



# House of Commons Debates

---

VOLUME 133

NUMBER 125

1st SESSION

35th PARLIAMENT

---

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, November 17, 1994**

---

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 17, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

(1005)

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Prayers*  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 109, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs.

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

\* \* \*

### CANADA COMMUNICATION GROUP

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as was promised to the House on September 19, I wish to table at this time a summary report on the investigation of advance payments for internal government contractual arrangements with respect to the Canada Communication Group and Consulting and Audit Canada. This report is in both official languages.

## STATISTICS CANADA

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table, in both official languages, a summary report of the investigation of advance payments for internal government contractual arrangements with regard to advance payments to Statistics Canada.

\* \* \*

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C), 1994-95

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (C) for the financial year ending March 31, 1995, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, supplementary estimates (C).

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources regarding Bill C-48, an act to establish a Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts.

#### GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on Bill C-52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, with an amendment.

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 48th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs concerning membership of committees.

*Routine Proceedings*

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in this report later this day.

\* \* \*

**STATUTORY PROGRAM EVALUATION ACT**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-289, an act to provide for evaluations of statutory programs.

(1010)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my private member's bill, the short title of which is the Statutory Program Evaluation Act. This bill will establish a process whereby all statutory program spending is reviewed by Parliament on a cyclical basis.

In his 1993 report, the Auditor General stated that some 70 per cent of all government spending is now statutory spending. Spending is not reviewed or even voted on by Parliament once the original bill is enacted. It has been many a long year since Parliament voted on some statutory programs, spending millions of dollars annually.

I believe this bill has significance in that it will turn the tide of authority which has been flowing from Parliament to government and cabinet back to the elected representatives and Parliament.

Spending without review or analysis is clearly unacceptable in these times of burgeoning debt. The Statutory Program Evaluation Act would cause the examination of all program spending based on the following objective criteria. First, is the program still required, is it relevant, or are we just spending money by virtue of habit? Second, is the program effective in meeting its objectives or are we spending money with the greatest of intentions but missing the mark? Third, is the program being delivered efficiently knowing that our resources are limited and that our taxpayers deserve good management? Fourth, can the purposes of the program be better achieved through different means?

The Auditor General stated that the program evaluation act has great potential to save millions of dollars and I call on my colleagues to support the bill.

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

\* \* \*

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C)**

## REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr.

Speaker, I would like to move, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 81(5) and Standing Order 81(6):

That supplementary estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995 laid upon the table this day be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with the consent of the House, I move, that the 48th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, tabled today, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

[English]

**VIOLENCE**

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, following consultation with representatives of the parties, I seek leave at this time to move a motion, of which I gave notice yesterday. I seek unanimous consent to move the following motion:

That this House strongly condemn the recent shooting of Vancouver, B.C. doctor, Gary Romalis, extend its wishes for a full and speedy recovery to Dr. Romalis, and urge the appropriate authorities to take all necessary steps to prevent violence directed at those providing legal medical procedures in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, if there is unanimous consent to put the motion I would briefly clarify the purpose of it.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** There is not unanimous consent.

\* \* \*

(1015)

**PETITIONS**

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table a petition containing approximately 170 signatures which was conveyed to me from my riding of Cambridge.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality.

*Routine Proceedings*

## ASSISTED SUICIDE

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I wish to present two petitions.

The first is signed by 665 constituents praying that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by 1,146 constituents. Pursuant to Standing Order 36 I present it to the House. It states that your petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

## GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today I have a petition signed by 158 constituents of the riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt. The number of people who are opposed to additional legislation for gun control is growing.

The petitioners are calling on the House assembled to oppose further legislation for firearms acquisition and possession and to further provide strict guidelines and mandatory sentencing for the use or possession of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime. I agree with my petitioners.

## ASSISTED SUICIDE

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table petitions signed by many residents of my constituency of Burnaby—Kingsway who draw to the attention of the House the fact that the current provisions of the Criminal Code deny people who are suffering from terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to choose freely and voluntarily to end their lives with the assistance of a physician.

Therefore the petitioners call upon Parliament to amend the code to ensure the right of all Canadians to die with dignity by allowing people with terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to the assistance of a physician in ending their lives at a time of their choice subject to strict safeguards to prevent abuse and to ensure that the decision is free, informed, competent and voluntary.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition to the House. The petitioners are from my riding of Mississauga South. They pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions here today that I would like to present. The first calls upon Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

## RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is concerned with the sanctity of life. The petitioners pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings. I share the concerns about the fact that there is no such law in Canada right now.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** The third petition, Mr. Speaker, is that the petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation. I agree with these petitioners.

(1020)

## ASSISTED SUICIDE

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I too have the honour of presenting a petition on behalf of Canadians who respect the sanctity of human life. The petitioners request that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and, that Parliament make no change in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia. I add my support to these petitions.

## RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am honoured to present a petition on behalf of 48 Albertans, many of whom are my constituents. These petitioners request that Parliament act immediately to

*Government Orders*

extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

Not only am I pleased to present this petition but to endorse it as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I propose that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Shall all questions stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

---

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF RELATIONS ACT**

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-58, an act to amend the Public Service Staff Relations Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, be read the second time and referred to committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, on March 10, 1994 the Federal Court of Appeal decided on its judgment on the Queen v. Yvon R.H. Gingras that RCMP members were entitled to the bilingual bonus now paid to eligible federal public servants.

The court ruled in this case that the bilingual bonus had to be paid because the RCMP was listed as one of the agencies for which Treasury Board is the employer under part 1 of schedule 1 of the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

According to the ruling RCMP members, both uniformed and civilian, are part of the public service. This government is taking appropriate steps to respect the court decision and to live up to its obligation to pay the bonus to current and former members of the RCMP who are entitled to it.

Strictly speaking, the court's decision dealt only with the bilingual bonuses issue. It therefore did not address issues of labour relations or issues of health and safety. In this sense, the legislation confirms that the existing arrangements should continue.

[Translation]

I would like to stress the fact that within the RCMP, in accordance with the divisional work relations system in place, management meets with representatives who are elected by the members. I can assure you that the RCMP occupational safety

and health measures are totally in line with the requirements of the Canada Labour Code.

The bill we are bringing in today will clarify the status of the RCMP by amending several provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act and of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.

(1025)

The proposed amendments do not change the status of the RCMP. They only confirm the status it had before the Federal Court ruling.

[English]

As such, the amendments merely remedy ambiguities in the legislation not intended by Parliament. I ask the support of this House for this bill.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, upon first glance Bill C-58 appears to be a rather innocuous bill. It is only two pages long with four amendments. It seems to be just a housecleaning measure.

The changes in this bill put into statute what has been in practice for years. Police officers within the RCMP have never viewed themselves as members of the public service within the meaning of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. They have a separate superannuation plan. They have a separate means of employee representation. They have a different body to review grievances and they have always considered themselves to be outside the regular public service.

Now we have a bill before us that puts this into statute. It is no big deal. It is really just confirming what is already a reality in one sense perhaps. However, one must look at what prompted the introduction of this bill.

It is not stated anywhere in the bill but acknowledged by the speaker before me, the hon. secretary of state. The motivation of this bill is a Federal Court appeal decision from March 10, 1994. In rendering its decision in *Gingras v. the Queen* in the right of Canada, the court concluded that the RCMP was included in the definition of the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

As such, it was required to pay the bilingual bonus that has been paid to the public service for years but had not been paid within the RCMP. Not only did the RCMP suddenly find itself having to pay the bilingual bonus, it was also required to pay a significant accumulation of bilingual back pay. This amount will run into millions of dollars.

Last year the RCMP spent \$5.1 million on official languages, not including these retroactive bilingual bonus commitments.

Under the *Gingras* decision, the force will be required to pay all members who occupy positions that were designated as bilingual. In recent years the RCMP has not designated specific positions as being bilingual. Instead it has utilized the unit bilingual complement system.

*Government Orders*

Ironically, in its main estimates this year the RCMP stated that it was reinstating the bilingual position designation system in all bilingual divisions. These bilingual divisions include headquarters as well as A division, which is the national capital region, C division which is Quebec, J division in New Brunswick and O division in Ontario.

The force stated that it was required to reinstate the bilingual position designation to meet its obligations under the Official Languages Act, particularly as it relates to supervisory positions. The force does not mention how many of its positions are designated as bilingual but if it were to be 10 per cent of the non-civilian positions this would result in an additional expenditure of \$1.3 million. If 25 per cent of the positions were to be designated as bilingual that would mean another \$3.2 million.

Faced with this unexpected expenditure, the RCMP and government are looking for a way to get out of these payments. They had to look no further than the Gingras decision to find a way to get out of these payments.

It turned out that Mr. Gingras was a member of the RCMP security service in 1984. When that organization became the Canadian Security Intelligence Service he was transferred to CSIS. When it was created, CSIS was designated a separate employer. This means that CSIS employees do not have the Treasury Board as their employer and that the bilingualism bonus plan does not automatically apply to them. On August 7, 1984 Mr. Gingras' counsel asked the director of CSIS, Ted Finn, to recognize that Mr. Gingras was entitled to the bilingual bonus.

(1030)

In a response dated March 5, 1985 Mr. Finn replied that he had decided to provide the bilingual bonus to employees in the administrative support category only and excluded the professional level position, including the one occupied by Mr. Gingras.

Mr. Finn justified his position by stating that Mr. Gingras did not qualify for the bilingual bonus in his previous position in the RCMP and he would not change that now that he was in CSIS.

In the Federal Court of Appeal ruling the justices found that the RCMP should have been paying the bonus all along. The court ruled that RCMP members were indeed public servants and that the RCMP was represented by the Treasury Board and thus the force was compelled to pay the bilingual bonus.

The RCMP was required to pay Mr. Gingras the bilingual bonus from November 28, 1980 when he first raised the issue until he transferred to CSIS on July 16, 1984. CSIS was required to pay Mr. Gingras the bilingual bonus from July 16, 1984 until March 5, 1985. Why March 5, 1985? Because that is the date that

the director of CSIS decided that the bilingual bonus plan would only apply to CSIS employees in the administrative support category.

The court ruled that as a separate employer CSIS had the legal right not to pay the bilingual bonus. Once the director decreed that the service would not pay it to professional categories they legally could avoid paying it.

The court ruled that there were two required elements to avoid paying the bonus. First, the government agency must be a separate employer. Second, the agency must decide not to pay the bonus. Thus CSIS qualified on both points not to pay the bonus but the RCMP did not. Yet the RCMP decided that it would not pay the bonus.

Back in 1977 then Commissioner Bob Simmonds decreed that the bonus did not apply to the RCMP. While this comment was subsequently deemed to be an error in law, his reasoning for not seeking authority to pay the bonus was sound.

Commissioner Simmonds decided that the RCMP should not pay the bilingualism bonus on two grounds. First, other police forces in Canada did not pay bilingualism bonuses even in bilingual cities or provinces, and since the RCMP determined its benefit package in relation to the police universe it was not prepared to be the only police force to pay such bonuses.

Second, the commissioner went on to state that the payment of such a bonus would become a divisive element as it would create situations in which members of equal rank and responsibility working side by side could receive differing remuneration because one or several of them had either the good fortune to grow up in a milieu favourable to learning a second official language or have the equally good fortune to learn it at public expense.

This was sound logic in 1977 and it is still sound logic today. Why should the RCMP spend taxpayers' money to train some of its members in Canada's other official language and then turn around and financially reward them for having a second language? Then again, why should any government department spend taxpayers' money to train some of its employees in Canada's other official language and then reward them with \$800 a year bonus?

The RCMP main estimates show that there are other rewards for being bilingual. As I mentioned earlier the RCMP stated that it is reinstating the bilingual position designation in all bilingual regions in order to meet its obligations under the Official Languages Act, particularly as it relates to supervisory positions. Since bilingualism is a required element to obtain a promotion to a supervisory position in a bilingual region then maybe that is sufficient reward for bilingualism.

*Government Orders*

Whatever the reason, the RCMP and the government have decided that they should not be paying the bilingualism bonus plan to its police officers. That is why today we are debating Bill C-58. The bill will give the RCMP the second requirement to avoid paying the bonus. By removing the RCMP from the Public Service Staff Relations Act the force will therefore be a separate employer. All it will have to do is have Commissioner Murray announce that it will not be paying the bonus and it will be legally exempt from doing so.

(1035)

Well, almost. The force has decided not to remove its civilian employees from the Public Service Staff Relations Act. For whatever reason, the RCMP has decided that civilian employees, appointed or employed in accordance with section 10 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, will still be covered by the PSSRA. There may be other reasons for treating them separately from the police officers within the RCMP, but it is clear the force will have to continue paying the bilingual bonus to these employees.

Current management seems to have forgotten the words of former Commissioner Simmonds who stated that payment of such a bonus would have a divisive effect on employees. Some may argue that the bonus is justified for civilian members because they are generally lower paid support staff. In the RCMP the 1,919 civilian employees of the force had an average salary of \$46,178 per year. While Commissioner Simmonds' comment may have been made in reference to police officers within the force, the same divisive effect could occur among civilian employees.

Why should a civilian employee of the RCMP in a position that is designated as bilingual receive \$800 more than an employee who is doing exactly the same job in a position that is not designated as bilingual? Why should we limit this to just bilingualism in the RCMP?

Consider the following comment: "This year approximately \$50 million was once again spent without any assurance that the payment of such a sum was necessary to ensure Canadians of the availability of quality service in the official language of their choice. Given the present economic circumstances we are more than ever convinced that the bilingualism bonus should be eliminated gradually by negotiating with the parties concerned. In the interests of public finances as much as that of the official languages program, it is high time for the government to take the problem in hand".

If those words sound familiar, they are. They were spoken by the Commissioner of Official Languages in March of this year when he presented his annual report for 1993. While I take some exception with the commissioner's comments about eliminating the plan gradually, I fully agree with his recommendation that the government should turn its attention to this problem without delay.

The government should not have to resort to such sleight of hand legislation as Bill C-58. The RCMP should not be paying out millions of dollars in bilingual bonuses to regular members and special constables. Nor should the RCMP be paying the bilingual bonus to its civilian employees. Nor should any government department, agency or crown corporation be paying any of its employees the bonus. The government must come to terms with reality. That bonus must be dropped. When even the Commissioner of Official Languages is calling for its elimination it is time to drop the payments.

Bill C-58 seems like an innocuous bill. I am sure it was intended to be. The government certainly does not want to be seen as attacking any portion of the official languages program, but it intends to use the bill to circumvent it.

The time has come for the government to be straight with the Canadian public. It is time to scrap the entire bilingual bonus plan. We will support the bill because it takes a step toward eliminating the bonus, even if it has to take ten steps sideways to take one step forward.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, speaking on behalf of the Official Opposition, I wish to express my objections to Bill C-58 at the second reading stage. We are not alone, since the Canadian Police Association, including associations of RCMP officers, did so yesterday. I would like to quote from the minutes of a meeting held at their headquarters here in Ottawa on November 14 and 15, on the subject of Bill C-58.

(1040)

*[English]*

André Girard submitted copies of Bill C-58 introduced for first reading on November 4 and scheduled for second reading on November 17, 1994. If the bill is passed it will give separate employer status to the RCMP commissioner and leave the members vulnerable on all issues of pay and benefits.

It was decided to treat Bill C-58 as CPA priority and direct Scott Newark to take all necessary action to make sure the bill was sent to a parliamentary committee, vigorously debated and defeated.

It was moved by André Nadon, seconded by Jim Davidson:

That the RCMP C and O Division Members' Associations have full support of the Canadian Police Association and that the CPA take all necessary steps to fight Bill C-58 on their behalf.

It was carried unanimously.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, our objections to Bill C-58 are two-fold. First, this ostensibly routine legislation is, in fact, aimed at invalidating the effect of the judgment handed down by the Federal Court Appeal Division in the Gingras case on March 19, 1994. I intend to focus particularly on this aspect.

*Government Orders*

Second, Bill C-58 constitutes an additional obstacle to union membership for members of the RCMP, as well as interference by the legislative with the judiciary, since a case is still pending before the Quebec Court of Appeal. I am referring to *Delisle vs the Deputy Solicitor General of Canada and the Solicitor General of Canada*, file 500-09-001747-898 of the Montreal appeal district.

I will now discuss my first point. Two of my colleagues in the Official Opposition rose in the House to address this particular matter. The first time was on March 11, 1994, when the hon. member for Laval-Centre, in a question directed to the Solicitor General, asked as follows:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. Yesterday, the Federal Court of Appeal ordered the federal government to pay bilingualism bonuses of \$800 a year to qualified officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It is estimated that the government now owes up to \$4,000 to more than 3,000 officers, as well as to retired officers of the RCMP. Does the Solicitor General intend to abide by the unanimous decision of the Federal Court of Appeal and pay the bilingualism bonus to qualified officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

And the Solicitor General's reply:

Mr. Speaker, that decision raises some very complex issues. It is presently under review, and I will have more information about that in the near future.

The "near future" came two months later. On May 10, the hon. member for Richelieu rose in the House to make a statement under Standing Order 31. He said as follows, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois applauds the government's decision to finally comply with the Federal Court of Appeal judgment and pay a bilingualism bonus to RCMP members who occupy bilingual positions.

This puts an end to a lengthy dispute between RCMP members and their employer who, must it be reminded, had decided not to provide this bonus, supposedly "to preserve cohesion within the forces".

If it is serious about bilingualism, the government must continue to pay bilingual bonuses inasmuch as it provides true incentive and compensation for the added complexity of bilingual positions.

Considering there is much room for improvement in the federal Public Service, particularly with regard to the use of French, the government must make sure this bonus is awarded for language skills of the highest level to provide services of the highest quality.

(1045)

That was the end of the statement under Standing Order 31 made by the hon. member for Richelieu.

The government did not appeal the decision of the Appeal Division of the Federal Court. The case did not go to the Supreme Court, although in March, the minister maintained that some very important principles were at stake. We now know why. The minister had decided to take a difficult approach. Instead of asking the Supreme Court for a definitive opinion on the legal aspects of this case, the government decided to

legislate, and that legislation is Bill C-58 before the House today. The government decided to go after its own justice, not by appealing to the Supreme Court, but instead by presenting to the House a bill which, to all intents and purposes, is aimed at rendering null and void the court's decision in the *Gingras* case.

Indeed, Bill C-58 seeks to overturn the decision handed down by the Appeal Division of the Federal Court, on May 10, 1994, in the *Gingras* case, which concerned the more or less 17,500 members of the RCMP. It should be pointed out that there are three distinct categories of employees working for the RCMP. The numbers I have were updated November 15, 1994, the day before yesterday.

Regular members and special RCMP constables number 15,551, whereas 1,983 civilians and 3,440 civil servants work for the RCMP.

The 15,500 regular members are, in fact, police officers. They are not unionized. The 2,000 civilians are support staff working in laboratories, as technicians or specialists; an unspecified number of them belong to the administrative support category. They are not unionized either.

The 3,500 civil servants are either administrative or support staff such as clerks, secretaries, stenographers, guards, caretakers and the like. They are all hired by the Public Service Commission or transferred from other departments. They belong to unions such as the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

As I mentioned earlier, Bill C-58 seeks to overturn the Federal Court of Appeal's decision. In the *Gingras* case, the court came to the conclusion that members of the RCMP belong to the Public Service and, as such, must abide by the rules set by the Treasury Board and that they are entitled to the \$800-a-year bilingual bonus.

In May 1994, the government announced that it did not intend to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada and that it was going to pay the bilingual bonus to RCMP members, including retroactive payments for some of the years it had illegally denied RCMP members this bonus. All in all, retroactive payments could amount to \$30 million.

It seems that the *Gingras* decision disturbs the RCMP top brass because it means that, in certain cases, other Treasury Board regulations may apply to the RCMP and its police officers. Such regulations deal in particular with employment equity, the enforcement of the Official Languages Act, and working conditions. The right to unionize is being debated as part of the *Delisle* case, which I will deal with later.



*Government Orders*

(1050)

Schedule I of the Public Service Staff Relations Act contains a list of departments and other agencies having the Treasury Board as employer, that is to say that are part of the Public Service, and a list of agencies which are separate employers. The RCMP is listed in Part I of Schedule I, and that makes it a part of the Public Service.

Bill C-58 would remove the RCMP from the Public Service, and therefore the Treasury Board would cease to be its employer. Consequently, the RCMP would be subject to legislation applicable to public servants only if it were specifically referred to in such legislation. Treasury Board policies would no longer apply to the RCMP, except if the RCMP itself decided to follow them, but that would be on a strictly voluntary basis.

Since December 1992, the Financial Administration Act has been the legal basis of the Employment Equity Program set up by Treasury Board in the mid 80s. All departments and agencies having the Treasury Board as their employer are subject to the Employment Equity Act because they are part of the Public Service.

Until recently, because the Commissioner had so decided, the RCMP was not subject to Treasury Board policies despite the fact that the force is listed in Part I, Schedule I of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. However, we should stress that the RCMP differs in some ways from the rest of the Public Service, and that has allowed the commissioner to pretend that the policy on bilingual bonuses did not apply to the RCMP.

The decision of the Appeal Division of the Federal Court, made March 10, 1994, in the Gingras case, puts an end to such pretence. From now on, said the three presiding judges unanimously, the RCMP is part of the Public Service. Therefore, since March 1994, the RCMP has had to apply all Treasury Board policies to its 17,500 employees. Bill C-58 puts an end to that. We must note that civilian employees of the RCMP, numbering approximately 3,440, were always fully subject to Treasury Board policies on employment equity and bilingualism because they were recruited by the Public Service Commission.

The RCMP submits an annual report to the Treasury Board and is included in the Treasury Board's equity statistics. However, the RCMP decided a long time ago to implement the federal policy on employment equity for its 17,500 employees, which include 15,500 peace officers and 2,000 civilians. Instead of submitting an annual report to the Treasury Board and being subject to its rules, the RCMP decided to create its own system of co-operation with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, to which it submits an annual report.

However you look at it, the system is an ad hoc one and, in principle, inefficient. By in effect reversing the March 1994 decision, the government is seeking to exempt the RCMP from the Treasury Board's authority regarding labour relations and

conditions of employment. Although the RCMP implements certain policies on a voluntary basis, its goodwill is questionable, given that, for 19 years, it denied its members the bilingual bonus, thereby saving approximately \$50 million, or \$2.8 million annually.

(1055)

If one of the purposes of Bill C-58 is to stop the payment of bilingual bonuses to members of the RCMP, we can conclude that the government is adopting the Reform position. Do the Liberals intend to eliminate the bilingual bonus throughout the public service? If the government announces that it intends to pay the bonus to members occupying bilingual positions or if the RCMP commissioner decides to continue the bonus voluntarily, we can still say that the bill undermines the bilingual bonus policy, because the commissioner can terminate the bonus at any time.

It seems that the Official Languages Act applies differently to the RCMP: service in both languages, equitable hiring, language of administration, language of instruction at the Regina school and other similar provisions.

The member for Nanaimo—Cowichan believes that the Federal Court's decision in the Gingras case means that military personnel would also be entitled to the bilingual bonus. Unfortunately, under the act, military personnel are not considered part of the public service.

The Public Service Staff Relations Act specifically excludes members of the RCMP. They cannot, therefore, apply for certification to the Public Service Staff Relations Board, although the Delisle case I mentioned earlier may change this. While Her Majesty in Right of Canada, represented by the Treasury Board, is ultimately their employer, members of the RCMP are excluded from the definition of "employee" for the purposes of the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

At any rate, since RCMP members are presently part of the public service, this means that the RCMP remains subject to Treasury Board policies and standards. Only organizations with separate employer status are not subject to TB policies. Separate employers are paid a lump-sum each year, but are not required to comply with general policies regarding official languages or employment equity for example. Bill C-58 excludes the RCMP from the application of TB policies.

The Financial Administration Act under which the Treasury Board was established sets several standards regarding the public service and government finance administration, except as specifically provided in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and any other act that applies to the RCMP, such as the Official Languages Act.

Bill C-58 provides for Treasury Board policies to no longer apply to members of the RCMP. Paragraph 7(1)(e) of the Financial Administration Act states clearly that the Treasury

*Government Orders*

Board may act on matters relating to, and I quote: “personnel management in the public service of Canada, including the determination of the terms and conditions of employment”.

Bill C-58 would add to the RCMP Act a provision by which paragraph 7(1)(e) would not apply to the RCMP. Therefore, terms and conditions of employment would be determined by the commissioner of the RCMP and the RCMP Act. This act does provide that staff may appeal to the RCMP external review committee.

Without Bill C-58, the RCMP would presumably have had to gradually comply with Treasury Board occupational standards. I do not have the full list of TB standards and cannot compare them to those in effect within the RCMP under the RCMP Act, but I note that the Treasury Board has powers in the following areas: first, administration of the Employment Equity Act; second, administration of the Official Languages Act; third, financial management; fourth, annual expenditure plans; and fifth, personnel management and determination of terms and conditions of employment.

(1100)

As far as personnel management is concerned, it is interesting to note that, under Section 11(2) of the Financial Administration Act, the Public Service Commission is partly responsible for personnel management in other departments. In the case of RCMP members, however, it is the Treasury Board which plays this role.

I note that the RCMP Act and some other acts make an exception for the RCMP given the nature of its work. Therefore, at this time, RCMP members' terms and conditions of employment are not identical to those of other public service employees. Among other things, RCMP members are excluded from the definition of “public servant” in the Public Service Staff Relations Act and cannot form a union.

So we can ask ourselves why the government is not proposing at the same time to grant civilian employees of the RCMP—about 2,000 office and support workers—the same rights and privileges as their 3,400 colleagues who are already part of the public service. After all, neither group is composed of law enforcement officers.

There is also an RCMP External Review Committee, whose mandate is “to provide an independent review of grievances, formal discipline, and discharge and demotion appeals filed by members of the RCMP”. But, as the external committee points out in its annual reports, no document clearly spells out its jurisdiction. A member of the RCMP can ask the RCMP Commissioner to review a demotion or discharge. The Commissioner then asks the external committee to review the decision

before settling the matter himself. The Commissioner is not required to follow the recommendations of the external committee.

The external committee also notes in its annual report that the decisions of the RCMP arbitration committee cannot be appealed to the external committee. Again, everything rests on the good will of the RCMP Commissioner, who ultimately becomes both a judge and a party in the disputes that may arise within the RCMP. How can we leave the terms and conditions of employment up to the good will of the RCMP Commissioner?

The external committee also stresses in its annual report that the grievance procedure is even more complex. In some cases, the Commissioner himself determines what kind of grievances can be submitted to the external committee.

Let us now talk about the RCMP as a separate or almost separate employer. The Treasury Board is the employer of the Public Service and all public servants, according to the list in Part I of Schedule I to the Public Service Staff Relations Act. The RCMP is now listed in Part I of Schedule I and Bill C-58 would replace the expression “RCMP” in this list with “civilian employees appointed or employed in accordance with section 10 of the RCMP Act”, who number 2,000. It would exclude the peace officers in the RCMP, who number 15,500. This same law presents a second list, in Part II of Schedule I, of sectors of the federal public service that are distinct employers.

Note that the expression “federal government employees” takes in all government employees, including those who work for Crown corporations and the military. In all, there are 550,000. The Public Service does not count employees of Crown corporations, the military and personnel of separate employers, who number about 235,000 in all.

In particular, the separate employers in Part II of Schedule I include the Communications Security Establishment, CSE, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS.

(1105)

Bill C-58 does not add the RCMP to the list in Part II of Schedule I, neither does it add the 15,500 members of the RCMP who are peace officers to this list. Therefore, the 15,500 members of the RCMP who are peace officers will have the same status as members of the Canadian Forces; that is, they do not even appear in Part II of the schedule.

In fact, only the personnel not paid with public funds, namely the employees of bars, restaurants and other service establishments on military bases, are listed there. However, the Commissioner of the RCMP would have the status of a separate employer. I think that not putting the 15,500 members of the RCMP who are peace officers in Part II of Schedule I would give

*Government Orders*

the commissioner even more absolute control over his staff. Why? For what purpose? That is the hidden agenda in this bill.

I now come to my second point, very briefly, because to a large extent it is now before the courts. Bill C-58 further infringes on the unionization of members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and is unacceptable interference of the legislative authority in judicial matters, since a case on this issue is pending before the Quebec Court of Appeal. It is the case which I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, *Delisle v. the Deputy Attorney General of Canada and the Solicitor General of Canada*, which is to be heard by the Montreal District Court of Appeal in the coming months.

In this legal proceeding, the plaintiff, Gaétan Delisle, a member of the RCMP and member of the Quebec provincial association of the RCMP, is asking the courts of this country to declare unconstitutional all the provisions which prevent the Canadian Labour Board from issuing a certificate of accreditation for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and especially for its employees who are peace officers.

The officers who are the plaintiffs in these proceedings are basing their argument on section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which provides for freedom of association. These plaintiffs argue that the freedom of association gives them the collective bargaining right, hence the right to unionize. This is an issue the Court of Appeal will have to settle, and I do not think that we, as legislators, should hinder the Court of Appeal and influence any interpretation it might give.

The plaintiffs before the Quebec Court of Appeal, the police officers of the Quebec section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, also refer to the equality rights enshrined in section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Why is it that in every Canadian jurisdiction, and especially in provincial jurisdictions, police officers can join a union, but that the federal legislation prevents members and police officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police from unionizing? Can we talk about inequality pursuant to section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms? This is another issue upon which the Quebec Court of Appeal will have to decide.

Would it not be wiser to postpone this bill for six months or even longer until the court rules on the rights of the police officers and other bargainable employees of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, should they be successful with their court challenge?

(1110)

For all these reasons, we will vote against Bill C-58 at the second reading stage.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are addressing Bill C-58, a bill to amend the Public Service Staff Relations Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act. At first blush it appears to be just an innocuous housekeeping bill. However, this morning it became evident that the purpose of the bill is solely to avoid paying bilingual bonuses to the RCMP which resulted from the Federal Court of Appeal ruling in the Gingras case.

At the time of the court decision the government said it had no choice but to pay the bilingual bonus. Not only is this untrue as it could have appealed to the Supreme Court but it is also misleading to Canadians as the government has now brought in this legislation as an attempt to quietly circumvent the court system.

I give the bill the label of good news, bad news. It is good news in what it will do with regard to bilingual bonuses. It is bad news in the manner in which it is being brought into being and things that have been quietly put aside in the past.

The Liberals were aware of the potential problems this case could create back in 1990. The Commissioner of Official Languages in the 1990 annual report wrote: "The distribution of this bonus was also brought into question in 1990 when the Federal Court ruled that an RCMP officer was as much entitled to it as a public servant. If the appeal court decision does not reverse this judgment we may see other federal employees in the armed forces or in some crown corporations claiming the bilingual bonus, all the more reason to reform this rickety structure, especially in a period of budget cuts".

The Liberals were also well aware of the reasons for the judgment in that 1990 Federal Court ruling. At that time the court stated: "The exclusion of the staff of these two agencies which are covered by the Public Service Staff Relations Act constituted illegal discrimination under the rules of administrative law". That is the court talking. The Liberals knew this. They were sitting in this House, but they waited more than a year after coming to power a year ago to act on this problem.

In April of this year in this House I asked the Prime Minister to heed the strong recommendation of the Commissioner of Official Languages and eliminate the bilingual bonus. At that time the Prime Minister stated: "I do not think the commissioner has made a strong recommendation". That is what he said, there is no strong recommendation, therefore we do not have to do anything about it.

Before I quote the present Commissioner of Official Languages from his last report I would like to quote previous commissioners on this very issue.

In 1983 the commissioner at that time stated: "Six years and let us say almost a quarter of a billion dollars into the game, any question of the real contribution that the bilingualism bonus might be making to federal language programs has pretty much

*Government Orders*

been lost from view". There is now nothing to prevent the cost climbing to \$50 million or more except that a short, sharp government decision to stop this nonsense now before it does any more harm". How prescient the commissioner was in 1983 saying that because that is precisely the cost, \$50 million a year, of bilingual bonuses today other than those of the RCMP.

(1115)

To go on with comments of other official language commissioners, in 1986 the commissioner wrote: "There was at one point in 1985 a hint that Treasury Board was looking for ways to curtail whatever part of bonus spending might frankly be considered superfluous such as payments to middle and upper managers whose bilingualism is adequately compensated in other ways. It may be that the board is still looking and we encourage it to do so".

Let us move on to 1987 when the commissioner's report contained the following statement, and the Liberals sitting in this House were privy to all of this: "The bilingualism bonus as an instrument to encourage more active work related bilingualism among public servants is not well attuned to present needs. It falls like heaven's rain indiscriminately on the just and unjust alike which is not how bonus incentives are supposed to work".

Similarly at the risk of being boring in 1988 the commissioner stated: "Since the bonus no longer has the incentive effect that justified its creation, we can only repeat our recommendation that Treasury Board review the value of the bilingualism bonus".

That brings us to 1989 when the commissioner wrote: "The awarding of a bilingualism bonus may originally have been a positive measure but over time it has proven to be more of an obstacle to a fair linguistic designation of positions and a source of inequities within the public service".

I have already stated the concerns of the commissioner in his 1990 report so we will fast forward to 1991. That year the commissioner applauded the updating of the bilingualism bonus confirmation process but added: "This updating clearly cannot be called a reform of the bonus system, a system whose disappearance we, like many others, continue to hope for. This bonus which originated in 1966 as a 7 per cent supplement to the salary paid to secretaries truly has nine lives".

The commissioner's 1992 report states: "We are far from sure that this bonus paid to 59,900 public servants constitutes a necessary encouragement to the effective use of both languages. We can only reiterate the recommendation we have made so often that the bilingualism bonus be gradually eliminated".

Finally, everyone will be pleased to know the commissioner's comment from last year: "Unfortunately, with regard to the issue of the bilingualism bonus, it is obvious that the commissioner's repeated recommendations still have not been fol-

lowed. This year approximately \$50 million was once again spent without any assurance that the payment of such a sum was necessary to ensure Canadians of the availability of quality service in the official language of their choice. Given the present economic circumstances, we are more than ever convinced that the bilingualism bonus should be eliminated in the interest of the public finances as well as that of the official languages program. It is high time for the government to take this problem in hand".

(1120)

That is the recommendation of the commissioner that the Prime Minister said was not a strong recommendation. I do not know how much stronger he could make it based on years of precedent recommendations by other language commissioners.

It is interesting that while publicly the Prime Minister has shrugged off these recommendations, his government today quietly tries to slip through this innocuous legislation which will at least partially achieve what so many commissioners have strongly advocated for more than 10 years.

