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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 29, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 29, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

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

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[*Translation*]

1997 IMMIGRATION PLAN

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1997 Immigration Plan.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Zed (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 14 petitions.

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[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a legal requirement that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration rise in this House and

table an annual plan on the immigration levels. This is a responsibility which I welcome this morning.

The 1997 immigration plan is a tangible example of this government's pro-immigration philosophy. This government, and the Canadians that it serves, recognizes the importance of promoting immigration as an instrument of positive social and economic development. I would ask all the members of the House to not lose sight of what they represent when they look at the numbers I will be tabling today.

Immigration policy is not about charts and graphs. Every number in every column represents a human being with dreams and fears and hopes. When you skim down the columns, think of the people in your neighbourhood. Your friends. Your colleagues. People in this House. Chances are they—or their parents or grandparents—were immigrants.

We should never lose sight of the human face of immigration. Our government does not, and it is reflected in our policies. This is demonstrated in the 1997 plan I am tabling today.

[*English*]

We are clearly attracting the economic immigrants we need to strengthen our economy. We are also bringing in skilled workers to meet specific labour market needs. At the same time we remain committed to family reunification and the realization of Canada's humanitarian mission.

Immigration is obviously a front and centre policy issue in this country. Immigration programs have a profound impact on all aspects of life in Canada. This is true now and it has been true for over 130 years.

Even before Canada existed as a country, people recognized that immigration was the key to building the Canadian society. Unifying the British North American colonies was seen as a good way of attracting the farmers and labourers needed to kickstart the young economy.

The visionaries who met in Charlottetown to create this country knew that immigration was the key to unlocking our potential. Immigration was a cornerstone of the national policy of Sir John A. Macdonald.

Immigrants helped fuel the engine of Canadian growth. They worked in the factories of Toronto and Montreal; they tilled the land; they helped develop the Atlantic fisheries.

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• (1010)

Laurier predicted that the 20th century would belong to Canada. He knew at that time that immigration would be a key to realizing this goal so he entrusted Sir Clifford Sifton to bring immigrants to open the west. Sifton did just that. Under his direction, waves of immigrants from across Europe made the leap of faith and came to this country. Their dreams and determination helped shape our destiny.

More recently during the Pearson and Trudeau administrations, immigration was perceived as a way of not only strengthening our country economically, but also of bringing new ideas and new perspectives to Canada. Immigration policies in the 1960s and 1970s helped shape Canada into the multicultural and multi-ethnic country we enjoy today.

Immigration has served Canadians very well and it continues to do so. Immigration will be an important component in guaranteeing our future development.

Our government is following a clear direction. Two years ago the Canadian government produced a 10-year strategic framework that committed us to building an immigration program that is fair, sustainable, affordable and based on partnerships. The 1997 immigration plan represents our ongoing commitment to achieving those goals. That is why we have chosen to call the document "Staying the Course".

We have a very good plan which has set a reasoned path. In 1994 we set a strategic course which we are following now. That is what good and responsible government is all about. As hon. members can see from the numbers, we are attaining the levels which were laid out last year. This means just over 200,000 people will come to this country in 1996.

I would like to announce that the 1997 plan calls for the same level of immigration next year, between 195,000 and 220,000 people. I cannot stress enough that this is not a quota. We do not set quotas in Canada. These numbers are targets. We do not and will not close the door on immigrants if we happen to hit the top level.

[*Translation*]

I would like to announce that the 1997 plan calls for the same level of immigration next year: between 195,000 and 220,000, including 27,000 for the province of Quebec. But I cannot stress enough: this is not a quota. We do not set quotas in Canada.

These numbers are targets. We do not—and will not—close the door on immigrants if we happen to hit the top level. These are not arbitrary numbers. They were developed in a fair and reasoned way, based on a variety of factors, such as Canada's needs, and our ability to integrate newcomers. The result is the numbers you see before you today.

I draw your attention to our 1993 campaign promise laid out on page 87 of the Red Book: "We need to target immigration levels of approximately 1 per cent of the population", considering, "our ability to absorb and settle immigrants".

• (1015)

The Liberal government's 1997 immigration plan is in line with this commitment. I know that many of you might find it difficult to wade through the numbers and graphs in the document. Allow me to draw your attention to a few key points.

In Citizenship and Immigration Canada's ten year strategy, we stated our intention to put a greater emphasis on attracting economic immigrants. This is a move which Canadians whole-heartedly endorse. We heard this time and time again during the nation wide consultations in 1994.

Business professionals and skilled workers bring expertise and entrepreneurial strength which is important to our economy. They have the skills to integrate quickly and contribute to the community. They make a vital contribution to our standard of living and our lives.

I think that the data and studies speak for themselves. Immigrant investors injected nearly \$606 million in investment capital into our country last year. Current studies show that immigrants account for about half of Canada's labour force growth. This contribution is expected to increase as we move into the 21st century.

We have all heard people say that immigrants take jobs away from Canadians. That is one myth that must be laid to rest. Evidence suggests the contrary. Immigrants create at least as many jobs as they take. Immigrants and newcomers also enhance Canada's ability to expand into global markets and to build trade links throughout the world.

The value of these connections can be seen in the success of the Prime Minister's Team Canada missions. Many of the participants in these initiatives have been recent immigrants. Their connections and familiarity with international business practices have been invaluable. We are selecting the men and women who have the best potential to contribute to Canada's long term growth.

I am happy to say that we are already seeing an increase in the numbers of immigrants to this country who come in under the economic designation. In fact, the number of economic immigrants exceeded our expectations. The 1997 plan anticipates that these levels will be maintained.

But we are not just looking at the economic bottom line. Immigration is not—nor will it ever be—simply about dollars and cents with this government. There are other issues which must come into play. We are talking about future citizens of our country—not units on a balance sheet.

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[English]

We need to recognize the importance of factors such as family reunification when we address immigration policy. The bonds of family are very important to Canadians. The support and love which family members give is an essential part of life. I think that our commitment to family reunification speaks volumes about what kind of society we are. It shows what kind of heart and soul unite us together.

I know that all Canadians can sympathize with the woman in Toronto who wants to be brought together with her husband in New Delhi. Or the son in Red Deer who wants to be joined by his father in Manila. That is why we offer priority processing to facilitate the reunion of Canadian families. We want to eliminate unnecessary anxiety.

I know that many of you will look at the numbers and ask why there has been a gradual decline in the family class component. There are several factors that account for this, including the modification of the definition of family in our regulations in 1992 and the somewhat tough economic times.

• (1020)

Whatever the reason for the declining numbers, I do not believe they are a cause for alarm. We should remember that family members accompanying independent immigrants are included in the economic category.

I strongly believe that we need to keep our family class commitments in mind when drafting policies. For instance, as many will know, I am looking at various options to strengthen sponsorship regulations. Some people have asked why it seems to be taking so long. It is simple really. We want to get it right. The stakes are very high and we will not be rushed.

We want to make sure that whatever regulations we develop will be fair and effective. I also want to make sure that they will not have an undue effect on numbers within the family class category. This is important to me personally and it is important to all Canadians.

I would like to turn to another very important subject to Canadians, a subject that shows what kind of a country we are. I am speaking about our record in resettling refugees. We have always taken our international responsibilities very seriously. Canada prides itself on being a good citizen in the international community. Part of this is a commitment to respond to people in need.

Since World War II this country has helped to resettle over 700,000 refugees. We have provided a safe haven in a world of hunger, war and instability. I am proud of our accomplishments. I know Canadians are behind me when I say that we will continue to do what we can to offer a helping hand to those most in need.

Right now the government is working closely with non-governmental organizations to develop strategies which will allow us to continue to meet our humanitarian commitments.

For example, last year we responded to an urgent appeal from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to help resettle refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Canada committed to resettling a minimum of 500 refugees in this country. We developed the 3/9 project to do this, a partnership between the Canadian government and community groups. I am proud to say that at the conclusion of the program, Canada resettled over 1,000 people. This is an example of what can be accomplished when we work together.

I am happy to report that last year we met and even exceeded our refugee resettlement targets.

[Translation]

The document I am tabling today is a success story. It shows that we set goals and achieve them. As I have mentioned, we hit our global immigration targets.

In 1996, slightly more than 200,000 people will choose Canada as their adoptive home. We believe that it will be the same for 1997. We also achieved our refugee resettlement predictions. We are clearly continuing to move forward with a positive vision of immigration.

In conclusion, Canada has a dynamic immigration program.

• (1025)

This is crucial because immigration is going to become more and more important in the coming decades. Immigration has helped shape our past.

We are what we are because of generations of immigrants. Immigration will continue to shape our destiny as we look to the 21st century and beyond. That is why we must stay the course.

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to the speech by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. There is nothing new in what she says. The levels set by the government for 1997 are about the same as for this year.

There are, however, a couple of changes. Economic immigrants take up far more of the total: 60 per cent of immigration. Canada will take in between 82,000 and 90,000 skilled workers and between 20,000 and 30,000 business persons. This, I feel, is a good decision, but one that was made at the expense of the family reunification program.

The family reunification program, which involves spouses, fiancés, parents and grandparents, will account for only 35 per cent of immigration to Canada. Until the Liberals came into power, the family class and the economic class were almost equal. This is no longer the case. In all, there will be a total of between 168,900 and

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187,700 new immigrants. With the refugees, that makes a total of between 195,000 and 220,000 newcomers to Canada in 1997.

The minister does not, however, mention that some 80,000 people leave Canada each year. The positive balance will, therefore, range between 115,000 and 140,000 new people in Canada.

There is one other comment I would like to make. The government had created the category of provincial or territorial nominee. Last year, the objective for these persons to be nominated by the provinces or territories was set at 1,000. The number for next year will be the same. I have some questions, and the minister is not giving us any answers. Is this new category a failure? Are the provinces not interested in taking part in this program? The Bloc Québécois believes that provinces ought to play a far greater role in immigration, a far more active role, because immigration is a jurisdiction shared between the federal and provincial governments.

The minister does not indicate where these new immigrants will be coming from, either. As at present, two-thirds of the new immigrants will come from Asia, particularly Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The rest will come particularly from the former Yugoslavia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Pakistan.

When I asked departmental employees this morning, they were unable to tell me how many new immigrants are expected from Latin America.

• (1030)

There are no figures because the numbers have shrunk and are so small that Latin American countries do not rank among countries that provide high levels of immigration. In my opinion, Canada should make a special effort to attract more immigrants from Latin America, as we approach continental economic integration.

NAFTA will be expanded to create a broad economic zone from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, involving the mobility of capital, investment, services and goods. As far as mobility of individuals is concerned, however, problems on our own continent are increasing, and Canada is not very generous to Latin America as far as immigration is concerned.

Africa has the same problem. Today, 42 per cent of the world's refugees come from Africa, this out of a total of 25 million. We see what is happening today in Africa, but the minister remains silent on these tragic events.

However, I do want to point out that the Bloc Québécois agrees in principle with the target figures proposed by the minister for 1997, although the government is still far removed from the objective set in the red book, which proposed annual immigration levels equivalent to 1 per cent of the population of Canada.

I am critical of the fact that the minister has considerably reduced the family component. There has been a major reduction in this class, which goes against the promises made by the Liberal Party in its red book, where family reunification was one of their priorities. That is not the case. I closely followed the proceedings of the convention of the Liberal Party of Canada on the weekend. They said their record was very positive: 78 per cent of their promises had been kept.

The government's policy is a dismal failure as far as family reunification is concerned. Last year's target figures, which were much higher, were not met.

Under the Conservative government, about 250,000 new immigrants were admitted to Canada annually, but this year, the real figure will be less than 200,000. It is expected that next year, the real figures will also be well below the target figures.

The minister said in her speech, and I agree with her on this point, that we should never lose sight of the human aspect of immigration. However the immigration tax imposed by the federal government in the 1995 budget is certainly not indicative of a policy that is open and fair to all aspirant immigrants.

The fact that each individual has to pay \$975 to obtain permanent residence in Canada is a major hurdle for immigrants from developing countries. I realize that at this last convention some Liberals tabled a resolution to eliminate this tax. I also realize that some members, even Liberal members, as yet do not agree with this discriminatory tax, which goes against the government's family reunification program.

• (1035)

This tax is even more irritating when applied to refugees. Even the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees expressed very serious reservations about this refugee tax. I think it goes against the spirit of the Geneva convention, which is aimed at protecting persecuted people, victims of conflicts, and so on.

I must also point out that this tax is a significant source of revenue for the government, bringing in over \$250 million a year. With the other fees immigrants must pay to have their files reviewed, obtain work permits, etc., the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's total revenues exceed \$400 million a year, while its overall annual budget is only \$600 million.

I would like to say a few words on the issue of refugees and displaced persons. The situation is tragic. In addition to the 23 million refugees I just referred to, there are over 100 million people displaced from one country to another or within their own countries as a result of wars, persecutions, natural disasters, racial or religious troubles, ethnic intolerance, political repression, poverty, and human rights violations.

I think that, without exceeding the general goals set by the minister today, we could make an additional effort for world refugees, especially women and children, who make up 80 per cent of all refugees and persecuted people.

I was very affected by the horrific scenes in Zaire we recently saw on television. In the Goma region alone, 200,000 refugees have gathered in the past few days. With its 214,000 refugees, the new Mugumpa refugee camp is the biggest in the world.

Again, as the Bloc Québécois did yesterday, I call on the government to help these hundreds of thousands of sick people without drinking water or the basic means to survive.

Even though the war in Bosnia is over, there is still a problem. Some people have returned to Bosnia, but the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees tells us it is still too early. Some are so traumatized by the war that they cannot return to Bosnia right away.

There are problems in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, the Sudan, etc. But it is mainly what is happening in Zaire that should concern the Canadian people. We must provide humanitarian assistance to the African continent. We need special programs to deal with the human tragedies facing Zaire and other African nations.

Under the Canada-Quebec agreement, Quebec set its levels at 27,000 new immigrants for the year 1997. I must point out that Quebec is the most generous province for refugees. In 1995 alone, Quebec welcomed 12,019 asylum seekers, compared to 11,546 for Ontario, the most populous province in Canada. Quebec welcomes 47 per cent of refugee claimants, compared to 45 per cent only for Ontario.

• (1040)

The minister makes no mention of it. In their recruiting campaign, Canada and the Canadian government should promote francophone immigration in Quebec. Quebec is the only French-speaking country, the only French-speaking nation, the only French-speaking state in America and, as such, it has to protect its French-speaking immigration. Quebec believes that it is enriched economically, socially and culturally through immigration.

I would like to mention in passing a survey published today in *La Presse*, which indicates that the people of Quebec are quite open to immigration. A survey released yesterday by Quebec immigration minister André Boisclair shows that two Quebecers out of three are receptive to cultural diversity and pleased with the number of immigrants coming here every year.

Quebecers are very tolerant, I have always said so, and they do not display any signs of xenophobia toward the minorities. This

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survey tells us that 67 per cent of Quebecers are receptive to cultural diversity; 56 per cent believe that immigration promotes economic development; and 72 per cent regard immigrants as contributing to the province's cultural richness. Also, 64 per cent of Quebecers, or 11 per cent more than in 1992, believe that immigrants work hard to fit into Quebec society.

Here is what this very serious survey conducted in April says. It shows how open Quebecers are, contrary to what some members have been saying, members of the Reform Party in particular and also members of the Liberal Party.

I agree, as I have just said, with the minister that the positive aspects of immigration should be emphasized. Immigrants make a substantial economic, cultural, social and political contribution. I notice that the minister did not address either, unfortunately, the hostility perceived today in Canadian society toward immigrants and more particularly refugees.

Contrary to a certain statements, immigrants contribute more than they receive. They do not tend to use social services as much as people who were born in Canada. The crime rate is lower among them than among people of Canadian stock. This needs to be repeated in this House, and it is the minister's responsibility to educate the Canadian public on the enormous contribution made by immigrants and refugees as well, since most refugees are young and highly educated individuals fleeing persecution and looking for a better life for themselves, their families and their children. They come to Canada with all this energy they have. They are prepared to contribute to economic growth and to employment development.

I will conclude with a few comments on the IRB. Time and time again the minister has said that the IRB is an independent tribunal, but in Bill C-49 before us, she is giving herself the power to remove the IRB chairperson at any time. Under the current legislation, the chairperson may be removed only after five years, coinciding with the end of his or her mandate. With this new legislation, she would be authorized to dismiss the chairperson after a year or two, then renew his or her mandate, chose someone else, and so on. For these reasons and others, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to Bill C-49.

• (1045)

[English]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, almost a year ago the previous Minister of Citizenship and Immigration rose in the House to announce the 1996 immigration levels. At that time he painted a very rosy picture of Canada's immigration situation.

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This year the current minister paints a similarly rosy picture and says that this government will be staying the course. However, there are very serious problems with Canada's immigration system.

The minister is aware of her own department's surveys which show that over 60 per cent of Canadians have little faith in this government's immigration policy. Why do Liberal immigration ministers stand in the House and tell the country how wonderful things are when they know that there are major problems with our immigration system?

It is so typical of this government to put forth its don't worry, be happy philosophy instead of dealing with today's reality. The reality is our immigration system is in need of repair. The reality is that if Canadians are to regain their confidence and give their support to immigration, the government must act now to make the necessary changes.

The first issue that needs to be addressed is the type of immigrants Canada is accepting. Last year the previous minister of immigration stated that he wanted to see the percentage of economic immigrants and their families increased to 50 per cent of the total. However, to be precise, we must remember that the principal immigrant, that is the individual who actually qualifies under the point system, made up only 37 per cent of the economic class. This year, while the number of economic immigrants is higher, the percentage of principals in that total has dropped to only 25 per cent, which means that there are no more economic immigrants than there were two years ago. It is just that they are bringing more dependants with them.

This still means that Canada chooses only about 14 per cent of the newcomers to this country each year. Or, to express it in other terms, when we include the dependants of economic immigrants with a family class immigrant that means that over 85 per cent of all immigrants to Canada are dependant immigrants.

The ability of Canada to select immigrants based on their potential to contribute to our economy must increase beyond the current 14 per cent.

The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration has reviewed a number of studies that have shown that economic immigrants have had a positive economic benefit for Canada. The statistics are there. The average incomes of these immigrants are 40 per cent higher than those of average Canadians.

In addition, over the last 10 years the immigrant investor program has attracted more than 13,000 business people who have invested over \$2.5 billion to the Canadian economy. These investments have created over 17,000 jobs. This is the positive side of immigration and must be promoted.

However, there is a downside even to the economic immigrant portion of Canada's immigration plan. This past January my community of Surrey was faced with a tragedy of one such investor immigrant who killed his mother, his wife and two of his three children before killing himself. It was later determined that this individual who committed the horrendous act was over \$200 million in debt in his native Taiwan. Despite the fact that this individual's financial woes were publicly known throughout Taiwan, he was able to immigrate to Canada on the basis of a \$350,000 investment. Immigration officials apparently were unconcerned about the other financial situation.

While this may be the most tragic example of the investor plan going astray, there are other cases that raise even greater concerns. On May 25, 1992 Canada admitted Lee Chau-Ping and her family as investor immigrants, as she was supposedly putting money into a fast food chicken franchise in northern Saskatchewan. In reality, Lee Chau-Ping never made it past Vancouver as she continued to run her other more lucrative business of trafficking in illicit drugs.

• (1050)

Despite being under investigation by the royal Hong Kong police since 1986, Canadian immigration still accepted Lee as an investor immigrant. This case caused a Hong Kong crown prosecutor to make this statement: "Canadian immigration is very much a laughing stock of criminals and Canada is being used by criminals such as drug traffickers as a soft spot for the entry of drugs into North America and as an exit point for the laundering of funds".

If there is one thing this government should be concerned about it is its investors program and the likelihood that it will be used as a money laundering scheme. It is a concern of academics who specialize in immigration matters and it is especially a concern for law enforcement officials.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to meet with members of the co-ordinated law enforcement unit in Vancouver. This unit contains members of the RCMP and other municipal police forces in the greater Vancouver area and specializes in organized crime.

These members informed me that the investor immigrant program is an absolutely wonderful way for organized crime to launder money, for once these investors cash in their investment no bank in the world is going to question large deposits that came from the Canadian government. I hope that this government is not so desperate for money that it would close its eyes to funds earned by criminal activity.

