spouses and ex-spouses of pensioners under this legislation.

I would like to commend the hon. members who have spoken and moved motions on this portion of the legislation. They include the hon. member for Kootenay East, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier and the hon. member for Victoria.

I suspect almost everyone in this House has constituents who have a problem, and who have had a problem which they hope will be solved by this legislation. I have many, but I would just like to put on the record the concerns of one of those constituents who I have been discussing this matter with for many years.

Mrs. Joyce Bisset, one of my constituents who lives in Vicora Linkway, wrote me on October 31, 1991 to say: "I have written you several times in the past, specifically in 1987 and 1988, in regard to the unfairness of federal legislation, which discriminates against former spouses of military and public servants. I wrote to you about both pension credit splitting and survivor benefits earned during the years of marriage".

"Just prior to the last election, I invited you into my home at which time we discussed these issues. I did provide you with copies of my correspondence for you to read. You did tell me that if federal legislation was not forthcoming following your letters of referral to the correct ministers in charge that you would introduce a private members' bill yourself to have the legislation changed".

"I am sure that you can understand my disappointment in not receiving anything positive in regard to these pressing issues. I have enclosed a petition which has been signed by my doctor because of the stress-related illness that I have suffered including life-threatening major surgery in 1990 and also by strong supporters of this issue, some of whom find it to be unbelievable that in this day and age such discrimination exists".

That petition read:

> That many women in Canada are living in poverty after years of home making, which allowed their husbands to pursue careers without the burden of of child rearing and housework.
>
> That many of these women are disentitled by divorce to an equal share of their husband's federal pension credits accumulated during their marriage, and
>
> That the government has stated in the past that it is in favour of mandatory, automatic pension credit splitting.

• (1650)

In fact, the Canada Pension Plan has had that for some time.

> Therefore, your petitioners request that Parliament consider amending all federal superannuation acts in which inequity exists to allow for the retroactive pension credit splitting for all divorced spouses so that they may receive one-half of the federal pension credits accumulated by both spouses during the years of their marriage.

That is not an uncommon kind of situation. There are lots and lots of homemaker spouses who are in that situation and have been in that situation. I know that myself from my own family's circumstances.

My uncle was a military officer until his retirement, my aunt worked along with him. They were a team. It seems incredible to me that somebody in Mrs. Bisset's case could not share on a credit splitting basis the pension of her husband in a situation like that where suddenly as was the case with Mrs. Bisset almost to the day that her husband retired from the military he left and is living with another woman.

As a result of that, Mrs. Bisset did not have any access whatsoever to the credits of her husband's pension. This bill helps to correct some of those inequities but as hon. members have said already there are many more inequities that have not been corrected as yet by this bill.

In the motions that I have put before the House, Motion No. 74 deals with the whole situation of what happens when there is a separation. Do you go on for a period of weeks, months, years perhaps before suddenly the credit splitting starts, or the payments to the one spouse end pending some sort of decision.

I have provided in Motion No. 74 that there will be a freeze on those payments upon notice from the spouse who is a party to this separation until there is a decision made.

I have also provided in Motions Nos. 77 and 78 that there is a right for the minister to determine that the deserted, separated or divorced spouse in those cases should be entitled to receive more than 50 per cent of the pension if she has contributed that proportionate amount over the time, in the judgment of the minister.

I would hope that the members of this House would see fit to adopt all of the motions that have been put on this issue which raise very longstanding concerns on matters of complete inequity and it is long overdue that this Parliament correct these inequities. After all, we have corrected them in the Canada Pension Plan. There is no reason why we should not be correcting them in this legislation also.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch briefly on Motion No. 78B. That is the amendment that was offered by my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier. As members will know, particularly those who serve on the committee that my colleague from Ottawa West as well was very active in raising this issue.

Just very briefly I want to say to the House that Motion No. 78B is meant to address the following problem. Bill C–55 currently says that the amount of the pension to be transferred is 50 per cent or less even if the court order takes the entire pension into account in the division of assets, and the words "more than 50 per cent" to one spouse.

If this was a pension in the private sector regulated by any statute, federal or provincial, none of us would interfere with that. A court order would be respected. However, when we are dealing with pensions for public servants it seems that we have decided that we can inject something into the bill whereby we will supersede the order made by a judge of the court, having taken a number of things into consideration in the disposition of assets. The proposed amendment would enable the federal government to award the amount of the pension stated in the court order, whatever the court order, whether it is 50 per cent, more than 50 per cent or whether it is less. In fact, the amendment would bring this legislation in line with the Pension Benefits Standards Act which is the act which we use to impose those kinds of rules on everyone else. The amendment proposed by my colleague would inject that element of fairness that has been raised by other colleagues earlier today. I just wanted to take a moment of the House and so indicate.

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. 73 which will apply to Motion No. 75. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 73B which is voted on separately. 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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 73B negatived

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 74 which applies to Motions Nos. 77 and 78. 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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 74 negatived

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 76A which applies to Motion No. 82A. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Motion No. 78B will be voted on separately. 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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 78B negatived

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 79. 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.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 79 negatived

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 80. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 81. 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.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion No. 81 negatived

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 83. 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.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8) the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved:

Motion No. 75D.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out lines 16 to 22 at page 154 and substituting the following therefor:

"those grounds are based."

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is to remove two paragraphs of the proposed Pension Benefits Division Act which state that the minister shall refuse to approve the division of pension benefits if, and it reads:

(d) That periods subject to division cannot be determined under subsection 8(2) or 8(3) or

(e) The minister is satisfied, based on evidence submitted to the minister that it would not be just to approve this division.

Mr. Speaker, we want those two paragraphs deleted.

In the case of (d), subsections (2) and (3) of the same act give ample guidelines as to how to determine a period subject to division and gives the minister the power to declare a period as the period of co-habitation even in the absence of court order or spousal agreement specifying such a period. Spouses should not be refused the part of the pension they earned because the minister has not exercised his power to declare a period of co-habitation.

Concerning paragraph (e), which we also want deleted, the proposed Pension Benefits Division Act states that pension credits cannot be divided in the absence of a court order or agreement. Paragraph (e) gives the minister the power to ignore a provincial court order or agreement between spouses as to the division of benefits for unnamed reasons. This is probably unconstitutional, as marital property is under provincial jurisdiction and provincial law is paramount in this area.

Other paragraphs are in place to prevent division if a court order is found to be invalid, the application for splitting is withdrawn or an appeal is underway.

Paragraph (e) may allow the minister to make decisions based on moral or other grounds, superseding valid court orders. This is unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the present law does not provide for sharing pension rights. This new bill, C–55, would allow sharing pension benefits at source. Of course, we are pleased with that and support some of those recommendations. The spouse's agreement or a court order would be required, if we take the bill literally; up to 50 per cent of the entitlement would be transferred to a retirement savings plan for the spouse and the participant's benefits in the plan would be adjusted accordingly.

All that proposed amendment 75D does is to give clear, specific directions, because we do not want grey areas. We want the minister to meet his responsibilities, but we also want all public servants and everyone entitled to a pension to know clearly that there are difficult situations where the same rules as apply to the Canada Pension Plan will apply to the Public Service Superannuation Act. The CPP provides for automatic sharing of pension benefits at source and the 1983 report of the parliamentary task force on pension reform recommended that this measure also apply to Public Service pensions, as we recall.

The purpose of my motion 75D is simply to update the bill and make it apply not only like all other bills but like all other systems.

[*English*]

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 nays have it.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 75D negatived.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent to move the next motion on behalf of the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur who cannot be here at this time.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Don Boudria (for Mr. Arseneault) moved:

Motion No. 85.

That Bill C–55 be amended in Schedule II by striking out line 6 at page 158 and substituting the following therefor:

"16. Subject to sections 17 to 20, the Governor in Council may, on the".

Motion No. 86.

That Bill C–55, be amended in Schedule II by adding immediately after line 30 at page 159 the following:

"17. The President of the Treasury Board shall, at a time and in a manner appropriate in the circumstances, seek the views of interested parties and, where appropriate, members of the public generally on proposed regulations to be made under this Act.

18. The President of the Treasury Board shall, where the Governor in Council proposes to make any regulation under this Act, lay a draft of the proposed regulation before the House of Commons at least thirty sitting days before a copy of that regulation is published in the Canada Gazette under section 19.

19.(1) Subject to subsection (2), a copy of each regulation that the Governor in Council proposes to make under this Act shall be published in the Canada Gazette at least thirty days before the effective date of the regulation, and a reasonable opportunity shall be afforded to interested persons to make representations to the President of the Treasury Board with respect to the proposed regulation.

(2) No proposed regulation need be published under subsection (1) if it has previously been published pursuant to that subsection, whether or not it has been amended as a result of representations made pursuant to that subsection.

(3) In calculating the thirty day period referred to in subsection (1), there shall not be counted any day on which the House of Commons does not sit.

20. Where, within twenty five sitting days after a proposed regulation is laid before the House of Commons under section 18, a motion signed by no fewer than thirty members of the House to the effect that the proposed regulation should be reviewed by a committee of the House and should be the subject of a report by the committee to the House, is made in the House, the Speaker shall within five sitting days after the filing of the motion, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary for disposition of the motion."

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved:

Motion No. 88.

That Bill C-55 be amended in Schedule II by adding immediately after line 30 at page 159 the following:

"17. Organizations representing parties interested in or likely to be affected by a regulation under section 16 must be consulted in the formulation or amendment of such regulation."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I do not want to take too much time of the House.

The purpose of this amendment is to allow for pension advisory committees to have representation from organizations representing spouses or former spouses of pension plan members.

It is a proposal that is fair, that would not cost any money. It would give us a chance to hear from those who sometimes are affected by these dispositions of the law and who clearly have a financial interest in the formulation of regulations that apply to these laws.

This amendment is strictly an attempt to ensure that these groups be heard, that they be consulted, and it is an amendment that wants to open up the process to those people involved and it simply asks that they be allowed to be heard at these advisory boards.

It is a simple amendment. It is a just amendment.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly on Motions Nos. 85 and 86.

The bill as presently drafted would allow the government to settle by regulation a number of important issues related to the division of pension benefits as a result of a marriage breakdown.

The amendments we are offering would only require the minister to consult before drafting the regulations and it would give the House of Commons an opportunity to review the draft regulations before they are promulgated.

In other words, we want Parliament to be consulted in the process, thereby giving the government further input that we as MPs would get from constituents. It seems to me to be a very reasonable thing to ask. It in no way contests the government's ability to make the regulations, but it does provide a useful device to ensure proper consultation with members of Parliament and with the representatives of the people of Canada.

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. 85. This vote applies to Motion No. 86. 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 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.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion No. 85 negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 88 which will be voted on separately. 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 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.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion No. 88 negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Normally at this time the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions at the report stage of the bill now before the House. However, pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the recorded divisions will stand deferred until Monday, June 15, 1992 at six o'clock p.m.

Do I have unanimous consent to call it ten o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being ten o'clock, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 9, 1992, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 5.09 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 15, 1992

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

AUTOMOTIVE POLLUTION REDUCTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex) moved that Bill C-226, an act to reduce automotive pollution, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Natural Resources envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present Bill C-226 for debate in the House today.

This bill is called the automotive pollution reduction act. It requires that all automotive fuels in Canada contain at least 3.2 per cent oxygen and that the use of MMT be banned in Canada.

This bill sets out an implementation period of six months. Being a realist, I am prepared to accept an implementation period of two years from the date of passage. This change can be implemented in committee.

This is an important bill in this day of environmental concerns and the amount of automotive pollution taking place.

Because of incomplete gasoline combustion hydrocarbons are being released into the atmosphere. The three largest aromatic hydrocarbon components of gasoline are benzenes, toluenes and xylenes. They all have a serious health impact and have been placed on the Canadian Environmental Protection Agency's priority substance list.

• (1110)

Increasing the oxygen content requirement to 3.2 per cent will result in complete combustion of the fuel burning of these hydrocarbons. As a result, emissions are much cleaner.

Since the introduction of this bill the government has introduced its green plan initiative. I believe this bill dovetails the green plan very well and strengthens it.

Ground level ozone and greenhouse gases will be reduced. The government did take steps to reduce automotive pollutants as promised in the green plan in its 1992 budget announcement of a tax break for the ethanol portion of ethanol blended fuels. Although this is an important commitment and I applaud it, it is one that has to be strengthened.

Because of this initiative, United Co-operatives of Ontario now has ethanol for sale in 21 of its stations and gas bars in southwestern Ontario. The first was opened on May 28 in the riding of the member of Parliament for Kent.

Although the green plan has proposed tighter emission standards by 1994, the proposals in this bill before us today will have a more immediate effect by changing the formulation of fuels which will reduce the emissions without substantial redesign of pollution control devices.

By banning MMT it will keep present control devices operating effectively. For example, studies show that compared to regular unleaded MMT-free gasoline, a 10 per cent ethanol blended gasoline reduces automotive emissions as follows: carbon dioxide by 5.9 per cent; carbon monoxide by 25 per cent; volatile organic compounds by 8.5 per cent; nitrous oxide by 5.7 per cent; and urban ozone by 5.3 per cent. This is particularly significant if one considers that a 1984 Environment Canada study found that adding the allowable amount of MMT to gasoline increased hydrocarbon emissions by 27 per cent.

The Canadian Renewable Fuels Association predicts in its brief to the House of Commons committee on global warming that the use of a 10 per cent ethanol blended gasoline would mean a direct reduction of 10 per cent in toxic carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere once the photosynthesis process and benefit of by-products are taken into account.

Denver, Colorado reported an 8 per cent reduction in carbon monoxide levels after just two months of use of ethanol blended fuels.

In the course of our research, we found that Canada allowed the use of this gasoline additive that has been banned in the United States since 1978. The gasoline additive I am referring to is MMT.

In the most recent waiver application to have MMT reinstated into the automotive fuels in the United States, the amount requested was only half the amount allowed in Canada. The request was for 31 milligrams of manganese per U.S. gallon compared with 66 milligrams of manganese per U.S. gallon allowed in Canada. Why is it applying for a waiver using only half the amount currently being used in Canada?

This gasoline additive, methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl or MMT, was first banned in 1977 in California. One of the U.S. leaders in air pollution control, the California Air Resources Board, in response to the concern expressed by that state's department of health regarding the potential health hazard of the manganese additive officially requested that MMT be phased out of all gasoline sold in California, effectively banning its sale. In 1978, it was banned throughout the United States in unleaded gasoline by the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States government.

This discovery led to a whole series of revelations.

First of all, I discovered that Canada does not conduct emission testing with gasoline containing MMT as the Canadian testing standards cite the American code which prohibits the use of MMT in unleaded gasoline. Therefore, Canadian emission testing of new automobiles is conducted with MMT-free gasoline imported from the United States. Consequently, Canadian automobile emission testing is a fraud.

I also discovered that in June 1990 while I was drafting my legislation the Environmental Protection Agency was conducting hearings into a waiver application submitted by Ethyl Corporation to reallow MMT in unleaded gasoline in the United States, again proposing to use half the amount currently being used in Canada.

Ellen Silbergeld of the University of Maryland, formerly with the Environmental Defense Fund served on the EPA peer review panel on the EPA's most recent health assessment document on manganese. In her testimony in Washington, D.C. on June 22, 1990 she stated:

> Manganese, like lead, is a cumulative toxin in that both its absorption and retention as well as its toxicity increase with time. At present there are insufficient data on the low level chronic sequelae of manganese exposure, similar to the case that was made for lead in 1925.

That was 67 years ago and here we are going through the process again.

Dr. John Donaldson is one of Canada's top neurotoxologists. He along with other recognized experts in the field, such as Dr. Frank Labella and Dr. Andre Barbeau, have conducted research on this issue. Dr. Donaldson was one of the scientists selected by the National Research Council of Canada to participate in the mid-eighties study entitled "Manganese and the Canadian Environment". Dr. Donaldson told the EPA in Washington on June 22, 1990:

> —one of the major theories in leading edge neuroscience which relate to the environmental issues of today is that there are agents, neurotoxins—insidious neurotoxins like manganese which are age accelerating neurotoxins.

Most vulnerable to the MMT's toxic hit are unborn children, infants, and young children whose defence systems against the retention of manganese have not yet been fully developed.

Manganese in its normal form is not that dangerous; we have it in our food, in our bodies, and we have it in the earth. But in the form of MMT which comes out of the exhaust systems of cars is the area where we are most concerned.

To quote Dr. Donaldson:

> What we are talking about here is that manganese is insidious, a stealth toxin, hitting early and perhaps often and then revealing the damage as we get older.

Dr. Donaldson's contention is supported by other scientists including Aljandro Daniels of the large pharmaceutical company Burroughs Wellcome. "I totally agree with Donaldson," he is quoted as saying on the basis of his own animal research.

The U.S. Congressional Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Health and the Environment in a letter to the United States Environmental Protection Agency dated June 29, 1990 and signed by the chairman and three other members of the committee warned:

> As a nation, we cannot afford to subject ourselves again to the tragic results of using a neurotoxic heavy metal in gasoline. Nor is the use of such a dangerous compound necessary, given the wide availability of octane enhancers that are a derivative from farm products, such as ETBE and ethanol, and are not hazardous air pollutants.

If anyone wishes to examine the credibility of corporate arguments and their environmental and public health record, North America's experience with lead and gasoline is the place to start.

To quote toxicologist Ellen Silbergeld again, she says:

> MMT is exactly like lead. All you have to do is substitute the word "lead" and you will have what they said (back in 1925).

Again in the 1990s, the company that manufactures MMT in the United States for export to Canada argues the amount of manganese in gasoline is insignificant in health terms but very important to the U.S. economy. I should point out there is no MMT manufactured in Canada.

It should be noted this corporation has attempted four times to have the additive reallowed in United States fuel. The most recent attempt was denied by the EPA in January 1992.

EPA noted in its denial of waiver that five car manufacturers, Ford, General Motors, Toyota, Chrysler, and Nissan, as well as the Association of International Motor Vehicle Manufacturers, the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association, and Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association all recommended the denial of requests and expressed two major concerns with regard to the addition of MMT with unleaded gasolines.

Thus the intent of Bill C-226, an act to reduce automotive pollution is to ban MMT and to require that all gasoline sold in Canada contains 3.2 per cent oxygen.

Studies show a net energy benefit in the production of ethanol, taking into consideration such agriculture inputs as machinery fuel, fertilizer and ethanol production costs, such as processing heat and electricity.

If existing waste heat from another industry could be utilized such as from Ontario Hydro's Douglas Point reactor on Lake Huron, then the net energy balance would be even better. Such utilization, plus modern technology would result in a balance of approximately four times the energy inputs required.

But the process squeezes more than ethanol from the feedstock. When ethanol is made from grain, the by-product is a high protein stillage, a mash that includes original vitamins and minerals which can be used as an animal feed or as an additive for low nutrition human food.

• (1120)

This by-product can be dried and used as a flour for cookies, biscuits, bread or muffins. It is extremely low in calories and high in protein and fibre content. It will be of particular value for Third World countries and for starving children of which there are millions in Third World countries today. It has great potential as a low calorie health food right here in Canada.

In August 1991 Mohawk Fuels and Sask Pools opened an ethanol plant at Lanigan, Saskatchewan, with an adjacent feedlot to utilize the stillage for beef cattle production. It is projected that this will allow them to produce ethanol for as little as 27 cents a litre.

The financially fragile farm sector will benefit by producing grain for ethanol fuel.

Rural small town Canada too will gain financially from increased employment in the fuel ethanol plants which would have to be built and operated. In turn, the depopulation of Canada's rural areas would be reduced. In addition a new market would be created that would consume about one-fifth of Canada's grain production.

I hope that members on all sides of the House will support this bill. It will benefit our environment, this planet, our economy, and the health of the Canadian people, particularly our children.

Mr. Speaker, because of the number of members who wish to speak on this bill I request at this time that the House give consideration to allowing the members to split their 10-minute time slots into five-minute speeches. Would that be acceptable to the House?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Hon. members have heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent to have five-minute speeches?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Ken James (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate on Bill C-226, an act to reduce automotive pollution. I would like to indicate that I have a variety of concerns about the bill.

MMT, the manganese-based gasoline additive, was first introduced in Canada in 1977. It was introduced into Canadian gasoline in 1978 and has been in continuous use since that time.

MMT is manufactured by the Ethyl Corporation of Canada which also distributes and sells the product to refineries in Canada. Ethyl has 170 employees located in my riding of Sarnia—Lambton.

I rise today to present Ethyl's concerns and interests. There are always two sides to a story. I would like to focus my remarks on three areas: concerns about MMT and health; MMT and the United States situation where the company made an application; and ethanol and MMT.

My friend and colleague from Lambton—Middlesex has raised concerns about the issue of MMT and health. Members of this House will be interested to know that like many natural substances, manganese can have a harmful effect if consumed or inhaled in large quantities. However, to produce adverse effects the exposure must be chronic. The level of airborne manganese also must be in excess of 1,000 micrograms per cubic meter.

All members of this House will know that many organizations have established exposure guidelines to ensure human safety, including the World Health Organization and the province of Ontario.

Ethyl's research has demonstrated that MMT use in gasoline will result in a maximum of approximately 0.02 micrograms per cubic metre, which is insignificant in terms of air quality and health concerns. This is 50 times less than the lowest standard listed by health organizations as safe. The World Health Organization lists one microgram per cubic metre as being safe. So the tests show that it is 50 times less than that.

At the same time, Ethyl Corporation has undertaken extensive research in this area to add to the scientific understanding of the way manganese affects human health. In 1985 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency studied airborne manganese levels. The levels studied were approximately 10,000 times higher than the level that results from the use of the additive which is, as I noted earlier, 0.017 or as I used, 0.02 micrograms per cubic metre at the most.

The EPA determined that even at the level studied, which was of course 10,000 times higher showed, according to their statement as "caused or contributed to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to result in an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness". Certainly they have indicated that even 10,000 times higher would not be a health concern.

Ross Associates, a group of respected toxicologists, conducted a comprehensive literature search on the health effects of manganese. Ross' literature search determined that "the anticipated increase of manganese in the environment from the use of MMT is sufficiently small in comparison to the natural levels of this element and human intake of it that the body's ability to maintain consistent manganese levels should be unaffected. Indeed, manganese is necessary for proper functioning of the human body; thus, no effect on health would be anticipated".

Let me turn to MMT and the United States situation, which my colleague brought up. Much attention has been directed to Ethyl Corporation's application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for permission to use MMT in unleaded gasoline. This request was based on a comprehensive series of tests to scientifically evaluate and document the effect of MMT on automobile tailpipe emissions and air quality.

The members of this House may find it interesting that these tests show conclusively that the additive does not harm the catalyst and, in fact, significantly reduces pollutants, especially nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide. In fact, nitrogen oxide emissions are reduced by 20 per cent and carbon monoxide emissions by 7 per cent, with no practical effect on hydrocarbon emissions. Overall tailpipe emissions are reduced by 8 per cent.

Ethyl's testing program also showed that the use of MMT in unleaded gasoline will not adversely affect the ambient air concentration of manganese.

A study done for the company by Stanley Industrial Consultants Limited of Calgary went on to say, in summary: "This study examined changes in air emission patterns in the event that the use of the octane-enhancing additive MMT in Canadian gasoline is eliminated". The tests say: "The Fleet Test Program results indicate significant decreases in nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide emissions and a slight increase in volatile organic substance emissions due to the presence of MMT".

The study also went on to say they estimate "that benzene in vehicle emissions will increase in the order of 5 to 10 per cent due to the increased aromatic content of gasolines without MMT".

The ability to use MMT in Canadian gasolines is of major importance to Canadian refiners and the driving public. If MMT is eliminated, nitrogen oxide emissions will increase. The addition of nitrogen oxide emissions will be approximately equivalent to an extra 500,000 vehicles on Canadian roadways in 1995 and 1.3 million additional vehicles in the year 2000.

Without MMT, Canadian refinery crude demands will increase by approximately 6,500 barrels per day, equivalent to $60 million a year in 1995, assuming crude is selling at $25.50 a barrel.

• (1130)

Capital needs of great consequence will be required by our refineries. It would affect the refinery in Sarnia. Esso is in a difficult productive mode at this time so it could have a serious effect. Some companies would need to spend millions of dollars of investment.

If MMT is eliminated from Canadian gasolines there will be increased emissions of nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, sodium dioxide and volatile organic substances, all of concern.

It is important to put on the record that Ethyl does not oppose the increased use of ethanol as a blended agent in gasoline. It clearly can reduce emissions of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons but members will know that ethanol does not have the same attributes as MMT and is mistakenly represented as an alternative to this additive.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate today on behalf of Ethyl Canada and its workers. In the interests of the public present studies should be examined as we evaluate this bill as presented by my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, before getting into the main body of my remarks, I would like to note that the speaker who just finished at one point stated that a series of effects would follow from a positive series of assumptions, one of which was a $25.50 per barrel price for Canadian crude oil.

I must say that I desperately hope God is listening today and will take that suggestion to heart and effect it because I can tell you $25.50 for a barrel of oil would be welcome news in Alberta. I suppose that is beside the point of the discussion here today.

Mrs. Sparrow: How about Canadian dollars.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): We even take Canadian dollars, $25.50.

Mrs. Sparrow: You want U.S.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Yes, that would be great. $25.50 U.S. would be wonderful, but $25.50 Canadian at this point would be really great too.

In general I must say that we in the New Democratic Party are in agreement with the notion underlying the bill, which is that of replacing hazardous additives in gasoline with less hazardous and much more environmentally friendly additives that can achieve much the same result.

Again, referring back to the member who just spoke, he enumerated a number of very nasty things that would happen were MMT to be removed from gasoline, but the majority of effects in that list are predicated on the assumption that no replacement would be placed in that gasoline that would have equivalent or similar effects.

Whereas it is true that MMT mitigates several environmentally unfriendly elements of gasoline at the moment, that mitigation can be achieved as well in most instances by other additives, including biomass derived ethanol which is what I want to concentrate on today.

I should note as well that we acknowledge the effort of the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex in encouraging the greater use of ethanol. We agree whole-heartedly that the greater use of biomass derived ethanol could expand Canada's domestic market for grains.

In fact, testimony last year before the Standing Committee on Energy, Mines and Resources indicated that a 10 per cent blend of ethanol, which is to say 10 per cent ethanol to 90 per cent gasoline, would require 3.45 billion litres of ethanol annually and would consume 9 to 10 million tonnes of grain annually. Canada's annual production of principal grains now totals between 50 and 60 million tonnes. Therefore, ethanol production, were it to reach the 10 per cent blend level in all gasoline sold in Canada, would require the equivalent of slightly less than 20 per cent of the entire Canadian annual grain harvest at present. That would be a real boon for grain producers.

I would also note that we agree with the hon. member's contention that ethanol use should be stimulated because this would be good for the environment. That is clearly the case. It is the case not just because of its additive qualities but because biomass generated ethanol is derived using carbon that is already in our biosphere and to the degree it is used it backs out carbon that is dredged up from the lithosphere and added as new carbon to the biosphere. Therefore, for every litre of ethanol you use in preference to a litre of gasoline, you have stopped the introduction of that new equivalent amount of carbon into our biosphere. That is the principal environmentally sound attribute of ethanol in our contention and one that ought always to be borne in mind when we consider the question of ethanol use.

Unfortunately, if passed in its current form, this bill would only achieve part of what it sets out to accomplish. The bill would succeed in banning methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl, or MMT, a manganese-containing compound for which there are legitimate health concerns despite the submission of the previous speaker, but it would not ban other hazardous compounds like the aromatics toluene, benzene and the family of xylenes. These are very worrisome elements in current gasoline and are left unaddressed by the bill. However, again, it would ban the methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl.

The bill's biggest failing, however, is that it would not succeed in encouraging the greater use of ethanol derived from agricultural products and byproducts or from wood waste. By stipulating that no gasoline sold in Canada, and I quote from the bill "has an oxygen content of less than 3.2 per cent by weight", the bill would allow the use, not just of ethanol, but as well of MTBE or methyl tertiary butyl ether and ETBE, ethyl tertiary butyl ether.

MTBE is a petroleum-based product. It does not stimulate domestic markets for grain. It does not result in reduced CO2 emissions. But, because it is produced by the oil industry and because it is easily shipped through pipelines, MTBE is the additive of choice for that industry which is why, for example, a large new methyl tertiary butyl ether plant was recently built in Edmonton. The bill would essentially result in the replacement of MMT with MTBE, not with ethanol.

As for the use of ETBE, the bill does not stipulate that ETBE, although derived from ethanol, be derived from ethanol produced from grain or wood. The same with ethanol itself. Therefore, the same problem could arise in that you would be using lithospheric carbons to generate this new additive rather than using the biospheric carbons we have available.

However, the bill in its principle is a commendable one. Its elements can be individually addressed and repaired in committee. Therefore, the New Democrat caucus will be supporting this bill at second reading and attempting to get it into committee where what we submit are salutary changes could be made.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today and speak in full and complete support of the private member's bill by my colleague, the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex. It is not very often that a private bill of such merit and importance gets called for debate in the House. This bill is well-researched, well-intentioned and totally worthy of support. However, I would expect nothing less from the member whose riding borders mine in southwestern Ontario.

This bill would require all gasoline sold in Canada to have a minimum oxygen content of 3.2 per cent. That is consistent with the original draft of the U.S. Clean Air Act of 1988.

Hundreds of my own constituents have signed petitions calling on the government for more action on ethanol with a legislated blend. Indeed, this comes on the heels of a meeting in my riding on March 23, attended by over 350 people. It was sponsored by the Kent Federation of Agriculture and the Chatham and District Chamber of Commerce and chaired by Stephen McGrail, president of the Kent Corn Producers Association.

We all met to determine the possibilities of locating an ethanol industry in Kent county. It makes both economic and environmental sense, since my riding is the number one corn producer in all of Canada. It is the fuel of the future while creating other markets for our grains and helping the local economy.

Environmentally friendly green gas was pumped for the first time in Ontario last month in Chatham in my riding of Kent.

• (1140)

Frank Anthony, president of the Ontario Corn Producers Association, said that the move to ethanol at UCO's 21 Ontario stations will generate about $57 million dollars from 22.5 million bushels of corn in the province.

My riding alone has over 5,000 corn producers. Industry predictions indicate that 20 per cent of the Ontario corn production, some 200 million bushels, will go into the making of ethanol.

In 1990, Ontario drivers used over 12 billion litres of gasoline not including gasoline for aviation, marine, farming, construction, transportation or other off-road transportation. That accounts for over one-third of the 31.8 billion litres of gas used across the country. With that ethanol represents a lucrative market. While it cannot be used alone in conventional engines, when one part of ethanol is mixed with nine parts of gasoline, it becomes a viable alternative.

In the United States, 375 million bushels of corn annually are distilled into fuel ethanol. That could grow to one billion bushels within the next seven years. The market is there so we now have to meet the demand.

Due to the clean burning and renewable nature, ethanol fuel blends were recently awarded the eco logo by Environment Canada. This is the first time any transportation fuel was ever granted the logo.

This private members' bill is important both to help the environment and our agricultural economy. Plagued with drought, low commodity prices and rising costs, farmers have taken a battering in recent years. The situation has become so bad that there have been predictions that the family farm will disappear within the next generation.

The Chatham ethanol consortium is showing the type of forward thinking attitude needed as it conducts a feasibility study on whether or not a plant can be located in the city.

My colleagues will speak more about the dangers of MMT. My friend from Lambton—Middlesex has spoken out often and strongly for the banning of this deadly additive.

It is useful to point out that the Leader of the Opposition is the first federal party leader to support the use of ethanol and abandon the use of MMT in Canada.

We have consistently shown leadership on this issue by developing the policies for the future. Indeed, I was a member of the Standing Committee on Environment when in 1990 we released a report calling on the government to introduce a major research development and demonstration program to reduce greenhouse gases. This has already been done for ethanol. It is something positive that we can do right here in our own backyard to reduce global warming and thinning of the ozone layer.

I congratulate the member for Lambton—Middlesex for his fortitude and determination in sticking with this proposal, for developing this important private members' bill and for his leadership on this issue.

This bill is worthy of support by members on all sides of this House. Environment and agriculture need this type of initiative and Canadians are demanding concrete action. I am proud to support this bill and the efforts of my colleague from Lambton—Middlesex.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have five minutes to speak in support of this bill, Bill C-226, a private members' bill proposed by my colleague from Lambton—Middlesex. There are so many winners in this particular bill that I just cannot imagine why the entire House would not get behind it.

I will not go into all of the benefits that would accrue to the agricultural industry in this country. I will not go into all of the benefits in terms of new job creation that would result because of the fact that it is a new industry that would result with a commitment to this fuel. I would like to focus on the reduction of CO2s.

You have to understand that in a city like Toronto we probably have 50 to 60 per cent of the entire CO2 emissions of this entire country. If you fly into Toronto on a day like today, you can see the smog hovering over the city. If you ever have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to visit Toronto you will just be amazed at the Don Valley Parkway, the 401 highway, east and west, the Trans-Canada Highway and our Gardiner Expressway to the south. For at least five hours of every day these major thoroughfares are like parking lots. The health hazard that exists because of the emissions that are coming from the automobiles right now in the city of Toronto are unquestionably a danger to the health of that community.

In fact, in 1986 when there were air quality monitoring stations in Toronto, during an eight-hour maximum period that they were monitoring the air quality, at that time just at Yonge Street in downtown Toronto there were over 10 different times that the levels had exceeded the recommended amount by over seven times. This was in 1986. The situation is worse right now.

A member of Parliament has put forward a private members' bill which is going to reduce this toxic emission, and that is what it is. Doctors from all over the world are saying that this MMT is showing health effects that are certainly hazardous. I listened to the member for Sarnia-Lambton who had a different point of view. I cannot imagine all of these doctors from all around the world putting forward their position unless there was some scientific and substantive basis to their concern. I do not really see how we cannot get behind this bill.

From a member representing an urban area of close to 2.5 million people where we are just a step away form wearing masks in that city, those of us who are responsible for urban areas plead with this House for support. Anything that would reduce the toxic emissions into our community is something that we hope all members from all regions of this House would get behind.

For this particular fuel there is scientific information that shows that this ethanol fuel reduces these toxic emissions by close to 60 per cent and so we are pleading for support of this bill.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and speak to this motion which was brought forward by the hon. member opposite. The issue under discussion here today is whether we might by requiring some change in the way gasoline is produced in Canada create some benefits for the citizens of Canada in the form of a cleaner or a healthier environment.

The changes proposed in Bill C-226 would require the elimination of the anti-knock additive MMT and the addition of a fuel oxygenate, likely ethanol.

The United States has recently completed a thorough review of the potential for various changes to gasoline quality to address a variety of environmental concerns in several parts of that country. This process included extensive consultation with concerned parties, environmental groups, health authorities, vehicle manufacturers, fuel producers. The outcome, the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, represents the consensus of all these parties about which gasoline specifications will improve the local air quality.

• (1150)

However, since different parts of the United States have different environmental problems, it is not surprising there are several so-called reformulated gasolines with the properties of an individual fuel being set to address most effectively the environmental concerns of the specific region where it will be sold.

Under the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, gasoline sold in winter months in the 44 cities which exceed carbon monoxide standards must contain at least 2 per cent oxygen, rising to 2.7 per cent in 1992.

In addition, reformulated gasoline must be used in the 10 areas most severely exceeding the desired ozone levels beginning in 1995. This gasoline must have a 2 per cent oxygen content year round. Ethanol and MTBE, an ether produced from methanol and butane, can both be used to meet this requirement. The demand for ethanol and MTBE are therefore expected to increase in the U.S.

The Clean Air Act regulations also provided for a waiver to allow fuel blends containing 10 per cent ethanol to exceed the standard for Reid vapour pressure by one pound per square inch. This higher vapour pressure however increases the fuel's tendency to emit hydrocarbon vapours and so the state of New Jersey, which is very concerned about local smog problems caused by high ozone levels, is currently refusing to allow alcohol fuel blends to exceed the normal vapour pressure. The Environmental Protection Agency's proposed regulations on reformulated gasoline released on April 16, 1992 do not provide a waiver for RVP.

That may have a number of effects such as giving preference to MTBE and affecting planned ethanol production expansion. Already the largest producer in the U.S., Archer, Daniels and Midland has cancelled a planned ethanol production expansion. It may require that petroleum producers provide a special tailored, in other words a lower RVP base gasoline for blending with ethanol. Various options to reach a compromise on standards for oxygenates in gasoline are yet being discussed in the U.S.

Canada too has its gasoline reformulation agenda. Government officials are reviewing the extensive information coming out of the U.S. process to determine how it applies to Canada's situation. They are beginning to consult with the many parties who will be affected by any decision to change gasoline specifications. They are beginning a dialogue with vehicle and fuel manufacturers in Canada to discover what changes are possible in Canada, what their effect on air quality might be, and what will be the likely cost to Canadians. Provincial governments, which largely have jurisdiction over fuel specifications, will have to be actively involved in this process.

Four years ago the concerted efforts of the government resulted in the most powerful piece of environmental legislation in the history of this country. Proclaimed as an act of Parliament on June 30, 1988, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act gave the government the legislative power to address the kind of issues raised in Bill C-226 in a rigorous and comprehensive way.

Sections 46 and 47 of the CEPA provided a comprehensive regulatory framework to prohibit the production or importation for the use or sale of any fuel that contains an element, component or additive in a concentration or quantity that exceeds the concentration or quantity prescribed with respect to that element, component or additive in relation to the fuel when in the opinion of the Governor in Council the combustion of the fuel would result in a significant contribution to air pollution.

This government went much further than that. In May 1989 the Ministers of the Environment and Transport announced a five-year plan to reduce emissions from internal combustion engines.

In 1990 the green plan reinforced several pollution issues such as smog, toxins and climate changes to name only a few which will result in several strategies to achieve the objective of a clean and healthy environment in a sound and prosperous economy for future generations of Canadians.

Energy, Mines and Resources; Environment Canada; Transport Canada; Industry, Science and Technology; and Health and Welfare are reviewing all aspects of gasoline formulations. They will workshop the complex subject of gasoline formulations with representatives from provincial ministries, consumer environmental groups, members of the petroleum industry, the motor vehicle industry, and consultants in the near future.

The cost of fuel quality changes to improve the environment will likely be high. A forecast of the capital expenditures required for refining and marketing by the industry to the year 2000 has been estimated at between $12 billion to $31 billion depending on what changes will be required. This estimate includes ongoing capital expenditures, low sulphur diesel, reformulated gasoline, stationary source emission control, and other refinery modifications for environmental controls.

Members of the House should be reminded that there is already in place a comprehensive review and consultation process as well as a regulatory framework to assist the linkages between gasoline components and air pollution. These comprehensive technical and social economic reviews will provide facts to assist government in addressing the need to make changes to existing gasoline

formulations to respond to environmental issues and concerns.

I doubt at this time that there has been sufficient data on the use of oxygenates in motor vehicle fuels and the effect on air quality in the Canadian urban areas.

Therefore I would make the point that I cannot support Bill C–225, given its restrictive nature and its failure to address a number of important factors which impact on the entire issue of automotive fuels and air pollution.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of privilege to stand in the House today to give full support to this bill which I believe is a bill of common sense, a bill that is bringing the pollution question forward and giving a reasonable way to bring a solution to something which has become a major problem not only in this country but world–wide.

We all watched very much with interest at what was happening in Brazil with the environmental talks. I heard the minister for this country state: "We are entering a new era of environmental development". I believe it is the responsibility of this government to enter that era along with the minister if the minister is heading in that direction. However I do not see a move when I hear statements from the ministry or getting close to the ministry: "We do not have enough information". I believe that is wrong.

The information is there from a multitude of sources, information enough that could fill this room with environmental problems from auto emissions and other types of emissions in this world.

Before I continue though I want to offer my congratulations to my colleague, the member for Lambton—Middlesex. He has taken it upon himself to put together a tremendous background of research information and possibly that backgroung of research information should be pushed on to our government if it does not see research is there.

I really have a strong question about the availability of research. It is not because it has not been done, but if I understand that the United States has banned a product since 1977, the research must clearly show that this product is not acceptable to the majority of North Americans. Certainly the track record of the United States has not been up front and first in the race to clear up environmental problems. When it has taken the initiative to ban MMT, we must be aware that there are negatives and there is proof. We have to stop that type of emission occurring.

The product itself is causing, as my colleague earlier stated, a manganese problem which becomes accumulative and may cause a tremendous amount of neurological damage to young, old and all people alike.

It is important to understand then that there are great volumes of information which tell us that MMT is not an acceptable product to be used in our country. Canadian emission testing does not use MMT. That seems to be a fraud in itself. When we do not see the product itself being used in the testing that we are sending out results on, there must be a major reason for concern. In that case I would question the whole process of testing itself.

• (1200)

It must be remembered that our goal is a goal of a cleaner atmosphere, a goal of a better environment for people to live in. Certainly MMT is not the only product we are talking about within this bill. We are also suggesting that we raise the oxygen content of our fuels up to a percentage of 3.2 by weight. That would—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but the time 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 list of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES WATER ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–51, an act respecting water resources in the Northwest Territories, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There are nine motions in amendment to Bill C-51, an act respecting water resources in the Northwest Territories, on the Notice Paper for the report stage.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River, will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 2, standing in the name of the hon. member for Nunatsiaq, is identical to Motion No. 1 and will not be selected.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River, will be grouped for the purposes of debate and voted on as follows: the vote on Motion No. 3 will apply to Motions Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 9; Motion No. 4 will be voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 8, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River, appears to be amending the Northern Canada Power Commission Act which is not before the House in Bill C-51. Accordingly I must rule Motion No. 8 out of order pursuant to Beachesne's citation 698 at paragraph (8)(a).

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-51 be amended in Clause 5 by striking out line 1 and the heading preceding line 1 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"Application

5. (1) In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of this Act and the provisions of any land claim agreements affecting the Northwest Territories, concluded between aboriginal peoples of Canada and Her Majesty, the provisions of the land claim agreements prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

(2) Nothing in this Act, the regulations or".

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure this morning to rise in the House to debate Bill C-51, an act respecting water resources in the Northwest Territories. There will be a bit of confusion today as we get into these two bills because Bill C-51 and Bill C-52 are so similar. Those who are watching us at home will have to watch very carefully because they are tied together and what we are doing is simply taking one bill and splitting it into two bills. There will be some very technical amendments, as people at home will notice, that we are talking about which in essence will make the new bill more consistent with the old bill.

I want to talk for a moment about Motion No. 1 and of course Motion No. 2 which was the identical one submitted by the hon. member for Nunatsiaq. I want to read it for the folks. It relates to the application of this particular bill to ongoing land claims in the Northwest Territories under Bill C-51 and also under Bill C-52 in Yukon.

It states:

In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of this act and the provisions of any land claim agreements affecting the Northwest Territories, concluded between aboriginal peoples of Canada and Her Majesty, the provisions of the land claim agreements prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

I am aware, after discussions with the government, that it will not be accepting our amendment. I tend to think this is a grave mistake for the simple reason that in committee, as we discussed this, we became aware that this legislation, Bill C-51 as well as Bill C-52, would have to be amended on a fairly regular basis because of the inconsistencies in it as it relates to the land claim settlements that are ongoing and, of course, those that have already been accepted. I use the Gwich'in land claim as an example of that.