Let us have a quick look at what the rationale was regarding this bonus within the RCMP in years gone by. Back in 1977 R. H. Simmonds who was the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police gave as his rationale for not paying the bilingual bonus that members of the police universe who are compared to the RCMP in the amount of pay and benefits received do not receive the bonus and the equations between these groups should remain the same as much as possible.

The Commissioner of the RCMP also said in that year: "The payment of a bonus was seen as a divisive element in a cohesive organization as situations would be created whereby members of equal rank and responsibility working side by side could receive differing remuneration because of different advantages toward learning a second language, perhaps even at public expense".

This was the evidence, part of it, that has been picked up on by various language commissioners over the years.

From my own experience in the Canadian forces I am well aware that members who are bilingual, and this applies to the RCMP as well, already have an enhanced opportunity of promotion with the accompanying increases in remuneration. The bilingual bonus therefore is in effect an additional payment. I might add as well that most members are bilingual because of language training at public expense.

So I ask, in view of all of this background, in view of the evidence presented, why is the government not proudly proclaiming its attempt to cut wasteful spending? Could it be that it is afraid of publicly slaying the sacred cow, which is official languages, no matter how small a knife the government wields?

*Government Orders*

I congratulate the government on its attempt to right a wrong, but I condemn the government for wrapping this initiative in a cloak of secrecy. Why not tell people the truth? The Federal Court of Appeal ruling in the Gingras case means taxpayers will have to shell out roughly \$30 million in retroactive bilingual bonus payments.

The government should say: "We do not agree with this decision. Therefore we are enacting this legislation to prevent further annual payments of nearly \$3 million." This is the truth of the legislation and the people of Canada deserve nothing less than the truth, especially from a government that claims honesty and integrity as its guiding principles.

(1125)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-58 aims at reversing the decision of the Federal Court of Appeal in the Gingras case, on March 10, 1994. As you may remember, the Court of Appeal then concluded that members of the RCMP, most of whom are of course police officers, are part of the public service and must adhere to Treasury Board rules, and that these members are also entitled to the bilingualism bonus of \$800 per year. This is a brief summary of the decision.

In May of 1994, the government announced that it had no intention of appealing the decision and that it would pay the bonus to RCMP members, including for part of the years during which the government had illegally refused to grant such bonus. In all, retroactive payments should amount to \$30 million.

The decision of the Federal Court of Appeal seems to bother RCMP authorities since, according to some, it means that the RCMP and its police officers will be subjected to the other Treasury Board rules. These rules deal, among other things, with employment equity, the implementation of the Official Languages Act and the rules governing working conditions, with the exception however of the right to set up a union. This is a very important aspect which must not be overlooked.

Before going any further, we have to look at the issue from a temporal perspective, but also in the context of that specific group.

What is the RCMP? We must first make an important distinction between three different groups of employees within that organization. In total, there are 15,500 police officers in the RCMP; there are also 1,983 civilian members, as well as 3,440 public service employees. Again, 15,551 regular members are in fact police officers and are not unionized. The 2,000 civilian members, or 1,983 to be precise, are in support positions and include laboratory and general technicians, experts in various

fields, aircraft pilots, as well as an indeterminate number of employees from the administrative support category. Those people are not unionized either.

The some 3,500 public service employees hold administrative and support jobs and include clerks, secretaries, stenographers, nurses, janitors, etc. These employees were all recruited by the Public Service Commission or transferred from other departments. They belong to unions such as the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

What is troublesome with Bill C-58 is that it is an underhanded way of doing what is prohibited by the law. As can be seen in Bill C-58, what bothers the authorities is that for many years some RCMP members have been trying to unionize. Three times already, their attempts have failed. In 1994, unionization should no longer be considered a barbaric action that needs to be countered. For a group, it is the freedom to express its will to protect itself against its employer.

So, the purpose of Bill C-58 is to reverse the Gingras case of March 10, 1994. Bill C-58 would exclude RCMP members from the Public Service, taking away their capacity to unionize, but would give them the bilingualism bonus. Such an opportunity to depict the bilingualism bonus as a favour will certainly not be missed when, in reality, it was originally established to promote bilingualism within the Public Service of Canada.

(1130)

Now, let us set aside the union aspect for a moment—I will come back to it later—to focus on the bilingualism bonus. I just want to make a few comments to show the unwillingness of the administration to acknowledge some data concerning the RCMP and the bilingualism bonus.

The bilingualism bonus program for public servants who meet the standards of proficiency for bilingual positions was established on November 15, 1976. Its purpose is to promote bilingualism within the Public Service, working as an incentive for civil servants to become bilingual. In 1993-94, the government will again have spent approximately \$30 million in bilingualism bonuses, which represents \$800 a year for each beneficiary.

As I was saying earlier, in its March 10 ruling on the Gingras case, the Federal Court of Appeal has declared that members of the RCMP are entitled to the bilingualism bonus. However, as far as the government or, should I say, RCMP administrators are concerned, two problems persist. Firstly, the government is repudiating the ruling handed down by the court by refusing to make retroactive payments as far back as the court ordered. Secondly, we have now learned that payment of the bonus has since been granted.

*Government Orders*

RCMP senior management has reduced by half the number of employees entitled to the bonus. According to the president of the RCMP Employees' Association, this drastic change in the application of the Official Languages Act is based on the fact that the great majority of RCMP members entitled to the bilingualism bonus are francophones. What a coincidence, Mr. Speaker! The President of the Treasury Board must make a commitment, as he is being asked to do by RCMP members, to intervene as soon as possible in order to redress this flagrant injustice. That is what we hear.

Today, this bonus is considered a source of inequity within the public service rather than a real compensation for the added difficulties related to working in both languages. The same amount is paid to every employee, whatever the level of competence, the salary or the frequency of use of the second language. The bonus is granted to public servants, but not to government employees.

According to the Commissioner of Official Languages, it is far from certain that this bonus is an incentive to effectively use both languages whenever it is required by law. If the government really believes in the importance of bilingualism in federal institutions, the bilingualism bonus can be considered a major asset when it provides an incentive for public servants to learn a second language and use it effectively.

The Bloc Québécois does not, however, agree with those who argue that the cost of bilingualism is too high. We must see things in perspective. As long as the federal government maintains its official bilingualism policy, which is entirely reasonable, it will have to allocate the requisite funding. I suggest that when the annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages is tabled, the debate should not be about costs but should focus on the government's failure to act in this area and on the long way it still has to go before the federal public service is truly able to offer quality services in both official languages. That was in connection with the bilingualism bonus.

I will now consider the aspect of union membership, to which I referred earlier. I said that Bill C-58 was an attempt to isolate members of the RCMP by targeting the organization's regular members, in other words, the police. The bill creates two groups but only one group will belong to the RCMP, and I am referring to the police officers. In other words, civilian employees and other technicians will no longer be members of the RCMP. Bill C-58 no longer wants to include public servants, the so-called civilians. The people of the RCMP are being isolated.

(1135)

The question people are asking and I am asking is this: Why are they trying to isolate police officers in the RCMP? There are several theories, of course, and I will tell you mine.

The Quebec government recently set up a rather interesting program in its public service, aimed at encouraging input from public servants who want to discuss, as a matter of economic and social concern, anything that might look like terrible waste and abuse of public funds, in a straightforward attempt to reduce operating costs without, of course, affecting the quality of service to the public. Today, for instance, it would be the quality of service provided by members of the RCMP to Canadian taxpayers.

Clearly, Bill C-58 will prevent these people from making an honest attempt to show up any abuse that might occur within their organization. Bill C-58 confirms that it will turn these people into robots at the beck and call of a small group of individuals who are only intent on controlling situations and thus keeping a certain power over events and the people who are supposed to manufacture those events.

For instance, suppose an RCMP officer were to notice that equipment, to give a simple example, was being used wrongfully by his superiors for their own use. Can anyone in this House imagine just for a second this officer going to his superiors and telling them: "You are misusing public funds, and you are doing so for your personal benefit"? Not on your life. Even if the alleged incident is illegal or close to breaking the law, he cannot do it because he has no protection. These people are muzzled.

Trade unionism is not a weapon, it is a working tool in a democratic social system, which gives more power to those who use it, no matter where, even in those areas where it is the most difficult to unionize workers, as is the case at the Ogilvie flour mill, in Montreal. Even though the workers there belong to a union, they are now faced with the lack of anti-scab legislation in the Labour Code of Canada. Therefore, they are very close to being under some kind of a dictatorial regime since they have to sit idle while scabs come in to take their place. Negotiations then become meaningless. This creates a dangerous social climate.

Last spring, we had the very same situation, for three months at Q.N.S. & L. in Sept-Îles, in my riding of Manicouagan. Scabs were allowed inside to take the jobs of workers who, in all good faith, wanted to negotiate with their employer. Once again, there was provocation. There is nothing illegal in being unionized, it is perfectly legal.

The Sûreté du Québec is unionized. Its members belong to a group that is there to protect them. The Communauté urbaine de Montréal, otherwise known as the CUM, is made up of police officers. They are not animals or equipment, they are individuals, human beings. They are entitled to some security in their life. The same goes for the Communauté urbaine de Québec. But the RCMP said no.

*Government Orders*

The rumour has it that the employees tried to unionize on three occasions, but each time, their attempts were unsuccessful. Such tactics, you can imagine, go against the Charter of Rights. But these hypocritical tactics are concealed so well in Bill C-58 that it is impossible to make an official complaint under the Charter of Rights, arguing that the Liberal government does not want RCMP employees to form a union or is trying to prevent them from doing so.

This prompts me to make a connection with the situation of CSIS, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. I think that there is a strategy, that Bill C-58 is an element of a very simple strategy.

(1140)

First, you prevent the members of the RCMP from unionizing. On three separate occasions already, attempts to do so failed, but pressure to unionize most have been growing and getting quite strong recently, last spring. This gave fuel to the case, the Gingras case, which was brought before the Federal Court of Appeal on March 10.

This case castigates the Liberal government, so it reacted by introducing Bill C-58. Here is the line of thought: because this is a small separate group within forces responsible for national security, unable to unionize and therefore unable to make itself heard and to protect its members against abuse of power on the part of management, before this Parliament is over, a bill will probably be tabled before us to renew the RCMP, perhaps even under a new name! Why not? This group will need a special budget and, as it turns out, no one will be allowed to know what exactly this money is used for. This is where I see a similarity with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Let us take a brief look back at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, so as to clearly put the problem facing us in its proper context. In 1946, given the increased workload of the RCMP resulting from this added jurisdiction, the staff assigned to this particular function was made into a separate group for the first time. In 1956, the Special "I" Branch became a directorate within the RCMP. I am going quickly. In 1969, the royal commission of inquiry on security recommended creating a civilian security agency. From 1971 to 1974, especially but not exclusively in Quebec, the security service mounted a series of operations, many of which were apparently illegal, to neutralize radical groups, who happen to be separatists, once again.

On March 27, 1975, the federal Cabinet developed a directive for the security service's activities. This directive remained secret until 1978. In 1976, Corporal Samson, who was tried for an incident unrelated to this affair, revealed his participation in Operation Bricole in 1972, which involved breaking and entering and stealing files, as we recall.

Various events occurred over the years, but let us go to November 29, when the members of the Security Intelligence Review Committee were appointed; the chairman was a former Conservative Cabinet minister. In February 1985, CSIS's operating budget was \$115 million. This was less than the \$200 million it is today, and neither Canadian taxpayers, nor the House of Commons, are allowed to review it. Something is wrong! It is a terrible outfit which not even the House of Commons is able to control any more.

So, to sum up, one, we want to talk about unionization, to move the process along. We intend to talk about unionizing members of the RCMP because the people in that force can find out about the abuses going on in various branches.

Second, they table a bill aimed at isolating the only people with access to compromising documents. Third, I am convinced that, before the end of this parliamentary session, they will pass a bill putting the RCMP in the same class as CSIS, that is, with millions of dollars to spend but without ordinary taxpayers being allowed to look into how this money is spent.

In conclusion, it is my firm belief that it is high time that Quebec achieve sovereignty. Bill C-58 will not make Quebecers change their minds and convince them that it might be beneficial to keep federalism in good shape.

(1145)

In fact, we do not have to worry about federalism or trying to destroy it. Federalism is destroying itself through bills like C-58.

*[English]*

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, members recognize that this bill is very straightforward and very important. Not only does it deal with a circumstance that was created by a court decision, it deals with a matter that could be very costly to the government and to Canadians. On that basis the matter is very timely.

I find two issues of interest in this legislative change. First is the matter of the bilingual bonuses which are the base purpose of the bill. Second is the autonomy of the RCMP. That both these purposes can be achieved is to be commended.

I would like to give some background which I believe we all recognize is important to our discussion. Certainly the purpose of the bill should be discussed. As I understand it, the bill removes RCMP officers from the definition of employee and in so doing it removes them from the public service as defined under the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

How will they be governed? They will now be governed under the RCMP act. That is where the item of autonomy is discussed. It all seems very simple at first glance.

*Government Orders*

However when the background of the bill is examined some significant consequences are shown. First, let us talk about the matter of bilingualism. RCMP officers would be able to opt out of bilingualism. Reform Party policy states very clearly that it supports the removal of bilingual bonuses to civil servants as a federal cost reduction measure. We support individual bilingualism but oppose institutional bilingualism as dictated by the Official Languages Act. We feel the bill is in line with that policy.

Why do we believe there are reasons for the RCMP to be able to opt out of bilingual bonuses? First, we can talk about the very basic matter of fiscal constraints. We all recognize that the decision of March 10, 1994 with regard to *Gingras v. The Queen* in right of Canada that bonuses that were not paid in the past can now be collected by the RCMP. It will cost millions and millions of dollars. The question is whether a person should legitimately have it or not. I say he or she should not.

It was the policy of government under the Public Service Staff Relations Act that was wrong in the first place. We should be able to stick to that very basic principle which we hear often, that of equal pay for equal work. Not only should that happen in the public service but it should happen in the private sector. It is very important, as I examine this matter.

I refer to a comment by R. H. Simmonds who was the commissioner of the RCMP in 1977. He was at that time putting together a rationale for not paying the bilingual bonus. He came to the conclusion that the payment of the bonus was seen as a divisive element in a cohesive organization, as situations would be created whereby members of equal rank and responsibility, working side by side, could receive differing remunerations because of different advantages toward learning a second language, perhaps even at public expense. That was a major concern and on that basis there was a resistance to paying the bilingual bonus.

(1150)

That principle is very important to the RCMP, which as an organization and as individuals, whether male or female, must be very objective and fair in how the law is applied in a variety of situations. In no way can there be discrimination that is based on either linguistic, racial, religious or any other characteristic of the RCMP officer when the law is applied.

In certain circumstances there may be a need for a limited number of bilingual positions. We need bilingual members of the force. Those people already receive certain rewards. However, it should not be the reward of a special pay bonus. They receive a reward because they can take advantage of certain promotions within the public service. They can receive assignments which require special skills in providing service to the public in law enforcement.

When looking at this matter of an extra bonus because one has special skills in a language, I can think of a variety of analogies which are appropriate. For example, if a person comes to the RCMP with a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree, should a clause in the bill say that person should receive an extra bonus to perform a duty? Should they receive a bonus? I do not think so.

I look at another analogy of Elizabeth Manley, for example, a professional figure skater, who if she became an RCMP officer would bring that special skill, a very special skill that we in Canada certainly admire and respect. Should there be an extra bonus because this person is physically fit, able to do the job and may be a little bit more nimble in applying the law in a variety of circumstances? I do not think so.

The *Globe and Mail* this morning made a statement with regard to the abilities of males versus females. It stated that studies show that females have better verbal skills to bring to the job market. Does that mean we should pay an extra bonus? Should we really do that or not? Do those skills assist the person to get a job or to compete in the marketplace? Yes, I think it does. Does it mean that females should get paid more than males under those circumstances? I do not think so.

We have to look at the responsibilities of that job. We hire based on qualifications to meet the requirements of the job. We maintain the basic principle that there is equal pay for equal work in whatever job confronts the individual whether male or female. That is the only logical way we can look at a circumstance such as this.

The second consequence of the bill is the matter of more autonomy for the RCMP. It takes members of the RCMP and places them under the RCMP act. That is the way it should be. They should have more autonomy and more control with regard to their members and employment. As Reform policy we state very clearly in our manual that the Reform Party supports the traditional role of the RCMP as a police force, representative of and responsive to the population it serves in Canada's regions. It means it has to have its own autonomy and its own ability to apply the law equally to all citizens in the country, without some RCMP officers having special pay with regard to applying those services whatever they may be.

(1155)

I believe that bringing the other members of the RCMP under the RCMP act will make it possible for them to be more responsible to the public rather than being responsible to the broad federal bureaucracy under the Public Service Staff Relations Act. It is important that this law enforcement organization maintain its independence.

I conclude my remarks by saying it is good that the RCMP have the opportunity to opt out of the bilingual bonus program. I certainly would urge them to do so when we finalize this



*Government Orders*

legislation. Second, greater autonomy for that organization is good and it is most important.

If I had to say anything negative with regard to the government's bill and its presentation here, I would say that it has not gone quite far enough. If we examine the bill we will see that something is missing. The civilian personnel working for the RCMP, as I understand it, can still claim the bilingual bonus. The bilingual bonus should be eliminated across the board and we should deal with the whole public service in the same way. We should have a complete change rather than this somewhat piecemeal change, even though it is good as presented.

The government is playing a bit of catch-up. I know some of these policies and legislative changes are brought in by governments under different circumstances. We have to recognize that circumstances have changed, not only fiscally but in the attitudes of Canadians. They are saying: "We are all Canadians no matter where we live. We should have equal opportunity, not only in the job place but equal opportunity in terms of cultural and other social aspirations".

This law as it was put in place some time ago created inequality not equality. I believe it is good that we are trying to tackle that problem.

I certainly support my colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan who said we should tackle this problem in a very comprehensive way. As Reformers we are certainly united on that front.

We support this bill. We feel it is a small step in the right direction. We certainly urge the government to continue this pursuit and make sure that equality is brought to the public service.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister introduced Bill C-58 this morning by telling us that, for all intents and purposes, these were mere technical provisions, that they were of little consequence, and that they only aimed at bringing back the status quo which prevailed before the Gingras decision. As everyone now knows, the Court of Appeal ruled that some RCMP employees were part of the public service and not excluded from it.

We wonder if this issue is so simple. Indeed, if it is so ordinary, why is the government acting in this fashion?

(1200)

It does not seem to be a matter of avoiding additional costs, since the court decision has already been implemented and the bilingualism bonus paid to those RCMP members who are entitled to it. Consequently, it does not look as though this bill will help the government make significant savings in the immediate future.

We wonder why the government wants to act so quickly in this particular case, considering that it still has not done anything in other cases involving a lot more money, such as the now famous Gulf Oil case. In 1974, the government legislated to allow certain tax deductions for oil companies, thereby reducing their tax burden.

Oil companies took advantage of those provisions to the point that after a while the government must have concluded that some were going too far. However, the government merely watched: It did not take any action. Yet, there is a lot of money involved. Since 1974, these companies have avoided—and I am not saying they acted illegally, because the law entitles them to do so—the payment of \$1.2 billion in taxes. In fact, every day the government loses \$260,000 because of those tax provisions. In this case, however, 20 years later, the government has still not seen fit to change the law, even if it seems to do the exact opposite of what the government intended to achieve, which was to allow companies to increase their research and development activities in the natural resources area.

There are billions of dollars at stake. For 20 years now, we have been studying the legislation and wondering if we should act now, or wait a little longer to see if the law has any impact on other companies. If a bill had been passed right away and if we had said after a few years: "Since the law does not seem to say what we meant to say, we will correct it and change it right now", we would have saved billions of tax dollars.

So, here we are 20 years later and nothing has been done yet. However, the government is in a hurry to pass Bill C-58. The ruling of the Court of Appeal only dates back to March 1994, but already the members of the RCMP who were hopeful to see their situation legitimized realize that the government had decided to act right away and to say: "Since the court's ruling is at variance with our intent, we will act now and pass an act to clarify the situation and make the act say what we want it to say, which is to stipulate that employees of the RCMP are not part of the public service".

There are some 15,500 regular members and special constables, and, as was said earlier, 2,000 civilian employees in the RCMP. There are also about 3,400 civil servants, currently the only ones who have the right to join a union. Of course, this bill in itself represents a step in the right direction, since it allows civilian employees of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to unionize, which they could not do before.

So, we should commend this part of the bill, thanks to which 2,000 and more employees will be able to exercise their democratic rights.

(1205)

That is a nice gesture on the part of the government, but it does not go far enough, since it still deprives the vast majority of RCMP employees, and I am referring to regular members and special constables, of the right to enjoy the same privilege, which is the right to organize, to form a union, a right that has been recognized by all other groups in society, all other occu-

*Government Orders*

pations and professions, and even by other police forces across Canada. Other police forces have this basic, democratic right which respects the right of individuals to organize freely and to be able to negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment. In Bill C-58, RCMP officers are denied that right.

Why should these people not enjoy the same advantages as their colleagues in the provincial police forces or the rest of society? What is the government's real agenda? Does the government expect to control this police force more readily by removing it from the supervision of Treasury Board, thus turning it into an agency that is not an agency defined by law as another activity sector, that is not covered by a specific department and, in fact, seems to come under the sole supervision of the commissioner, who has a lot of power. Bill C-58 more or less confirms, although it does not say so explicitly, that the big boss, the big decision-maker, is the Commissioner of the RCMP. Occasionally, he gets some help from an outside committee, but mostly he accepts the committee's recommendations to protect his image, while he ultimately has the right to reject those recommendations.

What we want is transparency in the way the government is run, which should include the way police forces are run as well. To exclude them from the public service boils down to treating them like members of the military, who for security reasons, are excluded from this kind of control and have their own justice system and their own courts. However, we do not think it is appropriate to run a police force along those lines.

Would the government want to exempt these 15,000 RCMP members from the policy on bilingualism in the future? We wonder. We can feel that government has the support of another opposition party in this matter. That party has been very clear: the government's approach is not the proper one in this case. Bilingualism should mean two languages in Quebec and only one language in the rest of Canada. That is bilingualism according to the Reform Party. Is the government prepared to adopt that Reform Party policy on bilingualism for Canada? Does the government intend to cut the bonus for RCMP members? We wonder.

What are the intentions of the government in terms of employment equity? Since the courts have ruled that, by virtue of the present legislation, the RCMP should come under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Board, why would the government not accept that RCMP members be treated according to the same standards as those applied to all other civil servants, that is the standards laid down by the Treasury Board?

(1210)

Why not take this opportunity to give RCMP members the same privileges as those granted all other employees of the public service?

The Public Service Commission is responsible for personnel management in several other departments. As part of the monitoring process, it must make sure that everybody abides by standards and regulations. In the case of the RCMP, the Treasury Board, not the Public Service Commission, had that responsibility. The Treasury Board authorities would ensure a better control of the RCMP.

But Bill C-58 would take that responsibility away from the Treasury Board. Is this another way for the RCMP to avoid having its activities scrutinized by a public body whose role is to ensure transparency and answer taxpayers' questions? What is so secret that Treasury Board should not have authority over the RCMP?

Is there a hidden agenda? Is the government planning again to have the RCMP carry out duties in a covert way, protecting it from inquisitive taxpayers wanting to know why the RCMP is behaving this way or that? Does the government have ulterior motives?

It is hard to say, but it seems rather strange for the government to take advantage of an Appeal Court decision not only to give back to the RCMP Commissioner the same powers he had before, but also, in reality, to reinforce the authority he has now since, to all intents and purposes, he does not seem to be accountable to anybody in particular in the government.

We cannot condone this policy because this bill lacks transparency and does not go far enough. Why is it that something good for 5,000 RCMP employees should not be good also for the remaining 15,000? As the saying goes, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Why would what is supposed to be good for support and administrative staff and all other RCMP employees not be good for special constables and regular members of the RCMP? Why should they not benefit from it also?

We will vote against this bill at second reading, and we hope that the government will do an about-turn and abide by its civil service renewal policy, which was supposed to give more decision-making powers to lower levels of government, and not to exclude certain agencies from the decision-making process.

If this is the kind of civil service renewal the government had in mind, we misunderstood its intentions and we must denounce them here and now. Letting authority move from top to bottom, means allowing the decisions to be taken as close as possible to the place where the problems occur.

This is not what the government is doing with Bill C-58. What the government is doing is exclude the RCMP from the jurisdiction of Treasury Board. By making the RCMP come under a single person it enables it to act on the sly, without any openness and in a way unacceptable to taxpayers.

*Government Orders*

Once again, we think that the government should backtrack and respect the spirit of the program of public service renewal, the so-called Public Service 2000, that it does not seem to hold in high regard and has not really considered up to now. We have a feeling that it has been relegated to the highest shelf and that the government is in no hurry to follow-up on its electoral promises in this regard.

(1215)

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your attention. I am ready to answer questions if there are any.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments. Normally, I would give the floor to a member from another party, but since no member for another party wishes to speak, I recognize the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm.

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to congratulate my Bloc colleague from the riding of Joliette because I think he grasped the full significance of this bill. Since he is the critic on public service renewal, there should be at least one person in this House who defends the public servants working for the system. RCMP members are directly affected by what is done or not done in this House.

I must tell you at the outset that although we seem to defend the RCMP, we, in the Bloc Quebecois, would have good reasons not to oppose a bill which paints the RCMP into a corner and puts them in a separate class. You have certainly heard members of this House talk about incidents involving the RCMP back in the 1970s. As you know, sovereignists and independentists are not great friends of the system, of the RCMP, but I think that as the Official Opposition we must denounce such bills. This is what I am doing today by denouncing Bill C-58.

Our first reaction after looking at a bill like this is to see it as a harmless piece of legislation. There are not many sections. It does not seem very consequential at the jurisdictional level. Nevertheless, I think we should ask ourselves why Bill C-58, now, in November, singles out RCMP members by putting them in a separate class. Because C-58 does put RCMP members in a separate class.

Looking at the bill, we realize that it touches on staff relations and wonder why the Federal Court of Appeal made a certain ruling under the law as it stood when the court addressed the issue. It handed down a very fair, very well-researched ruling, so that the Liberal federal government—I will come back to this a little later—does not want to appeal it.

Why C-58? As my colleague said earlier, I think that the Gingras case spurred the Liberal government into introducing legislation in this area. For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the Gingras case, a brief review of this case may be

useful, for the sake of understanding the general dynamics of Bill C-58.

You all know that the federal government instituted a bilingualism bonus plan in the seventies, on the 15 of November to be exact. Yesterday was the anniversary, not only of the first term of office of the Parti Quebecois, but also of the creation of the bilingual bonus. This plan was for employees hired by Treasury Board, that is to say the government of Canada, who held a bilingual position, a position recognized as such, which required the use of both official languages. The bonus was \$800 a year.

The purpose of this bonus, and I do not wish to discuss the purpose of the bonus again, was to promote bilingualism. It was designed as an incentive for public servants to learn the other official language to serve the people of Canada, and the people of Quebec in particular.

(1220)

Well, Mr. Gingras had been a member of the RCMP since 1962. In fact, he worked for the RCMP until 1984. But between 1976, when the bilingualism bonus plan was put in place, and 1984, when Mr. Gingras retired from the RCMP, despite the fact his position was designated as bilingual, he never received the \$800 bilingual bonus, while all other public service employees working on the Hill or elsewhere did.

Naturally, pursuant to the RCMP regulations, Mr. Gingras asked his superiors to look into the matter and, unsatisfied with their decision, brought the whole matter before the Federal Court. The case even went to the Federal Court of Appeal, which ruled very clearly on March 10, 1994 that Mr. Gingras and all members of the RCMP were entitled to this bonus.

Although I do not want to read much of the ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal, we see that the reason for this ruling is that all members of the RCMP are public servants who must comply with the rules adopted by Treasury Board and are entitled to the bilingual bonus if they occupy a position recognized as bilingual and requiring bilingualism.

Given such a ruling, we must conclude that Bill C-58 seeks to overturn the Federal Court of Appeal's decision—it is as simple as that.

I come back to the question I raised at the beginning. Is this a harmless bill? I think not. I think that it is a dangerous, sneaky bill for a society that claims to recognize the rights of equality and association. I repeat those two terms.

Why did I say that it is a sneaky bill? Because after this ruling was rendered in March 1994, the government, through its minister, said that it was reviewing the matter to see whether it could appeal. It wanted to analyze the consequences of this judgement. However, in May 1994, the government announced

*Government Orders*

that it did not intend to appeal the Supreme Court's decision and therefore it would pay the bonus to members of the RCMP, including the bonuses for part of the years when the government illegally refused to pay the members of the RCMP.

It is true that the Liberal government did not appeal this decision. However, what the government does not do openly by appealing this ruling to the Supreme Court of Canada, it does indirectly to arrive more or less at the same result. By asking the House to pass Bill C-58, the government is using a sneaky approach. It led us to believe that it was going to live with the ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal, but then it turned around and drafted Bill C-58, which is now before us.

This is sneaky because even those directly concerned by this legislation, namely RCMP members, did not know about it until the Official Opposition approached them to find out what they thought of Bill C-58. These people were not even aware of that legislation. You cannot help but wonder about the internal consultation process. This is why I find it sneaky. This is not a bill about which all concerned were clearly informed. It was drafted, and the government is now trying to have the House pass it rather quickly. I doubt many Liberal members will discuss it. The government is trying to proceed quickly. Yet, this legislation will have very significant consequences.

I also think this is a dangerous bill for a society which claims to be respectful of union membership and equality rights.

(1225)

By introducing a bill which has the effect of overruling a Federal Court of Appeal decision, the government does not necessarily solve an issue related to bilingualism: It is trying to do a lot more than that. And this is what can be very dangerous for RCMP members. Let us not forget that the ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal has an impact on many other very important issues. For example, the court was unanimous in saying that RCMP members are Treasury Board employees and must be considered as such. Consequently, it court ruled that the RCMP and its peace officers should be subjected to all other Treasury Board rules. These rules govern such things as employment equity, enforcement of the Official Languages Act and the rules concerning labour conditions, with of course one exception relating to the right to unionize.

Once the Federal Court of Appeal made its ruling, we heard that the mandarins at the RCMP were concerned about the legal implications of this ruling. Which brings me to another question: Who is affected by this ruling? Why does it bother people so much, why does it bother the mandarins of the RCMP who seem to call all the shots within their agency?

According to inquiries made yesterday, the Gingras case affects some 17,500 members of the RCMP. Of these 17,500 members, about 15,500 are regular members and special constables and about 2,000 are civilian employees. These were the people working for the RCMP who were affected by the Gingras ruling. To these figures you can add about 3,500 employees of the public service, who are not however affected by Bill C-58 or the Gingras case, because they are already considered to be public servants.

We are forced to realize that an injustice was done and we have to understand the rationale behind the ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal, because we had a situation where people working at the same place, for the same employer, were subject to different labour conditions, where the rules were not the same for everyone, and that did not make sense. This is why the ruling of the Federal Court of Appeal set things straight. However, unhappy with this decision, the government now introduces Bill C-58 which negates the ruling of the Federal Court.

As I said earlier, and as my colleagues already said, the first objective of Bill C-58 is to exclude RCMP employees from the Public Service, employees who, at the present time, come under the control of Treasury Board like the rest of the Public Service. If this bill passes under its present form, the RCMP will be covered by legislation governing public service only if it is specifically mentioned in such legislation.

The basic rule under the bill is that Treasury Board policies no longer apply. They applied ever since the court decision. Under Bill C-58 these policies will no longer apply, unless RCMP management decides they do. Therefore, we give mandarins, who worried about the consequences of the Federal Court of Appeal decision, the option to follow or not the rules set out by Treasury Board.

I am no longer as naive as I was on election day, and I know full well that they are not ever going to accept those rules since they were the ones who pushed for Bill C-58. So, even from that point of view this is a sneaky piece of legislation.

If I were a member of the RCMP, I would be furious. I do not know what they are going to do, but if I were in their place I would try to make it known that I am unhappy. I am going to give you some examples. In the area of employment equity: In December 1992, the Financial Administration Act gave the Public Service Employment Equity Program, launched by Treasury Board in the mid-1980s, its real legal basis.

(1230)

All departments and agencies, including Treasury Board and the employer, that is the public service, are subject to the Employment Equity Act, because they are part of the public service. Until quite recently, the RCMP commissioner had decided that the RCMP was not subject to Treasury Board

*Government Orders*

policies, although the RCMP is listed in Part I of Schedule I of the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

It should, however, be mentioned that the RCMP's status is not quite the same as the rest of the public service, which allowed the commissioner to claim that the bilingual bonus policy did not apply. The Federal Court of Appeal decision did not back him up. In the Gingras decision handed down on March 10, 1994, the court ruled unanimously that the RCMP would in future be considered part of the public service. Since then, the RCMP has been obliged to apply Treasury Board policies to all 17,500 of its members affected by the decision.

Bill C-58 is an attempt to put an end to this process of equity. After all, the approximately 3,500 RCMP employees in the third category I referred to earlier were recruited by the Public Service Commission and have therefore always been fully subject to the Treasury Board policies on equity and bilingualism.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, under Bill C-58, members of the RCMP who are police officers or special constables are being treated as a separate class within the RCMP itself. They are being put in a class quite distinct from secretaries, clerks, caretakers and so on.

And it is the same with the official languages policy. The decision to implement this policy in the RCMP as an organization will rest with the big boss himself, the RCMP commissioner. It is extremely dangerous to leave this power in the hands of one person alone.

As for the labour relations and unionization aspects, I think that my hon. colleague from Joliette has covered them well. Since I am rising immediately after him, there is no need for me to argue the unionization issue all over again, except to say that Bill C-58 confirms in no uncertain terms that RCMP employees who may, at one time or another, have contemplated forming a brotherhood or a union can forget it for good.

If there was room for interpretation before, it is all very clear now. As you probably know, Mr. Speaker, applications were made by RCMP employees wishing to unionize. Actually, some are still pending, but Bill C-58 clearly puts an end to any attempt to unionize. Bill C-58, if passed, will make it impossible.

To sum up, seeing that I have one minute or so remaining, the most dangerous thing about Bill C-58 is the tendency to put almost everything in the hands of the commissioner of the RCMP. Mr. Speaker, I think that you for one would understand the situation, because you are sensitive to these issues. If we look at what is happening with the Communications Security Establishment and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, which are truly considered as separate employers by the government in Ottawa, the same thing will happen, indirectly, to the

RCMP people, but that is not spelled out clearly, as it was in the other two cases.

Indirectly, the commissioner of the RCMP will have the final say on certain aspects of the application of RCMP regulations. That is what is extremely dangerous in a country that claims to be democratic and open to the right to organize, to official languages and so on.