Notwithstanding these concerns, it is apparent that Canada has reaped the economic benefits from the independent class immigrant. Unfortunately, it has been equally apparent that when it comes to immigrants under the family class sponsorship breakdowns have caused Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

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Nobody argues with the validity of family class unification. It is a valid reason for immigration. But the underpinning basis of family reunification is that such immigration is not to have an adverse economic impact on the country. In cases of family reunification the sponsor makes a 10 year commitment to provide for the immigrant.

In the past there did not seem to be any great effort to enforce these obligations. In 1993 a survey by the department found that 14 per cent of sponsorships were in default, costing the taxpayers some \$700 million in social services.

This government likes to claim that it has made improvements in getting sponsors to honour their commitments. However, last year the previous minister made a big deal about setting higher financial requirements to ensure that sponsorships were honoured. And under this minister that announcement has gone where most Liberal promises have gone, absolutely nowhere, which means that this government will continue to ignore defaulted sponsorships.

Most sponsors and family class immigrants are honest people, but there are some who abuse the system. My constituency office became aware of a situation where a woman was trying to sponsor her fourth immigrant husband in four years. It is situations like this that create a great deal of cynicism among the general public about the validity of family reunification programs. Is the program there to reunite loved ones or is it there for some Canadians to earn a quick buck by marrying foreigners so they can enter the country?

Finally, we come to the area of refugees. This year the government is suggesting that Canada will accept between 26,000 and 32,000 refugees. Canada has long had a reputation as being a compassionate country that accepts its fair share of refugees.

The majority of Canadians have no problem with our accepting of genuine refugees who have been displaced from their homeland by war or other domestic disputes. However, the majority of Canadians also have a great deal of problems with a system that allows bogus refugees to remain in our country for years.

The minister herself experienced some of these scams this past summer when she observed the process firsthand at some of our points of entry. The minister was surprised when the immigration officer had to admit the Ukrainian refugee claimant who stated that his claim was not based on a well founded fear of government persecution but rather on the fact that he was afraid of his neighbour. The minister then observed a Chilean refugee claimant who admitted that his claim was based on the fact that he could not find work in his native Chile.

• (1055)

If this is the type of criteria that refugee claims are being based on, then Canada itself is home to millions of potential refugees.

It is precisely these types of ridiculous claims that have brought the whole refugee process into disrepute. We now have the trend where people come to Canada, claim refugee status here and then get smuggled into the United States.

We are being viewed around the world as a consolation prize by people smugglers. They might not get their clients into the United States but, at worst, their clients will be accepted in Canada. That is the problem with our refugee system. It rewards dishonesty and criminality.

Last April a Hong Kong man was stopped at the Vancouver international airport and was found to be carrying four additional passports to his own. Sure enough, the other individuals from the same flight were claiming refugee status at the same time. These four claimants paid the agent thousands of dollars to get to Vancouver. The presence of these four refugee claimants in Vancouver is going to cost the Canadian taxpayer thousands of dollars.

When we finally catch one of these people smugglers red handed, what do they get? One day in jail as a sentence. Won't that teach these people smugglers not to mess around with Canada? These guys must be laughing all the way to the bank.

As bad as the situation was, there are even worse things that take place. In July Dennis Garcia escaped from a Montana prison where he was serving a 20 year sentence for viciously assaulting a female store owner. The judge who sentenced Garcia also designated him to be a dangerous offender. When Garcia was arrested near the border of British Columbia, everyone should have been happy that this dangerous individual had finally been captured.

Unfortunately, that is not the way things work with the government refugee program. Instead of being immediately returned to the United States to finish his sentence, Garcia was sent to Vancouver and brought before an immigration adjudicator. Garcia claimed refugee status and, lo and behold, he was released pending his hearing; that is right, an escaped dangerous offender was released because he claimed refugee status.

Did Garcia show up for his hearing? Of course not. He is an escaped fugitive. Garcia is dangerous but not stupid. That is a label that is reserved for our refugee laws that allow such a travesty to happen.

As long as this government allows cases like Garcia to occur, the Canadian public will have little faith in our refugee program, much to the detriment of those genuine refugees who truly deserve our protection.

This country was built on immigration, which makes it all the more ironic that so many Canadians have so little faith in today's system.

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The system needs to be made fairer. Perhaps the minister could start this fairness by renegotiating the Canada-Quebec accord. This accord gives Quebec a flat rate of \$90 million a year for settlement funds. That is approximately one-third of the total amount that the federal government spends. Is Quebec receiving a third of the immigrants to Canada? Actually, the number of immigrants that Quebec is receiving continues to drop.

When the accord was first signed in 1991, Quebec received 22 per cent of all immigrants to Canada. Last year that figure dropped to 13 per cent and this year Quebec, which gets to set its own numbers, will be taking in almost 10 per cent fewer immigrants. Even those numbers are deceptive. By the Quebec government's own numbers, between 70 and 80 per cent of investor immigrants to that province have left Quebec for other destinations in Canada.

Yet despite these numbers, Quebec continues to receive over 33 per cent of the settlement funds, which means that the two provinces that receive the bulk of Canadian immigrants, Ontario and British Columbia, receive a significantly smaller amount for each newcomer they accept.

The current system is not fair and must be amended so that this government funds every immigrant and refugee at the same rate no matter what province they settle in. That is what Canadians are looking for in our immigration system: fairness. They want a system where everyone is treated in a fair and honest manner as quickly as possible. They want a system where dishonesty and criminality are not rewarded. Once the Canadian government can accomplish these goals, I am sure that Canadians will once again have confidence in our immigration system and will support it.

* * *

• (1100)

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

[English]

Pursuant to the order of reference of Thursday, October 3, 1996, your committee has considered Bill C-41, an act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act, the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and the Canadian Shipping Act, and your committee has agreed to report it with amendments.

PETITIONS

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe Centre.

The first petition requests that Parliament pass legislation to strengthen the Young Offenders Act including publishing the names of young offenders, lowering the age of application and transferring serious offenders to adult court.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): The second group of petitioners are requesting that the Government of Canada not amend federal legislation to include the undefined phrase of sexual orientation. The petitioners are troubled about not defining the phrase of sexual orientation. They have a legitimate concern that such a broad term could include all kinds of sexual behaviour.

AGE OF CONSENT

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition concerns age of consent laws. The petitioners ask that Parliament set the age of consent at 18 years to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Question No. Q-75 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 75—**Mr. Mayfield:**

With regard to the reinstatement of Indian status under Bill C-31 passed in 1985, from 1985 until 1995, (a) how many income tax returns have been reassessed, (b) how much income tax has been refunded, (c) for which year(s) did each tax return apply, (d) what was the total amount of each refund and (e) from which government department or agency was the refund money provided?

Mrs. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Since Revenue Canada has no way to identify the clients who were affected by the passage of Bill C-31, an act to amend the Indian Act, the department is unable to provide numbers with respect to any applicable refunds or reassessments.

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

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Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 54 minutes.

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[*English*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-35, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (minimum wage) as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are two motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-35, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code.

Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted upon separately.

[*Translation*]

The motion will be debated and voted on separately.

I will now submit Motion No. 1 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-35, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing line 12 on page 1 with the following:

“employee is usually employed or, if the employee works in more than one province, the minimum hourly rate of the province that is highest, and that is”.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in today's debate, at report stage of Bill C-35, which, for all intents and purposes, eliminates the federal minimum wage, aligning it with the minimum wages established by the provinces.

We supported Bill C-35 with the feeling that we had to do our work as the official opposition and help improve this legislation. This is why we proposed an amendment. Let me elaborate.

As you know, the federal minimum wage was set at \$4 in 1986 and has not been reviewed since. The situation was a bit paradoxical: in a given territory, there could be two categories of workers.

Indeed, workers doing the same job in the same company were not necessarily paid the same salary.

• (1105)

Three main considerations must be kept in mind when we deal with minimum wage. First, those affected are often part-time workers, employees whose jobs are precarious, and people who live below the poverty line, or just at that level. In this regard, the government should have introduced, along with the minimum wage review, a bill that would have truly targeted the causes of poverty.

We can never say it too often: the issue of minimum wage should remind parliamentarians that, in Canada, one person in six currently lives below the established poverty levels. This proportion increases in the case of certain groups, particularly single parents.

What does being poor mean in today's Quebec and Canadian society? We know what it means. It is not a reality that escapes us. We know precisely what it means. From a statistical point of view, a person is considered to be poor when he or she must spend more than 56 per cent of his or her salary on housing, food and clothes.

It would have been a good thing for the government to deal with this issue. It is hard to square the minimum wage bill with something like the Employment Insurance Act, which is a factor in poverty, because we know for a fact that only 38 per cent of the labour force will qualify under that legislation.

The amendment we are presenting today introduces a mobility provision whereby a worker employed by a company operating interprovincially, or conducting business in two or more provinces, will receive the minimum wage that is most to his advantage. It is a cause for some concern that the government did not think of this.

When the minister appeared before the committee, we pointed out to him that the situation was, of course, clear when a worker was employed by Ontario. When he works in an area coming under federal jurisdiction but the head office of the company or the place where he works is in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba or Prince Edward Island, understandably everything is crystal clear, and he is paid the minimum wage in effect in that province.

But what will happen when this same worker is required to work in one or more provinces, when there is no set place of work? Such a situation can arise. With the advent of telework, the whole question of interprovincial mobility and, of course, interprovincial transport, this is more than just an isolated case. Had the official opposition not been vigilant, there would have been an omission in the act that must most definitely be corrected today.

I would remind members that the intention of the amendment is to have the legislation spell out very clearly that, when a worker is

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called upon to provide services or work in more than one place within the Canadian common market, he will be paid the highest rate.

You know how widely the minimum wage varies in Canada. It ranges from \$5 in certain provinces to \$7 in British Columbia, the most generous province in this connection and undoubtedly the one with the most favourable financial situation.

I would like to emphasize, for the benefit of viewers, just how much the situation varies. This must be borne in mind. We are certainly not talking about a uniform situation where the minimum wage is concerned.

• (1110)

I will give the example of Alberta, where the minimum wage is \$5. In British Columbia, it is \$7; in Prince Edward Island it will be raised to \$5.40; in Manitoba it is \$5.40; in New Brunswick, \$5.50; in Nova Scotia, \$5.35; in Ontario, \$6.85; in Quebec, \$6.70; in Saskatchewan, \$5.35; in Newfoundland, \$5.25; in the Northwest Territories, \$7; and in the Yukon, \$6.86.

It could, therefore, be a great temptation for an employer with interprovincial mobility to decide that the place of employment of a given worker is a specific province. If a worker works in three or four provinces, for example, the employer could have his choice of province. He could say: "I consider that the place of work to which the worker is attached is the province with the lowest minimum wage." This is a trap which must be avoided for, as we have seen, there is a disparity between provincial wage levels.

When speaking of minimum wage, we must keep in mind that often non-unionized workers are involved, people who lack the protection of a large union to which they pay dues, which looks after the rights of workers, which is certainly not the case for minimum wage earners.

Generally speaking, this minimum wage covers 10 per cent of people in the work force. Ten per cent of workers therefore come under federal jurisdiction. Obviously, therefore, the bulk of workers are in areas where legislation other than that of the federal government applies. Nevertheless, 10 per cent of the work force is involved in the sectors of transportation, banking and communications particularly, but not exclusively, affected by Bill C-35. Of that 10 per cent, a very large majority, which the minister estimates at 60 per cent, are not protected by a union and work at minimum wage.

It is, therefore, important to ensure that, if the government were preparing to defeat the official opposition amendment to Bill C-35—which I doubt, since I believe the parliamentary secretary is nodding that he will support the amendment by the official opposition—but at any rate, if the government were preparing to defeat the opposition amendment, well, then we would find ourselves in a legal vacuum. In the case of workers with several different places of work, working in more than one province,

workers having to move about within the broad Canadian common market, it could be extremely tempting for the employer to make a decision that would not be to their advantage, choosing to attach them to the place of work where the minimum wage was lowest, to the workers' disadvantage.

I will close my remarks by saying that, today, we are just beginning the process. Bill C-35 is the first indication that the government intends to review part I of the Canada Labour Code, as the hon. member for Québec is well aware—and I know she is very concerned about the plight of workers today. Parts II and III will also be reviewed.

This review process has given rise to considerable debate on, for instance, the possible unionization of the RCMP and the issue of replacement workers. In report after report, year after year, the government has been urged to bring peace to the workplace and introduce anti-scab legislation that make the use of replacement workers an unfair practice and as such subject to sanctions by the Canada Labour Board. I know that the hon. member for Bourassa, a long-standing member of the labour movement, has some very specific proposals in mind.

So as part of this review process, it will be very important to ensure, of course, that the Canada Labour Code is the locus for establishing a certain balance of forces, where the legislation defines a number of positions to be used in dealing with future labour disputes. But I think it is also important to ensure, in 1996 and in the years to come, that the Canada Labour Code is also a weapon against poverty. Why not consider including provisions in the Canada Labour Code that would set limits on working hours and overtime?

• (1115)

The minister told me he was regularly asked to authorize overtime in the private sector because a federal provision says that the minister's authorization is required for work in excess of the statutory number of hours. I think, at a time when one Canadian out of six lives in poverty, in other words, 2.8 million Canadians in all Canadian provinces, that we should ensure that the Canada Labour Code is also a weapon against poverty.

[English]

Mr. George Proud (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have listened to the concerns of my fellow members with regard to the wording of the amendment and we have given the matter very careful study.

The hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve and the opposition were originally concerned to clarify that employees who perform work in more than one province be paid the rate of the province in which they are employed. They were concerned over any loophole which would permit a lower rate than that of the employee's province of employment. Now the hon. member is proposing an amendment that is somewhat different. It is proposed

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that where an employee performs work in several provinces, the minimum wage would be that of the province with the highest rate.

While I appreciate my colleague's concern for clarity to protect the worker, I believe that the solution will create more problems than it will solve.

The proposal would be cumbersome to administer. Even one trip across a provincial border could alter a truck driver's hourly rate. What would be the justification for this approach? Surely we would want to establish labour standards that reflect the conditions in the local area.

The whole approach of this bill has been to align the federal minimum wage with regional economies. Why would the government impose the rate designed for one region on an enterprise within another? Furthermore, in the case of an employee who makes infrequent trips outside the province, it is unclear how long the higher rate would apply. Would it apply for a day, a week or a month?

The amendment would impose unnecessary rigidities on an employer who might have to refuse small amounts of business in another province. Surely we do not wish to place additional complexities and paperwork on businesses, and small businesses in particular.

The amendment would create inequities within an enterprise. For example, two employees travel the same distance but one travels across a provincial border while the other is going in another direction and does not cross that provincial border. Under this proposal the two drivers would not be entitled to the same rates.

Most important, the amendment is unnecessary. Our legal advisors do not see any difficulties with the present French and English texts of the bill. The current wording refers to more than one province where an employee works. It relates to the overall employment relationship which includes the province where the employee reports to work, where he or she picks up equipment and tools, is supervised by his or her employer and where, for example, the provincial worker compensation laws apply.

Similarly, the term usually or habituellement relates to where the relationship customarily takes place or commonly occurs, rather than simply the notion of time. When this was raised in the committee, the minister explained that in the case of a truck driver who drives across a provincial border the rate of the province in which the employee's home terminal was situated would be used in applying the law.

Very few workers are paid the federal minimum wage. About 2 per cent of workers come under the jurisdiction of the federal act and even fewer in the kind of employment that would take them outside the province. Since the minimum wage order came into effect on July 17, 1996 establishing the rates current in the

provinces at that time, there have been no problems or complaints on the issue of concern to my hon. colleague.

Given the problems with the amendment proposed and the assurance of the Department of Justice that the existing bill is enforceable, I cannot support the Bloc's amendment and ask members to pass the bill as it stands.

• (1120)

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-35 is to align federal minimum wage rates with the general minimum wage rates established by the provinces. The involvement of the federal government in setting minimum wages is only about 30 years old.

In 1935 Canada ratified an ILO Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery Convention which had actually been introduced in 1928. It specified that workers would be guaranteed a minimum wage mainly in cases where wages were exceptionally low. However, it was 1965 before Canada actually began setting minimum wage rates. The Canada Labour Code covered less than a million workers so the government of the day did not feel pressured to establish a federal rule.

Between 1965 and 1986 there were sporadic changes in the federal minimum wage rate but 10 years ago only one-tenth of 1 per cent, or 7,000 workers under federal jurisdiction were directly affected. While updated estimates are not available from department officials, there is a presumption on our part that very little may have changed.

The big changes for Canadian workers over the last 30 years have been the diminished opportunities and lack of security which they now endure. Today one in every four Canadians is afraid of losing his or her job.

If the government was really concerned about workers and their wages it would not be sidestepping the real issue. It would be lowering the payroll taxes that kill jobs. At a time when 1.4 million Canadians are unemployed, about 2.3 million Canadians are underemployed and 500,000 Canadians have given up looking for a job, the best the government can come up with is a plan to realign minimum wage rates with the provinces. This is not even a decent band-aid.

If the government was really concerned about helping workers make ends meet it would be launching a plan, like the Reform Party's fresh start proposal, that would give workers much needed tax relief. Canadian workers deserve a tax break because they are working harder for less money.

The Fraser Institute estimates that the average worker's income has decreased by over \$3,000 since the government was elected three years ago. Why are Canadians taking home less money? The government wants to lay the blame by pointing a finger at

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employers. However, the real culprit is the ever increasing tax burden.

In 1996 the average family pays a staggering 46 per cent of its income in taxes. Twenty-five years ago, when one income families were the norm, families could pay their way and even prosper. Today it takes two incomes just to scrape by. One partner works just to pay the taxes for the household.

If the government was really concerned about Canadian workers' wages it would get its greedy hands at least part way out of the workers' pockets. If the government was really interested in helping workers it would streamline its operations and relinquish jurisdiction to the provinces in those areas that the provinces are best equipped to manage.

Take Bill C-35, for instance. On one hand the government is saying that it trusts the provinces to set realistic and fair minimum wage rates. However, on the other hand it is saying that it does not trust future provincial legislatures to set realistic and fair minimum wage rates so it will retain the right to set its rates whenever it sees fit. The provinces have already proven that they are better fiscal managers than their federal counterparts. What governments in this country have succeeded in balancing their budgets? Provincial governments.

• (1125)

Now is the time for the federal government to show that it is serious about streamlining and delegating more power to the provinces. Instead of retaining the right to set the rate, the government should seize this opportunity to enter into agreements with its provincial counterparts to give them sole discretion over the setting of rates. The agreements could feature clauses stipulating that each province and territory retain a minimum wage rate. It would be obligatory. That would protect Canada's international commitments and the free trade agreement.

The provisions of Bill C-35 have actually been in effect since July 1996. This is not a concern for Reformers since the overall intent of the bill is positive. However, there is still time to improve the bill.

Section 178(3) gives the governor in council the option of "replacing the minimum hourly rate that has been fixed with respect to employment in a province with another rate, or fix a minimum hourly rate with respect to the employment in a province if no such hourly rate has been fixed".

An amendment has been tabled calling for the deletion of section 178(3). If the government adopts this amendment the bill will receive our support, although with certain reservations. The amendment moved by the member for Edmonton Southwest, seconded by me, is:

That Bill C-35 in clause 1 be amended by deleting lines 1 to 8 on page 2.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this House to debate Bill C-35 at report stage. This bill tabled on May 9, 1996, is to align the federal minimum wage rate with the general minimum wage rates established from time to time by the provinces and the territories. Let me say right off the bat that I support the amendment put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

This is a subject in which I have a great interest. As a previous speaker indicated, I was involved in the Quebec labour movement for a long time and, at every convention of the Fédération des travailleurs du Québec or of the Congrès du travail du Canada, resolutions were passed requesting that the federal and provincial governments raise the minimum wage, which is consistently too low.

I have often criticized the federal government, arguing that, in its capacity, it should be an example to the provinces in the area of labour law in Canada. As a member of the International Labour Organization, the federal government is the one that signs international conventions respecting minimum wage and other principles important to the workers.

Like the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, I think that the best way for low-wage workers to improve their conditions is to unionize. The unions can do something to improve the plight of these workers. Those who earn minimum wage are not even entitled to social benefits. I think that raising the minimum wage is a great way of fighting poverty.

Under Bill C-35, the rate paid to any particular employee is that of the employee's province or territory of employment. The Governor in Council retains the authority to establish a minimum wage rate that can apply to employees on a provincial or territorial basis and that differs from the rate set by a province or territory.