I want to inform the House that the Northwest Territories Water Board calls the Northwest Territories water bill an interim measure because the inconsistencies in it in relation to the land claims are so glaring and so obvious.

I want to quote the minister, who is here today, as to the relation between land claims and these bills. The minister has agreed there are going to be some problems with this particular situation. He agrees the land claims will have to take precedence over the bills we are debating today.

I want to quote the minister in his press release of December 12, 1991 when he introduced the bills in this House:

> Aboriginal rights and management roles concerning water resources may be defined and set out in future comprehensive claim settlement legislation. Where there is any inconsistency between these acts and future claim settlement legislation, the latter will prevail.

That is exactly the intention of the motion before us today, to show the inconsistencies and the glaring differences between what the land claim negotiations will give aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories and the legislation itself in this particular bill and the powers under it.

What I am suggesting is not something that is earth shattering. Basically what I am asking the government to do is acknowledge the fact we will have to revisit these particular bills as land claims go through the system and are negotiated and approved in the Northwest Territories.

In Yukon that may not be as difficult because there is only one group involved in negotiations in that particular area, but if we take a look at all the different aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories, as many as five or six different negotiations may be undertaken over a period of a few years and we will be continually revisiting this legislation.

It is imperative that governments at all levels be very straightforward and frank with those who are involved in these licensing processes in those jurisdictions, that they understand there is going to be some revisiting of these particular bills in the future. It will not have to be a process of word of mouth to particular groups be it either the mining companies or individual user groups. They will understand there are land claim negotiations going on and they, as individuals who are concerned or interested in doing business in the Northwest Territories will be apprised of all changes as they go through because we have recognized that is a necessity in the bill.

What we did ask for in committee, what we suggested to the government and to the minister through discussions with his staff and with the parliamentary secretary, is that this particular legislation should be delayed somewhat in order for the Council of Yukon Indians, who wanted to make a further presentation to the different groups in the Northwest Territories, to have more input into this particular legislation.

• (1210)

It seems to me that this has been going on, and the government will say so when it has an opportunity, since 1988. It needs these technical changes in order to get on with a more modern process of dealing with water and the environment in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

I would ask the government to consider our amendment simply because it is more straightforward. It deals with the most important aspect of the issues that are ongoing in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, and that is the land claims process that we hear so much about and so often in this place.

If we as parliamentarians can acknowledge the fact that this is an interim measure and that applicants for licences in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon are aware of it, then they will deal with their business accordingly. This is the most appropriate way to govern and to do business in this place and indeed all across Canada.

I think I have presented our concerns as a party in relation to Motions Nos. 1 and 2. We feel it would be to the government's benefit to consider looking at this in detail in order not to make it any more confusing than it already is for those who have been trying to follow these two bills in the last few years. Because of the processes that are going on in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, they can expect these bills to be revisited on a regular basis as time goes on.

I ask the government again to consider accepting this amendment as it is a very legitimate amendment considering the facts that I have outlined today.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be able to play a role in this important debate on Bills C-51 and C-52, when we come to those amendments momentarily.

At this point I want to respond to the amendments just put forward and explained by the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River. He would have provided in Motion No. 1 for an amendment to clause 5(1) suggesting that in the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of the proposed amendment to Bill C-51, and the provisions of any land claim agreement affecting the Northwest Territories that the provisions of the land

claim agreement prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

I certainly understand the spirit of the hon. member's proposal and that also put forward as Motion No. 2 by the member for Nunatsiaq. As the land claim agreements are being negotiated both in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, it is anticipated that certain of the existing laws of general application will be affected, as will policies and regulations flowing from that legislation at the time.

When the land claim settlement legislation and self-government legislation is presented to Parliament, if there is then any overriding or paramount effect caused by the legislation which establishes the legal basis for the land claim agreements, then the question of paramountcy will be determined at that time.

At present there are four northern land claims agreements under negotiation. All of these agreements could affect many federal statutes, not merely Bills C-51 and C-52. But the paramountcy of those agreements is not necessarily an unqualified general right; it will be determined in a way which also respects certain of the overriding laws of Canada. Therefore, when the land claim agreements are finalized, they will be implemented through settlement legislation brought before this House and debated in this Chamber.

The individual agreements will set out the matters which these settlement acts must address and the manner in which inconsistencies or conflicts with federal legislation shall be dealt with. Legal working groups within the claims negotiation process will develop the necessary consequential amendments to federal legislation.

Therefore, I would submit that the inclusion of a general amendment such as the one advocated by the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River would constitute a precedent in that it would anticipate the conclusion of negotiations, the ratification by aboriginal groups and the governments affected, of the provisions of those settlement acts. If one were to make an anticipatory amendment of this nature it invites the question: Why not amend all federal statutes that will ultimately be affected by claims negotiations?

To come to the point, the inclusion of such a provision now would pre-judge the manner of implementing future land claim agreements and the specific development of legislation which enshrines the principle of paramountcy in those jurisdictions which will be affected when that legislation is brought before the House.

So the government at this time, while understanding the spirit and the intention of the proposal made by the hon. member, is not able to support the amendment at this time.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, my constituency of Prince Albert—Churchill River has a fair amount of water that flows into the Mackenzie River system through Lake Athabasca and the Athabasca River system.

I would like to rise in support of Motion No. 1 which states that in the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of this act and the provisions of any land claim agreements affecting the Northwest Territories concluded between aboriginal peoples of Canada and Her Majesty, the provisions of the land claim agreements prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

That is an excellent amendment to be proposing at this time. We have just heard the minister indicate his rationale for not accepting that particular provision, but I really think that he has in many ways side-stepped the question.

First of all, he says that paramountcy as envisioned here is not necessarily binding or unqualified in all areas. This contradicts a quotation of the minister, contained in a press release which he sent out on December 12 which says that "aboriginal rights and management roles concerning water resources may be defined and set out in future comprehensive claims settlement legislation". The press release continued: "Where there is any inconsistency between these acts and future land claims legislation, the latter will prevail". Those were the words of the minister at the time.

As I understand the amendment before us, it intends to include that thought, those words virtually, in the legislation before us. It seems to me when the minister issues a press release to the nation arguing that if there are any inconsistencies, that the land claim settlement will be paramount, that the latter will prevail, in his precise words, and now he argues that it is not necessarily the case, that kind of inconsistency really starts to undermine the good faith that has to underlie these negotiations.

I have some experience with these negotiations with constituents of my own. The Dene people of northern Saskatchewan, as well as those in northern Manitoba, have been very frustrated in dealing with this ministry and, with all due respect, with this minister regarding their traditional uses of the territories. There has not been, in many cases, an atmosphere of goodwill surrounding these talks.

• (1220)

For the minister to argue that while there may be inconsistencies and the negotiated land settlements may not prevail, and that is essentially what he is arguing, really serves to undermine the goodwill that needs to underlie these negotiations.

Also, the minister said this was anticipatory of what may happen and that if we were to make these kinds of amendments, then we should make amendments to all other legislation which the land claims negotiations might affect in the future.

In some ways it is a bit of a specious argument and I guess he needed to also round out his remarks. The fact is this is the legislation before us and the other bills are not before us. Therefore, it is not particularly germane to suggest that we would get into all of those at the same time. However, if we are to demonstrate our good faith in these ongoing negotiations at this critical time in history, as they do come up it is very important that they become recognized before the House.

It is important for the aboriginal people and all other people in this country to know that Parliament is taking seriously the general trend in constitutional negotiations toward self-government, the trend in the courts toward interpretation of aboriginal rights which very liberally interpret the right to traditional hunting, fishing and gathering rights and other trends in our society. It is incumbent upon Parliament not only to recognize those but, in fact, to show some leadership which we could do by accepting this particular amendment.

As well, I would like to make reference to the fact that the issue of water is a very substantial part of the negotiations which are under way with respect to claims agreements in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

I note in testimony by the Council for Yukon Indians on April 28, 1992 before the committee studying this legislation that about 12 pages in the umbrella agreement initialled in November are devoted to water management. It is a very critical aspect of that whole agreement. In that chapter it does something very important in establishing a new use not recognized in the Yukon Waters Act, the traditional use for Yukon Indian persons for purposes of trapping, non-commercial harvesting, transportation, traditional heritage, culture and spiritual purposes. This is a traditional use that is very much a part of the negotiations that are under way. In fact, it is something that the federal government has already initialled.

My understanding is that this particular legislation before us does not even make reference to this new and very important right for native people and important use as far as regulating waters are concerned that will come into being with the finalization of these agreements.

I do not blame the people of the north, particularly the Dene and the Yukon Indians, for feeling that if we proceed with this legislation without recognition of this important new use which is a part of all the new negotiations at a time when we are negotiating self-government agreements and other agreements that will fundamentally change the jurisdictional relationship between native peoples and the Government of Canada and if we proceed without recognition in this legislation through the amendment that has been proposed, we are going to fall behind the course of history and might well be creating difficulties down the road as we proceed with these negotiations.

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): The motion is negatived.

An hon. member: On division.

Motion No. 1 negatived.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 are grouped together for debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River) moved:

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-51 be amended by adding immediately after line 3 at page 30 the following new Clause:

"Transitional Provisions

45. Persons who, pursuant to the *Northern Inland Waters Act*, were members of the Northwest Territories Water Board immediately before the coming into force of this Act continue as such thereafter as if they had been appointed pursuant to this Act."

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-51 be amended in Clause 45 by striking out lines 5 to 9 at page 30 and substituting the following therefor:

"day fixed pursuant to section 54 of Bill C-52 entitled an *Act respecting water resources in the Yukon Territory*, as introduced on December 12, 1991, for the coming into force of that Act."

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-51 be amended by adding immediately after line 9 at page 30 the following new clause:

"46. (1) Licences relating to the Northwest Territories that were in force under the *Northern Inland Waters Act* immediately before the coming into force of this Act continue in force thereafter as if they had been issued in accordance with this Act.

(2) On the day on which this Act comes into force, the Board shall send a written notification to the holder of each licence referred to in subsection (1), stating whether the licence is a type A licence or a type B licence in accordance with the regulations made under paragraph 33(1)(*c*), and that licence shall henceforth be deemed to be of the type stated in the notification.

(3) Subsections 40(2) and (3) of this Act do not apply in respect of any condition of a licence referred to in subsection (1)

(*a*) until the ninetieth day after the coming into force of this Act; or

(*b*) if, on or before the day referred to in paragraph (*a*), the licensee has applied to the Board to amend the licence in relation to that condition, until the day on which that application is finally disposed of by the Board."

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-51 be amended by adding immediately after line 9 at page 30 the following new clause:

"46. Where, immediately before the coming into force of this Act, a person was using waters or depositing waste under the authority of regulations made under paragraph 29(*f*) or (*g*) of the *Northern Inland Waters Act* in such a way that, after the coming into force of this Act, that use or deposit would constitute a contravention of subsection 8(1) or 9(1) of this Act if the person were not a licensee, the person may, notwithstanding those subsections, continue to use waters or deposit waste in a substantially equivalent way

(*a*) until the ninetieth day after the coming into force of this Act; or

(*b*) if, on or before the day referred to in paragraph (*a*), the person has applied to the Board for a licence to continue that use or deposit, until the day on which that application is finally disposed of by the Board."

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C-51 be amended by adding immediately after line 9 at page 30 the following new clause:

"46. The Board shall deal with applications referred to in paragraphs 46(3)(*b*) and 47 (*b*) in priority to all other applications received by it."

Motion No. 9.

That Bill C-51 be amended by adding immediately after line 9 at page 30 the following new clause:

"Other references to *Northern Inland Waters Act*

46. A reference to the *Northern Inland Waters Act* in any Act, regulation, document, instrument, proclamation or order in council shall be deemed, unless the context otherwise requires, to be a reference to

(*a*) this Act,

(*b*) the *Yukon Waters Act*,

(*c*) this Act and the *Yukon Waters Act*, or

(*d*) this Act or the *Yukon Waters Act*,

whichever is appropriate."

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I start debate, it is my understanding that the government and the opposition have agreed to accept my Motion No. 8 which was ruled out of order by the Table. We have had some discussion and what I would like to do is ask for unanimous consent of the House to accept Motion No. 8 for debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Hon. members have heard the terms of the motion on Motion No. 8. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): moved:

Motion No. 8.

That Bill C-51 be amended by adding immediately after line 9 at page 30 the following new clause:

"Consequential Amendment

Northern Canada Power Commission (share issuance and sale authorization) Act

"46. (1) Section 12 of the *Northern Canada Power Commission (*share issuance and sale authorization) *Act* is repealed and the following substituted therefor:

12. The Minister may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, make an order exempting the Corporation as continued pursuant to section 10 from the requirement to pay fees for the right to use waters or deposit waste pursuant to a licence under the *Northwest Territories Waters Act.*

(2) An order made under section 12 of the *Northern Canada Power Commission (*share issuance and sale authorization) *Act* before the coming into force of this Act continues in force as if it had been made under that section as amended by this Act."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On Motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9, the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River, debate.

Mr. Nault: And No. 8, Mr. Speaker. I will talk about that at the same time. Let me again talk about these motions all in one lump and try and put them in a context that would be easily explainable to our folks back home and of course to the members who have not been following these bills as closely as they could.

First of all, we understand the difficulties that the Table had with Motion No. 8. We are aware that it does go somewhat outside of the legislation. What we had intended on doing with Motion No. 8 was merely to lift clause 50 which is in the Yukon Waters Act and transfer it into the Northwest Territories Waters Act. This is a clause that deals with the Northern Canada Power Commission in the Northwest Territories. What we are attempting to do in a technical sense, in the hope of reducing confusion, is take a particular clause out of the Yukon bill that deals with the Northwest Territories and deals with the Northern Canada Power Commission, which is in the Northwest Territories, and put it into the legislation that we are now talking about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I do not like to interrupt the hon. member, but we checked on Motion No. 8 and it is possible to group that motion with the other motions. Debate is on all motions, including Motion No. 8.

• (1230)

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, as I said the first time I rose, I felt that it was going to be an interesting day because of how things were structured here. Of course, we are seeing that.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the NDP and the government for giving us unanimous consent to put this motion on the floor of the House of Commons because it is a very appropriate one. It is more of a technical one. Again, it is one that we are trying to deal with to reduce the confusion that is within the original bill.

When we divide the bill into two separate bills, of course, we would like to remove clause 50 out of the Yukon Waters Act and put it in the Northwest Territories Waters Act because the Northern Canada Power Commission deals specifically with the Northwest Territories.

I will go back to all the motions to try to explain the technical aspects of these particular motions in order to put some semblance of understanding before the House.

The motions are technical amendments which respond to concerns expressed more so by the Northwest Territories Water Board than anyone. In fact, Motions Nos. 3 through 9 are all transitional amendments which have been, if I can be so bold, accepted by the government and the opposition as amendments that would be accepted because of their technical nature.

The transitional provisions which are the bridge between the current Northern Inland Waters Act and the new Yukon and Northwest Territories water bills are all contained in the Yukon bill.

It is somewhat baffling to come across references to the Northwest Territories in the Yukon Act. It is equally disconcerting to read the Northwest Territories water bill as it currently stands and see no reference whatsoever to any transitional provisions.

When the Northwest Territories Water Board appeared before the legislative committee in April, this issue was raised. I will quote from the remarks made by the chairman of the Northwest Territories Water Board on this matter: "If a licensee picked up a copy of Bill C-51, he would not know whether his licences were going to lapse when this comes into effect, or what was going to happen to him. He would not know who to

phone or whether the old board was going to be in business after the new act came into place".

"We found afterwards that these transitional provisions had been put into Bill C–52 so you could either address this concern by putting the same or similar transitional provisions into Bill C–51 or alternatively, writing to every licensee and doing a public relations campaign to make sure they know where that information is available".

As you can see, there is a lot of confusion as to how things will apply once we split one bill into two. What is suggested by these technical amendments is to remove references to the Northwest Territories from the Yukon bill and to put the transitional provisions of one bill into another bill. I hope that does not confuse anyone, because it sometimes confuses me.

Clause 45 of the Yukon Waters Act, for example, says that persons who were members of the Yukon Territory Water Board or the Northwest Territories Water Board before the coming into force of this act continue as such thereafter.

Motion No. 3 creates a similar clause 45 for the Northwest Territories Waters Act. We have in this case struck out the reference to the Northwest Territories Water Board in the Yukon bill and put it as a new clause 45 in the Northwest Territories bill.

In essence, to make a long story short, these technical amendments are basically the process of removing references of one particular area in one bill that do not relate to that particular area.

Of course, Motion No. 8 on which we just got unanimous consent was somewhat different in that it dealt with the Northern Canada Power Commission as it relates to the Northwest Territories and, for the sake of removing confusion, we are hoping to take that particular clause when we get into discussion of Bill C–52 out of that particular bill completely and put it into the Northwest Territories Waters Act.

That explanation is as concise as I can give in the short time I have to explain the technical amendments. It is my understanding, and I hope it is correct, that the government accepts those amendments. It is also my understanding that the New Democratic Party accepts those amendments. Basically they are ones to clarify the two different bills as they were lumped together in one bill.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the government is prepared to accept the amendments put forward by the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River to Bill C–51, Motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

I certainly understand the confusion as it has been described by the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River which appeared to arise from cross–references in the alternate pieces of legislation when each was to have been a self–standing bill affecting either Yukon or the Northwest Territories water act.

Bill C–51 and Bill C–52 are drafted in such a way that they both must come into force at the same time since they will replace one existing statute, the Northern Inland Waters Act. Thus the legislative drafters felt that the transitional provisions need only appear in one of the bills. Bill C–52 was chosen to repeal the existing Northern Inland Waters Act, so it also contains all the transitional provisions for both Yukon and Northwest Territories, hence the confusion.

As the member has pointed out, when the legislative committee was reviewing these bills one of the witnesses, specifically the Northwest Territories Water Board, indicated that some confusion among the affected stakeholders might arise due to the absence of these transitional provisions in Bill C–51.

I want to thank the hon. members for Nunatsiaq and Kenora—Rainy River for their co–operation in putting forth these important amendments. Their adoption will only help to improve and clarify these bills for all the affected stakeholders.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise and briefly indicate that on behalf of the New Democratic Party we will also be supporting the motions currently before us. I think it behoves us all to try and make sure that the legislation that we produce in this Chamber be as watertight—I guess that is the proper word—in this particular debate as possible.

Therefore it was important that some of these technical changes be made to ensure that the legislation is clear. I as well would like to thank the members who

have put hard work and effort into making sure that this legislation is as complete as possible.

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. 3. I would remind hon. members that the vote on Motion No. 3 will apply to Motions Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

• (1240)

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 3 agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The next question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 4 agreed to.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that the bill as amended be concurred in at report stage, with further amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Siddon moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

YUKON WATERS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-52, an act respecting water resources in the Yukon Territory, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There are eight motions in amendment to Bill C-52, an act respecting water resources in the Yukon Territory, on the Notice Paper for the report stage.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River, will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 2, standing in the name of the hon. member for Nunatsiaq, is identical to Motion No. 1 and will not be selected.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, standing in the name of the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River, will be grouped for debate. The vote on Motion No. 3 will apply to Motions Nos. 4, 5 and 6. Motions Nos. 7 and 8 will be voted on separately.

[*English*]

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River) moved: Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-52 be amended in Clause 5 by striking out line 7 and the heading preceding line 7 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"Application

5. (1) In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of this Act and the provisions of any land claim agreements affecting the Yukon Territory, concluded between aboriginal peoples of Canada and Her Majesty, the provisions of the land claim agreements prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

(2) Nothing in this Act, the regulations or".

He said: Mr. Speaker, we are now debating Bill C-52, which is the Yukon water bill. What we are trying to achieve with the amendment that I have presented and classified as Motion No. 1 is the same thing I attempted to do in debate under Bill C-51, namely, to put in the legislation a transitional clause regarding inconsistencies between the provisions of this act and the provisions of

any land claims agreements affecting the Yukon Territory concluded between the aboriginal people of Canada and Her Majesty. Those land claim agreements will prevail to the extent of the inconsistencies.

I listened very intently to the minister's response and rationale to my amendment under Bill C-51. I find it somehow difficult to understand the approach by the government on this particular amendment. The necessity of being consistent in these particular pieces of legislation related to the land claims negotiations is obviously completely impossible.

Therefore, what is going to be negotiated when there is a land claim may vary depending on the particular group the government is negotiating with. The particular aboriginal group in that area may decide that there are certain provisions necessary in its land claims agreement but which are not necessary to another group. In essence, every particular land claims negotiation will be unique in certain respects.

Therefore, what we are suggesting is during the negotiations that the government will undertake with the four or five different groups during the period of the next few years, and I hope it does not take much longer than that, the government will go into these negotiations with the understanding that the land claims settlements enacted through the negotiations will take precedence over this particular piece of legislation. This is in order that the traditional users of this particular resource in a particular area will have the ability and the jurisdiction to control that piece of land and the waters that flow in and out of that land to the point of giving them the jurisdiction and the wherewithal to deal with the problems that may occur within that boundary.

If the minister suggests that is not necessary, once the land claim is settled we would have to go back to the House to amend these particular pieces of legislation every single time. It seems to me that would be a waste of the House's valuable time and a considerable expense to the Government of Canada. In essence, with a clause like we have suggested what could be done is that there could be a clause put in during the negotiations on the land claims settlement which would give precedence to the particular aboriginal group that is being negotiated with.

Therefore, the inconsistencies within the bills that are being passed, Bills C-51 and C-52, would no longer play an important role. Aboriginal people in those particular areas would feel comfortable in that these particular pieces of legislation that are being passed today would not trample over their rights in the area of inland waters.

I would have hoped that the minister would see the very common sense rationale to this particular amendment and not look at it as a precedent. We are suggesting that the land claims settlements will take precedence over these particular bills. That in itself may be classified by the government as a precedent.

I would suggest that every land claim settlement that will be done in the future would not take place unless the aboriginal people are assured that they will have some legitimate rights and control over the water resources within their own borders. Therefore, it may seem on the surface to be somewhat of a precedent but in reality the facts are that these land claims will suggest and be put in place with that understanding and belief by the aboriginal people once they are signed.

I was hoping that the minister would look at this as a friendly amendment in order to make things much clearer to the people who live in the Northwest Territories and to the people who live in Yukon. It would be a practical amendment that would put in place a regime of better understanding as to what we as members of Parliament are really trying to achieve by putting this new regime in.

We drafted an amendment on this issue for clause by clause.

• (1250)

First, we were advised before the meeting started that our amendment would be ruled out of order by the chairperson at the particular meeting when we were trying to deal with this in committee. We felt it was important to bring this to the people's attention in Canada, the Northwest Territories and in Yukon because it is going to come back to haunt us down the road. I suggest the new government that will come into this

House after the next election will have to deal with this inconsistency.

In conclusion, Motion No. 1 recognizes that there are inconsistencies between the water bills and the water provisions of soon to be finalized land claims agreements. The inconsistencies have been acknowledged by our own government and the water bills will have to be amended as soon as the claims agreements are finalized.

The government acknowledges that amendments to the water bills will be necessary in order to bring them in line with the claims agreements because the minister has suggested that.

The government is also well aware that aboriginal organizations had requested a delay in the passage of these bills. They preferred to have their claims agreements finalized first so the water provisions of their agreements could be integrated into the proposed new water bills before they were brought into this House.

In this way the water bills would be completely updated. There would be no need to amend the bills subsequently to make them consistent with land claims, as is now the case. The government, however, did not want to wait for the finalization of the claims before bringing the new water management legislation forward.

Members on this side accept the need for a new water management regime in the north. We would have preferred, however, that the government acknowledge in these acts what it is prepared to acknowledge outside these acts, namely, that the bills are inconsistent with what has been negotiated in northern land claims.

Our amendment is a compromise which avoids delaying these bills until land claims are finalized. It is simple and straightforward. It informs everyone of a basic fact on which there is no disagreement. It confirms the minister's position. It clarifies what could be a very confusing situation for northern residents and industry.

Again I suggest to the minister and the government that this is a very friendly amendment. It is meant to make things a little clearer, which we were attempting to do, and it is hoped the government will reconsider because we feel it may cause a lot of confusion, especially in Bill C–51. We may be back in this place every year amending that particular act because of the land claims settlements that are going to be ongoing and approved in the near future.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the proposed amendment, Motion No. 1 to Bill C–52 and also the companion motion offered by the hon. member for Nunatsiaq, I would like to say to the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River that I do look upon his amendment as a friendly amendment. There is no question about that.

I understand the spirit in which he is offering this proposal. However, this amendment is premature and it is premature for the reason that, as the hon. member has stated, every land claim negotiation will be unique in certain respects.

I know he has made the case that it would save time later in not having to return to the Northwest Territories and Yukon waters acts to further amend them, but when the settlement legislation is brought before this House, after it has been ratified by a particular first nation, well after a negotiated agreement has been reached, when that settlement legislation is brought into this House the amendments he is concerned about will be but consequential amendments to other pieces of existing federal legislation.

There is no doubt the federal government is committed. I have publicly committed myself to ensuring that in the affected jurisdictions, in the areas which are the settlement areas contained within a land claims agreement, the first nation's laws or the laws of the aboriginal party will prevail according to the terms that are negotiated in each individual case.

In terms of Bill C–52 and the amendment before the House, it is premature to anticipate the nature of those negotiations and the time it might take to include them, notwithstanding the suggestion of the hon. member that we might save time in the future. It is an inappropriate principle to anticipate agreement on a particular land claim until that agreement is reached.

I restate one final time for the record that there is nothing in Bill C–51 or Bill C–52 which prejudices the future implementation of land claims agreements with any of the aboriginal parties north of the 60th parallel. When those agreements are implemented, the settlement acts which will be brought before this Parliament and debated will determine what changes might be made

to laws of general application in order to accommodate the land claims agreements.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in a debate on Bill C-52, the Yukon waters act, and particularly Motion No. 1 which states:

> In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of this Act and the provisions of any land claim agreements affecting the Yukon Territory, concluded between aboriginal peoples of Canada and Her Majesty, the provisions of the land claim agreements prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

This is an excellent motion. I am a little disappointed that the minister twice within the last hour has offered arguments against its adoption. I really cannot understand the basis for his argument. I was impressed on December 12 when he issued a press release from his department saying that aboriginal rights and management roles concerning water resources may be defined and set out in future comprehensive claims settlement legislation. Then he added that where there is any inconsistency between these acts and future claims settlement, the latter will prevail.

Mr. Siddon: I said that here.

Mr. Funk: The minister adds from across the way that he has made a very strong statement to that effect again. I appreciate that he says those things but that is why I have trouble comprehending why when he is prepared to put it in a press release he is not prepared to put it in this legislation.

The minister is arguing that it anticipates land claims agreements which may be different from case to case and may be included in specific settlements legislation. That much is true. However, at the same time this amendment anticipates such differences existing between different agreements and says provision of the land claims agreements—plural—prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

Really the wording of the motion is such that it would not make any difference which particular claim would come before us and what the provisions would be. This provision would automatically kick in and be an operative clause.

I really cannot see what the minister's argument is and I see some danger in not pursuing this particular motion and not including it in the legislation.

The legislation before us is very important. It covers probably half the land area of the country. The waters in that vast tract of land are some of the cleanest and least polluted waters in the country that we as Canadians have an absolute stake in preserving and keeping from going the way of much of the water in southern Canada.

This legislation is important to my constituency, which borders on the Northwest Territories. The northern waters systems do not necessarily reflect political boundaries. It would probably be a mistake to wait two, three, four or five years until all these settlements are negotiated. At the same time, it is important to recognize in very practical ways, as well as in symbolic ways, what is happening in these negotiations.

The Council of Yukon Indians made an excellent presentation to the committee in which it said that in the umbrella agreement which was initialled in November between the Yukon Indians and the Government of Canada there are a dozen pages devoted to water management.

• (1300)

It is a very important aspect of that particular umbrella agreement. What happens in there is that it establishes an entirely new use as far as legislation is concerned when it comes to water management. That is the traditional use for the purposes of trapping, non-commercial harvesting, transportation, traditional heritage, cultural and spiritual purposes. This use is guaranteed to Yukon Indian persons without a licence or a fee.

This is what is being anticipated in the land claims negotiation. The courts, in decisions like the Sparrow decision, have made very clear it is part of the fundamental fabric of the country. At the same time, we are at the constitutional table trying to convince the aboriginal peoples of this country, the Métis, the Indian and Inuit people, that we are serious in recognizing what traditionally has been the self-government role which has not been recognized in the Indian Act and other kinds of legislation. We are now saying that is an inherent right, it has always been there. We will finally get around to recognizing this in the Constitution. That is a commitment that has been made not only by the Government of

Canada but I believe by at least nine out of the ten provinces and the two territories of this country.

It seems to me that if we are establishing that kind of a jurisdictional context in the country, it really calls into question how serious we are about that kind of rhetoric if we refuse to include in legislation like the Yukon waters act an operative clause that basically indicates that when we are talking about these kinds of changes we are talking in good faith.

Aboriginal people have some reason to be concerned about this. First of all, the consultation process with respect to this bill was somewhat flawed. We were assured earlier on when this legislation was introduced and scheduled for quick passage that all the interested parties had been consulted and basically went along with this legislation. When the committee checked around with those people, the interested groups in Yukon and the Northwest Territories, it turned out those people had not felt they had been consulted at all and that if they had been consulted they certainly had not been listened to.

That is a bit of a pattern, unfortunately, with some of the people who consulted on behalf of the present minister and previous ministers. Certainly in my experience with issues like post-secondary education, Oka, and most particularly with the Nunavut settlement with the Inuit people and how it affects the Dene people in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, there has been a long string of instances in which negotiations and consultations certainly have not met the expectations of the aboriginal people even though they may have exceeded the expectations of the minister.

As I mentioned, in this case we had again an instance in which people felt they had not been consulted and various groups came forward to make presentations on this legislation. That was as it should have been. There were the Council of Yukon Indians, the Northwest Territories Water Board, the Klondike Placer Miners Association, the Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines and a submission from the Dene Nation.

Central to those presentations was this whole question of what is going to happen with the land claims. On the one hand you have the aboriginal peoples saying that water use, traditional use, is part of their treaties, part of constitutional negotiations, part of the claims negotiations. It is the stated intent of the minister to include recognition of this kind of jurisdiction by aboriginal people. These people ask why this is not in the legislation.

On the other hand there are the other water users in the Northwest Territories and Yukon who need to know and have before them in legislation the fact that times are changing, that there are new actors on the scene, that there are new jurisdictional arrangements being made.

While it is important that this bill goes forward, I really do believe that it is a mistake for this bill to go forward without Motion No. 1, which would eliminate any inconsistencies between land claims and this bill. It is a real mistake to let that legislation go forward the way it is without that particular amendment.

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.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Motion negatived.

Motion No. 1 negatived.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River) moved:

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-52 be amended in Clause 45 by striking out lines 33 to 39 at page 30 and substituting the following therefor:

"Yukon Territory Water Board immediately before the coming into force of this Act continue as such thereafter as if they had been appointed pursuant to this Act."

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-52 be amended in Clause 46 by striking out lines 40 to 46 at page 30 and lines 1 to 24 at page 31 and substituting the following therefor:

"46. (1) Licences relating to the Yukon Territory that were in force under the *Northern Inland Waters Act* immediately before the coming into force of this Act continue in force thereafter as if they had been issued in accordance with this Act.

(2) On the day on which this Act comes into force, the Board shall send a written notification to the holder of each licence referred to in subsection (1), stating whether the licence is a type A licence or a type B licence in accordance with the regulations made under paragraph 33(1)(*c*) and that licence shall henceforth be deemed to be of the type stated in the notification.

(3) Subsections 40(2) and (3) of this Act do not apply in respect of any condition of a licence referred to in subsection (1)

(*a*) until the ninetieth day after the coming into force of this Act; or

(*b*) if, on or before the day referred to in paragraph (*a*), the licensee has applied to the Board to".

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-52 be amended in Clause 47 by striking out lines 36 to 50 at page 31 and substituting the following therefor:

"or 9(1) of this Act if the person were not a licensee, the person may, notwithstanding those subsections, continue to use waters or deposit waste in a substantially equivalent way

(*a*) until the ninetieth day after the coming into force of this Act; or

(*b*) if, on or before the day referred to in paragraph (*a*), the person has applied to the Board for a licence to continue that use or deposit, until the day on which that application is finally disposed of by the Board."

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-52 be amended in Clause 48 by striking out lines 1 to 5 at page 32 and substituting the following therefor:

"48. The Board shall deal with applications referred to in paragraphs 46(3)(*b*) and 47(*b*) in priority to all other applications received by it."

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C-52 be amended by deleting Clause 50.

Motion No. 8.

That Bill C-52 be amended in Clause 54 by striking out lines 36 to 39 at page 33 and substituting the following therefor:

"tion (1) unless Bill C-51 entitled An Act respecting water resources in the Northwest Territories and introduced on December 12, 1991, has been".

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, without anticipating any words that the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River might want to bring to his amendments at this point, the government has accepted Motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 with respect to transitional arrangements. Therefore, we are prepared to curtail the debate and move on if that would be the wish of the other members.

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, the minister failed to mention Motion No. 8. If he accepts No. 8 then we do not have any difficulty in dispensing with rehashing old ground that we have already talked about under Bill C-51. As has been mentioned by the minister they are accepted and we would be prepared to go to third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 3 agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The vote will apply to Motions Nos. 4, 5 and 6.

Motions Nos. 4, 5 and 6 agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The next question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 7 agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The next question is on Motion No. 8. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 8 agreed to.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

• (1310)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Siddon moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

Government Orders

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-49, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault), as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There are two notices of motions set down on the Notice Paper in amendment to Bill C-49, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault).

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 2 standing in the name of the hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys was moved, debated and negatived in the legislative committee.

I understand that there was a tie vote in the committee on this particular amendment, with the chairman casting his vote in the negative, allowing for further consideration of this amendment at the report stage.

Therefore, in this particular case, I am selecting the motion which will be debated and voted upon separately.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 1 by adding immediately after line 32 at page 2 the following:

"(4) Consent shall not be presumed on the basis of the complainant's clothing, appearance, age, ability or membership in any group, including on the basis of race, colour, religion, country or ethnic group of origin, marital status, sexual orientation, immigration status or employment, including prostitution.

She said: Mr. Speaker, this amendment seeks to name in the body of the bill the women most vulnerable to violence and the women with the least access to the justice system. The amendment states that consent on the part of the complainant cannot be presumed on the basis of membership in a disadvantaged group.

Over 60 diverse women's organizations in this country came together and agreed on a set of amendments to Bill C-49. They shared their experiences and their perspectives, and suggested amendments which would tell all women and men that sexually assaulting a woman because she is an aboriginal woman, a black woman, a prostitute, an immigrant or on any other basis would also be punished.

I introduced many of these amendments at the committee stage of this bill, and all but one was defeated by the majority on the committee. The amendments I introduced used the words that these women had worked on and struggled over, and had come to an unprecedented agreement on.

Members of Parliament are barred from proposing the same amendment twice so I have had to reword what is among the most important of the amendments and ask that members of this House reconsider it. The amendment I am proposing states that:

Consent shall not be presumed on the basis of the complainant's clothing, appearance, age, ability, or membership in any group, including on the basis of race, colour, religion, country or ethnic group of origin, marital status, sexual orientation, immigration status or employment, including prostitution.

This amendment would mean that sexist and racist myths about women would no longer be acceptable excuses to commit a sexual assault.

Women are still divided in our society into "good girls" and "bad girls", with the bad girls being less worthy of protection. Prostitutes, lesbians, black women, aboriginal women are often considered targets of violence in a society in which all women are not equal.

The Native Women's Association stated in their brief to the committee:

Aboriginal women are doubly damned by stereotypes.

> As women, we are often subject to the presumption that we lie about being assaulted, that we are emotionally unstable, that we are spiteful and seek revenge, or that we provoke the attack.
>
> As aboriginal women, we are also subject to the presumption that, if we had been drinking, we are drunks and would not have been assaulted if we were sober.
>
> There is also still the perception that aboriginal women are available to provide sexual gratification to any man who demands it. People still cannot rid themselves of the notion that there are "good girls" and "bad girls".

People who think this way perceive that aboriginal women by their nature are bad girls.

> In recent years, Inuit women have been subject to other judicial proclamations that incest is normal in Inuit societies, that a girl is ready for sex when she begins to menstruate, and that it is acceptable to have sexual relationships with young girls.

Aboriginal women experience higher rates of violence than most other women. Aboriginal women are living with the legacy of destruction and abuse in their own communities born of residential schools, powerlessness and poverty, as well as the history of abuse by a white dominated society which called them savages and treated them as such.

Aboriginal women live with Helen Betty Osborne in their hearts and other aboriginal women, raped and murdered, and on which no action was taken by society at large.

Kitty Nowdluk–Reynolds is an Inuk women who was dragged across the country, handcuffed and imprisoned for eight days. Her crime was that she was a victim of sexual assault. There were no charges against her. She was locked in a van with her rapist, not by the rapist but by police. Ms. Nowdluk–Reynolds said this would never have happened to her if she were a white woman.

We heard during the committee hearings that most police officers, Crown counsels and judges are white, middle class men, and they find it easier to protect women who look like their wives and mothers.

Jails are filled over–proportionately with aboriginal people. Many aboriginal women do not trust the justice system and do not come forward because the justice system does not work for them.

We need to overhaul the criminal justice system, educate judges, lawyers and police, get more women and minorities integrated as an essential part of this system, but right now we can start with a law that would make a racially motivated sexual assault a crime rather than an excuse to escape punishment.

The Native Women's Association says that naming aboriginal women in the bill would make it easier for aboriginal women to come forward with reports of sexual violence.

More than 40 per cent of disabled women have been sexually assaulted. We heard at committee that disabled women are targeted because they are more vulnerable and less likely to be believed by police and in the courtroom. Disabled women are often more dependent on others and have learned to keep silent in order to survive.

A study of assaulted disabled women found that charges were laid 14 per cent of the time, few cases were taken to court, and 5.8 per cent of the accused were found guilty. That means that 94 per cent of those who assault disabled women are still out there targeting perhaps other disabled women for assault.

• (1320)

The committee heard that the excuses made in the sexual assaults of disabled women included, "it is okay to rape her, she did not know what was going on anyway" and "it was okay because she could not feel anything anyway".

Bill C–49 must explicitly state that such excuses will no longer hold up in court and that consent cannot be presumed on the basis of disability.

Prostitutes have been raped and murdered and their reports of violence against them are not taken seriously. It seen they cannot be raped because they take money for sex. This should not mean that they never have the right to say no to sex or no to sex for free or that they deserve to be beaten or deserve to die. There have been 38 sex trade workers killed in the lower mainland of Vancouver. Even murders of prostitutes tend to be closed and abandoned earlier by the police. Prostitutes' rights organizations have told us that they have been put into the position of having to find the evidence and do the work.

Immigrant and refugee women are also particularly vulnerable to abuse. Women have been deported for reporting that their husbands abused them. If their husband is their sponsor and the sponsorship breaks

down, the woman might find herself out of the country very quickly.

There has also been a case of a Canadian immigration official demanding sex in exchange for entry into the country. We must make it clear that this is not acceptable in our country and is punishable with strong criminal sanctions.

A recent survey of college men in Canada found that 30 per cent of men said they would rape if they thought they could get away with it, one-third of the young men who were surveyed. What we need to say clearly and strongly is that they cannot get away with it, not any more.

During the committee hearings we heard stories of racism, lack of access to the justice system and aboriginal women and women of colour less likely to be believed by the police and the court system.

I have also added clothing and appearance to this amendment because these are often used against women. Everyone, woman, man or child, has the right to security of the person. This right is not given up on the basis of a low-cut blouse, lack of underwear or any other excuse.

A judge found that a woman provoked a physical assault against her because she was wearing a T-shirt that made her husband mad. Our assault laws must be clear that clothing and appearance are not the issues in sexual assault. Violence is the issue. We are looking at whether someone committed a crime, not at the fashions that have been sported by the complainant.

The Minister of Justice has refused to support an amendment that would name doubly oppressed women in this bill because she and her department have said that all women are vulnerable to sexual violence. That is true. Every woman, young or old, can be a target of sexual violence but some women are much more vulnerable than others.

It is important that Parliament of Canada make it clear that sexist and racist myths can no longer be used as excuses to sexually assault women. I would hope that all members will take this important amendment into consideration today.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the amendment suggested by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. It is an amendment which has a lot of good common sense.

We in the legislative committee on Bill C-49, as the hon. member said, heard a great deal of testimony from women's groups that wanted this sort of amendment. Frankly, the hon. member and I both presented amendments in committee to achieve this result but unfortunately they were defeated. While I do not particularly like the wording here as much as I liked the wording we presented in the legislative committee, certainly the House should support the amendment.

Frankly, there is no other way to word it because it cannot be worded in the same way and brought in at report stage and that is unfortunate. The member has done a very good job in wording this amendment. As I mentioned, I would like to support her on this.

The women's groups that came before us made a great deal of sense in their application. They said that women of colour, aboriginal women, disabled women and women who are under pressure because of immigration or employment status are not given the same consideration in our criminal justice system as are white women who are gainfully employed and do not have these pressures or these disadvantages in presenting themselves before our criminal justice system.

They say that white women are believed in front of the criminal justice system without any question by the judges and by the lawyers and by the police, much more so than women of colour, aboriginal women, sex-trade workers, disabled women and those who have some kind of employment or immigration question pending. They say there is more of a tendency to assume that they consented to the sexual assault than is the case with other women.

They say that in our system, as it is today, all women should be given the benefit of the doubt and believed that they are telling the situation as it happened. However, they say they are not receiving the benefit of the doubt which may go to other women. They say that regardless of the law stating that all women are equal in their complaints on sexual assault, they are not believed.

They are not believed by the courts and they are not believed by the police.

While it can be said that this type of an amendment is not necessary in our country because we have equality before the law, there is the *de facto* situation which has been pointed out to us by these women which says that they are disadvantaged before the law. They want this amendment included.

They wanted some changes to the preamble. The Minister of Justice has stated that the preamble is not going to be part of the Criminal Code. It will be a part of Bill C–49, a part of the legislation and presumably will be mentioned in the commentary of the Criminal Code but will not be a part of it. For that reason we need this clarification in the bill.

The request being made by these women is perfectly understandable and I feel that the House should support them completely and unanimously.

One of the reasons I was pleased that we were having a report stage is that I thought the minister would actually be tabling an amendment to accomplish this. From her commentary, it seemed that she felt there was a valid concern here that these women did have a very valid point that needed to be addressed and that she would be bringing forward an amendment. However, the Department of Justice has not brought forward an amendment either in legislative committee or in this report stage today. I am very disappointed in that. I was hopeful that the government would support the concern that it seems to have been stating.

However, I do feel that this amendment is very important and certainly I would support it.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with Bill C–49, a sexual offences bill. It has been at second reading stage, it went to committee and the committee heard many witnesses and it is now back to report stage at which we have two amendments to be made.