This is a bill that centralizes many jurisdictions under a single person, and that is very harmful. You will understand that, for all the aforementioned reasons, like all my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois, I will vote against Bill C-58.

(1235)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion, the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the chief whip of the official opposition has asked me to defer the division until a later time.

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), the vote on the motion stands deferred until 5.30 p.m. on Monday, when the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you would find unanimous consent to further defer the division from Monday at 5.30 p.m. to Tuesday at 5.30 p.m.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent of the House to accept the proposition?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed from October 24 consideration of the motion.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to say a few words on the following motion of the Minister of Human Resources Development:

That this House take note of the progress made to date on the government's forthcoming reform of social security programs and of the views expressed by Canadians with regard to this reform.

I believe the discussion paper on improving social security in Canada, tabled by the minister some weeks ago in the House, is a very welcome and courageous document. As with all initiatives that involve courage there is the potential for controversy and for misrepresentation. Certainly we have seen a fair amount of both since the issuance of the discussion paper.

I am not surprised by that. Indeed I would be disappointed if there were not such controversy and I would certainly be surprised if there were not some misrepresentation. It is the nature of our system of government that for every point of view there is a counter point of view. It is the nature of the way things get done in the Chamber that very often people who choose to take an opposing point of view are not hampered by the facts in some cases. They tend to do a bit of fearmongering and create a whole lot of what if scenarios: Does the government mean to do this or does it mean to do that?

(1240)

I am not surprised by the misrepresentation and indeed I welcome the controversy. The minister and the government have wanted a full scale discussion on this issue and that presumes a discussion of the facts in play.

What I like about the discussion paper is that it raises a series of questions. Do we want this? Do we want that? They are questions. The standing committee is now travelling around the country to canvass the views of Canadians and to invite Canadians who cannot appear before the committee by reason of distance, time or whatever to send their views. I repeat the invitation to send their views to the committee and to their respective members of Parliament but particularly to the committee. As sure as night follows day there will be changes in the social security package as we know it in Canada. There has to be changes.

One of the reasons there has to be changes is that the present system was put in place so long ago that in the intervening time there have been new demands and new realities. Another reason change is needed is that no matter how tightly the rules are written there is always potential for abuse. I could indicate, as could many members of Parliament, many specific examples of where a particular package within the social security network has been abused.

That must never be an argument for throwing out the baby with the bath water. Unemployment insurance is a good system. It has served us well. Have there been abuses? My friend from

Elk Island is probably in the category to which I just made reference. He would probably be leading the charge. He would be the pied piper of throwing out the baby with the bath water. Judging by his reaction in the House at this moment, he would be the kind of person who would want to get rid of the whole system. I am not one of those. That is where he and I differ.

There have been abuses in the UI system; I can document many hundreds of them. The abuses need to be corrected but the basic premise remains. The basic premise is that there are people who need to be assisted financially from one work opportunity to the next one. That is the basic premise of the UI system and we cannot lose sight of that. Nor can we lose sight of the abuses. That is one of the reasons this discussion paper is before us right now.

I could refer to other programs. There are abuses of any program embraced by the social security net, but for each of those programs there is a basic premise. For example, are there people who need an old age supplement? Yes, there are and I can give a list of many tens of thousands of them who need it.

With reference to what my friend from Gander—Grand Falls was saying a few days ago, was it ever intended that the old age security program should help people who already net several million dollars a year to get some more millions, some more dollars? No. Was it ever intended that 2,340 millionaires in this country should be able to draw unemployment insurance and benefit therefrom in tax terms? No, but that is happening. Now what is the solution?

(1245)

There are two possible solutions, I suppose, theoretically. There is a sure way of guaranteeing that not one of these 2,340 people draw UI ever again. Wipe out the system. Wipe the system out completely and you will have guaranteed that none of them ever draw it because it will not be there to draw on. But what will you have done in the meantime? You will have ignored the basic premise of the program, the basic reason for the program in the first place: To help those who genuinely have financial need to get from one work opportunity to the next work opportunity.

With respect to unemployment insurance, old age security, medicare, university tuition, transfer payments, let us not lose sight of what their basic *raison d'être* was in the first place, the basic reason for putting them in place.

There is going to be and there is already a very wide debate. We saw an aspect of it yesterday here in front of the Parliament Buildings when many thousands of university students came to the Hill. I for one was glad to see them there. It is part of the debate that must go on. It must be an informed debate. I hear and I read in the papers a lot of information, a lot of misinformation, a lot of fear mongering. No matter what you attempt to do as a

*Government Orders*

public policy maker or as government, the NIMBY factor immediately comes into play. NIMBY, not in my back yard.

Any Canadian, any taxpayer anywhere in the world will respond to the following set of questions in the following way: Do you want to improve roads? Yes. Do you want to pay for them? No. It is the nature of how politics is done in democracies around the world. Do you want change? Yes. Do you want it to cost you? No. NIMBY. Do it by all means, politicians, please do it, but do not do it in my backyard. Do not affect me adversely.

Well budgeting in government is like a zero sum. Again, as soon as you spend it somewhere you have to take it from somewhere else.

So I say to university students, I say to unemployment insurance recipients, I say to old age pensioners, I say to recipients of medicare, I say to all of them out there including those of them who are my constituents: If you want change you are going to have to accept a basic fact of life. Change will mean improvements in some areas from your perspective but a less adequate measure in other areas from your perspective. Everybody sees it from his or her own perspective.

If you want the status quo, we can just tear up this little green book and we can allow the abuses to go on, allow the millionaires to continue receiving their unemployment insurance. We can allow that to go on, but that would be unthinkable. Therefore we have taken the other route as a government of which I am a supporter of saying that changes are needed but before we trigger those changes let us see what kind of changes you have in mind.

That is why we are having quite a far reaching consultation with the Canadian people. I have been encouraged by the kinds of letters I get, the kinds of spontaneous dialogue I encounter in airports and elsewhere around this country. I have been quite encouraged. But do not for a moment make the assumption that the vested interests are going to allow that dialogue to continue unfettered. There are vested interests.

(1250)

If for example the government contemplates a change in a funding formula for various organizations around this country, the paid staff in that organization immediately says: "What does this mean for my job? If the subsidy from government is less or wiped out altogether, what does it mean for my job?"

Understand that we are talking about a discussion paper. Nobody has said that we are going to do this, this and this. The government through the Minister of Human Resources Development has said: "Here are some questions about what could be done. Canadians, what do you think?"

Let us go back to the organization I was talking about. The guy or the girl sitting behind a desk in a job that is funded by a government subsidy says: "Is it not possible that if they change the system there might be less money flowing to this organization? Therefore, my welfare, my livelihood, my pay, my job might be at stake". It does not take a nuclear scientist to figure out that the next thought that person may well have is: "How can I stop that from happening? I could mobilize a great rally. I could mobilize some letter writing".

Why has he or she done it in that example? Is it because he or she does not think there is a need for change? No. It has been done for the NIMBY reason: Not in my backyard; do not adversely affect me; however good your intentions, however good this program will serve the country, do not do it because it might affect my pocketbook.

Is there controversy? Oh yes, there is lots of controversy. Will there be more? Yes, I certainly hope there will be a lot more. Because at the end of the day when the smoke has cleared, everyone will see that this government will bring in a social security reform package which reflects the concerns of Canadians from coast to coast. Will everybody be happy? I doubt that very much. However I sincerely believe that most of them will be happy if they honestly engage in the process along the way, if they ignore the fear mongers, read the document themselves and respond to the document themselves.

I have some concerns about the process. I hope this does not fall into the category of the fear mongering I have just castigated. I subscribe to the view that what is in this document is basically a series of questions. However you would need to be deaf, dumb, blind and everything else not to realize there are some implied policy directions in this document.

One relates to the issue of university tuition. The government has not said it is going to do it, but it certainly has wondered out loud as to whether that is the route to go. Whether it goes that route or not depends on what Canadians say about the issue in the next few weeks.

The government has wondered out loud about seasonal workers versus workers who only have occasion to tap into unemployment insurance benefits spasmodically and infrequently. I have a very decided view on that issue.

(1255)

Let us take an example of two brothers or sisters who are doing the same job. They are both carpenters driving nails and building the same office building in Toronto or St. John's. They both work for 18 or 19 weeks and both get laid off. Then UI says to one: "You came straight to this job from another job out in Cold Lake, Alberta where you worked for six years. You have no record of being unemployed over the last six or eight years so you are going to get a certain rate of remuneration or benefit while you are looking for work". However UI says to the other brother: "Before your 18 weeks, you were out of work for two

*Government Orders*

or three months. It was through no fault of your own mind you. It was not because you are lazy because you are not, but because you could not find work. However we are going to pay you a lesser rate”.

Forget Liberalism, forget Reformism, forget Blocism. Let us talk another theology called fairness. Let us talk about basic fairness and another theology called basic common sense. The two brothers having worked the same amount of time driving the same kind of nails and getting the same rate of pay receive different UI payments. Who can buy the more groceries? That is the issue.

Remember that UI was put in place in the first instance to help tide a person over from one work opportunity to the next work opportunity. If in the process we say to a person who through no fault of his own has had fewer work opportunities that we are going to give him less money to buy the groceries to get him to the next work opportunity, that comes down to not a matter of political ideology, but to a basic matter of fairness. It is blatantly unfair to contemplate that approach. That is the kind of feedback I am getting and I expect others are getting too.

If it is a matter of deficit reduction, if it is a matter of having the UI fund live within its means, there is another way to fix that. The way to do it is not through unfairness. Instead of paying that fellow that rate and that other person another rate let us just equalize it. We may have to pay one fellow a bit less and the other fellow a bit more. It is not a matter of dollars here. We are not talking overall costs. We are talking another issue. We are talking about whether we believe as parliamentarians in a system that is fair. I can tell this House that I do and I will oppose any suggestion that would treat Canadians unfairly.

I have just given one quick example of where my eyes are open in case the need arises to have them open on that issue. Lest some colleagues who just joined us got bogged down in my examples, let me remind all concerned, including the people outside the House who may be watching, that the Minister of Human Resources Development put down a motion that the House take note of the progress made to date on the government's forthcoming reform of social security programs and take note of the views expressed by Canadians.

I spent most of my time on the latter issue. I believe the success of this process or its failure will be determined largely by the degree to which we give Canadians an opportunity to say what they think of the proposals, say what their answers are to the questions and the degree to which we listen to that feedback.

(1300)

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy interventions by the member for Burin—St. George's. Actually, without any disrespect to him, he did remind me of a friend I have who used to talk endlessly and used many words. When I challenged him on it one time he said: “I am a mathematician. I just use statistics. By the law of averages if I speak long enough and fast enough sooner or later I will say something important”. Without putting the member down, there were many words but not terribly many solid ideas in his speech.

One place I was invoked to make a little comment was when he was speaking about unemployment insurance. I have said unemployment insurance is exactly what its name implies. It ensures that we have unemployment, and so it has been. I could give many examples but that is not my purpose right now.

The fundamental difference between the Liberal philosophy on social programs and the Reform philosophy, which is more a philosophy of self-determination or looking after oneself, is that the Liberals make the assumption that unless the government does it, it will not be done. This is particularly true in the area of unemployment insurance and in many of our other social security programs. They somehow feel the government has to be doing it. We believe it is a function of the people, the taxpayers.

I made an observation while the hon. member was speaking. I have the advantage of being old enough to remember enough years and see changes over time. A way back we were very well off. I remember we had lots of jobs. Unemployment was very low. There were very few needy people in real need. Their needs were all met. Yet we did not have these government programs.

Now with all the government programs and the huge rate of taxation we find a dampening of the economy. The government sucks everything out of us. We know that marginal tax rates are 50 per cent or more. There is very little money left for the people to look after themselves and to help their neighbours.

I make a connection. I say that increased government involvement in these things has added significantly to our lack of efficiency, the downturn in the economy and the resulting hard times many of us face.

I would like to hear the member's response to my statement that we differ in philosophy. Would he perhaps consider admitting at least partially that the government is also part of the problem as opposed to thinking that it has not done enough to find a solution?

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, my friend from Elk Island is one of the courageous people I was talking about earlier. Let me show his last effort at courage. Having said I said nothing in 20 minutes, he now has the courage to dare to ask if I can say



*Government Orders*

something substantive in 30 seconds. I am glad he was not trying to put me down. I am sensitive these days but I take his assurance at his word.

He tried to indicate the difference between Reformers and Liberals. I will put it more graphically for him. We do not think we should let poor people die because they are poor.

**Mr. Epp:** Neither do we.

**Mr. Simmons:** You could have fooled me.

There is a need for those programs. Despite the fact that by the member's own admission he may be old, decrepit and so on, he misinforms the House. He can remember when there were programs. When was he born? Of course there was UI in his youth; of course there was social security. He should not mislead the House. These programs were not brought in by this administration or the previous one. These programs have been there for decades upon decades. The unemployment program goes back nearly half a century.

(1305)

**Mr. Epp:** More than that.

**Mr. Simmons:** Slightly more. In reaching to make a point I say to him—he is my senior so I should not be trying to coach him in public like this—that he does not need to reach for falsehoods to prove his thesis. For him to stand in the House and say these programs have lately arrived is a falsehood; it is just not true. These programs were there when he was a baby.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Burin—St. George's described another member of the House as being old and decrepit. I may have missed it, but was he quoting the member who had just spoken in using those words? If he was not quoting, I hope the member did not wish to describe any member in the House as being old and decrepit.

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, I was taking some poetic licence just to make a point in referring to one of the more virile and youthful members of the Chamber.

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the reference to my age, mature and wise would be better than old and decrepit. In response to what the member has just said, surely I am not so old that I lived before these programs were in place. I guess they did come into place about the time I was in my youth. Certainly they were not nearly as invasive and pervasive as they are now. That is the difference.

We used to have a very modest program for unemployment insurance and everybody was employed. Now we have a pervasive program of unemployment insurance and we have a 12 per cent or 10 per cent rate of unemployment.

That is what I was talking about. There has been such an increase in government programs and such an increase in taxation as a result that the economic balance has been seriously tilted.

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, I have two points in response. First, I agree with my friend from Elk Island that government is much too pervasive. It is and I agree completely. The second point which I piggyback on the first one is that too often in the House we fall into the trap we are in again today. He felt obliged to rise and say "the member has said nothing; he talked ad nauseam" and so on. With respect, I said several things I think the member on reflection would agree are substantive.

I talked about the basic premise for UI and the basic premise for OAS. He may not agree with these premises, but he cannot say they are all verbiage. They are statements. Whether he agrees with them or not is another issue. He falls into the trap, and I did to a degree in response, of always being obliged to knock what the other guy said.

I tried to give as considerate a statement as I could during my 20 minutes in which I said where I am coming from on the issue of social reform. I measured beforehand its success or failure in terms of to what degree the government listens and how much the government canvasses opinion.

What I have said in short, and probably could have said more briefly, is that the jury is out on this one. I am not up here saying this is the best thing since sliced bread because I cannot see it yet. I do not know what it is. We should not fall into the trap of just knocking the other guy because he sits on the other side of the House. I happen to agree with the member for Elk Island that the government is too pervasive. One of the goals of the reform package ought to be to get government out of some people's hair.

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech of the hon. member for Burin—St. George's. It is always interesting listening to him speak.

He mentioned the UI program. I would agree there have to be some changes for the UI program to continue. Of course the Reform Party has been talking about making the program actuarially sound. I would like his comments on that.

The member also raised an example of a UI situation. I would also like to bring to the attention of the House a situation in my own riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt which happened recently. We had a terrible forest fire in the Penticton region that devastated the area for quite some time over the holidays, our peak tourism season. God bless the people who came out to fight the forest fire. They were there to ensure the fire did not spread much farther than it did. We lost in the neighbourhood of a dozen homes; it could have been a lot worse.

*Government Orders*

(1310)

Recently a company that does a controlled burn each year on a contract basis in the Merritt region went to the unemployment insurance people and said it needed some people to help with the controlled burn. Strangely enough the same people who fought the forest fire in Penticton were the people that year after year participated in the controlled burn. This year he could not get those people to come out. The UIC said that these people had been asked and they said: "No, we have had it with fires and working in the forests. We can do much better if we stay on UI for this period of time". This is an excellent example of abuse in the system.

What would the member do? What would be his suggestion to alleviate this situation?

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, on his question about whether I believe it ought to be actuarially sound, the answer is yes. I gave that answer in other words during my speech. I think I used the phrase that the fund ought to live within its means. I believe that. On his example, I can give him several like it. It is another example of how the UI scheme has been a disincentive to work.

I remember when I was a school superintendent in Newfoundland that I used to have people coming into my office on a number of occasions and saying: "You are the superintendent". "Yes". "How do you spell that?" "Yeah". "Have you got a job for me here?" "No". "You are also the president of the Green Bay Economic Development Association?" "Yeah". "How do you spell that?" "Yeah". "You have got another job up there, have you?" "No, no". "Now you are also involved with that park up on the highway". "Yeah". "How do you spell that?" "Yeah". They had just applied to three employers for employment. They could go back now and fill in their forms that they had approached three employers and they could not find work.

I also remember the day that a dear young former student of mine refused a job as a secretary. I knew why she was refusing it and I reported her. One of the reasons we have abuse has to do with the abusers. Another reason is the aiders and abettors, the employers who will not report the abuses.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will address the House on social program review today in a slightly different manner than is usual.

I will direct my comments to the pages in the Chamber for a couple of reasons. I think the pages might well listen to me. I find it sometimes frustrating to stand in the House and I do not think I am necessarily being listened to. I should like to address these young, enthusiastic, keen students who have come to Parliament. They are smart. They are a good example of what Canada should reflect upon.

They are fluently bilingual. They are from all over the country. I notice a few of them gathering in the wings here. They are paying attention. They are listening to the fact that somebody wants to talk to them.

I know they are smart because they remember all our faces. They can call us by name. They are kind to me when I speak to them in French as I try to improve my French. They speak very slowly so I can comprehend what they say. I am speaking to them because what we are undertaking in this social program review will affect them a lot more than anyone else in the Chamber.

I will be dead and gone when the effects of the social program review are truly on the table. I speak to the pages and only to the pages. If others in the Chamber want to close their ears, look down at their papers and do other things, I give them my complete concurrence; I am not going to be upset if they do so. I do not think the pages will heckle me either. Maybe that is another benefit in talking to the pages.

(1315)

Why are we undergoing a social program review in Canada today? During the election campaign a significant number of individuals got after me for the social program review thoughts that I had. I laid them out on the table pretty plainly. I did not find social program review to be a large part of the programs from some of the candidates who ran against me.

I read a very interesting article in *Maclean's* magazine just before the election. That article had a headline "Social Programs: The Cuts to Come". It described a process whereby we were going to undergo social program review no matter who was in power. It said it would not matter if it were the NDP, it would not matter if it were the Tories, it would not matter if it was the communist party from somewhere else, whether Reformers were in power or whether the Liberals were in power, there was going to be social program review.

I said there is no way that some of the parties that conducted this campaign could have a major social program review. I read the platform carefully. I said there is no way that the Liberals could have social program review. And here we are today with a major social program review.

I said to myself: Why are we now undergoing this social program review? Of course, the reason is staring us in the face. The reason is our debt. The debt leaves us with unsustainable social programs. As the article said, it would not matter who was sitting in the government benches, we would have that review.

I have had trouble in understanding the debt. All my life I have heard this spoken about. I am a car nut, a phrase that I bear proudly. I love old cars. I have a hobby of old cars. I finally figured out how I could explain the debt to the high school students. To the pages, here is what the debt means.

*Government Orders*

Each one of you young people in this chamber today owes to the federal government a brand new Camaro. It is a basic Camaro, not a fancy one. It has plain wheels. It does not have radial tires, it has plain tires. It is an automatic. It does not have electric windows, it has wind-up windows. It has a heater and it has a good motor. It will get you from home to the Parliament Buildings or from university to the Parliament Buildings every day. It is brand new. That is your debt to the federal government.

Do you know what the kids in the high schools said to me? They said: "Grant, where is my Camaro?"

If the current mandate of this government takes place and everything that they promise us unfolds, I say to the pages that they will owe the federal government a Z-28 Camaro. This Camaro will have alloy rims and an AM-FM stereo. It will not have a CD player. We are not quite that broke yet. It will have the big motor. Now, this motor is a hot motor, a 300 horsepower motor, zero to 60 in about 5.4 seconds. It has electric windows. It has nice thick upholstery in it. It is not the plain Jane model at all. That is their debt to this federal government.

When I told that to the high school students they really were upset because every one of them wants the Z-28 Camaro. They are beautiful cars, every kid's ideal. They said to me: "Where is my Z-28?"

The answer is: Your Z-28 you will pay for and it is in the hands of our federal government. Every single individual in Canada owes to the federal government that Camaro; every single infant, every single grandparent, every single member of these chambers. That is the reason that we are undergoing social program review.

The interest on the debt that we are paying is just paying for the borrowing each year. What a legacy to the pages. What a legacy my generation presents to you. Many of you, if you think carefully of this, will say: "Thanks a lot for the debt; thanks a lot for that legacy."

(1320)

Will they look back with fond memories at their time here in these chambers? Will they look back and say: "I learned a lot as I was studying in university and was present and part of the history of these chambers?" I believe they will. Will they feel a part of Canadian history? We have a new Parliament. We have an opportunity with many new backbenchers who have never been tied to the old government ways, many individuals with bright thoughts, on both sides of the House ready to undertake new ideas, ready to reform the way government operates. Rookies. They know about the dissatisfaction of the public. They went to the doorsteps and heard the problems. Yet I see what I consider

to be a slow slide back into some of the old ways of the old government.

I had an opportunity to sit with the HRD committee and talk about the consultation process it has undertaken. I am fully in agreement with the consultation process. Canadians need to know what the government is doing, need to have input, need to have the opportunity to reflect upon and express their viewpoint on the consultation process.

I am very critical of 15 members of Parliament flapping around the country like a wounded goose, going from major city to major city looking for public input. I am profoundly critical of the numbers of individuals who can reach them. I am profoundly critical of the cost of that exercise. I read that even though they have a somewhat crippled goose to fly around on, it will cost \$800,000.

There is another mechanism for this government to consult the public on something like social program review. The mechanism is straightforward. The HRD minister presents a package that is very straightforward so that everyone has the same information. I look upon the best package as being a video. It would spread the HRD minister all over the country. I thought he would like that idea, with his smiling face in every townhall meeting.

Every single member of Parliament would take that video along with the background information and have townhall meetings throughout their constituencies; for the senior citizens in homes who do not get to have a consultation with the Minister of Human Resources Development and for those individuals in the small communities who are too busy to travel to the main cities. The cost would be very small. The taxpayers are already paying the member of Parliament's salary and already paying their way home. Who knows the constituency better?

That information would be gathered by the members of Parliament. They would come back and present that information to the committee which would look at all the input, profound input, close input, tight input, input that I think would be much more typical than special interest groups being paid for by the government to step forward.

I saw those individuals come to the committee before, one after another. I heard NIMBY, every single one of them with a NIMBY. At the second round of consultations the same people came back.

**Mr. McClelland:** Not in my backyard.

**Mr. Hill (MacLeod):** I had an opportunity to say to them: "Who's paying you to come here?" I found that the government was financing not only their way here but the studies they were undertaking. One group had \$40,000 for the brief that it came to the committee with.

*Government Orders*

We as individuals are paying not only for their trips but the briefs. Surely interested Canadians do not need \$40,000 to tell the minister that there are specific things that they want him to conduct in social program review.

When I was an intern I once went mountaineering. Your pages, Mr. Speaker, are still young enough to be mountaineers. Let me tell a mountaineering story. I wanted to climb Mount Assiniboine, 11,870 feet, one of the really high peaks in the Rockies, a famous peak. It looks like the Matterhorn. It is a significant height to get to. I had a big back pack. I went with one of my buddies.

(1325)

As we got into Assiniboia we met up with a fellow from California, a powerful looking young man with all the fancy equipment. I have never seen more mountaineering equipment in my life. It was the most modern, the best. He had ropes that were beyond our means. We had pretty inexpensive ropes and all our climbing equipment was used, tattered I suppose you would say.

We were going to climb Assiniboine and he asked to join us. Well, a pretty impressive group, but mountaineering is somewhat dangerous. We asked what his experience was. He had climbed all over, almost everywhere. He had climbed this peak, that peak, and had all this equipment so we said he should join us. He did.

We climbed early in the morning. You have to cross underneath the glacier in this particular spot. If you cross early enough in the morning the sun does not melt the ice and snow and there is very little risk. We crossed underneath the glacier at three in the morning, before the sun was up. We got to the place where the climb started to get a little bit risky, so we roped up. My buddy was on one end of the rope, the stranger in the middle, and myself on the end. We started to climb one at a time. The rope was simply for security.

We reached a point where there was a gravel slope with a very steep cliff at the end. The young man in the middle fell. He skidded down the gravel slope and went over the cliff. Of course the rope was designed so that we could arrest him. As I tried to get good footing, I also skidded down on the gravel, lost my footing completely and I was going over the cliff. This was 1,500 feet straight down. Gonzo, over the cliff. Luckily, because he was higher up on a better more secure spot, my buddy was able to arrest us both.

What lesson do I bring from this mountaineering story on Assiniboine to the pages? There is a huge risk in our society and the risk is that we will ignore our debt. The debt is going to pull us over the cliff and there will be no arresting us if we go over. The social programs will be gone if we go over that cliff.

We talk about review of the social programs. Forget the social programs if we go over the cliff of the debt. There are ample examples of this in other countries, New Zealand being the best

one. The field I am so keen on is health care. I look at what happened to their health care system when they slammed into the debt wall. They went from a socialized health care system to one where every single visit to the doctor costs. Cough up, shell out. Do we want that in Canada? Do we need that in Canada? We do not. Social program review is necessary. Social program review is mandatory. You pages should have a part in social program review. I ask you, I beg you, I implore you to be involved. Speak up. Tell my generation what matters to you in social program review and, to the pages, thank you for listening to me.

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we should remind the viewers of what motion we are debating. It is Motion No. 15 which says that this House take note of the progress made to date on the government's forthcoming reform of social security programs and of the views expressed by Canadians with regard to this reform.

Last week when the House was not sitting I had a townhall meeting with an excellent attendance. I would like to share some of the views from my constituents in Toronto.

At that townhall meeting almost everyone in the audience agreed that a strong economy is the essence of a strong society. They also agreed with the government's two priorities, jobs and economic growth. The Government of Canada will meet those priorities by building a healthy fiscal climate, by getting the federal deficit down and eventually eliminating the public debt as some people have already stressed in this debate.

(1330)

It will strengthen Canada's economic performance through investment, innovation and trade; review government programs and priorities, making sure that as a government we are concentrating our energy on the right things in the most effective way possible. Finally, it has the priority of reforming social security.

Why is reforming social security part of this agenda for growth? Because good social programs will put people and jobs together. The programs we have now do not do that well enough. It is time to rebuild and modernize our social security programs to build a system that will help people get back to work, help people get off welfare and build a better life for their families.

In education, prior to being a politician, I met families that were second and third generation on welfare. This has to stop. Our system will have to look squarely at the problem of child poverty and do something about it.

It is up to all Canadians to decide how we can build a system that works, that is fair, affordable and effective, with programs that open doors, not close them, to opportunity for people across our great country. The federal government has presented Canadians with some options for discussion. Now it is inviting all Canadians to consider how we can build such a system. How must our social programs change to stay in touch with the needs

*Government Orders*

people face today? What kind of programs make sense as Canada prepares for the 21st century?

At the town hall meeting I was asked why do we need reform? Because our social programs have not kept pace with the needs of Canadians. For too many people the system does not work any more. At this town hall meeting there was a qualified doctor who is on welfare. Because he got his training in another country he cannot work in Canada.

Canadian taxpayers are spending more than \$38 billion a year on employment programs, UI, welfare, post-secondary education, child tax benefits and programs for disabled persons. Yet too many people are unemployed or find themselves caught in a revolving door going from UI to short term jobs and back to UI.

Too many children are living in poverty. Too many people are stuck on social assistance. They want to work, but under our present system they cannot afford to go to work. They are better off financially staying on social assistance.

Too many young people cannot get started in a career. It breaks my heart when I get a PhD graduate or a Master's graduate coming to my constituency office begging: "Mr. Flis, can you help me find work?"

In many ways the system keeps people on a treadmill instead of helping to solve their problems. Too many Canadians fall through the cracks. Too many Canadians find the rules stacked against them when they try to build better lives for themselves and for their children.

People here in Ontario know firsthand how urgent the need for reform is. Ontario today is at a crossroads. The recession and the effects of international competition have taken jobs we thought were secure. It has helped push unprecedented numbers of people on to unemployment insurance and social assistance rolls. Now that things are beginning to improve, our social programs do not do enough to help people to get back into the workforce.

We have been forced to recognize that our social programs were designed in an era that has passed into the history books. In 1993 the average unemployed worker in Ontario between the ages of 45 and 64 had been looking for work for 34 weeks. That figure masks the number who were facing much longer unemployment because of their limited skills and as a result of industrial change. For too many of them a plant shutdown meant a career shutdown. We can no longer afford that.

Ontario recognizes the need for reform as do all governments. Now is the time to work together. We need a system that works for people, that brings hope, that rewards initiative, that supports efforts to regain independence and the dignity of work. We need a system that Canadians can afford. All governments have

to get spending under control if we are to take control of the future.

In my region we contend with four levels of government: federal, provincial, metro Toronto, Toronto and a lot of unnecessary duplication. We must do a better job in putting people and jobs together. Employment programs, things like job counselling, training, labour market information, work experience projects are a good investment if they help people get off UI or welfare and back to work. But existing programs do not work well enough.

(1335)

We need to invest more in people, focusing on better tools to help people get jobs and better management to make sure those tools get results.

The green paper suggests a healthy debate around possible directions for reform, making progress more accessible to those who need help, especially people on social assistance and persons with disabilities. We must pay more attention to individual needs, with more assessment and counselling to help each person develop a practical action plan for getting a job.

People come to my constituency office complaining that they have to wait six months before they can see a counsellor, and as a result miss many opportunities.

We should consider giving communities, local business, labour, education and service groups more control over what kinds of programs are used and how they are used.

Another possible direction suggested in the green paper is encouraging more employers to provide training on the job. Why not? We can ensure that institutional training is relevant and effective. We can help people get work experience, for example by offering to supplement their wages if they are hired, or finding opportunities for community work, something we have not stressed enough. We can reduce duplication and waste in programs, with better co-ordination between the federal, provincial and local governments. We must pay more attention to results and help people get jobs and less attention to following rigid bureaucratic rules.

I mentioned as an example someone who came to my office wanting a course which was to begin in a couple of weeks. That course would have led to full time employment. So I said, great, why don't you take it, why don't you apply? He could not because he had to see a counsellor first. I asked him why don't you see the counsellor? The counsellor cannot see this person for six months because of the workload. Another opportunity is lost where someone could have taken a course which would have led to full time employment.

*Government Orders*

We must have unemployment insurance that makes sense. For too many people the UI program does not work any more. It does not help them get the skills they need for new jobs. It does not help people solve their employment problems. Too often it just makes those problems worse because there is no incentive or support for people to change. Canadians want a better UI program, one that is fair and affordable and helps unemployed people get good long term jobs.

Another constituent complained because she has been working for six years with the same company but it has always been on a part time basis. The employer saves all of the fringe benefits, et cetera. This has to stop.

One way to adjust the system is to make people work longer to qualify for UI or reduce the amount they receive. Or we could shorten the time people could collect UI. That might help but we need more than that. We should look at an entirely new employment insurance program, one that really helps people deal with employment problems. The hon. member mentions a newly-formed party in the past that led to unemployment instead of employment.

The discussion paper outlines one possible approach, a program that targets special help to people who have trouble getting a job. It would have two components; basic insurance and adjustment insurance. Occasional UI claimants, people who face temporary, occasional unemployment would get basic insurance benefits. This would give them income support while they looked for work, much as at the present time. The frequent UI claimants, people who keep having employment problems, would get adjustment insurance benefits. They would get much better help finding a job than they do now through things like better job counselling, training, or opportunities for community work.

Adjustment insurance benefits could depend on a person's willingness to take part in programs that would help them find work. Reformed programs will open more doors through learning. More than ever before the key to security for Canadians is learning. Education, training, skills are the only ticket to a good job.

More Canadians need opportunities for training and education throughout their lives. We all know now that learning is a lifetime process. While the provinces are responsible for education, the federal government plays an important role. But education and training cost money. How can we make sure that individual Canadians can afford the learning they need?

(1340)

Some options outlined in the green paper include: making more loans and grants available for students; exploring a new form of income contingent repayment of student loans. These loans would be repayable only after a student graduates and enters the workforce. At that point a repayment schedule would

be based on the borrower's ability to repay, given his or her income levels.

I am sure many of the members here receive students at their offices who are at a breaking point mentally because the previous government sent out collection agencies to collect the loans that they did not repay. How can they repay the loans if they cannot get a job? That has to change.

Another option is allowing more flexibility in registered retirement savings plans so that people could draw on those savings for lifelong learning. Our goal must be to preserve and broaden access to post-secondary education. A reformed program must provide a fair chance for all Canadians. This is a basic commitment at the heart of our social security reform, to protect those most in need. It is the same policy that we have in our foreign policy, to help those most in need.

That commitment will remain firm but we have got to do a better job. The system is not working despite the fact that spending on welfare and social services has jumped from \$2.6 billion to more than \$8 billion annually since 1981. Too many Canadian children live in poverty, more children proportionately than any other industrialized country except the U.S.A. Too many parents of those children spend years on welfare even though with the right kind of help they could find work. The problem is we do not give them the help they need.

The source of the problem is the outdated rules of the Canada assistance plan know as CAP. The rules place strict limits on how federal funding through CAP can be used. We have got to start looking at new ideas to help all Canadians get a better chance in life.

For example, how can we make the rules more flexible and put people first, giving the provinces more leeway to design programs that work? How can we start focusing more of our attention on long term solutions like preventing child poverty instead of just tinkering around with short term cures? Should we take some of the money we spend now and use it for special priorities like increasing the child tax benefit for low income families, or giving people on welfare more training and more help finding jobs, or providing more opportunities for people with disabilities so we do not have the incidents such as we saw yesterday on the news?

Many of the ideas behind social security reform are already being put into action here in Ontario through creative partnership agreements between the Ontario and federal governments.

The first of these will create a series of local labour force development boards across the province. The boards will give communities a real voice in training and employment development priority setting. It will give them the chance to put federal and provincial dollars to work on the needs they see around them. Real grassroots planning and action will mean that money is spent where it has the best chance to create results.