• (1130)

This bill is important to the official opposition, and it is in our best interest to support it. Of course, once this legislation is completed by the antiscab bill I tabled in this House last week and the other necessary amendments to the Canada Labour Code, we can then state loud and clear that the Canada Labour Code is in line with reality at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. Make no mistake about it, the Canada Labour Code still has some major flaws.

I support this bill, which—it is important to emphasize this—concerns more specifically the most vulnerable in our society. For example, workers who are not covered by a collective agreement or who hold precarious, often part time jobs, increasingly concentrated in industrial and economic sectors that are sensitive to fluctuations, the soft sectors in the economy.

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Two thirds of minimum wage workers are women. Many are immigrants and young people. Of course, the harmonization of the minimum wage based on the rate in effect in the province or territory should be hailed. In fact, the Government of Canada has not raised its ridiculous \$4 hourly rate since 1986. This rate is so out of step with today's cost of living, it seems like an anachronism. There was an urgent need to raise it as soon as possible.

It is interesting to compare this \$4 hourly rate with the rate in effect in the Canadian provinces, which average around \$5.60. In Ontario, the minimum wage rate is \$6.85, while Quebec raised its rate to \$6.70 on October 1. I must point out that this increase is due in part to the women who, in May 1995, participated in the "bread and roses march" from Montreal to Quebec City.

In the Prairies, the minimum wage rate hovers around \$5 an hour: it is \$5.35 in Saskatchewan, \$5.40 in Manitoba, \$5 in Alberta. I do not understand how a province as rich as Alberta can have such a low minimum rate. The minimum wage in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories is \$7 an hour, compared to \$6.86 in Yukon. It is \$4.75 in Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, \$5.50 in New Brunswick, and \$5.35 in Nova Scotia.

As I said before, it is quite clear that raising the minimum wage is an important tool in the fight against poverty. Such a policy makes the economy of a country or a province more dynamic, in that it helps reduce the underground economy, while stimulating the consumption of goods and services.

Also, in the case of a welfare recipient, working outside the family home becomes more interesting when the minimum salary is more decent and in line with the costs involved. It is important to remember that, over the years, the gap between minimum wage and the poverty line has decreased.

It would have been a good thing to table this bill and to announce at the same time the implementation of a true policy to fight poverty in Canada and in Quebec. One Canadian in six currently lives in poverty. The proportion is even greater in the case of women, children, immigrants and young people.

• (1135)

Canada's population is increasingly poor. I am not the only one to say so and to deplore this fact. The loss of jobs and the cuts in the federal public service payroll and in social programs are meant to help reduce the public debt, but they do little to put a stop to the impoverishment of our society.

Moreover, this situation does not only affect the poor, but also social classes which were thought to be immune from a deterioration of their quality of life.

This is why I can only support whatever attempt this government makes to help protect the interests of Canadian and Quebec workers. The federal government should show the way regarding minimum wage and everything that relates to labour law. Unfortunately, it is not the case.

Still, the proposed legislation is a step in the right direction. This is why I support Bill C-35.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion of the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia relates to the next motion, so we will postpone that until we deal with the second motion.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. All those in favour of the motion 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: A recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.) moved:

That Bill C-35, in Clause 1, be amended by deleting lines 1 to 8 on page 2.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing further to add to what I said earlier.

The Deputy Speaker: The mover of the motion is the hon. member Edmonton Southwest and the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia is the seconder.

Does the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest wish to speak to the motion?

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia spoke eloquently on the substance of this bill during the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. We would not further use the time of the House to say what has already been said.

Mr. George Proud (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to conclude this discussion, I want to say that we disagree with the amendment. It would delete 178(3).

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The governor in council has the authority to issue an order replacing a provincial minimum wage rate. What we are saying here is that the federal government in a situation which would occur not very often, I would hope, has the power and will retain the power to set a minimum wage for employees under the jurisdiction of the federal government. That is all we want to do. It would not affect provincial employees, it would affect only federal employees. Therefore I cannot support this motion.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 2. All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

• (1140)

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

An hon. member: On division.

(Motion No. 2 negatived.)

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions on the report stage of the bill.

Call in the members.

The Deputy Speaker: There is a request from the deputy chief government whip to defer the vote until later today at the end of Government Orders.

* * *

BELL CANADA ACT

Hon. Raymond Chan (for Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.) moved that Bill C-57, an act to amend the Bell Canada Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the legislation before the House to repeal section 7 of the Bell Canada Act is an important step in the federal government's efforts to help Canadian industry compete, innovate and grow in the information economy.

It follows through on commitments we have made to promote and facilitate the development of the Canadian information highway as a foundation for long term economic growth and job creation.

We are now three-quarters through the government's mandate and the foundations for the jobs and growth agenda are firmly in place. Deficit reduction targets have been met and exceeded. Inflation is at its lowest level in 30 years. Statistics Canada reports that the number of persons employed was up 82,000 in August, bringing year to date gains to 153,000 in full time employment.

Building on these accomplishments, the government has highlighted three elements that form the core of the current phase of the jobs and growth agenda: youth, technology and trade. At the heart of the jobs and growth agenda is the information highway which advances all three of these priorities.

In 1994 the government announced its vision for the Canadian information highway as an integral part of that agenda. The government's strategy envisages a low cost, high quality information infrastructure that gives all Canadians access to employment, educational, health care, entertainment, investment and wealth creating opportunities of the information age. We have a coherent government-wide program for the information highway and we have been steadily putting these elements in place.

In 1994 we set up the information highway advisory council to examine key public policy issues related to Canada's transition to an information society and knowledge economy. Also in 1994 the federal government released an order in council outlining its policy on convergence, the merging of formally distinct technologies, industries and activities such as cable and telecommunications technologies. This policy focused on three broad areas: network facilities, Canadian content and competition in facilities, and products and services.

The government asked the CRTC to hold public hearings on how best to implement these policies. The commission received more than 1,000 written submissions and heard 78 oral presentations. The CRTC's report "Competition and Culture on Canada's Information Highway: Managing the Realities of Transition" was referred to the information highway council for its review.

The information highway council's final report, released in September 1995, made more than 300 recommendations. On the issues of convergence both the CRTC and the council supported the move toward greater competition. Both also supported policies and regulations that will allow cable companies to compete in the local switch telephone market and telephone companies to compete in the broadcasting distribution market.

• (1145)

Along with the CRTC report, the council's report provided valuable guidance to the government in formulating its comprehensive plan which was published last May as "Building the Information Society: Moving Canada into the 21st Century". In this report the Minister of Industry and other key federal ministers set out a series of initiatives and milestones for developing Canada's infor-

mation highway. Included among these initiatives was the government's policy on convergence.

Canadians now get a range of broadcasting and telecommunications services from their local telephone and cable television distribution networks. Recent breakthroughs in technology mean that each will soon be able to compete with the other in offering a full range of services.

Soon, a range of industries, including telecommunications, cable television, publishing and entertainment, will be able to offer packages of services either in co-operation or in competition with each other. Convergence will change these industries dramatically and will bring businesses and consumers an array of new products and services. It will change the way we work, communicate and entertain ourselves.

On August 6 of this year, the government issued the final text of its convergence policy opening the way for fair and sustainable competition between cable and telephone companies. The policy statement and implementation principles cover three major areas: facilities, content, and competition. They clear the way for cable and telephone companies to compete in each other's core businesses and further advance a series of initiatives aimed at introducing competition to the communications industry.

The policy will allow for fair and sustainable competition between cable and telephone companies. Telephone companies may offer broadcasting services once the regulatory framework and tariffs for competition in local telephone services are in place. Competition could begin as early as the end of 1997.

The policy statement is an important step toward fulfilling the government's commitment to ensure that Canadians can participate fully in the information society. It brings to a close a long process of public consultation and studies. The goal has been to create the conditions needed for fair and sustainable competition, expanded consumer choice and continued support for Canadian culture.

The policy is intended to guide the CRTC as it establishes rules and regulations for broadcasting and telecommunications in the convergence era. It will also provide greater clarity and confidence for broadcasting and telecommunications firms as they enter each other's traditional markets.

The policy statement included a commitment to amend the Bell Canada Act so as to remove the prohibition on Bell Canada and its subsidiaries from holding broadcasting licences. The bill we are discussing today will implement that policy by repealing section 7 of the Bell Canada Act.

Section 7 was put in place in 1968 to prohibit Bell from holding a broadcasting licence. At the time there was a real concern that keeping Bell out of broadcasting and especially cable TV was

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necessary to prevent Bell from dominating the delivery of broadcasting services and give the fledgling cable industry a chance to develop. However, during the years since, these concerns have been overtaken by a number of technological and market developments which are leading to the convergence of the telephone and cable industries.

I would like to point out here that the convergence policy framework will create more choices for consumers and ensure that Canadian content remains prominent on their screens. While new technologies allow telecommunications and broadcasting companies to offer similar services, the distinction between telecommunications and broadcasting will remain and will continue to be guided by distinct regulatory systems.

● (1150)

For example, when a telecommunications company provides broadcasting services, those services will fall under the Broadcasting Act. Conversely, when a cable company provides telecommunications services, those services will be subject to the Telecommunications Act.

Finally, the telecommunications and broadcasting industries are supportive of the government's goal to foster competition in all matters on the information highway. The Stentor companies, including Bell Canada, have made a commitment to make significant contributions to the Canadian broadcasting system.

Bell Canada is anxious to move ahead with its plans to invest in the Canadian information highway. By amending the Bell Canada Act now, the company can plan for the future with a greater degree of certainty. We cannot afford to delay.

The Clinton administration in the U.S. has launched its national information infrastructure initiative. The European Union has a budget of \$3.8 billion U.S. to support the development of a new information infrastructure. In Japan, NTT has plans to wire every school, home and office with fibre optic cables by the year 2015.

If we do not match the efforts of our competitors, they will seize the opportunities for network, product and service development. Failure to build our own information highway will lead to reduced competitiveness and a loss of high growth knowledge industries and high quality jobs.

We will also miss the benefits of the so-called enabling effect cited in the 1992 report of the Information Technology Association of Canada. The report found that the effective implementation of technology not only enabled cost reductions and quality enhancement but also over time led to new products and services to better strategic management and eventually to new ways of doing business and meeting customer needs.

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Telecommunications is a pivotal enabling technology and increasingly an integral part of all types of businesses and public sector agencies. Given our many accomplishments in information and communications technologies, the convergence of cable and telephone services offer Canadians many opportunities.

Technologies at which Canadians excel are already creating whole new industries. Knowledge based industries are growing faster than any other sector of the Canadian economy. As one of the most wired countries in the world, Canada has the communications and network infrastructure necessary to take full advantage of information technologies such as electronic commerce.

Technology has already eliminated many of the barriers to convergence. We can help to eliminate the legislative barriers by passing the bill before us. As the Minister of Industry has said, the role of government is not simply to reduce the deficit and then get out of the way. It would be foolish to think that people, businesses or entire industries will be able to take up the challenge of the information revolution without government involvement.

Passing the current bill is a necessary step. But once we have established the policy framework and removed legislative and other barriers to competition, it will be up to industry to make the necessary investment and seize the opportunities to provide the services that consumers want.

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-57 contains only one clause. The bill's purpose is quite simple: it repeals section 7 of the Bell Canada Act, which currently prohibits Bell Canada and any person controlled by Bell Canada from directly or indirectly holding a broadcasting licence or operating a broadcasting undertaking.

In tabling this bill, the Minister of Industry is following up on a recommendation made by the CRTC in its document on the information highway entitled *Competition and Culture on Canada's Information Highway: Managing the Realities of Transition*. In this document, made public on May 19, 1995, the CRTC wrote, on page 25, and I quote:

Bell Canada is currently prohibited from holding a broadcasting licence pursuant to the Bell Canada Act. Given the Commission's view that Canadian telephone companies have the potential to contribute to the objectives of the Broadcasting Act, and that they should be allowed to do so, the Commission recommends that the Government amend the Bell Canada Act to permit Bell Canada to hold broadcasting licences.

Last August 6, when the Minister of Industry made public his policy on convergence, he announced that this bill would soon be tabled.

As you can see, it fits into the broad and immediate context of the advent of the information highway, and more particularly of the convergence of telephone, telecommunications and broadcasting technologies.

As you know, advances in these technologies now mean that they are converging and must, to all intents and purposes, be able to merge one with the other. Thus, telephone companies and cable distributors, to take one example, will shortly be offering the same services. It is because of this context that the bill is necessary, so that Bell Canada can eventually transmit television signals, since cable distributors, for their part, will be authorized to provide telephone services.

Bell and its partners at Stentor will be able to provide broadcasting services, as soon as the government has regulated competition with respect to local telephone services, including rates, so that cable distributors and other companies will be able to set up competitive local telephone services.

This convergence of technologies prompted the Minister of Industry to state in a press release this past September 19, and I quote: "The real winners are consumers, who will ultimately have a choice in who provides their services." An interesting statement, is it not? Will the public see its quality of life improved as a result?

The advent of the information highway will profoundly affect the lives of individuals in the first part of the next century. Business, information, recreation, entertainment, work, culture, consumerism, will all be linked to information highway technologies.

This is the reason why, although the bill submitted by the government is not really complex, and might be a mere technicality in itself, the Bloc Québécois feels that it cannot be examined except in conjunction with the entire aspect of the information highway.

When the Minister of Industry states at the drop of a hat that his approach, based on competition at all cost, will ensure individuals and society of quality of life, we believe the minister is being naive at best, and committing a very dangerous error at worst.

• (1200)

Have the federal government's promises about protecting the interests of Quebecers and Canadians in implementing the information highway been kept, or will they be kept? That is the question. In the next few minutes, I shall direct the attention of this House to the pitfalls that are already a threat to us as individuals and as a society, and those that will be a threat in the short and medium term.

The deregulation process in the telecommunications field has been underway for more than ten years, but the key decision dates back to 1992, when the CRTC introduced long distance competi-

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tion. This marked the end of a long tradition in the telecommunications industry which has always been a monopoly. According to the Minister of Industry, the decision should benefit all consumers. But does it really?

As shown in the report on long distance savings by the coalition for affordable telephone services, filed in February 1996, most residential subscribers of companies that are members of Stentor had enjoyed no substantial reduction in their long distance bills since the CRTC opened up the area to competition in 1992.

As you know, the coalition is an umbrella organization for more than 60 associations across Canada. It includes organizations that represent consumers, senior citizens, unions and other public interest groups. It is probably the largest coalition of consumers nationwide.

I would like to quote to the House what it says on page 2 of the coalition's report, which reads as follows:

"Last December, the members of the Stentor group convinced the federal government that they should be allowed to keep the increases—we are talking about increases in residential rates—and not have to reduce basic rates. If residential subscribers remain customers of Stentor for long distance services, they will pay not less than \$700 million in 1996 and 1997, and over a ten year period up to \$4.5 billion, an amount that would go to the telephone companies without giving the subscriber the benefit of discounts on long distance calls they pay for, discounts to which they are entitled".

The coalition goes on to say that long distance rates have gone down, but significantly so only in the case of wholesale users, mainly large corporations.

In ruling 94-19 and 94-21, the CRTC announced that it would, among other things, authorize a re-balancing of rates between long distance and local services and would therefore allow three increases of \$2 each in the monthly basic service rate over the next three years, each increase being \$2.

In exchange, the telecommunications companies would commit themselves to reducing the long distance bills of residential subscribers and small and medium-size businesses by the same amount. However, Bell Canada and seven other telecommunications companies that are members of the Stentor group objected to this restriction and filed a petition with the government asking that the restriction be withdrawn.

• (1205)

Forgetting his promises to consumers, the Minister of Industry approved this application by the Stentor group by maintaining the increase in local service rates—\$2 in 1996, \$2 in 1997 and a review of the \$2 increase in 1998—while allowing market competition to continue to dictate long distance charges.

Worse, as consumers were hit by an increase in local service rates without a reduction in long distance rates, the president of

Bell Canada was quoted in the December 21, 1995 edition of *Le Devoir* as saying that the government's decision would result in a 1 per cent increase in the rate of return of stockholders' equity for the year 1996.

For its part, the Fédération nationale des associations de consommateurs du Québec or FNACQ stated in the same article that, in the next three years, Canadian households would have to pay over \$1 billion more for local service so that telephone companies can make as much profit as they want.

An FNACQ analyst, Marie Vallée, added that the CRTC's original decision would have translated into a first substantial reduction for residential low and medium volume users of long distance and for small businesses. Unfortunately, this did not materialize.

There was some hope that consumers would now have some breathing room. Unfortunately, on September 6, Bell Canada submitted a new application regarding residential service to the CRTC. This application has two components. The first component is the modernization of the telephone network for some 490,000 customers in Quebec and Ontario by the end of 1997. That is good news. But there is a hitch. The second component is the proposed compaction of the rate scale from 19 to 11 levels, which would lead to an average increase of \$1.11 for 850,000 Quebec households. How will the CRTC rule on this new application for a rate hike? I am afraid to guess.

But that is not all. Let us talk about business customers. Last spring, Bell Canada tabled with the CRTC a proposal to harmonize the rates paid by business customers in small, rural communities. As you may have figured out, we are moving toward a new rate increase. In fact, according to Bell, business customers in small, rural communities will have to pay between \$44 and \$54 for their lines, compared to between \$39 and \$44 in major centres. Should this increase be approved by the CRTC, it would take effect in July 1997.

Let us think about this for a minute. When a business wants to modernize its equipment or develop new services, it usually has three ways to raise capital: reinvesting operating profits in its modernization, issuing additional shares or borrowing the money from the banks.

• (1210)

Telephone companies have a better system. Because they operate a monopoly, they can increase their rates as they please, with the government's blessing, thereby increasing their profits.

This means that, at present, those paying for the information highway structure, infrastructure and superstructure are mainly the people taken hostage by the telephone companies. Yet this infrastructure will be the property of private companies. I find that indecent.

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The effects are both negative and unacceptable to any modern society. First, basic service will no longer be affordable for low-income individuals and families. In a world where communications and information are becoming the cornerstone of societal relations, those who are excluded will be dramatically marginalized. Is that the kind of society the Minister of Industry has in mind? I hope not.

Another negative effect: higher commercial rates will affect rural businesses than others. As we know, access to communications services has become essential to any business. If these services are reduced in any way, or cost more outside urban centres, the message the Minister of Industry will be sending our local businesses is that they should move to larger urban centres. Of course, this would make no sense.

The Minister of Industry must realize that deregulating left and right as he is currently doing produces ill effects. It is true that it costs Bell Canada more to provide services in rural regions than in urban regions. That is true.

It is therefore only normal that the more lucrative urban market is more attractive to new competitors. The resulting loss of income from urban sources forces Bell Canada to charge amounts closer to its actual costs, which, in turn, penalizes the regions. Give the rules put in place by the Minister of Industry, the telephone companies' reaction is both normal and predictable. But it is also unacceptable, totally unacceptable.

The minister certainly cannot believe nor say that consumers and our businesses will benefit from this competition. The facts prove just the opposite. Instead of using their own money to invest in modernization, communication companies pass most of the cost on to the consumers. Worse yet, the poorest consumers and those living outside large urban centres are the hardest hit. The Minister of Industry can no longer afford not to be involved.

Are there solutions? Let me draw the attention of this House to the solutions proposed by the Fédération nationale des associations de consommateurs du Québec, or FNACQ, the National Anti-Poverty Organization, and the Canadian Seniors Network. These groups propose, based on measures successfully implemented in California, to first set a monthly rate ceiling of \$15 for the basic service provided to households that have confirmed, through a self-certification process, that their income is below the poverty line.

• (1215)

The shortfall suffered by telephone companies affected would be compensated with moneys from a universal telecommunications access fund. These moneys would come from a supplement charged to the ultimate user of telecommunications services. The providers of telecommunications services would be responsible for

collecting these moneys and transferring them to the fund. In return, the fund would compensate the companies providing the service to the poor.

In the case of businesses located in the regions, the purpose of the fund would be to ensure a sharing of access and maintenance costs, which are, of course, higher in the regions than in urban areas. The fund would be financed through a contribution paid by the companies providing the telecommunications services.

The proposals of these organizations were made following CRTC's public notice 95-49, which sought to develop the means to ensure that telecommunications services continue to be universally accessible at affordable rates. CRTC's decision in this regard should be known in the next few days. Let us hope it is the right one.