The history of sexual assault, and some years ago rape, is very interesting. There is absolutely no doubt that under the common law the law was very much weighted against the interests of women in this area of sexual assault and rape.

• (1330)

Parliament stepped in and in 1976 it made some amendments to limit the old common law rules. In 1983 Parliament stepped in again and refined them further. Now in 1992, as a result of the Supreme Court decision in Seaboyer, Parliament is stepping in again.

I am quite convinced, although one can never predict these things with any absolute certainty, that this bill will come as close to being charter proof as any bill can at this point because the law is really starting to reflect the changing attitudes of our society.

The women's groups did a very good job in the consultation process leading up to the bill and this bill constitutes a real step ahead.

With respect to this motion which purports to add a new subclause 4 to the bill, I submit that it would really be a fundamental flaw to put such a list in the actual body of the statute.

The committee had an extensive debate on this. The committee made changes to the preamble to point out in the preamble the prevalence of sexual assault against women and children. Parliament is declaring to the courts across the whole land the importance of judges in that context. That is about as far as Parliament can go.

We had before us in the committee a number of different words for this type of clause and every one has a problem because the minute you start to put a list, some people might be left off it. Because the wording of it is that consent shall not be presumed, they make a list and if you are somebody who is not on the list there is an implication that maybe you have consented. We could all come up with our own lists.

For example, what if a woman is a hitch–hiker? She is not on the list, therefore is it presumed that she has consented? Other things could include motorcycle riders or a woman going to a man's apartment after having two or three drinks. Is that not capable of being abused?

We have to get back to the point the minister stressed again and again which responds to the latter point my friend from Cape Breton made. This law, as framed, applies to all women, all people, in terms of sexual offences. The minute you start limiting it down you are going to get yourself in trouble. The minister persuasively argued that we should stick with a law that covers everybody and makes it crystal clear.

It is very important that we do not make laws based on decisions of individual judges or individual instances because they often reflect only a foible of one person at that time or poor administration rather than a fundamental flaw in the law. Therefore, for those reasons I am asking members of the House to defeat this motion.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to rise along with my colleague, our justice critic, in support of this amendment.

The member for New Westminster—Burnaby in her remarks brought some information forward to the House which I found particularly interesting. She said 30 per cent of men surveyed in college thought that if they could get away with rape they would commit it.

As I listened to the member going through all of her remarks, all of her insights, I could not help but think that one of the problems we have in our society is the lack of awareness when a bill like this goes through the House with all the different changes.

In my own riding there are many immigrant women who are constantly suffering from abuse. This new law that we are going to put through the House might get into one or two of the major newspapers, but for all intents and purposes most of those women will not know anything about it.

I certainly support the amendment. However, once this does become part of the legislation we must figure out a way to communicate all of these changes, and not just in a press release or by sending out copies of the bill to the various institutions involved. We are conducting a competitiveness campaign in this country and are buying ads on television and in the ethnic press, et cetera. There is enough dramatic change in terms of education in this particular bill so that we should consider how to ensure that all of those people who are directly affected—aboriginal women, immigrant women and disabled women—are aware of the changes in this law.

To return to the survey that the member quoted, if people realized that they were not going to get away with this form of abuse or rape, or the other acts of abuse related to it, then that might go a long way in diminishing the number of attempts.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I also rise to support this amendment.

In looking at the amendment one must first look at the nature of rape itself. It is not a sexual act, it is an act of power and violence. People who perpetrate sexual assaults and rape are trying to demonstrate their power over women.

This amendment is trying to deal with the fact that there are some women in our society who are doubly disadvantaged. They are powerless because they are women but they are also powerless because they belong to identified minority groups that have traditionally not had power in our society. They have been the ones who have disproportionately been abused by society and subject to sexual violence.

The other thing we must understand is that legislation, including criminal legislation, tries to do two things. It sets out the kind of behaviour that society says is not acceptable, and it also tries to change the attitudes of people toward certain kinds of behaviour. This amendment is definitely trying to change the attitudes that people have toward sexual violence to women who are in a disadvantaged position. As a result of that it would go a long way in providing protection for these women. Once we start changing attitudes then we can start changing behaviour.

I have worked in the court system and in corrections. Very clearly, women in these disadvantaged groups are the ones who are subject to the highest incidence of sexual violence, particularly aboriginal women. Women in the inner cities, particularly native women, and women on reserves have always been subject to a disproportionate amount of sexual abuse. Immigrant women feel particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse during the time they are landed immigrants because they are concerned that if they make an issue of it they will be deported or will not be allowed to proceed with their Canadian citizenship.

• (1340)

We should take the opportunity when we are passing legislation to ensure that we clearly set out not only standards of behaviour but the changes in attitude that we want in this society.

This amendment goes a long way toward that goal because it points out clearly that it is no longer acceptable in our society for people in disadvantaged positions to be abused.

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. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion No. 1 negatived.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-49 be amended in clause 2 by striking out lines 4 and 5 at page 4.

He said: Mr. Speaker, there are some areas in this bill that I would rather see changed, I do not think there is any question about that, even though I support the bill and think it is a major step forward.

However, there is one area that really must be changed. It causes me a good deal of concern. It is not a major point and can be deleted without any difficulty. It is just that the government has chosen not to.

This bill deals with two major areas. One is consent, the woman giving consent to the sexual activity or consent between two adults and what constitutes that consent. The other major area is the past sexual activity of the complainant and whether that should or should not be an issue.

It has been decided in this legislation that during the trial there will be a hearing within the trial, in other words a *voir dire*. It will be determined at that time whether the past sexual activity of the complainant is an issue and can aid the case of the accused, or whether it may just dredge up a lot of information that cannot help the accused but can cause severe distress and embarrassment to the complainant.

It is an important area. The government in this bill has listed the things that will be taken into consideration. It says in clause 2, which is an amendment to 276(3) of the Criminal Code, that:

(3) In determining whether evidence is admissible under subsection (2), the judge, provincial court judge or justice shall take into account—

Then it lists the things that will be taken into account.

The second item to be taken into account is society's interest in encouraging the reporting of sexual assault offences.

In my opinion this is particularly unacceptable because it interferes with due process and the right of the accused to a fair trial. I think that society's interests are of paramount importance. Please do not misunderstand me on that.

However, there are areas in which society's interests are taken into consideration. For instance, society's interests are now being taken into consideration when we debate this bill in the House of Commons, when we go through the second and third reading stages, and report stage and when we are before the legislative committee.

We are taking society's interests into account because we are trying to make this bill as good a bill as we possibly can and deal with the needs of society, particularly those people who are going to be involved: the complainant and the accused. All of society's interests must be taken into consideration, so we do that. We take society's interests into account when we consider the bill.

We also take society's interests into account when the Crown prosecutor is determining, in co-operation with the police and other parties, whether to lay charges, what charges will actually be laid and what section of the Criminal Code will be applied. We are taking society's interests into account then.

Once the determination of innocence or guilt is brought forward we take society's interests into account in the sentencing. In these three major areas we take society's interests into account. That is the way it should be.

However during the trial itself what must be of paramount importance and what we must never lose sight of at any time during the trial proceedings is the innocence or guilt of the accused. That person who is brought before our courts is entitled to a fair trial without any outside agendas being imposed on the case. That is not only the case with respect to the actual trial itself, the main trial, but it also must be the case when we are taking into consideration *voir dires* or other hearings that determine what is to be introduced in the main trial.

It is not that society's interests are not important, but they cannot be allowed to interfere with the determining of the innocence or guilt of the accused. That is what is

going to happen if we allow society's interests to be a factor in this process.

The other thing that is perhaps even more alarming is that it will undoubtedly become a precedent. It will become a precedent when we are talking about other legislation. Once we bring the concept of society's interests into a court of law then it is going to be very difficult to withdraw it.

For that reason I ask that those lines regarding society's interests as a consideration in the hearing of the past sexual conduct of the complainant be struck out.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, as my friend opposite pointed out the committee had a debate on this motion. The vote was divided equally among the committee members. As the chairman I voted against it on the basis that it could be brought back and the member could make his case here in the House.

I would like to put the arguments against accepting this motion. It seeks to delete one of the factors that a judge must consider in determining whether evidence of the complainant's sexual history is admissible in accordance with the test for admissibility set out in the bill.

It is important to make a distinction between the factors to be considered and the actual test that is set out in the bill. The test follows those principles enunciated in R. *v.* Seaboyer and Gayme.

Evidence of a complainant's sexual activity is not admissible unless it is evidence of specific instances of sexual activity, it is relevant to an issue to be proved at trial and it has significant probative value that is not substantially outweighed by the danger of prejudice to the proper administration of justice.

When applying this test the judge is guided by a series of factors that have been set out in the bill. The judge must take these factors into account when determining whether the evidence has significant probative value that is not substantially outweighed by the danger of prejudice to the proper administration of justice.

In other words, the judge must weigh the probative value of the evidence against the danger of prejudice. I appreciate that these are fancy legal words but they have very real meaning in the day to day operations of the court.

• (1350)

The factors are offered to guide and to assist and to ensure that all judges in Canada are guided by the same considerations when determining the admissibility of evidence.

Bill C–49 proposes seven specific factors which the judge should consider. In addition, the judge may take into account any other factor considered relevant. No one single factor will determine admissibility. The factors are not the test.

For all of those reasons I would ask members to vote against this motion.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I too speak in opposition to this amendment. In all of the testimony that we heard at the committee from women's organizations and in the arguments I put forward on my amendment which has just been defeated in the House to include doubly disadvantaged women, one of the things that women understand very well is that we have been conditioned in our society not to bring forward charges of sexual assault. Young girls are still socialized today to keep things of this nature—perhaps being touched by a person, which is inappropriate to a little girl—secret and to be quiet about them.

Women are conditioned this way all through society. I understand my friend's concern from a legal perspective but I must speak very strongly from a personal and female perspective on the need for our society to encourage women and children to come forward, to speak clearly about these issues and to have some sense that their concerns and their personal experiences as women and children will be taken seriously by the court.

I would encourage members in the House today to vote against this amendment.

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. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion lost.

Motion No. 2 negatived.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Siddon (for the Minister of Justice) moved that the bill be concurred in.

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. Siddon (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill C-49 be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Debate. The hon. member for Lethbridge.

[*English*]

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, I rise on point of order. Given that we are only five minutes from Question Period and members of all three parties would like to speak at third reading, you might find unanimous consent to suspend the sitting and we will take it up at three o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The sitting of the House is therefore suspended until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1.56 p.m., the sitting of the House was suspended.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

S. O. 31

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

RUSSIA

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, another chapter in the struggle for democracy in the countries of the former Soviet Union unfolds this week as we prepare to welcome Russian President Boris Yeltsin to Canada.

In the interest of international peace and security, Canada has thrown its full support behind all of these countries. For example, last February Canada signed a declaration of friendship and co-operation with Russia.

Canadians are disturbed, however, by the continued presence of approximately 200,000 Russian troops in the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. This is an unwanted occupation in complete violation of international law.

Just yesterday Lithuanians voted 90 per cent in favour of an unconditional withdrawal during a national referendum in that country. All of us are aware of the difficulties associated with sending these troops back to Russia where shelter and employment opportunities are rare, but the time has come for their troops to leave.

I therefore urge the Prime Minister to raise this issue with President Boris Yeltsin and insist that further assistance to Russia be contingent upon a complete troop withdrawal from the Baltics.

* * *

ABORTION

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, in 1990, 94,180 Canadian babies were aborted. That comes to approximately 24 abortions for every 100 live births.

For those abortions done in hospitals and even in some private abortion clinics, medicare funded by tax dollars is paying for a procedure that has nothing to do with health care and everything to do with the destruction of human life.

Abortion is not therapeutic. It treats no medical, psychiatric or social problem. It cures no disease. However, we know for certain abortion eats up a hefty chunk of the health care budget.

We have a crisis in medicare with people waiting for life-saving treatment while provincial governments fund an elective procedure, abortion, at a time when genuine health services are being slashed. By paying for abortions, governments are mismanaging scarce tax moneys entrusted to their care.

In view of the increased pressure on health funding, I call upon all governments to stop public financing of abortions.

* * *

THE TORONTO STAR

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, as a former unionized employee of *The Toronto Star*, I regret the present situation at the *Star*. The management of the newspaper is refusing to negotiate with the union representing journalists and support workers. Indeed, the owners of the paper have brought in replacement workers to try to keep the paper operating despite this legal strike.

Not surprisingly, they have been met by continuing protests aimed at stopping strike-breaking. This angry confrontation shows how essential it is that the labour law reforms in Ontario be passed. These changes will prevent the hiring of strike-breakers. The result will be greater fairness and less violent confrontation in labour relations in Ontario.

Meanwhile, I urge the owners of the *Star* to remember Joseph Atkinson who made the *Star* a crusading paper for the rights of workers and to settle this dispute through fair negotiation instead of the use of force.

* * *

EARTH SUMMIT

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, the earth summit in Rio was the largest and most important global gathering in human history. There were some who cast doubt on what would be accomplished in Rio.

I believe the five principal documents that came out of the earth summit, namely, the Rio Declaration, the Statement of Forest Principles, Agenda 21, the Global Warming Convention and the Biodiversity Convention, all attest to the over-all success of the summit.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney did all Canadians proud in not only his excellent address but especially in the way he provided a clear direction and acted as a constructive bridge on the many important issues dealt with by the world leaders in Rio. Environment minister Jean Charest is to be commended for his outstanding contribution as leader of our Canadian delegation. I believe the earth summit will go down in history as the point when all nations of the world began to focus on preserving our common home. I am glad to have been part of that process.

* * *

PRINTING INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, printers across Canada are deeply concerned by the impact of this government's economic mismanagement of their industry. Canada's fourth largest manufacturing employer has lost 10,000 jobs in the past 18 months.

When the federal government recently announced its "Buy Canada" campaign, the Canadian Printing Industries Association launched its new "printed in Canada" logo as part of its contribution to this effort. The Minister for Small Businesses and Tourism personally unveiled this logo on Parliament Hill.

Last week we learned that Canada's main tourism guide, the official *Traveller's Guide to Canada*, paid for in part by Tourism Canada, was printed in the United States. The minister was wrong when he said in this House last Thursday that this was an American publication. It is a Canadian publication that the government had printed in the U.S.

The federal government is spending $4 million to encourage Canadians to shop at home. It is a sorry day, Mr. Speaker, when this government will not support its own "Buy Canadian" program.

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[*Translation*]

ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, Abitibi—Témiscamingue has been left out in the cold again.

Sélection du Reader's Digest has just published a *Guide de la route au Canada*, in which No. 117, the Trans-Canada Highway, is shown as ending at Mont Tremblant in the Laurentians. This perpetuates a situation that is one of the grievances of the general director of the Val d'Or Tourism and Convention Office, Ms. Louise Potvin, as well as of the general public in our area. They feel that once again, their region and James Bay are being given short shrift.

A researcher with the publishing department of *Sélection* in Montreal added that only the more densely populated areas had been chosen. In the pages on Quebec specifically, among the peripheral regions only the northwest and north were left out. The Gaspé, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and the north shore were included.

I would like to invite the directors of the *Reader's Digest* to come and visit our vast and beautiful region.

* * *

[*English*]

CLEARWATER LOBSTER PLANT

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, a labour dispute in my constituency has been allowed to get out of hand due to inaction by the Nova Scotia government and over-reaction by the RCMP.

Workers at the Clearwater lobster plant in Cape Auget have been on a legal strike since May 14. Union and management had been progressing toward a new contract settlement. However, the appearance of scab workers during this strike has created strong feelings among workers and poisoned the bargaining atmosphere.

Last week's use of riot police, complete with attack dogs and billy clubs to break up a demonstration against replacement workers, provoked a violent confrontation.

The industrial inquiry agreed to Thursday by Nova Scotia Minister Leroy Legere at the insistence of MLA Richie Mann is better late than never.

Now it is time for cooler heads to prevail. Both labour and management need to suspend their mutual suspicions and focus on the issues that matter: wages, working conditions and seniority provisions that will allow the workers at Clearwater to go back to work.

Considering the millions of dollars in grants and loans which Clearwater has received from the federal government, management can afford to be generous.

* * *

ROBERT STEWART

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievement of Mr. Robert Stewart, a native of Barrie, Ontario, and a son of a former member of Parliament of Simcoe South, now Simcoe Centre, Mr. Ron Stewart.

Robert Stewart is one of the four Canadians chosen by the Canadian Space Agency to attend a NASA training program in Houston to become a full astronaut and a candidate for a future shuttle mission.

I know that the members of this House join me in extending most sincere congratulations to Robert Stewart and best wishes for his future success. I know he will do Canada proud.

* * *

ATHABASCA

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, for the 3,000 people in the Athabasca region of Saskatchewan isolation carries a heavy price tag. Overcrowded housing is causing outbreaks of tuberculosis, communities lack proper sewer and water systems, food prices are sky-high, economic opportunities are limited because of the cost of shipping out local products like freshwater fish. Meanwhile, the Coast Guard reports that the construction of an all-weather road would save $1 million to $2 million now being spent annually on dredging and navigational aids for barging.

• (1410)

Studies by the Prince Albert Tribal Council indicate a road would save the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and First Nations $1.5 million on operations each year.

The cost of shipping materials for new housing, schools, and sewer and water systems, would be cut by additional millions. This is an obvious case of where we can save money and help people at the same time.

Therefore, I call on the Department of Indian Affairs, the Coast Guard, and the provincial Department of Transportation to get their act together and start work on an all–weather road into the Athabasca.

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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians make their travel plans for the summer months, I hope they consider visiting the place where Canada was born, my province of Prince Edward Island.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of our Canadian nation and celebrations are happening all across the country. Special events are happening on Prince Edward Island as well, as Islanders recreate the spirit of the historic Charlottetown Conference which led to Confederation.

Visitors to the island in search of rest and relaxation will also appreciate our magnificent beaches, delicious seafood, exciting live theatre, and our famous island hospitality.

Our reputation for celebrating the many aspects of our lives and of our history continues to draw visitors to our enchanted isle. In fact, whenever you visit the island there is certain to be an unforgettable community event awaiting your arrival.

On behalf of the citizens of Malpeque, I am delighted to extend an invitation to all members of this House, their families, to all Canadians to visit Prince Edward Island, one of the world's great islands.

* * *

THE VALOUR AND THE HORROR

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, veterans in my riding of Fraser Valley East are outraged at the biased and defamatory CBC National Film Board series *The Valour and the Horror*.

Terence McKenna and his brother Brian decided to use public funds to develop a revisionist view of World War II. Despite technical and factual errors identified by academics and veterans, the CBC is quite happy to rerun this series.

Freedom of expression is a fine freedom. It is a freedom for which Canadian sailors, soldiers, and air personnel fought and died, but freedom without responsibility is dangerous. It creates an imbalance and is a drain on the very system which guarantees the freedoms in the first place.

I do not advocate censorship, nor do veterans. What I do advocate is that the CBC begin to act responsibly and inject some balance of measure and fairness into the programs it funds and airs.

Terence McKenna can cast aspersions as he wishes. He is entitled to his views. But when it comes to representing Canadian war efforts, a biased and a very subjective diatribe is not worthy of public funding.

This series could well be the only information that many Canadians see about Canada's war effort. It is therefore imperative that the CBC provides a balance so that the public can make up its own mind and not be contaminated by the poisoned view of revisionist journalists and pseudo–historians.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again state my support for the Canadian panel on violence against women. This panel has heard from thousands of women across the country, women who have dared to come forward to tell their stories of physical and mental abuse endured for years.

These women come from all levels of our society but they share one thing in common, the violence that has been directed at them for years.

The final report of the panel will be a comprehensive plan to deal with violence against all women: native, minority, rural, disabled, elderly, and young.

The changes needed in our society will be great. The greatest change is to change attitudes to women themselves. It is a difficult task but this is where the co–operation of law makers and society in general is crucial. We must unify our energies around this issue to work together on a common agenda and not be affected by incongruous demands.

Let us all work toward exterminating violence against women in Canadian society and let Canada be an example for the rest of the world.

TRADE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the headline in *The Globe and Mail* of June 12 reads:

> Canada a winner in free trade. Survey shows exports to the U.S. gained with imports no threat.

This was a survey of 325 companies conducted by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association in April and May and the data compiled this month. It covered a wide range of business issues.

For the most part the results confirm claims made by the proponents, the supporters of the FTA, and it states that nearly half of the respondents said they increased capital investments in Canada since the agreement came into effect while only 9 per cent reduced investment.

It also pointed out that 56 per cent said they have not lost domestic market share to imports since 1989 and 39 per cent said exports to the United States have grown since 1989. Also, three-quarters of the companies see the U.S. as Canada's most attractive market in the future, 30 per cent citing Europe as the best market.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

* * *

THE DISABLED CONSUMER SOCIETY OF COLCHESTER

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, the disabled community in my area has worked hard to improve their quality of life and have succeeded in several areas.

The Disabled Consumer Society of Colchester has established a special bus system to provide transportation in the Truro community. They have organized an employment service to locate employment for the disabled with funding from Canada Employment and Immigration. They have also participated in drafting legislation to provide access, opportunities and awareness.

The society is now urging Parliament to pass amendments to the Human Rights Act which will include a duty to provide accommodation for people with disabilities. As well, they are seeking to provide an undue hardship clause and they want a barrier removal process to be implemented right away.

These amendments would enhance the employment opportunities for the disabled and help them participate in every aspect of Canadian society. They have proven that if given the tools with which to work they will achieve their goals. I hope that I can play a small part and be of assistance to them in their efforts.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, six Innu children died in a house fire in Davis Inlet in February of this year. They died because there was no running water to fight the fire in their community.

One hundred and fifty members of this Innu community were forced to relocate to an isolated island off Labrador by the Government of Newfoundland. The result of this forced relocation was the complete social disintegration of the community.

It is time for the premier of Newfoundland and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to stop denying responsibility for this community and to sit down and develop a plan for implementation of complete self-government and to institute a plan with sufficient resources for community and social reconstruction.

Action must take place by these two parties before any other children die in similar circumstances.

* * *

CYPRUS

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, has said he is not troubled by Canada's threat to pull our peacekeeping forces out of Cyprus. Of course not. Mr. Denktash is backed by 30,000 regular Turkish troops facing a much smaller Greek Cypriot national guard across the green line.

If Canada did pull out, it would hurt one side and help the other. Giving one party the upper hand will certainly not create an incentive for a peaceful, just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. In fact, just the opposite.

Rather than removing our peacekeepers, Canada, through the Prime Minister's special relationship with President Bush, should push the United Nations during the Cyprus meetings scheduled to begin on Thursday in New York City to bridge the differences between Greek and Turkish Cypriots once and for all.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

TRADE

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the government's principal justification for a free trade agreement with the United States was secure market access, but Canadian exporters, most recently steel producers, continue to face long and costly trade actions launched by the United States.

Contrary to the earlier statements of the Minister for International Trade that the U.S.–Canada Free Trade Agreement would not be re-opened, the Minister for International Trade is now suggesting that the North American free trade agreement will correct some of its flaws.

Can we assume from this that Canada will finally win true secure access to the U.S. market and real exemption from U.S. trade law?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the hon. member has acknowledged that the dispute settlement mechanism under the free trade agreement is working. He would like to see it working a little bit better, but in fact we have won ten of those panels and lost nine, which is pretty good. We have equality with the United States when we have a dispute.

If that mechanism can be improved in any way, of course the government will do so.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the minister is fond of saying that the dispute settlement mechanism somehow resolves all trade questions between Canada and the United States, but he knows, as we all know, that the process takes months or even years to bring about any resolution, if indeed there is a resolution.

The minister also knows that there will be no secure access to the United States market unless all three countries in the North American free trade agreement can agree on a definition of subsidies and on dumping. Yet all the government ever says is that somehow this issue is being addressed in the current Uruguay round of the GATT. It is NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement, which this government is on the verge of signing, not a still uncertain Uruguay round.

• (1420)

Can the minister now assure Canadians that the government will not sign the North American free trade agreement until it includes a clear definition of subsidies and a clear definition of dumping?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member complains about the amount of time that it takes to resolve a dispute under chapter 18 or chapter 19 of the free trade agreement.

In fact, the limit in one case is 180 days, the other, 315 days. He complains that it is too long, but what did we have before the free trade agreement? Nothing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hockin: We had three or four or five years, millions of dollars of expenditures on the American terms alone in order to settle any kind of trade dispute.

Now we have a time limit. Now we have panels that are constituted with one American, one Canadian, a neutral chairman. We have equality when it comes to a dispute. This is a tremendous improvement compared with what went before.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows perfectly well that in the pork dispute, for example, it took 21 months to reach a settlement.

During that long and costly process, Canadian exports to the United States were severely disrupted. Let me put the question to him even more simply. Is there going to be in the North American free trade agreement a subsidies code and a dumping code, or will there not be? Will this government sign a NAFTA that does not include a subsidies code?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a premature disclosure of that.

The government will announce what is in the agreement when it is signed. However, the hon. member does know that the whole subsidies discussion is part of the free trade agreement. It is the same with dumping, and it is important that progress be made.

What the hon. member must remember is that there are some American actions when it comes to dumping. There are American actions when it comes to subsidies that we do not find acceptable. We have an interest in making sure that there is progress on both those dimensions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Full integration of sustained development in all trade treaties is one of the major items on which a consensus was reached in Rio. For Canada, the next trade treaty on the horizon is the one now being negotiated with the United States and Mexico. In this regard, could the minister give the House the assurance that all three countries will be subject to common environmental standards integrated as part of the principal agreement, and second, that failure to apply these standards will result in trade reprisals?

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, environmental considerations with respect to NAFTA are being addressed in several different aspects simultaneously during the negotiations. They are part of the negotiations themselves.

Key participants of the environmental communities are part of the SAGITs. The Government of Canada has agreed that there would be an environmental assessment of the plan when it is completed.

Also there is an agreement that each country will continue to have its sovereignty right as you would wish, to establish and to protect its own environmental standards.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the parliamentary secretary.

How future historians will judge the conference in Rio depends on how the nations of the world act in the months to follow. The issue is, will the focus of international trade shift from raw market forces to the needs of sustainable development?

Canada's position on this is about to be put to the test in the Mexican agreement.

First, will a dispute settlement mechanism in the agreement enforce the environmental standards of the countries involved? Second, will the parliamentary secretary or the Deputy Prime Minister assure us that the onus of proof in any dispute will be such as to favour those who would protect the ecosystem? That is the lesson of Rio.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, first of all the hon. member makes reference to Rio.

I want to say that I, and I am sure the vast majority of Canadians, are exceedingly proud of the leadership that this government provided at Rio.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, there are a series of quotes that I am sure you would be interested in, but time does not permit me to read all of them today or even any at this particular point in time.

As I said just a moment ago, what is very clear is that this government is committed to sustainable development. It is evident in the green plan. It is evident in our actions in a number of instances. It is evident in the way in which the NAFTA agreement is being negotiated.

Furthermore it was very evident at Rio. That was perfectly clear in view of the response with which the Government of Canada, including the Prime Minister, was received at every available public opportunity.

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TRADE

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the spokesperson on international trade.

Given the fact that in this House the only two parties that support the North American free trade agreement talks are the Liberals and the Conservatives and the fact that they are out of tune with 67 per cent of Canadians who are opposed to the talks, the government has decided to launch a program to suggest to Canadians why this is good.

I would like to ask the minister this question. Will the minister, in preparation for this discussion with the Canadian people about their views of the free trade agreement, release as requested by me on April 1 all of the sector by sector studies done, so that the people of Canada can have hard facts in front of them? Will the minister release those sector by sector studies or were they ever done before the government went into the negotiations?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the sectoral studies that have been done by the Department of Industry, Science and Technology and other parts of the government are well known to the hon. member.

Every time the Minister for International Trade or the Minister of Finance appears before a committee, they quote from the studies that the government has done. He knows that these documents exist.

He also knows that the confidential studies which have been done are not public. Generally, most of these sector studies are well known to the hon. gentleman through various briefings that he has attended and continues to attend.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I have been present at every single committee meeting when the Minister for International Trade has been there to address these questions. Never once has the minister referred to any sector by sector studies. Unless I have been struck stone deaf, we must be talking about two different meetings.

I ask the minister who is speaking on behalf of the minister, on behalf of the excuses for the government, if the government is prepared to spend millions of dollars in an advertising campaign to sell its point of view on the free trade agreement and whether those who oppose the free trade agreement will have access to taxpayers' dollars to present the other side of the argument to the Canadian people?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that he and his party have been offered confidential briefings on the NAFTA arrangements and the NAFTA negotiations. As I understand it, he can make himself available for those. I gather he does not want to make himself available for those.

His position and the position of the NDP, if it is similar to the NDP in British Columbia where the hon. member comes from, is that we should not negotiate at all for NAFTA. What should happen is that Mexico and the United States should negotiate and they should do a deal. Then at the last minute they would decide whether Canada should do a deal.

This is a ridiculous approach to tripartite negotiations. That is not our approach. Our approach is to be there from the beginning and to get the maximum benefit for Canada.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I am just a humble boy from the country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Barrett: When I go into negotiations to buy a house or sign an agreement, I hire a lawyer. Some of the best firms in British Columbia are available to me.

I also talk to scientists and researchers before I put my name to any document. Could this government explain to Canadian people why it would call a meeting where there are no sector by sector studies, say that it is quoting from such studies that do not exist, and then go out and tell Canadian people that it is good for them without showing one shred of evidence to the people?

• (1430)

I would not sign a deal like that on a mortgage on a house. Why would the government mortgage this country without some hard evidence before it goes into these negotiations?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the humble country boy opposite would have us do the following. This is one of the problems perhaps with having that particular humble boy doing any negotiating for Canada. What he would do is have our whole negotiating position made public before he went in to negotiate. This is absolutely ridiculous.

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UNITEL

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, like many other members of this House during the weekend I was stopped many times and was asked: "Is my telephone bill going to go up because of Friday's CRTC decision?"

Mr. Epp: Where? At the tennis club?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Mrs. Finestone: With the opening up of telephone competition in the long distance field people are worried about their local rates. The industry says it doubts that local rates can stay down and Mr. Spicer says: "Don't worry. They will be protected".

What specific assurances can the government give to local phone users that their rates will remain reasonable and that these rates will not go up? What kind of confidence can they have?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, my first inclination if somebody put that question to me would be to quote the hon. member who was on CBC a couple of days ago.

She said about the CRTC: "Really they opened the whole box of competition. I would say that with that open door I am certainly not going to tell you we should close that door. I am going to say that we are going to watch what Mr. Spicer said when he made a very important point of ensuring that we would have affordable local rates, that they are going to be maintained. That is what I would say to them".

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, that is fine. That is what I said. That is what Mr. Keith Spicer said. What does the minister say? Is the minister going to ensure that local rates will stay down for all Canadian consumers?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will know, a key part of Bill C–62 is designed to ensure that all Canadians in all parts of Canada have affordable phone rates and the best possible service anywhere in the world.

I would think the best way to guarantee that sort of service to all Canadians would be for this House to move expeditiously on Bill C–62.

CHAMPION SPARK PLUG

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Last Friday the American owners of Champion Spark Plug in Windsor announced that they were turning it into a warehouse and transferring the production jobs there to their plant in Iowa in spite of the efficiency and co–operation of the Canadian workers.

I ask the minister: Why is it that, since the signing of this government's free trade deal with the United States, when these kinds of moves take place they are almost always at the expense of the Canadian workers?

I further ask the minister: Will he contact the American owners of Champion Spark Plug today to urge them to keep that plant open and recognize the productivity and efficiency of these Canadian workers?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is doubly out of date. First, he does not know, at least in his question, that there has been a drastic decline in the size of the North American spark plug market as a result of smaller and cleaner burning engines.

He is from an automotive town. He should know that these cleaner burning engines have been a major factor in this industry and this is what has led to a downsize in the demand for spark plugs.

Also he does not know—and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association made it clear last week in its big survey, the survey of its membership—that in fact capital investments in Canada have increased since the free trade agreement.

In fact twice as many manufacturing firms in Canada expanded their investments in Canada since the free trade agreement than decreased them; 56 per cent said they had not lost domestic market share to imports; 39 per cent said that exports have grown significantly; 42 per cent expect higher exports; and so on.

What is happening since the free trade agreement is that our manufacturing sector, contrary to everything we

hear from the hon. member, is increasing and improving. The hon. member refuses to recognize this.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, plants that have closed down do not answer surveys, so what he has to say has little meaning to the workers at Champion Spark Plug and at plants like it which are losing their jobs because the jobs are going to the United States.

He has not answered my question as to why, if the market for spark plugs is declining, the jobs are not consolidated in Windsor rather than in Iowa.

Why was it that when the minister of industry was asked about this on Friday all he could say was that this was a sign of "a dynamic economy"? Canadians will shudder at the idea that for this government a dynamic economy is one that means our plants are turned into warehouses and the jobs go to the United States.

Will the minister assure us that in any North American free trade deal there will be a return to Canadian content for automobiles to help prevent further Champion Spark Plug situations? If not, how will such a deal help Canadian workers in the auto industry, in that industry as a whole?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I think it is dangerous for the hon. member to stand up and ask questions about the automotive sector in Ontario when in fact in his riding, in Windsor for example, Chrysler has just added a third van line. We have a $2 billion to $3 billion announcement by Ford in Oakville. There is tremendous expansion coming there. Ste. Thérèse in Quebec has just added 800 workers to expand its work force.

There is example after example of the fundamental truth about the North American environment for automobiles, and that is 10 years ago we had a 14 per cent share of the automotive production in North America. Today we have 24 per cent.

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UNITEL

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs regarding the Unitel matter.

In the CRTC decision the minority opinion said: "The United States is an example of a country where, with long distance competition, there have been significant increases in local rates".

We were told that it costs $300 to install a phone in California. I checked today and in a rural town such as Southend in northern Saskatchewan as a result of the competition they are talking about $5,000 now. We know it went up in Japan as well and anywhere else there was deregulation.

Will the minister ask for a cabinet review of this decision? In the cabinet review will the cabinet build in guarantees that the ordinary Canadian phone user, the home phone user, will not be gouged as a result of this decision?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe my ears. Is the hon. member saying that Sask Tel which is owned by the NDP Government of Saskatchewan wants to charge $5,000 for telephone service to residents of that province? It is astonishing if that is so.

On the particular point raised by the hon. member with regard to the situation in the United States, all I can do is quote the chairman of the CRTC who said, directly on the point raised by the hon member: "Canadians of all social and economic circumstances want us to be vigilant in maintaining affordable local telephone service". We are committed to doing exactly that and to preventing unnecessary or excessive increases. Before anyone tries scare tactics on Canadian consumers, let me underline that today's decision was made in Canada, not the United States. It is not deregulation. No phone company is being broken up. Canadians can still buy both their local and long distance services from the same company.

Let us not use phoney arguments to scare Canadian consumers. Let us stick to the facts.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, phoney arguments. If the minister had any guts he would stand and answer my question and give the consumers a guarantee—

Some hon. members: Order, order.

Mr. Speaker: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark and then put his question.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I know the minister has lots of intestinal fortitude and I withdraw that.

I would have asked him to give a guarantee because the CRTC itself said it did not predict significant increases. It did not say there would not be increases. I ask him to consider that.

On another tack and as a supplementary question, I want to ask him this seriously. The Unitel decision will hurt one of Canada's largest companies. Indeed I think it may be the largest; Bell is the 40th largest in North America. Jean Monty, president of Bell, has said that the real competition will not come from Unitel but that it will come from the American telecommunications giants.

• (1440)

How does the minister propose that Canada compete in the North American communications trade when we are hamstringing one of the few Canadian businesses that could in fact compete with the American multinationals? What is he going to do to change that situation?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I never thought I would live to see the day in this House when the spokesperson for the NDP would call on us to protect one of the largest companies in Canada against competition. What a change in philosophy there has been there.

When the hon. member raises the issue of Saskatchewan, the best way to deal with protecting consumers in Saskatchewan is for members on all sides of this House to pass Bill C–62 to ensure that there are rate hearings for the residents of Saskatchewan on their phone service, which there are not today; to ensure that the CRTC can continue to bring down rates across the country; local rates do not go up; and that the people of Saskatchewan also have that protection.

When we talk about protecting Canadian companies against the United States, the best way to do that is to ensure that Canadian phone services are affordable and that Canadian companies are not routing through the United States to get cheaper services.

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OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In 1986 Canada announced that official development assistance would no longer be meted out as loans to developing countries. Since then Canada has provided unconditional ODA debt forgiveness to the poorest sub–Saharan and Caribbean countries.

Last week, however, the Prime Minister in Rio targeted 10 impoverished Latin American countries to receive $145 million of conditional debt relief.

Unable to service any ODA debt in any manner, what incentives will Canada provide to these countries to invest in sustainable development projects?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this is one of the initiatives at Rio of which Canada is very proud and in which our Prime Minister played a lead role.

The forgiveness of the debt in relation to environmental projects is very specific. What it means is that it is not a blanket review of debt of these countries. It is tied to specific proposals.

The forgiveness of debt over time under the Trinidad terms has been very generous to underdeveloped countries, and indeed we have taken the lead in putting that into place as well.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister used words in Rio to promote the enhancement of our International Development Research Council's independent and internationally renowned reputation, but the government continues its plans to scrap the council's independence by incorporating it under the Financial Administration Act.

Will the government agree today to stop its meddling in the mandate of the IDRC and give up its intention of internalizing it under the Financial Administration Act?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think this is an entirely appropriate role for the IDRC which has really embraced this expanded mandate. It is an organization that we are very proud of and that will now be in a position to have even more impact on the world than it has had before.

I believe this move is a very constructive one and it will be very helpful to the countries involved.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

At the earth summit in Rio, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand and Australia all pledged to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by as much as 20 per cent from 1988 levels.

If the government is really committed to sustainable development as the parliamentary secretary earlier announced, why did Canada fail to exercise leadership in this crucial area by not committing to carbon dioxide cuts beyond stabilization?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, Canada is one of a relatively few number of countries in the world that have in fact provided leadership at Rio by indicating that we would stabilize at 1990 levels by the year 2000. There are other countries we wish had chosen to adopt that same significant standard of leadership but did not. We are very proud of the fact we were there and were in the forefront.

Furthermore, we also made a commitment to quick-start the same convention. In fact, the Prime Minister was one of the first leaders to sign the convention in question. He indicated we would be ratifying it this very year.

I would also hope that those who had the opportunity to attend Rio as part of the official Canadian delegation would come back and be very supportive of that commitment which, indeed, is a significant one.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Contrary to the answer by the parliamentary secretary Canada unfortunately is not leading the pack.

Therefore, I have to repeat my question. If Canada is really committed to sustainable development, why does the government not implement the commitment made by the Prime Minister last Tuesday in this House as recorded on page 11654 of *Hansard*, to put reduction in gas emissions, not stabilization, firmly on his political agenda?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): First of all, the question of what happens after Rio is very significant. We on this side have understood that Rio was in a very real sense just the beginning of a very important process. The debate will probably go on for a few weeks as to who did what at Rio.

I would just like to take this opportunity to refer to the quotes of Mostafa Tolba, the executive director of the United Nations Environment Program, who said: "Canada has broken the ice by signing. We are grateful to Canada and we are grateful to the Prime Minister." That was with reference to the biodiversity convention which was one of several very important achievements at Rio.

I truly believe, as do most Canadians, we were in the forefront with respect to environmental change, with respect to the convention to which the hon. member refers, with respect to biodiversity and with respect to fisheries. We have made some progress with respect to forestry as well.

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ABORIGINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. I appreciate the sort of hiatus in the discussions now. The Prime Minister is returning and I know the minister has to brief the Prime Minister. Perhaps eventually the House will find out in more detail what we have heard in the press which has led us to this present hiatus.

I would like the minister to clarify some confusion and uncertainty about one of the very important matters which seems to have been agreed upon in principle. That is the inherent right of the aboriginals to self-government and the statements of the minister and others at the conference that in effect this item can be delayed for three years and be negotiated and then perhaps referred to the courts.

How can this be a very tenable position when I am sure the minister knows, and certainly the Minister of Justice knows coming from British Columbia, on this very day in British Columbia the Court of Appeal is hearing the case of Delamuukw *v.* the Queen and the Attorney General of Canada on this very issue?

I would like to know how that can be rationalized. It is clear from the court case in British Columbia what the aboriginals believe self-government means is a little different from what we have seen in the press.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, obviously constitutional discussions are now underway. Once they are concluded in the next two to three weeks they cannot affect a question that is before the courts now.

What has been agreed on is there would be a recommendation to Parliament and the legislatures that we recognize the inherent right to self-government, that we recognize it is not a contingent right but that the Constitution would also reflect an agreement entered into voluntarily by all governments and by all aboriginal leaders and groups that no one would take that new non-contingent inherent right to court for at least three years. That period of time would allow for discussion and negotiation as to the interpretation of an inherent right in a particular case.

That is an admirable compromise. I congratulate the aboriginal leaders on being willing, once they have established their right, to negotiate its application during a three-year time period.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): I appreciate, in part, the minister's response.

• (1450)

Talking about compromise, how can the fact be rationalized that one party says it is going to delay the interpretation when at the very moment in British Columbia there is another three weeks of this very fundamental and important case, an appeal from Chief Justice McEachern, on this very issue?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, for one thing, I understand that the issue is different.

For another thing, I do not think anyone has suggested that the fact a matter is under discussion in constitutional deliberations should mean all actions in all courts having relation to that matter should suddenly cease.

We cannot act retroactively that way. The hon. member would be one of the most vigorous to oppose it were we to suggest that kind of retroactivity. We are dealing with matters that might arise in the future and I think we have found a way.

Frankly, it needs a little more refinement in the discussions that are going on. That will occur and we will be able to find an agreement which will be broadly acceptable.

[*Translation*]

AGRIFOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Agriculture. Both the Quebec farmers' union, UPA and the Quebec agriculture minister, Yvon Picotte, think that the agriculture summit which ended in Trois-Rivières yesterday gave Quebec's agrifood community new confidence in the future. The UPA president took the lead on Thursday by announcing to everyone's surprise that his organization was determined to take on export markets, provided the risks were shared by the other partners, namely the distributors and other intermediaries.

Can the minister tell us today that Quebec farmers will have help from the Canadian government in making Quebec's agrifood industry more competitive internationally?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I think that these statements reported in the press last week show how sensible farmers in Quebec and Canada are. It also ties in with the review of all our agricultural policies that we began about two years ago.

I will repeat some of what the UPA president said:

> The UPA president thinks that Quebec agriculture has everything it needs to gain new export markets. "The farm community is ready for change. It is better equipped with its expertise to face international competition in the future," said Mr. Proulx.

That shows that this government's policies asking farmers in Quebec and Canada to prepare for the future in a positive and dynamic way will have good results.

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[*English*]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence.

The government has tried to justify the $4.3 billion helicopter deal by saying it would be unsafe to modernize the existing Labrador and Sea King helicopter fleets.

If that is so, why did the United States navy, the Australian navy and the Japanese navy recently upgrade their Labrador fleets at one-fifth of the cost? Why has Great Britain just upgraded its Sea King helicopter fleet at a substantially lower cost?