*Government Orders*

Another joint project, Joblink Ontario, will create about a dozen resource centres in communities across the province on a pilot basis. The \$25 million that the federal government will contribute this year will match Ontario's contribution. These resource centres will help people on social assistance prepare for and find jobs. It will give them one-stop shopping for training and employment programs for all levels of government and community agencies. It will offer real support to people who can work and who want to work. Through counselling, labour market information and Canada employment centre job listings these people will gain the self-sufficiency they need to escape the welfare trap.

By working together the ideas behind social security reform are already becoming a reality in Ontario, but we cannot stop here. In the past generations of Canadians have risen to the challenge of building a society that cares, that has compassion for the disadvantaged, that supports those in need. This is a challenge each generation must face in turn.

(1345)

It is now our turn, and I include every member in this Chamber. It is our turn to shape a system that works here on the eve of a new century. We should face this challenge with confidence. We can face this challenge knowing that as a nation our prospects for the future are good.

The federal government is putting in place a comprehensive agenda for economic growth and jobs for Canadians. We can make social security reform an integral part of that agenda. As demonstrated in my town hall meeting of last week Canadians want a better system. By working together we will build a better system.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, our debt is rising at a fantastic rate since this government came into power. Admittedly, some of it would have been the fulfilling of obligations from the previous government. We do not know the number but most likely we have slipped another \$40 billion into debt.

I have a question with respect to the speed with which this is coming about. After a year we finally have a discussion paper which we are now supposed to start talking about. Canadians were already talking about it before the last election. By now I would have liked to have seen a good system of cost analysis with options on these different programs so that we could begin making choices and start making the necessary cuts in order to prevent us from sliding into debt so deeply that we will never get out.

I would like the member's comment on the whole question of speed and urgency with respect to this debate that is going on.

**Mr. Flis:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question. I get the same question from many constituents: Why is it taking so long? Why not do it tomorrow?

If you want a true consultative process, if you honestly want to get input from the grassroots Canadians it will be a slower process. By listening to Canadians you have to determine what programs are of highest priority, what programs are of the least priority. Then as a government jointly with all parties in opposition we have to decide which programs we must continue funding and which programs can be dropped. Then we have to see what kind of resources, how many public service personnel we need to match those programs and what kind of financial resources we need to match those programs.

We lead the public astray when we complain we are not moving fast enough. We are moving very quickly when you consider the kind of input that the minister, the parliamentary secretary, and individual members from all three parties are getting through town hall meetings. I think we are moving fairly quickly.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a follow up comment and question to try to determine the member's motivation for the social policy review.

He mentions in his opening remarks the reason the review is necessary is that the programs are not working properly for Canadians any more. Other people would argue that a financial motivation is actually driving it. The agenda is being driven because we must change because we cannot foot the bills.

In his opinion which is the case? Is it the case that we must change because we are going to go over the waterfall that another member mentioned earlier today? Or is it because they are not just working well? I am wondering which is the priority.

**Mr. Flis:** Mr. Speaker, we ran on a platform of putting our own house in order first. When I say we, I include all of us. To get our house in order we have to look at the programs and which ones we can afford.

We give out \$38 billion for programs and services but we spend more than that in paying the interest on the public debt. I know we agree on that. We see eye to eye. We are going to have to reduce the annual deficit and bring down the public debt. I do not think we can wait for one and then the other. All of this has to go hand in hand.

(1350)

I know the Reform Party would like to reduce the annual deficit in one year and wipe out the public debt in one or two years. If we did that we would put so many people out of work that we would really bankrupt this country because it is jobs that create the resources and funding that we need to carry on.

*Government Orders*

Let us not forget that even with all of our deficit and public debt, et cetera the United Nations still named Canada as the number one country on this planet in which to live. Therefore, we must be doing something right. We are not perfect and we never said we were, but we must be doing something right for a United Nations organization to put Canada that high on the map measured against certain social protection.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with my colleagues in this House by splitting it into 10-minute periods.

The least that can be said is that the Liberal government has finally achieved unanimity. In every province, a mass movement is taking shape against the proposed reform of social programs. I predicted—and I was not the only one—that the people would rise up against this reform whose prime objective is very clear: to meet the finance minister's budget requirements by slashing social programs. Yesterday, it was thousands of angry students, as the minister's dry cleaner can attest to. Tomorrow, it will be all the others who have nothing but whom the government is still going after. The only objective is to cut social programs.

The government plans to announce additional measures in its 1995 Budget, as it states on page 23 of its discussion paper. We know that the government has prepared a secret document specifying that the \$7.5 billion in cuts announced in the last Budget will be supplemented by another \$7.5 billion in cuts over five years.

I will now deal with the minister's proposal to address the current unemployment problem. His favoured option will introduce a second class of unemployed, that of workers with precarious jobs. Women and young people, who hold the majority of these jobs, will be the main victims of this reform. With this proposal, the minister creates cheap labour. In addition to compulsory employability measures, these unemployed people will be required to participate in community work. They also want these second-class people to pay higher premiums in return for lower benefits. Indeed, the government feels that some citizens are just lazy bums who lose their jobs on purpose. It wants to treat the unemployed like thieves sentenced to community work.

The federal government has always stressed that unemployment insurance was a generous system aimed at redistributing the wealth across the country. Yet, the minister's paper states that it may—repeat, may—become necessary to put in place special programs for seasonal workers to offset the negative impact of reform on regions with very high unemployment rates. If the government does not give that assurance in its document, this is cause for serious concern.

Earlier this week, a cartoon in a Quebec daily depicted a producer selling his corn for 75 cents a dozen, at -30 degrees. This is what the government wants seasonal workers to do.

As regards manpower training, the federal government continues to dismiss Quebec's claims. It wants to maintain national standards to bypass provincial initiatives and let local communities decide which programs they want to implement. The government is again trying to impose its famous single-window concept, which perpetuates overlapping and duplication, this time under the same roof. Talk about improvement! While all every stakeholder in Quebec agrees on the need for an integrated provincial policy on manpower development, the federal government persists in wanting to control everything. Ironically, the proposal made by the government in its report is the same one which was rejected last summer by the former Quebec Liberal government.

(1355)

By persisting in maintaining and even increasing their involvement in manpower training, the Liberals only contribute to the administrative mess they know exists. In Quebec, \$500 million were wasted within two years.

As we all saw, many students came here yesterday to demonstrate. Several women called me and said: "Can you tell me, sir, what will happen to me with the new social program reform? My husband earns \$50,000 and I earn much less compared to him, but I do pay unemployment insurance premiums".

I told this woman: "Look, in all honesty, I think that you should get the service for which you pay". But this is not what the reform will do. The reform will ensure that you pay, but that you do not get the service.

I should tell you that one group of workers I helped at the union level went to court because they had paid for a service they never received. These people, who may be paying unemployment insurance premiums, will now be able to say: "I contribute to the unemployment insurance fund, and my husband earns so much money. I will no longer pay unemployment insurance premiums, since I will not be entitled to benefits".

It only makes sense not to pay for a service you will not get. We should not focus only on the negative aspects of the reform. At one point, I asked why a reform of the unemployment insurance program was undertaken. I was told that too many people cheat the system. I said fine, can you tell me the percentage these people represent. The answer was 1 per cent. One per cent are cheaters, and because of that one percent, the 99 per cent who are honest, who have not done anything wrong, will be penalized.

That is totally unacceptable. I entirely agree that reform is necessary, but we should not penalize the most vulnerable in our society and we should not penalize all women in Quebec and



*S. O. 31*

Canada by withholding unemployment insurance benefits because of a tax bracket that is beyond a certain level.

There are alternatives, and I can suggest a few simple ones. I agree that reform and cuts are necessary, but leave the most vulnerable members of our society alone, once and for all. Go after the multinationals that make millions of dollars in profits and do not pay taxes.

I have had enough. I can no longer go along with this system. There is something I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker. You saw those young people demonstrating on Parliament Hill. I would urge the unions, I would urge all workers to get up and come to Ottawa to demonstrate against these measures which are intolerable, and I can tell you I will be there on Parliament Hill with those groups, with the most vulnerable members of our society.

**The Speaker:** I believe there are five minutes remaining in the period for questions and comments. We will continue after Question Period.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5) the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, among Canada's senior citizens there is a strong desire to remain autonomous and stay in their homes as long as possible.

Home adaptations and safer consumer products can play an important role. Increasing the level of awareness among health, housing and support service professionals and seniors themselves about home adaptation resources and opportunities, as well as information about safety in the home can help seniors maintain their independence and remain in their homes with greater comfort and security.

Health Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists all support the Canada Safety Council's 1994 National Seniors Safety Week campaign, November 12 to 18. Together we can work to meet the safety and housing needs of this important segment of our Canadian population.

[Translation]

### CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this week Quebec emphasizes the vital contribution made to our society by members of our cultural communities.

At a time when Quebec is preparing to choose the country it wants, this intercultural week should not be seen as another forum for dialogue but as an opportunity for co-operation and for actively promoting membership in a common culture while respecting one another's differences.

Since Monday, the unions, schools and municipalities, to name a few, have been organizing numerous activities that demonstrate how open Quebec is to its citizens from other countries and other cultures. For instance, we have the Association des droits des minorités du grand Châteauguay, which will hold a seminar called *Contact 1994*, an opportunity to celebrate these much needed intercultural ties.

Our cultural communities are important to Quebec, and the Bloc Québécois fully supports them.

\* \* \*

[English]

### GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the bedrock of the Canadian legal system is the British common law.

It is unnerving to know that our justice minister, Canada's top lawyer, has so little regard for the common law that on May 4 in the House he stated that the possession of personal arms is not a right but a privilege granted by the state.

He should reread his Blackstone. This greatest of all British jurists pointed out in his commentaries that without the auxiliary right to have arms, the absolute rights to life, security of person, liberty and property are illusory.

There is already more than enough regulation of firearms in Canada. Do we really want to continue sliding inch by inch into the Mexican model where firearms are restricted to criminals and agents of the state?

\* \* \*

### ATLANTIC CANADA

**Mr. Paul Zed (Fundy—Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that enough is enough. I have grown sick and tired of hearing anti-Atlantic Canadian comments coming from members of the Reform Party. Not only are they attacking Atlantic Canada but they are using untruths and distortions in

S. O. 31

their partisan attempts to pit region against region. This is unacceptable.

One of the worst offenders is the member for Fraser Valley West who has been slandering the hard working scientists and researchers at the University of Moncton's food research centre.

Out of respect for the truth, the ACOA contribution was not to make jam as the member suggested. It assisted in research and development for the small fruit industry. This R and D contributes to the development of new markets for products from soft drinks to jellies. This is no small industry to take a knock at. For example, the blueberry industry alone provides 10,000 direct jobs for Atlantic Canadians and generates \$35 million in revenues.

The Reform Party members should tread lightly when they attempt to slander the business efforts of hard working Atlantic Canadians. They will never be a national party—

**The Speaker:** I would encourage members to use words such as slander and untruths judiciously. We are walking a very tight rope in using these words. I would ask all hon. members to truly consider if and when they want to use that type of word in this House.

\* \* \*

#### EAST TIMOR

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, November 12, was the third anniversary of the Dili massacre in East Timor.

Since the Indonesian armed forces invaded East Timor in 1975, one-third of the nation's population has been killed, resulting in the worst genocide on a per capita basis since the holocaust.

Despite two UN Security Council resolutions condemning this invasion and requesting the withdrawal of Indonesian troops, no action has been taken by Indonesia to withdraw or the UN to enforce.

Since our Prime Minister in opposition said that he would take action to support the UN resolutions, I urge the Prime Minister to follow through on his commitment to raise this issue at the United Nations and elsewhere and to stop all arms sales to Indonesia.

\* \* \*

#### MS. SUU KYI

**Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Vancouver South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on September 20 I stood in the House to draw attention to the continued imprisonment of Ms. Suu Kyi, the leader who was democratically elected by the majority of the

Burmese people. Ms. Suu Kyi has been under house arrest since 1989.

(1405)

Burma's military regime did meet with Ms. Suu Kyi on September 20. However, during this meeting they did not give a commitment or a time frame as to when they plan to release her.

I urge all my colleagues here today to remain vocal on the subject of Burma. I ask all my colleagues from both sides of the House to support a motion urging the United Nations General Assembly to condemn the current Burmese military regime and restore democracy to Burma.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CRTC

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there are reports in the newspapers today that a CRTC analyst did believe that the Minister of Canadian Heritage was lending his support to the licence application submitted by one of his constituents, and he did so long before the minister argued publicly that he never intended to influence the decision of the CRTC. The analyst even advised the CRTC committee reviewing the licence application in question accordingly.

So, this was much more than simple carelessness, as the Prime Minister claimed it was. These recent revelations show that the minister in fact interfered with the operations of the CRTC, a quasi-judicial organization operating at arm's length from the government. This new information confirms that the minister has lost all credibility by now.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### LIGHT STATIONS

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday during the Senate standing committee meeting on transport, Liberal senators defeated a planned fact finding mission to British Columbia next week to hold public consultations on the future of light stations.

The mandate and terms of reference were granted long before the coast guard announced the destaffing initiative. This is flagrant political initiative by Liberal senators to block input by concerned citizens and associations into the future use of light stations on the west coast.

An ad hoc parliamentary committee on light stations, jointly chaired by Senator Pat Carney and myself, was struck today. It will undertake this initiative and hold public hearings next week in Richmond, Sidney and Campbell River. The hearing group will be composed of two other senators and MPs.

*S. O. 31*

We welcome participation on this committee from other federal parliamentarians.

\* \* \*

#### TELEPHONE CITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

**Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 11, residents of Brant had the chance to remember the thousands of Canadians who have paid the ultimate price for our country. Again this year one could hear at the Brantford cenotaph the music of the Telephone City Musical Society. In fact, the band has played every November 11 in Brantford except two since 1919.

This year the band celebrates 75 years of providing music for parades, concerts and ceremonies in Brant. During these years highlights from the band include playing for the royal visit to Brantford in 1939 and playing on the same stage as the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1978.

Congratulations and many thanks must be extended to all members of the band, past and present, for their contribution to the quality of life in Brant. Special congratulations go out to Mr. Bert Locke and Mr. Fred Nicholas who are celebrating 57 and 48 years of service to the band respectively.

On behalf of the residents of Brant, I would like to say that their contributions are very much appreciated.

\* \* \*

#### ATLANTIC CANADA

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern over the disturbing increase in anti-Atlantic Canadian sentiment coming from members of the Reform Party.

The Reform Party does not speak for westerners on this issue. First it was the Reform member from Capilano—Howe Sound who made insulting comments about westerners being tired of hearing Atlantic Canadians whine for more subsidies. Now in the same vein the member for Fraser Valley West has attacked entrepreneurial spirit in that region, stating that westerners are more money wise and work harder than their Atlantic counterparts. When will this stop?

All Canadians have benefited at some time or another from government support, even British Columbians. As a British Columbian I am personally ashamed of this tactic. Rather than slander our fellow Canadians on the Atlantic coast for political gain, we in the Pacific should be more understanding.

\* \* \*

#### FOLK OF THE SEA

**Mr. Fred Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 13 and 14, I along with several

thousand citizens of Ottawa and Toronto was fortunate to witness the inspirational concerts given to packed houses by the Folk of the Sea.

(1410)

Folk of the Sea consists of 110 fisherpersons from Newfoundland and Labrador who have come together to prepare their gift of song and story and to proudly present this heritage to the people of Canada. Everything that has been of consequence to Newfoundlanders invariably centres on the necessity that grafted us to the salt water trade. Our speech, our song, our common memories that shape and temper what has come to be recognized as characteristically Newfoundland was portrayed in a powerful and moving manner.

When we in Newfoundland and Labrador face the greatest challenge of our 500-year history in the fishery, which has been our sustenance, our occupation and our craft, it has never been more important to share our bounty of music and narrative with other Canadians.

I ask this House to join me in extending heartiest congratulations to this talented group of ordinary Newfoundlanders achieving extraordinary results as Folk of the Sea. We believe in Newfoundland and Labrador.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are finally finding out the real impact the cuts the HRD minister is contemplating as part of his social reform plan.

The Quebec government announced yesterday that the minister's cutback frenzy will force another 45,000 or so Quebec households onto welfare. This translates into tax increases of over \$340 million for Quebec taxpayers.

That is real impact of the minister's plan cynically dubbed "from unemployment insurance to employment insurance". The minister will no doubt argue that you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs, but he will have to come to the realization that his reform will create unbearable poverty in several regions. Again, this government is cutting where it hurts the most.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### PRIVATE HEALTH CLINICS

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, health care is far too important to be partisan with. Last week our health minister went on national TV and singled out Alberta's private clinics because they charge facility fees directly to the patient while the doctor's fee is paid by medicare.

S. O. 31

When I pointed out to her that exactly the same thing is done in every province, stunned silence. When I asked the minister to clarify, she waffled. When I challenged the minister to a debate, she ran like a scared rabbit.

Private clinics are an offshoot of this country's financial crisis. Our debt is squeezing the life out of social programs like health care. When the health minister was in opposition she knew this was true. Now the chickens are coming home to roost.

\* \* \*

### PRIVATE HEALTH CLINICS

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on September 20 I raised the issue of private health clinics in Alberta with the Minister of Health. Since then she has done nothing to enforce the Canada Health Act. Members of the Reform Party have been raising this issue but the Reform Party is clear in its intention to move Canada toward a two-tier health system.

The Reform Party wants to end the national system of health care that we have in this country. Clearly, with this kind of opposition the government will do nothing to enforce the Canada Health Care Act.

While the Reform and Liberal parties bicker, the province of Alberta is allowed to continue this violation of the Canada Health Act. I urge the minister to act today to end what is a very clear violation of the Canada Health Act. End it before we have two health care systems in Canada, one for the rich and one for the poor.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### MCSC ELECTIONS

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, *Le Soleil* reported recently that the Leader of the Official Opposition denied that his party was trying to infiltrate the Montreal Catholic School Commission. He said that they were not trying to infiltrate any school board or municipal council in any way.

How can the leader of the Bloc limit himself to such a simple explanation for the bias his members have shown for a particular school board party, when two of his members have made public statements flatly contradicting him.

The Canadian press reported a Bloc member as saying, "I am not necessarily talking about infiltration, but I am asking you to be there in large numbers". We ask the Leader of the Opposition to restore discipline in his caucus and thus ensure that Montrealers will have free and democratic school elections, not shameless ideological infiltration for the separatist cause.

[English]

### CRIME CARDS AND BOARD GAMES

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the report on crime cards and board games was tabled in the House of Commons yesterday. Crime cards and board games have no redeeming cultural value. They glorify and commodify heinous crimes and make heroes of those who commit those crimes. At the same time they devalue the terrible losses experienced by the victims' families and loved ones.

Many Burlington residents, in particular Deborah Mahaffy, a mother who lost her daughter, a victim of violent crime, have been deeply involved and active in this issue. By writing letters, distributing and signing petitions, acting as a witness at the justice committee, she encouraged others to get involved in an issue that affects the attitude of youths and adults.

(1415)

Canadians are concerned about the long term impact of the absolute violence contained in some of our entertainment products. Women and children are directly affected by them.

As legislators it must be our goal to work toward the day when every person in our society lives without the threat of violence. Members, join with me in moving this legislation forward.

\* \* \*

### MPS PENSIONS

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, next Monday 52 MPs of the class of '88, 46 Liberals, will be eligible for their gold plated pensions for life, worth \$53 million. This is on top of the estimated 480 current recipients who will cost taxpayers almost half a billion dollars. That is a lot of money for the services of former backbenchers, former frontbenchers and former prime ministers.

Reformers have had it. Canadians have had it and yes, even the steelworkers in Hamilton have had it. It is time for the Liberals to get off their high horses and reform this ridiculous MP pension plan now before they decide to cut RRSPs.

The Prime Minister promised action one year ago but we have seen no action. Reformers cannot even opt out. Could it be that he is waiting for his colleagues to hit pay dirt on November 21?

Stop stalling, stop talking the talk, start walking the walk like Reformers. Start living in the real world like the taxpayers who pay our salaries.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Major Barry Armstrong, senior medical officer of the unit in which several members were accused of murdering and torturing Somali civilians, said that he was ordered by superior officers to destroy photographs showing Somali patients who were tortured, so that these photographs would not be used as evidence against other Canadian servicemen.

Yesterday in this House, the defence minister tried to minimize the serious allegations of Major Armstrong, who says that he kept some photographs, despite the order to destroy them.

My question is for the Minister of Defence. How can the minister continue to trust the military investigation, when senior army officers ordered the destruction of photographs that could be used as evidence against servicemen accused of torture and murder?

*[English]*

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has stated, I did not and I do not try to minimize the awful events that occurred in 1993 in Somalia with members of the Canadian forces serving under the UN banner.

However the hon. member must realize that a number of charges were laid as a result of investigations conducted concerning members of the armed forces. Those charges are being adjudicated at present. In fact an appeal which the crown has initiated—I believe the crown has initiated appeals on most of the verdicts so far—will commence next Tuesday. The last of the original charges will be heard next January or February.

Whatever I say or do and whatever the hon. member says and does should not impinge on the rights of the accused for a fair trial.

That having been said, the allegations that were raised yesterday by Major Armstrong were indeed quite troubling to me as the minister. As a result I have decided under the auspices of the National Defence Act to have an inquiry that will continue either after the original courts martial or after the court martial appeals are heard. I am seeking legal advice on that. This inquiry will be totally public. It will be totally civilian. The chair will be a civilian. The members of the original inquiry will be invited to participate.

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister told us that the case for which a conviction was obtained, involving only a private, has been appealed. I ask him if he thinks that the appeal can be effective, since it must be based on the evidence already accumulated, without existing photographs in the possession of Major Armstrong and other photographs that were destroyed?

So I ask him whether, in these circumstances, he can go on trusting military justice for the case under consideration. Should he not ask himself the troubling question as to whether the destruction of some photographs has made it possible for other military people to escape justice?

(1420)

*[English]*

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a basic premise of jurisprudence that a person in my position cannot comment on the facts when a trial is ongoing.

I would like to address the question of military justice. Military justice has a long, noble tradition in this country. It has been upheld as being constitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. However, once the courts martial are completed then the crown and individuals if they are dissatisfied with the verdict have a right to appeal.

The court martial appeals court is headed by a member of the Federal Court of Canada. Next Tuesday the acting head of the court martial appeals court or the justice of the Federal Court, perhaps himself or one of his colleagues, or with one of his colleagues, and perhaps with members of the supreme courts of the various provinces, perhaps even the province of Quebec, will hear the first appeal.

I want to emphasize that what we have here is the military justice system which has been ongoing. However the appeals when they are deemed to be appropriate are being heard by civilian authorities.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, given the fact that additional photographic evidence exists in the matter of the torture of Somali civilians by Canadian soldiers, how can the minister claim that justice has been rendered?

What steps will he take to make sure that the evidence relating to the pending case, now in appeal, will be enriched with existing conviction documents which are in the hands of Major Armstrong?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition is a matter for the court to decide, not for me as Minister of National Defence.

As I said yesterday, if Major Armstrong or any other person in the Canadian Armed Forces has any evidence that may be germane to any one of these cases, that evidence should be made available to the military police who are conducting investigations.

One was reopened dealing with the question of photographs some time ago and the other deals with the other events related to the allegations that have been made concerning the words "cover up" or the allegations of cover up on the part of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I would invite Major Armstrong or any other person to make that evidence known and then we will let the courts decide as appropriate.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### COLLÈGE MILITAIRE ROYAL DE SAINT-JEAN

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The mayor of Saint-Jean has made public the elements of his proposal to allow a gradual transition for the military college in Saint-Jean, which would become a university-level civilian institution. He thinks that there should be a gradual transfer of all officer cadets to Kingston and that the closure should not be brutal but civilized.

Now that he has in his possession the proposal made by the mayor of Saint-Jean, which is supported by the Quebec government, does the minister still intend to reopen the discussions on the closure of the college in Saint-Jean, especially since the Kingston barracks cannot accommodate the officer cadets from Saint-Jean?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the proposal made by the mayor of Saint-Jean contains two elements we agree with. First, it is essential to demilitarize the college in Saint-Jean and turn it into a co-ed institution. Second, we need a transition period.

We now have an agreement providing for a five-year transition period, a military presence of between 100 and 200 students who will take language training during the five-year period and \$5 million a year for a total of \$25 million over the five-year transition period.

We therefore believe that, although some of the arguments put forward by the mayor of Saint-Jean are valid, the agreement signed on July 19 by the governments of Quebec and Canada provides for a more appropriate transition period and better meets the needs of the Saint-Jean community and of keeping the college open.

(1425)

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister said several times that the transition would occur without problems. How can the minister continue to claim that transferring the operations of the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean to Kingston will occur without problems, when only 20 of the 250 employees of the college in Saint-Jean have agreed to move to Kingston?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems to forget that there are already bilingual classes as well as francophone teachers and students in Kingston. In fact, 17 per cent of Kingston's student population is French-speaking, all courses will be offered in both official languages this year, and all teachers will be bilingual within a few years. As a result, there is no problem in transferring military activities to Kingston with respect to bilingualism and the accommodation capacity.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks there have been allegations of infighting, bullying, corruption and influence peddling at the Immigration and Refugee Board. The most damning allegations now come from William Bauer, former ambassador and champion of human rights who resigned from the board in disgust in March of this year.

According to this distinguished Canadian, the independence and effectiveness of the IRB are being undermined by constant pressure from the legal lobby and advocacy groups, in other words by those who stand to profit from the system.

Does the minister accept the truth of Mr. Bauer's analysis? What is the minister's position on allowing advocacy and lobby groups, the legal lobby, to unduly influence and profit from the activities of the IRB?

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I responded to the leader of the Reform Party yesterday by saying that if he or any other member of his party have any evidence about any influence peddling, whether it be at the IRB or anywhere else, it is a matter for the Criminal Code. Rather than simply lobbying, he should provide evidence.

*Oral Questions*

Second, the 211 members of the Immigration and Refugee Board are there to adjudicate refugee asylum cases. It is not for the minister or for members of Parliament or for NGO groups or for lawyers to unduly influence any member. They are there to do a job. They have an important mandate. It is an institution that works. It is a model that is respected internationally.

Rather than tearing down the system, we should be seeking reforms and modifications on how to make the system better and how to build up this federal institution.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bauer does not think it works. Obviously someone is profiting from the IRB process. Most immigration lawyers can earn two to three thousand dollars at least per refugee claim.

In the past the minister has appointed over 50 immigration lawyers to the IRB. Coincidentally, the acceptance rate for refugees has jumped from 55 per cent last year to approximately 80 per cent in recent months.

Will the minister tell the House whether the currently high acceptance rate of 80 per cent is a reflection of his government's policy, or is it evidence that the IRB has been captured by those interests that stand to profit from excessively high acceptance rates?

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand the narrow, vested interest of his questions and his party.

What we have to do is stand up in the public interest. In so far as the public interest is concerned, he owes the House and the public interest the evidence of those charges of profiteering and influence peddling. It is simply not good enough that he lob over these very serious accusations without backing them up.

Second, there is no policy of the Government of Canada or a minister of the crown or members on the government side with respect to what is an acceptable or non-acceptable threshold. That is not the business of government or a member of Parliament or the minister.

(1430)

The individuals adjudicating who is and who is not a refugee are the members of the refugee board. That is why they are quasi-judicial and at arm's length. It is to protect it from such scurrilous allegations as we see today.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister's excuses, denials and half baked measures do nothing to restore confidence in the IRB. It has gone too far for that. The allegations are too serious and too many. They range from influence peddling at the board to fraud charges being laid, even to RCMP investigations.

The minister has it within his power to order a judicial inquiry into the IRB members. Given the allegations that have come to life over the last few weeks, will the minister stop making

excuses for inexcusable behaviour and order a judicial inquiry into the IRB?

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member continues to make inexcusable, unfounded, serious allegations.

What do we have before us? We have before us a board chairman's report and a response from the deputy chair which will be considered. I mentioned to the leader of that party during this week that the decision will be made before the week's end. I know it does not bring him any satisfaction, but in this country we do things according to facts and due process, not jungle justice a la Reform Party.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. I was shocked to read in the papers this morning that immigration authorities are about to deport a woman from the Seychelles Islands and her two children.

Immigration Canada refuses to take into consideration the letter of threat written by the woman's husband, who was sent back to his country, in which he says that he will kill her when she returns to the Seychelles.

Considering that the minister has released gender guidelines to protect refugee women who are victims of spousal abuse, does he not think that the death threat made to Mrs. Sabadin warrants his immediate intervention to prevent that woman and her two children from being deported to the Seychelles tomorrow, where she might be killed?

[English]

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member should know that this morning officials gave this particular woman a two week reprieve so that the review can take place to ensure ourselves and officials of the humanitarian and compassionate request. I think the hon. member should be pleased.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, can the minister guarantee that the deportation order will be quashed in the next two weeks?

[English]

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** No, I cannot guarantee that, Mr. Speaker.

One party is saying no one should come in. Another party is saying no one should leave. What we have to say is that this individual has been given a chance for a review to see if in fact those gender guideline reviews are legitimate.

*Oral Questions*

I do not believe it would be very fair for any minister to guarantee anything before a review takes place.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on April 29, 1993 the present Minister of Human Resources Development in praising soldiers who came forward with public evidence of wrongdoing in Somalia said, and I am quoting from *Hansard*: "They have taken a very courageous stand because they saw something they thought was wrong. They deserve an open inquiry". I understand the Minister of National Defence is moving toward that position.

Will the minister not agree that the actions of Major Armstrong and others who may possess information and may be reluctant to give it to the present system are fully justified when they know that system has not acted upon information and when that system asks for the destruction of the very evidence they possess?

(1435)

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not share the assumptions upon which the question was based.

I did announce a few minutes ago that there will be an inquiry under the auspices of the National Defence Act. It will be public and will be headed by a civilian. It will be available for people such as Major Armstrong and all others to come forward with any information and any charges. Hopefully, they will be totally satisfied.

I want to make it plain that this government has nothing to hide. These are events that occurred before the 1993 election. The Minister of Human Resources Development when he was in opposition was fully justified in making those comments and calling for an open inquiry. We have done that.

What I am concerned with is to act in a way that would not prejudice the course of justice. I hope the hon. member will understand that.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister indicated there are two ongoing police investigations in addition to one suspended investigation. Yet two months ago the department's public information officers indicated there were no ongoing investigations into the Somali affair.

Why are these investigations occurring 18 months after the fact? Why is this kind of information not made public until it is raised in the House or appears in the media? Why will the minister not provide right away an open inquiry for information on this to be presented to the public?

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the statement to which the hon. member referred made by public affairs officials at national defence some time ago were at that time true. Investigations have been closed, but because there had been allegations of cover-up the military police reopened one investigation. Subsequently there were charges made about photographs being concealed and another investigation was opened up to deal with that matter.

I should raise another point. I have tried to act as expeditiously as possible given the fact that we do want to protect the course of justice. I would have made this announcement yesterday, but out of courtesy to the Prime Minister who was only informed of this matter this morning, I felt I should not act until I had his agreement.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. The minister's answers to questions from the Official Opposition and to claims from students, who held a demonstration yesterday on Parliament Hill, only confirmed our greatest fear, namely that he will increase the burden of students through additional loans of \$10 billion, over a ten-year period. That money will be available because of cuts in transfer payments to provinces for post-secondary education.

Will the minister admit that the statement he made yesterday confirms his intention to transfer \$10 billion from the federal debt to the students?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker, because that is not what I said.

First I have pointed out to opposition members on several occasions that the government does not intend on going back to its February budget statement to cut the transfers to the provinces. The transfer of over \$6 billion is to be maintained based upon our fixed 1993-94 level. I will repeat that there are no cuts to the transfers to the provinces. The provinces will receive exactly the same amount of money, over \$6 billion of transfers.

What we did suggest is that the cash portion of that which is receding at the same time the revenue of the provinces is going up to the tax revenue could be used to help lever an additional \$2 billion. If you took \$500 million of that savings you could almost get a four or five to one addition. We would also have a grants program to help students in need.

Rather than a \$10 billion debt load it would mean we would be able to add \$10 billion to the existing system's contribution to higher education for better laboratories, more classrooms, more



*Oral Questions*

scholarships and more accessibility for students. That really is the choice that is being made. I would like to know why members of the opposition are against putting more money—

(1440)

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, I would appeal to you once again to please keep the questions and answers a little bit shorter.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the more explaining the minister does, the more complicated it gets! The bottom line is that the minister is only offering students the possibility of incurring an additional \$10 billion debt. Period.

Will the minister admit that this option, which consists in getting more into debt, is the only solution he could find to make students absorb the increase in tuition fees which will result from his reform?

[*English*]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand the difficulty the hon. member has dealing with conflict problems. He only has simple solutions to those problems.

I would suggest to him that the best way to deal with the problems is to sit down and have a discussion. Do not go to the barricades, do not have angry protest, but sit down and share information and deal with the various options and choices. Look at the ways as a country we can bring governments together at the federal and provincial levels, we can bring members of the university community together. We can work together to find an answer, not to try to create confrontation, not to try to create disputation, but in fact to create agreement. That is the kind of process we want to provide.

If the hon. member bothered to read the various proposals in the book perhaps he would finally understand that what we want to do is rebuild this country's higher education system.

\* \* \*

**MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PENSIONS**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in March the government received a report reviewing MP pensions. At that time it indicated it would be introducing legislation to overhaul this pension scam in the immediate future. That was eight months ago, yet no action has been taken on this matter.

Could it be that perhaps there was pressure from within the Liberal caucus to wait until after next Monday, trough day, when 46 MPs will be eligible to collect pensions? Will the President of

the Treasury Board give us a definite deadline for the enactment of legislation to overhaul this scandalous pension plan?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we made it clear and the Deputy Prime Minister made it clear earlier this week that we are living up to our red book commitment with respect to MP pensions.

I do not anticipate that the hon. member who asked the question is planning on resigning. We are all here for a full term that will go on substantially more years. There is lots of time to deal with this but we will be dealing with it very soon. We will be living up to that commitment in the red book.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the best time to deal with this would have been before next Monday when these people qualify for an MP pension.

The deadline is next Monday. As of Tuesday next week the member for Halifax seems pleased that she will be eligible for \$1.1 million in possible pension payouts. The Minister of Health may well receive over \$1 million. In fact, Mr. Speaker, soon—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** I would ask the hon. member to put her question, please.

**Miss Grey:** Mr. Speaker, I am trying. Will the Deputy Prime Minister personally take a leadership role on this issue and use her power within cabinet with the briefing notes to change the present pension plan so that we, myself included, will keep our trotters out of the trough?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not need briefing notes or the hypocrisy of the Reform Party on this issue.