Public notice 95-49, tabled by the CRTC on November 22, 1995, that is before the government's rejection of rulings 94-19 and 95-21, states, among other things, that the CRTC feels local rate increases, over and above the ones that would result from the rate rebalancing referred to in ruling 95-21, raise concerns about the maintaining and affordability of local services. This should convince the industry minister to rethink his all-around competition policy.

The concerns of the Bloc Québécois regarding consumers' interests are not limited to wire telecommunications. We are also worried about the consequences, for the public, of implementing new wireless infrastructures, such as personal telecommunications services, multimedia services via satellites, direct broadcast satellites, and broadcasters digitizing.

In fact, beyond the financial consequences for the consumer, the Minister of Industry has not yet told us where he stands with respect to the protection of personal information, copyright and privacy, or with respect to offensive content, child pornography, production of francophone content, affordability, accessibility and universality of these services.

We must look at this bill in the larger context of the information highway. The federal strategy with respect to the information highway is unfortunately being doled out bit by bit by the Minister of Industry, despite extensive, in-depth studies by various organizations. Thus, despite the CRTC report on competition and culture on Canada's information highway tabled a good year and a half ago, despite the final report by the information highway advisory council tabled over a year ago, despite the many departmental committees on which numerous public servants toil away and, finally, despite the Minister of Industry's constant reminders of the need for urgent action, the minister has still only intervened in the infrastructure sectors. By intervene, all we really mean is leaving the field wide open for private enterprise.

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● (1220)

I would also point out that the information highway is not really being looked at by any standing committee of the House, although it is an issue of paramount importance for the future of Canada and of Quebec.

I will, if I may, give you an example of how pitifully little has been done. There is the document published by the Minister of Industry last May 23 entitled: *Moving Canada into the 21st Century*. Everyone was expecting the government to come up with an action plan for the information highway. But all we got was a progress report on implementation of the information highway. The Bloc Quebecois reacted vigorously when this so-called strategy was tabled.

The minister's report made no mention at all of important factors linked to the development of the information highway. Although the minister wants to encourage virtual transactions with the public, he does not say how he will ensure that everyone, every single citizen in this country, will have affordable access to the information highway.

Furthermore, although electronic marketing will create a new economy that under existing rules may be able to evade taxes and even threaten the rights of consumers, the minister makes no mention at all of this issue. Copyright, offensive content and foreign transactions are given very superficial treatment.

In fact, the minister mentions only those problems we already know, without suggesting innovative solutions. Even worse, the minister's document as well ignored Quebec culture, lumping it together with Canadian multicultural culture. Furthermore, the document indicates a willingness to intrude on provincial jurisdictions.

Finally, the Minister of Industry informs us in this report that the policy on convergence would be tabled later. It was released on August 6 by the ministers of industry and Canadian heritage. I may point out that once again, the announcement was made during the parliamentary recess, so that the government would not have to face the usual barrage of questions and criticism.

In a press release, the Bloc Quebecois expressed its reservations about the government's policy statement. So the ministers of Canadian heritage and industry seem to have forgotten that the big players in the telecommunications and cable industries will look after their own interests first, and that the law of the jungle will prevail. The policy statement on convergence has created a climate of complete uncertainty as to the future of telecommunications and broadcasting services in this context.

The bill now before the House comes as a result of this policy statement. Let us see what it says.

● (1225)

First of all, by allowing telephone and cable companies to provide the full range of communications and broadcasting services, the policy statement on convergence makes vertical integration of services inevitable.

Consequently, despite the ministers' guarantees to the contrary, it is obvious that all of the companies involved will see joint financing as an interesting way to ensure a competitive edge. With number crunching, they will find it easier than ever to ensure that no legal stone is left unturned. Major clients will be attracted by price reductions, which will be inaccessible to the general consumer, who will still unfortunately be a prisoner of his monthly bill. This is what the Bloc Quebecois predicted last August, and now we see it happening.

In this battle between the giants of industry, they will no doubt be able to guarantee their risks and their profits, by joining forces through the creation of new structurally distinct companies in which they will be co-shareholders. Already several American companies have joined forces with Canadian ones and have a strong presence in both regular and cell phone service.

Under the guise of healthy and durable competition, the government is moving convergence into the jungle of world competition, where there have already been many, far too many, victims.

You will understand that I regret the federal Minister of Industry's decision to allow market forces to dictate the physical and technical implementation of the information highway. And yet, consumers finance most of it through significant hikes in their monthly bills. I also deplore the fact that the minister is neglecting one of the main stakes in the information highway, namely content development and distribution, whether in the areas of entertainment, professional services or teleshopping.

And yet, it is a consumer market worth tens of billions of dollars. What positions will Canadians and Quebecers take in this market? The answer to this question lies to a large extent in the way issues regarding copyright, tax legislation enforcement, consumer protection, security, privacy, the respect of cultural, moral or civil values will be dealt with at the national and international levels. Unfortunately, these unavoidable issues are being ignored by the industry minister.

And what about the accessibility issue, the danger of a two tier society, one made up of those who are connected and those who are not; those who know how to use it and those who are unable to. I believe that the minister should without delay allow the House to have an input in the analysis and resolution of the critical stakes in the information revolution.

You will agree that this information revolution is going to completely reshape, for better or for worse, social, cultural and economic relationships within society for the next century. So far, the Bloc Quebecois is the only voice to raise this issue in the

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House. We urge the ministers of industry and heritage to do the same.

In conclusion, I inform the House that the Bloc Québécois will support Bill C-57. Our position reflects the fact that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of healthy and ongoing competition within the telecommunications sector resulting in profitable and competent telecommunications companies.

However, I must emphasize that the Bloc Québécois will never let the federal government get away with neglecting its duty to prevent them from competing at consumers' expense.

• (1230)

[English]

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to make a few remarks today with respect to Bill C-57, the amendment to the Bell Canada Act.

Right off the top it is clear that this legislation is a housekeeping amendment and Reform supports its speedy passage. Bill C-57 simply removes the restriction preventing Bell Canada from holding a broadcasting licence, thereby allowing it to get into the cable business at some point down the road.

Bill C-57 flows from the government's convergence policy announced in August. Convergence has become one of those words that is banded about a lot. People sometimes use it to sound impressive, but convergence simply means the coming together of different technologies and industries into a new competitive environment. In this case we are talking about cable companies getting into the business of providing telephone services and telephone companies becoming cable providers, both in direct competition with each other.

As the process of convergence pertains to this bill, we are referring to Bell Canada being allowed to hold a broadcast licence. In the late 1960s the Bell Canada Act was amended to prevent Bell from getting into the cable business in order to protect the fledgling cable industry.

Today with the likes of Rogers and Shaw, companies which have grown enormously since their beginning in the protected marketplace they have had, now the playing field is a bit more level. So this is really an administrative prelude to the more difficult and challenging task of actually getting convergence and the prospective competitors up and running.

The CRTC, which Terence Corcoran of the *Globe and Mail* has called the Canadian roadblock to telecommunications competition, is currently holding hearings with stakeholders on how best to proceed with the nuts and bolts of the government's convergence policy. I certainly do not envy it that task. Much of it will be concerned with the arcane technical details that must be worked out

in order to make sure that any new system functions smoothly for both the providers of the service and for consumers alike.

What is certain however is that convergence will benefit the consumer. It is for that reason that Reform urges the government to push ahead as swiftly as possible in its implementation. Witness long distance competition as an example of consumer benefit.

In 1992 the CRTC permitted resellers to enter the long distance phone market. Competition in other words. To begin with there were many players, some big, many small. Those consumers who switched early will recall dialling multiple access codes and passwords in order to be able to call long distance with their newly chosen provider.

Slamming, or the practice of moving a consumer from one long distance provider to another without their consent, was rife. Many small companies fell by the wayside under the strength of the larger firms.

Along came 1994 and the ease of access provisions. Then we could simply pick up the phone and our long distance call was billed to the chosen company.

During all of this, intense marketing was taking place. Door to door campaigns and multimillion dollar TV blitzes with Hollywood stars were launched in order to woo our patronage. People switched because they saw that prices actually had dropped right across the board. Even the Stentor companies that own the networks were forced to become competitive, all without the due interference of the prodding CRTC. Wonder of wonders: private sector competition in an area of former monopoly control and the consumer benefits.

Well, it will be the same with competition in local phone service as well as in cable. Pricing and service packages will become more attractive and competition will keep the choices interesting. New entrants into monopoly fields will shake up the old ways of thinking and marketing and operating. Stodginess and complacency will thankfully become things of the past.

• (1235)

The convergence of phone and cable, which we have come to be so familiar with, will open doors to new types of service simply due to the inherent properties of the technologies. But there are new technologies coming on line by the time convergence gets up and running that will further stimulate and spur competition. I refer to PCS, personal communications service, the next generation of cellular based telephones, and LMCS, local multipoint communications system, or wireless cable.

Instead of having an 18-inch dish outside your house for direct to home satellite service, assuming it ever gets up and running that is, how about an 8-inch dish on top of your television delivering high

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quality digital TV and audio services and high speed Internet access as well? It is just a couple of years away.

Industry Canada is going through the process of granting the first batch of licences right now and PCS is already hitting the market. New technologies make it a more secure and a far more flexible form of wireless telephone service than current analogue or even digital cellular. The types of things it can do make it more akin to land line phone service than anything yet available.

I recently heard an interesting quote. It said that nowadays one should not invest in companies that still employ professional ditch diggers. The inference is that wireless is the way of the future. The once mighty cable and phone companies have more to worry about than just each other with these new technologies coming on the scene. The issue is not without politics either, as if anything in this place ever is without politics.

British Columbia's telephone company, B.C. Tel, was to have been barred from entry into the cable business based upon a historical reality. That reality is the fact that 75 years or so ago, there was not enough interested Canadian capital available to build B.C. Tel's initial infrastructure so it went south of the border for the money to build the system. This was before the cultural engineers in Ottawa decided that foreign capital was a bad thing in a business like a phone company.

As a result of being 51 per cent or so foreign owned by GTE Inc. of the U.S., B.C. Tel apparently violates all sorts of culturally sensitive rules made by the Ottawa bureaucrats. In its questionable wisdom, the CRTC recommended in its convergence report in 1995 that B.C. Tel be denied entry into the cable business due to this foreign content. Let me say that much consternation ensued in B.C. and the Liberals felt some of the heat that might come if B.C. Tel's future in the cable industry was denied.

In its wisdom and in an apparent victory for the industry minister over the heritage minister and her protectionist ways, the cabinet in approving the convergence policy has decided to let B.C. Tel into the cable business after all. Perhaps the thought of a hoard of angry British Columbians was not all that appealing.

We have a bright future for Canada's telecommunications sector. We lag behind in some technologies like direct to home satellites and PCS but we are ahead in others like cable Internet access and LMCS.

Large numbers of jobs will flow from convergence, high tech jobs, and that certainly is good news. In this first legislative round over convergence, I am glad the Liberals have finally come to their senses but I also wish to urge them to move toward turning policy into reality just as quickly as they can. The benefits are simply too great to permit much delay.

• (1240)

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the bill we are debating today is one of the shortest allowed by the rules of debate of this House. It deals with one of Canada's oldest institutions, Bell Canada, which was incorporated as long ago as 1880.

Neither the length nor the legal wording of the bill can do justice to the sweeping changes which have marked and will continue to mark this company's evolution. We really have to read between the few lines of this particular piece of legislation to see the numerous advantages it offers consumers. This is why I personally welcome the opportunity to speak today to discuss how these few lines of text will affect the lives of Canadians living in the region served by Bell Canada, that is, Ontario and Quebec.

Bell Canada has acquired a world class reputation in the field of telephone services and technology development. This bill will enable the company to put its reputation for excellence at stake in the field of broadcasting, including cable TV operations. It will allow Bell to offer a range of services based on new technologies that are coming into the market.

It is extremely important for legislation that is presented in this House to reflect the changing nature of the world in which we live.

Broadcasting and particularly telecommunications have always been really the two solitudes of Canada's communications system. From the beginning these two fields have been divided by laws, regulation and technology. Technology in particular was a barrier to convergence of the two industries. Now those technological barriers are indeed fading. We are essentially living in an era where time and space are being redefined.

The technological revolution makes it possible for the two solitudes I was talking about earlier to unite and to complement each other. The truth is we now need to change our laws and our regulatory environment to facilitate our entry into this new era of technology.

In 1968 this House prohibited Bell Canada and its subsidiaries from holding a broadcasting licence. At that time the purpose of this restriction was very noble indeed: to prevent Bell Canada from dominating the delivery of broadcasting services and to protect the fledgling cable industry. However since that time, as Canadians are well aware, these concerns have been overtaken by a number of technological and market developments that are leading to the convergence of the telephone and cable industries.

In the future, broadcasting and telecommunications will stake their claim on the same territories. Cable distributors will be found in the area of telephone services, and telephone companies will be at work in the area of broadcasting. This new competition between the two great branches of Canada's communications system will

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stimulate investment and innovation. Above all it will give consumers the benefit of an even wider variety of services.

Mention of Bell Canada often conjures up images of a great untouchable monopoly. This is no longer the case as competition has opened up several areas of the telecommunications market, including long distance services. Now Bell Canada will have to face competition from cable distributors and new entrants in the local telephone service market.

• (1245)

The new wireless technologies will provide alternatives to the traditional cable and wire services. For example, wireless broadband or local multi-point communication systems technologies will offer everything from TV programming to Internet access, from multi-media applications to telephone services. Satellite services are another competitive alternative to wire and cable based distribution systems in rural and remote areas. Consumers will be able to select the type of local telephone services they want on the basis of choice, quality and price.

In this new environment, it is only fair that Bell Canada should be able to meet head to head with its competitors in their respective fields. Now that cable companies are well established and about to take on the telephone services market, Bell Canada will have the opportunity to take on the cable distribution market.

Bell Canada's extensive telecommunications distribution network will be able to carry all the products and services which up until now were only offered by cable companies and all the new products that will be introduced as soon as cable companies are able to offer telephone services.

The convergence policy statement and principles released on August 6 will give consumers more choices and will help ensure that Canadian content prevails. Even smaller specialty service providers will be able to access large distribution networks like Bell Canada's and carve out profitable niches for themselves.

Regardless of whether they subscribe to Bell Canada's network, a cable network or new wireless networks, the emerging information highway will provide consumers with access to a range of new employment, health care, educational and entertainment opportunities.

Canadians, regardless of where they live, will be able to open links from their homes to training institutions, educators and distance education. They will be able to access many government services 24 hours a day. Telecommuting will enable many Canadians to work at home through a network which allows them to be in contact with their employers, colleagues and clients. This new work scheme will also cut the costs traditionally associated with working.

When this short bill becomes law it will have a far-reaching impact on the development of Canada's information highway. It sets the stage for true competition between what until now has been the two solitudes in Canada's communication industry. This competition will lead to new innovations in products and services that drive the growth of the information highway and open up an new era of opportunity for confident producers and consumers.

For these reasons I urge all members of the House to support the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech by my colleague from the Liberal Party. He announced all those great things the public will soon benefit from.

I would like to ask him a question. Since the unemployment level is close to 23, 24 and even 25 per cent, since the unemployed have trouble making ends meet, since the monthly telephone bill increases by \$2 each year and another \$1.11 will soon be added to that, how does he think that these people, one in four in Canada now, will be able to afford the range of services he just described? As a government, is the Liberal Party not creating a two tier society, one for those who have money and one for those who will have to do without services whenever there is not enough money? I would like an answer to that question.

• (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Bevilacqua: Madam Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member opposite who said that he was paying attention to what I was saying. Based on the question that he asked, it is obvious to me that he must have either just entered the House or was not paying attention to the TV screen in the back lobby.

This bill actually opens up competition for cable and telephone companies. Competition usually results in better service and a wider array of services for Canadians at a lower cost.

As a member of Parliament who has travelled the country extensively from coast to coast to coast, on the issue of unemployment and the related fields of social security and youth, I can say that there is a great call in Canada, including in the province of Quebec, to create the type of information network and infrastructure to help people with the issue, for example, of distance education.

The 21st century is only a few years away. For anyone to attempt to block legislation such as that which the government has put before the House would clearly indicate to me that the hon. member is not looking to the 21st century with a great deal of enthusiasm, nor is he looking for ways to help the 1.4 million

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Canadians who are unemployed or others who are on social assistance.

Let us remember that any industrial strategy that an industrialized country like Canada undertakes will include a very effective infrastructure, not simply bridges and roads, but also the type of infrastructure which is required in the field of telecommunications.

It is high time that members understand that our country's future economic capacity will largely be increased by the type of investment it makes in telecommunications, in computer networks and in those sorts of things which speak to building a global economy.

This bill will allow many things to occur. Above and beyond that, it will allow for the sort of competition that speaks to innovation and creativity in Canada's marketplace. That will generate jobs. It will give hope to those individuals who the hon. member professes he wants to help.

One of the things of which I am aware is that people, the unemployed in particular, are moving away from the concept of income support just for the sake of income support. Unemployed Canadians want income support plus the tools required to re-enter the workforce. We cannot do that using old fashioned rules and old fashioned approaches.

The hon. member is bringing in unemployment as it relates to this bill. If he was a bit of a futurist, if he understood how the world is changing, then he would know that these are the types of bills which he should be supporting.

If he looks at the issue of distance education and the interaction between teachers or professors and an individual Canadian at home, I am sure he will understand that this bill is improving the chances of those unemployed people to which he referred.

The government is on the right track. I am sure it will stay the course. At the macro level the deficit has been lowered and that has resulted in lower interest rates. We are also getting our fiscal house in order. On the other side, which is equally important, is the type of investment we are making in people and the type of investment we are making in the information network which exists and which needs to be improved. When we continue to invest in people we are speaking about prosperity, of giving the tools required for people to take on the challenges of the 21st century.

• (1255)

Knowing that the hon. member understands all these things that are occurring in the world, I am quite surprised he would limit himself to what I would consider a pretty empty question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of my colleague, both on the monitors and here in the House. I must say that affordability and accessibility of services are not empty questions.

There is a real possibility we will end up with a two tier society if we do nothing to prevent it. There will be those who can afford the services and those who cannot. There will be those who will know how to use the tools and those who will not. If we are not careful about this, we could create information ghettos which would be hard to escape.

I am surprised that my colleague across the way is singing the praises of technology. I have been working with information systems since 1968, for 28 years now, and I understand quite well, probably better than anybody in this House, what is at stake in this situation. As I have experienced how difficult it is for companies and individuals to adapt to technological changes, I must caution the Liberal government not to make such changes unless it is very sensitive to the needs of society as a whole and most of all to the needs of the neediest in our society.

This is not an insignificant issue, it is the fundamental purpose of a society to go forward, but we must do so all together as we want to do in Quebec and as we want to do in Canada, I hope.

[*English*]

Mr. Bevilacqua: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is picking on the wrong member of Parliament. This is the same member, through his youth initiatives, who has been able to talk to and recommend to the minister that we should have technology youth initiatives for at risk youth. I understand that polarization of classes in this society is going to occur between those individuals of technological know-how and the have nots. It is a known fact.

People have to understand that for governments it is not a question of either/or and we do understand that in this House. We always think that only one policy direction can be taken and it is exclusive.

Policy directions and choices do not have to be mutually exclusive. Both can be done. If there are people in this society, who through no fault of their own cannot access certain technological instruments, does not mean that you deny everybody else. What you do is work hard at making sure those individuals also have access to those technological improvements that our society can offer.

The point the hon. member made is well taken but he should only look at the Minister of Industry's program of computers in the schools to find out that the Liberal Party has already responded to his question.

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[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the second reading of Bill C-57, an act to issue a broadcasting licence to Bell Canada to allow it to compete in the cable industry.

What is at stake here with the bill is not the principle of deregulation as such, but the results obtained as opposed to the results expected by the minister responsible for the communications sector.

You will recall that, when the Liberals formed the federal government in 1993, they promised to pursue the deregulation objective in the telephone industry and the communications sector. They promised especially that, with this deregulation, consumers in Quebec and Canada as a whole would end up benefiting from reduced rates. However, since this deregulation objective has been set into motion, the effects have been totally the opposite.

• (1300)

Far from arriving at a reduction of these rates, we were confronted with rate increases, even in the sector where they had promised the most reductions in communications rates, that is long distance rates.

Data have been checked out. Since 1992, most residential subscribers, mainly those of Stentor, which is a partner of Bell Canada, have not seen one cent of reduction in the long distance rates. Not one cent of reduction since 1992, while they were promised, especially in the long distance market, a substantial reduction of these rates.