Finally, why is the government wasting money on this $4.3 billion helicopter deal when it tells the world all it can do for the global environment is forgive $145 million of Third World debt?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to remind my colleague that there is no deal. There is no decision. Our department is looking at a variety of options by which we can ensure we will have the kind of equipment needed to go into the 21st century.

To upgrade equipment is still not the best answer. It is like having a car. You can keep on upgrading the car but eventually there comes a time when it really does not work as effectively as it should.

We could spend a few dollars perhaps to put in some new engines. That will not provide the capability really needed for the future. We could spend a few more dollars but actually, looking at the costs of doing a full upgrade, it is almost comparable to buying a new helicopter.

If I were to ask what the hon. member would rather have, would he rather have a refitted engine, a refitted car, a refitted helicopter that still would not do the job, or a brand new one that would get us ready for the 21st century?

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CHILD CARE

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women has shown herself to be a very strong advocate for helicopters at a cost of over $4 billion to the Canadian taxpayers.

When will the minister become just as strong an advocate for the women and children of this country? When will she honour the commitment her government has made over and over again to a national child care program for the over one million children in desperate—

Mr. Speaker: We must try to keep going.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, this supplementary is perhaps not in order. Nevertheless, I am pleased to respond to my hon. colleague.

I can assure the hon. member of my advocacy on behalf of women in this country by ensuring that we deal with the primary issues of equality, of violence against women, of looking at ways in which to ensure that work and family responsibilities are attended to not just by government but by employers as well.

On the issue of child care, this government provides over $1 billion a year to the provinces for child care, a substantial portion to assist those families requiring those kinds of needs. We will continue to attend to the needs of children through such programs as the $2.2 billion child tax credit.

I can assure my colleague that this government looks after every sector of people in this country, including the men and women in the Armed Forces, including the children of this country.

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FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister of fisheries.

Last week's decision at the earth summit to hold a conference on high seas fishing may help to address the problem in the long term. The real question of course is whether there is a long term and whether there will be any fish left to save a year or two from now.

What assurances does the minister have from the European Community that it will now honour the NAFO moratorium until the conference deals with the issue?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, it was very significant that at the summit meeting in Rio a week ago, for the first time as far as I know, the organized world community of 180 countries recognized that overfishing and the failure to apply principles of sustainable development in the fishery was a major world environmental problem.

The 180 nations there adopted a resolution which was an initiative of Canada together with 39 other countries. This will be a great help to us in the longer term with reference to future fish stocks.

We have to start somewhere. No one can expect that the whole world will arrive at the decisions one would like within five minutes or five months, but we are well on the way.

In the meantime, there is a short-term problem, hopefully short-term, in the northwest Atlantic with reference to the northern cod and flatfish stocks. I am sorry to have to relate to the House that there is a problem with cod fish in other areas as well, for example, off Iceland. There is a problem this year off Greenland in the Baltic with reference to cod stocks. While misery loves company, it is too bad that this is happening in other areas as well.

With respect to our own problems, we will act when we have all the information that is necessary in July. If we have to close any fisheries—

Mr. Speaker: Let us see if we can move on. The hon. member for Burin—St. George's, a supplemental.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, when the minister gets all the facts. How many more facts, how many more closed fish plants does he need for proof? He has enough facts. The problem is right on his doorstep.

The straddling stocks are as vulnerable as ever. In that respect, despite all the optimism and the rhetoric of last week, very little has changed, if anything.

I want to know how far the minister is prepared to go to protect that resource? How far is he prepared to go? Why is he ruling out taking over custodial management despite the fact that last week at Rio he was strongly urged by an expert in international law to do exactly that?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed to see that the hon. gentleman is more negative today about the achievements we made in Rio last week than he was in Rio. I am sorry that he has had this change in attitude.

How far am I prepared to go? I am prepared to go as far as is necessary to overcome the issue of overfishing in the northwest Atlantic as well as in the rest of the world.

• (1500)

What is the best way of achieving that? The best way is by getting 180 nations on your side, not having 180 nations oppose you because you want to adopt some premature cowboy tactics and unilaterally extend management controls in an area.

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MARINE ATLANTIC

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

After three years of disastrous fishing activities the incomes of Labrador fishermen have gone consistently down, yet the increase in rates of Marine Atlantic which is their supply line in the summer have gone consistently up. This year there is another 15 per cent or 20 per cent, at least, increase in rates of Marine Atlantic.

In view of the fact the government may very soon I hope announce a compensation program for the fishery on the Atlantic coast, will he now order Marine Atlantic to freeze its rates at last year's level on behalf of the fishermen on the Labrador coast?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. At this stage I would like to invite him to meet with the CEO and other officers of Marine Atlantic so some of the misconceptions arising out of its tabling of its recent structure can be ironed out.

In fact, the minimum charge on small shipments is going to remain at $25 a piece. If the shippers are prepared to work with Marine Atlantic, they will find they have ways to minimize the increases because what Marine Atlantic is really trying to recover here is not full recovery. It is $600,000 out of the $28 million in subsidies we have been providing it over the past few years.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, a short supplemental. I met last week with the Chamber of Commerce in Goose Bay and I have talked to small businessmen along the Labrador coast. They are not fooled by the snow job the minister has been given by Marine Atlantic. There is going to be an increase in rates, at least 15 per cent to 20 per cent.

Will he listen to the people there? Will he listen to the businessmen there and freeze Marine Atlantic rates this year at last year's level?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I hope the member opposite agrees with the mandate of Marine Atlantic to manage the taxpayers' money properly. It has put in a structure that will do that without overcharging for small shipments. Again, I invite him to meet not with the Chamber of Commerce or others, but the CEO of Marine Atlantic who have put this new rate structure in place and dispel many of the misconceptions that have arisen from that.

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 12 petitions.

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

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BILL C-63

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-63, an act to dissolve or terminate certain corporations and other bodies, without amendment.

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HEALTH AND WELFARE, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SENIORS AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

FOURTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors, and the Status of Women on breast cancer.

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

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TRANSPORT

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 move:

> That in relation to their study of the competitiveness and viability of Canada's ports, eight members and two staff of the Standing Committee on Transport be authorized to travel to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to attend the Conference on Canadian Ports Competitiveness from June 16 to 18, 1992.

Motion agreed to.

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PETITIONS

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I have five petitions again today dealing with the Court Challenges Program.

Canadians have made it known that they are very supportive of this program which gave access to the courts for those of us, groups and individuals, who wanted to test our constitutional right to come to court dealing with freedom of expression, the question of language rights and equality rights.

These petitioners would like to have the Court Challenges Program reinstated. It was abolished by the government some months ago. It was not a very expensive program at about 10 cents per year per Canadian. It was a very good program. In times of reviewing our constitutional arrangements, I think it would be appropriate if Canadians had access to public funds to defend themselves in front of the courts when their language rights and their equality rights are questioned.

Therefore, these people humbly ask the Parliament of Canada to reinstate the Court Challenges Program.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by 27 constituents of Sarnia—Lambton. The constituents call upon Parliament to enact legislation providing for (a) a referendum of the people binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the

government; (b) the acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments to be determined by, one, a majority vote of the total votes cast in the whole of Canada, together with, two, a majority vote in the majority of provinces with the territories being given the status of one province.

I thank these constituents for their interest in our constitutional amendment process.

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present petitions that have been signed by many constituents of my riding of Sarnia—Lambton.

These petitions were organized and distributed by the Kinsmen and Kinettes of Sarnia. They urge all Canadians to take pride in a united, strong and independent Canada by participating in the Proud to be Canadian project. This project is 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 promote our tremendous pride in being Canadians.

I thank the Kinsmen and Kinettes of Sarnia for their Proud to be Canadian project and thank the many people of Sarnia—Lambton who signed the petition.

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions today, pursuant to Standing Order 36, calling upon the Government of Canada to reinstate the Court Challenges Program. These are residents from the province of New Brunswick who have signed the first petition.

The second petition is from residents primarily of the province of Ontario again calling upon the Government of Canada to reinstate the Court Challenges Program which they believe to be a very important program for Canadians to have at their disposal.

I would hope that the government would see the wisdom of the suggestion and would rescind its earlier decision to cancel this most worthy program.

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Madam Speaker, I wish at this time to present a petition which was started by my friend Bob Newell in Waterdown. It has about 50 signatures.

• (1510)

It is virtually the same language as the petition of my hon. friend from Sarnia—Lambton.

It is asking for a referendum of the people, binding upon Parliament, to accept or to reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government to be determined by a majority vote in a majority of provinces with the territories being given the status of one province.

As is duty bound, these petitioners will forever pray. I know that they are all Canadians to the core as I am and I pray too that the outcome of a referendum, if necessary, will mean the preservation of this country as we know it.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have three different petitions to table today.

The first one is regarding the subject of individuals within the bodies of their mothers. The petitioners state that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to the Parliament and Government of Canada and that the charter in article 15(1) states:

> Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law.

They call upon Parliament to call on the government to enact laws which protect individuals while they reside within the bodies of their mothers.

CANADA POST

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, the second petition is about the closing of postal station 'B' in my riding of Parkdale—High Park.

The constituents state that they have heard that postal station 'B' is going to be closed whereas they believe that as Canadians they have the right to efficient mail service and that the service rendered by postal station 'B' is very important to the local businesses, seniors and those wishing to mail parcels or use priority post.

They call upon Parliament to call upon the minister responsible for Canada Post to review the decision to close postal station 'B' and instead renew the lease and ensure the service remains at the Ritchie Street location.

RWANDA

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, the third petition is three different petitions on the same subject. To save time I will put them all together regarding the human rights violations in Rwanda.

These petitioners state that the issue in the current armed uprising in Rwanda is not an ethnic conflict as the current Rwanda regime and its backers would like the world to believe. Rather the real issue is the fact that Rwandan people are rebelling against a military dictatorship.

They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to urge the Canadian government to apply pressure on the Rwandan regime to immediately stop killing innocent Rwandans. They urge the Canadian government to support the EEC resolution on Rwanda, issued on February 20, 1992.

POVERTY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of presenting to the House of Commons a petition signed by residents, many of them and most of them senior citizens from my riding.

They point out that hundreds of thousands of Canadian citizens live below the poverty line and particularly that 80 per cent of single women over the age of 65 live in poverty.

They are complaining of the 37 cents increase in April on their Old Age Security cheque. They are petitioning this government and this House to ensure pension benefits for seniors that would allow them not only to have their ends met, but to also allow them to have dignity at the same time.

We are asking this government to review this policy and to think that it was a shame to send a 37 cents increase per month per senior citizen.

TRUCKING

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present three petitions on the same subject representing about 90 people in my constituency and elsewhere.

The petitioners represent dump truckers which have little or no legal means of enforcing prevailing rates on the 'stated in contracts'.

They call upon this government to enact legislation for adoption of minimum rates schedules for dump trucks on federal projects at rates not less than the minimum truck haul rate and conditions set by each province with a federal project that is to be undertaken.

[*Translation*]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to present a petition concerning the Court Challenges Program.

This program has helped many individuals and minority groups to clarify their constitutional language and equality rights before the courts.

The elimination of this program represents an incalculable loss for social justice and equality in this country.

Parliament should consider the option of reinstating the Court Challenges Program, which gives all Canadians equal access to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to present to the House a further petition spearheaded and gathered by Mrs. Eileen MacDonald from my riding. It is signed by around 70 residents of North York, Don Mills, East York, Toronto and Scarborough.

It calls upon the Parliament of Canada to enact legislation providing for a referendum binding upon Parliament to accept or reject constitutional amendments proposed by the government, the acceptance or rejection of the proposed amendments to be determined by a majority vote of 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.

This is a further petition presented through the hard work of Mrs. MacDonald. I am sure that the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada will ensure that this petition is granted.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a petition signed by many people in the national capital region. These people are complaining about the unfair gasoline prices in the Ottawa–Carleton region.

As you know, gasoline prices in the Toronto area are much lower than in our region. This issue has really been of concern to many residents in my area. They look at it as discrimination against the consumers in this region and are calling on the federal government to take action on this issue.

SRI LANKA

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by 100 people from Winnipeg who are very concerned about the treatment of the Tamils in north and east Sri Lanka.

Many of these people have had first-hand experience in dealing with this situation. They call upon the Government of Canada to intervene and to stop the flagrant human rights violations committed by the government of Sri Lanka and to ensure basic food, medicine and fuel supplies be permitted to reach the Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition today signed by several hundred people from the province of Prince Edward Island.

It states that all provincial ministries of transportation and departments of highways have long recognized the validity and stabilizing effect of establishing minimum rates and cites a base for their own contracts involving dump truck work.

The lack of such minimum rates in federal projects leads to ruin of such prevailing rates. It creates predatory pricing and opens the door for other abuses.

The truckers have little or no legal means of enforcing prevailing rates unless stated in the contracts.

In the interests of keeping a viable and meaningful dump truck industry, these petitioners call upon Parliament to enact legislation for the adoption of a minimum rate schedule for dump trucks on federal projects at rates not less than the minimum truck haul rates and conditions set for each province where a federal project is to be undertaken.

LIGHTHOUSES

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition concerning the proposed closure of light stations on the Pacific coast.

The petitioners request that the Government of Canada having decided not to close these lighthouses implement the terms of *The Future Role of Light Stations* report and that it return the roughly $1 million a year of federal funding removed from these light stations and the person years that were removed in anticipation of closures.

According to the petitioners, this would restore the safety and viability of light stations as a major component of the safety net on the coast of British Columbia.

• (1520)

RWANDA

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition which relates to the Canadian government applying pressure on the regime in Rwanda to immediately stop killing innocent Rwandans.

The petitioners urge the Canadian government to stop economic aid and other forms of assistance to the current Rwandan regime. They urge the Canadian government to support the EEC resolution on Rwanda issued February 20, 1992.

* * *

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, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 294 and 314.

[*Text*]

Question No. 294—**Mr. Jordan:**

For the years 1990 and 1991, have any departments, agencies or crown corporations contributed funding to the Legal Education and Action Fund and, if so, which ones and in what amounts?

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am informed as follows:

Department of the Secretary of State:

1990 $257,498
1991 $257,198

*Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada:

1990/91 $4,000
1991/92 $20,000

*Amounts available by fiscal year only.

Question No. 314—**Mrs. Mitchell:**

What is the total cost of television ads produced for Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada dealing with Canadian citizenship, entitled "Citizenship, Take it to Heart" and what was the date and value of this contract, and to whom was it awarded?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): The advertisement was produced by the firms Gingko of Toronto and Everest of Montreal for $408,000. The placement cost for the ad was $2,476,504. The television ad started April 12 and was aired until May 3, 1992.

The total cost of the "Citizenship, Take It to Heart" advertisement was $2,884,504.

[*English*]

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

* * *

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): Madam Speaker, if Question No. 218 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 218 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 218—**Mr. Fulton:**

Since 1984, has the government established paid informant programs and, if so, (*a*) for which departments, agencies (*b*) at what cost (*c*) what are the names and positions of responsible officials (*d*) for what purpose are the informants used (*e*) what types of benefits do the informants receive?

Return tabled.

[*English*]

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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre) that Bill C–49, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault), be read the third time and passed.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I introduced amendments to the Criminal Code regarding sexual assault on December 12, 1991.

The driving force behind the Bill C–49 amendments was the need to restore protection for victims of sexual assault in the wake of the Seaboyer decision which struck down former section 276 of the Criminal Code, commonly referred to as the rape shield provision.

Bill C–49 received second reading on April 8, 1992 and was referred to a legislative committee for detailed review.

[*Translation*]

I was struck by the favourable reception given by members to Bill C–49. The same attitude and co–operation were evident during discussions before the legislative committee.

I have said many times, in response to questions about the wording of certain provisions of this bill, that the legislative committee was the appropriate venue for fine tuning the text to reflect accurately the general principles and substance of the bill. I am very grateful to the committee for the attention and care it gave to analysing the text of the bill, and I am also very grateful to the many witnesses who came to offer their comments and advice and tell us about their concerns.

The legislative committee heard a large number of witnesses, including representatives of the Canadian Bar Association, the Criminal Lawyers Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, the Disabled Women's Network, the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres. The committee also received briefs prepared by interest groups, individuals and academics.

Despite the extremely diverse interests represented by this broad range of witnesses, the principle of the bill was very well received by all. Comments and concerns tended to concentrate on a few similar aspects of the bill and the amendments proposed by the legislative committee are in direct response to the concerns expressed while the bill was being examined. I think these amendments have done much to improve the bill.

[*English*]

Before I begin to sketch out the amendments made by the legislative committee, I would like to set the record straight for those who have been following the media coverage of this issue by making some general comments about what Bill C–49 is not.

Bill C–49 does not outlaw sexual activity after a few glasses of wine. It does not require that written consent forms be signed before sexual activity, or that a third party be present as an observer to ensure that consent was given. It does not prohibit sexual activity between an employer and an employee, nor does it permit a person to wake up in the morning and revoke the consent given to the previous evening's sexual encounter.

This may seem like a frivolous thing to say about the legislation but it has been extraordinary in my mind to see some of the commentary and caricature of the very serious intent of this legislation that, in fact, makes it necessary to make those kinds of comments about what the bill is not.

On the contrary, Bill C–49 deals with three fundamental issues regarding sexual assault. The admissibility of evidence of a sexual assault and the complainant's sexual history and the applicable procedure, the definition of consent, and the defence of honest but mistaken belief in consent. Amendments made by the legislative committee touch upon all three of the key features of Bill C–49.

With respect to the consent provisions, the committee amended three subsections which set out circumstances where no consent is obtained.

The subsection dealing with incapacity and intoxication was revised to delete the phrase "by reason of intoxication or other condition". The paragraph now reads: "No consent is obtained where the complainant is incapable of consenting". The revision puts the emphasis where it belongs, on incapacity rather than on the reason for the incapacity. It states the obvious. A person does not consent where they are incapable of consenting.

Section 273.1(2)(c) was revised to avoid the possible interpretation that an abuse of a position of trust or authority would exist where two people involved in such a relationship engaged in sexual activity, that is, to avoid the criticism this provision prohibited sex between an employer and employee or professor and student.

The key issue here is the abuse of the position. The revised wording will provide that no consent is obtained where the accused induces the complainant to engage in the activity by abusing a position of trust, power or authority.

The revision adds the requirement that the accused induce the complainant to engage in the activity and maintains the requirement of abuse of the position. The word "power" has been added to cover relationships not captured by the phrase "trust or authority".

Section 273.1(2)(e) was revised to avoid the criticism that consent could be revoked after the fact. For example, the next morning a person could claim that they no longer consented to the previous evening's sexual encounter. Although the law would never have permitted such a retrospective revocation, in the interests of clarity the provision has been amended. The revised wording will provide that no consent is obtained where the complainant, having consented to engage in sexual activity expresses by words or conduct a lack of agreement to continue to engage in the activity. That lack of consent of course only applies to the continuation of the activity for which there is no consent.

With respect to the defence of honest but mistaken belief in consent, the Canadian Bar Association, the Criminal Lawyers Association and the Civil Liberties Association argue that the requirement that the accused take all reasonable steps in the circumstances known to the accused at the time to ascertain consent in order to assert the defence imposed a standard which would be impossible for the accused to meet. However, the central idea that an accused should have done something to ascertain consent in order to argue that he honestly believed the complainant had consented was not disputed.

The committee, therefore, amended the provision to delete the word "all". The revised provision will state: "It is not a defence that the accused believed that the complainant consented or the accused did not take reasonable steps in the circumstances known to the accused at the time to ascertain that the complainant was consenting".

I believe this sets a standard which protects the complainant, the standard that was suggested by the Canadian Bar Association, "or any steps", we all agreed was too low. At the same time, it also respects the fundamental principle of criminal justice and that is the need to have a guilty mind or *mens rea* in order to establish criminal culpability.

I would also like to point out that this defence arises only after the Crown has proved that the complainant did not, in fact, consent to the sexual activity.

[*Translation*]

The legislative committee has amended the provisions relating to the prohibition of the publication of the judge's decision and reasons.

These amendments came in response to concerns expressed by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Association of Journalists, as ardent defenders of freedom of the press. They also respond to questions raised by various women's groups which maintain that the complainant's right of privacy should be protected, but the public should know how the law is applied.

According to the amendments made by the legislative committee, where the evidence is judged to be admissible, the judge's determination and reasons may be published. Where the evidence is judged to be inadmissible, the judge's determination and reasons may be published if the judge so orders, after taking into account the complainant's right of privacy and the interests of justice. The judge who initially decides that a hearing should be held to determine whether the evidence is admissible may, after taking into account the complainant's right of privacy and the interests of justice, order publication of the decision.

• (1530)

[*English*]

In addition to the amendments made to the clauses of the bill which I have highlighted, the legislative committee carefully considered the contents of the preamble. I attach a great deal of importance to the preamble since it states our collective intentions as members of Parliament and as legislators in reforming our sexual assault laws.

The legislative committee has amended the preamble to refer specifically to the prevalence of sexual assault against women and children. In addition, the order of the paragraphs has been changed to put greater emphasis on the protection of charter rights, which will now be in paragraph 3. Some minor changes in the wording have also been made.

[*Translation*]

We now have before us a considerably improved and readily comprehensible bill that aims to identify and codify the rules of law for determining the admissibility of evidence relating to the complainant's sexual history, a bill that fills in the gaps in the former rape shield provisions which caused them to be struck down.

Procedural safeguards for victims of sexual assault have been reinstated. The complainant is no longer obliged to testify at the preliminary hearing to determine the admissibility of evidence relating to the complainant's sexual history; the hearing will be held *in camera*. Publication of the judge's determination and reasons may be prohibited in certain circumstances. The current provisions of the Criminal Code will prohibit publication of information revealing the identity of the complainant.

These amendments are based on present day reality and on the principles set forth by the Supreme Court of Canada. They take into account the fundamental principles of trial procedure and admissibility of evidence.

[*English*]

I would like again to thank all members of the House, particularly the members of the legislative committee, for their comments and careful consideration. The provisions of Bill C–49 will ensure the much needed improvements to benefit sexual assault victims while respecting the rights of accused persons to defend themselves against allegations of sexual assaults.

I would also like to emphasize that during the period of time since this bill was tabled in the House, particularly over the period of time when my colleagues on the legislative committee were hearing witnesses and discussing the bill and generating public debate, I have had an inordinate number of comments made by members of the public across this country with respect to this legislation. I have been very gratified to see that irrespective of gender and irrespective of region, Canadians feel very comforted by this piece of legislation. I have had men thank me for this piece of legislation and for the law relating to sexual assault, and women who feel very strongly gratified and validated that the reality of life as they live it in Canada and their concerns have been reflected in this legislation.

I want to conclude by again thanking my colleagues in the House, the critics and the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys over there who has played such a fundamental role along with his colleagues. Our colleagues in the New Democratic Party I believe at the moment are involved in a very important press conference on another issue relating to women. They have been very, very helpful as well. I want to thank them again for their care and consideration in dealing with what was in many ways a contentious and sensitive issue. They did it in a way that I believe represented the finest of the parliamentary tradition. I believe that we have made an important statement. I believe that we are dealing with an important provision of law that is respectful of the fundamental traditions of criminal justice that we all uphold but, at the same time, is a law for the last decade of the 21st century and truly enfranchises all Canadians.

Therefore, I want to again say thank you and to say that it will be many years before I forget the second reading debate on this legislation and the kinds of comments made by members in this House. They represented a quantum leap in the enfranchisement of Canadian women and the ability of parliamentarians of both founding genders of this country to respect and understand the reality of all Canadians. I thank them very much for that experience.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to debate today on Bill C–49.

I want to share with the minister my feelings and my satisfaction that we have here a good piece of legislation. There are some points, some things about it, that I had hoped would have been changed and I will refer to some of those. Basically, as the minister has said, we have made a major leap forward with this legislation.

I do feel that we have to have some idea in Canada, everyone in this country has to be aware, of what we are trying to do with this legislation. There have been a lot of things said by various members of the bar, by other segments of society, which indicated to me that they really did not know the depth of the problem that exists, not only in Canada but throughout the world, and the disadvantaged position in which women find themselves in this country and throughout every country in the world.

What we have to do here is ask if we are going to accept that. Are we going to say that we want to keep legal niceties at the risk of putting women in a position in which they will constantly feel fear, will constantly question the justice system, will constantly ask members of Parliament and other members in authority in this country when they are going to realize that women do not have an equal position in this country?

We have talked about job equality. We have talked about equal pay for work of equal value. This is an area in which men in Canada do not realize that women have had a very, very detrimental position as far as their rights within the law are concerned. We have not realized that the law has actually put women in a very derogatory position as far as their rights are concerned.

What we have to look at is what we want to achieve. We want to achieve for women in this country the right to be able to bring action against sexual assault. We want every Canadian to feel that sexual assault is not something that is going to happen or that there is nothing that they can do about it. We have to erase the feeling that sexual assault is a part of growing up, that it is a part of living and there is nothing to be done, that you just have to endure it. That is not the way it has to be in Canada. That is not the way it should be in Canada.

Before 1983, a woman who brought a charge of sexual assault was questioned without, in some cases, any bounds whatsoever on her past sexual history, not only with regard to the accused, but generally speaking on all her sexual activity that the other side could conjure up. It would get to the point at which the woman was actually the accused because she was placed in such an uncomfortable position within the court structure that no woman wanted to bring an action of sexual assault.

• (1540)

Fortunately in 1983 there was an amendment to the Criminal Code in section 276 in which it was stated that you could only bring evidence of the past sexual history when: one, the Crown opened up the area by bringing in allegations or information on past sexual history; two, where it was alleged that the accused did not commit the assault; and three, where the accused was saying that it was important that this information come forward because there was other sexual activity that happened just before, just after or about the same time so that it was an integral part of his or her case.

This greatly reduced the trauma that women felt in bringing sexual assault cases before the courts. Unfortunately or fortunately, whatever way you want to look at it, we could not maintain section 276. It is also fortunate that within our system of law in Canada our courts are looking after the rights of all Canadians. They decided that section 276 could not stand a charter challenge and that it contravened section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That was in August 1991.

Then the Minister of Justice brought forward this bill, Bill C–49, last December. As the minister said, we had a very good debate on second reading and then it went to legislative committee. There were some changes made. The bill is a much better bill.

The bill we have today does three things mainly. It provides for strict guidelines in determining the admissibility of past sexual history as far as the evidence in court is concerned. It outlines clearly the procedure which must be followed in admitting such evidence.

It also defines the notion of consent to sexual activity. This idea of defining consent is a very important one and a bold move on the part of the Minister of Justice. It is a very difficult thing to do. It is very important because this is the way we can state in the legislation exactly what consent is going to be.

We will be able to say that women in this country have means by which they know what their rights are. The men will have to learn this act and realize that things such as extreme intoxication of the woman are not consent. That is very important.

That is going to mean that a lot of people who go out and party and get intoxicated are now going to realize that their actions are going to be under severe scrutiny if the complainant states that he or she did not give consent. That is a major step forward. It is important that the ramifications in this bill receive a clear screening and that we educate Canadians as to what this bill really does. It is an important bill. It is important for Canadians to realize exactly what it says.

One of the aspects which raised concern initially was that there may be no consent if the complainant is incapable of consenting by reason of intoxication or other conditions. We have since in the legislative committee taken out the words "intoxication or other conditions". That does not, however, mean that intoxication has been taken out of the bill as far as prohibiting consent is concerned.

If a person is intoxicated, severely intoxicated and really would not know what she or he is doing, consent cannot be assumed. It will have to be determined by the courts whether he or she gave consent to the sexual activity. That is very important.

In the next section the minister says that honest but mistaken belief in consent is not a defence. We mentioned the fact the accused did not take "all reasonable steps" in the circumstances known to the accused at the time to ascertain if the complainant was consenting.

You look at that and you say well that is just not reasonable. If a person is before the courts and they are accused, then evidently they did not take all reasonable steps. You cannot have it as a criteria that the accused took all reasonable steps.

Second, who is to say what all reasonable steps are. In each case a judge will determine whether there is something else the accused should have considered. If every time there is a trial, a judge or defence counsel states this is something else that could have been considered, the case would have to be thrown out, because here is a new criteria of reasonable steps that was not taken into consideration.

While there are concerns among some of the women's groups that the bill is no longer strong enough, I believe this amendment was made in the best interests of the legislation and of really protecting this legislation from a charter challenge.

There were groups which said that instead of saying all reasonable steps we should say any reasonable steps. That would go too much the other way. We would then be weakening the bill. By just saying reasonable steps, it would leave it to the court and I think that is a very fair way of doing it.

There are some things about the bill, however, I have difficulty with. One is that the question of whether the complainant's past sexual history is to come before the courts is going to be decided in what is really a *voir dire*. It is going to be a hearing within the main trial itself, at which time the judge will decide in closed court if the evidence is or is not suitable to the nature of the case and if it has a bearing on the accused's case.

The question is, what is going to be considered as relevant? That has to be left up to the judge and that is important. If the judge determines that the past sexual history should be allowed in and it is in the interests of the accused that this be brought forward, the judge can also then decide whether the press should be able to report on that evidence. That was another change in second reading.

My concern here is that the complainant is not compelled to testify in this hearing. It may be a problem as far as the courts are concerned as they may feel the accused is not able to get a fair hearing because the complainant does not have to testify. That is not to say that in most cases the complainant's testimony would be important. It may very well not be important in most cases but in certain cases it may be necessary.

I am also concerned because if the complainant is not being compelled in certain instances to testify, there is going to be a lot of hearsay evidence brought into the hearing.

Another thing that concerns me is that in the hearing the judge has to consider society's interests. I honestly feel in a court of law there is to be one major objective, and that is the innocence or guilt of the accused. Under no circumstances should we be trying to decide anything else.

• (1550)

When we are talking about legislation, we are talking about society's interests. Right now debating this bill, we are discussing society's interests. That is very important. We have to look at society's interests. It is a fundamental obligation of members of Parliament when we are discussing legislation. We are now looking at society's interests.

When the Crown prosecutor decides whether he or she wants to proceed and on what grounds, under what section of the Criminal Code for instance, the Crown prosecutor is looking at society's interests and taking them into consideration.

When the decision of innocence or guilt is brought forward, the judge will determine sentencing in society's interests. In the actual body of the trial or any hearing within the trial, to me it is not right to inject society's interests. That is not a fundamental factor in determining the innocence or guilt of the accused. The accused should not have to bear that hurdle. I feel that should not be in the legislation and frankly, it is harmful to the legislation.

I do feel there was one area in which we did not go far enough, not that the area is of vital importance legally because not everything that is in legislation has to have strict legal terminology and is only for legal purposes. We are saying in this bill, by the wording in the preamble, that we want to get our intentions to the judge and that we want the justice system to know about our feelings on why this bill is being presented and what we want to achieve as parliamentarians.

The government stated that very eloquently in the preamble. The language is very good and it is very clear. I think it is going to be helpful. The minister has said that the preamble is not going to be a part of the Criminal Code. That is fair enough. It will presumably be in the commentary in the Criminal Code. That is going to be helpful as well.

Women's groups that came before us said that we did not really understand the problems of disabled women, the problems of visible minorities, of sex trade workers, of those who are under pressure because their immigration hearing is pending, or because they are in a vulnerable position because of their employment. They explained to us that we do not realize that these people are not able to convince a judge or a policeman or somebody else in the criminal justice system that they did not consent more easily than a white woman would. What judges who are mainly white middle-aged men see in a white woman is their wife or their daughter or somebody like that. They do not see that when the person is from a visible minority. They do not as readily give the benefit of the doubt to somebody who was not a visible minority.

We know what the law says. The law says that everybody is treated equally before the courts, that justice applies equally to all Canadians. We know that. We have heard it, we have had it told to us, we have read it and that may be the case in most instances. That is something we want to believe. We have seen it. They have been assaulted by policemen who feel because that person is a visible minority, it will not matter if they are sexually assaulted. We have seen cases of that. We know that the law does not apply equally.

We want to overcome that. We want to redress that problem. We want to say that consent should not be implied because the person is a sex trade worker, because the person is disabled, because the person is a visible minority, because the person is under pressure of an immigration hearing or because of their employment. We want that in the bill. They may say it is not necessary but we feel it is.

After hearing these women I frankly feel it is necessary because there is obviously a problem. I think it is important not only to these women but also to people in homosexual relationships, and where we in Canada believe the rights of people have to be upheld. We also feel that if Canadians feel they are not being given equal treatment before the law then we have to bring forward a statement that would help these people see that the law is going to be equally applied to them.

This is a very important request. I know the minister thinks there should be something done in this regard. I am hoping that something will be done even though it is not in the bill.

The education of the members of the judiciary is very important. I think that should be done. I was hoping the government would bring forward an amendment at report stage that that would deal with this, but unfortunately it did not.

I leave it with the minister and I ask her to please consider this concern that many Canadians have. I ask her, in ways that she may think expedient, to address this concern.

The concern does not end there. This bill is, as I have stated, a major advance as far as women's rights in Canada are concerned. We have to do considerably more. We need new pornography laws. As a result of the Butler decision the minister has said that she hopes to bring forward new pornography laws in the fall, hopefully in September, particularly with respect to child pornography.

These are all parts of what we want to achieve. The question of urban violence is a major concern in this country.

What we have to realize is that in this country women have not had the same feeling about protecting themselves that men have seemed to feel that women should have.

They do not realize, and I have said this before, that a woman leaving a bus stop, getting off a bus after dark in any size Canadian city these days is in constant fear as she walks to her home or to her apartment. That fear does not end upon the woman going into the building. The fear can exist that someone on the elevator, or someone on the very floor on which she lives, could assault her. This fear is constant and I do not think many men in this country realize this.

Frankly I think it is this bill and legislation such as this that will help to address this question.

It is really not satisfactory when we realize that in this country one woman in four is sexually assaulted. Of those one in four that is sexually assaulted only one in 10 will actually report that sexual assault. That is largely because the woman does not think that her concerns are going to be taken seriously by the judicial system. She feels that she is just really letting herself in for a very

difficult time when all of the past sexual activity is going to be brought up in open court.

We should not be convicting people who are not guilty, but we should be making sure that those who are guilty are going to be convicted. Not every time, there is no way you can assure that that is going to happen. The circumstances have to be such that the woman will come before the court to lay a charge and that the structure will indicate that there is a path to follow, that there is a means of bringing forward the evidence and that a conviction actually can be brought forward, certainly more frequently than once every 20 cases when it comes to trial.

• (1600)

We had some concern in the legislative committee. There were people proposing that this bill was not going to be charter proof on the basis that it did not differentiate between a sexual assault that was done through the mistaken belief that the accused had consented, on the one hand, and a sexual assault that was premeditated and done with full planning and intent to injure on the other. There were those who said that it is unconstitutional if you cannot ensure that those who do something through negligence or by accident do not receive a lighter sentence than those who commit an offence intentionally. One case that comes to mind is the Martineau case where Chief Justice Lamer gave the decision. He stated that it was a constitutional principle that those who cause harm intentionally must be punished more severely than those who cause harm unintentionally.

I asked the minister and officials of the Department of Justice and they were able to assure us that that principle would be upheld. They gave the assurance that he who commits an assault through the mistaken belief that he had consent would not be treated as harshly as somebody who intentionally committed the assault. I feel that that is important and I have every reason to believe that the Department of Justice has looked at this point.

In closing, I feel that this bill is a major step forward. We have done something here which is going to greatly correct the imbalance that women have suffered as far as their equal rights before the judicial system are concerned. These were not intentional oversights; it was just the way the law was. It seemed to indicate to women that they were going to be victims themselves if they were willing to withstand the harsh cross-examination on past sexual history. We now have a clear idea of what constitutes consent. There are those who will say that this is too rigorous, but I want to say that we have the definition and that is very very important. Because we know what we want to do, because it is stated in the bill, I think that this will be a major step forward. This is a good bill. We are doing something here that really has needed to be done for a long time.

I think this is going to be accepted by Canadians, both men and women, throughout the country as a major step forward.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of my party, the New Democratic Party, to make some remarks on this bill.

As the House knows, in committee and in the debate the major spokesperson for the NDP was my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby, who is our spokesperson on women's issues. She will be speaking later in the debate today. I rose because as my party's justice critic I wanted to make some specific comments on the bill.

This is a bill which we are supporting, a bill on which we worked very hard in committee to make better. We succeeded somewhat but in other parts we did not succeed. I will speak about that in a moment.

It is an important bill, one of the most important bills of this Parliament. I want to be honest and straightforward here and give a little bit of a personal reaction if I might. Before I do so, I congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys, the Liberal critic who spoke eloquently today. He spoke especially eloquently at second reading of the debate.

That leads me to my confession. I come at this issue as a former criminal lawyer, as a prosecutor and especially as defence counsel. I guess I have the focus that the criminal bar has on the accused and the rights of the accused. It was put well by the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys. We were taught the old saying that it is better that 10 guilty men go free than one innocent man be found guilty. Notice the word "men" that is used in the expression.

Where the criminal bar comes in, the defence bar, is a real focus on protecting the rights of the accused. I came at the debate with support of the bill but with some scepticism about the bill. I had an opportunity to listen. As Tommy Douglas used to say when people heckled

him: "The good Lord gave you two ears and only one mouth. That means you should listen twice as much as you speak". Maybe we should take that advice more in politics.

I had the opportunity since my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby was the lead spokesperson on the bill to junior, if you like, in legal terms, to be the kind of second lawyer or the second string part of the team here. I got a chance to listen.

What I heard was remarkable, in three areas. One was in the House in the debate on second reading. Second was in committee and third in the level of public debate that we had in the country in the papers, on radio and television.

Let me talk about the House because it was a remarkable debate. There was a clear view expressed in this House of a determination to change the present law, more than any other debate I have seen in a long time. It was really a wonderful debate. It was wonderful in the sense that people poured out emotions and spoke from the heart, especially the women members of the House.

I learned that violence against women and children is epidemic in our society. I knew that, but I had not had it expressed in the same kind of way it was expressed in the House. That male violence seems to be rooted in the inequality in our society. That inequality reinforces the violence and that is something we should all think about.

The statistics are dramatic. One in four women are victims of sexual assault, half before the age of 17. One hundred and ten women are murdered every year by a male intimate, 110 women. One in eight women is battered by a partner. The majority of women in Canada are afraid to walk the streets of our cities and towns.

You may say: "You should have heard that before". Coming at things from a male point of view, especially a white, middle class, WASPish male, sometimes you are not aware of that. You are aware but you do not really feel it. You can walk down the street at night. You can park your car in a dark garage with no problem. What is the problem?

• (1610)

When I heard my fellow members of the House express their concerns and feelings, it made quite an impact on me, and I hope it made an impact on Canadians.

In the committee the National Action Committee on the Status Women in a first-rate brief said: "We believe from our experience that the majority of women have experienced some form of male violence if we include sexual harassment, sexual assault, incest, and battering". That is staggering. I was listening to that in committee.

Some of the other evidence or words that I heard were that sexist and racist stereotypes and myths promote sexual assault and prevent access to justice for survivors. Men are socialized to become aggressors in sexual relations, women to be passive and submissive.

I remember these comments in the House where women members said that women are divided into good girls and bad girls, with the bad girls being less worthy of legal protection. Aboriginal women experience a significantly higher level of violence than other women. More than 40 per cent of women with disabilities have been sexually assaulted. Prostitutes experience an average of five rapes a year each. These were staggering—

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): More than that.

Mr. Waddell: My colleague says "more". The evidence that came out in committee was pretty staggering. I guess what I am saying is that I was listening to that in the House.

Then we went into committee and we had a number of briefs in the committee. Again, according to the rape crisis centres in the country, only one in 10 women who report sexual assault to the crisis centres get access to the criminal justice system, yet 27,000 sexual assaults were reported to the police in 1990.

A 1977 study found that 70 per cent of rapes reported to the police never reached trial and only 10 per cent of the original charges resulted in conviction. One would like to think that things have dramatically changed but a 1990 study shows that 15 per cent of sexual assaults reported to police were considered unfounded compared to 4.3 per cent for break and enter reports.

I had confirmed to me in committee what I knew before, but I never had it confirmed in such a systematic way. Sexual assault is the most under-reported and under-convicted crime against a person.

There you have it. There you have the need for this law. That is a situation where a crime is not being reported because women are afraid to come forward. They are not listened to and so on. They have to go through a hassle in the trial including, before we had passed the previous law, their whole being coming under attack, their own sexual history. In fact instead of being the victim they become almost like the accused. That is rough. That is the problem. That is why this bill is here.

I should say that I am disappointed that the government did not accept the amendment introduced by my colleague, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, to specifically name doubly disadvantaged women. Sixty diverse women's organizations came together to work on the wording and finally agreed on amendments that all women felt comfortable with. I believe their perspective is not reflected in the bill.

In some ways the bill is still a bill for white, middle-class—this time—women. We have forgotten about visible minorities, disabled people, and other groups of women who are particularly hard hit. We have introduced amendments on behalf of the New Democratic Party to address the concerns of these particular groups.

Nevertheless, the bill is a step forward from the sexual assault law that we now have, in which men can claim that they have an honest but reasonable belief that there was consent and that is good enough to get them off no matter how hard the woman fought, what she said, or whether there was really any consent. I have already said that the number of sexual assaults that were unreported and the rate of conviction were very low.

The law also states for the first time that consent cannot be given by a third party. A man was acquitted of sexual assault despite a clear lack of consent on the part of the woman in the case because her husband told the man that she liked rough sex. Husbands and pimps can no longer encourage other men to rape women and get away with it under the provisions of this law.

In other words, an accused cannot come into court and say that this other man, this third person said that she was willing. That is not consent; you have to ask her. That sounds logical, does it not? It sounds simple but it is a big change in the law and it is in this bill. That is one of the reasons we are supporting this bill.

The bill defines an abuse of trust and authority as an assault. If a woman is forced into sex by virtue of the fact that the man is a police officer, or has other power over her, that is now unacceptable in the eyes of the law. Again, that is an amendment that was a long time coming.

There is a preamble in this bill, making it a different sort of bill. It makes explicit that the Parliament of Canada wants to see justice served by protecting the rights of the accused as well as the victims. This is something new, and it is a good direction for Parliament. We are looking at the rights of victims as well.

It clearly states what this law is for and why it is being enacted. We hope this will prevent the misuse of sexual assault laws, such as the sexual assault charges levelled against an HIV positive woman in my own province of British Columbia who had sex with two men without condoms. She was charged. We should look at the intent of this law, the courts should look at it, the prosecuting officers should look at it, and it is set out in the preamble of the bill.

Under this bill a man cannot rape an unconscious or incapacitated woman and get away with it, as in several unfortunate and painful cases in the past. There was a case in the Northwest Territories in which a woman was raped who was incapacitated by alcohol. The judge said: "Well, if there is a pair of hips there, that is asking for it".

There are some things we should watch with regard to the bill, and the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys considered them. We should be watching the media provisions, the reaction of the court in terms of whether the bill is charter proof, the development of the cases, the conviction rate and so on to determine whether the bill makes any difference.

I said when I started that I listened to speeches in the House and in the committee, and I mentioned the level of debate in the public. I recall waking up one morning—,I was trying to sleep in—and listening to the

Gzowski show on CBC Radio. Who did I hear on it but the Minister of Justice debating with Clay Ruby, a distinguished lawyer in Toronto and a very good friend of mine.