Remember the great announcement of the 10 per cent pay cut? I understand it is tough. They had a press conference. They gave away the keys to the limo, but the leader of the Reform Party is fighting right now to end the 10 per cent pay cut.

(1445)

Could it be that the Reform Party is finally beginning to understand that the salary of a member of Parliament is \$20,000 less than the salary of a secondary school principal in this community?

We have promised pension reform. We will deliver pension reform, but unlike the Reform Party we will not prop up the notion that politicians are here at the top.

I said yesterday, and I will say it again, my father spent 16 years in public life. When he left he was unable to walk; he was unable to go to the bathroom on his own; and his pension was \$160 a month. I will not apologize for paying politicians what they are worth.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**REVIEW OF CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. In their majority report on foreign policy, Liberal members and senators refer to Canada's principal trading partner as a problem. After being opposed to the free trade agreement with the United States and ultimately rallying behind NAFTA, they now wonder whether it would not be advisable to simply abolish all trade commissioner posts in the United States and Mexico.

Does the government intend to reject the Liberal majority's recommendation to abolish the posts of trade commissioners, since it knows perfectly well that this might deprive Quebec and Canadian businesses of major benefits arising from the free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico?

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the committee's report was released a few days ago. The department is now examining the recommendations contained in this report. Our response to the recommendations in this report will be made public as soon as possible.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in their report, the Liberal members and senators, as I said before, see trade relations with the United States as a problem. Would it be possible to find out from someone in this government whether they endorse this view and whether they agree that abolishing trade commissioner posts is hardly the way to help small businesses break into the U.S. market?

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I may point out that trade between Canada and the United States is worth about \$280 billion in both directions. We are bound to have problems from time to time in some areas. That is not unusual. But it is incorrect to say that relations between Canada and the United States are poor, which is what the Bloc Québécois is saying. However, when their leader was part of the government and sat on this side of the House, he supported the free trade agreement with the United States.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association has recently expressed great concern over proposed new fish licensing fees. I believe it has a copy of the proposal from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

I would like to ask a question of the minister. Is it true that Island fishermen may go from paying tens of dollars for a fishing licence to paying tens of thousands of dollars under this new proposal? If so, how will individual costs per fisher be determined?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I know the leader and the members of the Reform Party are interested in this question because of their constant request of the government to find efficiencies in the way in which we deliver programs.

As part of the program review exercise, DFO is looking at cost recovery measures. I can say to the member that no decisions have been taken at this stage of the game. There will be no change in the licence fee structure for 1995, but we are asking ourselves whether it is appropriate that somebody who makes on average a \$900,000 a year income from fishing certain lucrative fisheries should pay the same fee for a licence as somebody who makes \$9,000.

(1450)

My belief is that somebody who makes \$900,000 can afford a little more than someone who makes \$9,000. These fees will be quite reasonable, quite rational, and will reflect the circumstances of fishermen living everywhere in Atlantic Canada.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, here we go again. Just yesterday a Gatineau man was found not guilty after he severely beat and threatened to kill his wife. His defence: A large intake of cocaine made him unconscious of his actions.

Will the Minister of Justice now show some backbone and some leadership and put a stop to this insanity in our justice system?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to comment on the particular case to which the member has referred, but I will be happy to respond to his broader point. I do so as follows.

The cases in the Supreme Court of Canada in recent years, including Daviault as recently as a month ago and Bernard in 1988, identified the difficulty in dealing with intoxication from the perspective of the criminal law, primarily because intoxication, depending on the degree, goes to the ability of the accused person to form the intent which is an integral part of the offence as the law is written at present.

In each of those cases the court expressed the invitation to Parliament to consider alternative ways of expressing the law to overcome that impediment. On Saturday last the government accepted that invitation. We published a paper expressly for the purpose of examining alternatives in that regard. We are solic-

*Oral Questions*

iting during a decent period the opinions of Canadians including experts on the subject. We will reformulate as necessary the criminal law in order to ensure that people are accountable for their conduct.

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, while a whole lot of lawyers make a lot of money from this defence and while this minister ponders his political options, the travesty of justice continues.

Last week the Minister of Justice wasted no time to kill any possible use of a cultural defence in criminal cases. Will the minister now act with equal speed to immediately put a stop to this insane use of drunkenness and drug induced defences?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the process of developing sections of the code that will introduce accountability while respecting constitutional rights and judicial realities is not one that can be achieved overnight.

The process of discussion which we have undertaken will last for a reasonable period and enable us to develop proposals and solutions that will last.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has undertaken to ban discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The Minister of Justice himself promised to change the Canadian Human Rights Act accordingly, no later than this fall. But we are now told that 60 Liberal members are against any legislative change to ensure that sexual orientation is considered as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. In light of the opposition generated within government ranks, does the minister still plan to table by Christmas a bill to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act so that sexual orientation is recognized as a prohibited ground of discrimination?

[English]

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our intention remains exactly the same, to introduce legislation in that regard before the Christmas break.

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, considering that several government members are in disagreement, will the minister confirm that he can go ahead and

table his bill, the only condition being that a free vote be held on the issue?

(1455)

[English]

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made clear that this is a government commitment and that it will be proceeded with on that basis.

I should say, in response to the member's reference to dissent or discussion on the government side, that whatever goes on in the caucus of this party is a private matter for us alone. I should say as well that in this party we listen with care and respect to different points of view, but at the end of the day we decide and present legislation on behalf of the government.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian foreign policy review released Wednesday shockingly called for increased spending in a number of areas.

Given Canada's tough fiscal situation, will the Minister of Foreign Affairs assure Canadians he will stick to the deficit reduction program of the finance minister and not ask for increased spending in the budget?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me the occasion, in responding to his question, to thank and congratulate all members of the committee who did very good work.

As is a tradition in the House we have received the report and the dissident reports. We will, as a good government, look at them. I want to say at the outset that there are some very good recommendations and some that are not so good.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting answer.

Since the foreign affairs review did not recommend any specific spending cuts, the Reform Party suggested cuts to bilateral aid and international grants among many other areas.

After reflecting for the past few days on our proposal, does the minister agree with these cuts and, if not, what spending cuts would he suggest?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I testified before the parliamentary committee, when it began its hearings, I had the opportunity to impress upon the committee members that we will have to do more with less in the future.

*Oral Questions*

We will have to come up with ingenious ideas to allow Canada to continue to play its rightful role on the international scene, one that all our friends and partners expect Canada to play. There is no doubt that we will have to take into account our increasingly limited financial resources.

\* \* \*

[English]

**VIA RAIL**

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

As the minister knows, VIA Rail will terminate passenger service from Saint John, New Brunswick to Sherbrooke, Quebec as of December 15, 1994 and CPR intends to abandon the rail line on January 1, 1995.

The private sector seems to have taken great interest in freight service from Saint John through the state of Maine and then through to Sherbrooke.

Could the minister tell us if he sees an option to renew passenger service from Saint John, New Brunswick to Sherbrooke, Quebec?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the interest of the hon. member in this matter, but I want to make sure that there is no misunderstanding. There has not been a single request from VIA to abandon any service in Canada, with the exception of this one area where it was not through its wishes but as a result of a decision by CP to abandon the freight activity on that line.

I would not want to give any indication of what may or may not happen in the future. The problem of the existing line on the basis of the freight operations has not been resolved. I would not care to speculate other than to say that I am sure VIA will continue to try to provide the very best service it can within the parameters of the limited budget we are allowing it to operate under.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SOCIAL HOUSING**

**Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec—Est, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on November 7, before the tenants' association in his riding, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs reiterated his party's election commitment not to raise the contribution of families living in social housing beyond the current level of 25 per cent of their income.

Will the Minister of Public Works promise families living in social housing not to raise their rents and increase their financial contribution from 25 per cent to 30 per cent of total income?

(1500)

[English]

**Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

He will know that that particular subject matter was the subject of debate of ministers of the crown federally and provincially at two housing ministers conferences which took place in the last year.

It is a subject matter which we are presently reviewing. It is an issue whereby in eight jurisdictions the rise from 25 per cent to 30 per cent is now in effect. The Government of Canada will review all of the options presented to it regarding this particular matter.

I do not want to give the hon. member the false impression that we can continue in the social housing end without providing the necessary kinds of revenues from a variety of different sources in order to refurbish the existing stock which is across this country.

\* \* \*

**CANADA COMMUNICATION GROUP**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today's Treasury Board report into the deliberate financial mismanagement at Canada Communication Group makes no mention of the disciplinary action.

In February 1992 the Comptroller General's department said: "Don't do this anymore". In November 1992 the Auditor General said it was illegal. In 1993 his own department said to cease and desist. Yet we find these things have been ongoing.

Will the President of the Treasury Board assure this House and all Canadians that we will never again see this type of dishonest and illegal activity again?

**Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes reference to the report which the Treasury Board minister has tabled.

Let it be particularly clear there have been breaches if you will of the Financial Administration Act. Treasury Board in co-operation with other ministries has taken corrective action to make certain this does not happen again.

With regard to my own department, management control has been removed from that agency and transferred to another. Second, the chief executive officer has been replaced and is no longer in existence. Third, on the very substance of the issue and the continuation of that operation we are at present as a result of program review looking at the possibility of either privatizing or discontinuing the special operating agency which it is under.

*Business of the House***ENDANGERED SPECIES**

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of the Environment released a discussion paper concerning endangered species in Canada. I too commend her for recognizing the seriousness of the situation as well as the need for consultation in developing federal legislation.

My question recognizes that there would have to be co-operation between federal, provincial and aboriginal leaders before federal legislation could be effective.

Would the minister give us some idea as to what type of consultation she has planned and what specific date she has in mind for the introduction of federal legislation?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to acknowledge the work of the chair of the Standing Committee on Environment on this issue. It is a very crucial issue. We have had some preliminary discussions with the provinces including the province of British Columbia whose minister of environment has expressed strong support for the initiatives we are taking.

We hope to complete a public input process in January and February across the country. We will be dealing on a bilateral level with aboriginal leaders and we hope to be able to introduce framework legislation in the spring.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in our gallery of Mr. Habib Ben Yahia, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, can the Secretary of State give us an overview of the legislative agenda for the next few days?

[English]

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will take note of the debate on social security review. Next week we will commence report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-48, natural resources reorganization; Bill C-52, government services reorganization; and Bill C-55, Yukon surface rights. We will also want to consult concerning completion of second reading stage

of Bill C-53, Canadian Heritage Reorganization. As the House is aware there is a time factor involved with regard to Bill C-57, the World Trade Organization.

(1505)

The House should take note that we intend to give consideration to that bill at report stage and third reading a high priority, as soon as it has been reported from committee.

[Translation]

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Tuesday, November 22, will be an opposition day.

[English]

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to respond on a point of order expressing some concerns about the report just given by the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs.

We are rather concerned that there have been a very limited number of bills that have been eligible to go on the Order Paper. We substituted that opportunity to debate legislation with take note debates. I certainly do not want to express the view that we are against take note debates. But it seems like they are being placed in substitution for actual bills to debate.

There are only three bills to my understanding that could be placed on the Order Paper this week. The minister did not announce the introduction of any new bills.

Our concern is what is happening with the starvation of legislation in the House is causing bills to be rammed through committee stage much more quickly than members of those committees have an opportunity to deal with those bills in a substantial way.

In light of the indication we got earlier that committees would have time to do their job and would receive new importance in this House in dealing with legislation, I would urge the government to provide more legislation for us to deal with in this House so that bills may not be rammed through at committee stage, but have proper time for discussion, amendments and witnesses to appear.

**Mr. Gagliano:** Mr. Speaker, first of all let me assure the member that in due course new bills will be introduced. Also, as he can see from my weekly business statement, there are a certain number of bills that are in committee. As soon as the committees report to the House they will be debated. That is what I announced for the coming week.

I want to reassure him that it is not the customary intention in the weekly business statement to announce new legislation. New legislation will be announced in due course and at the right moment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I will assume that the discussion related to the Thursday traditional question is concluded.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

### SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The hon. member for Lotbinière has about five minutes left for questions and comments. The hon. member for Lévis.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the speech given by the hon. member for Lotbinière before Question Period. He addressed two issues, or two client groups, of particular interest to me in the context of this social security reform. He talked about young people and the tuition fee problem. I would like him to clarify his position on this.

I would also ask him, if we have enough time, to elaborate on unemployment insurance proposals concerning women.

**Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer my colleague and also to inform all members of this House. A secret document published in the *Toronto Star* shows that with this reform, students will pay twice as much tuition.

When the minister asks these students to put their shoulder to the wheel, I think that is rather hard to do, since some students will leave university with a \$50,000 debt.

I would also like to answer the question about women. With this new reform, women in Quebec and Canada, even if they have paid into UI all their lives, will not be entitled to benefits if their income is over a certain amount. I think it is unfortunate to pick on women in that way.

(1510)

I must also say that the reform of social programs will cost \$170 million just in Quebec and force 40,000 households onto welfare. We must look deeper into the reform of social programs.

Take a family in which the father loses his job for some reason or other or has an insecure job and winds up on welfare. Imagine what it costs the government. First, it often causes problems like depression, medical problems; he has to see psychologists and psychiatrists. We must analyze the whole situation. We must not have a reform just for the sake of having a reform. We must also analyze the whole situation.

I often say that we must do prevention. We know that there is \$6.4 billion in unpaid taxes to collect, \$6.4 billion for the government's finances. It is out there, but it must be collected. That is all. When we opposition members tell you about the \$6.4

### *Government Orders*

billion, we are not here just to make trouble. Not at all! We are here to find solutions with the government, not just to criticize.

As politicians, we must deal with this situation. Unions have noticed that today employers hire more and more people on three- or four-month contracts. That is what happens more and more. Some employment agencies do just that. They hire people and tell them: You are hired for four or five months. Consequently, you can expect these people to come back every year. This is a problem.

In my region, unemployment runs very high and there are many seasonal workers. The social program reform will be applied uniformly everywhere, whether a province is prosperous or not, and that creates an injustice. So, let us take a closer look at these issues, which affect the workers and the unemployed. Whether or not you are unionized, the problem will surface some day. I tell unions that, at some point, the problem will come up.

Problems will surface and some say we will perhaps need a better immigration policy. If a reform is necessary, we should go that far. I am not saying we should not let anybody in. What I am saying is we have to create jobs. Thanks to modern technology, a machine can do the work of 100 workers. But what happens to these people? They find themselves out of work. This is what happens. I have nothing against progress, but it is a matter of balancing the positive against the negative. And this is what my comments are all about.

**Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the motion of the Minister of Human Resources Development.

In his social security reform package, the minister proposes to deal with social problems and unemployment, at the expense of the unemployed and the poorest people in this country. The government is asking the unemployed to pay more for a solution to their problems and asks the poor to be even poorer, if they would enjoy the benefits of this reform which, as I said before, will take more money from the unemployed and the poor.

Instead of looking at the underlying cause of unemployment, instead of looking at the causes of social problems, the minister and his experts are telling the unemployed they will have to pay the bill. As if the unemployed and the poor were responsible for unemployment rates and the large percentage of people living on welfare, especially in Quebec.

(1515)

That is why this afternoon, I would prefer to discuss what causes unemployment and the reasons for welfare. The federal Liberals have not been very helpful in this respect. After working for about ten years here in the House of Commons and seeing how the government runs its affairs, I could give you a few examples to prove that the federal government causes unemployment, not the unemployed.

*Government Orders*

My first example concerns interest rates. In 1990, the Governor of the Bank of Canada decided to raise interest rates, saying that there were inflationary tendencies in Canada and that we absolutely had to raise interest rates to reduce economic growth, although he knew perfectly well that these inflationary tendencies were restricted to a few specific locations in Canada and that their causes were well-known.

Inflation tended to be concentrated in the Toronto area. Why? Because the federal government had invested too much money in federal-provincial shared-cost programs. In 1981, 1982 and 1983, the Liberal government had set up special programs to fight the recession. At the time, inflation was really high and you may remember that the government had raised interest rates up to 21 per cent. It also had to set up programs, precisely to ensure that people on unemployment or welfare rolls would not suffer unduly from the situation.

However, the Conservative Party, which was in office then and of which I was a member, did not have the courage to reduce the budgets of those programs and continued to spend more or less the same amounts in joint cost-shared federal-provincial programs. There was a 50-50 split.

The result of this was that Quebec, which had less money than some other provinces and which was spending less on its joint programs, received less money. This is why the inflation rate in Quebec was somewhat more reasonable or acceptable. The situation was just the opposite in Toronto, which was going full speed ahead with the federal programs. Indeed, through these 50-50 programs, the federal government was spending a lot of money, with the result that the economy of that region overheated, thus generating more inflation.

It was obvious that the inflation was the direct result of this overheating generated by the federal government. The government of the time never wanted to use the means at its disposal to lower inflation. Instead, it left the Governor of the Bank of Canada on his own. And the governor had no choice but to increase interest rates. Vancouver is the other place where inflation was high. A lot of money was being invested by people from Hong Kong and Far East Pacific Rim countries. The inflation there was also very much a local phenomenon.

And what did the federal government do? Nothing. It let interest rates go up, with the result that Quebec's small and medium-sized businesses, which had worked tremendously hard to survive, went bankrupt one after the other. Unemployment went up, since workers were being laid off. All this because the federal government did not take its responsibility. I personally told the Governor of the Bank of Canada then that he was creating a recession we would have great difficulty pulling out of.

(1520)

We have been in a recession for four years, yet did not manage to bring it under control. That is terrible. So, when I hear that the unemployed should be the ones to pay for the problems, I find it absolutely ridiculous. That is all the Minister of Human Resources Development talks about in his plan.

The other event that took place was the signing, in 1989, of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States. Quebec investors in particular, and I am still one of them, were told: "Invest in your business because this is a golden opportunity to gain access to a unique market, the US market". We were told: "Invest in your businesses and life will be great. In the years to come, you will make good money, do good business and create jobs. It is going to be just great".

A short time afterwards, interest rates went up, curbing growth and killing the very businesses that had just been put in a vulnerable position by investing in infrastructure and equipment. They were crushed with higher interests rates, reduced growth and reduced production capacity, at a time when they are very vulnerable. Many had to shut down. That is outrageous! And that is what is going on right now.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that, if we want to address the UI and social welfare issue, instead of making a big fuss, publishing nice green books and talking about UI and social reform, we should start by creating favourable conditions for our businesses. Jobs do not appear suddenly, out of thin air; they are created by businesses and our businesses need favourable conditions to do so. They must not be required to do what they are currently doing on behalf of governments, namely handling enormous amounts of money collected left and right. Let me name a few of the tasks imposed upon our businesses.

First, they have to pay CSST premiums, UI premiums, federal and provincial sales taxes as well as federal and provincial income tax. They must deal with two sets of taxes: Quebec's and Ottawa's. I could give other examples.

Each time that a business is unable, or fails, to satisfy all these requests, which come in daily, there are additional penalties to pay.

Our small and medium-sized businesses in Quebec have to live in this negative environment. We think that it is terrible, unacceptable and discouraging for those who want to go into business, to succeed, to create, to invent and to export to have to look after all this administration for the two levels of government.

When I say that support to businesses must be more flexible, I am not talking about money, but rather, at the very least, an environment that would facilitate their growth.

*Government Orders*

The government's insistence on centralizing, on trying to control everything from here, on creating terrible confrontations between the two levels of government, leaves our businesses vulnerable in this sort of environment.

This is just another example. I think that the Minister of Human Resources Development hit on it himself when he said that there are many difficulties and problems associated with unemployment insurance and other social programs. There are many problems to resolve. But having read the document, I can tell you that there are not many solutions, because he did not really understand the cause of the problem.

We have here proof, once again, that federalism does not work. When a government can no longer meet the basic needs of its citizens, it is clear that federalism is not working. The debt is now \$550 billion.

(1525)

Our deficit will again be close to \$40 billion. What more proof do we need that federalism does not work?

So what is the answer? As the Premier of Quebec told the Chamber of Commerce last Tuesday, although the federal government siphons off our money and, as a result, our resources are diminished, Quebecers manage to do a better job than the federal government as far as economic development and job creation are concerned. My view is that as far as we are concerned, this reform is redundant. The federal government should simply transfer full responsibility to Quebec, since it has given us ample proof it cannot make a go of it. I can assure you that Quebecers with their dynamic outlook will do a much better job. I am positive about that.

That is why I look forward to the challenge of a sovereign Quebec, where Quebecers will be able to develop their potential and get a really good start by investing all their resources and skills and productivity. They will be able to create jobs, reduce unemployment and reduce the number of welfare recipients so that this nation can live with honour and enthusiasm.

[*English*]

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chance to comment on the member's remarks and on the whole social program review debate.

I wonder how seriously the government takes this whole program. When we look back at the chronology of events leading up to today and some of the recent statements by the human resources development minister, it makes us wonder how devoted the government really is to tackling the problem of social programs, the debt in general and how to make government run much more efficiently.

When I think back to the election campaign I remember distinctly how our party talked quite a bit about social programs

and how they needed to be reformed. I remember Kim Campbell, the then Prime Minister, talking about social program reforms in so far as she said they were too important to be discussed during an election.

I also remember the deafening silence of the Liberal Party on this whole issue. If one looks at the government's red book it is almost without mention of social program reform. That was one year ago. I guess the Liberals must have been holding this close to their vests because shortly after they became government they started to make noises about the need to change social programs.

What happened is they came face to face with the reality, at that time, of about a \$500 billion debt. Today it is just about \$540 billion. They realized that they were going to have to do something to deal with the deficit and debt so they looked at social program reform.

During the throne speech and in the days shortly thereafter they said they would launch a task force and have an action plan on the reform of Canada's social programs. A motion was made to that effect at the end of January of this year if memory serves me.

Over the course of days after that, we found that it was going to be the same old thing, the same old way of doing politics. First we found out that this group was going to be hearing not from regular Canadians but instead from special interest groups who, in most cases, were funded by the government. In fact I sat on that committee as an associate member.

I remember as a newly minted MP how disappointed I was to find out we were not going to hear from some of the Canadians who have a vested interest, as taxpayers, in seeing social programs work well. We were pretty disappointed that this was not happening.

(1530)

I must also comment that over the course of events we saw that the task force the minister was going to refer to was in many cases a bunch of hand picked patronage appointments, people who had strong ties to the Liberal government. Over the course of the summer we found that it lost its impetus and now the action plan has become a discussion paper. Over the course of events we have found that the government has failed to really pursue this with the necessary vigour considering this country's huge debt. Now taxpayers are running, afraid that the fat greedy fingers of government are going to get them.

So far this government has been unable to bring forward a real action plan. I encourage the government to move with dispatch. Get a handle on this serious problem by dealing with the social program review forthwith. Bring forward a real action plan that will bring the deficit and debt to heel.



*Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Given the general nature of the overall comments of the hon. member, I still want to give the member for Longueuil the opportunity to rebut.

[Translation]

**Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil):** Mr. Speaker, there was so little in the way of questions in the hon. member's comments that I thought he had started on a speech.

Initially, he asked whether the government was serious about its reform proposals. I doubt it, because if you consider that there is nothing in this document about demands Quebec has been repeating for 30 years, I think we can hardly say that this is a serious document, when they keep wanting to centralize and create confrontational situations.

Another point I wanted to mention earlier, which may answer part of his question, is that just this week, Softimage, a software company that invested several million dollars in Quebec, was looking for 70 computer experts but failed to find any. This means that manpower training is not adapted to the needs of companies. Once again, this manpower training mess is aggravating the unemployment problem but the minister does not seem to mention that in his report. There is a serious problem with manpower training and as a result, a number of companies cannot find the qualified employees they need, although we have a high unemployment rate.

We also have scientists who are doing very advanced research, but we do not have the companies that can manufacture these new products. This means there is a lack of consistency, so that a lot of time and money is wasted and we are not as efficient as we could be. We have trouble producing a low-cost, quality product, and at the same time we are trying to break into international markets. These incredible inconsistencies cost a lot of money and make us inefficient.

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid my time is up. I could have gone on for much longer because there is so much to say about this. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I thank the hon. member for Longueuil for his co-operation.

[English]

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I almost hate to break up this Bloc-Reform love-in on a government motion which puts forth provisions for a discussion paper and discussion on something that is very important to the country.

The changing nature of employment over the past several years has had considerable impact on the unemployment insurance program. Since UI is the key component in social security, it is essential that we revitalize the program to meet the needs of all Canadians in all provinces in the 1990s and beyond.

Originally UI was intended to provide temporary financial assistance for workers between jobs. Today people use UI for long term support and many use the programs repeatedly. Last year 13 per cent of unemployed Canadians had been out of work for a year or more. Compared to 1976 that is three times the level of long term unemployment.

Almost 40 per cent of UI recipients have claimed benefits at least three times during the previous five years. The number of frequent claimants has almost doubled in 13 years.

(1535)

The problem with UI is not the claimants. The problem is the program. It works well for people who require short term help while looking for a job, but it does help workers who need to adjust to the changing economic structure.

Many individuals alternate short periods of work with periods of receiving UI benefits. It becomes a way of life. These UI recipients need more than basic support. Their problem is more complex. They may need skills training, even basic academic upgrading or some counselling to get started in a new, more stable occupation.

A recent study by StatsCanada suggests that some employers take unfair advantage of the program. They do so by organizing schedules around the required number of weeks people need to qualify for UI benefits. Employers plan layoffs to coincide with UI qualification periods and plan recalls when worker benefits come to an end.

The business community complains that increases in UI premiums discourage job creation. Since premiums often increase during the latter part of a recession, we are taxing jobs at the worst possible time. Also, due to the changes in the labour market many more workers are not covered by UI. This is especially true for women and young Canadians.

What we need is an effective, sustainable insurance program that recognizes an individual's responsibility to become self-reliant. At the same time the program must ensure an income support system for those who truly need it.

To that end, we are recommending for discussion two possibilities for revitalizing UI. One approach calls for a new employment insurance program that closely integrates assistance with employment development services, or we could adjust the existing UI program to discourage abuse and better serve those who genuinely need it. Some elements overlap in both approaches. A new employment insurance program could divide benefits into two kinds: basic insurance and adjustment insurance.

Under basic insurance occasional users of UI could receive help returning to work much as they do now. These claimants could receive UI benefits and training employment programs more or less as they do now. Basic insurance would include the special benefits available in the current system. This insurance

would be for those who are caught between two jobs or who may need some assistance on a temporary basis.

Adjustment insurance could be available to frequent claimants. Who is a frequent claimant would have to be determined. For discussion we are using the example of a person who files three or more claims in five years. As well, adjustment insurance would consider regional differences in the workforce.

Other questions under adjustment insurance include: How long should a claimant draw these benefits? Should adjustment benefits be income tested? Should adjustment benefits depend upon a claimant's willingness to participate in adjustment programs? In considering the answers to these questions it will be important to recognize the significance of the UI system to many parts of the economy and in many parts of the country.

A fair approach which allows people to respond and adjust will be important. That is one approach, a new employment insurance program. A second approach, adjusting the current UI program, would not distinguish between occasional and frequent claimants.

We can increase the time a person had to work to qualify for UI, or we could reduce benefits by shortening duration and/or lowering the level of benefits. This approach would free up significant resources for reinvestment in employment programs, but it would not identify claimants who require the most help in staying employed. Those most in need of income support will not receive adequate assistance. Nonetheless this approach might be taken in conjunction with the first to create an equitable and balanced reform strategy.

(1540)

As well, UI reform must address the needs of the workers in non-standard employment: part timers, self-employed, temporary workers, and people with multiple jobs. Last year more than 60 per cent of all new jobs were part time. Many of these workers are not fully covered or not covered at all.

We also have to determine the best way to fund the renewed insurance program. Employers and workers are concerned about how UI premium rates are set. Higher premiums are killing jobs. We need to think about how the burden of premiums is shared.

Options for improving funding include: building a surplus in the insurance account during strong economic growth; requiring employers to pay premiums on their total payroll; expanding earnings subject to premiums; increasing premium rates for those who use the program the most; and reducing premiums for employers who support training.

### *Government Orders*

Funds saved from a revitalized UI program could be used to reduce premiums or to make employment development services more effective. The two must work hand in hand.

Employment development services help the chronically unemployed by offering them job counselling, training, labour market information and work experience. When people move from welfare to work, employment development services are a good investment. Unfortunately they do not do that often enough.

Employment development services need to be flexible, to be tailored to individual needs and community opportunities. We must give more UI claimants personalized job counselling that directs them toward the specific help they require. Up to date relevant information about job opportunities would help people make better informed decisions about jobs, training and education.

Millions of adults require additional training in reading, writing and arithmetic, the basic skills essential for almost all employment. The federal government sends UI recipients to classroom courses but again training must fit individual needs. Workplace training provided by employers is often the most effective approach. To encourage this we could offer employers tax credits, levies for training and paid educational leave.

Another consideration is to supplement wages for unemployed workers facing specific barriers to employment such as persons with disabilities or long term unemployed workers who may need an extra bit of support to break into the labour market.

Much of the success of employment development services depends upon good management. Success should be measured by results, not by bureaucratic enforcement of the program's rules. We should consider setting broad goals and then inviting local communities to decide which programs will best achieve those goals.

Once again effective EDS will require effective partnerships. We have invited the provinces and territories to plan many employment development services and to manage the purchase of institutional training. The province could manage single window offices to bring federal-provincial programs under one roof. This would make access easier for both UI recipients and those on social assistance who should also have access to EDS.

We must do more to help people with disabilities overcome barriers and become fully integrated into Canadian society. Constructive partnerships could lead to more accessible workplaces, flexible working conditions, appropriate training and better management practices for persons with disabilities.

I know hon. members appreciate the complexity and magnitude of reforming UI and adjusting employment development

*Government Orders*

services. I trust the ideas I have presented will help them prepare input for the government's discussion paper. I look forward to hearing the responses of my hon. colleagues.

(1545)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, I am on the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development now holding consultations on social programs. The speech by the hon. member for Victoria—Haliburton made me shudder because it seems to overlook reality. It is based on the widely-held belief—too widely held in my opinion—that many unemployed workers lose their jobs on purpose. His talk of abuse almost implies that the unemployed are guilty of fraud. There may be abusers but I will start by asking him—I will have more questions later—if he can tell me what percentage of the unemployed are guilty of fraud?

His arguments sound funny when we look, for instance, at the miserly unemployment insurance fund. The human resources committee I am on heard a forecast from the minister but when we recently asked a senior official, he anticipated a surplus in the order of \$2 billion in the UI fund for the year.

Now, why is there a surplus? Because UI was cut this year. The three series of cuts that he mentioned were implemented, and the hon. member seems to say that we should go even further. Let me refresh members' memories.

First, the amount of benefits was cut from 57 per cent to 55 per cent of salary; then, the benefit period was reduced to a maximum of 32 weeks.

I know that in the riding of Lévis, for example, the workers laid off by the shipyard are not unemployed voluntarily. After collecting benefits for 32 weeks, they will have no choice but to turn to their provincial government, even though the federal government picks up 50 per cent of social assistance costs, but it is still shifting responsibilities to the provincial government. The federal government is talking about making it even more difficult to collect unemployment insurance.

Yesterday, I met with students who, after completing their studies, may not be able to collect UI benefits because it would be even more difficult for someone who has not yet managed to join the labour force, as is now the case when after finally landing an insecure job a person is allowed to enrol in retraining programs.

I would ask the hon. member or another government member a little later to give us the exact percentage of voluntary unemployed who abuse the system.

[*English*]

**Mr. O'Reilly:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to respond to the hon. member. He and I share something in

common. We are both concerned about the unemployment and retraining situation in Canada. That is the reason the hon. minister brought forward this paper for discussion. We welcome discussion and the exchange of ideas hopefully for the benefit of all people in Canada.

I am aware of ongoing retraining programs. I attended a retraining program in my riding of Victoria—Haliburton the other night. The Victoria County Training Council graduated 295 people and 75 per cent of 1,717 people it has retrained over the last four years are actively involved in the workplace. That is a record to be very proud of. That type of retraining program has set the example for others to follow.

The member says that maybe I do not understand unemployment insurance. My father was unemployed in the fifties so I am well aware of what it is like to have unemployment in one's family, to suffer because of it and not to have proper funding until another job is found.

(1550)

Earlier today the member for Elk Island talked about some dream world wherein no one here knew about the programs. All the programs were brought in and he never had to partake of them. He had a great time getting along in some fairyland like *Alice in Wonderland*. I went through the fifties with an unemployed father. I know what it is like to have to go through programs when there is no work or nothing for the person who has trained all his or her life and is all of a sudden out on the street with nothing to do and a family to raise. I understand that part of being unemployed. That is why I am anxious to be involved in this program, add to the discussion and bring to the forefront the fact that people have to retrain.

I spoke to the graduates the other night and said: "You have come through a training program; don't stop training". We talked to the pages this afternoon about always spending time training and retraining. The days of walking into a place and being there until one retires with a pension are over. We must retrain. We must have a workforce that is effective in the nineties and beyond. Retraining, unemployment and financial assistance to people temporarily out of work are very important to me. I want to see the ideas of all members brought forward to make it a better program, an improved program for the people who most need it.

There are too many single parents suffering in poverty in Canada. They did not ask for that. They did not ask to be poor. They do not want to be poor. They do not want handouts. They want to be part of a productive society. That is what the government is committed to doing. It wants to make this a more productive society, a society that trains and retrains and looks after the job market that becomes available, a highly technical market in some cases.

*Government Orders*

However 2,400 jobs went out of my riding over the free trade agreement. Some of those people qualified within 15 or 20 weeks of not qualifying for certain programs of assistance. Some compassion has to be given to a person who does not qualify for POWA because there are not enough people working in the factory and people are laid off. That has to be looked at and refined so that it gives a benefit to everyone who needs it.

The member asked whether people cheated the system. I think it is a very small percentage. I know some parties work on that very small percentage for political gain, but I think most people are honest. Most people are on these programs because they need it, not because they want it. It is a program with refinements that can work to the benefit of Canadian taxpayers and retrain our workforce for the 1990s and into the year 2000.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a specific question for the hon. member who just spoke. I would appreciate if I could get a direct answer to a specific question.

Does the hon. member believe that there should be unified qualifying rules across the country such as, for example, with regard to the period of work before qualifying for unemployment insurance? Or, would the hon. member prefer special treatment for certain parts of the country?

**Mr. O'Reilly:** Mr. Speaker, a specific answer would be that all economic regions of the country are not the same. Whether one is in Gaspé, Vegreville or Haliburton, there is a difference in the areas, a difference in the needs and a difference in the qualifications required. Some have to work in seasonal jobs in a seasonal market in a certain area. I can go into Haliburton in my area and find 30 per cent unemployment in the winter because it is a seasonal, tourist oriented job market. It is improving. Winter sports are coming on. There are some good ski hills. There are cross-country trails. Things happen there in the winter that are drawing more people in.