The only ones whose long distance bills went down are the major consumers, most of which are large corporations concentrated in major urban centres such as Montreal and Toronto.

Everywhere else, all regular customers in Quebec, all the people who voted for this government in Canada and for the Bloc Québécois in Quebec did not see a penny in reduction in long distance rates. As for local rates, the situation is almost disastrous. Not only has there been no reduction in rates but, by deregulating left and right and promising just about anything, they compromised the basic principle of cross-subsidizing telephone services.

Under the cross-subsidization principle, operating surpluses generated in major urban centres, especially for long distance, were used to subsidize local service, which, in some small communities throughout Canada, costs more than in major centres.

The cross-subsidization principle was replaced by that of rate rebalancing. What was the result of this rate rebalancing? Since 1994, basic telephone service rates have risen by \$2 per month, per year, over three years. In other words, in three years, the monthly

bills of consumers in Quebec and Canada will be \$6 higher than if the principle of cross-subsidization had been maintained.

The most outrageous in all of this is that Bell Canada is taking advantage of these CRTC rulings, which Bell Canada itself contributes to since it provides documentation to the CRTC. Bell has a range of experts who do not carry as much weight as consumers or their representatives. But, instead of using these higher revenues taken from the pockets of consumers to remain competitive or modernize, Bell uses them to increase its stockholders' rate of return.

Mr. McLennan, the president of Bell Canada, made no bones about it. He was quoted in the December 21, 1995 edition of *Le Devoir* as saying as that the rate increases approved by the CRTC would result in a 1 per cent increase in the rate of return of stockholders' equity for the year 1996.

This is not modernization. Bell Canada is taking advantage of increases authorized by the CRTC to dig into the pockets of consumers and increase the return on investment of its shareholders. In fact, a spokesperson for the Fédération nationale des associations de consommateurs had this to say at the time: "Canadian households will have to pay more than \$1 billion in increases over the next three years for the telephone companies to achieve the level of profits they are hoping for".

In other words, deregulation, CRTC decisions, what the minister says, his policies and directions, all that is not designed to serve consumers, as he claimed, nor to reduce long distance rates for the average consumer or local rates, but to increase all these rates and take out of the pockets of consumers the money Bell Canada needs to sweeten the package offered to its shareholders.

I find that absolutely despicable. Especially given that Mr. McLennan was going around this year forecasting \$700 million in net profits for Bell Canada, or a 40 per cent increase over last year's profits.

• (1305)

Now, they have the gall to ask for more rate increases to be approved, so that they can fill their pockets even more, with the blessing of the minister, who keeps talking about abstract and vague concepts and does not bother to monitor the impact of his decisions and directions.

When you are looking to deregulate and ensure that communications systems meet the needs of the 1990s, into the next century, as my hon. colleague so aptly pointed out, you must ensure at the same time that a procedure is in place to follow up and monitor what is going on in terms of price increases. Soon, with such increases for basic telephone services, and other services too, communications will become a luxury item. Average families will no longer be able to afford these services.

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Bell Canada and its competition offer an incredible range of services. But, as the hon. member for Portneuf said, who will be able to use these services?

This issue raises a lot of questions. Here is another example of rate increase based on deregulation without monitoring, as applied by the minister responsible for communications: Last spring, Bell Canada asked the CRTC to increase the rates of its business clients located in small rural communities.

Some small businesses, referred to as VSBs or very small businesses, located in rural communities saw their basic rate jump from \$44 to \$54 per month, a \$10 increase. This puts small businesses located in rural communities at a further competitive disadvantage, since the increase in densely populated areas, that is in major urban centres, was only \$5. The increase imposed on small businesses located in rural communities is more than twice that of their competition in major urban centres.

This is not normal, particularly from a government that claims to support small rural communities and regional development. The government is killing entrepreneurship by playing a part in such decisions.

This is a serious matter. The Quebec vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Mr. Cl  roux, condemned this decision made last spring regarding small businesses in rural communities. He said the situation of a number of these businesses is precarious, adding that such an increase would adversely affect their performance and could even threaten their survival. Such are the effects of this government's deregulation, a process which does not involve any monitoring and which is irresponsible.

When the industry asks the government to support deregulation, as we do, the government must monitor the situation and provide a framework. It must not let the situation turn into a free for all. It must not let anarchy set in. More importantly, it must not let the shareholders of Bell Canada, Stentor and all the others raid the pockets of consumers in Quebec and Canada. That is not the purpose of deregulation. The purpose is to have better service, service that is competitive and is more concerned with what consumers can afford than with making money for the richest shareholders in Bell Canada. It is not right.

Finally, last September 6, and I tell you this because it is a matter of great importance to me, Bell Canada had good news for us. I said to myself that any good news in the matter of deregulation brings with it news that is not so good, and I was right. Last September 6, Bell Canada announced that it was modernizing all its telephone and communication facilities in small municipalities in Quebec and Ontario.

I believe some 500 or 550 municipalities, including 300 in Quebec, were involved. This was good news, excellent news, because for years, municipalities and economic development cor-

porations, as well as the federal government, have been pushing Bell Canada to modernize its exchanges. Why? You would be surprised.

At a time when the focus is on telecommunications, the very latest in service, the information highway, all these ultramodern services, you would be surprised to learn that over 300 municipalities in Quebec and over 200 in Ontario do not even have 9-1-1 service.

• (1310)

The networks are so antiquated that they do not have 9-1-1, and conference calls are not possible. The vast array of services offered by Bell Canada is not to be found in these municipalities. But the advertising is.

It is frustrating for people to receive advertising on a range of services with a 30 per cent discount on 10 ultramodern communications services offered by Bell Canada and to be told by head office that they are not entitled to these services, that they may not take advantage of the 30, 40, 50 and 70 per cent discounts because their system is completely behind the times, ready for the junk heap.

We were happy last September 6 at the marvellous news that Bell Canada was going to modernize its networks. At last, no more lives will be at risk. It is a serious matter when you do not have access to 9-1-1 service in communities. Situations can arise where citizens' lives are in danger and Bell Canada is doing nothing.

They are happy, except that there is a hitch, and it is this: Bell Canada will be passing on to these small communities the cost of modernizing the network in the form of a major hike in rates for local service. In other words, three municipalities elsewhere in Quebec, as in Ontario, located in urban or semi-urban areas, had their modernization paid for by all Bell customers, but those remaining, small rural communities, will have to cover the cost themselves. This is no small matter.

If I look at my riding, where two municipalities and parishes have these outmoded communications systems, monthly rates will increase by approximately \$4. In addition to this \$4, there are the increases already planned by Bell. I would remind you that they are talking of a \$2 hike in 1996, \$2 in 1997, \$2 in 1998, which makes \$6 more on local rates. Now another \$4. Do you realize what this means over 25 months for telephone service charges? A rise of close to 100 per cent.

Is such a situation normal, when everywhere else with a high population density systems were modernized from the funding of the entire client base? Now they will be demanding a rate increase on a case by case basis to meet the costs of such modernization.

Small rural communities are required to be cost-effective, to fit in with the movement toward market globalization, to compete with major centres, as well as internationally, and so we end up with situations of discrimination such as this.

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About a year and a half ago, a coalition for the modernization of Bell Canada service was formed in my riding. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of that coalition, which may have prompted Bell Canada's decision to speed up modernization. No rate increases were called for, mind you.

Today, I would like to single out the following for their excellent work: the mayor of Saint-Hyacinthe, Claude Bernier, who is also reeve of the regional county municipality and one the key players in the coalition; Jean Messier, Mayor of Saint-Damase; Mr. Guillet, Mayor of the Parish of Saint-Damase; Mr. Adam, Mayor of the Village of Saint-Pie; Rosaire Martin, Mayor of the Parish of Saint-Pie. I salute, as well, Mario de Telly, Director of the Saint-Hyacinthe economic development corporation. I am grateful for their support and the strong stands they have taken in this matter for the greater good of their fellow citizens.

As I have said, this coalition had only one purpose: to obtain for a population marginalized by Bell Canada the broad range of modern services which technological advances have now made available.

• (1315)

Bell was not, however, ever asked to increase rates inordinately, as it did in the plan it submitted to the CRTC this past September.

We are calling for the government to get a little more involved in this situation, not only for the sake of Saint-Pie and Saint-Damase, but also for the other 300 Quebec and 250 Ontario municipalities. In the name of its deregulation policy, in the name of its communications policy, the government must require the CRTC not to allow any anomalies such as there are in Saint-Pie and Saint-Damase in my region, and in more than 300 other municipalities in Quebec and Ontario.

The government has to act responsibly, because you cannot treat people in rural areas like second class citizens. They have the same rights as everybody else, and they are entitled to the basic service provided by Bell Canada and other telephone companies. And they also have the same right as anyone else to the services provided by Bell Canada.

I was astonished to see Mr. McLennan announce at a press conference that Bell Canada would make a profit of \$712 million this year and probably even more next year, which will mean more money for the shareholders. Meanwhile, after announcing this increase in profits and increased dividends for shareholders, he announced that in the course of the next 25 months, basic service rates in small rural municipalities would go up by 100 per cent.

Here we do not find compassion nor any concern for dealing fairly with the various regions in this country.

Sure, we want Bell Canada to modernize its equipment. Sure, we want deregulation which, if the minister does his job and if this government does its job, might improve rates for the consumer, but at the same time, we do not want small municipalities which are already at a disadvantage because of their location, compared with more centrally located areas, to be charged more by a big corporation that is federally regulated.

We hope the CRTC will respond to appeals from the coalition in my riding, and I mentioned some prominent members of the coalition earlier, and that it will require Bell Canada to use part of its \$700 million in profits to modernize its equipment without gouging the consumer. I also speak on behalf of Quebec's 300 rural municipalities which are in the same boat as the municipalities of Saint-Pie et Saint-Damase in my region, since the UMRCQ, at its last convention, voted almost unanimously to pass a resolution along the lines of the coalition founded in Saint-Hyacinthe against rate increases to pay for updating facilities.

[English]

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his intervention. It is interesting. There are some points that I would like to comment on and perhaps ask questions of.

The Bloc Québécois has been at pains to point out the difficulties that change brings on people. There is an element of truth in what it says.

However, it seems to me that unless we open the field that these big companies have dominated for so long and allow new technologies to have their place, to have new entries into the marketplace make their play, then we are simply going to be bound by the status quo.

I have heard my hon. colleague mention the number of communities he has in his constituency. I share many of the same concerns that he has. I have rural communities that do not have telephone service or they have the old telephone service that they cannot use for fax communication and for Internet communication. These people are waiting for the lines to bring in the technology that is available to people on modern telecommunications systems and they do not have them. This is not a matter that I am unfamiliar with.

• (1320)

It seems to me, however, that the means for dealing with this is not simply to maintain the status quo, that it must be opened up to the new technologies, that it is not going to be for a very long time that the most distant and most remote parts of our country have the benefit of a land line, a telephone company putting in polls,

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stringing wires and doing all the things we have seen done for the last 50 years. That is not going to happen. What we have to do is open up the marketplace so that the new technologies can bring the modern services that will put these points in communication with the rest of the world.

I also listened to the member speak about the difficulties with people not having 911 numbers. This too must be available for people in the same way with the communication means that are possible.

I would like to ask the member if he does not see the new technology and new avenues of competition as really being a blessing that will bring to people in the remote frontiers of our country the means of communication that they have not had in the past? If he does not see that, how does he intend to see these people who are without communication means get them under the present system?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Loubier: Madam Speaker, I welcome my Reform colleague's comments and questions. We must set the record straight: we are not against deregulation, except when it has such perverse effects, when, instead of the promised rate reductions, we end up facing rate increases. Another perverse effect is that—to get back to my Reform colleague's remark—competition benefits major centres and big consumers.

However, in rural and semi-rural regions, Bell and its competitors are not so eager to provide good services to their customers. That is why deregulation should be followed up to determine its impact on local communities. I can tell you that the deregulation of telephone services has not been good to rural communities so far.

It is up to the minister responsible for communications to ensure that rural communities can benefit from the positive impact of competition in the area of telephone and communications services—and there is indeed a positive impact. Under the current policy, there are now two types of citizens: the people living in densely populated areas, who receive good communications services, and those who live farther away from major centres, who are poorly served by communications companies.

There is no need to go very far. Saint-Pie and Saint-Damase are only about 50 kilometres away from Montreal and some 10 or 15 kilometres from Saint-Hyacinthe. But just because of this short distance, telephone companies are not so eager to provide good services to the population, and that is not normal.

I agree that deregulation can bear fruit, but the fruit has started to rot even before the tree has reached maturity. This is the minister's fault. We are asking the minister to remedy the perverse effects of deregulation and ensure that Bell Canada and its competitors

provide the same high quality services to all citizens, whether they live in cities or in rural communities. That is not the case today.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague's remarks on this important issue and I would like to get his view on the fact that, at present, technological advances—and we are all for technology and we believe in it—are not accessible and apparently cannot be made equally accessible to all consumers.

• (1325)

Precisely because large urban centres are profitable for telephone companies, that is where the competition is and, naturally, urban consumers will have access to excellent services at a presumably reasonable price. But in rural areas, Bell Canada remains the only provider. The competition does not reach there; it would cost them too much.

Bell Canada, which used to be able to derive part of its revenue from urban centres to make up for the higher cost of providing service to rural areas, can no longer do that and, as a result, people living in rural areas will not enjoy the same grade of service or good prices as their urban counterparts.

Does my hon. colleague not think that our friends from the Reform Party should take up the position of the Bloc Québécois to ensure that technological advances and deregulation benefit all citizens and demand that the Minister of Industry take steps to ensure we achieve this desirable end.

Mr. Loubier: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague from Portneuf has taken the words right out of my mouth. I had written, to conclude my response to our colleague from the Reform Party, that the Reformers might consider joining us in our pursuit to ensure that all our fellow citizens may enjoy the benefits of the deregulation process as soon as possible and have their rates cut.

I am reaching out to the Reform Party. If ever you experience in your rural communities the same unfair situation my fellow citizens of Saint-Pie and Saint-Damase are facing following Bell Canada's recent decisions, I urge you to join forces with us, and I will be pleased to join with you on this issue.

On other issues, it may be a different story, but on this one, I must say that we think alike and that is a good thing. The purpose of this coalition was to get the minister to yield, so that there will not be first-class and second-class citizens in Quebec and Canada, but only one class of citizens served by these large corporations and also by medium sized communications companies.

Your analysis, which you shared with us earlier, hon. colleague from the Reform Party, is exactly along the same lines as our analyses and those of the Bloc member for Portneuf. If our parties can, for this once, join forces in the interest of our fellow citizens, we will do so.

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In the meantime, let me tell you that, over the next few weeks, the CRTC will be hearing representations from various groups on the application for rate increase presented by Bell Canada on September 6. I urge you to do as some of us have done and write the CRTC, asking that the system be modernized without rates being raised.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise to address Bill C-57, an act to amend the Bell Canada Act.

This bill seeks to allow Bell Canada to hold a broadcasting licence or to operate a broadcasting undertaking which, until now, the company was prohibited from doing.

This legislation is part of the regulatory changes undertaken by the government to allow competition among the various players in the communications sector. Telephone companies will now be allowed to operate in the broadcasting and cable broadcasting sectors, while cable companies will be able to use their networks to sell telephone services and to provide access to the information highway.

We agree with the objective to promote competition and convergence, and we support the bill. However, this legislation only solves Bell Canada's case. The government must still grant the same privilege to other companies providing telephone services, including Quebec Telephone and BC Tel.

Let us not forget that, with the support and the co-operation of the public, the Bloc Québécois worked very hard to show to the government the major role played by Quebec Telephone in eastern Quebec's economy.

• (1330)

The Bloc Québécois asked that Quebec Telephone also be allowed to provide broadcasting services. The government recognized the soundness of the official opposition's arguments and, on August 6, when it launched its policy, it also announced that Quebec Telephone and BC Tel would be allowed to access the new convergence market, and that an order in council would be made to this effect.

We are concerned that this bill was tabled without any order being made regarding Quebec Telephone and BC Tel. Madam Speaker, I ask you to remind the government that it would be greatly appreciated if the order was made before the final vote on this bill, so as to give equal treatment to all telephone companies.

We cannot talk about a bill on Bell Canada without mentioning the recent telephone rate increases approved by the federal government. The new competitive environment was supposed to result in a lowering of the rates, including for long distance services. In fact, prices went down only for major users and companies.

As for Bell Canada's clients, they will have to put up with two successive increases of two dollars, in 1996 and in 1997, and with an undetermined one in 1998. The government overturned CRTC decisions that would have given residence customers and small and medium size businesses a rebate on long distance calls.

In the end, the government's attitude towards the industry means that it would be up to the consumers instead of investors and phone company shareholders to pay for the development of communications networks and for their adaptation to the information highway.

For the industry, getting assistance from the government means that the companies do not have to take any risk or invest any money. They make the consumers pay for their investments, make huge profits which are, for the most part, tax deductible, not to mention the deduction they might get for their contribution to the party.

Several companies are not at all interested in developing networks in rural areas, because it is less profitable than developing networks in urban areas. Ever since the government has introduced competition at the local service level, it has become obvious that regions will be adversely affected.

Putting an end to cross subsidization between the rural areas and the cities will be devastating, since it will result in an increase in rates and reduced access to services.

First, the rates will go up, as of July 1997, businesses in rural areas will pay \$5 to \$10 more than businesses in urban areas.

Also, residence customers will face an 87 per cent increase over a period of a little more than two years, if you add to the rate increases the cost of modernizing telephone exchanges.

These increases are occurring as the chairman of Bell Canada announces that his company expects its net income to grow by 40 per cent and to generate \$712 million in profits.

Even if it talks about accessibility, the government has not promised to set up any kind of system to provide universal access to telecommunications, as was proposed by the Fédération nationale des associations de consommateurs du Québec, and has not found it necessary to ask the CRTC to examine this issue.

Therefore, in the communications area, there is a huge risk to see the gap widen between the urban areas and the regions, between the people who have easy access to and those who are starved of information.

This gap will only emphasize the cultural isolation of the regions, deny the local economies the tools they need to make up for their geographical isolation and to fully take part in the market globalization.

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The fact that the opposition supports the federal initiative set out in this bill in no way means that we agree with all the government policies concerning the communications industry, far from it.

• (1335)

While the government has thoroughly addressed issues such as competition, deregulation and markets with regard to the information highway, it seems to have neglected to look at what will be offered to the public.

These technological innovations open the door to promising changes. However, society must take the time to adapt to these changes and to find the best way to benefit from them.

These new communication technologies have been dubbed "information highway" because, just like highways, they allow people to communicate more rapidly. But even if one likes to drive, highways are only useful if they lead to interesting places.

An information highway without any interesting content, whether educational, artistic, scientific or other, would be as useless and boring as a highway that would stretch over hundreds of kilometers without any exit, without beautiful scenery, and that would bring us right back to our starting point.

Yet, this is exactly what the government is doing. It wants to give our country an information highway but has no plan to develop meaningful Canadian products in both official languages.

I am talking about products developed here by our own creators, that would reflect the culture and the interests of our society and that would be accessible to the public. These products would also represent us in the global forum which the information highway is becoming more and more everyday.

Of course, the minister is even less concerned with the importance of developing French language products that would allow Quebecers, Acadians and other French-speaking communities in Canada to benefit fully from the opportunities offered by these new communication technologies.

The government is talking about recognizing Quebec as a distinct society, but its actions do not match its words. In this case, it should ensure a French content in all communications-related areas.

The industry minister is so obsessed with the economic aspect, the competition issue and building infrastructures that he is even forgetting the price-quality ratio and seems to be stuck on the word price.

Forgetting the word quality is forgetting the millions of taxpayers and consumers who pay high taxes and high telephone and cable bills and who want to have more for their money.

Recently, the government has shown again its lack of commitment to protect Canada's and Quebec's cultures when it authorized two American audio programming service companies, Power DirecTv and DMX, to broadcast in Canada without having to comply with CTRC rules on minimum Canadian and French language content.

Of course, the minister wanted to reassure Canadians and, in all the information she gave, she forgot to mention that DMX will broadcast 17 American channels that are not authorized by the CRTC.

These American services will be competing with the services of Canadian companies, which do meet CRTC requirements and which invest here in the production of Canadian content, which employ our own technicians, artists and creators.

Canada negotiated a "cultural exemption" clause in NAFTA so that it could protect Canadian cultural industries. The Liberal government has given up enforcing this clause, and, bit by bit, is opening the door ever wider to Americans. The Liberal Party's job creation promises will thus come true, but largely in the United States, as far as culture is concerned.