Mr. Ruby and I handled our first case together in Yorkville in the hippie days in Toronto. He is a very articulate and experienced lawyer and this was an articulate debate. The Minister of Justice certainly held her own, and perhaps did even better than hold her own.

I think the Minister of Justice would agree that there was a high level of debate in the public. The minister wrote a letter to the editor. There was a high level of debate in that. There were replies, especially in *The Globe and Mail*. The matter was treated seriously. It was treated seriously in editorials.

• (1620)

I know that J. J. Camp, president of the Canadian Bar Association, made a real effort to try to get the rough edges off the bill but keep it an effective bill.

We have been lucky in this debate. It is the way Parliament should work. We will see what happens as the bill becomes law and it affects cases.

A strong rape law will not prevent sexual assault. I think we all recognize that. I wish it would. I wish all we had to do was pass this bill and that would be the end of the problem.

It may not even convince most women to report the crime of rape, although we genuinely hope they will. We hope the bill will help there. Eliminating the sexist and racist biases of our society as a whole and the judicial system in particular is necessary if we want to convince more women to report rape.

A strong "no means no" law is a beginning step toward the other changes that must be made. A strong "no means no" law would be a signal to judges, Crown counsels, defence lawyers, police, and most important, women, that Parliament intends justice to apply to women as well as men. A strong "no means no" law could help to change our culture in regard to sexuality.

That is why I am supporting this bill. I learned a lot in the debate. I think it was an excellent debate and an excellent process with regard to this bill. My colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby will have other comments to make and I hope some of my other colleagues will speak in this debate this afternoon.

With that, I will conclude and urge that the House pass the bill.

Madam Deputy 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 Victoria—Government expenditures; the hon. member for Cochrane—Superior—French colleges; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands—The environment; the hon. member for Edmonton East—Petroleum industry.

Mrs. Edna Anderson (Simcoe Centre): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to stand today in support of Bill C-49, on the admissibility of evidence of sexual conduct.

On August 22, 1991 the Supreme Court of Canada struck down section 276 of the Criminal Code, which was commonly known as the rape shield provision, in the case of Seaboyer and Gayme.

Section 276 prohibited the reception of evidence in sexual assault cases of a victim's previous sexual history except in three narrow circumstances. The Supreme Court of Canada held that section 276 overshot the mark in protecting complainants. It held that section 276 had the potential to exclude evidence relevant to the defence and was therefore a violation of sections 7 and 11(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Supreme Court of Canada suggested guidelines to govern the receipt of evidence of past sexual activity in the absence of legislation.

The decision of the Supreme Court of Canada was swiftly criticized by equality rights-seeking women's groups. It cannot be denied that although sexual assault can be committed against a man the overwhelming majority of victims are women and children. Women feel very vulnerable without the protections formerly provided by the law. While the Supreme Court suggested guidelines for the admission and use in evidence of a sexual assault victim's sexual activity the judgment was silent on a number of issues of great significance to victims of sexual assault.

The proposed amendments in Bill C–49 will clarify the law and the procedure regarding the admissibility of evidence of the victim's sexual activity and will restore essential protection for the victims.

Victim's rights advocates have long maintained that victims of crime are the forgotten persons in the criminal justice system. The amendments proposed in Bill C–49 are an excellent example of how law can effectively respond to victims of crime without jeopardizing in any way the fundamental rights of accused persons. The Bill C–49 amendments are also an excellent example of how the law must conform to current social realities.

The offence of rape was abolished in 1983 and replaced with three levels of sexual assault offences. The trauma suffered by rape victims cannot be so easily abolished nor can the image of the rape victim being once again victimized, this time by the court process.

The Supreme Court of Canada has clearly stated that striking down the so–called rape shield provision does not revive the old common law rules of evidence that permitted evidence of sexual conduct and condoned invalid inferences from it. The rules must be adapted to conform to current reality. The myths that the rape shield provisions sought to eradicate have no place in a rational and just system of law.

The Criminal Code amendments proposed in Bill C–49 will ensure that a rational and just system of law prevails. With respect to the admissibility of evidence of a sexual assault victim's sexual activity with any person, including the accused person, the proposed amendments include a general statement about the purposes for which such evidence may not be used, a new test for admissibility of such evidence, and detailed procedural provisions to govern determinations of admissibility.

The Supreme Court of Canada has unequivocally stated that the fact that the complainant has engaged in other sexual activity with any person, including the accused, should not lead to the inference that the complainant is more likely to have consented to the sexual activity in question nor should it lead to the inference that the complainant is less worthy of belief.

Subsection 276(1) will put this principle into the Criminal Code to ensure that evidence that the complainant has engaged in sexual activity is not admissible to support an inference that the complainant is more likely to consent or is less worthy of belief.

Bill C–49's single most important feature is the test for admissibility of evidence of a complainant's sexual activity. I would prefer not to use the term "new rape shield provision" but this may be unavoidable.

Proposed subsection 276(2) sets out the test for admissibility of evidence of a complainant's sexual activity with any person, including the accused. The amendment avoids the pitfalls of the former section 276 that was struck down. It does not set out a blanket exclusion with narrow exceptions that the evidence an accused seeks to introduce must fit into. The new test for admissibility places the responsibility of determining whether the evidence is admissible on the trial judge. The trial judge has the task of assessing whether the evidence meets the requirements of section 276.

The questions the judge must ask are: Is it evidence of specific instances of sexual activity? Is it relevant to an issue at trial? Does the evidence have significant probative value that is not substantially outweighed by the danger of prejudice to the proper administration of justice? If the answer is yes to all three questions then the evidence will be admissible.

The task of determining admissibility will not be a simple one. Trial judges will be required to give serious consideration to this issue.

Proposed subsection 276(3) sets out a range of considerations which a judge must take into account in determining whether evidence of a complainant's sexual activity is admissible in accordance with the new test of admissibility. These factors are intended to assist judges in the difficult task of assessing whether the evidence should be admitted. The mandatory factors ensure that all Canadian judges will be guided by the same considerations in exercising their discretion in determining the admissibility of evidence.

• (1630)

The factors to be considered include: the interests of justice, including the right of the accused to make a full answer and defence; society's interest in encouraging the reporting of sexual assault offences; whether there is a reasonable prospect that the evidence will assist in arriving at a just determination in the case; the need to remove from the fact–finding process any discriminatory

belief on bias; the risk that the evidence may unduly arouse sentiments of prejudice, sympathy or hostility in the jury; the potential prejudice to the complainant's personal dignity and right of privacy; the right of the complainant and every individual to personal security and to the full protection and benefit of the law; and any other factor that the judge considers relevant.

Bill C–49 also includes a clear and enhanced procedure applicable to a determination of admissibility of sexual conduct evidence. Basically a two–stage procedure is proposed. First, an application to adduce evidence of a complainant's sexual activity must be made. Second, if the application is granted a hearing must be held to determine whether the evidence is admissible in accordance with the new test proposed.

The procedure begins with an application in writing setting out detailed particulars of the evidence sought to be introduced and the potential relevance to that evidence. The application must be made to a judge with a copy to the prosecutor and clerk of the court. A seven–day notice period is provided to enable the prosecutor to prepare argument as to whether or not the evidence should be subject to a determination of admissibility. Provision is also made for an abridged notice period where the interests of justice so require.

The application stage is designed to discourage frivolous attempts to introduce evidence of sexual activity. Where the judge is of the opinion that the evidence sought to be introduced is not capable of meeting the test for admissibility, the judge will not hold a hearing to make such a determination. Where an application is granted, the judge will hold a hearing to determine the admissibility of evidence in accordance with the test proposed.

The hearing will take place in the absence of the jury and members of the public. Note that the complainant is not a compellable witness at the hearing. At the conclusion of the hearing, the judge will determine if the evidence is admissible and will be required to state the reasons for. the determination.

The reasons must be written or recorded and must refer to the factors that have influenced the determination. The reasons must also indicate the manner in which the evidence is expected to be relevant. The judge may determine that only part of the evidence sought to be adduced meets the test of admissibility and, if so, the reasons would state the part of the evidence to be admitted.

These procedural provisions require judges to proceed through a staged analysis when considering admissibility. More than a brief reference to the test of admissibility is required in the judge's reasons.

The amendments proposed in Bill C–49 also restore provisions which protect the victim from embarrassment and which respect the victim's privacy and dignity. For example, the hearing to determine admissibility shall be held *in camera*, that is the public and the jury are excluded. The victim shall not be compellable at the hearing, that is the victim cannot be compelled to be a witness at the hearing although the victim may voluntarily take the stand. Evidence taken or information given at the hearing shall not be published in any newspaper or broadcast.

The re–enactment of the non–compellability provisions is essential in order to protect victims and encourage their co–operation in prosecutions. Note that the complainant may give evidence if he or she chooses to do so.

However, the complainant could not be required to testify at the hearing to determine admissibility. Bill C–49 also provides that the determination of admissibility of evidence of a complainant's sexual activity shall be conducted in the absence of the jury and members of the public, i.e., *in camera*.

The procedural provisions set out a two–step process, an application followed by a hearing. A judge considering an application to introduce evidence of a complainant's sexual activity must do so in the absence of the jury and the public. If the application is granted and a hearing is held to determine the admissibility of such evidence, the hearing must also be held *in camera*.

The objective of the *in camera* hearing is to ensure that the jury and the public do not hear evidence of the complainant's sexual activity before a judge has determined whether such evidence is admissible. The exposure of evidence of the complainant's sexual activity which may be misleading and irrelevant would have a highly prejudicial effect on the trial process and would cause unnecessary embarrassment to the complainant.

The proposed amendments governing the reception and use of evidence of a sexual assault victim's sexual history reflect the current reality of the 1990s. That is that evidence of the complainant's sexual history is rarely relevant to the issue before the court.

However, where that evidence is relevant, the Criminal Code permits its admission. Bill C-49 amendments reflect the very sensitive balance between the interests of the victims and the rights of the accused persons.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise to participate in this debate at third reading because of the absolute essential nature of having this legislation.

The problem that this legislation is meant to address is essentially a problem of attitudes and it is very, very difficult as everyone in this Chamber knows to legislate with regard to attitudes. Indeed, for many years one of the arguments against legislation of this nature, one of the many arguments against the legislation that this is replacing—in other words, the charter defeated rape shield provisions of the Criminal Code—was that you cannot legislate attitudes. I think all of us who support this bill say that not only can you legislate attitudes, but you must.

There is a very frightening attitude if you will in this country today. It is not held by all fortunately, but unfortunately it is held by enough people. That attitude is that women somehow are less believable, that women are less credible witnesses, that women invite sexual assault, that women are somehow less innocent victims when the crimes of which they are the subject are crimes that have "a sexual nature".

First of all, it is well established in the academic and scholarly literature surrounding these criminal issues that such crimes are not crimes of a sexual nature. That is the first attitude that legislation like this must change. Indeed, crimes of this nature are crimes of power and crimes of violence. Women in our society are by and large powerless. This is why they are so frequently the victims of these cowardly crimes.

When the legislation was first changed some 10 to 12 years ago, one of the things that was changed was the removal of the word "rape" from the Criminal Code. The theory behind that deletion was that the word itself was so pejorative that it set up a victimology, the same kind of victimology we are trying to delete right now with this legislation. The word rape was so pejorative that people immediately reacted to it by blaming the victim.

• (1640)

It is interesting. We do not deal with it in this legislation nor indeed is it perhaps necessary to deal in this legislation right now with these particular amendments. I hope we will deal with it at some other time.

A lot of feminists and criminologists thought that perhaps we moved too quickly and moved too soon on the removal of that word from the Criminal Code. There is no question the word is blunt, it is direct and you know what it means. We have removed that and replaced it with the words "sexual assault" which somehow contributes to the attitude that these crimes are not as serious as the vast majority sitting in this room know they are.

We are hearing over and over again, as we read in the papers, as we watch television, as we listen to our radios and as we as parliamentarians hear the experiences of our constituents, that there is an upsurge in crimes of violence against women including those crimes of sexual assault. My own fear, and sometimes I almost hesitate to articulate it for fear of articulation making it more true, is that we are suffering through a major backlash that relates to the further emancipation of women in our society today. The fear of women stepping out of the traditional roles of homemaker and mother and into the boardrooms, into the professions and even to a small extent into this Chamber, Madam Speaker, and into your chair, is creating a backlash of fear, anger and yes, even hatred among certain sectors in our society.

Because of this backlash of fear, anger and hatred, crimes of violence against women are on the increase. We certainly know they are on the increase. We are waiting for various people and various organizations such as the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women to give us some answer as to why they are on the increase.

When the old rape shield laws were thrown out by the Supreme Court based on the charter argument, it was absolutely crucial that the government step forward and give us something to replace them with. This legislation may not be perfect. My colleague, the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys, brought forward a number of amendments that I certainly supported. By and large,

this legislation deserves to be supported because it is a fairly substantial step in the right direction.

There are two major problems, the first one being the attitudinal problem. The second one is the need to convince women that they can get justice without too much fear in our law courts. Without legislation such as this, it makes it all the harder for those people working in the area against sexual assault to convince women of this.

As every one of us must know, those of us who are lawyers have seen it first hand, others have heard about it, read about it or witnessed it through family and friends, the events surrounding a trial, surrounding charges being laid on matters of sexual assault create a double victimization. Even if all of the victim's rights are protected, her privacy, her right not to have to disclose irrelevant background information, et cetera, even if these rights are respected, the mere fact of pressing the charge means that she has to relive the horror of the sexual assault. That is going to be a difficult endeavour for anyone. How much worse will it be if she does not feel that she is protected against having to be cross-examined on what is ostensibly irrelevant information.

It is crucial that the women of Canada understand exactly what this legislation will do. We know the statistics but they bear repeating. In 1990, 27,000 sexual assaults were reported to the police—27,000, Madam Speaker, and we know that over 60 per cent of sexual assaults are not reported. So when you see those figures, you see just how widespread a problem it is and how many people are affected.

This year it is estimated that one in four Canadian women will experience sexual assault, yet fewer than one in 10 will report it. Unless we make it known to Canadian women and back it up with legislation that they need not fear a double assault, an emotional assault in the law courts, then we will not see an improvement in these statistics.

The other thing that Bill C-49 will do is make all Canadians aware of sexual assault law. There is no question that in this area women practise denial, as do men. "It cannot happen to me" or "It cannot happen to my sister, my wife, my daughter. It can't, it can't, it can't". It can, Madam Speaker, we all know it can, and we know sadly that the streets are not safe for Canadian women. We know that. We know that Canadian women are not safe in their houses from assault. All of us know the horror of the case involving the 911 line in Calgary, when a woman called while a man was trying to break in through her back door and police protocol was such that they did not respond in time. We all felt the horror to some degree that the woman must have felt when she lived through that experience. Only an awareness of how widespread sexual assault is will lead to the proper protocols and the proper responses.

One of the most important things in Bill C-49 with regard to an attitude change is the message that no means no. Interestingly enough, this is the message that has received the most intense response.

If this subject were not so serious and so crucial to the well-being of not just Canadian women but Canadian society in general, I could almost say that I am faintly amused by the response. I have had men of my acquaintance say to me things—I mean, seriously, one man said to me: "Well, it's sure not going to make courtship much fun". My response was: "Gee, dates with you must have been really terrific".

I do not know what people who are afraid of the no means no statement in the law are really afraid of. The amendment brought forward by the government and supported by our side of the House that you remove all reasonable means to establish consent to reasonable means, is indeed a reasonable amendment. But I am not sure what the difficulty is in the minds of those people who still think that this is going to create a terrible tyranny on men in their social endeavours in this country.

It is true that a great deal of what passes between men and women in these relationships is tacit. But what women are saying is that too much has been taken for granted and taken tacitly for granted. When we have had in this country a woman who was deaf and mute, who kicked and screamed and fought back, and a judge still said that she had not been able to establish her lack of consent, I think that the women of this country have a right to stand up and say: "We want it explicit that no means no".

When we have had a judge of the Supreme Court of British Columbia call a three year old girl sexually aggressive—it is so difficult to encompass the thought it is almost hard to say the words—then women in this country, and men too, have a right to see a law that says no means no.

When we have had a judge in the Northwest Territories say that: "It does not matter as much if you assault native women because they are either drunk or asleep", then the time is long overdue for a law in this country that says no means no.

• (1650)

The time has come for all Canadians to understand that there is a responsibility in social relationships. Women are not playing games when they say no. Women are in the vast majority of cases not walking around on the earth to torment and bedevil men, although with the greatest of respect sometimes that might not be such a bad idea. Women have a right to say what they want and what they do not want, and if they happen to say it in a bar room or in a bedroom or on a beach, or in a public street, the location does not matter, the circumstances do not matter. What matters is that no means no.

Again and again we have heard from various groups that this is going to be impossible to establish. That is one of the stupidest things I have ever heard.

I said to a rather well-known lawyer in this country who made that statement at committee: "Which word did you not understand?" I think that phrase is something all of us should carry forward in arguing in support of the no means no section of this bill.

For too long the tacit belief that women when they say no mean yes has been accepted and has been laughed about and joked about. For too long there has been some sort of general belief among a certain segment of the male population and I want to make perfectly clear to all of my esteemed colleagues that I do not put all of them in that category. I put some of them in there but not all of them.

The response is such that women have a right to be taken seriously and what this law finally does is take the reactions and the responses of women seriously. It may be more difficult. It may make social interaction more complicated and complex, although I cannot imagine how that could possibly be the case, it is so complicated and complex right now.

Unquestionably it is what we must have. Unquestionably it is what we must put in the Criminal Code for the protection of women in this country.

It is a sign to the judges, to the police officers, to lawyers and to society in general that sexual assault is not a joke and it will not be tolerated. It is something we need to say to judges when we stand here in this Chamber and know that 40 per cent of Canadian judges have yet to avail themselves of the gender sensitivity training courses.

I have already listed in my remarks this afternoon the most outstanding shall we say, of horrifying comments by judges in the area of sexual assault. I know of another judge in this country who hears the majority of sexual assault cases in his particular jurisdiction and on the rare occasions when he convicts will give intermittent sentences or very light sentences, sentences that show he just does not take these offences seriously.

We have to make a change. This legislation is a step in making that change. While the government still refuses to institute mandatory training for federally appointed judges, then all the more reason to support legislation of this nature. We must have something that the women of this country can depend upon to protect them in the rising epidemic of sexual assault, and the rising epidemic of violence against women.

This is not an anti-men amendment. This is not going to change the actions of the vast majority of good, decent men who live their lives understanding that women have a perfect right to make their intentions known.

It is going to make a difference to that subspecies of humanity that does not seem to believe that women have a right to make a choice. When we lost the old amendments to the code after the Seaboyer and Gayme decision, it was absolutely crucial that the government step in with new amendments. Bill C-49 fulfils, to the best of its ability in this particular circumstance, the steps which must be taken for the proper admission of evidence.

I want to say a few words about the preamble to the bill. The preamble makes special mention of the prevalence of the crime against women and children. We know that this is absolutely so. We also support the naming of doubly disadvantaged groups: visible minorities; sex-trade workers; disabled persons; lesbians and those whose immigration status is questionable. Unfortunately the government did not accept that.

We are also aware that the preamble to the bill does not really have much of an influence on courts *per se* so we had wanted both of these changes to be moved to the body of the bill to give it more weight in a court of law.

The last time that we brought forward sexual assault amendments to the code we lost them after a number of years under the charter in the Supreme Court of Canada. There is no doubt in my mind, nor do I think there is doubt in anyone else's mind, that these amendments will also be the subject of a charter challenge.

We support this bill and we hope it will survive the charter challenge. If it does not then we will have to go back to the drawing board once again because this issue is perhaps the most crucial issue that women have to fight under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleagues from the committee and the Minister of Justice in this debate today on the third reading of Bill C–49.

First I want to say that I was pleased to be a member of the legislative committee. The committee worked very well and co–operatively in hearing the witnesses and extracting from them substantive arguments and some technical amendments. We put them forward and the committee process was one of consensus and co–operation. I am pleased that it was so. I am also pleased that we were able to agree on the amendments and bring them forward.

I am very proud to be part of a government that has made security of women in our society a priority. Our government recognizes that security of the person and the ability to live without fear are essential to women's achievement of equality. We have taken action to ensure that these fundamental rights for women are protected in Canada.

Bill C–49 is evidence of our government's and society's efforts to ensure the security of women who are victims of sexual assault.

Last August the Supreme Court of Canada struck down section 276 of the Criminal Code in the Seaboyer decision which governed the reception of evidence of a victim's sexual history during the course of a sexual assault trial. The Supreme Court of Canada held that section 276 overshot or overstepped the mark in protecting complainants. That decision evoked expressions of concern from many women and women's groups. If assailants could use the provisions of the charter of rights to strike down protections such as the rape shield provision, it would seem that the justice system was offering greater protection to the assailant than to the victim.

The government moved quickly to respond to these concerns. It was a narrow decision by the Supreme Court, but the perception was that women did not have very much protection and, in some cases, they did not. Therefore, we had to move very quickly.

The Minister of Justice undertook an immediate consultative process with women's groups, the bar, provincial and territorial governments and other legal experts to canvass as many views as possible on the direction that the new law should take.

I would emphasize that it was the consensus, and I would say society's consensus, that the new law had to take into account today's reality of violence against women. The Minister of Justice agreed.

• (1700)

Bill C–49, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding sexual assault, received first reading in the House of Commons on December 12, 1991. It is of landmark value in protecting the rights of women victims of sexual assault.

The bill provides for strict guidelines in determining the admissibility of past sexual history as evidence and outlines clearly the procedure which must be followed in admitting such evidence. According to the bill's provisions, evidence of the victim's sexual activity would not be admissible unless that evidence was specific, was relevant to the issue to be proved, and its probative value

was not substantially outweighed by the danger of prejudice to the proper administration of justice.

The bill also legally defines for the first time the concept of consent, a definition of consent to sexual activity, that is clear and unambiguous. Under the present law, a man accused of sexual assault can be acquitted if he can persuade a judge that he honestly believed the woman consented.

Under the legislation proposed by Bill C–49, the test of consent would be whether the woman's behaviour was sufficient to convince an objective third party that the woman had agreed to the man's sexual advances. Bill C–49 clearly states that submission does not signal consent nor does silence and that is very important. Under this bill, no clearly means no. This means a great deal to the women of Canada.

Also, for the first time in the history of Canadian common law, or one of the few times, the bill has a preamble. This was the subject of much discussion and debate.

When I found out that I would be sitting on the committee, I sent letters to constituents who had expressed an interest in issues affecting women. I sent them copies of the bill and some of the information about the bill and I asked them for their advice.

One woman, a professor at the University of Alberta, Professor Susan Jackel, wrote me a four-page letter in response. She is a professor of history and Canadian studies and also has offered advice to the government on constitutional matters. She is not a lawyer. I want to quote what she had to say on the preamble. I believe this to be very important.

> I cannot tell you how important it is to the women of Canada to see their own experience and understanding reflected in the wording of a law, not only in its technical sections, but in the general statement at the beginning about the values of Canadian society. To read that "the Parliament of Canada is gravely concerned about the incidence of sexual violence and abuse in Canadian society"; that Parliament is likewise cognizant of "how sexual assault and, more particularly, the fear of sexual assault affect the lives of the people of Canada"; and that "the Parliament of Canada wishes to encourage the reporting of incidents of sexual violence or abuse," in the interests of justice for all Canadians, is indeed a milestone.

She goes on to say:

> Much of my recent research on the history of women as citizens of Canada, and as activists in the reform of law, has uncovered a long, rather regrettable story of many intelligent women's sense of alienation from the laws that govern them. Women have seen the law as an oppressive, or at best insensitive, instrument when it comes to the daily reality of their lives.

This departure from the practice of common law, to put a preamble to a bill, is welcomed by women in society for these very reasons. It provides guidance to the courts. It interprets the daily lives and fears and the reality of violence against women for those who read the law. I believe that is very important.

The amendments of Bill C–49 are of crucial importance in protecting the rights of women who have been victims of sexual assault. These women should not have to be revictimized in the course of bringing the accused to justice. Bill C–49 sends a clear message that our society will not tolerate sexual assault or any other form of violence against women.

Once again, I want to quote from Professor Jackel's letter. It was four pages long and she puts it in much better words than I can. It is important to read what she has to say about sexual assault and put it on the record. She states:

> The fact of sexual assault is part of that oppression for a minority of women; the fear of such assault—and it is present in the vast majority of women, in many circumstances—is one of the major impediments to free, trusting relationships between men and women.

She goes on to say:

> As a professor and student advisor, I am especially aware of the limitations that women place upon themselves in pursuing their studies, out of justified caution about being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Women students make academic decisions—not to take an evening course, not to study in the library in the evenings, not to take a course that might end in their being labelled "feminist"—because of fear. Combating that fear, through the law and the administration of justice, is thus not only a security-of-the-person issue, but it is also an equality issue, as defined in sections 15 and 28 of the Charter.

She says further:

> Women who cannot take equal advantage of education and training opportunities out of fear are at a disadvantage relative to men. The law should act positively to ameliorate this disadvantage, without removing the safeguards that are needed for an over-all balanced approach to justice.

That is what this law does. It helps remove the fear women have about the law itself and about how they will be treated before the courts and within the judicial system. I believe that is important.

I want to thank Professor Jackel for her advice to me which I was able to bring forward to the committee.

The Prime Minister has said that one Canadian woman suffering violence at home or elsewhere is one too many. Therefore our government has made a priority in putting an end to violence against women.

Our government's goal is zero tolerance. Our commitment to that goal is evident in the federal family violence initiative announced in February 1991. It is providing $136 million over four years for programs in the area of health and social services, criminal justice, community action, housing and support services for aboriginal communities.

Women's security is a key focus of the family violence initiative. As children, as seniors and at all ages in between, women are the most frequent victims of family violence. Through the family violence initiative our government has pledged to work closely with its partners in society to eliminate family violence through activities such as the promotion of community–based projects, the creation of new emergency shelters for women and support for training for police and the judiciary in understanding the depth and breadth of family violence.

I would also note that an estimated one–quarter of the federal government's Canada Assistance Plan contributions to the provinces and territories is used to provide support to victims of family violence.

I would also like to point to our government's establishment last August of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women. This is the first comprehensive national examination of violence against women that has ever been undertaken in this country and indeed, the first of its kind in the world.

Co–chaired by Pat Freeman Marshall of Toronto and Marthe Asselin Vaillancourt of Jonquière, Quebec, the panel's members are representative of Canada's best knowledge, experience, sensitivity and leadership on this issue.

The panel has been mandated to examine the issue of violence against women through an interactive, responsive and grassroots dialogue. It has embarked upon an intensive schedule of consultations in large and small communities across Canada in an effort to reach all possible participants including victims of violence, front-line, social service, education and health care workers, and other community members.

• (1710)

The panel began its operations in September and has visited so far more than 130 communities in all of Canada's provinces and territories.

Early next month, the panel will issue an interim report which will provide an overview of its work done so far and what panel members have heard in the course of their public consultations, as well as preliminary proposals for eliminating violence against women. This will set the stage for the second round of the panel's public consultations which will begin again this summer.

We can expect the panel's final report in December. It will include recommendations and a concrete plan of action to help make Canadian society safer and more equitable for women.

In conclusion, our government considers the security of women in society to be of absolute paramount importance. I thank the many members of this House who have made a significant contribution through their support and through their personal efforts to the advancement of women's equality in society.

I want to quote once again from Professor Jackel as she sums up her letter to me providing advice on Bill C–49: "I know that you and your colleagues will listen carefully to all presenters at your committee hearings, but I hope that in the end your decision will be to recommend this bill to Parliament substantially unchanged. I believe it has been drafted with care and deserves to become law".

I believe that also. I call on members of the House to support us in making this bill law.

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint–Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, in most cases the women of Canada have benefited from the decisions of the Supreme Court. Our justices have, for example, upheld the laws that ban the production and importation of hard–core pornography. Unfortunately, this type of enlightened and progressive vision was abandoned when the high court struck down the provision of the Criminal Code known as rape shield.

The women of Canada were angered by the court's decision because they viewed this action as a direct assault on their security. The decision in effect would allow for continued victimization of women who have been sexually assaulted.

The decision gave defence attorneys the right to raise a woman's past sexual experiences and use them as relevant testimony in determining consent. The lack of a rape shield provision would result in brutal cross–examination of women by defence lawyers who are seeking to

discredit a victim's testimony based on negative stereotypes of women.

It is time for the cycle of victimization to end. No in every conceivable circumstance means no. Men must realize that sex is a matter for two mutually consenting adults. The old power games must be put to rest. The antiquated and unrealistic view of sexuality must be shelved. This is not a time for subtlety or for carefully selected words. Far too many children and women have fallen prey to this insidious violence against their bodies and their minds.

This is why I find myself in the unusual or awkward position of having to praise the government for its swift action. I share the Minister of Justice's concern when she says we must protect the rights of rape victims. This is why I am more than happy to support this law.

Bill C–49 is the first piece of legislation in history that is founded both on the experience and expertise of women. This is a bill that recognizes the reality of a rape trial and takes into account the constitutional rights of both the accused and the victim.

The most important element of this bill is that it says a complainant's sexual history is rarely relevant. By admitting such evidence, the court would be seriously compromising the woman's case as to consent.

It completely boggles my mind that because a woman consented to sex the previous week, the last hour, or if she had sex many times with different men, that somehow this previous consent applies to every subsequent sexual advance.

This bill was introduced in December of last year and will hopefully fill the gap left by the Supreme Court Seaboyer and Gayme case.

The preamble of this bill is essential in clearly expressing to the people of Canada this House's collective condemnation of sexual violence, not only against women but against children as well. This law is the first in the Criminal Code to have a preamble that explicitly says a victim's sexual past is rarely relevant.

I find it strange that some segments of society have ridiculed this legislation. I am certain that many members of this House have seen caricatures in the newspapers that portray lawyers sitting behind an amorous couple arranging the affidavits, making certain that consent is established.

Consent is the crux of sexual assault trials. If it has been established that consent has been given, the woman's claim of attack is rejected. It is imperative that the law be absolutely clear on this matter, as must the partners involved in the sexual activity.

The bill states that consent is the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question. There is no need for lawyers to be present. All you need are two people who understand each other's needs and open and frank communication.

Refusing to talk about sex can lead to very serious problems. By talking to our partners we establish clear guidelines as to what is acceptable and welcome behaviour and what is, for lack of any other description, a violent attack.

This act invalidates consent obtained under certain circumstances such as agreement through a third party or when a complainant is incapable of consenting to sex by reason of intoxication or any other conditions. This law will invalidate consent when the accused has abused their position of power or authority.

Finally, the law allows women to change their minds and refuse consent at any juncture.

These provisions recognize the reality of sexual assault. They tell us that the government recognizes that far too often women have been forced to engage in sexual activities by their bosses for fear of losing their jobs. They recognize that women and children are often in subordinate positions and are at high risk of being victimized. It also acknowledges and addresses the painful reality that often the perpetrators of sexual assault are friends, relatives, or co–workers of the victims.

Bill C–49 also recognizes that the incapacity to refuse consent by reasons of intoxication is by no means consent. Men can no longer use that defensive, mistaken belief concerning consent. This bill makes people responsible for their actions. Because an individual has had too much to drink and because of this irresponsible behaviour one believes that consent was obtained is hardly a reason to let him off the hook.

[*Translation*]

Bill C–49 will finally give women the tools they need to confront their assailants.

It is reported in 1992 that one woman in four, or 25 per cent of the female population, has been sexually assaulted, but less than one in 10 report it. Since the law seems to have been written for the accused rather than for the victim, only 5 per cent of those accused of sexual assault were convicted.

For too long, our society has accepted violence and assault against women as a man's right and a symbol of his superiority. I am glad that we are daring to abolish that myth today.

Nevertheless, I find it hard to take that in the late 20th century, we must have recourse to the law to ensure women's right to say no. We have a great deal to learn about communication and respect.

This legislation has been eagerly awaited for a long time. I must congratulate the Minister of Justice here for her efficiency. Although I do not always agree with what the government does, I cannot overlook this major step for the greater welfare of women in particular.

It is high time for our society to face the problem of violence. We must stop finding excuses and instead look at reality as it is. The reason this bill is before the House today is that our society is seriously sick and the only way we know to exercise control is through the law.

• (1720)

This is no fairy tale and we all have our work cut out for us to make this society human again.

The preamble of Bill C–49 is a guide so that lawyers and judges understand the importance of discretion regarding the sexual history of the complainant, who is usually a woman. It recognizes the unique character of this kind of offence, as well as its effects on the population. It reminds us how serious this offence is.

Historically, a woman's sexual history and reputation were considered relevant evidence, since it was accepted that loose morals were an indication of her consent.

With Bill C–49, regardless of a person's past, consent still means saying yes and no will always mean refusal of consent. Unfortunately, for far too many men, the law will remain an abstraction. Men must organize so that the problem comes out in the open. Their education must begin with their peers if we really want to work on stopping this violence. It must start today.

Some steps have been taken and the white ribbon campaign is an example. This must continue. Men of all ages assault women; men of all ages deny it; men of all ages do not want to admit that there is a problem, that they have had a problem. But still, all these men have had at least one woman in their life, their mother.

We are barely beginning to lift the veil on all the violence and assault in the military world. As soon as the veil is lifted, voices are raised to lower the veil again and deny what is going on. This happened just a few months ago. What are we afraid of? Do we always have to go to court to protect those who have been assaulted, always after the damage is done?

Despite what many people think, sexual assault is not only physical assault. The human being as a person is violated. It leaves a deep wound that can never be forgotten, even if it can be survived. It is the violation of someone's body. In too many cases, it is done on a bet or a dare, as an initiation rite or an act of wild misbehaviour. It is using someone else to satisfy a desire, nothing else, like merchandise that is discarded once it is no longer needed. That is what we do when we let ourselves go.

[*English*]

The bill was modified somewhat during the legislative committee process. Aside from a few minor technical changes, there are three major amendments. The preamble to the bill was changed to make special mention of the prevalence of sexual assault against women and children.

We supported this amendment. However, we hoped that it would mention certain doubly disadvantaged groups such as visible minority women, sex–trade workers, disabled persons, lesbians and those whose immigration status is questionable. Unfortunately this was not accepted by the government.

We also requested that the preamble be moved to the main body of the legislation so that the statement it makes would carry more weight in a court of law. Originally the legislation required that the accused take all reasonable steps to ascertain consent. The bill was amended by the government with the support of our party so that it now reads "take reasonable steps to ascertain consent".

It is imperative that the new legislation be able to meet any new charter challenge. We do not want to find ourselves in the same situation as we did after last fall's Supreme Court decision.

The final amendment put forward by the government allows for the publication of a judge's decision when the judge allows evidence of a complainant's prior sexual history to be used in the trial. This decision would allow for such publication on a case by case basis.

I hope this bill will give the women of this country security and confidence in the justice system. I hope it will remove the fear that women could be victimized a second time by a system that is insensitive to the nature of sexual assault.

[*Translation*]

Bill C–49 is a step in the right direction to start protecting victims of sexual assault. It is a first step, but it is up to all of us to work at rooting out the causes of sexual assault. The economy must pick up so that people work. Above all, men must be educated to respect their partner and look for help when they lose control. Women must be educated to protect themselves and use the few available resources to be able to recover.

Our society is very sick when people are only considered commodities. We must all work to restore every woman's pride in who she is. We must all get involved, if only by realizing that all our sexist behaviour, from the jokes we tell to what we do, makes it harder to learn mutual respect. That is one attitude to correct and the House of Commons is a good place to practise what we preach.

We cannot expect the law to solve all problems. Together we formulate rules for our society and together we must see that they are enforced. We each have a role to play in ensuring that our children enjoy a better quality of life than those who live on the street. Violence and sexual assault must no longer be the lot of women and children, and all of us, you and I, must see to it starting today.

[*English*]

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak again on Bill C–49, the new sexual assault law.

I am disappointed that most of the amendments I proposed did not pass. The amendments I put forward were those drafted by a large number of diverse women's organizations. Unfortunately some women's organizations have withdrawn their support of this bill because important amendments were not included.

One of these amendments is the naming of women who are most vulnerable to violence and who have the least access to our justice system. One of the amendments that did pass was the amendment that changed "all reasonable steps" to simply "reasonable steps".

I was alone on the committee in voting against that amendment because I believe that the provision "all reasonable steps" would have passed the charter challenge, as a number of legal experts across the country also believe that it would survive a charter challenge.

The committee which studied the sexual assault bill heard over and over again from prostitutes, disabled women, black women, aboriginal women and immigrant women that some women believe that the justice system does not serve them, that there is no point in reporting assault to the police or going to court because their race, ability and type of employment are held against them.

These women wanted their situation clearly spelled out in the bill to let doubly disadvantaged women know that this law is meant for them also and to let police, lawyers and judges know that their concerns are to be taken seriously.

In addition to being sexually assaulted, many women have further pain and humiliation in store when they try to access our justice system.

Many Canadians, including some members of this House, do not understand the depth of the pain and violation that is involved in sexual assault. They do not understand the effect sexual assault has on women. They think of it as sex that got out of hand rather than an act of violence which often leads women to suicide, to drug and alcohol use, to fear, hatred, disgust, nightmares,

severe eating disorders, debilitating insecurity and self-blame, anxiety attacks and problems in relationships.

One in five rape victims attempts suicide as opposed to one in 50 non-assaulted women. Sixty per cent of female clients receiving treatment for drug and alcohol abuse at a treatment centre were found to be victims of sexual assault.

Those are some of the long-term psychological effects.

Physical effects of sexual assault can include permanent physical disability, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, including AIDS, broken bones, bruises and death. Our society still expects women to take responsibility for sexual assault. It does not expect the victim of any other crime to take that responsibility. It does not expect people who have been injured by a drunk driver to have worn brighter clothing or driven a brightly coloured car. Everybody knows the responsibility lies with people not to drive drunk.

• (1730)

For the first time, sexual assault laws will be brought into line with the other laws of our nation. It is the responsibility of people not to commit sexual assaults. Some people think that if women did not go out at night that would reduce the risk of sexual assault. What about the hundreds of women who are assaulted on university campuses? This kind of logic says that maybe they should stop going to university.

What about women who are assaulted in their work places? Should they stop going to work? Should we stop walking on our streets? Should we not go to the grocery store, not visit our family and our friends? One woman was sexually assaulted while shovelling her own driveway in winter in broad daylight. Maybe women should stay at home.

However, the majority of sexual assaults occur in a private home. Women are actually safer on the streets than in their homes. So where do we go to be safe? The problem with changing women's behaviour to avoid sexual assault is that no matter what we do, no matter where we are, no matter what we look like, and no matter what we wear we are targets for sexual assaults. Some are targets even more than others because as a result of their race or because they are poor or a prostitute they are more vulnerable and less likely to be believed.

The problem is not women's behaviour. The problem is the behaviour and attitudes of the men who commit this crime. This should be the focus. We are going to stop sexual assaults by convicting the men who commit them and by changing attitudes so that our society no longer tolerates them.

Most women are sexually assaulted by men they know. Often the men are men they are supposed to trust and have faith in, such as their fathers, teachers, priests, doctors and friends.

A Canadian study of sex offenders reveals that their profile does not deviate from the average male. There is no one out there who has sex offender written on his forehead. The rehabilitation programs for sex offenders in prison are notoriously ineffective.

They concentrate on sex rather than on violence, power and negative attitudes toward women. Rape is a crime of power, a crime of anger and ignorance, not a crime of sex. It does not matter what a woman is wearing or not wearing. Nowhere in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms does it state that one's human rights, that one's right to security of the person is suspended because of an item of clothing.

Different cultures and different people within a culture have very different ideas about what constitutes too little clothing. Clothing does not say yes or no, only people can do that.

Sexual assault happens to women of all ages, from three months to well into their nineties. Studies show that women who are disabled are far more likely to be sexually assaulted than other women because they are more vulnerable and often less believed.

The portrayal of women in the media and in pornography reinforces beliefs about women asking for it. Fifty-six per cent of men in a study reported that pornography played a role in their offences. A study of video pornography found that 13 per cent of all the scenes involved sexual violation, including rape, sexual harassment, sado-masochism and sexual mutilation.

A national survey of Canadians' use of pornography showed that young men aged 12 to 17 are the primary consumers of pornography. Thirty-five per cent of these

young men expressed an interest in watching sexually violent scenes, including rape, torture and bondage.

The day our society says that it is not natural for boys to be interested in these things is the day that our society stops feeding our young men material that tells them it is fun to rape women and that women enjoy it. That will be another step forward in ending violence against women.

A number of respected studies have found a link between violent and dehumanizing pornography and the acceptance of rape myths, acceptance of violence against women, decrease in sensitivity to the suffering of rape victims and an increase in male willingness to rape.

I congratulate the Supreme Court of Canada on the Butler decision, in which it said once and for all that the problem of pornography was violence and dehumanization, not explicit sex.

As with sexual assault the issue is not sex but violence and degradation. Police officers, customs officers, lawyers and judges need education to examine these issues so that they will not assume that gay or lesbian erotica is necessarily obscene while the rape and torture of women and children is not.

Rarely do we see the pain of sexual assault reflected. Rarely do we see the real victims. Rarely do we see the racism and hatred that often accompanies sexual assault.

Aboriginal women and women of colour have been victims of racist attacks. There are no available statistics on this type of violence. Just over a year ago a white man was convicted of drugging, raping and videotaping 50 young native women aged 11 to 17. In Vancouver another white man targeted aboriginal women. He sexually assaulted nine women and forced them to continue to drink until they died.

I have often heard, in defence of a sexual assault law without strength or substance, that women lie about sexual assault. In fact, the opposite is true. A Winnipeg study showed that 87 per cent of sexual assault victims did not report the crime to the police. A further 12 per cent told no one at all. The reason is because it is humiliating, costly and emotionally debilitating for women to access the criminal justice system on this issue.

Forty-seven per cent of those who did not report it said they believed that the police would do nothing about it. They believed the police and courts had negative attitudes toward women and victims of sexual assault. Thirty-five per cent feared another assault by the attacker if they did report it and 64 per cent said that fear and shame kept them from reporting it.

When a woman reports sexual assault her private life is open to scrutiny as if it is anyone else's business, in a manner that no victim of any other crime is put on trial. She does not even get a lawyer to represent her. While the accused can access legal aid, she cannot. She merely has the status of a witness of a crime committed against her own body.

I have been told how police, Crown attorneys and judges can be insensitive to sexual assault victims, taking their cues from pornography, the media and misinformation rather than from compassion and reality.

An aboriginal woman from the Northwest Territories was forcibly taken from her home in Vancouver, handcuffed, confined in a space with a violent man and made to testify. Was she a criminal? No, she was the victim of a sexual assault. The man she was confined with was the man who had beaten and raped her. What other victim of a crime would be treated in this way?

The profound ignorance and insensitivity of too many police officers, lawyers and judges keeps women from reporting crimes and testifying. Many women also fear reprisals on the part of the rapist because there is no protection for them. Sometimes women just want to forget and get on with their lives rather than be tormented by the court process and wait for up to a year for the trial to come to court and be finished with.