(1555)

I do not think we can compare that with the city of Toronto, Vegreville, Elk Island, or any other area. The area has to be taken into consideration on its needs. The program has to suit the area, not the area suit the program. I hope that answers the hon. member's question.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I thought I was going to be able to further interrogate the member for Victoria—Haliburton, but I guess it is my turn now.

I would like to begin by declaring something we probably all know. Members on this side of the House certainly are aware of it. Members on the other side are becoming aware. We are very happy to notice that in recent days even the Minister of Finance has made public pronouncements admitting that our national

debt and ongoing annual deficit are problems and something we must address.

As a matter of fact it is very important for us to remember in all this debate when we are talking about revamping our social programs the objective and one of the very large motivations for us being here is that we need to reconsider the financial picture of the country. We are in trouble. It is a matter of simple realism to recognize that if we do not do something about it external forces will take over and we will have it done for us. If we can do something about it while we still have control that is much to be desired and the highest of several different options.

In keeping with a well known couplet which probably everyone in the House knows, the borrower is a slave to the lender. Our debt with its required interest payments has made us slaves in the sense that we have now lost our freedom to do the things we want to do.

I really think it would be wonderful if we could just simply pick up everyone who does not have a job. I think it would be wonderful if everybody in the whole world could come to Canada to get medical procedures done because we have a wonderful free medicare system for everyone regardless of their ability to pay. I think it would be wonderful if we could offer free education to everyone, young and old alike. I think it would be great if we could say to people who are unemployed: "Don't worry. We will pick up your cost of living. We will pay for your tuition to get retrained. We will help you to get re-established in another workplace". Would that not be great? No one would ever suffer at all. That would be great.

However we do not have that option because of our fiscal situation. Right now for every \$4 the government spends \$1 is borrowed. We only have income of \$3 for every expenditure of \$4. A lot of that growth is not even in our control. Just adding the interest payment this year of \$40 billion, if we do nothing, will add another \$5 billion of interest payments next year because of the interest due on the interest we paid this year and had to borrow the money for. Unless we get a hold of it and get a hold of it fast, we are not going to have the option.

Members opposite love to make wonderful promises. I do too. I cannot help but use an analogy. I have a couple of sons. They are now thankfully grown up or close to it anyway. One of them is still at home because he needs my subsidy to go to school and that is fine. We love him and it is great having him there. I thought I would be considered the world's most wonderful dad if I could say to my boys: "Hey guys, I will buy you each a Corvette". They would just love it. Very frankly they would go around bragging. They would say: "I have the greatest dad in the world. He is going to buy us each a Corvette". It is an empty promise because I do not have financial backing. I do not have the money in the bank to buy two Corvettes to give to my boys. My promise is empty.

*Government Orders*

(1600)

It is time the Canadian people woke up to the fact that despite the best promises that governments of the past have made and the present government is making, unless we maintain the fiscal backing that enables us to fulfil the promises, they become empty promises. That is why we must discuss all of our spending realistically, including social spending because it is such a large portion of our total budget.

In the body of my speech I would like to concentrate on the question of education. Since I graduated from university I have been an educator. All of us here have been educated to some degree or another and we have all benefited from receiving an education.

It would not be stretching it at all to recognize that our standard of living is based on education. Our democratic system is based on education. If we did not have a generally educated public we could forget about having votes and debates in public. We could not present things for people to read. If they were not educated and not literate we could only talk to them. We could not appeal to their ability to compute matters to see whether we are reasonable in our projections on the budget and government spending. Our very democracy depends on a generally educated public.

However, I would go beyond that. Without in any way minimizing or marginalizing those people who do get past high school, we also need to acknowledge that our standard of living is greatly dependent on what happens in educational institutions past high school.

I am not in any way minimizing or marginalizing those who for whatever reason do not go beyond high school. I know a number of people in that category and most of them do very well but our standard of living, as I am going to show now, is dependent on what happens afterward.

Think of the basis of much of our standard of living. Think of the things that we enjoy. I guess because of my particular field of study I would first of all thank the mathematicians, since mathematics is the foundation of almost all science, all research and all engineering. Without mathematics and a solid mathematical, analytic ability we really would not have any of the wonderful things that we enjoy in the western world. I extend that to studies in engineering, to research scientists, to medical practitioners, medical researchers. All of these people contribute to what we almost take for granted in our country as a standard of living.

We take it for granted that if we are ill we can go to the hospital for treatment. It goes beyond just having the hospital facility. Unless there are trained doctors and nurses, hospital and medical technicians, respiratory people and all the other specialties and all of the lab technicians, going to the hospital is as useful as going out to the wood shed when you are sick. We have to have qualified, trained people.

It is important for us to make sure that we have not only quality education but quantity education. We need to provide a high degree of quality control in our education right through the years so that when our students graduate whether they are doing surgery on us or are designing our aeroplanes, bridges, or buildings, they will provide a highly reliable, dependable service.

(1605)

It also has a spin-off in our economic competition in the rest of the world. It is only when we do very well in those areas that we can maintain our standards. We are dependent on people who invent, who design, who plan, who build, who produce, who organize, who maintain and operate equipment, who build and maintain structures and systems. We need people who invent combinations of chemicals and materials to help our agriculture and forestry industries, to help us fight diseases with medicines. We need all of those different aspects, which are the result of education, if we are going to have our standard of living.

We need to have electrical engineers and others, who are capable of learning, developing and inventing new ways of communicating with each other via telecommunications systems, computers and things like that. We need to constantly be on the move forward.

So much for building the case for the need of education. Should we as people collectively, through our tax system fund education? I have said it in the House before. I say it again by way of emphasizing something that has been greatly misunderstood. Many times misinformation has gone out, especially from members opposite, regarding our party. They keep talking about us wanting to cut and slash and do away with everything.

We said during the campaign and we are as deeply committed now as ever to bringing our fiscal House into order so that we can maintain a universal Canada-wide health care system. It is in our policy. We have said it from the beginning. We have always said it, notwithstanding that others have tried to minimize our message.

Based on our very careful analysis of questionnaires of members in our party, which we think is a very good cross-section of the Canadian citizenry, those people have said that health is first and education is second. Here we have two programs. The review that the government has embarked on does not even talk about health care, old age security and some of the things that are so important to Canadians, but we have talked about it.

Those are the items which are of very high priority for Canadians. We are here to do what we can to make it more than an empty promise. I would like to say that investment in education is exactly that. I have already indicated that we benefit as a society and as individuals from the positive spin-offs of having an educated population. I would also like to add that it is a very positive fiscal investment. We can invest our money and actually get a monetary return.

*Government Orders*

I want to go way beyond what the minister has suggested. In fact it has already been done, as we know, in some previous parliamentary work the government has embarked on and that is to increase the loans to students. I do not think that is the way to go at all. We need to give some positive support to education so that education is within the means of students in their present level of earnings however they earn their money in the summer months when they are on vacation from their studies.

We need to look at it as an investment. Let me give some numbers. I happen to love mathematics. I did a few calculations. It is totally realistic to assume that a person with a university degree, a college degree or a technical institute diploma could earn in some cases \$1,000 or more per month as a result of that education.

I am going to take a very modest number. I used to use the word conservative, but that word has now come into disrepute around the country, so I no longer say that. I am going to use a modest number of \$400 per month. Let us say that graduate can earn \$400 per month more as a result of receiving an education. Let us say that he graduates at age 22 and works to age 62, which is a good 40-year life span of work.

(1610)

During that time the \$400 per month gives him an additional \$192,000 of earnings. We all know that in our tax system the marginal rate of taxation is around 50 per cent. Governments right now are clawing back 50 per cent of the result of that added earning. Over the 40-year period that is \$96,000. Just educating a student gives back \$96,000.

I want to be realistic. Let us think of this as an investment. What is the present value of that, using an 8 per cent interest rate, which is what I used to compute it. Amazingly the present value of every educated student in terms of returned increase income tax collected is \$57,238. That is an amazing number. We are quibbling about whether or not we should lend these students \$4,800 so that they can go to school and then graduate with a huge personal debt load as well as the collective government debt load we have laid on their shoulders. That is atrocious.

We ought to be looking at more creative ways of funding education. It is a tremendous investment not only for our standard of living but even from a straight fiscal point of view. In the matter of direct income tax collected, it is a tremendous benefit for us all in the economic activity in the country. The more people we have who are educated the greater the economic activity in our country and the greater our exports. We benefit

myriads more than just the income tax collected. That is but a very small portion of that investment.

The question that comes next is how do we do this? How do we provide an education system for our students so that it is affordable and we can have all of our students going to school? I agree with the goal that students should not be prevented from going to school because of personal economic hindrances, just as I agree that people should not be prevented from going to a hospital for needed medical care because they do not have the money to pay for it.

It is a downright shame if young people from poor families cannot go to school because they cannot afford it. It is time that we wake up to the fact that we have a responsibility to make sure that education is affordable. That can only be done if we put our fiscal house into order and stop all of the wastage in those many other areas.

I have some suggestions. In the elementary and secondary schools we practise the idea that education should be free. Students generally do not pay tuition. There are some exceptions. Unfortunately in parts of our country some people who choose to send their children to private schools for various personal reasons end up paying extra. They pay tuition. Others, if they attend the public school system or, in some cases, there is a legitimate separate school system in the province, do not pay. That is paid for by the taxpayer.

I have a question. Why would we use that principle up to grade 12, or in Ontario grade 13, and then abandon it for education past that? The only thing I can think of as a legitimate reason would be that past grade 12 further education is a marked financial advantage to the student as well. Not only do we benefit as a society by being able to collect more income tax from them, but they are paying more income tax because they are making more money.

Therefore, it is fair to say that the students should pay for at least a portion of their post-high school education, as it has been for quite some time. However, I do not believe that we should put the whole load, the whole burden of that education on these students, particularly because we know that over the years they will end up paying it back into the system anyway.

Therefore I would like to propose that we give very serious consideration to a system whereby the students would look after their own housing. That is more or less acceptable unless they have to travel to a place away from home. The family should be able to provide for housing. In most instances they can live at home. Where they cannot of course we need to look at ways of

*Government Orders*

funding that at a reasonable rate, perhaps as part of the particular educational institution.

(1615)

Second, there are books and supplies. These too I think for the most part could be funded by students through their summer earnings, particularly if we had a good strong economy which would demand that a lot of students be hired in the summer months when they are away from their studies.

My last and most important suggestion is that we would go to a system of vouchers for students which would essentially pay their tuition. I would like to see the student upon graduation from high school get a little certificate as part of his graduation package that says the certificate may be presented to any post-secondary institution in Canada of his choice and it will provide for a payment of 90 per cent of the tuition at that particular institution. I did think of putting in a fixed number. That is another option, but we do recognize that some institutions, some universities and some colleges have different costs because of the kinds of programs they offer.

We know for example that in some of the engineering and some of the physics programs the cost of the equipment is way greater than in some other areas where the costs are mostly in books and libraries. I think to recognize that different programs have a slightly differentiated tuition system that certificate could be used.

It would be a wonderful encouragement to our students to say: "We believe in you. We don't care whether you have rich parents. We are going to see that you have an opportunity for a good education and we are with you all the way. Here is a certificate from us, the taxpayers. We know that you will pay us back. But we put our faith and our trust in you. We want to see you be successful".

Mr. Speaker, my time has come to an end. I really would like to encourage the people on the government side to give serious consideration when they are looking at this aspect of a social program review to do it and, for the sake of our young people and our children, do it well.

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments of the hon. member across the way. I must say that I am certainly pleased to hear a member speak from the point of view of consultation. That is what the green paper tabled by the minister is really all about.

During the most recent break I had the opportunity to have several public forums in my riding. I must admit there were several suggestions on this particular point regarding education and, from the federal perspective, how it might or should be funded in the future.

The point that the hon. member made was one of those comments about a voucher type of system. Another was the fact that instead of taking this fund that currently I believe is \$2.6 billion, put it in a special fund for students only, earmark it that way and transfer it to the provinces, but with the specific outline that it is for post-secondary education only to ensure that is where it goes.

Having heard the hon. member and his comments regarding the voucher system, would he agree that there probably are several options available which could and possibly should be looked at in addition to the one that was in the green paper as one alternative.

I do appreciate the fact that finally the member and his party realize that this is a consultation paper, that nothing has been carved in stone, that we want this input not only from members of Parliament but from Canadians from coast to coast so that we can come up with a consensus that will be good for Canada, our students, our youth not only today but indeed as we work toward the 21st century and try to be a benefit to all post-secondary students and those coming on in the next number of years.

I would ask the hon. member to comment on that.

(1620)

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his kind comments. Actually, I should be worried if I say things that please members on the other side. Maybe I have not done a good job.

With respect to the question of vouchers, I think it would be better for us to take the federal government money that is now allocated for post-secondary education, allocate it entirely through the voucher system and allow the universities to build a tuition system that reflects to a fair degree the cost of educating a student in the program.

The provinces would individually be required to provide the funding for the facilities and for any special developments there since it is a provincial requirement. This way the students would be the ones who would produce a level of good, healthy academic competition between various institutions. They would then have to attract students because of their good record and good quality control program. Their graduates would be able to get the top notch jobs. Through that natural competitiveness those institutions would I think develop a better level of research and a better level of teaching.

The provinces could go ahead and use their money as they are now in their component in the provinces. The voucher system would help to give students a great deal more flexibility in the choice of which institution they attend because of the fact that very often there are universities which specialize in their area.

For example today I was talking to a person who happens to be a member of the chiropractic profession. There are no programs for that particular discipline in all universities. But there are

*Government Orders*

those that could provide that service and that student would not have to face a great economic disadvantage because it may be out of province.

Those are just some of my comments on that.

**Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed the analysis by the member for Elk Island.

I have just a couple of things in relation to education in Canada and his idea that the economy is what should determine how we relate to costs of education in elementary where it is free, secondary where it is free and then in university where it suddenly costs money.

In Canada education is a bargain if you compare it with any country in the world. The one to which we are most likely to compare it of course would be our neighbours to the south where even the basic university courses cost roughly twice what they do in Canada. I am talking about the state universities that receive a government subsidy. I am not talking about private universities. They are beyond reach unless you are quite affluent. Private universities in the United States are very, very expensive.

What is wrong with a student borrowing some money? Just the exercise itself is a good one for a young person. He takes on the responsibility of borrowing some money and having it made available and taking that opportunity to advance himself, investing in himself. That is not a bad exercise for a young person to have. It would be better of course if you could graduate and say: "I do not owe anybody anything".

Really, carrying a little debt within reason is a pretty good exercise for later life. All of us I am sure have carried some debt. The idea is to take on some responsibility, address that responsibility seriously and repay that debt. I sometimes get very annoyed when people take the liberty of borrowing or taking advantage of money when it is available, but they do not follow up with the responsibility that accompanies that, to pay it back on time providing they are in a position to do that. I think provision is being made now to gear the repayment plan to the income you are getting. That seems to make sense to me. How else would you pay it back.

(1625)

I wonder if the member would see some very worth while benefit to a student through those years accepting the responsibility of borrowing and of course the responsibility that follows the borrowing, to see that it is repaid. It is really taxpayers' money, my money, your money, and that of the rest of us. It is our money. We want it back because we loaned it to somebody. I think it is their responsibility to address that at the appropriate time when they can of course.

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address that question because that is actually one of the aspects of this proposal that bothers me the most.

I know it is good to learn when you are young that when you borrow something you repay it. I remember growing up as a youngster on a farm in Saskatchewan my dad taught me that whenever we borrowed something from a neighbour we always returned it in a condition as good as or better than we borrowed it. That is a good principle but I do not believe it is a good principle to set things up so that young people on graduation have a millstone of debt hanging around their necks.

For example, a young person who has gone through a dental program wants to open a dentist office. He now has to borrow money in order to put up his office, get his equipment. That is true for many different professions, even in my profession of teaching. We need to have computer equipment and things like that, depending on what area we are in.

Some of us on graduation get married. We set up a home. We need to borrow money for the home. We need to borrow money for the downpayment for the car and for the furniture. The first thing you know, you are up to your ears in debt just like this government is up to its ears in debt and you are totally debilitated by it.

I really think it would be much healthier for our whole society if our students could graduate debt free. That really is the very best. It is not that one is a nine and the other is an eight. I really think that one is a 10 and the other is a zero in this as far as my feeling is concerned.

I know that is idealistic but I think it can happen. In a healthy society where students can get a good summer job and are able to live frugally, I believe they should be able to save enough to pay their living expenses. If we as a society, as taxpayers, pay their tuition directly and have them pay it back through their taxes that would be a superior method.

I want to avoid handing them a millstone of debt with their graduation certificate from university.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in such a historic debate in this House, one that I think is of great importance to all Canadians because we are talking not only about the social security network that supports us all in times of trouble but also about a very significant portion of the federal government's budget.

The green paper recently released by the Minister of Human Resources Development contains a number of interesting proposals that have already been the subject of considerable discussion and will continue to be the focus of that discussion in the weeks ahead.

The government's objective in regard to the improvement of Canada's social security programs was outlined very briefly by the Prime Minister in a speech he gave to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Quebec in September. I quote him: "Our objective at the end of the process is a reform system of social security that protects the most vulnerable while enabling all Canadians to obtain a fair and equal opportunity to exploit their



*Government Orders*

talents, lead fulfilling lives and experience the dignity of work”.

Those are words that would reflect the views of a series of Prime Ministers of this country from Laurier to King, St. Laurent, Pearson, Turner, Trudeau, and of course the present Prime Minister who said the words.

They are words that come from the leader of a party that has introduced virtually every social program this country enjoys today. It is not a party that is in any way anxious to tear away the fabric of the social programs that we have built for Canadians. It is not our intent in producing this green paper to destroy in any way or rip apart the social safety net that we as a party at various times in government in Canada have worked to build.

(1630)

On the other hand, there is a pressing need for social security reform. I can only look at the figures. I have quoted them in public meetings in my riding before and I do so again. The green paper concerns federal expenditure of \$39 billion or about 24 per cent of total federal expenditures. It does not include pensions. It does not include expenditures in government departments related to transport, foreign affairs, corrections and national defence.

In other words, a huge range of federal government programs are excluded from the \$39 billion figure that is the subject of discussion in the green paper on social security reform. It is the only other single government expenditure that is as large as the interest on the public debt which is at \$40 billion. Some say: “You can reduce the debt figure and that will solve your problem”. That is complete nonsense, utter hogwash.

The government does not control interest rates in the country. It can affect them. It can influence them. It cannot control them. In the end Canada’s interest rate, the national rate charged by our central bank, will have to reflect world trends. It will have to reflect those for the very simple reason that the value of our dollar is tied to interest rates in the country. That is an unfortunate fact of life, but Canada cannot simply go about setting its own interest rate ignorant of world events, world trading patterns and currency movements. We recognize that we can influence the rate; we cannot control it.

Since the government has taken office it has influenced the rate. Whether it was done directly or not I cannot say; I do not know. The rate has gone down, the Canadian dollar has dropped and Canadian exports have increased since, leading to increased prosperity in the country. That may be one of the factors leading to prosperity. There are others but that is a principal one. The changes that have come about in our world economy have no doubt improved the economic situation of Canadians, but it has

not improved to the extent that we can ignore the fiscal realities the Minister of Finance has been discussing.

We have a particularly competent Minister of Finance who has gone before the Standing Committee on Finance and made what I can only describe as a brilliant exposition, describing the state of the Canadian economy today and inviting Canadians to address that committee to express their concerns and views concerning tax changes in the country and how we can improve the tax system to make it fairer and better.

He has also asked Canadians to comment on what they would do if they were minister and were drafting a budget. Where would they cut? Where would they increase taxes? Where would they seek to increase revenue, and so on? Those questions are extremely important. We have engaged in a great national debate on this subject and we read about it daily in the media.

Unfortunately much of what we see are ideas that if we simply cut interest rates everything will turn up roses. I do not accept that for a moment. I do not believe it is true. I think the people that are saying it know it is false. They are simply putting the message out in order to distort the view of Canadians that things can be improved in this easy way without some painful changes in our systems.

What did the Minister of Finance say in his brilliant exposition before the Standing Committee On Finance? First, he indicated that the world economy has become far more integrated than it was 40 or 50 years ago when many of the social programs were put in place. It has become more integrated and global and trade barriers have disappeared. We have brought down trade barriers both through GATT and through the North American Free Trade Agreement. Those are being extended rapidly around the world.

Second, people from what we once called the third world are joining the global economy. They are producing goods for sale in this country that are inexpensive and that Canadians are buying. We will continue to buy them in increasing numbers because they are less expensive. They are also quite well made in many cases. We are getting better and better products that are made abroad.

Third, information technology is exploding. It is easily portable and we cannot stop it from changing across borders around the world. If we do not get on the bandwagon and produce goods and deliver services in a less expensive and more efficient way, we will be outpaced by others who can do it less expensively elsewhere. The technology that allows us to deliver the services more cheaply will move to the places where it is being delivered cheaper, reduce costs further and leave us high and dry. All this means is that competition is forcing companies, states and individuals to change their method of work, their method of dealing, and the way they interact one with the other.

*Government Orders*

(1635)

I quote the Minister of Finance again:

For three entire decades after the second world war all we knew was high job growth, high productivity growth, high income growth and low unemployment. We ignored the fact that our unemployment rate was rising relentlessly with every recession and staying up.

As he pointed out, the unemployment rate 25 years ago was usually at 5 per cent. During this past decade it has been steadily at 10 per cent. Unemployment has become more serious for Canadians and the costs of it have risen enormously.

The Minister for Human Resources Development in his introductory address to the House when he produced the green paper and led off this debate pointed out that workers and employers finance unemployment insurance through their contributions. He said:

It is simply costing too much. In 1980 the program cost \$4.4 billion. Last year it cost \$19.7 billion. In other words, in about 13 years the costs quadrupled. We cannot allow this escalation in UI costs to continue.

The minister was right. For that reason we have to look at the unemployment system to see what can be done to improve it. It is very important that the green paper which has made some proposals be thoroughly discussed and I have aimed to do that.

The minister outlined two basic proposals for change in UI. He is willing to receive others. He has made that very clear. That is what the public debate is about. He said we could have a new unemployment insurance program or we could tighten the rules of the existing UI program further.

We have been tightening the rules ever since I got elected in 1988. We watched the Conservative government tighten the rules right, left and centre, causing pain and anxiety to a lot of Canadians. In the last budget there was further tightening of those rules. I do not think that continuing to tighten them is really helping the unemployed. It is not.

We need to find a new scheme that encourages people to work rather than encourage them to remain on unemployment insurance. The minister pointed out that because the program has been in place for so long and because it has some fairly generous rules here and there it is easily abused both by workers and by employers. They schedule work around UI instead of the other way around.

We are not taking out unemployment insurance against the day we are unemployed. We are taking it out and receiving it because we know there will be a period of unemployment. It is planned for in employment contracts today. That is not what the system was designed for. Canadians are paying a great deal of money for this system through the charges that are put on them, especially if they are ones who are in places where they are regularly employed and paying the new higher premiums.

The day after the tabling of the green paper I met with members of the construction industry in my community. They were very much concerned that unemployment insurance would be changed as we know it. They are not seasonal workers, but they are people employed in the construction industry who are unemployed from time to time, not at any particular time of year but whenever there is not work available for them. As they pointed out to me, many of them travel great distances to get work. They are quite prepared to travel to Windsor to work on a construction project there, or to New Brunswick to work on a construction project there if that is necessary. They will travel great distances to get work. However, if there is no work available, they depend on and need unemployment insurance.

The indication to me was that they would pay higher premiums if they could continue to receive unemployment insurance. They did not mean higher premiums in terms of the employer's share. They meant in terms of the employees' share. The employees would pay more if they could keep UI in something like its existing format.

I invited them to make a submission to the minister, send a letter to the minister or prepare some kind of brief through their union—and some union leaders were at the meeting—to let the minister know what they could do in their view to make the system work for them.

I have stressed to the minister in my discussions with him the importance of UI to people in that particular job category. In the green paper there are suggestions that perhaps UI will have to be tailored to fit the needs of different areas of our workforce. That would be worthwhile. It is a sensible idea. I hope that there are suggestions forthcoming from members of the construction industry in Kingston and the Islands.

(1640)

Another thing the Minister of Finance said that I think is important is that we missed the signals with these rising unemployment rates. I quote him again:

And as we were missing those signals what did we do? We borrowed to paper over the problem, borrowing first from ourselves, then from foreigners and always from the future.

The hon. member for Elk Island in his remarks referred to the fiscal crisis facing Canada today. Most members of the House acknowledge that is a serious problem facing us. For the years from 1988 to 1993 I sat here and watched while Brian Mulroney and Michael Wilson fiddled. They did absolutely nothing to solve the deficit problem in Canada. Indeed it got worse and worse the longer they were in office. They were elected in 1983 with promises to fix this problem. They were going to bring the deficit under control within two or three years—I have forgotten the promise now—from 1984. We all know what Mr. Mulroney's promises were worth.

*Government Orders*

We sat on the other side of the House, some of my colleagues for the full nine painful years, but me for only five, and watched the government do absolutely nothing to make the situation better. I know members of the Reform Party who are here missed this, but we heard budgets presented that indicated that within three years the deficit would be down to, I think the low figure we heard was \$16 billion. It never got anywhere near \$16 billion. The projections were always wrong. They were revised in every budget and the promised pay off was always deferred another two or three years. It was really quite nauseating.

The minister kept insisting with every budget every year that this time his projections were going to stick, that he had made the right decision, that everything was going to be fine in another two or three years, and that we should just hold on to our seats and wait and see what happened. They did not hold on to their seats, thank goodness. We have the remnants of the party sitting over there, all two of them. It was a string of broken promises that really deflated and disappointed Canadians.

We have heard repeatedly from the Prime Minister and from the Minister of Finance the proposal he has put forward to reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of the gross national product by the end of the third year of our mandate. That gives us two years to reach that figure.

It is not going to be the *annus mirabilis* when we get there, but it does signify that at least the Government of Canada is willing to make a commitment and stick to it. The Prime Minister has indicated his commitment to that figure repeatedly in the House and elsewhere. I believe it is important that the government achieve this.

The critics of social reform, and I point specifically to the Bloc Quebecois, all sit and howl and scream and say: "You are eliminating this; you are going to hurt everybody". Yet they know perfectly well that the government is not seeking to reduce all its expenditures through this one package alone.

I have no doubt in the ability of the Minister of Finance and in his sense of fairness that when he seeks to achieve that goal of reducing the deficit to 3 per cent of GDP in another two years, he will achieve it by making reductions across a very wide range of government services and government programs. It will not all be done through reductions in social programs, which is what the Reform Party would like us to do.

[*Translation*]

On the one hand, the Bloc Quebecois wants everything to remain the same, unchanged, exactly as it is right now. Unfortunately, this is no longer an option. There is no way status quo can be allowed to continue. This is just impossible.

[*English*]

On the other hand, the Reform Party wants to cut all the social programs and let Canadians suffer on their own, abandoned by their government, abandoned by the social programs they have paid for with their taxes for these many years.

**An hon. member:** All from rich provinces.

**Mr. Milliken:** And as my colleague says: "All from rich provinces".

I do not care where the money comes from. The fact is that Canadians expect there will be social programs in place. They may not be the same as they are today, but they want social programs and they want a voice in how those social programs will be shaped.

That brings me to the significant and important thing about this discussion. The Minister of Human Resources Development has produced a plan for discussion. He has invited Canadians to participate in this national debate to express to him and to one another what they think the social programs of the country should be like.

(1645)

We are not going to have unanimity on the point. I know the hon. members of the Bloc do not agree with anything the government has put forward. They fulfil the traditional role of an opposition and that is, oppose, oppose, oppose. I can understand that. I am not surprised by that. On the other hand I would hope they would engage in a dialogue with the government and put forward their ideas on how the social programs of this country could be improved.

As for the Reform Party, it was refreshing to hear the hon. member for Elk Island. However I am sure that if his leader had heard all his remarks he would have been horrified by what he was saying. I know his leader would not have agreed with everything the hon. member for Elk Island said. I can only hope that the hon. member is here tomorrow. I am worried that he is going to be shut up and gagged.

What he said about the importance of this program spending on students was correct. I am sure that in an ideal world it would be wonderful if students could come out of university debt free. I do not think that is the case for many students today and I do not believe it will be the case tomorrow. I think the situation can only get worse, not better, at least for a while.

That is the fiscal reality we are going to have to face, notwithstanding the demonstration yesterday and notwithstanding the demagoguery of the hon. member for Roberval who was out there saying that students deserved free tuition and all that sort of nonsense. That was considered when I was a student in the sixties. It was not adopted by governments then and they had a lot more money to spend than governments have today. It is simply not a realistic approach to the tuition issue.

*Government Orders*

I did not want to get into that. I am prepared today to deal with unemployment insurance and I will stick with that.

The Reform Party must acknowledge that we cannot bring the deficit of the Government of Canada under control simply by eliminating social programs. If members of the Reform Party—

**Mr. Hermanson:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The parliamentary secretary just made some allegations about a member who is not even present in the House regarding another member in our caucus. He talked about being gagged. I would appreciate it if the hon. parliamentary secretary would withdraw those comments. They were out of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I think the point raised by the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster is more a matter of debate than a point of order. Like himself I have followed the debate attentively. In fact I do not believe I can attribute the inference to the parliamentary secretary. I think there is a debate going on between the parliamentary secretary and the previous spokesperson from the Reform Party as to whether that member would be here tomorrow or not and no one else who is here or not here at the present time in the Chamber.

I am prepared to return to debate. Unless the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster wishes to add something else, I will return the debate to the parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I hope that silly interruption will not be taken off my time. Even the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster was huffing and puffing on that one.

Members of the Reform Party would do well to reconsider their ill advised stance with respect to Canada's social programs and get on board with the government to make the social programs better instead of just chopping and cutting the way they want to do.

I recall during the last election campaign I had many requests from electors as I went door to door asking what the Reform Party was really doing with its proposals to cut the deficit. Of course it had this great scheme for eliminating Canada's deficit by cutting \$18 billion or \$15 billion or something like that. We all know the deficit is \$40 billion and so \$18 billion was barely half of it. Yet that was the cut they were proposing during the election campaign. They were telling Canadians that was going to eliminate the deficit.

Most people could see that was hogwash. The people in Kingston and the Islands certainly saw that it was hogwash. I hope the Reform Party members who were elected running on that bowl of hogwash will be able to realize that it is time to change their tune, get into dialogue with the government in respect of what social programs could and should be and try to work with the government to make them better.

The hon. member for Elk Island in his very able speech spoke about one aspect of it. He did not tell us of any proposals from his party to improve the current proposals put forward by the government or suggest changes to the current system that would make the system one that we could afford or would be more workable or better for Canadians. That is the government's aim. That is what we would like to do.

(1650)

I encourage hon. members opposite to engage in that dialogue. Work with the members on this side of the House in committee and in this House to come up with proposals that will better Canadians' lot in life and provide the income security for all that we so earnestly desire in this country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Questions or comments. I take note of the interest of a number of members who want to speak. I would ask that questions and replies be rather brief and I will get as many on the record as possible.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, of course there is always a great response from Reform MPs when they are being unfairly represented by members on the other side of the House.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands talked a bit about discussing with his constituents the Reform position on social programs and on reducing the deficit. It is true that Reform has consulted extensively with Canadians. In fact while the hon. member was part of a party that was involved in rat packing and some very unproductive activities, Reformers were consulting.

I might add our leader led the way in consulting with Canadians and hearing the views of everyone, not gagging anyone I might add, but being very considerate of all opinions expressed by Canadians. Reformers found a consensus that they took to the electorate last year. That consensus was that spending needed to be reduced to save social programs that were most needed by the Canadian public.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and his party did not undertake that consultation. We did not see that proposal in the red book. They did not have a plan. They still do not have a plan. They cannot even put out an action plan. They have a discussion paper.

How does the hon. member have the audacity and the nerve to make these allegations in the House when in fact there is no political party in Canada that has consulted more with Canadians and knows more about the wishes of Canadians on the deficit and on the reform of social programs than the Reform Party of Canada?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I have no trouble answering that question. We just heard the answer from the hon. member for Elk Island. If the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster had been in the House he would have heard it.

The hon. member for Elk Island said that yes, the leader of the Reform Party consulted with all the members of the Reform Party and that was a great cross-section of Canadians. What utter rubbish. If he thinks so, I wish he had gone to the meeting last night that the hon. leader of the Reform Party was at in Quebec. I understand all of 50 people showed up to hear him at Cowansville, Quebec, members of the Reform Party. That was a cross-section of Canadians? Be serious.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as we all know in this House from time to time there are those who take liberties with exactitude of what might have been said, otherwise known as nose stretchers. I think we have just heard one.

As the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands knows full well, our presentation during the last election campaign was \$18 billion in spending reductions and \$20 billion in growth. At that time the Liberals opposite were going all around the country like Johnny Appleseed saying: "Do not worry, everything is just fine. Those terrible Reformers are going to have to cut spending but we are not. We have never done it in the past. We are not likely to do it in the future. Do not worry. Vote for us. Everything is going to be okay". However, we are all in this boat together. They are finding that they have to do the very things that would not be done or we are going to destroy the country. All of a sudden, they are faced with the fact that they have to do it.

Since the hon. member does not think the Reform Party has a plan, what is his plan for reducing the deficit to zero? That is not a low hurdle. We all know the member opposite is part of the Liberal olympic low hurdle team. If you make the hurdle low enough anybody can stumble over it. Before he hurts his shins getting over this 3 per cent hurdle let us hear how he is going to get to nothing.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I have not said, nor has the government said, that it is going to reduce the deficit to zero. What it did say is in the red book, and the hon. member says he did not see it. Of course I am sure he did not read the red book during the election campaign. He should have. He might have joined the Liberal Party instead and he would be much happier than he is today.

(1655)

The red book made it very clear that the government was committed to reducing the deficit to 3 per cent of gross national product by year three of its mandate. That is the promise the government is going to keep. That is the promise I was discussing earlier in my speech. I believe it is a reasonable promise. We have two more years to do that. By the end of the two years

the government will have plans for reducing the deficit further I have no doubt. I am optimistic that with the great policies the government is pursuing we will have phenomenal growth in this country throughout the period that will reduce it further.

I invite the hon. member to wait for the budget. See what is in it and rejoice when it comes out.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an interesting discussion when the hon. member opposite begins to wax eloquent, especially if the wax is not fully hardened yet. I have particularly enjoyed some of his diatribe. It has been quite good.