Another case where the government has opened the door to American products is that of satellite television. The government was unable to help set up a Canadian direct to home satellite broadcasting service.

• (1340)

Some 400,000 Canadians, 80,000 of them in Quebec, living largely in rural areas without access to cable services, subscribed to satellite services originating in the United States. This represents millions of dollars lost to Canadian industry.

There will be important changes in the near future in satellite television technology. Consumers who spent a lot of money on satellite dishes may well find themselves with equipment that is no longer compatible with the new technology.

The government is refusing to conduct advertising campaigns to inform the public about these changes. It is refusing to protect the public by requiring that dishes be leased until equipment adapted to the new technologies is available, in order to save consumers the expense of these changes.

By thus allowing retailers to continue to sell satellite dishes that will soon be useless because they are based on old technology, the federal government is completely neglecting its responsibility to protect consumers. Yet, section 5 of the Act to establish the Department of Industry, which requires the minister to promote science and technology in Canada, also stipulates, and I quote: "—the minister shall exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions—in a manner that will promote the interests and protection of Canadian consumers".

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There is still time for the minister to redeem himself. First of all, people who have purchased satellite dishes since January 1, 1995 ought to be compensated when they are required to make changes to accommodate the new technology.

This would affect close to 400,000 Canadians, 80,000 of them Quebecers, who have been the ones taken for a ride. It has been known since 1994 that dish technology is going to become obsolete, now that CBC and all stations have gone digital. That was known when the dishes were sold.

They are still being sold in Canada, and purchasers are not even being warned by a government label or some other means stating "these antennas are purchased at your own risk. This is an outmoded technology, so you cannot come after us claiming compensation later on." The government has a responsibility concerning these companies, which are selling obsolete technology without any scruples.

Second, the minister ought to warn consumers not to invest in outdated technology. The government ought to carry out a serious information campaign, even going so far as to ban sales of this satellite technology during the transition period, and to allow only short-term leasing, so as to protect the public against unscrupulous vendors.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois has demanded, still demands, and will continue to demand unrelentingly that the government take consumer interests and regional interests into greater consideration, where price and quality as well as content and services are concerned.

We will be closely monitoring how much expression the government will allow francophones, how much funding it will give them to permit full, quality expression in French. We will continue to criticize the federal government's lack of vision with respect to culture and consumer goods.

● (1345)

Since the Bloc Québécois was elected to the House of Commons, we have seen time and time again how the government has no compunction about selling off Canadian culture, bit by bit. Not a day goes by in this House without a government member rising to say we want to destroy Canada, but I accuse the Liberal government of wanting to destroy this country by selling Canadian culture off bit by bit, day after day, month after month. And that is the truth.

When the day comes when a country has no more culture, when Canadian culture has become American, do not ask Quebec to save you again. You took from us the name of our country and our national anthem, but we will make ourselves a country where we have our own culture, where we can develop our potential. Meanwhile, we will support this bill, provided the case of Québec Téléphone and B.C. Tel is settled before we are asked to vote on third reading. Enough is enough.

We are now backing down from promises made to B.C. Tel and Québec Téléphone. You can be sure we will vote against this bill if B.C. Tel and Québec Téléphone do not get a fair deal from this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Therefore, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Industry.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

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[English]

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS (REMEDIAL AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES) ACT

The House resumed from October 22, consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, an act to authorize remedial and disciplinary measures in relation to members of certain administrative tribunals, to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak on Bill C-49 which came out originally as a housekeeping bill.

The bill deals with the administrative changes to boards, agencies and tribunals. For the most part it makes fairly minor changes, or what would appear to be minor changes. What it does not do in all of these boards is improve the accountability. It does not improve the competence of the people who are appointed or the quality of the appointees.

It was the hope of the Reform Party that the government would follow through with some of its promises in the red book to bring greater accountability to these politically appointed boards and commissions. The red book promised:

A Liberal government will take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government—and make competence and diversity the criteria for federal appointments. Open government will be the watchword of the Liberal program.

A Liberal government will examine the size and relevance of existing boards and commissions to achieve cost savings by shrinking some boards and commissions and eliminating those that no longer play a useful role. To fill the vacancies that remain, a

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Liberal government will review the appointment process to ensure that necessary appointments are made on the basis of competence.

I would like to focus on a specific area of Bill C-49 that relates to the Immigration and Refugee Board. First of all, Bill C-49 has not been passed by Parliament and already the Immigration and Refugee Board has implemented the changes. It would appear that the IRB has little respect for the parliamentary process as it has not waited for legislative debate and passage before implementing this new process. This just reinforces the Liberals' arrogance and total disregard for the parliamentary process.

• (1350)

Prior to this amendment the refugee division was required to have a minimum of two members to hear every refugee claim. If both members hearing a claim differed on the final determination, the negative decision was always overruled. This bill now changes the minimum requirement to one member so that if the member rules that the claim is not valid, their decision will now stand.

At first glance I could favour this amendment. It would appear that it would be quickly processing or allowing double the work to be done in half the time. However since this change is already in effect at the IRB, I have learned that the majority of cases are still being heard by panels of two members due to pressure and interference by refugee lawyers.

These lawyers can choose whether they want one member or two members to hear their case, depending on who the member is. If the lawyer does not like the single member, then they request a panel of two members to increase their chances that their client's claim will be accepted. This certainly puts into question the arm's length approach that is intended.

I have also learned that members are being pressured into increasing the number of positive decisions, something the IRB has assured me time and time again does not happen but I keep hearing about it from people within the system. How can someone make an unbiased and objective decision with pressure from the board like that placed on them?

I ask: Where has this process become more efficient and cost effective? The IRB is costing taxpayers about \$77 million a year. Members of the board have been and continue to be patronage appointments comprised of former refugee lawyers and advocates that depend on refugee claims for their livelihood. How objective would you be if your bread was buttered by the very people that are now appearing before you?

The entire purpose of the IRB has to be questioned. Guidelines are issued to IRB members that really put the entire process into question. For example, a woman arrives, claims to be single with children, claims to have been abandoned by her husband and now fears persecution in her country. The guidelines pertaining to gender related claims indicate that a member is in great difficulty

to deny this woman refugee status even if her claim is questionable because the IRB is non-adversarial. The IRB member cannot investigate the woman's allegation because it may put the woman at risk. The woman is then given the benefit of the doubt.

This guideline is very well known to immigration lawyers and is often used as a tactic to ensure that their client remains in Canada. After the woman is allowed to stay in Canada, she sponsors her husband who she originally claimed abandoned her. This is a case of blatant abuse of the refugee determination process. What is the purpose of hearing cases like this one when we know full well that the outcome is predetermined by the IRB guidelines?

One of the purposes of the Immigration Act is to provide protection to genuine refugees fearing persecution. I fail to see where this is addressed in a guideline such as the one I just mentioned.

What have the Liberals done to deter this type of abuse? Nothing. Something has to be done to ensure that genuine refugees are granted the protection they need and that bogus refugees do not use this avenue as a means of curtailing the normal immigration process.

The abusers of the system are causing genuine refugees to be left fearing for their lives while these abusers jump the immigration queue and benefit from Canada's social and health programs. This is unfair to those who rely on this system as a genuine and legitimate way of finding protection and safety.

The IRB thinks it is doing its job by providing statistics to the minister every year showing how many cases have been processed and how many refugees are now in Canada. However, what it fails to mention is the large volume of backlog cases that leave genuine refugees in limbo for an unacceptable length of time. This cannot continue. The IRB must now face the fact that it has failed the immigration system by allowing the backlog of refugee claims and by way of this bill it has made it worse.

• (1355)

There are qualified public servants within the Department of Citizenship and Immigration who could assume the responsibilities of the Immigration and Refugee Board and would process the refugee claims in a more objective and cost effective manner. I see no purpose in giving political appointees a place to sit for \$86,000 a year when there are qualified people already in place to do the job.

Another improvement in the immigration system would be for officials at the ports of entry to be granted more responsibility in the initial determination of refugee claims made upon arrival. They are the ones on the front line who see firsthand what documents are not present. They are in a position to ask questions before the applicant can be coached by lawyers on what to say. Right now all a person has to do upon arrival in Canada is claim to be a refugee and they are allowed to stay and have their claim heard, even if the

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immigration official knows that they used fraudulent means to get here and are not genuine refugees.

There are few if any options open to the immigration officers at the ports of entry. Therefore, what is the purpose of having immigration officers at the ports of entry if we are not going to allow them to do their job and make decisions? What have the Liberals done to improve this? Nothing.

The Reform Party is committed to and relies on a grassroots approach to its policies. This government needs to take lessons from the Reform Party. Rely on the front line people. They are the people who can make a difference and can provide real insight into what needs to be done to improve our immigration system.

This government is not meeting Canada's humanitarian obligations by allowing illegal refugee claimants to stay in Canada.

What have the Liberals done so far? Nothing. A positive move on the part of Liberals would be to amend the Immigration Act by eliminating the IRB altogether and returning this responsibility to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Then again that would save Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars a year—

The Speaker: My colleague, I am going to give you the floor again right after question period. It being 2 p.m., we will now proceed to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

HILLOWE'EN III

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the attention of the House is riveted today on a momentous event, a history making occasion and an occurrence that will affect every member. I am referring of course to the third annual confectionery caucus Hillowe'en party.

One hundred and forty members participated in Hillowe'en II last year. Hillowe'en III will be even bigger.

Canada's value added confectionery manufacturers will display their products and will help raise awareness about this century old Canadian industry's contribution to our economy. Members, their staff and their children can come together in this non-partisan gathering in the best tradition of the Hill.

As a member of the confectionery caucus, I am proud to be associated with an industry that supports the employment of over 7,000 Canadians and generates over \$1.6 billion in factory sales.

I invite all members, their staff and children to join the confectionery caucus and the CMAC tonight in Room 200, West Block from 5.30 to 7.30 for great glorious gobs of goodies.

The Speaker: That sounds like a sweet message.

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[Translation]

POVERTY

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I recently participated in the fast organized in my riding of Quebec by a coalition of organizations to express their rejection of poverty.

This 13-day relay fast allowed hundreds of men and women to express their basic demands aimed at reducing poverty among women, children and the most disadvantaged in Canadian society.

I therefore urge this government to stop reducing the deficit on the backs of the poor and give the UI money back to the people.

In 1993, the Liberals condemned the fact that there were 4.2 million poor people in Canada. There are now 4.9 million poor Canadians, an increase of 700,000, and yet no one on the other side of the House is raising the alarm. This silence is disturbing. If I were cynical, I would say to the government that the time has come for them to take concrete actions so they will look good to the voters.

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[English]

TOP GUN FIGHTER COMPETITION

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of the House and all Canadians, I congratulate the outstanding performance of Canada's air force team who last week defeated six U.S. competitors and won the world renowned top gun fighter competition in Florida.

• (1400)

This was a real team effort by pilots, maintenance and other ground support personnel from Canadian forces bases right across Canada. The fighter pilots are based at 4 Wing Cold Lake in the riding of Beaver River.

I congratulate Captain Ross Granley of Red Deer, Captain Brian Murray of Markham, Captain Dave Mercer of Montreal and Captain Steve Nierlich of Toronto who won the best individual score in aerial combat competition.

Nothing else inspires wide eyed, heart thumping excitement quite like the flash and thunder of fighter jets streaking across our skies. I experience this thrill often when I am home in Beaver River as they race overhead.

The Canadian men and women who equip, fly and maintain these marvellous machines for training, active duty or international skill competitions have our deepest admiration and appreciation. Way to go, top guns.

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[Translation]

BEAUCE

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Beauce region is leading the way. Three levels of education—high school, college and university—and the private sector worked together on a joint project: the business innovation and technological transfer service or SITTE in French, which is supported by the federal government and whose mission is to help businesses design or modify equipment or prototypes and analyze manufacturing processes.

I want to stress the significance of this co-operation among the private, education and parapublic sectors in our region. Achievements like this can make the difference between regional development and the international competitiveness of local businesses.

I salute the initiative of the Beauce community. This is a first in Quebec.

To supplement government funds, \$263,000 was raised in a drive among businesses in the Beauce region. The committee was chaired by Marcel Dutil of the Canam-Manac group. The SITTE is a great project that looks to the future of the Beauce region.

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[English]

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize October as Women's History Month. It is imperative that all Canadians recognize the historical contributions made and the diverse roles that women play in today's society.

The theme for this year's celebration is women and the arts. Women in Canada have left a cultural legacy in the arts and their achievements are an integral part of our national history and identity. Women have been active and successful in every arena of the arts, writing, sculpture, carving, painting, pottery, photography, theatre, television and film, to name a few.

This month we also have the honour to commemorate Persons Day, the day that Canadian women were first recognized as persons before the law. We have a lot to celebrate and I am certain that all members join with me in congratulating women from coast to coast to coast on their past, their present and their future achievements.

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ELVIRA SAADI

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has designated the month of October Women's History Month. There is no better way to celebrate women in our communities than to highlight their contributions and achievements.

I wish to congratulate Elvira Saadi, a two time Olympian and head coach of Canada's gymnastic team at the Atlanta Summer Olympics, for her work as a coach and teacher. A member of the Cambridge Kips Gymnastic Club, Elvira Saadi was named the 1995 Coach of the Year by the Canadian Gymnastic Federation.

On behalf of the people of Cambridge, I congratulate Elvira for the care and effort she has put into the training of young Canadian gymnastic athletes.

* * *

VETERANS

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next week is Veteran's Week, when we honour the sacrifices our veterans made for our freedom. These brave soldiers selflessly fought for a free Europe and for the freedom which Canadians enjoy today. Now it is our turn to protect them.

Recently, Allied veterans living in Canada had their pensions revoked. They came to depend on their pensions for survival, and rightly so. These were hard earned pensions awarded because they fought side by side with Canadian soldiers.

It is unfair to revoke these pensions now that Allied veterans are in their most vulnerable years. These defenders of freedom deserve the security of the pensions they were promised. I ask all members of this House to take an active role in advocating the restoration of pensions for Allied veterans.

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[Translation]

SENIORS

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, single persons between the ages of 60 and 74 are being discriminated against in that they are not eligible to a seniors benefit like their fellow citizens of the same age who receive spouse's allowances.

● (1405)

Such discrimination on the basis of marital status goes against the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Minister of Human Resources Development argues that Canada cannot afford to make changes to its program to correct this injustice. But the minister must see reason and decide to implement fair and equitable measures.

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Right now, he is hiding behind the new seniors benefit, which is not slated to take effect before the year 2001.

Our society must not put up with this kind of discrimination any longer.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the spirit of this week, I rise today to commend the minister of agriculture on his amazing Halloween performance. He has truly given new meaning to the term “trick or treat”.

The minister has tricked farmers by failing to deliver three-quarters of the actual agriculture promises in the red book, keeping only 7 of 28. Specifically, the minister has cut agriculture research, failed to defend agriculture aggressively in trade relations with the Americans, quickly abandoned his commitment to preserve and strengthen article XI of the GATT and has fallen short of creating a national whole farm safety net.

When the minister attempts to treat farmers with the promise of reforms, he tricks them again by not following through, as most recently demonstrated by his unspectacular announcement of Canadian Wheat Board reforms. The minister is pushing costs into farmers' laps through his cost recovery schemes. Reform thinks it would be a real treat if the minister would make some of the cost disappear, starting with the oversized Pest Management Regulatory Agency.

If the minister does not start to perform soon, farmers may wave their magic wands and turn him into a pensioned pumpkin. That trick would be the greatest treat of all.

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TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal's elimination of the Crow benefit and rail abandonment will have a devastating effect on western farmers' pocketbooks and on our road system.

The Trans-Canada Highway system is already overloaded with tourist traffic. Increased traffic compromises safety and efficiency on our national highway system. The Liberals have a responsibility to ensure that the Trans-Canada Highway meets these growing demands.

The Trans-Canada No. 1 West Association, headed by Regina Mayor Doug Archer, presented a transport brief outlining the importance of twinning the Trans-Canada from Kenora, Ontario to

Vancouver, B.C. The Trans-Canada West Association makes the point that investing in Canada's Main Street will pay for itself in job creation by bringing more trade and tourism dollars to the west.

The Liberals have handed out an \$87 million interest free loan to profitable Bombardier in Quebec. The New Democrats challenge this government to invest in twinning the Trans-Canada west to bring jobs and growth to the west. This can be done in the next budget by dedicating 2 cents a litre for one year of the 14 cents a litre in gas taxes the federal government collects in excise and GST in gasoline sales.

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LAW OF THE SEA

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the United Nations tribunal on the Law of the Sea, with its seat in Hamburg, completes the conflict resolution machinery under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 which has now finally entered into force.

From the United Nations conferences on the Law of Sea of 1958-1960, on to the most recent 1970 to 1982 marathon, Canadian diplomats have led in successfully arguing the case for third party dispute settlement, especially judicial settlement. It is to be hoped that when Canada finally ratifies the 1982 convention we may be able to secure the election of a Canadian judge to the new court.

* * *

CHILD LABOUR

Mr. John English (Kitchener, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each year the United Nations and the International Labour Organization announce statistics on the number of children exploited in the world's labour forces. This year's figure places that number in excess 100 million boys and girls under the age of 16.

Canada has long supported efforts to counter exploitive child labour, as demonstrated recently by a \$700,000 commitment to the ILO's international program for the elimination of child labour. I applaud the government for this and look forward to continued efforts in this regard.

As Canadians we are proud of institutions like CIDA and its overseas development assistance programs which pursue integrated approaches while taking into account culture, education, poverty and other variables in this complex issue.

Moreover, at the Liberal Party's recent biennial conference the party adopted a resolution on protecting the world's children, further confirming the party's commitment to these pressing issues.

As chair of a subcommittee that is currently studying the topic, I look forward to the continued support of my colleagues and that of

the Minister of Foreign Affairs in recommending improved ways to protect the most treasured and vulnerable in society, our children. [English]

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[Translation]

LEADER OF THE BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc leader is upset because the Liberal convention was such a success. His frustration is understandable; after all, his party was never able to develop, let alone put forward, a meaningful electoral platform.

• (1410)

He feels frustrated looking back on the Bloc's convention in April 1995, where delegates spent most of their time developing strategies to change the temporary status of their party instead of developing party policy and direction.

The separatist member for Roberval can shout and threaten all he wants, the fact remains that he heads a party that has lost its relevance since Lucien Bouchard left to run the government in Quebec.

The Bloc's separatist blueprint no longer meets the people's expectations, as they will be told loud and clear in the next election.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a survey released yesterday by the Quebec minister responsible for relations with the public shows that Quebecers are increasingly tolerant and open to ethnic and cultural diversity.

A majority of people believe that immigration promotes economic development, with 72 per cent regarding it as contributing to the province's cultural richness. Young Quebecers are the ones who have the most positive and dynamic attitude in this respect. This bodes well for the future of Quebec.

Comparisons with the rest of Canada are striking. While only 29 per cent of respondents in Montreal consider that there are too many immigrants in their city, in Toronto and Vancouver, that percentage rises to 46 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

This goes to show that the people of Quebec have the most positive attitude toward immigration in Canada. I can personally attest to that. Newcomers who choose Quebec as their new home can expect a warm welcome.

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LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a memo from the Prime Minister's office is instructing Liberals to tell Canadians lies about the Reform Party. This is known politics as a fax attack.

The Liberal memo is full of misleading and dishonest statements. It is an abuse of power of the Prime Minister's office to smear Reform. Is this the Liberal way?

Reform launched its fresh start platform to encourage debate on the serious issues facing Canadians today. The Liberals resort to slander. Is this the Liberal way?

The Liberals' pre-election strategy is to slander Reform. They offer no policies of their own. They hurl invective because they have no vision. Is this the Liberal way?

Gutter tactics resorted to by the Prime Minister's office demean the political process, insult Canadians and confirm that the Reform Party is indeed the Liberals' chief political opponent.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC'S ECONOMY

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, is it a coincidence? Is it a well organized strategy?

In any case, the timing could not have been better for the Mouvement national des Québécois and the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Montreal to launch their regional tour to mobilize people against Bill 86.

The announcement was made on the eve of the socio-economic summit, during which Lucien Bouchard will try to rally participants around common objectives relating to job creation and economic recovery.