It is finally time for that to end. This law is one legislative step. It must be accompanied by mandatory training for judges, lawyers and police officers on issues of violence against women and children, and on women's equality issues.

This law means very little when many women are afraid of the criminal justice process because they fear it will only revictimize them. Just because a woman has had sex with a partner before does not mean she has given her consent for ever and ever. No means no. It means no when the woman is a virgin; it means no when the woman is married; it means no when the woman has had several boyfriends; it means no if the woman is lesbian; it means no when she is disabled; it means no when she is a prostitute; it means no when she is homeless. There is never any excuse for sexually assaulting any woman or any child.

• (1740)

No means no and that is the end of it. It is clear and it is simple. We must train girls to know what their rights are and boys what their responsibilities are. Everyone—girls and women, boys and men—has the right to say no to sex. It is the responsibility of boys and men to take that no seriously.

There were amendments that I had hoped to see included in this bill, but unfortunately they were not. I still support the bill. It is a small legislative step toward that eventual goal of ending the unequal status of women and children in our society and creating a safe and open society for all of Canada's people.

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, I also rise to take part in this debate. I was a member of the legislative committee. I was not a member of any of the previous committees but on the legislative committee I had very mixed feelings toward the bill.

These mixed views that I hold on the bill come from many directions. As a woman I have to say that I understand the reasons for the purpose of this bill. I also have to say that I would have liked to have seen other elements brought into consideration along with this bill. There are other stronger considerations I would have liked to have seen, but I will deal with them later in my speech.

The purpose of this bill is to tell Canadians that Parliament will no longer tolerate violence against women, particularly sexual assault.

As a lawyer I have mixed views because many of the witnesses who appeared before us have said that the bill will be challenged. As a lawyer I have to understand on what basis it will be challenged.

It will probably be challenged on the basis that this bill makes no distinction between an intentional rape or sexual assault and an unintentional rape or sexual assault. I say rape and sexual assault because rape is no longer in the Criminal Code. It is incorporated under the terms of sexual assault. I will also deal with that if I have the opportunity later. I really think that rape should be a specific section within the Criminal Code. When we can prove rape we should be proving the most offensive violence against women. As a lawyer I find it very wrong that it is not specifically there in the code.

I would like to discuss something that Professor Stuart of Queen's University said to the committee, specifically as it relates to the particular area of concern that I have about the bill being challenged under section 7. This is in reference to something said by Chief Justice Lamer.

In one of his cases he stated that there must be a difference between an intentional and an unintentional crime. As a legislator it pains me to think that we could not have come up with a better bill that would not be challenged as soon as it became law.

In the preamble the reasons for the bill are set out. It is very good to set out a preamble, but if we are using a bill to tell Canadians and educate society that this bill means serious business it seems to me that a preamble will get lost in those many statutes passed here in Parliament and across Canada.

It should have been incorporated somewhere in the Criminal Code prior to this as a preamble specifically with a sunset clause to show that after a while we should review it to see if the purpose of the legislation had been followed through or not. Therefore I really do feel, as my colleagues have said, that preamble should have been specific not just in terms of violence against women and children but specifically against doubly disadvantaged women, those groups that came before us to present their case for having a preamble that would represent visible minority women, disabled women, sex trade workers and rape crisis centre clients. They were particularly insistent in naming women who were perceived to be doubly disadvantaged. We could go on to say there are other groups that would be classified as being doubly disadvantaged.

If the minister was using a preamble to educate or to tell the judiciary and the lawyers what was the purpose of the law, then I felt it should have gone further in an attempt to hit specifically and target the doubly disabled groups. It is not doing that. It is saying women and children. Unless the woman who comes in to make a complaint looks like the policeman's wife or daughter, sometimes it is very difficult for him to believe the person is really saying: "I am serious about the charge, about the sexual assault that has just happened".

I do not think it was strong enough, for that reason, in the preamble or in incorporating it somewhere in the Criminal Code in terms of a sunset clause or in terms of a clear direction to the courts and to the enforcement people.

The women and the groups that have worked hard on this matter should be disappointed because they did not obtain a preamble for which they had worked very hard with the minister. Society as a whole knows that violence against women exists. If they are allowing Parliament to pass this legislation, they want it to be the best possible to stop the violence right away.

By the same token, I have said that there were definitely two groups of witnesses. Most of the women's groups supported the bill but wanted to see a stronger preamble. The others, the lawyers and those involved in civil liberties—no one was opposed to the purposes of the bill—felt that it lacked integrity in the sense that it would be challenged.

Probably the most important point about the preamble is the direction it gives. If a preamble gets lost in the shuffle, it has very little effect except to remind people. No judge has to be bound by a preamble whether or not what Parliament hoped to achieve by this bill is actually being followed through.

Another thing I want to say is from a legal point of view. It is difficult to pass a bill when, before it is even passed, different groups say that it will be challenged before. This bill will be challenged. It will be challenged on the mistaken belief section because it limits a defence present in the law for other crimes, shall we say. In the case of murder, if one does not have the specific intent one can be charged with manslaughter because it was a general intent.

When we do away with the *mens rea* that is so much a part of the Criminal Code in Canada, that specific intent, then it will be challenged.

• (1750)

Professor Stuart, who I thought had a very interesting brief, said there should be something to the effect that we have a negligent sexual assault with a five-year maximum. He said: "Given the above concerns about fairness to the accused"—and I mentioned that earlier—"and possible constitutional problems, it is suggested that section 273.2 be replaced by a provision declaring that where an accused is charged with an offence under section 271, 272 or 273, where the accused has a belief in consent but did not take reasonable steps to ascertain whether the complainant was consenting, the accused is guilty of an offence punishable on indictment with a penalty of five years imprisonment". This would take into account the person who is intoxicated and who cannot form an intent. Yet he will be found guilty, as Professor Stuart said, of a negligent sexual assault.

We are leaving too much confusion for the courts. I think what will happen is that this will become a very costly bill. Women will find that they will present a case. It will be appealed and it will be thrown out. It will become discouraging.

I realize it is encouraging that it will be made easier for women to take the process into court because of the present law, but I think women will become discouraged very quickly because it is an imperfect law. As a legislator I feel that it should be a perfect bill. If we are going to do a strict liability, that if one is intoxicated is no defence and it is the same liability as someone who took the specific intent to commit a sexual assault on a woman, we are educating Canadians in a very tough way.

I have to admire the present advertising that is being done by the Government of Ontario in terms of telling the people of Ontario that when out on a date they could be committing a sexual assault unless there is consent. It follows through from that.

By the same token, there is no education. The minister has said that there is a panel to review violence against women. Yet in the news this weekend or this past week we heard that the people on the panel were upset. The National Action Committee has said that the panel is not representing the purposes for which it was set up and has questions on that.

There is no more Court Challenges Program. Women cannot challenge decisions or find money to challenge decisions. I see a bill that should have been better perfected to enable a clear direction. Maybe there should be a panel that reviews a judge's decision that has been so clearly offensive to society in terms of a judge, as he reviews a woman before his court, saying there was no crime.

I just feel that we are passing a bill for which the purpose is very relevant, very much a part of our society, and very much a part that is not only distasteful but hateful and against women. Yet we are not talking about education in the schools, education in the universities, or education of the general population, those in law enforcement or our judicial process.

We are passing something that again leaves women exposed. We did not even put in a preamble as groups of women that came before our committee wanted. We made a few changes, mostly as a result of the Canadian Bar Association. They will perhaps improve the bill but they will not stop the challenges.

I have said already in the House tonight that I think a bill people say will be challenged before is perhaps, as some women say, better than no bill, but I find it a bit of a disservice. I find it will allow lawyers to take more challenges to court in an already heavily overworked court system in terms of the charter.

If we wanted better justice in this bill, we would have clearly stated that it was a liability, that if one was drunk one was liable on a sexual assault. We should have noted the difference, that if one is drunk and has a specific intent to go out and rape a person or sexually assault a person tonight then there is a difference. That should be noted. The crime is the crime but for the person who is intoxicated, if found guilty of the assault, the punishment is the same.

Another area I found wanting is when it comes down to the determination of allowing the *voir dire*, under what grounds we will allow the admissibility of past sexual history. Again I think it will be challenged unfortunately because it could go to the very basis of the truth of the matter, the full answer, and the defence.

I just think we could have passed a better bill, a stronger bill with a preamble. We could have passed a bill that would have precluded any arguments on the defence, but we would have excluded the consent based on the argument that there is no defence based on belief of consent or doing away with somebody's basic right of mistaken belief.

We could have said it clearer in this bill and we would have been telling Canadians that no means no, that there is a no means no law. At the same time we would have been telling the courts, the legal system, that there are no loopholes and that it will not be challenged the day after or the first time a charge is laid in court by a complainant. There will be a negative to what should be a good bill. This has been my concern from the beginning about this bill both as a woman who knows what is happening out there and as a lawyer who has heard in committee that it will be challenged and knows full well why it will be challenged. As a legislators I think we could have done better on a bill we all agree on so that it would not be challenged the day after it is passed.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, it is about two or three minutes to six o'clock. Might we call it six o'clock so the bells might begin?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for me to call it six o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It being six o'clock p.m., pursuant to the Standing Order 45(6) the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions on the motions at report stage of 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.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Friday, June 12, consideration 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, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The first vote is on Motion No. 2, standing in the name of Mr. Robinson.

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

(*Division No. 191*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Angus
Arseneault	Barrett
Bellemare	Bevilacqua
Black	Blaikie
Brewin	Butland
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
de Jong	Dingwall
Ferguson	Finestone
Flis	Foster
Funk	Gaffney

Gagliano
Gauthier
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)
Gardiner
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—62

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Kindy
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—111
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2 lost. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 17, 36 and 72 lost.

Mr. Gagliano: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I think that you will find unanimous consent to apply the result of the previous vote to Motions Nos. 5, 6, 6B, 9, 9A, 10, 11, 16, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 51, 52, 53, 55, 73, 76A, 80, 83 and 84A.

On the motion for concurrence at report stage, we could apply the vote in reverse.

[*English*]

Miss Grey: Madam Speaker, I would like to have my vote recorded in reverse. I would like to vote yea on all the remaining motions and then reversed again, nay, at concurrence stage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I would like to vote with my colleagues in the Liberal caucus on all remaining clauses and of course on the motion for concurrence at the end. Unfortunately, I was not here for the first vote.

[*English*]

Mr. Nystrom: Madam Speaker, I was not able to be here for the first vote but I would like to have my name recorded as voting with my party for the remaining motions.

Mr. Nowlan: Madam Speaker, with respect, I think it might help if we had one more vote. I am in the same position as my colleagues. I voted one way on this motion and I intend to vote for the rest of the amendments.

After all the other members stand up and speak one more vote would take care of it. But anyway—

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am quite prepared either way or to take some votes all over again. I think it would be wise to listen to those who want to change some votes. It might be possible, with the co-operation of our clerks, to save a lot of time.

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, I missed the first vote. I would just like my vote to be recorded with the government for the subsequent votes.

Mr. Lapierre: Madam Speaker, I was delayed for a few minutes and it kept me from voting for the first series of amendments. I was in favour of the first motion and I agree with the proposal made by the Official Opposition Whip.

Mr. Kindy: Madam Speaker, I would like to vote with the Official Opposition.

Mr. Bélair: Madam Speaker, I too was away for the first vote, unfortunately. I would like to follow my party, as recommended by the Whip.

• (1830)

[*English*]

Mr. Redway: Madam Speaker, I wish my vote on Motion No. 5 to be recorded as a yes vote. On all of the other motions I wish to have my vote recorded with my party.

[*Translation*]

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would like to point out to the House that the results of the previous vote will also apply to Motions Nos. 29, 54 and 56.

The next question is on Motion No. 5, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 192*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Redway
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—70

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee
Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—108

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 5 lost. I declare Motions Nos. 20 and 39 lost as well.

The next question is on Motion No. 6, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 193*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek

Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 6 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 6B, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 194*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo

Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion 6B lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 9, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 195*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm

Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 9 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 9A, standing in the name of Mr. Gauthier.

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

(Division No. 196)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy

Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 9A lost. This means Motion No. 58B is lost as well.

The next question is on Motion, No. 10, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 197)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek

Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 10 lost. This means Motions Nos. 32 and 59 are lost as well.

The next question is on Motion No. 11, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 198)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)

Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 11 lost. This means Motions Nos. 13, 14, 15, 33, 34, 60, 62, 64 and 65 are lost as well.

The next question is on Motion No. 16, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 199*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole

Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 16 lost. This means Motions Nos. 35 and 66 are lost as well.

The next question is on Motion No. 21, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 200)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre

Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson

Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 21 lost. This means that Motions Nos. 22, 23, 24, 40, 41, 43, 44 and 45 are lost as well.

The next question is on Motion, No. 25 standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 201)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer

Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 25 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 26, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 202)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall

Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens

Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED—MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 26 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 27, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 203*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)

Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 27 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 28, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 204)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone

Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault

Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Thompson
Tremblay (Québec–Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 28 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 29, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 205)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)

Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint–Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy–Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec–Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 29 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 51, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 206)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone

Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault

Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 51 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 52, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 207)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)

Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 52 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 53, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 208*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone

Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault

Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 53 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 54, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 209)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)

Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 54 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 55, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(Division No. 210)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone

Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 55 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 56, standing in the name of Mr. Arseneault.

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

(*Division No. 211*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)

Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 56 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 73, standing in the name of Mr. Parker.

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

(Division No. 212)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone

Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault

Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 73 lost. This means that Motion No. 75 is lost as well.

The next question is on Motion No. 76A, standing in the name of Mr. Brewin.

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

(*Division No. 213*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey

Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 76A lost. This means Motion No. 82A is lost as well.

The next question is on Motion No. 80, standing in the name of Mr. Parker.

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

(*Division No. 214*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone

Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault

Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 80 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 83, standing in the name of Mr. Parker.

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

(*Division No. 215*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)

Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 83 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 84A, standing in the name of Mr. Brewin.

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

(*Division No. 216*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone

Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault

Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 84A lost.

Hon. Marcel Masse (for the President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)) moved that the bill be concurred in at the report stage.

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

(Division No. 217)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bosley
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbett
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Dorin
Edwards
Feltham
Friesen
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Horning
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Langlois
Littlechild
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Saint-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bjornson
Blais
Boyer
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Cole
Corbeil
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Hudon
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Larrivée
Lopez
MacKay
Masse
McCreath
McLean
Monteith
Oberle
Paproski
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)

Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vincent
Winegard—109

Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van De Walle
Vien
Wilbee

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Brewin
Callbeck
de Jong
Ferguson
Flis
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
McCurdy
Milliken
Nowlan
Parker
Proud
Riis
Rodriguez
Stewart
Taylor
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—69

Angus
Barrett
Bellemare
Black
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Dingwall
Finestone
Foster
Gaffney
Gardiner
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Keyes
Kindy
Lapierre
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Marleau
Mifflin
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Rideout
Robinson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stupich
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Acadie—Bathurst)

PAIRED MEMBERS

nil/aucun

Madam Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre) that Bill C-49, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, as a former Crown attorney who has prosecuted a number of rape cases before both judges and juries, I would like to speak in favour of Bill C–49.

In doing so, I would like to pay tribute to speakers on all sides of the House, many of whom spoke this afternoon. It seems to me that it was the House at its best. Members were speaking from both their heads and their hearts. Members on all sides of the House were doing that and I would like to pay tribute to what many of them said this afternoon.

I have a couple of comments by way of introduction of the probably thousands of cases that I have taken part in either as a Crown or defence lawyer, including a number of murder cases.

The one that troubled me the most was a rape case. Found by a passing motorist, the victim was running partly naked down a gravel road, I believe it was in November, in a snowstorm. The two accused, however, were acquitted by a jury. I do not blame either the jury or the judge but rather the tactics of the defence counsel in that particular case.

A second case involved a former constituent whose apartment was broken into by a total stranger. Afterward she worried greatly, and understandably, that she might contract AIDS. She was told when she asked if her attacker might be given a blood examination that it would constitute assault and could not be done. She worried for weeks, or possibly months, and finally the assailant, to his credit, did allow a blood test for HIV.

Third, I think of the serial rapist in Edmonton who attacked 138 women. He eventually pleaded guilty to most of those charges and was sentenced to a period of time in the penitentiary.

Recently I happened to be at a social event and I met, if you can imagine the coincidence, two of his former victims. One of them is still taking physiotherapy. The assault took place in the seventies, I believe. The other has been severely traumatized by this rape.

In that context I would like to say a few things about the subject generally. Many other speakers have spoken about the particulars of the matter and I do not think I need to go into those details.

Violence against women takes place in our homes, in our work places, in our streets. Increasingly it affects women of all ages, races, cultures and economic status. It takes many forms, from the physical such as rape, battering and dating violence, to the ideological such as misogyny and pornography, to the institutional such as wage gaps and equal career opportunities.

Family violence and violence against women in society, although occurring throughout history, have become social issues unfortunately only in recent years. The current statistics, as we have heard this afternoon, underline the scourge of violence against women across Canada.

Three women are killed every week by an intimate male partner. In the last decade half of the 2,517 women murdered were killed by men with whom they were intimate. A sexual assault is evidently now committed every 17 minutes and 90 per cent of the victims are women. One in four women will be sexually assaulted at home some time during their lives, half before the age of 17. About 56 per cent of women who live in Canadian cities fear for their safety at night.

A Decima research poll found in 1986 that one in five men admitted to having been physically violent to their wives or partners. Four years later in 1990 Decima asked women across the country what they were most afraid of. The responses, in order, were violence inside the home, poverty and violence outside the home.

Last year brought increased awareness of the continuing violence against women and more media focused, thank goodness, on the issue.

Two years after the Montreal massacre of 14 women by Marc Lepine, December 6 was designated by federal legislation as National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Finally, not so long ago the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously held that pornography is not victimless. New legislation replacing the so–called rape shield law, the bill we are discussing today, was introduced to protect the rights of women in sexual assault cases. The panel on violence against women has been established to travel across the country and seek consensus on action to end violence against women wherever it takes place.

Gun control legislation has now been passed, making it marginally more difficult to obtain weapons. Police and social services are trying harder to co-ordinate their work to assist victims of violence.

All this effort, although important and long overdue, does not address the root of the problem, for it deals only with symptoms. Effective prevention is needed to change the prevailing attitudes and stereotypes in society that lead to such widespread abuse.

• (1840)

More vigorous and smarter education aimed at 15 to 25-year old minds would help in reducing violence against women and eliminating sexism and socially imposed gender limitations from class-room practices and curriculum material. Family violence should also be part of family life classes during which techniques of peaceful conflict resolution could be taught.

In the spring of 1990, the Canadian Teachers' Federation sponsored a project entitled "Young and Female: The Realities, Concerns, Expectations and Barriers Experienced by Adolescent Women in Canada".

Approximately 1,000 adolescent girls, aged 11 to 19, and their teachers were invited to talk about the experience of being young and female in the 1990s, a period of gender role upheaval. The results reported reflect concerns, opinions and the fear of respondents and provide a startling picture of what it is like to be a teen-age girl in Canada today.

More than half of the participants expressed concerns about issues relating to violence, including child abuse, 68 per cent, and sexual abuse, 65 per cent. Dating violence and wife battering were among the top 20 issues mentioned.

I would like to say a few words about television violence because I am one of those who believe that there is a definite link, perhaps not provable at the moment, between violence on television and violence against women.

A report published in February this year by the American Psychological Association says that the average child in the United States has seen 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence on television by the time they leave elementary school. The programs were found to devalue and stereotype social groups, including Afro-Americans and women, by either excluding them from shows or giving them negative roles.

The report, based on a five-year study of nine psychologists, showed that the violence on television influences viewers, particularly children and teenagers, to use violence to resolve conflicts and makes sexual violence and rape more acceptable. Canadian statistics, though not readily available, would probably mirror such findings.

Consolidated efforts by parents, educators and policy makers should aim at stemming the avalanche of violent images broadcast into our homes as well as limiting the time young people watch TV through alternative, more active entertainment.

The extent of dating violence is difficult to estimate because it is rarely reported to police. Date rape has the lowest report rate of all forms of rape. It is estimated that only 1 per cent of such crimes are reported.

The *Ms.* campus project on sexual assault, an extensive study on patterns of sexual aggression on college campuses, revealed that one quarter of women in American colleges today have been victims of rape or attempted rape.

Almost 90 per cent of them knew the assailant. A study on dating violence conducted by the Richmond Women's Resource Centre Association last year revealed the extent of the problem in B.C.'s lower mainland, which only recently became more known to the general public.

The authors, while outlining preventative measures, stressed that social services simply lack the resources to deal effectively with violence against women or date rape. Existing prevention and educational programs were found to be inadequate. In short, there simply still is not enough awareness and sensitivity to the issue of date rape to result in a closely co-ordinated and effective response to the victims and those perpetuating such violence. All of us must do our best personally to change the *status quo* here with all deliberate speed.

Many universities have attempted to face the issue of violence against their female students. Sexual harassment policies are being redrafted, workshops on gender issues, date rape, sexism and racism are held, and codes of discipline for social behaviour are being considered.

The most important change which would have the greatest impact on eradicating violent attitudes toward women has to come from within. As I speak, I refer to men in this House and elsewhere who have not yet fully accepted women as equal partners in all walks of life. They must critically examine their own latent prejudices, sexism and outdated attitudes.

The problem of violence is not a women's issue; it is a societal issue in general and a men's issue in particular. We cannot legislate attitudes but we can work together to get them changed. It would be in the best interests of all Canadians.

Canadians finally appear to have become convinced that pornography is simply hate literature against women, children and the family. The perennial question our legislatures ignore, however, is: Does pornography defined as the visual representation of sexual behaviour that includes a degrading portrayal of a human being result in increased violence to women and children?

One recent book by two Canadian authors, W. J. Marshall and Sylvia Barret, *Criminal Neglect*, presents a disturbing account of how our criminal justice system ignores the devastating effects of sexual assault and outlines how most offenders go free.

The authors, among other equally disturbing evidence, cite the case of Ted Bundy, perhaps one of the most notorious serial killers. He admitted that his repeated exposure to violence, particularly sexual violence in various media, triggered his sexual fantasies and dreams and eroded his inhibitions from acting them out. By his own admission, Bundy's taste for violent and graphic pornography started at the age of 12 when he first discovered the type of soft pornography commonly sold in corner grocery stores.

It is also known that our own country's worst serial killer, Clifford Olson, carried a brief-case full of pornography on his trips around British Columbia during which he murdered 11 children over a period of nine months.

Pornography is now estimated as a $10 billion a year industry on this continent and is one graphic expression of anti-women, anti-child sentiments rampant in our society. Advertising is as guilty of conveying this message of pornography by using sexually explicit images of half-naked women selling particular types of cars, brands of beer or after-shave. Movies and songs often portray men in positions of power and authority and women in submissive, often negative stereotype roles.

Personally, I do not believe the increasing availability of hard-core pornography reflects contemporary values or attitudes in our country. *Au contraire*, there has been a strong public demand for the elimination of violent and kiddy porn from our society. People who purvey this type of smut cannot expect to find protection under the charter of rights as we found recently from the Supreme Court of Canada.

I believe that legislation prohibiting or restricting pornography would fall squarely within the provisions of article 1 of the charter, "subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society".

There is no doubt that the ultimate effect of revised legislation on pornography would be more controls on material that is widely available in Canada today. The point must be made that most pornography is dehumanizing and serves to perpetuate unacceptable myths about women in our society. It is simply hate literature against both sexes. These stereotypes are also consistent with the attainment of full equality for Canadian women which is required by both common sense and section 15 of the charter of rights.

This fact, combined with strong indications that women and children are the victims of pornography, make smut something to be restricted in any civilized society. This is an area where we, of course, need as much consensus as possible.

By way of conclusion, I wish to make a few specific comments on Bill C-49. There are certainly things about the bill which are less than perfect. As my colleague the member for Cape Breton mentioned, there are certainly things we could have done better in the bill.

In fairness, it does provide for strict guidelines in determining the admissibility of past sexual history as evidence. It does outline clearly the procedure that must be followed in admitting such evidence and it does define the notion of consent to sexual activity.

The Minister of Justice intends that the preamble to the bill will be used for guidance by trial judges and lawyers alike. I would point out, however, that to my knowledge the preamble to a bill is not a direction that courts can or should follow. My understanding of preambles to bills is that they are simply so many words put together which any court or any judge across the land essentially would ignore. The minister may be overly sanguine in thinking it is going to act as a guide to judges and lawyers alike.

• (1850)

All members in this House hope the fact that an accused has to make a written application to the court for a hearing to determine the admissibility of sexual conduct evidence will help. The prosecutor and the court clerk would then have seven days to review the submission before any hearing to determine admissibility. Such evidence would have to be of specific instances of sexual activity, be relevant to an issue to be proved at trial and have significant probative value not "substantially outweighed by the danger of prejudice against the complainant". There would, of course, be a publication ban on all evidence obtained in such a submission.

There are matters that the court should consider in determining whether to admit such evidence. The Supreme Court of Canada will presumably have to decide whether this is valid under the charter of rights.

The boldest feature of the bill is its attempt to define consent. It defines it in the bill as "the voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in sexual activity but also removes or limits the defence of honest but mistaken belief in consent". It also, thank goodness, invalidates consent obtained in a number of circumstances which I will not go into. It removes the defence of mistaken belief in consent where the belief was based on the accused's self-induced intoxication or recklessness or wilful blindness. It also adds "all reasonable steps" must be taken by the accused to ascertain consent. It places an evidentiary burden upon the accused using the defence of mistaken belief and consent.

I think it is clear, it seems to be clear, to everybody in the House that we do need a new law against sexual assault which will deal with the reality of the crime, in some cases lifelong devastation on victims who find themselves victims of this type of horrific crime. I think that it will be no surprise to other members—and my time is up too, or virtually up—that we will be voting for this bill and hoping that the courts, defence counsel and Crown counsel across the country and above all the victims of these crimes will be significantly better off with its passage.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on this particular bill as I did during second reading and to reiterate what has been said by other of my colleagues that we on this side are supportive of the bill, supportive of its direction and will support the bill when it is voted upon. That is not to say that there are not some concerns, some worries, but as to the general direction and what was trying to be accomplished with the legislative process, we are supportive. Everyone knows that the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the law and there is some question mark as to whether this bill will follow the same fate. It is possible that this legislation is not charter-proof.

When we read the statistics and hear the information as to the number of unreported rapes that occur and the number of rapes that occur and get a sense of the magnitude of the problem, I think we have to go that extra mile to try to come forward with legislation which encourages women to report rapes and encourages the process of reporting and dealing with this particular problem because it is a major problem.

As some have mentioned earlier, I had the privilege of being on the committee that looked at Bill C-36. We met the victims of the Takahashi rape case and realized that perhaps over 150 women were raped and only six to nine were considered for charges. The lesser number were charged. We heard about the trauma that those women went through. Some came forward and reported the rapes and some could not face that reality. We have to put in place a system which makes women feel comfortable in dealing with that particular problem. We have to come up with the necessary support mechanisms to assist the victims. Some of the information that came forward was really quite horrendous as to victimizing the victims throughout the whole process rather than rendering that kind of assistance.

In my opinion, one of the victimizations would be the introduction on a wholesale basis of a person's previous sexual conduct which, in all candour, has nothing to do with the particular case or 99.44 per cent of the time has nothing to do with the particular case before the bar. Therefore, in that sense, it is incumbent upon us to come forward with some legislation to deal with that.

When you look at the history of this whole area of the law, it goes back to the concept that a woman's sexual history and reputation were considered relevant in a rape or an indecent assault trial since the lack of chastity of a female complainant was accepted as indicating her propensity both to agree to sexual activity and to lie about the fact afterward. That was the whole idea of introducing all of this evidence on previous conduct. We all know that is not really relevant in today's society, nor is it relevant to deal with the events of whether or not an offence in fact has occurred.

As I indicated earlier, one of the key points is to find the mechanism that will allow women to feel free to report the situation and come forward, and not feel that they are the ones who are going to be charged and on trial during the process. We have to change that system so they do not feel they are the victims and the ones who are on trial.

We are supportive of the legislation, but we have some concerns. I just want to read a few things into the record just to give you an idea. I think the Liberal Party has talked about changes to the preamble and, in particular, the first whereas clause. I will read this clause into the record first and then some of the comments of groups who appeared before the committee and had some comments about it.

I will quote the first clause: "Whereas the Parliament of Canada is gravely concerned about the incidence of sexual violence and abuse in Canadian society and in particular the prevalence of sexual assault against women and children". That is in the preamble and we are supportive of that, but we feel that it should be expanded because there are some specially disadvantaged women and children who require that special notice.

I would like to read from a number of those groups just to give an idea of their thoughts and to have them on record with respect to this legislation. I will deal first with the Disabled Women's Network of Canada which stated: "On the preamble, because women with disabilities belong to every other group and because we are the most vulnerable in each case, it is imperative that we be identified and named in the preamble of Bill C–49. The naming of women and children with disabilities in the preamble will not only advise any would–be perpetrators that women with disabilities are protected by this law, it will also let women and children with disabilities know that they are protected and that sexual offences against us are punishable. Mentioning women with disabilities in the preamble makes us visible. It makes us know that we are part of this new bill. It also lets police and judges know. They have not always been sensitive to the fact that we are as worthy of that protection as other women".

Another national organization dealing with immigrants and visible minority women in Canada states: "Immigrants, refugees, domestic workers and women of colour experience racism as well as sexism in every aspect of their lives in Canada, and that includes our dealing with the justice system. We must neither assume that there are no differences nor must we stereotype the differences. The point is to recognize and respect the differences. When you talk about people you have to make it so tight for us that we can then fight our own battles. We do not want you to do all our work, but you have to arm us with the tools so we can say to the police that Parliament says we are a vulnerable group".

Look at native women. All you have to do is look at the statistics dealing with native women and you realize the problem that is there and why that perhaps should have been included in the preamble of this bill. I will quote from the Native Women's Association of Canada: "It has been estimated that eight out of 10 aboriginal women will be beaten or sexually assaulted in their lifetimes. While fear of assault may be a real part of the lives of most Canadian women, being assaulted is too often just a daily reality for aboriginal women".

I also have a statement from the National Association of Women and the Law which states: "We note that the bill says there be no publication. We are concerned with that because we believe there is a clear directive that our judicial system must be accountable for the decisions that are made. If there is a publication ban on the reasons in the *voir dire*, clearly there is no judicial accountability".

• (1900)

Women are playing a very strong role in wanting the system to be accountable to them. Women and children from different groups, the disabled, minority groups and native groups, want to feel they are getting protection from the system. As we go through the process that I have gone through, sitting on a number of committees that deal with justice bills, we are left with the impression that all of the protections for those disadvantaged groups are not available.

Turning to the minister's decision to take out "all reasonable steps" and substituting "to take reasonable steps" in the legislation, we think that it has achieved the desired goal and we hope that the change will help the bill to withstand a charter challenge. We want this legislation to survive. We want it to function and function properly. We are hopeful that this change will achieve that goal.

In essence, we on this side have made our contribution to try to make the law better. The government has not seen the wisdom of some of the amendments that we have brought forward but at the same time that does not stop us from trying to lead this government to the right conclusions and in the right direction, even though it is sometimes stubborn.

This bill will go a long way to help solve the problem. It will not solve the problem of rape. It will not solve the problem of abuse against women and against children. It will take one small step in that particular area. It will take that one step of protecting women so that they do not become victims of the process. We still have to face those other fundamental issues and get to those fundamental root problems, but at least we are remedying part of the problem in the area of process.

We on this side are supportive of Bill C–49 and will be there to vote for it when the time comes. Thank you for the opportunity to address this bill, Mr. Speaker.

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.

Government Orders

DIVORCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that Bill C–79, an act to amend the Divorce Act and the Family Order and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present to you today for second reading a bill which contains a series of amendments to the Divorce Act and the Family Order and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act. The bill is intended to improve the operation of both those statutes and in some cases avoid serious problems of application.

In the summer of 1991 the Minister of Justice announced a comprehensive review of family law which should, over the next few years, lead to reforms in the crucial areas of child support, spousal support and custody and access. The bill before us today constitutes the first phase.

Phase two of the initiative includes public consultations on child support, spousal support, and custody and access in co–operation with the federal–provincial–territorial family law committee.

I am certain the family law initiative will convey two significant benefits. It will ensure our legislation is up to date and in keeping with the realities of today's families. In addition, the reforms in the areas of family support and federal support enforcement will enable some single parent families to live independent of public assistance, thus making more effective use of public resources.

In June 1986 a substantially revised Divorce Act took effect. Changes in terminology and substance were introduced to almost every section of the former divorce legislation. In addition, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act was passed the same year. This new act enabled the federal government for the first time to assist the provinces in the enforcement of child and spousal support orders.

Part I of the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act provides for the release of information to locate persons who defaulted on these orders or missing family members, while Part II regulates the garnishment of various federal moneys such as income tax refunds payable to the support debtor.

The justice department has carefully monitored the implementation of this legislation and consulted with the various groups affected by it.

Through the process of consultations, proposals were developed to address the problems of application with respect to each act. These are the proposals that are now found in Bill C–79.

I will first deal with the amendments to the Divorce Act which propose to reform the jurisdictional rules regarding corollary relief proceedings after divorce and interprovincial variation proceedings. This bill would provide greater flexibility in choosing the proper jurisdiction.

A second problem of application relates to the provincial order section. A provisional order is the result of a two–step procedure to vary a support order where the parties do not reside in the same province.

Bill C–79 clarifies that the two–step provisional variation proceedings be used where spouses reside in different provinces and the proceedings must proceed in the absence of the applicant or respondent party, as the case may be, if the parties cannot agree on the jurisdiction. This amendment then carries out the intent of the 1986 Divorce Act.

The bill also introduces a provision which would offer an alternative to provisional variation proceedings. This new section would highlight the use of affidavits, teleconferencing, or other means of telecommunication in variation proceedings where the parties agree and where territorial and provincial court rules allow.

The bill also addresses the problem of application relating to the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act. This act mandates two services to Canadian citizens. The first is a tracing service designed to access federal data banks to obtain information which will help trace individuals in contravention of a custody access or support order agreement. The second service is provided by a unit which garnishes designated federal payments payable to support debtors.

The amendments to the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act would facilitate police officers' access to the federal tracing service.

As well, the bill proposes to make all tracing searches ongoing for a period of one year rather than there being only one search as at the present time. Among the amendments affecting garnishment it is proposed that a garnishee summons bind Her Majesty for five years as opposed to the current one–year binding period. We expect that a five–year summons will save both the enforcement service and provincial services time and expense.

Pursuant to section 58 of the act, a fee may be charged for each garnishee summons served. The bill will provide for a regulatory power for collecting the fee so that it may be collected in a manner which is more bearable to the debtor. For example, the fee could be collected in yearly instalments rather than in one lump sum.

• (1910)

Other proposals in the bill before us include clarification on the operation of the notice of garnishment. A new provision would enable the establishment by way of regulations of federal levels of hold back. A hold back is that portion of a payment not subject to garnishment and is usually applied to the sum needed by a debtor for subsistence.

These levels of hold back would replace the current plethora of provincial hold back levels which have the effect of subjecting recipients of federal funds to different hold back conditions, depending upon their province of residence. The hold backs will simplify administration and ensure a quality of treatment of all creditors and debtors.

It is the government's intention to introduce a hold back level of 50 per cent for the following funds: unemployment insurance payments; Canada Pension Plan payments; federal training allowances and old age security payments.

In conclusion, I believe that Bill C–79 can accomplish the following two objectives in answer to the previously noted problems of application concerning the Divorce

Act and Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act.

First, it would make both acts more responsive to the needs of today's divorced and separated families, and second, it would streamline the tracing and garnishment systems to make them more accessible and more efficient.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–79 goes somewhat toward making the situation in this country a little less of a national disgrace.

It is the problem of child support, of spousal support. I do not think it is possible to relate to this House the misery and the deprivation that single parents, divorced women with children, are going through because the system is not working for them. I think we should be going farther than we are going in this bill to address this situation.

As I mentioned, there are some good points in this bill and this does help the process. It is mainly a technical bill, but it does make some improvements. It was written in consultation with the provinces, the territories and the Canadian Bar Association and it is part of phase one of the minister's family law reform initiative.

The other part is a feasibility study for a national family law data base. We have a lot of data on this question already. We have the data that support payments are well below what they should be. A lot of them are not enforced at all, and I will give more information on this later. The system is not working for people in this country. While it is nice to have feasibility studies, the information that we need is already known to the government.

Bill C–79 will amend the Divorce Act and the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act. Its goal is to improve the effectiveness of the support payments system. That in itself is very laudatory. It will also improve the tracing and garnishment systems for support payments, as the hon. parliamentary secretary has stated.

The major change to the Divorce Act appears to be a simplification of the law so that it will be easier for former spouses living in different provinces to apply for a custody or a support order. They would no longer have to be heard in the province where the divorce was granted, and only one of the former spouses would have to reside in the province where the application for the order is made. This will save both time and money and greatly benefit single mothers, most of whom, as I have mentioned, live under the poverty line.

There is also an allowance for the use of teleconferencing of sworn affidavits if the provincial court allows it. This should also free up court time.

Changes to the Family Order and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act will also reduce costs, this time for investigating child abduction. The proposed amendments would remove the requirement that police officers get court authorization to use federal data banks for tracing individuals in cases of spousal child abduction.

Other changes to this act make garnishee summonses valid for five years rather than the present one year, as the parliamentary secretary also stated.

These amendments would also allow the garnishee summons fee to be paid in instalments. This is to avoid financial hardship for former spouses, mostly women in this case, and regulations would allow that part of the garnishee payment held back for subsistence needs to be set at 50 per cent for UI payments, CPP payments, federal training allowance, and for OAS payments. The parliamentary secretary mentioned that also.

These provisions, as far as they go, are important, but so much time has been wasted in getting to the real problems that exist in this country for single parents. Why are we not doing more at this stage? Why are we doing more studying when the need to aid these families is so great?

At the outset I would like to say that the majority of Canadian child support orders are in arrears. That in itself is a disgrace. Most mother–led post–divorce families live in poverty. That is also a disgrace. This would still be the case even if all payments were made because the orders are ridiculously low.

First, most child support orders are in arrears. Second, most mother–led post–divorce families live in poverty. These families would still be living in poverty even if the payments were made because the payments are so low.

This is a tragedy in this day and age. Two–thirds of divorced mother and children households live in poverty, even with the support payments arriving on time. Contrast this with the fact that 16 per cent of ex–husbands are living below the poverty line after making support payments. Without these payments 75 per cent of mother–children households would be living in poverty.

During the 1980s there was a drive to reform the support system but this has done very little to resolve the problem. The Ontario government has now taken over the collection of support payments, and 75 per cent of those support payments, of those collections, are in arrears.

The larger problem of unrealistically low court order payments remains even if we have a better system of collection.

This is presumably why the minister introduced her child support guidelines research paper. However the research paper, the data base and all of the talking is not going to help these people. These are young families, young children and former spouses, who are in need of some financial assistance and they are not getting it. The system must be speeded up. It must be more resolved to do something to help these families.

The minister outlines in her paper four approaches to estimating the costs of child rearing and includes detailed calculations based on each of them for families of different sizes, children of different ages, and so on. That is very important information. However, if they do not have the money then this is going to be of very little use to them. They need the actual support.

• (1920)

A research paper by Miriam Grassby, published in the May 1991 issue of *Reports of Family Law*, shows that the average support awarded is considerably less than half of the actual costs of raising children. Even the support payments, when they are obtained, are less than half of what is actually needed to raise those children.

An already impoverished wife ends up paying a disproportionate share of child costs. She is left with no money whatsoever for leisure or savings for even a modest retirement. Any kind of retirement package is out of the question. She also ends up footing the bill for the emotional and recreational needs of her children, needs an absent and considerably wealthier ex-husband could in most cases give and can very easily ignore because of the system.

Ms. Grassby says:

> It is easy to deprive children if you appear to be paying a large amount for child support. It is very difficult to deprive children if you are living with them.

While the ex-husbands and the fathers may be living in a different province and feel they are being very generous, in most cases they are not. They are not even beginning to meet the needs of the children they profess to care for and have such concern for.

While mothers are living in abject poverty trying to meet the needs of the children, and in most cases using every cent that comes forward for their children and denying themselves of anything other than the bare necessities, the system continues to roll on with studies and does not make a meaningful contribution or meaningful declaration to end these injustices.

Judges also often seem unaware of the barriers to a woman becoming self-sufficient if she is older, even in her forties. Not only may she be lacking in skills, experience and opportunity, but as the custodial parent she is not free to travel, work long hours, study at night or socialize with colleagues.

We might also bring up the terrible inequities that exist within our tax system. It is a fact that in this country today a man gets to deduct his child support payments directly from the amount of tax he must pay. The mother must pay income tax on what she receives from him as well as on her own earnings. Where is the justification for this?

First, the payments are ridiculously low. They are not receiving anywhere near the support payments they should be getting.

Second, the orders to enforce these payments are in arrears. They are not being served or enforced.

Third, the meagre amount that the single mother, the former wife, receives she must pay income tax on while the husband gets the amount he pays deducted from his tax payable. I do not see how we can continue to drag our feet while this sort of thing goes on in this country.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary and the minister to do more to correct this injustice.

I know that a lot of this is provincial jurisdiction. It will require working with the provinces. The sooner these conferences and meetings start the sooner we will get somewhere in dealing with this problem. We cannot go

on just talking about it and saying that because we have made some improvements that we have corrected the system. We have not corrected the system. We are a long way from correcting the system.

We need to get all of the governments involved in this together. There must be a more meaningful determination to correct this situation.

I would once again ask the government to do more to bring a speedy end to this problem. These children are growing up in poverty. They are a concern to their parents and they are a concern to this country because they are not being treated fairly.

We can only surmise what this is contributing to in terms of juvenile delinquency or problems with young offenders. There are no statistics on that nor will we be able to get any. Certainly if they see the injustice that is continuing there will be a bitterness on their part against the system, against the government, and against the way in which they have been treated.

This is really not helping anyone. It may be allowing the ex-husband to have more disposable income for himself. When we consider the real needs more disposable income for him is certainly not at the top of the priority list. Concern and support for these children and former wives is much higher on the priority list, and if it is not it certainly should be.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of the New Democratic Party on this matter and also to speak on behalf of our justice critic, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who is unable to attend this debate this afternoon.

The bill before us is Bill C-79, an act to amend the Divorce Act and the Family Order and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act. As the parliamentary secretary stated earlier in his speech, this bill will result in less red tape and simpler procedures for obtaining and updating support orders and better tracing services. The legislation should mean an improvement to the respective acts. We welcome the opportunity to examine the specific changes proposed.

The bill includes amendments to the Divorce Act so that future applications for custody or support will no longer have to be heard in the province in which the divorce was granted and only one of the former spouses would have to reside in the province in which application for the order is made.

This is a very important section. Anybody who has dealt in the area of family law has often run into problems in which the custody area has to be changed and the applicant is in a different jurisdiction than the respondent. It often causes many difficulties when there simply is not enough money for either one of the parties to change venues or meet the court in the venue in which the application has been commenced. This is a very positive part of the bill that will and should be supported with some changes.