I would like to add to what one of our hon. members just mentioned. This mutatis mutandis attitude the Liberal government has: Do not worry, be happy, everything will be okay. I wonder if those watching have heard enough yet from the Liberal side of the House that they will somehow, hopefully with about a 6 or 7 per cent growth rate, be able to balance the budget. I suppose sometime into their grandchildren's funeral party they will somehow be able to bring together a government plan that will bring the deficit down to zero.

Canadians are not fooled by the idea that if we set the boundary so low we can never be disappointed, if we just say that some illusive day we will be able to balance the budget. Canadians have had enough of this. That is why the green book, the red book, the mauve book, the pink book, the grey book, the flurry of studies this government has brought forward, not one of them has any idea that is ever going to solve this deficit problem. They are discussion papers. The latest one is another discussion paper. The Liberals put a nice title on it: "Jobs and Growth". It sounds good, but in the body of it there are no details, no goals, no dollar figures and no costing of the options.

The people watching are not fooled by this. Certainly on this side of the House we are not fooled by government proposals that continue to leave the dollar figures off the bottom line. The Canadian people are not fooled. It is time for action. The Liberals have wasted and squirrelled away a year. It has been the best year to take advantage of economic growth.

Why does this member and the government not move now while they have some political capital left to move and address this deficit problem? It is not going to get easier with the passing days. I encourage the member to grab the bull by the horns and come forward with some solid suggestions, not more discussion points.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Fraser Valley East has raised a number of points. I am delighted that he enjoyed my speech and feels that it provoked him to rise in the House and ask questions. I will try to make speeches more often to elucidate matters for him. I regret I cannot speak as often as I did when I was in opposition. I would have certainly enjoyed debates with him, although I suspect he would have been on the same side of the House just in one of the smaller parties.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member suggested that Canadians were being fooled by government proposals. They are not being fooled by any proposals by this government. He said that Canadians are fed up with the things they are getting from this government. Well the polls do not indicate that. Seventy-three per cent was the latest figure I read of satisfaction with the government, the highest ever. No government since polling began has done such a great job as this government has done in the eyes of the Canadian electorate who voted us in.

**Mr. Strahl:** You have not done anything.

**Mr. Milliken:** The hon. member says we have not done one thing. The other day I listened to a litany of complaints from one of his colleagues about things the government had done that he disagreed with. We have done all kinds of things and Canadians appreciate what we have done. It shows up in the polls when a government can get a 73 per cent satisfaction rating. It must make the hon. member and his colleagues green with envy.

I should also say that this party does not fool Canadians. We have not fooled Canadians in this debate. We have presented proposals. We have invited discussion. We have told Canadians what we are doing in an open and forthright manner. The only party that has fooled Canadians is the one headed by the hon. member for Calgary Southwest. I suspect he has fooled the members of his own party.

**Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for certainly raising so much attention to this great issue. I also want to thank him for reminding the Reform members that the Canadian people voted for the Liberal Party and its policies in the red book. They did not vote in favour of Reform Party policies.

(1700)

I would ask the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, what would be the impact today if the Reform Party policies were actually in place? How would they differ from the actual policies that are going into place by the Liberal Party right here in this House of Commons? We never promised what the Reform Party is talking about, so we do not have to deliver that. What we have to deliver is what we promised.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has been very explicit in what he has said. He held up the books which contained the discussion papers. But the Reform Party is talking about figures. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands knows very well that when you have a discussion paper you do not have bottom line figures. If you had bottom line figures to go on to begin with, why would you even have a discussion paper?

I want to ask the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands what is the purpose of the discussion paper? Would he explain that. I know, but I want him to explain to these people across the way who seem to think that the Canadian public voted them into office instead of the Liberal Party of Canada.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I can understand why members opposite think they were voted into office instead of us. I used to think that too when we sat on the other side. Canadians now wish they had voted us in and they would not have gone through five years of anguish they did from 1988 to 1993. Unfortunately, they did not. They were cajoled into voting for Mr. Mulroney and his gang and we all suffered as a result. The members of the Reform Party all acknowledge that and they know it is true.

In fact, because of the suffering imposed by that government many of the Reformers were elected in western Canada primarily. To my recollection they got one in Ontario and spoiled a perfect record for this party. But we did fine in Ontario and the hon. member knows that.

I thank the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for a very sensible question. The purpose of this particular series of proposals was “Agenda, Jobs and Growth, Improving Social Security in Canada” to elicit the views of Canadians on improving the social security system in Canada. It was intended as a discussion paper. It is being used as a discussion paper. I had a public meeting in my constituency where members of the public were invited to make presentations and submit their views and there was discussion.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development was there as a special guest and he provided great illumination for all present. It was an excellent meeting. That is the purpose of the release of this paper.

I see my time has expired. I apologize.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, VIA Rail; the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, Grain Transportation.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are having fun here this afternoon.

I rise in the House today to talk about a very important and I think a very serious subject that affects all Canadians. That of course is social program reform.

I was in my constituency this past week. I attended several townhall meetings, coffee shop meetings, meetings with chambers of commerce and other meetings. It proved to be a very difficult week because I was continually preparing my consti-

*Government Orders*

tients for very depressing news. I laid out and explained the situation and the difficulties we face in the years to come in regard to dealing with reform of the social programs.

It was tough talking to people about cutting spending to social programs. It was tough talking about the \$10 billion of federal government cuts that must take place other than cuts to social program areas.

It was difficult telling Canadians and having those people agree with me that we need to cut somewhere between \$12 billion and \$16 billion from social program spending otherwise these programs will collapse and we will lose them entirely.

(1705)

In an attempt to lighten things in the evening and to make a very important point, I would start by relating a story about a neighbour of mine. This farmer was the frustrated type. He was the anxious type. To relieve the anxiety he would go out every Sunday morning on his road. He called it his road because he was the one who pushed to have it built and he was the one who pushed to have it paved. He would go out in his five speed car. He would go up the straightaway, get his car up to about 100 and go into a sharp curve and come out of the curve at 140. That made him feel good. That helped relieve his anxiety.

One Sunday morning he drove out to the end of his driveway. He just started accelerating up the straightaway and he saw around the corner someone on his road. As the car moved closer he saw it swerve. He thought: "My God, a drunk on my road on a Sunday morning". As the car came even closer he saw that it was a lady driver. He thought: "A lady driver on my road on Sunday morning, this is ridiculous".

He started accelerating but as he started to do that, the lady driver slowed her car down and quickly cranked the window open. He was not going to stop but he slowed down. As he went by he opened his window. And as the car passed he heard the lady shout: "Pig". He was really angry and really anxious. He accelerated down the straightaway, went into the corner at 120 and slammed, right into the pig".

I use this story to demonstrate that people with an attitude problem, as this farmer clearly had, often miss the signals that would help them avoid problems that are in the road. Because this farmer missed the signals he hit the pig. Because of his attitude problem he hit the pig.

I suggest that governments over the past 30 years have missed the signals. They have had attitude problems when it comes to cutting spending to preserve the social programs that people in this country value.

I want to talk today about spending, in fact overspending. It is the biggest problem the government faces today. To start this topic off at the meetings over the past week I presented a quote by P.J. O'Rourke which states: "Giving government money and power is like giving teenagers liquor and the keys to the car". That quote really hit home with people. They really could identify with that quote. Giving government money and power is like giving teenagers liquor and the keys to the car.

If we think about what has happened in the area of spending over this past 30 years or so with one government after another—Liberal, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative, Liberal—it has been the same problem, a problem that seems to be similar to giving teenagers liquor and the keys to the car.

My constituents one after another at one meeting after another just simply could not believe how this government operates. By that I mean how it is constantly overspending. They like to relate the overspending of this government to what would happen if they overspent in their personal budgets in running their homes.

The question came up again and again. How can they get away with spending more than they have? In my home if I was spending more than I have my family would eventually be without a home and they would be hungry. This was a common comment made by people in the constituency over this time.

What these people did understand very well is that the deficit, which is the amount that government spends more than it takes in over any one year, last year about \$36 billion, cannot continue. These people did understand very clearly that the federal government debt, which is about \$534 billion now, increasing at about \$110 million per day or about \$1,500 a second, cannot be continued.

I just want to put this debt and deficit into perspective by talking about how that relates to my family personally.

(1710)

My wife, my five children, and myself own about \$140,000 of this federal debt. We have to pay off about \$140,000 of this federal debt. That is on top of my house mortgage and my farm debt, another \$140,000 to pay off. Not only that but my family's share is being added to at a rate of about \$10,000 per year. I am very concerned that it is going to be extremely difficult for my family as it is going to be very difficult for other Canadian families to pay their share of this debt.

Where does the federal government get its money? Where does the money come from? First of all about \$58 billion a year comes from personal income tax, about \$8.3 billion from corporate tax, about \$17.5 billion from unemployment insurance contributions, about \$15 billion from the GST, \$11 billion from excise taxes, and about \$11 billion from other spending.

*Government Orders*

Where does the other \$40 billion to \$41 billion come from? The sad truth is that the other \$40 billion comes from borrowing.

Who does this Canadian government borrow the money from? It used to be that a majority of the money borrowed came from Canadians. Now, and I think this makes our situation even more difficult, almost 45 per cent of new borrowing comes from outside Canada.

Should the time come, and it almost certainly will if our government does not change its attitude so it can avoid this pig, it almost certainly will be cut off very soon. Lenders from outside the country will just stop lending. When that day comes we will face a situation that is every bit as serious as the situation that New Zealand has faced and the situation that Italy has faced, very difficult indeed.

Some say it is easy to get more revenue. All we have to do is increase corporate taxes. We have certainly heard from the NDP and from members of the Liberal Party over the past years: just increase the corporate tax.

I have a cartoon here that I think demonstrates very well the problem with that. It is a picture of people in a coffee shop who are saying "Well, this new tax plan sounds pretty good. We get a cut of 9 per cent and business picks up the burden". In the very next frame of this cartoon is a picture of their local grocery store and of course prices have gone up by 9 per cent. If corporate taxes are increased consumers pick up the full tab. There is no magic to it.

There just is no more room for increasing revenues. This government and past governments have had a spending problem. I think to demonstrate this it is important to look at spending over the past years.

I have a graph that shows spending from 1975 to the present. This graph shows in 1986 constant dollars, so inflation is taken out of the picture. Real spending has increased from \$73 billion in 1975 to about \$135 billion, again in 1986 dollars, in the most recent figures, an incredible increase in spending and it is not caused by inflation.

Where does the federal government spend its money? The first part of spending, the discretionary part, the part that government can change, is in a variety of government services. It is about \$43 billion of services to operate government and various programs other than social program spending.

The social program spending makes up almost half of the total spending. The social program spending of about \$80 billion per year along with other government services of about \$43 billion per year make up all of the discretionary spending. The rest of the spending is interest payments, almost \$40 billion a year in interest payments. To continue to carry the debt there is no discretion on spending in this area.

Interest payments can only decrease if the debt decreases. This large chunk, almost a quarter of total spending made up of

interest payments is making it extremely difficult to fund our social programs. If we are going to maintain these programs, clearly we are going to have to stop adding to the debt. We are going to have to spend less on providing social programs in a way that is acceptable to Canadians.

(1715)

When I am talking about social programs I am talking mainly about old age security, the Canada pension plan, payments that go to compensate or to carry people through unemployment and the child tax benefits. These are called program payments to persons.

The other portion of federal government spending is transfers to provinces. The transfers to provinces go to cover welfare. Established programs financing also covers health, advanced education and equalization payments.

Just before I get into the area I want to talk most about, which is old age security, I would just like to talk a little bit about equalization payments.

Equalization payments are meant to transfer money from the wealthy provinces, the so-called have provinces, to the have not provinces. How many have provinces are there in Canada? What would you guess, six or seven? No, there are three have provinces when it comes to calculating equalization payments. They are British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Ontario is getting very close to the line. In fact, two years ago part way through the year it appeared it had become a have not province under the calculations. Three provinces are paying and seven receiving. Who receives? All of the other seven receive. But the interesting thing is that Quebec, the fourth wealthiest province receives by far the largest portion of equalization payments.

I would like to spend the rest of my time talking about old age security. Old age security is the universal pension program which is made up of three separate programs. First is the old age pension which makes up about \$14 billion per year in federal government spending. The second area is guaranteed income supplement, about \$4 billion per year. These figures are for 1992-93. The third area is spousal allowance, which is half a billion dollars a year.

When people saw these figures on the overheads I used during my presentations over the past week, they looked at that half a billion dollars as nothing compared to the rest. When they thought of it as \$500 million they realized it was not insignificant. Spousal allowance made up that other half a billion dollars. The total on old age security spending is about \$19 billion a year.

Before I get into my presentation on old age security and other pensions, I would like to set the stage. A couple of points that I brought out really shocked people who were at these meetings. Again we are talking about the reality of the present situation in social program spending and what is going to happen as the population ages over the next years.



*Government Orders*

As a percentage of Canada's population, the increase is from about 7 per cent in 1951 to an increase of almost 23 per cent by 2030. I would like Canadians to think about this. Are there any of you who are on pensions? Or any of you who will be on pensions if we are around a few years down the road? I would like you to think about these funny looking kids with the baggy pants. You know the kind of pants, they hang halfway down. Do you want to depend on these funny looking kids to provide your pension in the future? That is exactly what we are counting on.

On the other hand these funny looking kids are not stupid. Let us look at the other side. These funny looking kids are very intelligent. These are the kids who are going to have to pick up the huge debt we are continually building and laying at their feet. Do you think these funny looking kids in the baggy pants are going to be so stupid as to pay the debt down and as well continue the pension, especially considering the fact that in 1951 there were about 14 working Canadians to pay for every person on a pension. By 2030 there will be only two working Canadians to pay for each person on pension. Do you think these kids with the funny looking pants are going to be willing to pay the full debt we have built and pay for our pensions? I would suggest not. These funny looking kids are smart and unfortunately we have laid an unfair burden at their feet.

(1720)

That was old age security. I will quickly lay out a few points in regard to the Canada pension plan. First, this plan is now funded by a 5 per cent payroll tax. The Canada pension plan pays about 25 per cent of former salary up to about \$8,000 per year. The Canada pension plan currently pays out about \$13 billion per year.

The sad thing is that right now the Canada pension plan fund is about \$500 billion short. The accrued liability is about \$500 billion and this \$500 billion does not show up in the government figures when it is talking about debt? This is another debt on top of the federal and provincial governments debts. This is an incredible amount and is going to be very difficult to deal with.

To sustain the Canada pension plan, for which the funding is now about 5 per cent, year to year we would have to pay off the top about 13 per cent of earnings. Every Canadian would pay off the top about 13 per cent of earnings by the year 2040 just to sustain the plan.

As I wind down today I would like to talk a little bit about the need to build incentive into our social program spending and the key role that reintroducing incentives will play in making these plans manageable and sustainable.

I was at a farmer's place over this past week and he talked about how he offered a big part of a field which was cultivated to people who were on welfare in the town. He advertised it around town. He has done a lot of work with people on welfare and is

very concerned about them. He offered this land to these people at no cost. How many do you think came out and took advantage of his offer? None.

He planted the garden, took care of it, and when it was harvest time he went to the people on welfare and told them they could go out and take what they wanted from the garden. How much produce do you think they took from the garden? The answer is absolutely zero.

We need incentives. There has to be incentive in a system to make sure that people who are receiving money are only those who need the money.

Look at what has happened with unemployment insurance over the past few years. The unemployment insurance rate has fluctuated but over time it has continued on an upward trend. The interesting thing is that when you look at unemployment insurance and you compare it to the consumer price index you will find that the consumer price index has not gone up nearly as fast as the unemployment insurance payments have.

What is the incentive for people who are looking at pensions? For unemployment insurance, for welfare, we know what kind of incentives we can put in place. It was very encouraging that at these meetings people who are on pension said they knew that maybe it was fair that they should take a cut in pension if they could afford it. Philosophically, I have a problem with that. But these pensioners said they were willing to make that sacrifice. The people who made the point with me the best are those who were veterans. At the ceremony on November 11 and at the 50th anniversary ceremonies over the past year veterans have been the people who have impressed me with their sacrifice and their commitment.

The wife of a veteran at one of our meetings said: "You mean my husband fought to preserve this country and I sacrificed in the war effort to preserve the country and now, rather than the enemy from without destroying our country, the enemy from within will destroy our country?" She was saddened by this and so was I.

(1725)

**Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few comments. I understand the member had meetings in his riding and that he said he had difficulty preparing his constituents for the massive cuts. He also mentioned that governments have developed an attitude problem.

I suggest to the hon. member the present government's attitude is positive and inclusive. In fact the green paper really provides Canadians with an opportunity to participate in the reform of these social programs. The process itself has been to address the inefficiencies of the social security system so that we can protect those who are most vulnerable and provide every opportunity for Canadians to experience the dignity of work.

The hon. member mentioned his farmer's offer. This is a good reason to look again at these social programs so we can look at the incentives and disincentives. I had a workshop this past Sunday where constituents in my riding of Lincoln pointed out some inefficiencies. One of them was that government must remove the disincentives to work.

We need to stop duplicating training programs. We need to look at more effective ways to have different levels of government work together. The member's whole talk was about spending cuts. This whole process of social security reform is to look at aspects of that program that may not be working efficiently.

Canadians have an opportunity to provide solutions and look at these inefficiencies. The member must agree with the process in having Canadians speak to these inefficiencies. It is only one aspect of government we are talking about here today. We certainly have an overall objective of meeting our target of 3 per cent of GDP. I would like to hear some comments. The member is talking about massive cuts. The purpose of this whole reform is to give Canadians an opportunity to speak to the inefficiencies of social security reform.

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments and question from the hon. member. I would like to start with a little point of clarification. The hon. member said that I had difficulty preparing constituents for cuts. That is not the case at all. In fact they recognized the need for these cuts because they know that is the only way these social programs can be preserved. That was not the problem.

It was not a problem but it was very difficult for me and painful for them to lay the situation out, having them realize there is no other place to make the cuts other than in social program spending and in other areas of federal government spending. In other areas \$10 billion would be about the maximum. It would be very difficult to cut \$10 billion from the \$43 billion in other spending.

That means there have to be spending cuts of between \$12 billion and \$16 billion from social program spending. I was asking them as they went along: "Does this make sense to you?" They told me: "Yes, we know this has to happen and your presentation has really made it that much more clear, especially in regard to the aging population and the number of people on pension".

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened as the hon. member from the Reform Party outlined his party policy and we heard the government member's argument in reply. Of course, we have a position of our own, a third position. We agree in part with what was just said in reply about the need to proceed cautiously instead of cutting blindly.

The hon. member says that we should think about the future of Canadian youth, so that they can find jobs and eventually

### *Private Members' Business*

contribute to the pension fund. I am in full agreement with him on the objective, but I do not think that blind cuts are the right way to go about it. I think we should be looking at job development, joint action and regional development policies instead. To provide employment, that is what it boils down to in the end.

Cuts are necessary, but I think that we should look to cut in other programs, not in social programs. As a member from the Reform Party indicated, you do not eliminate unemployment by eliminating unemployment insurance. Some solutions may be too drastic. As if the unemployed were responsible for their misfortune.

So, I would like the hon. member to comment on my general remarks. As today's debate draws to an end, I wanted to raise a somewhat conflicting view.

[English]

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, when the hon. opposition member talks about blind cuts, I agree with him. This is not the time for blind cuts. That is why as Reformers we have been going across our constituencies and across the country. We are presenting several different options.

I also presented the government's discussion paper. People's comments on it were: "Where are the options?" We have one or two options in most areas at best and they are only to discuss. Reform presented a series of possible options.

Blind cuts, no. We presented a real picture to the people in our constituencies. That is what I did in my constituency. Then we presented options and were saying: "You tell us where you want the cuts to come from". No blind cuts. I could not agree more.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It being 5.30 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]

### ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Parliament and crown agencies should be subject to scrutiny under the Access to Information Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to talk to my Motion No. 304 which argues that Parliament and crown agencies should be subject to scrutiny under the Access to Information Act.

This topic is one which is of vital interest to Canadians and because of its importance Motion No. 304 was made a votable item. This will give members of Parliament a great opportunity

*Private Members' Business*

to go on the public record to show that they care about opening up the political system and that they think our citizens should have the right to use the Access to Information Act in a more modern and inclusive way than is currently possible.

The motion is not a partisan political football which Reform is bringing forward to make life tough for the government. In fact we very much hope the government and official opposition will see the motion as one which is constructive and in the greater interest of all Canadians.

As we all know, under the nine-year Tory regime Canadians desperately wanted a more accountable and transparent government. The wishes of the people were dashed by the Mulroney and Campbell governments whose grossly unaccountable behaviour caused public cynicism to grow to an all time high.

Compounding this frustration billions of tax dollars were funnelled through crown agencies such as the CBC, Canada Post and the Canadian Wheat Board which were even less accountable than the government. At least we could vote the Tories out of office but crown agencies are another matter altogether.

As long as crown agencies are going to be run in the way they are, Canadians deserve to know what they are up to. Obviously sensitive information that is vital to their ability to compete in the marketplace would be exempt under the provisions of the Access to Information Act. More general information about their spending and business practices should be fair game. As crown agencies all Canadians have a stake in how they are run. Therefore they must be subject to public scrutiny.

All this I say by way of introduction. I am saying that Canadians are facing a problem. It is summed up by a quote from the public policy forum of 1993 which stated:

Given the sustained and often angry criticism that has been widely expressed by the public in recent years, it is remarkable how little has been done by way of reform.

Of all the grounds on which successive governments, together with MPs, could be charged with being unresponsive, none is more striking than the lack of response to unmistakable expressions of public dislike of the manner in which Parliament goes about its business.

(1735)

I believe this statement is an accurate reflection of what Canadians are thinking. I also believe this line of logic can be extended to their perceptions about crown corporations. Therefore I have suggested that Motion No. 304 be adopted by the House to send a clear sign from Gander to Victoria that the Parliament of the Tories is gone and a truly new day has broken.

Gone are the days when back room politics were acceptable. Gone are the days when Canadians would remain quiet as politicians and crown agencies acted unilaterally and without accountability. I hope that Motion No. 304 will give members of

Parliament a clear opportunity to break with the old way of doing things and show they care about the wishes of the Canadian public.

As we are well aware, Reformers were elected to open up the political process and seek out greater involvement from the Canadian grassroots. We want to bring about constructive change and ensure that our political institutions and crown agencies operate with honesty and integrity.

I do not think we are alone, however, in calling for these changes. I am certainly aware that the Liberals found the same matters to be very important at least while they were in opposition. I would only hope to believe that their desire for openness, accountability and integrity is still intact.

Let me remind our Liberal friends about the values which they claimed to believe in during the election campaign. To do this I think I will quote from the red book since it is often referred to by my friends in government on the other side. The following are a number of statements which make their position crystal clear. The first statement reads:

Canadians have always prided themselves on the quality of their democratic institutions—If government is to play a positive role in society, as it must, honesty and integrity in our political institutions must be restored.

The second statement reads:

The most important asset of government is the confidence it enjoys of the citizens to whom it is accountable. There is evidence today of considerable dissatisfaction with government and a steady erosion of confidence in the people and institutions of the public sector.

These statements are all from the red book. The last statement reads:

A Liberal government will take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government. We will introduce reforms to Parliament—Open government will be the watchword of the Liberal program.

Clearly the Liberal position must approve of the spirit of this motion. Motion No. 304 is precisely the type of initiative that will restore the confidence of Canadians. I implore members of the Liberal caucus to consult with their House leader and whip to confirm that they should all stand behind the motion 100 per cent.

Over the coming months I look forward to speaking personally with my colleagues on the government side and in the Bloc. I encourage any member to call my office to let me know so that we can work together on this proposal.

Reform members of Parliament such as myself do not need to always find a fight. While we will never agree with members of the government on all accounts, on issues such as this one where there is a natural alliance I think we should co-operate. In fact if we take this co-operative approach it will go further still toward restoring the confidence of Canadians that Parliament is truly undergoing constructive change to make it more accountable, transparent and responsive to the wishes of the electorate.

*Private Members' Business*

If I can move on to members of the BQ, while you do not have a red book to quote from I know that openness, integrity and accountability are important to you as well. As I have sat in the House for the past year I have witnessed your complaints about the secretive and unresponsive government on many occasions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I hesitate to interrupt the member, but I would like to remind members of the House to direct their comments through the chair and not in such an informal and familiar way as to use "you" and "your".

(1740)

**Mr. Mills (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I would simply make them aware that they have talked about these crown corporations and crown agencies. I know they are concerned about the veil of secrecy that seems to enshroud them.

The desire of the people of Quebec for open and accountable institutions is just as great as in Alberta, Ontario, the maritimes, or for that matter anywhere else. I would therefore ask members of the Bloc to join us in supporting Motion No. 304. I am sure it is one example where they will not get in trouble for voting with the Reform Party.

Let me just quote briefly from the 1991-92 annual report of the information commissioner to further illustrate my point. The information commissioner wrote:

The access law has attained a maturity of political whim. It is a law which cuts across and goes beyond party politics. It should appeal as much to the conservative as to the liberal or the social democrat. The Access to Information Act is ideologically neutral, without party coloration.

Conservatives who worry about the state growing too powerful should applaud the empowerment, that indispensable trendy word, of the individual by information rights; liberals and socialists in Parliament and elsewhere will welcome the sharing of the government's information better to challenge those in authority and effect changes in society.

In my speech I have tried to express the universal nature of the motion to expand the Access to Information Act. This is not a partisan bill. I firmly believe we can get all party support for the motion. If we get this support we will send a strong, positive message of change to the people of the country. The people of Canada are waiting. It is time for us to act.

Now that the House has heard my speech on unity and the universality of the motion, I want to talk a bit about the Access to Information Act in case people have some concern that we are trying to open up everything and cause the system not to work any longer.

To quote from the act, its purpose is to extend the "laws of Canada to provide a right of access to information in records under the control of a government institution in accordance with the principles that government information should be available to the public".

For those of my colleagues who may worry about the consequences of extending the act to Parliament, I assure them this would not force members to open up their own private files on constituency business or matters relating to their positions in their respective parties.

The motion would allow the opening of the business of the House to public scrutiny. This would include financial matters which are currently handled by our respected Speaker of the House, the expenditures of the Senate, the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Black Rod.

For example, the House will be undergoing a 12-year renovation projected to cost over \$250 million. This kind of expenditure is massive so the details surrounding the contracts and spending should be available to the public. Certainly reading some recently published books about government contracts being handed out will make that more of a consideration for the public.

While I am certain the Speaker of the House will do everything in his power to make sure that the renovation goes properly, all Canadians will feel better about the project and those like it if they have access to documents. If citizens know they are getting the straight goods they may just begin to trust us a little more.

For members concerned that extending the scope of the Access to Information Act will be too much of a good thing, I point out a comment of the information commissioner who wrote:

Of course access to rights are not absolute. They are subject to specific and limited exemptions, balancing freedom of information against individual privacy, commercial confidentiality, national security and the frank communications needed for effective policy making".

This limitation would apply to Motion No. 304. Any members of this House who are concerned that they would somehow be opening up Pandora's box by voting for this motion should rest assured. In fact those who are particularly nervous about exposing themselves to an unreasonable amount of crime need only look through the Access to Information Act itself. They will find there are a full 16 pages of exemptions which will guarantee that their legitimate right will not be breached.

(1745)

Nonetheless Canadians need to know that they do have the right to ask certain questions. These questions are not only legitimate but they are essential to the proper working of our

*Private Members' Business*

democracy. Beyond this, if there is clarification which is required as to the exact implications of M-304, I am certain that the parliamentary justice committee which is responsible for this would do an excellent job.

As members can see, there is no reason to be concerned about this motion and every reason to expect that it will be exactly the kind of initiative that the Canadian people have been waiting for from this Parliament.

I would like to conclude by once again referring to the words of the information commissioner in the 1991-92 annual report who made an interesting point that I think all parliamentarians should listen to. He said: "The Access to Information Act lacks visible champions of openness in Parliament. It matters not whether parliamentary access advocates come from either government or opposition benches. Preferably they should come from both sides of the House and, in particular, from the members of the justice and solicitor general committee. The information commissioner is a voice from the outside. Parliament should have some inside voices preaching for and defending the access to rights. A note to members of the next Parliament", and that is us, "anyone looking to be identified with a good issue should consider freedom of information. Any such champions will quickly receive attention".

I am asking all members here to get behind an act like this and a motion like this. This basically, above all, is going to send that message of openness, accountability, and transparency that all of us have been talking about and working toward.

One other thing the hon. member gives me as an example, if I can just add one more piece to this as I think I do have another minute or so.

Talking about access to information, I have just received information from the hon. member for Calgary Centre. Last night he was told about a meeting in Kingston and the Islands which 65 people attended. Five were media, 30 per cent were anglophones and 70 per cent were francophones. They were curious and interested in Reform. They were fed up with the over-government of the PCs and are now fed up with the under-government currently being offered by the Liberals.

As a point of information, the first Reform meeting held by the member for Edmonton Southwest only had 11 people and today he is a member of Parliament.

**Mr. Barry Campbell (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this motion. I am pleased the hon. member for Red Deer so vigorously supports the principles exemplified by the Access to Information Act that he wishes to see its coverage expanded. Such enthusiasm is to be commended.

I am happy to say that this government remains firmly committed to the principles of openness contained in the Access to Information Act. Such openness assists in debate on national issues, provides background for the development of public

policy and allows more in depth explanation of government processes and decision making.

[*Translation*]

This is why our government is always prepared to look at ways to improve public access to information held by these Crown agencies, this in order to promote government accountability. Currently, the legislation applies to government institutions listed in the schedule to the act. If a department, an agency or a board is not mentioned in the schedule, the legislation does not apply to it. It is that simple.

(1750)

[*English*]

At the time the act was passed in 1982 there was careful consideration given to which institutions should be included in the coverage of the act and which should not. There are ways in which the act could be updated to reflect the new information age. It may also be that the sorting of the institutions into the categories of those covered and those not covered could also be reviewed and updated. I do not believe that this is something which should be done in a casual or haphazard manner.

In considering the suggestion that the Access to Information Act be expanded to cover Parliament and crown agencies, as with all proposals for amendment to the Access to Information Act, the government is guided by the need to ensure that all amendments to the act and to its schedule are in the public interest.

While on the face of it providing access to government-held information may be seen as obviously in the public interest it is not necessarily the case. If it were the Access to Information Act would contain no exclusions or exemptions. We would just throw the information doors wide open.

[*Translation*]

There are competing public interests which must be taken into consideration. In the same way that exceptions serve public interest by protecting personal information on taxpayers, or information received in confidence from our government, it may be in the public interest to protect some information held by Crown agencies or by Parliament.

[*English*]

We must consider these competing interests before making such a sweeping recommendation.

When the motion refers to crown agencies it is unclear whether the term should be taken to refer to crown corporations or if it is intended to include a much broader range of institutions. After all many institutions which would normally fall under the heading of crown agencies are already covered by the act. CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, is already covered, as are national museums, the Federal Business Development Bank, the Space Agency, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and so on. On the other hand the act does

*Private Members' Business*

not currently apply to Canada Post or the National Arts Centre Corporation. We cannot assume that these were frivolous decisions as to who was included and who was excluded.

When considering expanding the coverage of the Access to Information Act to crown corporations the concern for a long time now has been that making all crown corporations subject to the act could for some of them result in harm to their competitive position relative to their private sector counterparts which are of course subject to no comparative requirements for openness. The hon. member for Red Deer alluded to this.

What might be required to mitigate such potential for harm would be additional amendments to the act which would provide crown corporations with an exemption tailor-made to protect information that if disclosed would result in injury to the competitive position of the crown corporation. The private sector corporations have such an exemption to protect commercially sensitive information in the financial information that they are presently required to file and no less protection should be provided to crown corporations.

[Translation]

While expanding the act to cover crown corporations is not a bad idea in itself, it must be examined in its proper context. In fact, the whole framework of the act must be examined from that perspective.

[English]

If the motion is intended to cover a broader range of institutions then careful consideration must be given to the implications for each type and for each institution. There is not enough room for that in the motion.

Much the same thing can be said concerning the suggestion that the act be expanded to cover Parliament. While in principle this is a laudable idea there are more than a few practical issues to consider. Just what coverage would the act have? When this issue was considered previously it was generally believed that it would be unwise to cover the personal offices of members of the House of Commons and senators but I think Canadians want to understand why that is.

[Translation]

The problems which could result from a decision to include the offices of MP's in the coverage of the act will have to be taken into consideration before such a measure can be taken. On the other hand, if members' offices are not to be covered by the act, then we will have to define very explicitly the precise scope of the act.

[English]

Where would responsibility for the application of the act by Parliament lie? Who would be considered to be the head of the

institution for the purposes of the act with the authority to release requested information or deny access on the basis of exemptions contained in the act? If there was a complaint concerning the handling of a request made to Parliament under the act would it be a conflict of interest for the information commissioner as a parliamentary agent to investigate such a complaint? Would Parliament report to itself on its own administration of the act? These are not simple questions.

(1755)

When considering possible amendments to the Access to Information Act or its schedule of institutions, consideration would also normally be given to the Privacy Act and its schedule of institutions.

Generally speaking, there are more government institutions covered by the Privacy Act than the Access to Information Act since the principle of providing individuals with access to their own personal information is seen as even more widely applicable than the principle of open access to general information.

[Translation]

If we were to extend the application of the Privacy Act to Crown corporations, it seems that there would be less obvious risk of harming the institutions' competitive position.

[English]

In the case of Parliament there remains the question of whether the Privacy Act would cover the personnel records contained in the offices of members and senators. It is clear that it would be beneficial for employees of the House and the Senate. Even in relation to the Privacy Act it is clear that expanding the coverage of the act must not be done in a haphazard manner but must be done in full consideration of the public interest in the possible outcome.

To summarize, while the idea of expanding the coverage of the Access to Information Act to Parliament and to crown agencies is surely based on a concept of openness which this government wholeheartedly supports, the practical implications of such an expansion of coverage cannot be disregarded.

[Translation]

For now, the most logical solution would be to keep these suggestions in reserve so that they can be considered as part of another process to amend the act for which the Minister of Justice and the President of the Treasury Board will initiate consultations.

[English]

At that point every member will have the opportunity to make suggestions for amendments to either the Access to Information Act or the Privacy Act or both. Possible amendments to these

*Private Members' Business*

acts will be open to full debate as pieces of an amendment package instead of as a separate patchwork proposal.

We do not wish to interfere in that process or to prejudge any of its outcome. We want the Canadian people to have input into this process.