Are these two organizations attempting to thwart the reconciliation efforts of Premier Bouchard? The Bloc Québécois should answer this question and tell us officially on whose side it stands regarding the linguistic issue.

As for me, the member for Brome—Missisquoi, I said it before and I will say it again: Quebec's National Assembly must put the idea of a referendum on hold for 10 to 15 years, in order to revitalize Quebec's economy.

Oral Questions

[English]

HELEN NEWTON

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and congratulate Helen Newton from Minden, Ontario.

Mrs. Newton was selected to receive one of three TV Ontario teaching awards from a long list of teachers from across the province.

Children across Ontario often read the delightful book *Flat Stanley*. Mrs. Newton's class makes its own Flat Stanleys to swap with classrooms around the world in a project that blends old-fashioned writing and geography with surfing the Internet.

Since the school does not have access to the Internet, Mrs. Newton takes the kids' adventures home to her personal computer and sends them to classrooms in Hawaii, Texas, France and the rest of the world via her modem.

Congratulations, Helen Newton.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is desperately trying to convince Canadians that he has kept his promises.

Well, Canadians will not be fooled by his twisting of the facts. Let us look at the major promises.

Fact No. 1, the Prime Minister promised to eliminate the GST. This empty promise has not been kept.

Fact No. 2, the Prime Minister promised to create employment opportunities for Canadians. This empty promise has not been kept. The reality is that this government has created fewer jobs than the previous government over the same period of time in office.

• (1415)

I could go on and on, for the list of empty promises is long. Canadians will remember that the Prime Minister has not met his commitments to the people and they will grade him much lower than his self-serving 78 per cent.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

FEDERAL INVESTMENTS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's investment policy discriminates against Quebec and has done so since 1981. The fact remains that the federal govern-

ment does not invest enough in Quebec, considering its demographic numbers.

The figures are there to prove it. Thousands of jobs have been lost in Quebec because the federal government does not distribute its investments equitably. Over a period of 15 years, Quebec has obtained only 16 per cent of federal investment and 14 per cent of investments by Crown corporations.

How can the Prime Minister blithely insist that all is well, when his own government refuses to deal fairly with Quebec in the matter of structural spending that creates jobs?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has invested money in the whole country, in every province of Canada.

Unfortunately, sometimes the Bloc Québécois does not realize this. For instance, in the National Capital Region, the Bloc Québécois tends to count all federal investment as being on the Ontario side, without considering the fact that one third of the Canadian government's operations are on the Quebec side. Besides, if we exclude the national capital, I still think the distribution is pretty fair.

We have a system that establishes a certain balance in our society. We have equalization payments that go to the weakest sectors in the Canadian economy. We have a formula under which last year, we were able to send an additional \$500 million to Quebec because Quebec's revenue fell far short of the forecast, and also because of interest rate levels.

For instance, because the government took charge of the country's finances in a very systematic way, the Quebec government over the past 18 months was able to save \$625 million in interest rates alone, which represents an enormous amount for the people of Quebec. However, the leader of the opposition is afraid to mention these positive aspects.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just admitted quite frankly something we have reproached him with for a long time. The money is invested on the Ontario side, leaving Quebec with transfer payments, unemployment insurance and transfers for social assistance. That is the government's policy.

Will the Prime Minister admit that by concentrating federal investment in Ontario and paying unemployment insurance and making social assistance transfers to Quebec, he is practising a policy of pauperization, which is the kind of policy we do not want any more in Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we regularly announce investments made in Quebec, so much so that we are criticized by the Reform Party because for instance, we helped a company that is on its way to become one of the biggest aircraft manufacturers in the world. It ranks sixth today and will soon rank fourth.

Oral Questions

However, we also helped the province of Alberta develop their tar sands because we know that it is very important in the interests of all Canadians to develop the technology and the potential of these reserves so they can be used later on.

That is what Canada is about. It means being able to find what works in each part of the country so that everyone can benefit. If the oil companies make money in Alberta, they pay taxes to the central government, which redistributes the money to all Canadian provinces, which means Quebec as well as the other provinces. Unfortunately, because of Quebec's weak economy, we have to pay more equalization payments to Quebec, which we do not do in the case of Ontario, Alberta or British Columbia.

• (1420)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, amazingly, the Prime Minister fails to understand that the federal government collects taxes from Quebec, year after year, but Quebec gets far less in return in the form of procurement of goods and services.

Mr. Pettigrew: That is not true.

Mr. Gauthier: When the federal government buys elsewhere using the money of Quebec and the federal government invests elsewhere with Quebecers' money, does it not realize that Quebec now knows that federalism is making Quebec poor, and underinvestment—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gauthier: The ministers are shouting, because the truth always hurts.

Mr. Loubier: Yes, it hurts.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, if it would make them shout more, I would tell them this: do any of them know that underinvestment by the federal government has cost Quebec an average of 8,000 jobs annually, the real jobs Quebec needs? And yes, I am a separatist because we are sick and tired of being exploited by the federal system.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to come from a province that in the thirties helped Alberta when it was in trouble. Today, Alberta is helping Quebec, so that year after year, Quebec gets about 24 to 25 per cent of federal spending, while it contributes 21 per cent.

Mr. Bergeron: That is not true.

Mrs. Picard: That is wrong.

Mr. Dion: The opposition keeps trying to find specific programs where Quebec gets less than its share. These always seems to be programs that require spending to be focused in the National Capital Region, for the benefit of all Canadians and Quebecers as well, since so many of them work in the National Capital Region.

And we will fight separatism. In fact I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for showing his true colours, and calling himself a separatist.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs does not know what he is talking about and the Prime Minister is afraid to answer the questions put by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs talks about political programs, when billions of dollars are being invested annually by the federal government, but not in Quebec.

When opposition members, with figures to back them up, say that Quebec has not received its share of federal government and Crown corporation investments, the government can create all the diversions it wants, but one fact remains: according to the government's own figures, Quebec has missed out on over seven billion federal dollars over the last 15 years.

My question is for the Prime Minister, if he dares to answer it. Will the Prime Minister admit that the seven billion dollars not invested by the federal government in Quebec over the last 15 years that should have been invested there given the size of its population represents over 8,100 jobs a year lost to Quebec through his fault?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not necessarily familiar with the statistics the member has just given. He spoke primarily of years during which I know Lucien Bouchard served as a minister in the previous government.

Mr. Young: There are gaps in his memory.

Mr. Manley: What I know is this: on October 21, 1996, we invested \$87 million in Canadair. On October 21, 1996 we invested close to one million dollars in Matériaux Techniques Côté; on October 11, \$4.25 million in Ericsson Communications; on October 9, almost one million in the École polytechnique. There are many examples.

• (1425)

I fail to understand why the Bloc Québécois always wants Quebec to have such a negative image, when it is a powerful province.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying to lead the debate off track. We are talking about investments in federal government buildings, land, and rolling stock, and he is talking about specific projects. If he wants to play that game, 1,000 question periods would not be enough for him to get through all the investment projects in Ontario. That is the reality of the matter.

Oral Questions

The federal government does Quebec out of \$1.3 billion in procurement annually. Now we learn that Quebec is receiving far less than its share of federal government and crown corporation investments.

How was it that the Prime Minister was patting himself on the back over the weekend for his government's fine performance, when the federal government has had it in for Quebec for at least the last 15 years, depriving it of billions of dollars in investments and tens of thousands of jobs? I would like him to explain that to me.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ministers are ready to reply to these attacks, so there is no need for me to rise in my place.

If the hon. members truly had Quebecers' best interests at heart, instead of creating political uncertainty, instead of calling themselves sovereignists for a year and a half, and then admitting today that they are separatists, if they were truly concerned with what is best for all the people of Quebec, they would be following our lead and pushing for political stability, so that the private sector would invest in Quebec, just as it does in the rest of Canada.

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[English]

LIBERAL PARTY

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at the Liberal convention last weekend the Prime Minister bragged at great length about the Liberal way and Liberal values. Today Canadians have seen exactly what that Liberal way means: a dirty, American style smear campaign full of distortions and misrepresentations.

Canadians want to debate the real issues facing us. Reformers want to debate those same issues as well. Yet it seems the Prime Minister and his very Prime Minister's Office would rather wallow in the political mire.

I ask the Prime Minister this. Who authorized this political smear campaign? Was the Prime Minister aware of this fax attack? If not, does he approve of his party's and staff's dirty tricks?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, we just said that the Reform Party and their leader had a great reception in Washington with Newt Gingrich. If he regrets his visit and if he wants to say so we will withdraw that.

We said that they oppose anything we do to build unity in this country. Whenever there is controversy about the two official languages in this House they are always opposed to having the reality confirmed: that we are very proud that English and French are the two official languages of this nation.

If they want to say that they support bilingualism in Canada, in the next letter we send—the same type of letter that they send themselves—of course we will say that they have converted to rationality and Canadianism and vote for things that will help to keep this country together.

We travel the land. When anything divisive comes up in the House of Commons you have members who get up to try to score cheap political points against the government. They hope they will gain votes by division. We gain votes in promoting unity from sea to sea.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the type of arrogance you have just heard voiced by the Prime Minister right now is exactly an indication of what is wrong in this country, just because there are differences in political beliefs, just because we happen to have differences on policies about the Official Languages Act.

• (1430)

This kind of behaviour from this Prime Minister is nothing more than a bold-faced lie. It is as simple as that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Colleagues, we are in the heat of debate. And from time to time in the heat of battle we use words that are unparliamentary. Would the hon. member please withdraw the last few words, "a bold-faced lie" before we proceed.

Miss Grey: Yes, Mr. Speaker, out of respect for the House and for you I withdraw that comment.

May I also say that when I sat back here as the only member of my party when we went through the Meech Lake debate and the Charlottetown accord debate I was labelled an enemy of Canada and someone who had no respect for Canadianism. I refute that. Just remember which side won on the Charlottetown accord.

We thought we had seen the end of this kind of stuff when the Tories were turfed out of office in 1993. These kinds of smear campaigns just go on and on. We are wondering if we see the ghost of Mulroney past in the Prime Minister's Office now.

I ask the Prime Minister this. Is this kind of smear stuff the Liberal way? Does this malicious fax attack reflect Liberal values? Does this American style smear campaign represent the Liberal way? How is this integrity in action?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is willing to pretend that Reform members voted for gun control, fine. But I was in the House of Commons and I know they all voted against gun control. Do they want to change their stand on that? I do not think that it is a smear campaign when we relay the facts of their votes in the House of Commons.

Who thought that the blacks and gays should go to the back of the shop? If they did not say that, fine, I would be happy. However,

it was said and the people of Canada have the right to know what was said. If Reformers want to withdraw that I will be happy to say that they regret what they said.

If Reformers want to say that the investment in Bombardier is as good as the investment in the tar sands I will write it in the next letter. They never attack us when we do something for Alberta but if we do something for another part of Canada they complain. This is the road to division. We want to help everybody in every part of the country so they will all have the same opportunities.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said we voted against gun control. I would like it on the record here today what the truth is. Two of our members, the members for Calgary Centre and North Vancouver, supported Bill C-68 according to their constituents' wishes.

It is the responsibility of all of us as members of Parliament to represent those people who we came here to represent. I know there are many members of the public across Canada who are disgusted with what they have seen in this and what they are listening to on talk shows. They are tired of this kind of political smear campaign and all this dreaming and dressing up that the Prime Minister is doing right now.

• (1435)

Canadians want to talk about tax relief. They want to talk about increased funding for health care because they have seen the system ravaged under these Liberals. They want to make sure that my party's leader, who offered a one on one debate with the Prime Minister, a one on one debate with no gimmicks, no frills, no gadgets, just the two of them, dancing toe to toe.

Will the Prime Minister debate with the leader of the Reform Party of Canada, one on one, on the issues, only on the issues and the facts of lower taxes and more jobs?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here at least three days a week, more than any of my predecessors. I am in my seat in the House to debate with the leader of the Reform Party. He is the one who said that he is wasting his time debating in the House.

He is travelling the country in a bus while as a member of Parliament he should not be afraid to be in the House of Commons to face off every day. But he would rather be sitting in the back of a bus preaching about his conversion.

Not long ago he was giving us a tough time on medicare. Now he has been converted on the road to Damascus. Now he wants to spend money on medicare.

I remember he said that we were not cutting enough and when he said that medicare should be transferred to the private sector. We

want to make sure that every citizen, whether they have money or not, will always have medicare available to them in Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

AMERICAN HELMS-BURTON LAW

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere is particularly highly charged today.

My question is for the Minister of International Trade. At the beginning of this month, the European Union announced its intention to lodge an official complaint with the World Trade Organization concerning the American Helms-Burton law with its extraterritorial measures. The following day, Canada announced its intention to take part in this process initiated by the Europeans.

Since Canada justified its participation in the European complaint by saying it was its duty to protest against the American law, how can the minister explain that Canada has not yet called for the formation of a special group under NAFTA to settle this dispute once and for all?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously, we continue with the protest under NAFTA, but we are also in a position to join many other countries in having this matter adjudicated before the WTO. We are readying to prepare a case in support of the European Union.

One of the strengths of the position Canada has put forward is that we have been able to get the support of countries right around the world that know the action by the United States is wrong. We will continue to work with those countries in a unified way to continue in our action, and the WTO is a good forum for the next step.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, title 4 of the American Helms-Burton law, which this government has not yet attempted to counteract, by the way, forbids the entry into the United States of Canadian businessmen and their families, under the pretext that their companies are supposedly trafficking in American properties in Cuba.

Does the minister not agree that the best way to counteract this definitively is to call for a special working group under NAFTA?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the two issues, both title III and title IV, are intertwined and will be dealt with together, in terms of the WTO and the NAFTA. We will also be continuing at the OECD where

Oral Questions

there is a multilateral agreement on investment. This is very key to the investment rules, the protection of Canadian company assets in other countries.

We will continue to work with other countries. We will continue to use a number of forums to protest Helms-Burton and to get the message across clearly to the United States and other countries that unilateral extraterritorial action attempting to impose their will, their foreign trade policy on Canada or any other country is totally unacceptable.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the Prime Minister and the Liberals are defending the sleaze and the American-style smear campaign—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would ask hon. members on both sides to be very judicious in their choice of words. I would especially ask hon. members not to use the word “sleaze”.

Mr. Solberg: For the record, Mr. Speaker, this government has closed more hospitals than any government in the country with \$3 billion in health care cuts. It is time that was on the record.

During the last election campaign the Tories ran attack ads and the Liberals could not believe it. They went ballistic at some of the ads. The entire country went ballistic. We spoke out against it. Now they are doing exactly the same thing. How can the government justify that hypocrisy?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Again, my colleagues, there are certain words that trigger responses on both sides. I know the hon. member would not want to use the word “hypocrisy” again.

I am going to permit the right hon. Prime Minister to answer the question as he was on his feet.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised. It was just a political debate. Of course I said that they voted against the gun control bill. Two voted for it. Some of my members voted against it. It was part of the debate, but the policy was my party's, passed by a resolution of the party two years ago and we implemented the gun control legislation.

The Reform Party is opposed to gun control, but two of their members voted for it. That is good. We accept that. All of that was in the article. There was all the normal debate.

When we said that they were very comfortable a year and a half ago when Mr. Gingrich was the new political star in the United States, the member for Calgary Southwest took the first plane and

was seen on TV holding hands with Newt and so on. It is amazing that I was not invited by Newt and I do not know why.

• (1445)

It is part of the political debate in the United States when the Republicans talk about a tax cut before they balance their books. We do not subscribe to that. We know that and we think we have to stay the course. Suddenly Reform changes its position. If I am not mistaken Reform has had four different positions on the GST in the last three years so it must have another one for the election. Who knows?

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a lot of gall lecturing us on the GST.

When the Prime Minister went to China, we did not accuse him of supporting summary executions in cavorting with the leadership of that regime and that is something they believe in. I want to point out the little inconsistency here.

My question is a follow-up to the question of the caucus chair of the Reform Party. Will the Prime Minister commit to meeting the leader of the Reform Party in a one on one debate out of this place where we can have a full fledged debate on the issues, not on a bunch of smear campaign ideas from the Americans?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here face to face with him every week, so he can ask me all the questions from the Reform Party in question period. He can ask his own members to shut up, and ask all the questions himself and I might reply to them. Sometimes I might feel that my ministers can plug them easily too. It is part of the political debate.

Reformers should learn one thing: In politics it is better to have a thick skin or they will not go very far.

* * *

[Translation]

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we will try to find out if there is still a government or if the election campaign has already started.

At last weekend's Liberal convention, the delegates passed a resolution urging the government to allow assisted suicide for terminally ill patients who often face intolerable suffering. In response to this resolution, the Prime Minister repeated that there was no urgency.

Are we to understand from the Prime Minister's comments that he has decided to avoid all controversial issues, even the most basic ones like assisted suicide, and that he refuses to get involved in the great debates facing Canadian society?

Oral Questions

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the Liberal Party discussed this complex and difficult issue last weekend.

The Liberal Party of Canada passed a resolution for Parliament to review this matter. We are currently considering it in caucus, in cabinet. We will then decide how to proceed.

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after the Supreme Court gave its ruling two and a half years ago, the Minister of Justice said he would announce later the measures they intended taking.

After Sue Rodriguez died, he again said that measures would be announced. After the Senate committee hearings, he reiterated that they would take action and that the status quo was unacceptable. Once again, they are deferring this until later.

Why is the Prime Minister so intent on deferring this debate until after the next election?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Senate committee has been reviewing this matter for the past three years. They have considered the moral, ethical, medical and legal issues. The Senate committee did not reach a consensus on these issues. During last weekend's convention debate, we recognized that this is a very complex matter.

• (1450)

All aspects must be examined. As I said, we as a government intend to review all this in detail in caucus, in cabinet, in order to develop a position.

* * *

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was at the meeting with Mr. Gingrich in Washington. We also met with a number of Democrats. We also met with a number of people from human rights concerns in Washington while we were there. I will tell you that we were as different as anything we could get from that right wing extremist element they are talking about. When I read that in a newspaper, Mr. Speaker, I was furious. I demand and we demand an apology from the Prime Minister now.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now they do not want to admit that they were praised by Mr. Gingrich. I remember, I read that. Mr. Gingrich said the Reform Party was the way of the future. When I compare the two parties, both have increased their support to 10 per cent.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will not attempt to list all of the praising that has been done of the present Prime Minister, from his homeless friends to all the others. I will not even try to list those.

If the Prime Minister is so certain of himself, why will he not accept an open debate with the leader of the Reform Party? What is he afraid of?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I travel around the world, people realize that Canada is one of the few countries, if not the only one, where there is a question period five times a week with no notice on any questions that can spring up from the opposition.

The Prime Minister sits in the House of Commons with virtually all of his ministers ready to reply to questions and they want to have a debate on top of that. Fine, there will be an election and there will be debate. But the main debate is here in the House of Commons where all members are elected. This is the main place for debate.

I have been here for 33 years and this is the first time that the leader of a party wants to have a debate outside of the House because he does not feel that he is performing very well in debates in le salon de la race.

* * *

[Translation]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the government released the report of the Liberal task force on disability issues. This committee, which did not include any member of the opposition, in essence reiterated the recommendations already made in 1995 in the unanimous report tabled by the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, following months of consultations.

How can the Prime Minister justify such a duplication of time, money and effort, except, once again, to try to buy time and to let organizations calm down, while financing, with taxpayers' money, his platform concerning people with disabilities?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did receive, yesterday, the report of the task force on disability issues, which was very well run by the hon. member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury.

This is a very interesting document, which will have a significant impact on the government's action, and particularly the Department of Human Resources Development. As for myself, I have already pledged to ensure that all Canadians, including those with disabilities, can make a full contribution to our society.

Oral Questions

• (1455)

I am convinced that a number of proposals made by the task force will help us fulfil this commitment. In the coming weeks, I will meet with my colleagues, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of National Revenue, to follow up on this very interesting report.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, still more rhetoric but no action. Rather than giving itself a nice passing grade like the Prime Minister did on the weekend regarding the fulfilment of his red book promises, will this government finally take action and follow up on the recommendations of the human rights committee, before the end of its mandate? Enough promises: we want action.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that our friends opposite, Bloc Québécois members, love action. This government is a responsible government. It wants to make sure that a remarkable consultation exercise such as the one conducted by our colleague truly reflects the concerns of Canadians with disabilities.

Check with them and you will see that, more than ever before, they feel they have had an opportunity to be heard by the government. There will be action, but it will meet the needs and the objectives of these people. We will not take action for the sake of it, as would members of the opposition.