This bill also includes amendments to the Family Order and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act that would remove the requirement that police officers obtain court authorization to use federal data banks for tracing individuals in cases of spousal child abduction. Police officers will no longer be expected to lay a charge before accessing the name and address information that will help them with their investigation. This certainly makes sense to me.

As well, garnishee summonses for the support payments would be valid for five years rather than the present one-year term. This is particularly important as it is often the experience of custodial parents, those women and children who are waiting for support payments, that they must wait many months for tracing services to find the father who has failed to meet his support payment obligation.

For example, presently a wait of six months leaves only six months of garnisheed support payments until the process must be started all over again. There seems to be a loss of time, a loss of effort, and often a loss of money to the spouse who is looking for the support payment. This must be seen to be an improvement, though recent developments at the provincial level give rise to hope that the wage garnishment procedure will become less and less the tool of last resort for women and for the children who have been abandoned by their fathers. Historically, the responsibility for enforcing family orders and agreements has fallen to the provincial governments.

• (1930)

Until the passing of the Family Order and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act in 1986 there was no tracing information service available at the federal level and federal moneys were immune from garnishment.

In fact, most of the data we have available telling us just how many thousands of fathers are skipping out on their obligations to support their children comes to us from provincial levels.

In Ontario alone, for example, over 75 per cent of support payments are in arrears. That is $400 million that mothers and children have done without because fathers do not want to make their payments. I say fathers because evidence shows that over 97 per cent of payers are men.

There is no need to rely upon terms like payer and recipient when we know that we are talking about women and children who are doing without because men do not want to make payments and have skipped out on the responsibility to their children and their former spouses.

In Ontario, the government has responded to this chronic situation with a new family support plan that is a radical and positive departure from the wage garnishment procedure. In order to apply for wage garnishment, women have had to wait until there has been a default or non-payment. Often they end up waiting over a period of months until there is clear evidence of this. They then have to apply for tracing and location services from the appropriate provincial offices which will turn to the federal services if necessary.

In Ontario, wage garnishment lasted six years. So bringing the federal equivalent closer into line by raising it to five years from one year as this bill will do is a welcome change.

The Ontario government has gone one step further. It implemented a support deduction order which will come into effect at the same time a court makes the support order. The program will serve notice to the employer who must begin deducting support payments from the father's net wages. The support deduction order is portable. It will move from employer to employer and the father must inform the program office of a new employer.

But just as important, this support deduction order lasts as long as the support order so it is really a positive step and a bit of a radical step. It is a step that we should be looking at when this bill gets into committee.

But as I have said, this is new in Canada. It may, in fact, make garnishee summonses a thing of the past for many cases in Ontario, as it has in most of the United States. I hope that other provincial governments are watching this development. There may already be others planning such an initiative. We need to take all of the steps we can to improve the enforcement of support orders.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, we welcome the opportunity to examine this proposed legislation in more detail in committee. We do not want to subject this bill to lengthy debate at this stage. I do want to raise one more matter before I conclude.

At the same time as the minister introduced this bill, she also released to this House and to the public a report entitled *The Financial Implications of Child Support Guidelines*. That report is the second report of the federal-provincial-territory family law committee and is part of the minister's family law reform initiative announced in June 1991.

There can be no question of the need to establish guidelines on child support payments. Support payments established by the courts are often far too low to meet the basic needs of children and vary widely in rulings of an otherwise similar nature. Those of us who have been in court on occasion, in family court, from court to court and from region to region, have seen some of these disparities.

That report may provide some valuable insight into the process of determining those guidelines. It may have a significant impact on the well-being of 40 per cent of Canadian children who are affected by family breakdown, the three-quarters of a million children in Canada living with their mothers in poverty.

We need to arrive at adequate guidelines for support payments through an accurate evaluation of the needs children have. As the government-released background to this report states, the report has been released to ensure informed public discussion on the child support guidelines option.

It is based on the work of three economists contracted separately by the department to examine the economic models used to estimate expenditures on children, identify the strengths and weaknesses of each model, suggest appropriate approaches and provide data using those

approaches in simulation with family expenditure survey data provided by Statistics Canada.

The report makes absorbing though technical reading. As I mentioned, it is available to the public as are copies of the studies completed by the three economists.

The Department of Justice has also contributed to a committee of two economists, an accountant and a legal anthropologist. That committee produced a report which gave an independent review of the literature and studied the suitability of various economic methods for estimating expenditures on children in Canada.

The results of the work of that group have not been included in the document released by the minister. The only reference to it states, and I quote from page 4 of the report: "The report contains two very different conclusions regarding economic modelling and the best way of measuring the cost of children. This came about because the participants brought to the project two fundamentally different views of how to approach the problem of estimating child expenditures."

The report also mentions that there were time constraints involved. It is clear that the primary reason for exclusion is the fundamentally different views brought to the project by this group. Were this an independent body or an independent inquiry responsible to the House of Commons and not an internal Department of Justice project we and the public would have access to that report. As it stands now, we do not.

It certainly would not cost more money if the report was to the House of Commons rather than the Department of Justice, would it? So as we are not saving money in this case, one might ask if we are going to save any money for example on the studies that the Department of Justice has assumed on behalf of the former Law Reform Commission of Canada.

I leave it to the members of this House to ponder yet again the question of why this government and this department is so eager to do this kind of work in the House as opposed to outside where we can all observe the findings, where we can learn from and engage in informed public discussions.

The members present might be interested to know that this other report, what I will call the fourth report, suggested an entirely different approach to the economic models proposed for examination after the non-economists on the team questioned the assumptions implicit in them and after they raised some points which got the economists working with them looking at the models under a new light, perhaps a more reality-based light.

The fourth report found that there were many limitations to the existing economic research. It was found that there had been statistically unreliable results from this research. Further, some results showed negative child-rearing costs. In the real world, it is not unusual for a mother to take maternity leave and then work fewer hours in the paid work force. Such a situation results in those economic models showing a negative cost in raising that baby. Perhaps the academics have missed something here.

What we are saying in this report is that while the mother may have earned a set amount of money, originally she made certain cutbacks in her expectations and therefore spent less money when the baby came along. By doing that, these studies have shown that in fact she is spending less money even though she has a child which is supposedly costing her more.

At the very least it would be most useful for us to have all of the information available to have a complete picture of what we are dealing with including all of the warts, false assumptions and mistakes that have been made if we are truly to have what the minister has identified as informed public discussion of child support guidelines.

In conclusion, I would like to say we are pleased to have the opportunity to work on these amendments to the Divorce Act and the Family Order and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act.

We want to encourage the minister to continue to move in a direction that will address child support guidelines. We also want to encourage the government to examine closely the taxation of child support payments, a situation which, to quote from one man who said to Mary McIver of *Homemaker's*: "Because my wife and I are living apart I get rewarded with a tax break and she gets screwed".

• (1940)

In a recent Statistics Canada study, it was shown that the per capita income of families receiving support payments was 41 per cent of the per capita income of the support payer's family. This issue needs to be looked at soon.

I would also encourage the minister to carry further her commitment to the well-being of Canada's children, to work hard in her caucus to support those initiatives that will really benefit the hundreds of thousands of Canadian children who continue to exist in poverty.

Take another look at a national child care program. This government has not provided any improved access to child care. Lack of affordable, accessible, non-profit child care is one of the major reasons for keeping poor Canadians, particularly women and single mothers, out of the work force.

Take another look at the cap on the Canada Assistance Plan. Take another look at the decision to cut the co-op housing program. Take another look at better funding for job training programs. These are the kinds of programs that will give Canadian women the help they need to provide adequate support to their children, the opportunities they need to get good jobs and provide for their families.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Departmental envelope.

* * *

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works) moved that 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, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

He said: It is a pleasure for me to speak briefly on these rather important measures that pertain to housing and to confirm that they will be referred to a legislative committee.

I had understood that this was perhaps more in accordance with what the original arrangement had been agreed upon rather than to try and do it in all stages as we had discussed earlier.

The purpose of this bill is to refine the legislation governing federal housing policies and programs. There is nothing more important to Canadians in general than the state of their housing. The management and access of financing are key to this. It is kind of interesting to see how things have changed in that regard. I was reading the other day a quote from the Danish writer, Henrik Ibsen. He was talking about housing in those days in his celebrated work *A Doll's House*. He said that there can be no freedom or beauty about a home life that depends on borrowing and debt.

I suggest to the House that this is exactly the opposite now and that one has to have access to borrowing and debt in order to enjoy the kind of amenities in housing that Canadians feel they are entitled to have.

The purpose of this bill is to refine the legislation governing federal housing policy and programs. The government is putting forward these amendments with three important principles in mind.

Public loan insurance under the National Housing Act should promote reasonable, equal access to housing finance, and lowest feasible costs and over-all self-sufficiency of the mortgage insurance fund.

In both market and social housing programs, Canada Mortgage and Housing seeks out and takes advantage of opportunities to improve the cost-effectiveness of the programs. The efficiency of their delivery and the ongoing effectiveness is basic and Canada Mortgage and Housing should and must exercise responsibility for its financing activities within a framework and in accordance with standards promoted by the Department of Finance.

As the federal government's housing agency, Canada Mortgage and Housing works with other levels of government and a host of stakeholders to ensure that Canadians have equal access to decent, affordable, and adequate housing.

The corporation is responsible for promoting the construction of new homes, the repair and renovation of existing ones, and improving the level of housing conditions in general across our country.

Canada Mortgage and Housing is a leader in the development of new financial mechanisms to stimulate the private housing market. It also is at the forefront in providing social housing programs for Canadians most in need and it is the prime source of housing expertise right across the board.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and National Housing Act contain the legislative authority for Canada Mortgage and Housing to carry out its mandate of helping to house Canadians, a mandate which everyone involved with the corporation takes very seriously indeed.

We recognize the importance of being able to change with the times and to ensure that we will be able to carry out our mandate effectively in the future. That is why the House is being asked to consider very seriously the amendments contained in Bill C-82.

These amendments introduce new financial and administrative measures designed to improve the efficiency of CMHC's business operations. The corporation will be able to operate more effectively by improving over-all cost-effectiveness, administration and the delivery of federal housing programs, and some of the main provisions of this legislation are as follows.

This bill will allow Canada Mortgage and Housing to assume more direct responsibility and accountability for its financial affairs. It will do this by enabling CMHC to obtain funding from and invest in the capital market.

The bill contains a provision to allow CMHC to directly finance social housing projects at lower interest rates. CMHC will look to the lending community as a source of funding to allow for the direct financing of social housing. This, we feel, could save more than $150 million in social housing costs over the next five years. By so doing it becomes evident these savings can be utilized for the benefit of the Canadian housing sector.

The Mortgage-Backed Securities program is often used when renewing assisted housing mortgages to obtain lower interest rates. Direct financing is another financial mechanism and the advantages of the various options included therein will be compared and perhaps levered in order to achieve the best possible rates which again will be of great benefit. The direct financing provision will require Order in Council approval, needless to say, before it comes into force.

Another significant amendment involves requiring owners of assisted housing projects to accept as a condition of assistance that they will not sell their projects without CMHC approval. This provision is needed to help ensure that where CMHC agrees to provide assistance, the assisted housing remains as a societal asset which cannot be sold or converted for some other purpose without prior approval.

The existing legislation does not provide this support and it is possible for some assisted housing projects to be sold or taken out of the social housing portfolio if sponsors wish to take advantage of market appreciation. This is, of course, contrary to the federal government's goal of maintaining assisted housing for social housing clients over the long term.

The proposed amendment would clearly establish the government's intent to preserve this stock of existing housing. It will reinforce clauses in project operating agreements to ensure that owners maintain the social purpose of the housing for the life of their agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing.

• (1950)

This bill also contains provisions which would allow CMHC, depending on its future business needs, to consider the option of delegating some of its mortgage insurance responsibilities to selected approved lenders, provided that appropriate arrangements are in place for Canada Mortgage and Housing to monitor and control these delegated functions.

The amendments proposed also allow Canada Mortgage and Housing to supply housing-related property management and developmental services to federal government departments and agencies. It allows CMHC to supply services to support federal-provincial housing arrangements in a cost-effective manner. The proposed amendment makes it clear that CMHC may—it has the possibility, it is an enabling provision—charge fees for these services.

It is obvious to the House that Canada Mortgage and Housing has a contribution to make across the board to other government agencies as well in matters relating to housing. Probably these enlarged powers would have come in very handy in the case of Summerside when all resources were being focused in an effort to find a solution for that problem.

With this amendment, Canada Mortgage and Housing would no longer be required to acquire ownership of the relevant property in order to apply its expertise. Over the years, Canada Mortgage and Housing has accumulated extensive, specialized expertise in housing-related property management and development. As I mentioned earlier, we know that many other federal departments and agencies would benefit from it.

The Canada Mortgage Loan Insurance Program is a vital component of facilitating Canadians access to mortgage funds which are needed to acquire decent and affordable housing. We want to continue to provide that kind of assistance in the future. Bill C-82 will therefore increase the existing limit on outstanding loan insurance from the current $60 billion up to $100 billion. The new limit of $100 billion is estimated to be adequate for the next five years.

The bill also contains a number of amendments to consolidate CMHC's borrowing authority. These amendments will give CMHC access to financial markets, modernize its investment authorities and rationalize its income tax status. There will be one central statutory authority for CMHC to borrow to fund its program loans and investments and financial management. This means that the agency will enjoy more flexibility in finding sources of funding and will be able to take advantage of favourable interest rates and conditions.

The income tax exemption for the mortgage insurance fund and the guarantee funds will also be removed. This is intended to have CMHC taxed on the same basis as financial institutions and registered insurance companies. Other amendments are included of a purely administrative or housekeeping nature in order to provide clarification of various provisions.

Briefly, I have presented some of the highlights of this legislation which I hope will be given favourable consideration and provide a clearer understanding of what the government is trying to accomplish with Bill C-82.

I would like to take a moment to speak about the role which Canada Mortgage and Housing has played throughout its history in helping to facilitate proper housing for Canadians and to respond to various challenges.

In my reading the other day I came across some incidents where a former president was reminiscing about the days when C.D. Howe was responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing. I believe this occurred on April 1, 1946 and he was reminiscing about how Mr. Howe needed to respond to the needs of some 16,000 families of war veterans who needed housing. Shortly after that, there was a further need to respond to conditions implicit in the Korean war, so Defence Construction Limited was created.

Since its inception in 1946, CMHC has carried out under varying circumstances adjustments to conform with the evolving needs of Canadians of many different kinds of housing assistance. This has traditionally involved providing assistance to the most disadvantaged of Canadians and encouraging self-sufficiency in the private housing market to support the financial markets and the housing industry.

The government, as colleagues know, has a number of social housing programs in place to assist those Canadians who cannot obtain affordable, suitable, and adequate shelter in the private market.

The government will continue to do what it can to assist households in need across this country through its programs. It will continue to spend approximately $2 billion annually and about $10 billion over the next five years to help meet the housing needs of low-income Canadians.

As colleagues know, at the present time over 650,000 social housing units are being assisted. This will allow CMHC to maintain its obligations to those that it now assists.

One of the most important jobs that Canada Mortgage and Housing does on behalf of the government is to make sure there is mortgage money available for people who want to finance the purchase of a home. Through its mortgage loan insurance program Canada Mortgage and Housing helped over 186,000 households last year to obtain access to home ownership. That is a record for Canada Mortgage and Housing, representing $13.3 bil-

lion in business taking the total of insurance in force to some $58.3 billion.

The federal government has been looking into creative ways to attract new sources of funding to respond to the housing needs of low to moderate income Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that there may have been an arrangement concluded since I began to speak that would involve proceeding through all stages of the bill tonight. If this is the case, I will conclude and simply thank the members from London East and Edmonton East for their understanding in consenting to this rather summary and cursory way of proceeding with this important legislation.

I know that this was not the original intent. I also know that my colleagues opposite had to interrupt important business to come back and facilitate this measure. It is important to Canadians. It is important to the agency and I want to thank them very much for their flexibility.

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for those kind remarks. We are trying to facilitate the workings of the House and to deal with legislation that is important to this House and to this country.

Let me take a few moments to speak to this bill. I am glad to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-82, an act to amend the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and the National Housing Act. Both of these acts have a long history in this country and have played a crucial role in the development of housing and the promotion of home ownership for all Canadians.

The federal government made excursions directly into the housing sector when a shortage of accommodation occurred during the Second World War which created some difficulties. In response to this crisis, the government created a Crown corporation, the Wartime Housing Corporation, with a budget for communities where a shortage of housing retarded defence projects.

After the war, in an effort to provide housing for returning soldiers, the federal government transferred the assets of the old Crown corporation to the newly created Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Now called the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC was legislated to administer the National Housing Act of 1944. This included the administration of loans for housing and the construction of public housing. As the economic circumstances of Canada changed throughout each decade so did the housing needs of Canadians.

Through amendments to both the acts, the House of Commons addressed these challenges and tackled Canada's housing problems.

In 1949 the NHA was amended to provide social housing for Canadians in need through cost-shared programs between the federal government and the provincial governments.

• (2000)

In 1954, the federal government changed the Bank Act and the CMHC Act and replaced direct lending with a mortgage loan insurance program which provided the foundation for the private mortgage market in Canada.

In 1964, the acts were further amended to address the problems of urban renewal and rapid population growth in urban centres. In the 1970s and 1980s, rapid inflation changed housing affordability forever, as we all know. The price of a home increased over 200 per cent in some areas of the country. In the communities in and around Toronto a family now needs an annual income of approximately $60,000 to afford the average starter home. In the Vancouver area, the income required is about $50,000 a year for that starter home. In my home city of London, Ontario, you need an average income of $42,000 in order to afford a starter home.

Under these tough economic conditions, CMHC has had to adapt to meet the changing requirements of Canadians looking to buy their first home as well as needy Canadians trying to afford the ever-increasing cost of rental accommodation. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has successfully manoeuvred these difficult economic obstacles. Within the confines of the limitations imposed by this government, it has delivered programs across the country.

In 1988, the then Auditor General, Kenneth Dye, named CMHC as one of the eight shining examples of high-performing organizations within the Canadian bureaucracy. As well, in 1988 CMHC was surveyed by an international management consulting firm which found it to have a high level of employee satisfaction. More recently it was listed in the publication called *The Hundred Best Companies to Work for in Canada.*

CMHC has served the housing sector very well. It has served home owners and people seeking affordable housing very well. Despite the budgetary constraints imposed by this government, it has served low-income Canadians to the best of its ability. With the help of CMHC programs, the housing industry in Canada has shown a remarkable ability to change in response to changing economic and market conditions.

Canada's industry increased its productive capacity sevenfold in the 30 years from 1946 to 1976 and it has expanded ever since. The evidence of successful adaptation to change in the past very strongly suggests the industry will be equally capable of responding effectively to the evolving markets and circumstances of the future.

The National Housing Act and the CMHC Act have been amended in the past by the House of Commons as a reaction to changes in the Canadian economy. However, reacting to changes in the economy is only one reason to introduce amendments to these two acts as we are being asked to do tonight.

Through many of the administrative amendments of the National Housing Act and the CMHC Act included in Bill C-82, CMHC can continue to maintain its high level of efficiency and cost effectiveness. There is another important reason for the need to adapt these instruments of national housing development. The housing sector itself is a vital component of the Canadian economy. CMHC cannot simply react but it must also become a vehicle for economic health and growth in this country. Housing activity in Canada has played an important role in the economic advancement of the country, as we all know.

Housing has had the advantage of being labour intensive, focusing much of its economic benefit in the locality or region where the housing is constructed. It is required in all parts of the country and it has considerable economic ripple effects beyond the actual building site. It creates not only construction jobs, but jobs in the sectors that must service the construction as well as spin-off jobs in servicing the communities which are being constructed. Therefore a comprehensive housing policy and a well-administered housing corporation is well suited for use as federal tools of macroeconomic stimulation.

As we face the challenges of the future, this House must again examine these acts to facilitate the most efficient operation of CMHC and its administration of the National Housing Act.

Bill C-82 provides for the authorization of approved lenders such as banks and others to act for the CMHC in insuring loans. The CMHC will set up the criteria which allows approved lenders to process the mortgage insurance, and the Crown corporation will set up a rigorous monitoring system, which will enable them to supervise these procedures. It is expected to take two to three years to implement these changes fully. Ultimately it should make the operations of CMHC more efficient; it should speed up the processing of mortgages.

The bill also increases the limit of loan insurance the CMHC can now authorize. The current limit of $60 billion has almost been reached and the new limit of $100 billion is expected to be adequate to service the demand for mortgage insurance until 1997.

This proposed legislation also closes up a loophole. The owners of assisted housing will be prevented from selling their projects without CMHC approval. This amendment is long overdue because there have been some horror stories with respect to assisted housing being converted to something other than was planned and designed for.

This ensures that CMHC subsidized housing will be maintained as social housing and not sold as a market rental project. This amendment will allow for better enforcement of the legislation, and ensures government housing subsidies are protected and targeted to those in need.

Another amendment to the National Housing Act enables CMHC to develop and manage housing projects without having to buy the land. CMHC can be contracted on by a government department, for a fee, to administer lands and develop housing.

Currently we all know that CMHC must first acquire the land before developing any housing on it. This fee-for-service change also allows CMHC to sell some

of its services to non-profit housing corporations and to co-op housing projects.

These services could include, for example, training programs and computerization. This amendment will be of most interest to the provinces, which have the option of purchasing these services in a block for all of their housing projects.

The provinces have other alternatives. They can provide these services through their provincial housing ministries or they can contract these services from the private sector.

Perhaps the most significant change affected by this bill is the clause which would allow the CMHC to directly finance and refinance loans. This change alone is estimated to be able to save government over $150 million over five years and I would hope that the government in saving this money would recirculate these savings to produce more affordable housing for those people in need.

CMHC studies have shown that the Crown corporation could provide lower and more favourable rates for the first mortgage of many social housing projects. The subsidies that CMHC spends on social housing projects are based to a large extent on the interest needed on the first mortgage.

By lending itself money at a better rate, savings can be achieved through lower subsidies. Other savings will be achieved through the creation of a more competitive financing environment.

The entrance of CMHC into the lending market will create I believe more competition in the financial community. Since the social housing projects are cost shared between the federal and provincial governments, this amendment would have the reciprocal effect of saving the provinces money because of the reduced subsidy level.

Another major amendment will expand CMHC's investment authority. Currently the Crown corporation is limited to investing in government securities or guaranteed government securities. This legislation will allow broader authority, subject to government review.

Last, the bill changes CMHC's income tax status, removing its tax exempt status for some funds. This will make CMHC more like a financial institution and registered insurance company. Currently CMHC is limited to $25 million of accumulated surplus. This means that any additional net profit is turned over to the government as dividends. The extra profit already goes to the government and taxes. This bill will result in the money being shifted from dividends paid to the government to taxes paid to the government.

• (2010)

These amendments to the National Housing Act and the CMHC Act will allow for greater efficiency in the operation of the Crown corporation.

In these times of economic hardship, the federal government must pursue cost saving measures while at the same time maintaining an adequate level of service. Bill C-82 has introduced amendments which are not only cost saving but are also cost effective.

These legislative changes are aimed specifically at administrative functions and operational structures. What is not included in this bill are the policy changes necessary to ensure that federal housing programs are as efficient as possible in meeting the housing needs of Canadians.

While this bill takes care of the administrative functions of the CMHC, improving its efficiency, housing policy itself has been neglected by this government.

The legacy of CMHC has been to learn from the past and adapt itself to meet the future requirements of Canadians. Unfortunately this government is neglecting to make the policy changes that are required to deal with the housing problems of today. Moreover, it lacks the vision to address the housing problems of tomorrow.

Despite the accomplishment of CMHC, there are still challenges that this government must address. There are still many Canadians who are inadequately served by the marketplace and for whom government assistance is required to ensure that they are adequately housed. The aging of Canada's population presents a number of challenges to public and private sectors alike and the government must now begin to implement new and more innovative ways of dealing with the housing needs of this emerging population.

The federal government must implement policy changes that will address sectoral changes that are expected. Canada's housing requirements are projected to decline considerably over the next two decades. There will not be as many housing units produced as there were in the past unless the trends in our population growth change and change dramatically. While the markets for new production are shrinking, they are also becoming more discrete and specific. The federal government must facilitate the development and servicing of these newly emerging markets.

This government must also facilitate the development of housing technologies with the view to exporting Canadian expertise and services in this field. Similarly, an industrial capacity must be nurtured which is capable of responding to the emerging economic importance of renovations of Canada's existing housing stock.

As the century comes to a close, a considerable proportion of Canada's housing stock will require the upgrading of its electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems in order to preserve its operating efficiencies. This presents the prospect of a great deal of labour intensive work which to some extent will replace jobs through the decline in new production.

This will also entail facilitating the development of an industry with a different mix of skills from those required for new construction. The federal government must acknowledge the importance of renovating Canada's existing housing stock and facilitate that end now, not ten years from now. The scrapping of the residential rehabilitation program as it related to rental stock by this government some years ago was not forward looking on behalf of this government.

The policy environment in Canada is well tuned to the development of jointly shared solutions to the issues in the housing field. A wide-reaching network has been established between all the participants active in the production, consumption and the regulation of housing. However, this government is not willing to become a responsible partner in these joint solutions.

For example, currently only 6 per cent of Canadians are served by social housing programs. There are 15 per cent or more, over one million Canadians, who are still in core housing need. Despite such overwhelming need, the federal government has consistently cut social housing programs in consecutive budgets.

The most recent budget will amount to a 50 per cent reduction in the construction of new social housing units within three years. As this is a cost-shared program, the federal government is letting down the provinces in forcing reductions in provincial allocations, particularly in the have not provinces.

The recent budget cuts also eliminated the co-op housing program. This is a cost-effective housing program which provides mixed income housing, not massive housing projects for the poor, which unfortunately and inevitably are labelled as ghetto housing.

Studies have indicated that the problem of social mix appears to be increasing in recent decades. Whether this is because of a shift in society's goals or an increasing awareness of the impact of poor mixing is not clear. What is evident, though, is that housing policy must not be viewed simply in terms of delivering numbers of housing units. Rather, it must also be related to the placement of those units, physically and socially, within the community.

A CMHC document concludes that the emphasis on so-called targeting in the name of program efficiency has resulted in the casualty of social mix. By eliminating co-op housing, a program in which mixed income housing was a key element, this government has sacrificed healthy community development. Despite changes made to the program over a year ago which met the targeting requirements of this government, this government still sacrificed this program.

Rather than facing the challenges of providing a healthy community environment, this government has opted out of its responsibilities. This government is also ignoring other housing problems that demand immediate attention.

The family projects, where 37.5 per cent of residents are children, have the highest incidence of crime. The program also puts disabled seniors and single mothers at risk as well.

The desperately needed repairs to many public housing units have made the federal government for all intents and purposes a slum landlord.

A 1990 public housing evaluation indicated a serious problem with security and crime has put almost half of our residents in danger, especially women and children.

There are 13,000 public housing units which fail to meet minimum property standards and more than half of all the units barely meet these standards and are at risk of falling below standard.

The money this government must allocate for renovations has not met these immediate requirements. Given the aging of these public housing units, these conditions have worsened and will continue to worsen and the costs are forever increasing.

Public housing was developed to provide affordable and adequate housing. The public housing program must be deemed a failure because the evaluation indicates that two out of every five tenants still live in core need because their housing costs are too high.

Since 80 per cent of the total repair budget was required within three years, an increase in the budget should have been accompanied by a needs based allocation of funds. This government has deprived CMHC of the resources it needs to meet the needs of these Canadians and provide adequate shelter.

Given the current difficulties with urban crime and safety, this government should get its own properties in order and provide a safe living environment for its tenants.

The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program was also drastically cut by the federal government in recent years and I have already noted that.

The program is needed to upgrade our private housing stock for Canadians in core need. Statistical evidence indicates that future demand for new housing construction will be generated primarily through immigration. Despite this, the federal government has not facilitated the development of any housing programs that would meet the shelter requirements of legitimate refugee claimants and the increased immigration population in this country.

The federal government must acknowledge its role as a partner in ensuring healthy Canadian communities. While C-82 creates an efficient administrative framework for the Crown corporation, it does not allow for efficient policy delivery.

CMHC's five-year corporate plan outlines the Crown corporation's commitment to "promoting good living environment" and "ensuring that housing and its supporting urban framework combine to produce quality of life in urban environments".

The federal government has not provided the legislative framework which would allow the CMHC to meet these goals. Instead, the federal government has cut the CMHC's program budget and limited its activities to studies, consultations, demonstrations, evaluations, seminars and conferences.

In the previous corporate plan, CMHC stressed the importance of addressing the problems of "displaced low-income earners, the increase in homelessness, and the eroding safety and security". However, this focus has been eliminated in the current corporate plan due to lack of government commitment.

Although I applaud the efficiency measures aimed at CMHC's administrative functions, I want to chastise the government for ignoring possible improvements to policy efficiency. With a projected savings of $150 million over five years, I want to urge the government to use these savings to fulfil its responsibilities as a partner in the housing sector.

It really is a partner, along with the provinces, the municipalities, the private non-profit sector, the co-op sector, in working toward solving Canada's housing problems.

While the government might be introducing legislative changes to Bill C-82 to make CMHC work better, it remains that this government must provide the leadership to have affordable housing in this country. It must not relegate its responsibilities to the provinces, the municipalities and other groups.

So while we are supportive of this bill, I look forward to the next stage, of asking some questions of the minister relating to the administrative changes being proposed in this bill.

Let me just say one other thing.

• (2020)

CMHC has served this country well. While the country is trying to redefine itself in terms of its constitutional responsibilities the fact is that housing in this country has been served well because all levels of government, the private sector and the non-profit sectors have all worked together. CMHC has been that glue.

If someone wanted to be really cynical with respect to this bill, and I do not want to be too partisan or cynical, one could say, because this has been a very successful Crown corporation—and I can tell the government right now that we are going to draw a line in the sand if it moves to privatize this Crown corporation which provides equality and equity in terms of affordable housing and mortgage insurance across this whole country.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In view of the urgency of this measure, I would ask that it be referred not to the standing committee but to Committee of the Whole.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, it might reasonably be inferred from the fact that the NDP caucus went along with the unanimous consent to run this bill through the House in its entirety today, correctly in this instance, that it is the intention of the NDP caucus to support the bill at all stages.

That is so principally because, unlike much of the legislation that the government introduces in this House, this bill will do no great harm and may indeed accomplish some small good. The two areas in which we are most interested are clauses 48 and 18.

Clause 48 will essentially prevent land flipping of social housing projects of the sort that we saw for example in Cloverdale in Montreal. A private developer got a bagful of government money on the promise of providing social housing, built a project and then sold it off to people who rammed it into the private sector. The social housing component was gone, the guy kept the bag of money and the new owners are presumably making a great deal more. CMHC was left holding the empty bag. With luck this bill will prevent that sort of thing in the future. To that degree it is commendable.

Clause 18 allows for direct financing of social housing projects by CMHC. It is assumed that this will give CMHC far greater flexibility in its operations and therefore could conceivably allow savings of up to some $150 million over the next five years. This is a best case scenario but we all wish the corporation well and hope that this comes to pass.

This would be a much more significant number and a much more significant hope if the government had shown any intention of financing any more social housing. As we know from the budget presented in this House this year the government's intention is in fact the reverse. It is scrambling as quickly as it can to extricate itself from virtually all prior social housing commitments.

It merely remains to note that new social housing projects will be cut from their current levels by about 51 per cent over the next two years as a consequence of this year's budget, for example. The co–op housing program is gone completely, and I will return to that in just a moment.

Of course the government is, to be charitable, stalling on additional financing required by those housing co–ops built under the ILM, the indexed link mortgage program, introduced in the mid–1980s. As a result of that program and consequent housing charges imposed by CMHC in an effort to not offend local private landlords, boosting housing charges in the co–ops to a level which the residents cannot afford to pay, there are tremendous shortfalls going on in ILM housing co–ops across the country.

These shortfalls amount in total to a requirement of possibly some $20 million. This too is money that is not forthcoming at this time, which is why some of the more recently constructed co–ops are in serious trouble.

I would like to draw one quick lesson from this, if I may. I do not intend to use up a great deal of House time on this but it seems to me to be instructive that in this bill the government basically is cleaning up the system whereby it can continue to give bags of money to private developers who promise to build housing with some social element in it. This is at the same time the government has axed completely the paltry $6.5 million annual expenditure on the federal co–op housing program and has radically cut back on its commitment to non–profit housing programs.

What this tells me is that the government, in fact, suffers an ideological bias in this regard. It is simply put this way. The government feels better about turning money over to private sector developers to create housing in which tenants will live always under the control of that private sector developer. It feels much better about doing that than it does about funding programs which would otherwise allow tenants to control their own housing.

This government lacks faith in the Canadian people. It assumes that lack of money is a clear indication of lack of responsibility and lack of ability. Therefore, because people without money cannot be trusted to devise and maintain and administer their own housing, we must have people of merit evidenced by the fact that somehow or other they already have money to do that for them.

This is the fundamental bias of the government that is expressed in many of its programs and policies across the vast host of issues but is clearly set out in its approach to social housing.

The real tragedy of this is that they could not be more wrong. Anyone dispassionately examining the record of co-op and non-profit housing in this country versus the record of housing provided with government assistance through the private sector, especially tenant housing, cannot conceivably come away from such a dispassionate examination concluding other than that if you put the responsibility for their own housing in the people's own hands you will have a more responsible, better administered, longer life and better maintained housing than you will if you place them in a standard tenant relationship to some private sector landlord.

The record is so crystal clear in this regard that the government's decisions of this year flying in the face of that historic evidence begs credulity and cannot be attributed to the result of any kind of dispassionate analysis of the actual programs.

Therefore, when I conclude it is quite literally blindly ideologically motivated and in the long term will do great disservice to the people of Canada.

However, if I may conclude that digression and get back to Bill C-82, I would say again on the face of it, it does no harm and maybe some small good. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it will enjoy our support.

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to say a word or two with respect to Bill C-82 which is an act to amend the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and the National Housing Act because as you know, I have rather a great interest in this area as the former Minister of State for Housing.

This bill does not make dramatic changes to either CMHC or to the National Housing Act but it does deal in a number of areas that I think are very significant.

• (2030)

As you know, on the one hand there are a great many Canadians who own their own homes. In fact, 63 per cent to 64 per cent of all Canadian householders are home owners. On the other hand, about 21 per cent of all Canadian householders cannot afford to own their own homes and need some sort of assistance to be able to live in affordable and decent housing.

Right now the federal and provincial governments, all taxpayers because the money does come from all Canadians as taxpayers, do assist about one-third of that 21 per cent of Canadians who need some assistance in their housing. Right now there are some 650,000 units of housing across Canada receiving that kind of assistance.

Clauses 18 and 48 of this bill deal with the assisted housing situation. In fact, clause 18 allows CMHC to go out and to get into the direct financing business in order to provide the money and the funds to finance that assisted housing, those 650,000 homes that are now provided across the country. Also, CMHC can find the financing for the other two-thirds of that 21 per cent, or 14 per cent in effect, of Canadian householders needing some further assistance.

Hopefully, the ability of CMHC to get into the direct financing of additional social housing will mean more assisted housing. I suppose in an indirect way it will provide that because the government faced with an enormous deficit and national debt has been trying to find ways to economize.

One of the ways it has been looking at is to have CMHC do the direct financing itself to try to cut down the financing costs in order to have the wherewithal to provide as much additional social housing as it has budgeted for in the next two years.

Without this ability, without this provision in the legislation I suspect there would even be a smaller budget, fewer funds available for assisted housing in the next two years at least than was indicated in the budget of February 25.

Clause 48 of course puts a cap on the ability of assisted housing builders, the non-profit organizations that are loaned money with a CMHC guarantee and then receive subsidies. It puts a cap on its ability to sell off those social housing or assisted housing projects without the consent of CMHC.

That is a good thing because as other members have pointed out, there have been problems in the past as far as the sale of social housing complexes to the private sector, taking those housing units out of assisted housing and depriving Canadians needing housing assistance of those homes and those units of housing.

I suspect this provision is not going to apply retroactively. I am sure the minister would like to comment on that a little later. Also, this provision is only going to be effective for the term of the mortgage financing through CMHC which is generally a 35-year period.

While this clause is going to protect the Government of Canada and the taxpayers of Canada as far as their investment in assisted housing is concerned, it will not apply retroactively as I understand it. It also is only going to apply for new commitments for 35 years from the time of the commitment and will not go beyond that.

It would be nice and helpful if somehow legally we could find a way to allow these kinds of provisions to apply retroactively and also to allow them to continue on in future, bearing in mind the fact that Canadian taxpayers have actually provided for these facilities. That commitment probably will not come to an end after 35 years.

There is one concern I have with respect to the conditions for consent. That relates to whether or not there will be consent given by CMHC and by the government if a project is to be sold with the purpose of using the net receipts to produce more social housing units in the future than there are at present.

One of the possibilities within this whole area of providing assisted housing is with the appreciation of land, with the appreciation of housing, it may very well be possible to sell a particular project and to use the funds to develop new projects and in fact develop more housing units using the same investment made originally. That, I hope, will be taken into account by CMHC and by the government in the days ahead.

As far as social housing generally is concerned, it seems to me that all of us face a major difficulty. That is the cost involved in providing assisted housing down the road. We still have a lot of people to try to look after. It is going to take an awful lot of taxpayers' money if we are going to do it unless we find some new and innovative ways.

I have brought one way to the attention of the minister. I know CMHC is aware of the Delancy Street concept in San Francisco in the United States. It is a project where the residents build the housing themselves. They finance it through small businesses they are engaged in. Not a dollar or cent of public money is in that project, yet it is one of the projects that is a showcase for the city of San Francisco. Everybody in San Francisco is extremely proud of it and extremely proud of what can be done by individuals using their own initiative.

Again I say to the minister, to CMHC and to the government that this is a model that perhaps will not solve all the housing problems we have down the road, but it is one that certainly has some possibilities to solve a good many of them.

The other aspect of the bill relates to home ownership. Clause 25 and clause 7 relate to the mortgage insurance aspect of CMHC's role and the ability of CMHC to insure mortgages that allow people to buy their own homes.

Clause 25 obviously is a very helpful provision because it means that the total limit on the mortgage insurance fund of CMHC is being increased from $60 billion to $100 billion. That means that CMHC is going to have the ability to ensure a greater volume of mortgages, a greater dollar value of mortgages. That means more Canadians will be able to own their own homes.

All of us would agree that is a good thing, whether we are in favour of social housing or assisted housing as everybody in this House is. For those people who can afford to pay for their own homes, then they too need some assistance through the mortgage insurance fund and this is a good thing.

Clause 7 also relates to the mortgage insurance fund. It gives CMHC the power to delegate loan insurance to other governmental bodies or other private sector bodies.

I suppose that begs the question for all of us as to whether this is opening the door toward the privatization of the mortgage insurance fund. Or perhaps under the constitutional discussions it will be the peeling off of the government's commitment and responsibilities to mortgage insurance to provincial governments. I hope that the minister in his remarks during Committee of the Whole proceedings will address that issue as well. There is one thing that is not in this bill that I had hoped would be in it. That is the question of mortgage insurance for something called the reverse mortgage.

• (2040)

The reverse mortgage is a provision for people who own their own homes. These people have a lot of capital locked into their own homes. People perhaps have their own home as their only investment, but it is a very major investment. These same people may very well be living on extremely modest incomes. A lot of senior citizens are in this category. They are asset rich in their homes but they are income poor in the amount of money they have to look after themselves. As a result, even though they have this great asset locked in, they often have to live below the poverty line.

The reverse mortgage concept would allow senior citizens, and others for that matter, who have this capital locked into their own home to get it out while they are alive. They could still live in their own home, but get their investment out either in a lump sum, several lump sums, a monthly payment, or a yearly payment on a program basis. This would allow them to improve their own standard of living, allowing them to live affordably and decently while still in their own home.

There are such things as reverse mortgages now. There are one or two mortgage companies in Canada that provide for reverse mortgages, but other financial institutions are very reluctant to get into the reverse mortgage business because there is no such thing as reverse mortgage insurance.

This bill could very well have given the authority to CMHC and the mortgage insurance fund to allow them to insure reverse mortgages. I had hoped that this bill would have allowed that but, unfortunately, that is not the case. There will be a lot of Canadians right across our country who will be disappointed as a result of that fact.

I hope once again that the government, CMHC and the minister are looking very carefully and still examining the possibility of introducing a reverse mortgage insurance program. It would be a great boon to Canadians and most helpful to many senior citizens who are living below the poverty line and have this great asset locked in that they cannot access without getting rid of their own home and having to suddenly move into circumstances they do not want and which would be unfamiliar to them.

Finally, I would like to comment on a statement by the hon. member for London East when he was referring to the condition of public housing across Canada. I am trying to recollect from memory, but I think there are some 300,000 public housing units across Canada that are assisted by the federal and provincial governments.

It is quite true that a study found that there were things that had to be done to improve that public housing stock. By and large that study found that the public housing stock we have is generally in good shape, that the residents of that public housing are very happy and that it has been of great benefit to them.

I can say that there are people across this country who live in public housing projects, people such as Margaret Mitchell in Vancouver. That is not the Margaret Mitchell who sits in this House but another Margaret Mitchell in Vancouver who would be shocked by the comment that there is something wrong with public housing. She is so enthusiastic about public housing that she is the president of a public housing tenants association in Vancouver. She is so enthusiastic about it that she wants the government, CMHC and the minister to build a lot more of the same thing because it does such a great job.

The last thing I would like to do on that subject is to draw the attention of the House once more to the fact that about two weeks ago in the city of Toronto, there was an international conference held entitled the Organizing for Social Change Conference, sponsored by the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres.

The delegates to that conference toured public housing projects in metropolitan Toronto. After touring those projects they made comments such as the following: "If that is inner city, it is nothing like we know inner city to be" said one American."We do not see that in Cleveland." "I have yet to see any slums in Toronto."

That speaks for itself as far as public housing is concerned. It has been and continues to be a great triumph. There is no doubt that improvements can be made. Improvements can be made in everything and should be made. I trust that the minister and CMHC are going to be doing that. By and large, we have done an enormous amount in the area of housing in this country.

I trust that this bill will reinforce that. We are going to see the federal government playing what I believe is the role it should be playing. Quite frankly, notwithstanding some of the comments that have been made during the constitutional debate, I believe the federal government clearly has a constitutional role in housing and that it should continue to play that. I trust that this bill will reinforce that effort.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address myself to second reading of 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.

My colleague from London East has outlined the position quite clearly and succinctly of our party with regard to this particular piece of legislation. As hon. members will know, there are a number of traditions within the act which intends to amend a number of statutes. I call to the attention of the House a number of important clauses, clauses Nos. 7, 24, 25, 48, 49 and 18. These are the major provisions of this bill which, as I said earlier, were addressed by my colleague from London East.

While the subject matter of housing is important for Canadians, I wish to bring to the attention of the House particular concerns that I have with regard to the expenditures or lack of expenditures under the social housing envelope of Canada Mortgage and Housing particularly when it relates to what we know in Atlantic Canada as the RRAP program.