All this is to say that while I very much support the principle which I believe lies behind this motion, I cannot support the motion itself at this time.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I have the pleasure to speak on this motion from the member for Red Deer:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Parliament and Crown Agencies should be subject to scrutiny under the Access to Information Act.

I must say to the member for Red Deer that in his speech, he of course mentioned that his objectives were similar to those of the Bloc and the Official Opposition. Yes, this is in line with our objectives of openness and clarity in the management of public affairs and it is also in line with the taxpayers' right to know, as it is called in a democracy.

Remember that the Access to Information Act was passed in 1982 and implemented the following year. This law gives a right to access federal government documents. Under it, government institutions must make their documents available. However, there are exceptions to access to information. For various reasons that I want to deal with in this speech today, several Crown corporations like farm product marketing boards, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, government bodies like the House of Commons, the Senate, the Library of Parliament, office holders who report directly to Parliament such as the Chief Returning Officer, the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Auditor General are not subject to the Access to Information Act.

The Bloc Québécois deeply believes that in a democratic system, public affairs must be conducted as openly as possible. Nevertheless, the everyday reality of running the affairs of state shows us that any system of access to information must balance various divergent interests.

On the one hand, the government must be accountable to the voters for what it does, as is the case in all western democracies, so that these voters can evaluate the government for its achievements, integrity and honesty. On the other hand, we agree that in reality some affairs of state must remain confidential.

(1800)

This confidentiality was recognized in the exceptions listed in the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act. These laws protect information whose confidentiality is crucial to the security and integrity of territory under state jurisdiction.

These laws also protect private interests related to personal and commercial information. A Crown corporation like the CBC should, in our opinion, be subject to the Access to Information Act, but there should be some exemptions because otherwise competitors could benefit, thus threatening this corporation's commercial balance.

Atomic Energy of Canada is another glaring example. How could this agency be subject to scrutiny under the Access to Information Act, when the Canadian government stubbornly promotes the development of such a dangerous and polluting energy source? For the current government, certainly not. But it should be possible in the name of quality of life and the environment.

As we can see, the problem underlying any system aimed at opening up public administration goes far beyond the motion tabled by the hon. member for Red Deer. It is not enough to say, as stated in the motion, that the Parliament and Crown Agencies should be subject to scrutiny under the Access to Information Act. As we have seen, the issue is twofold: how to improve the right to know while strengthening privacy measures.

On the other hand, arguing that the Canadian Parliament should not be subject to the Access to Information Act, as this institution is a symbol of democracy in the Canadian federal system, would be questionable.

Committed as it is to the principles of democracy and to promoting increased transparency in the present system, the Bloc Québécois just has to support the report tabled in March 1987 in which the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs recommended that the Access to Information Act apply to all federal institutions, including administrative tribunals, the Senate and the House of Commons. The Bloc lays particular emphasis on the need for much transparency, in the other place in particular, because, as I am on record as saying in this House, the public must be allowed to scrutinize the wild imaginings of a body that is undemocratic because non-elected.

Incidentally, one wonders about the need for an organization like the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons—and this is another important example—to be subject to public scrutiny under the Access to Information Act, since such a provision promotes in no way better democratic process or greater transparency in this institution.

To conclude, the Bloc Québécois agrees with the essence of Motion 304 and is in favour of the Access to Information Act applying to every government institution funded from the public purse. The main goal, as far as we are concerned, is to promote accessibility and transparency throughout the Canadian federal administration, and given the political climate that has set in within the federation since the 1970s, when the Liberal Party of Canada was in power, we emphasize the need to establish as a matter of urgency this openness, this transparency that the

*Private Members' Business*

Liberals themselves praise so much in quoting from their red book all the time.

So, let us act and implement a real access to information legislation, a meaningful legislation that reflects a justice and truth-conscious democracy.

[*English*]

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak to this motion put forth by my Reform colleague, the hon. member for Red Deer.

Since its introduction just over 10 years ago, the Access to Information Act has had a tremendous effect in opening up government. Government has been forced to be much more careful in the way it conducts business not only by the Access to Information Act but the Privacy Act as well. These two pieces of legislation have probably made for more open and honest government than any other government proclamation.

(1805)

Countless scandals have been uncovered through the Access to Information Act. Questionable contracts, leases and patronage appointments have all been uncovered through this legislation. The legislation has given substance to some accusations letting the whole country see what really transpired in some questionable deals.

One might even suggest that the very make up of the House of Commons is due in part to the access legislation. Scandal after scandal in the previous government was uncovered or confirmed by this legislation. The public's contempt for the previous administration's lack of honesty and integrity was the main reason that party was reduced to only two seats in this House. It is a legacy that all members of this House have to live with. Respect for politicians is extremely low. It is up to the members of this Parliament to regain that respect.

The one thing I constantly hear from my constituents is that I must strive to make government more accountable. We have to open up the political process and show Canadians that we really are working on their behalf. We do this by making government as transparent as possible. We must start with our own House.

The mere fact that the operations of Parliament are exempt from the Access to Information Act gives the public the perception that we are trying to hide something. The 35th Parliament has taken some steps to be more open. The fact that the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Internal Economy are now being published is a move in the right direction.

We have to ensure that Parliament is not only conducting its business in an appropriate manner, but that it is seen to be conducting itself in an appropriate manner. By making Parliament itself accountable to the Access to Information Act, the public would no longer have to speculate what we are hiding.

Yes, taxpayers may be outraged about the extent that they are subsidizing the parliamentary dining room. If they are outraged, they would have every right to be. After all, it is their money. If we cannot justify the subsidy to the dining room, or any other perk that we receive, then perhaps we should not be receiving it. If, on the other hand, we believe the taxpayers are getting good value for their money then we should not be embarrassed to receive it. Either way we should not be denying the Canadian taxpayers the opportunity to learn how we are spending their money.

Some may suggest that we as parliamentarians would be sacrificing the confidentiality of our constituents by making our information available under access to information. In fact, the confidentiality of our files would be protected as our files would be exempt. The Privacy Act provides a great deal of protection by ensuring that the access request cannot be used to obtain information about individuals. However the way we conduct our business should and must be made available to the public. It is the only way that we can try and regain some of the respect for our position.

Another complaint I frequently receive from my constituents is about how their money is spent by crown corporations. Crown corporations claim that their competitiveness would be adversely affected if they were required to respond to access requests. Competitiveness is a legitimate concern.

The Canadian Wheat Board should not have to reveal in advance what it projects its buying and selling rates are going to be. This information would be of tremendous benefit to its competitors in foreign lands and would end up putting Canadian farmers at a severe disadvantage. The act calls for a specific exemption for information of a competitive nature and this data would not have to be released in any event.

Let us look at a couple of different examples starting with Canada Post. A number of my constituents were concerned about their subsidizing the courier facility with revenue from their mail delivery. They believe that Canada Post would be able to undercut the rates charged by other courier companies because of this subsidy. Access to information would let Canadians know if this is what Canada Post would be doing. However, it is possible that Canada Post would be able to declare a competitiveness exemption. The question arises, should this be allowed? I think the question could best be answered by the access commissioner, and he should be able to respond to it.



*Private Members' Business*

However he needs the mandate and this motion would provide him exactly with that.

(1810)

In a similar situation, officials at CTV recently questioned the validity of CBC bidding on major events. Does the \$1 billion taxpayer subsidy permit CBC to outbid private broadcasters for such events? Should CBC's competitors be allowed to utilize access legislation to look at CBC's books?

Some questions about access to information requests as they pertain to crown corporations are easy to respond to. Canadians should have an unfettered right to determine if any government department, agency or crown corporation is wasting taxpayers' money.

Should Canadians be able to decide if the CBC is spending too much of their money on a top heavy bureaucracy? Yes, no question. Should CBC be able to declare an exemption on the basis of competitiveness? Perhaps, but these types of requests can always be resolved by the independent access commissioner.

If this Parliament is to recapture a measure of respect lost by past wrongdoings it must make every effort to provide accountability and transparency in government. This will only occur if we can convince Canadians that we have nothing to hide. Let us start with making our own house open to the people who pay the bills, the Canadian taxpayers.

I call upon all members of this House to support this motion.

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this motion proposed by the hon. member for Red Deer.

The objective of seeking ways to make government operations more open and accountable to Canadian citizens is a very good one. The hon. member is to be congratulated for bringing this motion before the House. This idea is something that should be pursued vigorously by all members of this House. As the previous speaker said, accountability is something we need more of and something the Canadian public wants more of.

In fact the Liberal Party's policy as stated in "Creating Opportunities" otherwise known as the red book, is to promote more open and accountable government. This is a promise all members of government are taking very seriously and are striving to implement in various ways.

As I have said, I agree with the objectives that motivated the member for Red Deer to propose this motion. However, I have three main concerns.

The first is that I believe the Access to Information Act should be given a complete review. The best way to do this is to let the Minister of Justice proceed with his publicly stated plans to do this. Second, I am concerned that the motion suggests that this

House thinks the most important reform that can be made is to make more institutions subject to the present act rather than changing the present act to create greater access to information from institutions already subject to the act. The third area is that the motion is perhaps a little too vague in certain areas.

I want to explain each one of the three areas because I think they are important. This subject matter is of very great importance. It is one all members should hold the government to be accountable for in this Parliament.

Since this act was created in 1982 there have been two information commissioners who have made numerous recommendations for reforms to the act. There was a 1986 parliamentary committee report entitled: "Open and Shut", a 1987 response from the former government called: "Steps Ahead", many court cases and a lot of administrative experience with this act.

(1815)

In addition, many institutions have adopted access legislation in recent years. The first was in Nova Scotia in 1977. Since then the federal government, as we have stated, the governments of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the Yukon have all adopted access legislation. Alberta's access law is waiting to be proclaimed. Outside Canada, Australia and New Zealand have recently adopted access legislation and the United States amended its freedom of information act in 1986.

In addition to various access laws being adopted, the federal government has issued a blueprint for improving government services with new technologies. There is an Information Highway Advisory Council. One of the advisory council's subcommittees is called access and social impacts. Access to information must be considered in light of past experience and the new technologies that are before us today.

Given all of this activity on recent issues, it is important that we ensure full consideration is given to the various recommendations in recent years and experiences under the access laws.

We also need to call on the collective experiences of federal government officials in determining the lessons to be learned from the first decade of experience with the act and from other jurisdictions.

The Minister of Justice stated in a media interview last July that he believes the act is in need of an overhaul. He stated unequivocally that it reflects the state of the art of the mid-1970s rather than the 1990s. To me this is quite a commentary from the Minister of Justice on this act. He says there is a need to catch up with new technologies and a need for more openness.

We should give the minister the time to do his job and to consider the various suggestions for reform carefully before pushing amendments into the House.

*Private Members' Business*

The second reason for opposing this motion is that it suggests that the House thinks the most important reform to this act is to add institutions to be covered by the act rather than improving access to government information that is already subject to the act. More than 132 institutions at the present time are subject to this act. The most recent report of the information commissioner as well as the parliamentary committee report in 1986, "Open and Shut" made numerous recommendations for improving the act.

A motion of the House to extend the application of this act to other institutions I think would detract from these other proposals. It could be argued that the main purpose of the Access to Information Act is to hold the government accountable. An amendment to extend the act to agencies that are independent of government is not likely to address the issue of the accountability of government.

I agree that independent crown agencies need scrutiny and that scrutiny is provided in various ways. I am not saying that making more institutions subject to the act is a bad idea. However, I do not necessarily agree that we should be telling the Minister of Justice that the priority of the House is adding to the list of institutions covered by the act rather than improving access to the 90 per cent of government information already subject to the act.

The third point relates to the motion stating that Parliament and crown agencies should be subject to the act. We know that more than 130 crown agencies are already subject to the act as I have stated. Presumably the motion calls for more crown agencies to be subject to it. It is important to be more definitive and to say which ones should be subject to the act.

(1820)

When we have something of this importance, with the good intentions of parliamentarians and the good intentions of the people of Canada, we have to be definitive. We have to show people that it works. We can best show people how it works by being definitive and straightforward in what we want to achieve.

The motion states that the Access to Information Act should apply to crown agencies. This seems to suggest that the act should not list precisely which agencies are subject to the act but instead should provide a general definition of what is a crown agency. It is difficult to say if this is the intent of the motion but it is an ambiguity which may make it difficult for the minister to know how to respond to the motion if it passes.

I want to cite just one example of where the general requirement that all crown corporations be subject to the access law may be too broad. I use an example in Ontario. Under the Ontario access law Ontario Hydro, the Ontario Liquor Control Board and the Ontario GO Transit Authority are subject to the

act, while TV Ontario is not subject to it. This is because broadcasting, freedom of expression, confidential news sources and independence from government may raise different issues than those affecting other types of crown corporations. A one size fits all approach is not necessarily the best way to go.

There are two advantages to using what I would call a list approach rather than a general definition of crown assets approach. First, the list approach ensures we consider each agency on an institution by institution basis, taking into account any special circumstances that might apply to these institutions. There may be good reasons why one government agency should be subject to the act while another one is not.

A second advantage to this list approach is that there is certainty over which crown agencies are subject to the act and which are not. If we simply create a broad general definition of crown agency some agencies are likely to interpret whatever words are used in that definition to say the definition does not include them.

Undoubtedly this will lead to litigation with all the increased time and cost to request the government definition in question. This will use valuable court time in a system that is already overburdened.

In summary I would want to say that it is important to talk about this issue. This is an important issue. I want to thank the hon. member for Red Deer for bringing it before the House. I support the hon. member's desire for increased openness and accountability in government. I want to say to him that I am confident the Minister of Justice will address this important issue during the life of the government. It is important that we as members of Parliament support him in the act of looking into this question and bringing forward a greater accountability.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Motion M-304. The motion is put forward by my Reform colleague from Red Deer. I would like to congratulate him on it.

The motion deals with extending the realm of the present Access to Information Act to include Parliament and crown corporations.

I begin by paraphrasing the purpose of the act. The passage will help to outline the true essence and principles behind the creation of the act and how the present motion before the House will only enhance those principles. "The purpose of this act is to extend the present laws of Canada to provide a right of access to information in records under the control of a government institution in accordance with the principles that government information should be available to the public". This is an explanation of the act's intent to foster accountability within government and its institutions.

*Private Members' Business*

(1825)

The motion before the House embodies the same principles and expresses them in a form in which Canadian people deserve to have access to, namely Parliament and crown corporations. It serves to ensure that the business of government is and remains open to the public. It represents the public's desire for Parliament to be accountable for its actions. It embodies the need Canadians have to know that their government and its institutions are not hiding from them. If government has nothing to hide, and it should have nothing to hide, why not open up Parliament and crown corporations to public scrutiny?

We in the Reform Party have been listening to the outraged cries of our fellow Canadians and understand their desire to hold Parliament accountable for its actions. This understanding was shown through our efforts to pass Bill C-210, the bill on recall. It was recently voted down by both the Liberal and Bloc parties. We are trying again.

The motion will allow the public access to financial matters handled by the Speakers of the House and the Senate. However the motion will not sacrifice the confidentiality of MPs' files or cabinet documents. It will, though, for such crown agencies as the CBC and Canada Post, open up their files to public scrutiny.

In this day of incredible national debt and financial strain on the taxpayer, such a motion grants true meaning to open government, something we have been hearing a lot about. After all, do Canadians not have a right to know where their money is being spent?

The Liberal government states on page 91 of its red book which we hear so often quoted in the House: "If government is to play a positive role in society, as it must, honesty and integrity in our political institutions must be restored". The motion will help to ensure that both Parliament and crown corporations are accountable to the public and hence will be viewed as capturing the honesty and integrity it once had.

On page 91 the Liberal book goes on to state: "The most important asset of government is the confidence it enjoys of the citizens to whom it is accountable".

The motion stresses the need Canadians have for a more open process of government. They are tired of being told what to do by the government while not having a government that invokes a sense of trust or integrity among the people it governs.

We hear all too often about more open and honest government, about integrity, about credibility. We hear the talk but we do not see the Liberals walking the walk. That is what this motion is all about. We hear speakers on the other side telling us that they support the motion in principle but that it is too broad

in scope and that perhaps there is going to be some Pandora's box opened as a result of the motion passing.

I suggest that what we ought to be doing is making the access to information law as broad as possible with limitations set in areas where appropriate rather than the other way around. What we are hearing from members opposite is exactly that. They want to limit. They are so concerned about having information out there in the general public they want to make sure they have as many limitations as possible in place. That is counter to the whole theme of access to information.

An example of closed, elitist and top down government is the land claim negotiations currently going on in my riding of Skeena. These negotiations are the epitome of backroom, closed to the public input, government deals. These negotiations between the federal and provincial governments and native groups in my province are completely performed behind closed doors without any direct public input whatsoever.

Is this not the kind of process the Liberal government condemns in its red book on page 91? It states: "The people are irritated with governments that do not consult them or that disregard their views or that try to conduct key parts of the public business behind closed doors".

I suggest that is what the government is doing and it can change by supporting Motion M-304. I would call settling a major land claim affecting a large piece of land and a great number of people public business. It is definitely irritating my constituents.

(1830)

Bring back integrity and trust to this Parliament and its agencies. Allow Canadians to feel proud as they once did of their parliamentary institution. Give Parliament back to the people. Allow them the access they deserve and put confidence in government back in the minds and hearts of Canadians.

In conclusion, this motion M-304 will help Canadians to trust Parliament and its agencies once again. It is essential for the political stability of this country that Canadians trust their elected officials and feel a sense of integrity when proudly telling others in the world that they are Canadians.

There is nothing to fear in this motion. It is straightforward common sense. Let Canadians have the right to an open Parliament and the right to hold their politicians accountable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** 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 order of precedence on the Order Paper.

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

VIA RAIL

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on October 13 VIA Rail announced that it was cutting a further 478 jobs, half of them in Montreal, and that it would be doing this without any cut in service to the public.

On October 18 I asked the Minister of Transport how VIA Rail could cut 478 jobs without reducing service to the public and why VIA was still pursuing a downsizing policy introduced by the Conservative government in 1993.

In answer to my question, the Minister of Transport said that the cuts were necessary because there had to be a cut in the subsidies to VIA Rail. He said it could not continue with the subsidies at the same level. He went on to say again that there would be no cut in service. By that he meant there would be no cut in trains or no cut in VIA Rail routes.

I guess it all comes down to what you mean by service to the public. Some of these cuts involve cuts in the maintenance staff for VIA Rail. Some of them involve cuts in the sales staff for VIA Rail. Let me state some things that have happened to me on VIA Rail trains. If there is no proper maintenance and the train is breaking down halfway through the trip, as it has done on several occasions, and arrival at your destination is delayed by half an hour or an hour and if the heating system breaks down in the winter and you freeze in the coach, that all has to do with service to the public.

It is also service to the public when you try to get a sales representative on the phone and all you get is a run-around with push one, push two and push three. It is very difficult to get the type of service you need to buy a ticket for VIA Rail.

In fact, these are cuts in service that will affect the public. Sooner or later because of the poor service in sales promotion or the purchase of tickets or in maintenance, people will stop using the train. When they stop using the train because of the poor service in these aspects, then VIA Rail will say: "Nobody is using the route to London or to Quebec City or Sherbrooke. Let's close it down". Of course the reason people are not using it starts at the beginning with the cuts that were made in maintenance, sales, public relations, research and so on.

I maintain that these cuts will lead to a cut in service. I see these cuts by VIA Rail as a lack of long range commitment to passenger rail service in this country.

## Adjournment Debate

In Canada we have always had subsidies for our transportation system. We have it for buses, trucks and airlines. The airlines are being subsidized indirectly by the airports, the air traffic control. The highways are subsidized by the fact that they are built for the public by the provinces and the buses and trucks are using them to a great extent. All this is happening in this country while in Europe they are building high speed, very efficient trains. The chunnel train service from Paris to London began just the other day. You can go from Paris to London I think in about three to four hours. It is very efficient and very fast. Here we are in Canada ripping up the rails.

(1835)

It is very difficult to understand why in our country, when we had a great railway system and a great seaway system, we are letting these things go down the drain. When one drives down Highway 401 to Toronto there are so many trucks and buses on the road one takes his or her life in danger. A lot of that freight traffic should be on trains and on shipping. I just do not understand what VIA is doing or what the government is doing.

Furthermore, the minister says he is reducing the subsidies by \$100 million a year in accordance with the 1993 budget. The 1993 budget was a Conservative Tory budget. We are a new Liberal government. Why are we continuing to allow VIA Rail to operate on a budget that was introduced by a Tory government that we helped to defeat last September?

Once again I will put my question to the government. Where is the commitment to good passenger service in this country? Why was the money saved by these cuts not redirected into better rail service? What assurance do we have that these cuts will not lead to a further deterioration in service and to more cuts in routes for our trains in this country?

**Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the question raised by my colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, regarding the impact of service resulting from VIA's recently announced job cuts.

As he mentioned, these job cuts are part of VIA's strategy to improve its operating efficiency and bring the costs of its operations in line with its reduced funding levels. In itself, this objective is no different from that of any other crown corporation or company in the private sector.

The challenge that VIA faces is it has to reduce its operating costs by \$100 million by the end of 1996-97 while maintaining as much of the existing rail passenger services network as possible. This is no ordinary feat. To meet that challenge VIA management must rethink the way it does business. All work practices that have been the mainstay of past railway operations

*Adjournment Debate*

have to be re-evaluated and streamlined throughout the organization.

The job cuts announced on October 13 affected people at all levels of the corporation from senior management positions to the workshop level. The minister mentioned that in his answer on the day of the question. This provides an indication that VIA management is serious about taking the necessary steps to assure its long term viability.

The review on the future of VIA services is not yet completed. It is part of the recognition by the government that we must address our national deficit, the size of which makes it a problem for all Canadians and not just an item on the previous government's agenda. For its part, VIA management has demonstrated that it is ready to meet its current challenge.

With the co-operation of its employees, its chances of succeeding are significantly improved as, hopefully, will service to the travelling public.

## GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):**  
Mr. Speaker, I am rising tonight as frustrated as I am angry.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, because I am a New Democrat I do not have the opportunities to ask questions of ministers in this Chamber as often as I would like. I consider it an honour and a privilege when I am called upon to raise matters with ministers of the crown on behalf of my constituents and Canadians everywhere who share my views.

However, when a minister refuses to respond with a correct answer when he has it at his fingertips, he is not only wasting my valuable time, he is also wasting the time of the Chair and he is insulting the Canadian people.

On Tuesday, November 15, I asked the Minister of Agriculture to clarify his position with respect to grain transportation financing in Canada. There were conflicting reports from government printed in the media. Because the issue of the Crow benefit is of incredible importance to the farmers and the communities that they support in northwest Saskatchewan as well as across the prairies, I thought it was appropriate to clear the air and let farmers who are now just starting to plan next year's crop know where they stand going into that crop year.

Those conflicting reports were numerous. During the month of October when he was touring Asia, the Minister for International Trade said he wanted Canada to eliminate all farm export subsidies including the Crow benefit and indeed prohibit any new ones.

At the same time, the federal Minister of Transport said he was looking for ways to reduce spending within his department

and the Crow benefit appeared to be on the block. Late last week the minister's deputy minister, Mr. Nick Mulder, told the semi-annual meeting of the Canadian Grains Council that it is time to update Canada's railway policy, including the grain subsidies. In fact he said that if Transport Canada had its way a new transportation policy would include a significant change in the Crow benefit method of payment. To quote Mr. Mulder, he said:

The view is that we ought to make a method of payment change sooner rather than later; we have to move in another direction.

(1840)

During the recent political convention of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party in Saskatoon, the delegates voted on a transportation motion and decided it was time to pay the farmer rather than the railway. Therefore I thought, since the minister of agriculture had been saying that as far as he was concerned the issue was one to be resolved in consultation with farm groups, that it was time the minister came forward with his own thoughts on the matter.

On Tuesday afternoon of this week I asked the minister if he was the defender of the Crow benefit and if it was the federal government's intention to keep grain moving by rail by ensuring that the Crow benefit remained in place. The minister did not surprise me by saying once again:

Over the course of the next couple of months the Minister of Transport and I will be canvassing all the major farm organizations in the country so that we might present recommendations to our current cabinet colleagues early in the new year.

The minister did not answer my question but at least he was consistent in his answer. Mr. Speaker, you can understand my surprise and my anger when I picked up the newspaper on Wednesday morning to read that on Tuesday night, barely five hours after the minister of agriculture had answered my question, he met with prairie ministers of agriculture and told them that the Crow benefit was on its deathbed. The federal government will betray the commitment to thousands of prairie farmers and introduce legislation early in the new year to end payments to the railways in favour of payments made directly to producers.

A great number of farmers in northwest Saskatchewan and I continue to support the Crow benefit. We want the federal government to maintain the current method of payment. It would appear the minister, the cabinet and the Liberals across the way are not prepared to listen or even understand our concerns. We are also appalled that when he had a chance to put his position on the table in the House of Commons where it belonged, the minister of agriculture chose to conceal that information until he was in a private meeting later that day.

*Adjournment Debate*

An issue of this importance deserves the attention of the House. Our time in question period is too valuable to be ignored, and it appears that is exactly what this minister of agriculture did on Tuesday.

**Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer the question on the Crow benefit raised by my hon. colleague, the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake.

It is not as simple as he makes it sound. The Minister of Transport and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food together are currently in the process of meeting with shareholders in the grains and oilseeds industry regarding changes to the Western Grain Transportation Act, which I will call WGTA for short.

Under the new GATT regulations the WGTA on shipments through the west coast and Churchill fall within the definition of an export subsidy. These subsidies must be reduced, as he knows, under the terms of the new GATT. This means that we have choices. We can change the WGTA so that it is no longer an export subsidy, or we can pay the railways but only within the new GATT rules.

The second option would lead to an immediate and severe restriction on the volume of grain shipped through the west coast and Churchill that would be eligible for subsidies. In other words as volume limits for products were reached, shippers would suddenly be saddled with the full WGTA rates on shipments.

Given this context there are now two proposals which have been put forward as alternatives to paying the railways. The

first, presented by the producer payment panel last June, recommends payments to producers based on cultivated acres and then gradually phasing into payments based on arable acres. It also recommends some of the WGTA be put into safety nets and research.

However the second proposal put forward by the Government of Alberta and endorsed by the present Saskatchewan government recommended provincial variations in the program within a set a principles. It also recommended against putting WGTA money into safety nets.

After their current discussion with all interested parties about these two options, and perhaps other suggestions may come up, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of Transport will make a comprehensive set of recommendations to cabinet about the overall reform to the Canadian grain handling and transportation system.

These recommendations must be fiscally responsible and consistent with our international trading obligation, as the hon. member knows. They must also reflect the concern of all those in the grains and oilseeds industry. In finalizing the government's position with respect to the WGTA we must ensure that Canadian agriculture and Canadian farmers are positioned to take on the world and to win.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Pursuant to Standing Order 38 the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

*[Translation]*

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 6.46 p.m.)

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thursday, November 17, 1994

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Milliken .....	7893
--------------------	------

### Committees of the House

#### Aboriginal Affairs

Mr. Irwin .....	7893
-----------------	------

#### Public Accounts

Mr. Eggleton .....	7893
--------------------	------

### Canada Communication Group

Mr. Eggleton .....	7893
--------------------	------

### Statistics Canada

Mr. Eggleton .....	7893
--------------------	------

### Supplementary Estimates (C), 1994–95

Mr. Eggleton .....	7893
--------------------	------

### Committees of the House

#### Natural Resources

Mr. Nault .....	7893
-----------------	------

#### Government Operations

Mr. Harvard .....	7893
-------------------	------

#### Procedure and House Affairs

Mr. Milliken .....	7893
--------------------	------

**Statutory Program Evaluation Act**

Bill C-289. Motions for introduction and first reading deemed adopted ..... 7894  
Mr. Williams ..... 7894

**Supplementary Estimates (C)**

**Reference to Standing Committee**

Mr. Eggleton ..... 7894  
Motion moved and agreed to ..... 7894

**Committees of the House**

**Procedure and House Affairs**

Motion for concurrence in the 48th report ..... 7894  
Mr. Milliken ..... 7894  
(Motion is agreed to.) ..... 7894

**Violence**

Mr. Robinson ..... 7894

**Petitions**

**Human Rights**

Mr. Peric ..... 7894

**Assisted Suicide**

Mr. Schmidt ..... 7895

**Human Rights**

Mr. Schmidt ..... 7895

**Gun Control**

Mr. Hart ..... 7895

**Assisted Suicide**

Mr. Robinson ..... 7895  
Mr. Szabo ..... 7895



Mr. Strahl ..... 7895

**Rights of the Unborn**

Mr. Strahl ..... 7895

**Human Rights**

Mr. Strahl ..... 7895

**Assisted Suicide**

Mr. Flis ..... 7895

**Rights of the Unborn**

Mr. Williams ..... 7895

**Questions on the Order Paper**

Mr. Milliken ..... 7895

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**Public Service Staff Relations Act**

Bill C-58. Motion for second reading ..... 7896

Mr. Gagliano ..... 7896

Ms. Meredith ..... 7896

Mr. Langlois ..... 7898

Mr. Ringma ..... 7902

Mr. St-Laurent ..... 7904

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge) ..... 7906

Mr. Laurin ..... 7908

Mr. Bellehumeur ..... 7910

Division on motion deferred ..... 7912

Division on motion deferred ..... 7912

**Social Security Program**

Consideration resumed of motion ..... 7912

Mr. Simmons ..... 7913

Mr. Epp ..... 7915

Mr. Hart ..... 7916

Mr. Hill (Macleod) .....	7917
Mr. Flis .....	7919
Mr. Epp .....	7922
Mr. Strahl .....	7922
Mr. Landry .....	7923

## **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

### **Senior Citizens**

Mr. McWhinney .....	7924
---------------------	------

### **Cultural Communities**

Mr. Godin .....	7924
-----------------	------

### **Gun Control**

Mr. Morrison .....	7924
--------------------	------

### **Atlantic Canada**

Mr. Zed .....	7924
---------------	------

### **East Timor**

Mr. Allmand .....	7925
-------------------	------

### **Ms. Suu Kyi**

Mr. Dhaliwal .....	7925
--------------------	------

### **CRTC**

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) .....	7925
--	------

### **Light Stations**

Mr. Duncan .....	7925
------------------	------

### **Telephone City Musical Society**

Mrs. Stewart (Brant) .....	7926
----------------------------	------

### **Atlantic Canada**

Ms. Fry .....	7926
---------------	------

**Folk of the Sea**

Mr. Mifflin ..... 7926

**Social Program Reform**

Mrs. Gagnon (Québec) ..... 7926

**Private Health Clinics**

Mr. Hill (Macleod) ..... 7926

**Private Health Clinics**

Ms. McLaughlin ..... 7927

**MCSC Elections**

Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine) ..... 7927

**Crime Cards and Board Games**

Ms. Torsney ..... 7927

**MPs Pensions**

Mr. Silye ..... 7927

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**National Defence**

Mr. Bouchard ..... 7928

Mr. Collenette ..... 7928

Mr. Bouchard ..... 7928

Mr. Collenette ..... 7928

Mr. Bouchard ..... 7928

Mr. Collenette ..... 7929

**Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean**

Mr. Bachand ..... 7929

Mr. Massé ..... 7929

Mr. Bachand ..... 7929

Mr. Massé .....	7929
-----------------	------

### **Immigration and Refugee Board**

Mr. Manning .....	7929
Mr. Marchi .....	7929
Mr. Manning .....	7930
Mr. Marchi .....	7930
Mr. Manning .....	7930
Mr. Marchi .....	7930

### **Immigration**

Mrs. Debien .....	7930
Mr. Marchi .....	7930
Mrs. Debien .....	7930
Mr. Marchi .....	7930

### **National Defence**

Mr. Harper (Calgary West) .....	7931
Mr. Collenette .....	7931
Mr. Harper (Calgary West) .....	7931
Mr. Collenette .....	7931

### **Post-secondary Education**

Mr. Dubé .....	7931
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	7931
Mr. Dubé .....	7932
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	7932

### **Members of Parliament Pensions**

Miss Grey .....	7932
Mr. Eggleton .....	7932
Miss Grey .....	7932
Ms. Copps .....	7932

### **Review of Canada's Foreign Policy**

Mr. Bergeron .....	7933
--------------------	------

Mr. Harb .....	7933
Mr. Bergeron .....	7933
Mr. Harb .....	7933

**Fisheries**

Mr. McGuire .....	7933
Mr. Tobin .....	7933

**Justice**

Mr. Harris .....	7933
Mr. Rock .....	7933
Mr. Harris .....	7934
Mr. Rock .....	7934

**Human Rights**

Mr. Ménard .....	7934
Mr. Rock .....	7934
Mr. Ménard .....	7934
Mr. Rock .....	7934

**Foreign Affairs**

Mr. Mills (Red Deer) .....	7934
Mr. Ouellet .....	7934
Mr. Mills (Red Deer) .....	7934
Mr. Ouellet .....	7934

**VIA Rail**

Mr. Culbert .....	7935
Mr. Young .....	7935

**Social Housing**

Mr. Marchand .....	7935
Mr. Dingwall .....	7935

**Canada Communication Group**

Mr. Williams .....	7935
--------------------	------

Mr. Dingwall .....	7935
--------------------	------

**Endangered Species**

Mr. Taylor .....	7936
Ms. Copps .....	7936

**Presence in Gallery**

The Speaker .....	7936
-------------------	------

**Business of the House**

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval) .....	7936
Mr. Gagliano .....	7936
Mr. Hermanson .....	7936

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**Social Security Programs**

Motion No. 15. Consideration resumed of motion .....	7937
Mr. Dubé .....	7937
Mr. Landry .....	7937
Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil) .....	7937
Mr. Solberg .....	7939
Mr. O'Reilly .....	7940
Mr. Dubé .....	7942
Mr. Benoit .....	7943
Mr. Epp .....	7943
Mr. Culbert .....	7946
Mr. Jordan .....	7947
Mr. Milliken .....	7947
Mr. Hermanson .....	7951
Mr. McClelland .....	7952
Mr. Strahl .....	7952
Mr. Hopkins .....	7953
Mr. Benoit .....	7953
Mr. Valeri .....	7956
Mr. Dubé .....	7957

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Access to Information

Mr. Mills (Red Deer) .....	7957
Motion .....	7957
Mr. Campbell .....	7960
Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) .....	7962
Ms. Meredith .....	7963
Mr. MacLellan .....	7964
Mr. Scott (Skeena) .....	7965

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

### VIA Rail

Mr. Allmand .....	7967
Mr. Mifflin .....	7967

### Grain Transportation

Mr. Taylor .....	7968
Mr. Mifflin .....	7969