Unfortunately, my colleague from St. John's East is not in the Chamber. I would have hoped that he would have stayed and participated in the debate. Some individuals would say that he is here. Others would say that he is here but he is not all there. However, having said that, the hon. member knows that the point I am attempting to make is that funding for the RRAP program in Atlantic Canada requires the support of all members from Atlantic Canada.

In a few moments I would like to address my comments to the minister of employment. I do not believe he has shown any leadership whatsoever in supporting the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing in attempting to find additional income in revenues from the Government of Canada for the various programs which will be needed under the RRAP program.

The hon. member shouts from his seat. I let him shout and I will give him the opportunity to participate later in the debate since he is so concerned about the RRAP budget. I can conclude from that he will support me in supporting the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing in order to obtain additional funding and in order to provide the citizens in Atlantic Canada with that kind of funding and thereafter in order to increase the employment opportunities in Atlantic Canada.

• (2050)

In my constituency, as I am sure the minister for housing can attest, in such metropolises as Glace Bay, Dominion, New Waterford, parts of Richmond county such as L'ardoise, Loch Lomond, Enon and Johnstown, as well as communities in Cape Breton county such as Birch Grove, Main-à-Dieu, the Victorias, South Bar, and a host of other ones, there is a large number of citizens who would like to avail themselves of RRAP.

RRAP needs more funding. I do not think any member can doubt that. In fact just the other evening at a special caucus meeting of our party my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, supported by my colleague from Saint-Léonard, made strong references and strong interventions that additional moneys were needed in that particular envelope in order to assist those individuals.

I want to clarify for members opposite, and particularly while the minister responsible for housing is in the House, what we are talking about here. Individuals, because of the restrictions which were placed on the RRAP funding, are being denied the opportunity to make application for that funding.

The figure in some municipalities, as the minister knows, is $16,000 to $17,000 and in other municipalities it may even be a little bit higher, urban as opposed to rural.

I say to the minister with great sincerity that a lot of those individuals may be over the allowable limit a small fraction and hence denied the opportunity to apply for the grant.

I do not think there would be too many members in this House who could argue that one of the things that governments ought to do for senior citizens is to provide them with the necessary wherewithal in order to remain in their own homes. I think from a cost-effective perspective that is certainly the best route to pursue. In terms of attitude, in terms of quality of life or in terms of one's own well-being, they would prefer to remain in their own homes. But the problem is they do not have sufficient resources, either publicly or privately, to make the necessary renovations to their homes.

This is the point we tried to make with the minister's predecessor and it fell on deaf ears. In fact we raised this issue in the House and his predecessor dismissed all the recommendations and sound interventions made by all sorts of members of Parliament from the various political parties.

It is absolutely essential that within the next period of time, hopefully by September, the Government of Canada could avail itself of putting a much higher priority to giving greater amounts of money under RRAP.

We are talking about such renovations as new roofs on various homes. I know hon. members opposite, particularly the minister's predecessor in that portfolio, may or may not understand that senior citizens require them for their housing stock.

It may be the necessity of putting in a second washroom downstairs in an older home. It may be a request to put a new electrical system into a home. It may be the addition of a ramp for a person who has to use a wheelchair, a cane or a walker. It may necessitate renovations with regard to new windows and perhaps a new chimney. Those are the kinds of things that RRAP has been able to do over the years.

I do not think there is a place anywhere in the country where the need is greater than that in Atlantic Canada. That is not to suggest that such a program could not or would not be utilized in other regions of the country. In point of fact I think the need has been demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that in Atlantic Canada RRAP is needed.

In my own district, in the county of Cape Breton, there is in excess of 2,000 applicants who are awaiting the possibility of making an application for the purposes of funding under RRAP to make the kinds of necessary repairs that I alluded to in my previous remarks, as well as on previous occasions to the minister's predecessor. However that fell on deaf ears with his predecessor. I would hope the minister will show more initiative, more concern for those individuals who are seeking funding under RRAP.

RRAP, as we know it and as we understand it in Atlantic Canada, could in many ways be enhanced by other government agencies. Perhaps later in the debate the Minister of Employment and Immigration will join in to give his views, but I am somewhat concerned that we have under his auspices a program called Community Futures. I would hope the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing would share with his colleagues that a Community Futures organization in co-operation with Canada Mortgage and Housing ought to give careful consideration to the housing needs of a particular community, both in the short term as well as the long term.

However, if we talk to chairpersons of various Community Futures groups across this country, and in particular in Atlantic Canada, we find that very little—and I underline very little—is being done under the auspices of Community Futures. That is not to say to the minister that no Community Futures group is doing anything with regard to housing needs, but by and large they are not. I would hope the minister would give careful consideration to having that agency of the Government of Canada attempt, as best it can and within the resources of the federal government, to expand its horizons with regard to RRAP.

There is another advantage to RRAP that I am sure members must be aware of. I have heard my colleague from London East on numerous occasions and I know what a tremendous debater he is.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dingwall: Hon. members opposite agree. He has made repeated interventions in the House to the predecessor and to the present minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing that moneys put into social housing, particularly those which focus on RRAP, the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, add immensely to increasing employment opportunities in rural and urban Canada.

I know my colleague, the former minister, is shaking his head because now he agrees. He sees the folly of his previous ways. I think he has had a change in attitude and a change in approach. It is never too late. It is never too late to change. Our only hope is that he will put additional pressure and give support to the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing so that when he goes before the cabinet committee on economic development he will be able to see that moneys under RRAP not only provide needed assistance to senior citizens and other Canadians in terms of renovations to their homes but add immensely to increasing the employment base in Canada.

There are some who would argue that it adds to the employment base in Canada but not appreciably. I disagree. For communities in Nova Scotia such as the one the minister responsible for housing comes from or ones in Pictou county, Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton county, Halifax county and other parts in Atlantic Canada, that kind of economic spin-off would create meaningful jobs. It would utilize carpenters who are so massively unemployed across this country. It would add immensely to the construction industry. In many parts of this country unemployment is in excess of 70 per cent to 75 per cent in the various trades, whether they be plumbers or electricians. These are the kinds of individuals whom we represent in the Parliament of Canada.

• (2100)

That kind of money is better spent on the housing industry, as I know my colleague from London East would agree, than the $21 million being spent on a propaganda war for the minister of industry, trade and commerce. It is absolutely asinine to be buying photographs, newspaper advertisements and television advertisements when we could be providing much needed assistance to the housing industry, consequently making an appreciable difference in the employment rate.

I have disagreed with the present minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing on a number of issues, but I hope that the minister opposite shares my objectives. I am confident that the minister opposite would want to have additional resources to answer those kinds of needs.

However, I am not certain that he has the support of his colleagues. I do not know if that minister, the phantom minister as I refer to him, the Minister of State for Small Businesses, has any understanding whatsoever of the housing needs in this country. I think that minister is more interested in having nice coloured photographs—

Some hon. members: Booklets.

Mr. Dingwall: —and booklets printed in the United States to promote some of the programs in his own department. The money that is spent on that kind of a brochure, a glossy, multicoloured brochure, could be better spent on the housing needs of ordinary Canadians.

I do not know where the Minister of Communications is when it comes to the housing needs of Canadians. We have not seen any demonstrable signs from that minister to support the diligent efforts of the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing. We think this minister is the Lone Ranger. He is the only one concerned with the housing needs of Canadians.

We do not know if the Minister of Employment and Immigration understands the importance of housing or the housing needs in this country. We think this minister has all of his priorities wrong in terms of trying to develop jobs in this particular country.

I am somewhat saddened to say that the Minister of State for Small Businesses has been a complete and utter failure, and I say that with sincerity. He has been an utter failure in supporting real economic developments in this country. He is only exceeded in that capacity by the Minister of Communications. I do not know if that minister would understand the difference between an outhouse and a four-bedroom home in downtown Toronto.

I would hope that those members opposite would give serious consideration to supporting the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing in providing the necessary dollars so desperately needed in this country for housing, as alluded to by my colleague from London

East and in some of the comments I made regarding specific programs in terms of the RRAP program.

In conclusion, I reaffirm my support for the RRAP program. I reaffirm my support for the minister responsible in terms of possible additional moneys he might be able to obtain in furthering the objectives of that program, and lessening the restrictions which have been placed on that program, urban versus rural.

I speak in somewhat of a selfish manner if I may, but I think I have a duty and an obligation on behalf of those constituents that I represent to inform the minister and to inform this House that I have a large number of constituents who wish to avail themselves of the RRAP program, but because of the restrictions which have been placed by Canada Mortgage and Housing do not have that opportunity.

I hope that the minister would give serious consideration, if not during second reading but at Committee of the Whole as well as third reading stage to at least entertain the possible intention of going back to cabinet. Perhaps the Minister of State for Small Businesses may have a change of mind and lend his support, as well as the Minister of Communications, to get the necessary kinds of dollars that all of us in this House need.

I congratulate my colleague from London East who has carried the can on this particular bill, Bill C–82, as well as on the housing needs of Canadians for quite some time.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mr. DeBlois in the chair.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order. House in committee on 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.

[*English*]

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

On Clause 3—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could ask the minister a question with respect to clause 3(1) which will deal with 28(1)(d)(i) where it makes it possible for CMHC to incorporate subsidiaries subject to an Order in Council approval.

This as I understand it would have the effect of trying to implement fees for services authority under clause 49 as well as existing property development management authority, particularly a joint undertaking with others.

I was just wondering whether or not it is possible for CMHC to do that under its current formation as opposed to having to form a subsidiary company in order to do such undertakings.

• (2110)

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Chairman, to my colleague opposite, this is really designed to deal with a situation like Granville Island, for example, in which it may be more expedient to deal with it in the form of a subsidiary organization. It is not meant to do anything radical to create a plethora of these organizations or anything like that and it may not really be something that is used a great deal. It is more an enabling situation.

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Chairman, since the minister has raised the issue of Granville Island, I would like to ask him whether it would be the intention of CMHC and the government to incorporate a separate body and transfer Granville Island to that separate organization and then privatize Granville Island.

Mr. MacKay: I know of no intention at this time to do that. If the hon. member is making such a representation I will take it under advisement. However, it is not something that CMHC has any immediate plans to do.

Clause 3 agreed to.

On Clause 4—*Profits credited to fund*

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, I would like a clarification again from the minister with respect to clause 4 which has amendments to the CMHC Act, section 29(2). This is a housekeeping amendment that authorizes CMHC to set aside money to cover future losses. I take it those losses are with respect to any losses in the mortgage insurance fund. This is technical and clarifies that authority.

I am wondering if the minister would care to comment on the need for this additional authority and whether it will stop the government from raiding CMHC of the surplus in its mortgage insurance fund as it did this year to the tune of $55 million just before the end of the fiscal year in order to make its deficit books look a little better. The needs of the corporation are not as well served as they could be when it is requiring CMHC to set aside moneys to cover future losses. Having said that it turned around and raided CMHC of $55 million in surpluses.

I wonder if the minister might want to comment on how this is going to protect the government from grabbing CMHC's surplus funds in the future.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Chairman, I want to say to my friend opposite it is not the intention to prevent the government from grabbing funds.

The member knows, as do all members in the House, that our government is involved in a very serious exercise to try to reduce the deficit so we will have discretionary funding so that we will be able to respond to some of the requests that have been made, such as the one made for the RRAP program by his colleague opposite, the member for Cape Breton—East Richmond.

It might not be a bad time to reflect upon the comments made by the treasurer of the province of Ontario, Mr. Laughren. When he was commenting on budgetary matters, I think it was on March 21, he indicated that he never wanted to see the government of his province put in a position such as the federal government found itself. To his credit he is resisting.

I think he indicated, as the member for Kingston and the Islands would know being a financial expert, that around maybe 14 or 15 cents of every dollar of the revenues of the province of Ontario are applied to paying the interest on past borrowings, which is only about half of what the federal government has to contend with.

When this money was appropriated from the fund which my colleague from London East talks about it was a considered act and it was done after careful consultation so that it would not interfere with the actuarial sums of the MIF. I can tell him that this other provision does not have any sinister background. As he indicated it is a housekeeping and expedient thing for the corporation to do.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 9—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, with respect to clause 9 and the changes in the National Housing Act, subsection 11(1)(a), dealing with co-operatives, I want to ask the minister if the content of this amendment would remove the statutory requirements that CMHC review housing co-operatives' by-laws.

I know that this is just an administrative step but in the past co-operatives were supported by CMHC and the federal government. Unfortunately this government has not as of this year because it cancelled co-operative housing programs. That was a brutal blow to those people who were looking for a form of housing that had security of tenure, that was affordable and had a mixed income concept.

CMHC now wants to not review the by-laws of the co-operatives. It would seem to me that the government, and if not this government then future governments, and CMHC would want to ensure that by-laws could not be changed by co-operatives. By-laws that are passed can easily be changed in the future. If one wants to ensure that co-operatives are functioning as they should and are protecting public investments then those by-laws should be reviewed on an ongoing basis by CMHC.

I am wondering whether the minister would comment as to why this clause is being put in.

• (2120)

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): I am informed that Canada Mortgage and Housing will continue to review these by-laws. It is put in for flexibility to eliminate the practice of more or less making it mandatory. Provincial legislation has a role to play here.

Despite any misgivings my colleague has about the lack of supervision or lack of interest he does not have to be concerned. We are still going to be looking at the by-laws and provincial legislation also has a role.

Mr. Fontana: I am not entirely satisfied. CMHC may want flexibility but it has that flexibility now. It is clear that clause 9 essentially will be that the rule will not be that they will review the by-laws.

I would like to deal with co-operatives because the by-laws of the co-operatives may very well relate to the indexed link mortgage. That has been the model for the past five years in the delivering of co-operatives.

The co-operatives have been killed. The ILM, indexed link mortgage, is a popular financing mechanism for co-operatives. While the federally subsidized co-operatives unfortunately might be finished in this country there are opportunities for co-operatives and other social housing groups to look at ILMs as a feasible mechanism.

I understand that even the Canadian Bankers' Association supports the ILMs. I am wondering if the minister would care to comment because in one of those by-laws the ILM may very well be mentioned. I am wondering whether that review of those by-laws is not absolutely necessary for CMHC to ensure that co-operatives are functioning within the mandate of the federal government's policy with respect to social housing and market housing.

Mr. MacKay: I think there may be a valid distinction to be made with respect to the charter and the by-laws. In any event, my colleague mentions the ILM mortgage. We are still involved, as he probably knows, in discussions with officials in the omnipotent Department of Finance. There may well be a light at the end of the tunnel or there might even be a tunnel at the end of the light.

I can assure the House and my colleague from London East that this is an ongoing issue. We are looking very closely at the future of ILM mortgages.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 17—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, clause 17 deals with this new amendment to the National Housing Act, section 15.1, that will essentially authorize CMHC to make loans, just like the approved lender loans for housing where CMHC will be providing financial assistance to setting operating agreements. This is a relatively new authorization that will allow CMHC to directly finance social housing and similar projects.

I would like to know what the criteria will be for writing those loans directly. As the minister knows, there are present agreements that will in fact come due. There are federal-provincial agreements that are in place now. How and when will CMHC directly intervene in financing that specific social housing program?

There are a number of groups, namely the Canadian Housing Renewal Association, and even co-operative groups, the Co-operative Housing Federation, as well as some municipalities that have some questions as to whether and when CMHC will decide to directly finance those projects.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Just scanning this I think that clause 17 to which my colleague refers is really concerned with the title. Clause 18 is the clause that has the substance in it. Insofar as the criteria are concerned it is as he would expect. It is where we can expect to get the proper financial backing. Of course we must go by reputation. It is not going to affect to any extent the existing arrangements that are made with financial institutions with which we have been used to doing business.

I cannot give him an exhaustive or even an exact definition of all the criteria. However, the reputations and capacity of the designated lenders with which we will be dealing are something that will be looked at very carefully.

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Chairman, I do apologize. Clause 17 is the title so I will make my comments with respect to clauses 17 and 18.

How will that criteria be established? Will it be done by regulation? Will it be done by CMHC directly?

While I am at it, one of the benefits that CMHC has indicated will accrue because of direct financing is that the government may save some $150 million over five years.

I am wondering whether CMHC intends to use those funds for the purposes of rehabilitating the public housing programs the minister, my colleague, the member for Don Valley East and I spoke about, which are in need of serious repairs. Is the $150 million going to be a dividend that is going to be paid to the government or will an additional mandate be given to CMHC in order to regenerate those funds for more useful purposes in terms of providing more housing and making sure those public housing units that CMHC now manages are maintained to the standards to which everybody else has to maintain them?

Mr. MacKay: We would hope that at least a portion of the savings that we are reasonably confident about can be achieved by this direct method of financing, which is another option as well as the delegation to direct lending, which I think my colleague would agree might save us as much as 50 basis points under some circumstances. We would be able to take some of those funds and use them, as he and other members have suggested, to refurbish existing public housing. That is a very good suggestion and one we hope to explore and to carry out.

Clause 17 agreed to.

Clauses 18 to 21 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 22—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, clause 22 deals with the National Housing Act, section 19. While it is a housekeeping and incidental matter, it does repeal the mortgage and loan purchase fund. One could make the case that discontinued funds really have no substantive role any more because a central borrowing authority is being created in order to give CMHC flexibility.

Could the minister provide us with an outline as to why they are removing flexibility presently in the National Housing Act such as the mortgage and loan purchase fund which may be required or may be a useful tool in the future?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): It is my understanding that this has already been repealed in a sense in that the effect of this legislation sets out CMHC's programs. We have taken out of the NHA basically all of the borrowing and investment authorities. Should this bill be adopted by the House, we will have one large borrowing and investment authority in the CMHC act. A lot of the other provisions, while they have served a useful purpose in the past, will in effect be obsolete in light of the new flexibility and the central borrowing authority we will have.

I can understand his observations. However, that in effect is the general purpose of what the bill hopes to accomplish.

Clause 22 agreed to.

Clause 23 agreed to.

On Clause 24—*Agents*

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, clause 24 is a new one and it deals with the approved lenders and indicates that CMHC may authorize approved lenders, municipalities and provinces to process loan insurance on behalf of CMHC.

• (2130)

I have no difficulty with that. Part of the main purpose for this bill is to have formations deliver the mortgage insurance program other than CMHC and therefore expedite the processing of applications and perhaps even save money.

I was rather curious in terms of the words municipalities and provinces. I wonder if the minister would care to give me an example of why or where a municipality or a province may want to process the loan insurance program itself when usually it would be a bank. As I understand it the banks are providing the mortgage insurance now, primarily the commercial banks. CMHC underwrites the risk to bring that level from 75 per cent up to 95 per cent of the mortgage now. I wonder why the words municipalities and provinces are mentioned. Is that in any way related to the constitutional discussions that are going on and therefore will allow CMHC to directly deal with municipalities and provinces?

I am rather curious to know if the minister might take a little bit of time to explain my concern with an explanation as to why municipalities and provinces are named and whether it really does have anything to do with the constitutional discussions that are going on.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): I can assure my colleague that it has nothing to do with the constitutional discussions. There may be times under a federal-provincial agreement when this would be a useful provision. There is really nothing more to it than that. It is enabling in effect and it is there to be utilized if needed.

I want to repeat again that this has no application to the best of my knowledge to any of the provisions that are being negotiated at this time with respect to the Constitution as it may relate to housing.

Mr. Fontana: That answer is not good enough. Would I then understand that if I moved an amendment to strike municipalities and provinces the minister would not have any objections to that and neither would CMHC? I would like the member to give me an example of when municipalities have asked for the authority or provinces have asked for the authority to deliver mortgage loan insurance. For the most part CMHC is doing it now. It wants to essentially let the mortgage lenders do it because they are underwriting most of the risk and providing most of the money. I would like to know if that means that municipalities will be able to lend money for

the purposes of housing or whether provinces will be able to do so. I am not getting the right answer and unless I get a good answer I am prepared to move to strike the words municipalities and provinces unless I am quite convinced there is a good reason to have these two formations in place.

Mr. MacKay: Basically it is just part of the business process. There is nothing there, as I say, that is intended to be irregular. It is just a case that part of the process of ensuring and obtaining finance may be utilized under certain circumstances by the provinces or municipalities. It is something that gives the act more flexibility and gives Canada Mortgage and Housing more options in dealing with these entities. That is all.

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Chairman, I am sure that the minister would acknowledge to this Committee of the Whole that while this constitutional debate is going on in this country with respect to governments in housing, average Canadians are sometimes fed up with governments fighting turf wars over whose responsibility it is. They want problems in this country solved and housing is one of them.

The minister had discussions with big city mayors and with the Canadian Federation of Municipalities. The one thing that is clear is that when it comes to housing they believe that CMHC is absolutely essential to ensuring that we do have a national housing program, a national housing equity across this country. They are nervous about what potentially may occur to this great Crown corporation that represents Canadians from across the country, from Vancouver right to St. John's, Newfoundland. It does provide the security that people will be treated equally across this country.

I would like to understand and know whether it would be possible for municipalities and provinces to process loan insurance as per this new clause that has been introduced. I am rather suspicious that it has much more to do with flexibility in terms of potential constitutional results than it has to do with the delivery of the mortgage insurance process.

I wonder if the minister could try to convince me and perhaps others that in fact inserting those two words, municipalities and provinces, does not take away at some point in time the glue of CMHC in terms of its national obligations.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry if I am not getting my point across adequately but the provinces are in effect doing this now. They are underwriting it now. This will make the process more visible. Canada Mortgage and Housing still has the ability to approve it in the final instance. This just allows them to be more flexible in doing what they are already doing and have been doing for some time.

Again I want to assure my colleagues that it has nothing to do with any constitutional negotiations.

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Chairman, I know that the minister has CMHC officials near him. Could he give me an example of a few provinces or municipalities that are now delivering such a program so that for the record we could have it and I could be assured that that is exactly the past, present, and perhaps future precedent?

Mr. MacKay: Again, Mr. Chairman, I stand to be corrected, but I think all of the provinces—the member asked for a specific province—are doing it at the present time.

What this does is allow them slightly more power to commit Canada Mortgage and Housing to do this but it is not a giant step or anything like that. It just improves and enhances what has been going on. They are doing it.

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Chairman, as I read this clause, it indicates that the corporation may authorize any approved lender, municipality, province, or agency of a province to act as agent for the corporation in insuring loans. It goes on to say that in the case of an approved lender, insuring the loans that are made by the approved lender.

I take it in the case of the provinces and municipalities we are talking here of merely insuring loans that are made by CMHC. Is that the case? It is not insuring loans made by themselves.

Does it mean that we are in effect by this clause authorizing the municipalities and the provinces to go into the mortgage insurance business and to provide mortgage insurance themselves from a mortgage insurance fund of their own?

If it does not mean that, I would have to again ask the question that my friend across the way has asked, what specifically does it mean?

• (2140)

If there is now a province or municipality that is either lending money for mortgages or insuring mortgage loans I would like to know which ones they are.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Chairman, the provinces under this provision would be acting as an agent for Canada Mortgage and Housing.

They have been acting, but not in the sense that they can do so independently. This gives them greater scope but it does not allow them to lend money, as my colleague suggests, but simply to act as an agent of Canada Mortgage and Housing.

Mr. Redway: Mr. Chairman, I take it then that this provision just delegates the authority to approve all the insurance provisions that CMHC has to the provincial government or municipal governments, as the case may be, that it only concerns the paperwork and the mortgage insurance fund stays with CMHC.

I take it this would only be for social housing or assisted housing projects and not to provide for a private market home ownership kind of mortgage loans insurance. Is that right?

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Chairman, my distinguished colleague has stated the situation as I understand it. That is correct.

Clause 24 agreed to.

On clause 25—*Aggregate maximum*

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Chairman, being somewhat fearful of rushing in where prudent angels may fear to tread I would nonetheless ask the minister about clause 25 and its new section 21 and clause 28 and its renewed section 21.5. What is meant by the phrase "the aggregate outstanding amount", or in the case of clause 28 and section 21.5, "the aggregate outstanding principal amount"?

Does that mean at any given time the total of the original principal amounts issued or is there a running total based on the aggregate of the paid down principals at any given time?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Chairman, it is the aggregate. It is up to $100 billion.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Chairman, to take a simplified example let us say I have a mortgage with an original principal of $100,000 and after five years I paid that principal down to $99,000.

For the purpose of the aggregate set out in the bill would the aggregate include the $100,000 figure until such time as the loan is completely paid off or would it, after five years, be the $99,000 figure and so on as it is paid down?

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Chairman, would my colleague run his question by me one more time?

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Chairman, I am trying to find out what precisely is meant by the phrases the "aggregate outstanding amount" and the "aggregate outstanding principal".

In a fevered attempt to explain this question let us again assume that the entire portfolio consisted of an initial principal of $100,000 and that after five years, because of payments on that principal, that amount had been reduced to $80,000.

For the purpose of these sections of the act would the aggregate outstanding amount still be the original $100,000 after five years or would it have become the $80,000 that in fact was the outstanding principal at that time? Which would be the total for the purposes of the act?

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Chairman, it would be $80,000, it would be the lesser figure.

Clause 25 agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 35 inclusive agreed to

On Clause 36—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, my comments would be on clauses 36, 37 and 38 as they relate to changes to the National Housing Act, sections 51(2)(b), 52 and 54. It talks about rehabilitation. My question relates very much to RRAP and ERP. In fact it calls for a maximum for loans forgiveness and contributions to be set by the Governor in Council rather than by regulations.

I know this is a simplified procedure, but I get rather nervous with respect to Order in Council as opposed to doing it by regulation because the regulations are transparent and up front. Everyone knows exactly what the rules of the game are as opposed to Orders in Council which are subject to a number of potentially different factors. I am wondering whether or not the minister might want to explain this.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): The member makes a good point with his observations on the merits of Orders in Council and regulations as he has stated, but the intent here is simply to let us respond more quickly to the needs of RRAP customers as it were. We are looking at ways of perhaps enhancing or improving the delivery and some of the limits on RRAP. We thought that by doing it this way we could do it more quickly and be more responsive. That is the only reason for it.

Clause 36 agreed to.

Clauses 37 to 40 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 41—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, if you want to call clauses 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45, I do not have any problem with doing that because all of these essentially have to do with repealing separate borrowing authorities for several programs and in fact changing them to that central borrowing authority for flexibility.

Let me ask again with respect to indexed linked mortgages whether or not we can get a commitment from the minister that this financial mechanism, which has proven its weight in gold with respect to co-operatives, has the support of CMHC, Canadian bankers, the co-operatives and even groups that may use it in home ownership, and would not take away the ability of CMHC or the government to continue to use them for other uses.

Can the minister tell me whether or not in any of clauses 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45 separate borrowing authorities may have been required? I know ILMs are now something in the neighbourhood of about $180 million. I mean CMHC has been promoting pension funds. Will the passage of these clauses kill the ILMs?

• (2150)

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Chairman, my initial reaction from listening to my colleague was that it would not. I have checked with my officials and I am told that indeed that is the case. It will not affect it whatsoever.

I might say to him that I share his positive feelings toward the ILM as an instrument, but unfortunately I cannot give him any commitment tonight that this will be quickly utilized. I am an advocate for it and I know he is, so we will continue our discussions with the Department of Finance.

Clause 41 agreed to.

Clause 42 to 45 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 46—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, with respect to clause 46, it introduces changes to section 95(1) of the National Housing Act. It relates to housing expense contributions. I take it that this is authorizing CMHC to make contributions to landlords to reduce rentals including where CMHC is the landlord.

I understand that this broadens the class of eligible contribution recipients. Can the minister tell us how that is being monitored? Is it by virtue of agreements with specific landlords?

I want to know what safeguards are in place to ensure that when CMHC is making contributions to landlords to reduce rents, hopefully with the view of providing affordable rents, they are living up to those agreements and they can be revoked at any time those landlords are not fulfilling their obligations.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Chairman, I can assure my colleague that these will be monitored. As he knows, this provision and the necessity for it were perhaps best illustrated when we had to use a device in order to deal with the province of Prince Edward Island which had no shared cost housing in the conventional sense. This is one reason for that particular clause.

I take his admonition on the other. We will be monitoring it to make sure there is no abuse.

Clause 46 agreed to.

Clause 47 agreed to.

On clause 48—*Condition re sale, etc.*

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Chairman, I note in reading this proposed new section, section 97.1, which briefly provides that the corporation may require any person who is to benefit from a loan of the corporation at a lower interest rate or a contribution from the

corporation or a forgiveness of any amount by the corporation, to provide the corporation with an undertaking that basically would, in the event of the person failing to comply with any of the requirements associated with the benefit, compel that person to pay back the benefit in whole or in part to the corporation.

For the purpose of this section clearly the definition of person is very important. I understand as regards housing co-ops, for example, the co-op is itself a corporate person and as regards a non-profit housing society, for example, that society is a corporate person. There is no problem there.

What I am wondering is whether or not it may be possible to further back that up either by the co-op or the housing society, in the instance of the co-op backing it up to its individual members or in the instance of the society backing it up to its individual board or even individual residents. Is that contemplated in this proposed section?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): I think the best way to answer that initially is to say that the intention, as I understand it, is at the project level. I do not think it is intended to go back to the individual members. It is at the level of the project itself.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Chairman, I had assumed that was the case. What troubles me somewhat is I see nothing here that precludes the individual project operator, be it the corporate person of the co-op or of the board or of the society, from backing that further to the membership on the one hand and the residents or board on the other.

I was just wondering if the minister could identify something in the new section or elsewhere in the act that would prevent that further backing of that responsibility in this instance.

Mr. MacKay: I am not sure I can fully answer my colleague without conferring with my officials, but I think it is a question of interpretation.

I think it is fairly clear that it was intended to operate at the project level and it would not be applied in an unreasonable or shall we say a Draconian way. If he wishes to give me a moment or two, I will try to elaborate a little more.

Mr. Harvey: I would be willing to let the matter hang.

Mr. MacKay: I would appreciate it. I do not want to give a misleading answer.

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): We have heard the horror stories of where in fact this has occurred. We obviously want to stop it.

Can the minister say whether or not this will give the authority to CMHC to rewrite some of these old agreements and perhaps even look at the principle of retroactivity to ensure these loopholes are closed and closed quickly so that in fact nothing like this can occur again as has happened in the past.

Mr. MacKay: On the question of retroactivity I think the answer is definitely no. Again, I am sorry I cannot be more specific on some of the nuances here, but there would be no retroactivity involved.

Clause 48 agreed to.

On Clause 49—

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Chairman, this appears to be a very positive move on the part of CMHC in order to start charging fees for its services.

I am just wondering whether or not these fees are going to be charged to social housing groups or municipalities? Where is the criteria? I know you talk about training and non-profit but some of these fees now that are offered by CMHC to groups are in effect done now gratis, free of charge, as part of the partnership that exists between CMHC, the provinces, the non-profit groups or what have you.

I agree that sometimes the fee for services is a good idea but I would like to know who is going to be charged and when will they be charged because it is just a blank and wide-open clause. I would like some more specificity with respect to those fees for services.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): It is really basically an enabling provision. As the explanatory note in the bill as my colleague no doubt knows states, it is enabling to supply housing-related property management and development services to federal government departments and agencies. That is the main purpose of it. We are not going to impinge on what public works does, for example, but to the extent it relates to housing expertise it would enable us to deal with a situation like Summerside where there was a need for our services.

It allows CMHC to supply services to support federal-provincial housing arrangements in a cost-effective manner, so it gets us into that area as well. It makes it clear that Canada Mortgage and Housing may charge fees for these services.

I cannot see us, to use the vernacular, soaking non-profit housing groups or co-ops, but there may be certain services that we have that we could assist them with for a modest charge.

I will check with my officials here but I do not think there is any schedule of fees or any plans have been made. It is an enabling provision.

Clause 49 agreed to.

Clauses 50 to 52 inclusive agreed to.

On Clause 53—*Coming into force*

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): On a technical point. I know that clause 53(2) makes revised CMHC income tax status effective January 1, 1991. That was one and a half years ago.

I know that clause 53(3) talks about ceilings on the insurance and the MBS guarantees effective January 1, 1992. Is January 1, 1991 the date? It is about a year and one-half too late.

• (2200)

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): I will put it again in the vernacular if I may. That is the deal that has been made with finance, basically. That is the arrangement that has been made. It is part of the discussions.

Mr. Fontana: Not to hold it up here but perhaps I would be interested to see in the financial figures why finance would have wanted it on January 1, 1991. Perhaps that information could be provided to the Senate when it is reviewing this bill as well.

Mr. MacKay: That certainly could be arranged. My colleague at finance is very benevolent in this regard and I am sure he did it for our own best interests.

Clause 53 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.

Adjournment Debate

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to elaborate for a few minutes on a question which I asked the other day in respect of the government's proposed purchase of $4.3 billion "worth" of anti-submarine and search and rescue helicopters.

The government's proposal is to buy 35 EH-101 helicopters, which are basically British helicopters, for anti-submarine purposes, and 15 of the same helicopters to be equipped for search and rescue purposes. These are to replace the current Sea King helicopters that are used on board our ships for anti-submarine and other purposes, and the 12 land-based Labradors which are used for search and rescue.

We have heard now from the Associate Minister of National Defence and from the Prime Minister that no decision has yet been officially made. What we have seen is that the Department of National Defence has made a very clear and specific recommendation to proceed with these helicopters.

We have also had the privilege of reading correspondence from the chief of the air services, Lieutenant-General Huddleston, and the commanding officer of air transportation who have really not criticized the idea of modernizing the current fleet, but rather said they do not want to proceed with that until the proposed purchase of new helicopters has at least been tested on cabinet.

Cabinet has before it now the possibility of a decision on this helicopter proposal. In the House, the ministers responsible have ducked the question of whether they are actually going to recommend it. In fact, today the Associate Minister of National Defence said that no decision had yet been made, no recommendation had gone forward.

I would like to say on behalf of the people of Canada that the government has to not only look carefully at this proposal, but ought in the general interest decide now that this proposal should not be proceeded with.

The proposal is obsolete in view of the changed world conditions and what we are hearing from authorities in the United States and other countries. First of all, with the end of the cold war, the end of the Warsaw pact and the dismantling of the Soviet Union itself, the Soviet submarine threat to North America has ended. If there is any sub threat to the western nations it is of a totally different order, and as a result of that the U.S. Congress has frozen a similar proposal from the U.S. navy. In fact, the U.S. navy has proceeded to modernize the Labradors, and because the Labradors are twin rotor, they are far safer working on search and rescue than would be the EH–101 helicopters that DND proposes we should be spending $52 million a crack for.

Our position is that, sure, the navy and the air force in Canada need helicopters, but for one–fifth the price they can end the proposal and can save the taxpayers billions of dollars. It is a responsibility the government should respond to.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians know that there have been drastic changes in the over–all geostrategic situation. The conflict between east and west has thankfully receded, we hope permanently, into the pages of history.

That being said, all members are no doubt aware that there are unfortunately significant areas of instability throughout the world.

The April 1992 statement on defence policy makes it clear that Canada cannot isolate itself from the world. We must be concerned about threats to the larger community of nations with whom we live, work and trade.

Specifically that April statement notes, and I quote:

> Military capability is in itself an essential element of national policy, even in peacetime. The government is responsible for the surveillance and control of areas under Canadian jurisdiction, be they on land, in the air or at sea, regardless of any immediate or apprehended activity by anybody else.

There is a limit to which a nation can relinquish its defence responsibilities and continue to remain an independent country. If Canada is to maintain the capability to carry out surveillance and control of our sovereign areas of responsibility as well as operate in supportive collective security, then we must have the equipment and expertise for a general purpose capability.

The proposed new shipborne helicopters of which we have heard so much recently will, in fact, be used in multiple roles. The helicopters will possess a wide variety of capabilities, including anti–submarine warfare, anti–shipping surveillance, and of course search and rescue. These helicopters will represent the main weapon system of the new Canadian patrol frigates and, as such, are essential to the full realization of the operational effectiveness of the new frigates.

• (2210)

I also want to add that these helicopters will contribute to the Department of National Defence support of other government departments in the roles of fisheries protection, drug interdiction, environmental monitoring, and protecting environmental resources.

Much has been made of alternative options to spending funds on the new shipborne helicopters, including modernizing the existing CH–113 Labrador fleet. Does the hon. member really want the brave men and women of the Canadian forces eventually to be flying 70–year old helicopters because these ships are to be used to the year 2035.

[*Translation*]

FRENCH COLLEGES

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, on May 4, I asked the Secretary of State why the matter of a French college in northern Ontario was dragging on so long. The Bourbeau report, which unequivocally recommended building a French college in northern Ontario, was published two years ago. The issue has moved forward very slowly. People were and still are tired of being told again and again that something is coming soon.

First of all, I would like to make my colleagues in the House aware that such a college is essential.

At present, it is sad to see young people move out, exiled as it were, to southern Ontario. The attraction of the big city and the possibility of completing their education in their mother tongue are the main reasons for this unfortunate migration. There is no doubt that northern Ontario loses a little of its future every time a student decides to stay in the big city. Of course, the ideal solution is to have a French college in our region as soon as possible.

It is estimated that about 22,000 people have left the north in the past 15 years. Most of them are retirees and young people. The time is therefore right to found a new academic institution which would put great emphasis on the quality of written and spoken French. The illiteracy rate among francophones is thought to be 40 per cent. This situation is urgent, even though a sustained effort should be made at the primary and secondary levels starting now.

Nevertheless, in a national perspective that would ideally seek to create a climate of acceptance for linguistic minorities, such an initiative should be supported. Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees Francophones outside Quebec the right to education in French at the primary and secondary levels, where numbers warrant. In my humble opinion, these rights could be extended to the post-secondary level and it could be left to the Supreme Court of Canada to decide if such an extension were challenged.

From a practical point of view, students and parents would save tremendously on transportation costs; depending on where the college was located, the costs of room and board would be substantially less for those who would stay with their parents. Establishing such an institution in the north would also provide very significant economic benefits.

In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity to remind the government that the province of Ontario announced on the weekend that it was approving the creation of two colleges, one in the north and the other in the south. This is subject to a contribution from the federal government, which I think is urgent.

Might the government be waiting for the right moment to make it an election promise? I hope not, because one should not play games like that with people's futures.

[*English*]

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, since at least 1989 it has been a priority of this government to do whatever it can to help the government of Ontario meet the legitimate demand of franco-Ontarian communities for the creation of a viable network of French language community colleges.

Of course in becoming involved in a project such as this we always have to keep in mind that education is in the area of provincial jurisdiction.

Nevertheless it is our conviction that the federal government has a duty to co-operate with the provinces to help ensure the highest possible standards of services to our official language minority communities throughout Canada, when the provinces indicate to us that they want our help and co-operation in this field.

In the case of Ontario, we are dealing here with a project of three separate colleges, one in northern Ontario, one in southern Ontario and one in the eastern part of the province.

The third project, *La Cité collégiale* has already been completed and is now receiving students right here in Ottawa—Carleton. It has proved a resounding success with an enrolment of almost 50 per cent of the number originally forecast.

It is in fact the tangible result of the agreement signed in 1990 between the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. That accord covered a seven-year period and an involvement of federal contributions of $50 million. To date, the government has paid out $19.5 million to the province as its share of expenses.

Negotiations with Ontario are proceeding for the creation of two other colleges and have been going on for the past several months. During that time the Secretary of State has had regular meetings with the provincial Minister of Colleges and Universities, the hon. Richard Allen.

There are of course problems to solve in terms of cost, definition of perceived location and institutions involved but discussions have been going on well and real progress is being made. We are confident that the agreement can be reached very soon.

Adjournment Debate

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, let me try to bring my hon. friend opposite back to duties closer to those he has as parliamentary secretary.

On March 25, the government announced the removal of the last vestiges of significant limitations on foreign investment in the Canadian petroleum industry. This move will create no new investment in our price-depressed oil patch. As analyst Ian Doig was quoted as saying in a March 21 *Globe and Mail* article: "Why would you invest in an industry that has had a rate of return of less than 5 per cent in the last two or three years?"

This universal abandonment of restrictions on American control in the Canadian oil patch will, however, effectively treat the symptoms of the ills facing Canada's strategic energy industry with a further dose of the disease. Disease it is, for while Canadian control builds Canada, foreign control bleeds Canada.

Between 1980 or 1981 and 1990, Canadian petroleum companies generated a modest $1.5 billion net flow of capital into Canada. By contrast, foreign-controlled companies extracted over $25 billion from Canada including nearly $8 billion in dividends alone.

In the same period, Canadian-controlled companies reinvested 94 per cent of their cash flow. Foreign-controlled companies reinvested much less, just 77 per cent.

If that were not enough, the Conservatives caved in on this issue right smack in the middle of negotiations on the North American free trade agreement. The government effectively stepped away from the bargaining table for an instant, and there, in the same room utterly without strings attached, in full view of the Mexican and American negotiators threw one of Canada's best bargaining chips out the window.

The energy minister denies that his government's action was a result of pressure from the United States government. Maybe, but note that for at least the last four years the annual "National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers" issued by the office of the U.S. trade representative in Washington, D.C. has contained specific reference to Canada's foreign ownership restrictions in energy.

In any event, it seems virtually certain that this relaxation of our limits to American investment in Canada's energy sector, a move taken right during the NAFTA negotiations, increased the pressure on Mexico to do the same.

As a result, this will have the effect, at a stroke, of significantly increasing the likelihood that large volumes of Mexican natural gas—so far starved for investment capital—will come on stream in less than a decade. It will thereby compete directly with Alberta gas, holding down its already pitifully low price. Some strategy.

I ask the government again: Does it have any estimate of how much more capital foreign-controlled companies will bleed from Canada as a result of this retreat, this capitulation, this abandonment of the Canadian national interest in Canada's national energy industry?

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the question by my hon. friend from Edmonton East regarding the potential level of foreign investment that might result from the announced changes to the foreign investment regime in the oil and gas industry in Canada.

The member knows the oil and gas industry has been performing poorly. Compared to other sectors of the Canadian economy, profit levels have been low and the level of capital investment has been insufficient to prevent a decline in employment. Since 1989 it has been estimated that the oil and gas industry has lost 9,000 jobs in western Canada.

Foreign ownership rules are only one of many factors influencing the level of foreign investment in the oil and gas industry. Other factors affecting the financial performance of the industry such as the price of oil, finding costs and the prospects for growth in the industry are very important.

Because so many factors are involved it is next to impossible to predict the level of new foreign investment in the industry in the long run. However, the executive director of the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada has estimated that the changes should stimulate increased investment within the year which may lead to increased annual investment flows in the range of $300 million to $400 million.

The honourable member quotes figures in an attempt to show that foreign ownership of the oil and gas industry has led to excessive repatriation of funds. The truth is that the outflow of funds during the period 1980 to 1989 was primarily due to the increased levels of Canadian ownership of the industry through takeover activity. Further, the $8 billion in dividends paid to foreigners over the past 10 years is not out of line compared with the $50 billion of investment and the roughly $60 billion of cash flow their investment dollars have generated.

The elimination of the Canadianization policy has allowed Canadian and foreign oil and gas companies to rationalize their operations and improve their competitiveness in global markets. This will contribute to a stronger industry with increased investment opportunities to improve future prospects for prosperity for all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being 10.22 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1), the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.