* * *

ASBESTOS

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

In July, France announced an almost total ban on asbestos, as of January 1, 1997. What does the government do to protect the jobs of workers in Quebec's asbestos mines?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the hon. member that the federal government is pursuing this issue very vigorously with its trading partners, with the province of Quebec and with the asbestos industry.

Let me remind the hon. member that the Prime Minister wrote to his counterpart, Mr. Alain Juppé, on October 6. As a result of that letter, today in fact we have a panel of Canadian experts in France providing scientific information and background to the French in terms of our policy on controlled or safe use of asbestos.

Let me also remind the hon. member that it was the Prime Minister, when he was Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in

1983 who signed a 10 year, \$15 million agreement to establish the Asbestos Institute that has pursued scientific inquiry into the safe use of asbestos and developed new asbestos products.

I would hope the hon. member sees that this government has had a long history of commitment to the asbestos industry in Quebec.

* * *

BOMBARDIER INC.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today's *Globe and Mail* headline reads: "Liberals turn sights on Manning: PMO issues attack memo suggesting Reform Party be linked to U.S. extreme right wing". I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the Liberals for targeting Reform. I take it as a compliment that they feel we are a threat to this government and that our policies and platforms have something to offer.

Let us check on innuendo. It is a fact that Bombardier has donated \$170,000 to the Liberals since 1993. It is a fact that Bombardier has done its research on those planes. It is a fact that the Minister of Industry yesterday did not answer my question on criteria fully. It is a fact that the son-in-law of the Prime Minister is on the board.

The Speaker: I ask the hon. member to put his question now.

Mr. Silye: Given these facts, will the Minister of Industry or the Prime Minister explain to us what technical advancement is being developed at Bombardier for \$87 million?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the offensiveness of the preamble to the question, the substance of the question is good.

• (1500)

In deciding to make this investment we looked at the criteria that were described when we announced the technology partnership program and the fact that we were engaged in a risk sharing venture of research and development, in this case the development of an extended version of the Canadair regional jet. We looked at the ability of that product to be marketed internationally. We looked at the number of jobs that were involved: either being sustained or created by the investment. We looked at the likelihood of the government recouping its investment fully. As I said yesterday, when we pass 400 planes we will make a profit on it.

The member lists some facts. It is a fact that despite our trade surplus the only high technology sector in which we have a trade surplus is aerospace. It is a fact that this company, Canadair, is one

Points of Order

of our finest companies and one of the best in the world. We will invest in our winners.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that when we start to use a little innuendo like the government members do they find it offensive. What is good for the goose is good for the gander, so either you take it or you don't.

On the issue of research and development the criteria that were used in this instance are still very suspect. The Minister of Industry picks the one company that is already number six, with \$6.6 billion in assets, with cash in the bank of \$200 million, with profits of \$100 million. That company has enough money to do a lot of its own R and D. Were there matching funds by Bombardier for R and D and if so, how much? And is this just the first part of a three-part instalment?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no, it was not matching money. In fact there was three times the money from the company in this investment. The ratio of the Canadian R and D is 25 per cent.

The hon. member should know it is implicit in his question that if a company succeeds, then it should not be helped. If he were to understand a little bit about the structure of this industry which is a very important industry to Canada, he would know that every other country, and there are not that many, that have a fully developed aerospace industry, are supported either by state ownership or by indirect support through defence procurement or other measures.

We have a study, and I will be happy to give him another copy, so that he can see what those support mechanisms are. In this case the kind of thinking that he brings to this file, as evidenced in his question, is the very thinking that 40 years ago led to the destruction of the Avro Arrow and set Canada's high tech sector back years.

* * *

• (1505)

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on two points of order dealing with the decorum during question period from the party of the fresh start opposite. It is the first time in eight years in Parliament that I have risen on a point of order with respect to decorum.

The member for Medicine Hat, in exchanges during question period, was heard to repeatedly refer to the right hon. Prime Minister as a sleazebag. This was clearly heard by people on this side of the House. In addition, some members on this side heard an unfortunate four letter word that was uttered after we objected to the use of the word sleaze.

The second point of order with respect to the decorum of the House has to do with the actions of the member for Beaver River who, in an exchange with the member for London West, made a gesture which we believe was inappropriate.

The Speaker: We all agree that today was a rather spirited day on both sides. I intervened on two occasions because the nature of the words raised hackles on both sides of the House.

I did not hear the word to which the hon. member referred. I did not see any gestures. If the hon. member wishes me to look at the blues I will, and I will revisit the television tapes. As for the gesture, I do not say this facetiously but how can this be recorded?

I would urge members on days such as this, and we have them from time to time, that we try to discipline ourselves as much as we can and try not to use offensive words.

Today, according to my count which is not official, we had 10 questioners rise in question period. We average around 17 on any given day. Sometimes the questions are a little bit long and sometimes the answers are a little bit long. When the answers are protracted, words are exchanged in the House. Not that I condone it, but this has been going on for years. It is something that we learn to live with as parliamentarians. I would urge members, however, to conduct themselves as parliamentarians and, as much as possible, to stay away from those words that seem to incite both sides of the House.

I would rule that the hon. member does not have a point of order but surely a point of debate.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, because I was named, I think I only have one recourse and that is to ask you for just a few seconds of your time. If blowing a kiss to the member for London West is offensive then all I can say is, forgive me.

• (1510)

The Speaker: If I had my way, which I do not always have, it would be better to kiss each other to death than to fight each other to death. If that is the offensive gesture, I hope we would let these points of order just sit here for today. We will be back tomorrow, same time. I am waiting for you.

Government Orders

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That debate on the motion relating to the appointment of the Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole House and on any amendments proposed thereto shall not be further adjourned.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 144)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anawak
Anderson	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre)
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bernier (Beauce)	Bertrand
Bethel	Bhaduria
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Caccia	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Clancy	Collenette
Collins	Crawford
Cullen	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Duhamel
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Fewchuk	Finestone
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Gaffney
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Hickey
Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Irwin	Jackson
Jordan	Keyes

Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Knudson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee	Lincoln
Loney	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Manley
Marleau	Massé
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McTeague	Mifflin
Milliken	Minna
Murphy	Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Robichaud
Robillard	Rock
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Shepherd
Sheridan	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Szabo
Telegdi	Terrana
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Wells
Whelan	Young
Zed—135	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bachand	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brien	Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Dalphond-Guiral	Daviault
de Jong	de Savoye
Debien	Deshaies
Duceppe	Dumas
Duncan	Epp
Forseth	Frazier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier
Godin	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Johnston
Kerpan	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Marchand
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Ménard	Mercier
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Nunez
Paré	Picard (Drummond)
Ringma	Rocheleau
Scott (Skeena)	Silye
Solberg	Solomon
Speaker	Taylor
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Venne
Wayne	White (North Vancouver)
Williams —79	

Government Orders

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin
Bélisle
Cohen
Dubé
Galloway
Mitchell
Serré
Torsney

Bélair
Canuel
Cowling
Fillion
Jacob
Pomerleau
St-Laurent
Wood

• (1555)

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

The Speaker: Resuming debate.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe the member for Vancouver North was on questions and answers when the debate stopped yesterday. Are we continuing from that point?

The Speaker: From the information I have, we were finished with the time allowed and therefore I am proceeding now with the debate.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my point of order is the same. My understanding was that the hon. member for North Vancouver still had some time remaining on questions and comments.

The Speaker: Now we are on debate.

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a little confusing sometimes. After the exciting question period we had today, we kind of wonder whether we are following proper procedure.

What I am going to talk about this afternoon is what is a promise. What is it, really? A promise is sometimes defined as something that one person makes. But I have found during my lifetime that usually if I made a promise there was somebody else involved. The consequences sometimes bore more strongly on the person to whom the promise was made than on me when I made the promise.

• (1600)

There are promises which are made verbally. In my experience I have also made a lot of promises that were signed. When I went to banks to borrow money, to dealerships to buy implements, I usually had to make a promise that if I took delivery of the implement I

would also have to pay for it and also service it properly if I wanted a guarantee or warranty on it.

One of the most important promises I made in my life was to a beautiful young girl whom I tried to convince she had no better man to look for than me. That was not so easy. I spent quite a bit of time at that. In the end I did have to sign my name to really fulfil a promise and to convince her that I would do what I promised.

After 35 years, sometimes I do not think I have totally kept my promises because there have been a few harsh words between us, although I promised there would never be because I was the perfect gentlemen and would be the perfect husband.

We sometimes do not quite fulfil our promises. As we have heard over the last couple of days sometimes these promises go back to Scripture. I listened to an interview with Mrs. Billy Graham on the issue of divorce. She had made a promise to her husband, saying that she should stay with him through thick or thin, health and sickness, richness and poverty. She was asked if she ever intended to break that promise, that she would not say with her husband until death did they part. She said: "No, I never thought of renegeing on that promise, but a lot of times I have thought of speeding up the process that he would leave me sooner than later".

We do have to honour our promises even if sometimes we do not want to fulfil them in the context that we agreed to.

What does a signed promise mean? A signed promise means that if we do not abide by the contract or the promise, somebody will probably bear some very severe consequences, not just the person who made the promise but the other party to the promise.

I found out early in my life that if I wanted to have credibility it did not really matter whether it was a promise made verbally or a signed promise. In the end it had the same results if I renegeed on it or partially fulfilled it. I think one of the most pleasant experiences I had in keeping a promise was to my two youngest grandsons. As it happened, we had been given by our daughter and son-in-law the privilege of looking after the boys for the weekend while they went on a short holiday. Since grandpa wants to impress his grandsons, I made a commitment to take them to McDonald's on Saturday night. This was in the middle of winter and I had forgotten that weather conditions could change drastically from Friday to Saturday.

About 2.30 in the afternoon my wife said "you know, grandpa, I think you will have to break your promise because that storm is just to bad and you cannot take your grandsons out on the road". We had about 12 miles to travel.

When I suggested to my grandsons that there might be a little problem with the weather they found all kinds of excuses to throw at me, saying that it was not that bad outside: "We have been with dad through a lot worse storms than this. You have the old 4x4 and we have the cell phone. There are all kinds of way we can get back and forth".

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• (1605)

Finally I realized that I probably could not wiggle out of this promise. At 35 degrees below zero we decided to take the old 4x4 and head 10 miles down the road to McDonald's about six o'clock in the afternoon. There were not many people in that McDonald's. When I walked in with my wife and the two little grandchildren they kind of looked at me as if to say "hey, is this man a little sick? Why is he taking those two little kids out on a night like this?" When I explained to them that I had made a promise, my grandsons looked at me and said "grandpa, he can do it. We'll get home. He can keep that promise".

I was the proudest grandpa that day because I was the only one with two little children there, stupid and foolish as it seemed, but I did keep my promise. I gained a lot of respect from my grandsons, even if I would have rather had it the other way.

Sometimes a broken promise can be very hurtful. To me, it really worked the other way and I gained a lot of respect. It cost me a little extra caution, to drive more carefully and to be a bit more cautious on the road, but we did get home safely and I felt very good about keeping that promise.

When I look at some of the tragedies that we see in the world today where promises were not kept, it is sad to see that we probably do not give enough attention to what a promise is.

In the olden days I heard my dad and my grandfather say that the handshake was a promise and it was a deal and that was enough. Today that does not seem to be true any more. We have to have things legally drawn up and we have to abide by the guidelines.

What has it cost this government to break a number of promises? One of them is the promise of the GST. We have seen that promise broken. We have seen that now it will cost other taxpayers about roughly \$1 billion. I do not know how this government is going to face the electorate next time, especially in the west where this \$1 billion is going to come from.

The other thing I would like to touch on is the Canadian Wheat Board. We know that this government promised during the election that it would hold a referendum especially on barley marketing. That promise has not been honoured. It may be honoured yet before this Parliament is over, but it has caused a lot of hard feelings. It has more or less developed a lot of tension between different farmers, different families even and different communities.

Is it really worth breaking a promise which creates this tension and distress in the farming community? If I had been the agriculture minister that is one of the first things that I would have honoured, holding a plebiscite. That is what democracy is about. It

is to let individuals decide what is best for them in their businesses, in their homes and in their governments.

About a year ago I saw news stories where Mr. Beswick did resign over the friction inside the wheat board on which type of marketing was better. He stated that the bungling of the wheat board had cost barley producers \$180 million that year. We can understand why there is friction between farmers and why they would like this to be resolved.

That gives us a small idea not just that the \$180 million was gone but that there was confusion and friction in the agriculture community. What did that do to that community? It pitted farmer against farmer. It also pitted business against farmers. When a farmer loses a dollar business loses just as much or more.

• (1610)

I have recently been approached by a number of business people who were very upset that this has gone to the point where some farmers have been charged horrendous penalties through monetary forfeitures. One of the farmers is in jail and it looks like there may be another one in jail very shortly because he is going to refuse to pay some of his fines. I am wondering where it is going to end.

We do not need this type of friction or tension in the community especially today when I see grain prices drifting lower and lower every day.

Why are we debating this issue about promises when I ponder some of the statements that have been made and look at what the four members of Parliament did to establish a task force minority report on the independence of the Chair or the Speaker of the House? I wonder how these four members, at that time being in opposition, could now just ignore what they said.

I would just like to read into the record exactly what was said. This is what they said about the independence of the Chair: "In order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship, when the Speaker is from the government party two of the junior Chair officers should be from the opposition so that the four presiding officer positions are shared equally by government and opposition". Further down in the statement they say: "If the Speaker were from the government party, the deputy speaker would be from the opposition, the next officer from the government—", and so forth.

I would say that is a tremendous statement. That goes to show that these four members, while sitting in opposition, were really determined and honest in analysing the partisanship that was happening in Parliament at that time.

I am wondering why it would be so hard to fulfil that little promise today. This promise is not going to cost them anything financially. It is not going to give them any more or less power in

this House. It would only, I would think, supplement their stature in the public that they honoured this small promise that was intimated to be made if they were elected.

I think it was probably important at that time to the government to add this to the appendix of the red book to show that this government wanted to democratize this Parliament the way it should be democratized, that it should be a House where there is equal opportunity, that it should be a House where the guidelines and partisanship were neutral or as neutral as they could hope it to be.

When we look at the debate we have been entering into for the last day and a half, it is astounding that this little promise could create such a partisan debate when I see that there has not been a single member from the Bloc or from the government really supporting this statement that was made in the last Parliament to reinforce the idea that this should be a House, through the Speaker, as impartial as possible.

We can see what it has done in the debate. It has kept us thinking, but the decision that we are going to make tonight will not be one that is going to be beneficial to the House unless something historic happens.

• (1615)

I wonder how the government would feel if the member for Kingston and the Islands decided to honour his commitment through the statement he made when he was in opposition. I wonder what the Liberal government would say if this member for Kingston and the Islands said: "I am going to stick by my statement of four years ago or so, walk the floor and join the Bloc or the Reform to honour the commitment that my nomination as deputy chairman could be held".

I would like to see what the Liberal government would say. That is the way he could honour his commitment. If he made that choice, I am sure not going to say that I would not honour his intentions. He could sit as an independent. He could join one of the other parties. That is the way this member could stay true to his commitment of four years ago.

It would be a tremendous credit to the House if this member fulfilled that commitment. I would really appreciate it and I think everybody would respect him more for it. It would probably be a pretty strong pill to swallow but I think it would be well accepted. Whether it would be accepted by the government is another issue. I am sure the opposition or the independents in the House would welcome another member on this side.

From what we have heard from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, he is an honourable member and a very fair member on the committees he has served on. I would love to see this member make that final decision. It would be precedent setting. It would be something this House would remember for

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perpetuity. I do not think we would run into the situation ever again where that would have to be debated.

He made this commitment before an election and he knew the statement he made was correct; so much more power to the member to fulfil it.

How is this government going to face the electorate in the next election when it cannot keep this one little promise which did not cost this government a single nickel? All it would have done is made this House more democratic. It would have fulfilled some of the promises the Liberals made to be honourable, fair and to treat people equally. It would only be a plus to them.

If I had to go back and campaign on a little broken promise like this, I am sure my electorate would not believe any big promises I made during the campaign. If I was not true to the little promises, the teeny-weeny promises that were costly neither to government nor to opposition, then how would people ever believe me on the bigger promises like the GST, like the referendum on barley marketing, like a few others I should mention? I do not want to create too much hostility on the other side. At that point we could run into another lively debate like we had during the question and answer period.

I enjoy listening to the comments from members on the other side because I know they will try to distort the issues somewhat and there will be some political rhetoric. I can deal with a little of it but when it gets too thick and too foggy then at times it becomes difficult to sit quietly and seal my lips.

• (1620)

We know today that we cannot even dare blow a kiss to opposition members. They get too excited. It irritates them. I would not want to cause a riot in the House just because of a few comments I might make.

I would really like to see how some of the members on the other side are going to deal with the issue of breaking the promise to make the Speaker impartial and to make the Speaker as effective as possible in the House when they have not even tried to accomplish that in the vice-chairmanship of all the standing committees. We have seen how democracy operates there. We see the whip walking into the room, counting the heads and identifying the people who might all of a sudden vote against the government.

We have seen it happen a number of times that when someone voted against government policy they were demoted, taken off the committee and replaced by somebody else. I find it very hard to believe that is democracy. It is not keeping the promise to make the procedures of the House more democratic and to have more free votes.

I wonder what the electorate will say in the next election, especially after some of the comments made in question period today about the way the government is trying to divert attention from the real issues. We are being called extremists. The government is renegeing on a little promise to make the Chair more

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impartial. How can we be the extremists? The extremism comes from the other side. That little democracy which could help the House—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I fail to see a quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the clerk to count the members present.

There is certainly not a quorum. Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

[*Translation*]

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: There are now 20 members in the House, it would appear.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Kingston and the Islands. I believe he will be the first person in the history of the House of Commons who will have come to the position of deputy speaker under closure. I think that is really something. He has been a very memorable member.

An hon. member: May he rest in peace.

Mr. Abbott: May he rest in peace.

He has been a very memorable member. I think of him as constantly popping up with his Reform green book. While entertaining, nonetheless it has not been quite as entertaining as this whole process. He was one of the authors of the idea of the continuing effort to reform this archaic institution to create more independence in the Chair in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship.

We all agree that we have no difficulty with the qualifications of this member but there is a complete lack of understanding of the principle involved. I realize it is really difficult for the Liberals to understand principle but we had people from the other side of this House saying this whole thing of creating impartiality, of getting people from the opposition to be officials in the House, it was not a promise.

In reality it was contained in their pulp fiction, the appendix to their red book. To try to weasel out of this promise, which was a promise simply because they chose to include it in the appendix, I

find is really very unfortunate and perhaps says something about their attitude toward the issue of integrity in government.

Over the weekend 1.4 million documents were distributed in newspapers. The document was called "Commitments are only as strong as our will to fulfil them". I do not know if these documents were all from the 1.4 million Canadians who are unemployed, but on the front of this document it was noted that this was a statement by the Prime Minister. I would like to read from this Liberal document:

There are no vague "philosophies" and empty promises in "Creating Opportunity". The Red Book is full of specific plans to improve our society, our economy and our collective strength. One of the reasons that Canadians so enthusiastically support the Red Book is because it was crafted after significant consultation with Canadians from every corner of our country. We asked what was important to you. We listened. And we're still listening. In turn, you have given [the Prime Minister] the most important mandate in the world: your trust. He and his government are fulfilling, and will continue to fulfil, the commitments you helped to create.

Let us take a look at the last couple of weeks and let us be very blunt. We are talking now about facts. I know Liberals do not like to talk about facts. When the Prime Minister was addressing young people in a high school in Manitoba he told a story that he sat on a corner on a chair with a homeless gentlemen. It rather piqued the interest of the reporters and they asked "who is this person, when did this happen and what is going on here?"

It was found that this story, taken to be true by these young people in Manitoba, was without basis in fact. The story that the Prime Minister had told these young people of Canada was a falsehood. He did not sit on corners with homeless people. He did not consult with homeless people.

• (1630)

The closest he could come was in the interim period when he had previously been elected and then re-elected when he happened to run into somebody on the street. That was the Prime Minister and his imaginary friend.

On the same trip this person we are supposed to trust was telling us that one of the great things he and his government had done was to move interest rates down from 14 per cent and 15 per cent. It depended on how much farther he went west how big the number got. He started at 13. Then it became 14 and then it became a 15 per cent interest rate that the Liberals were facing when they came into government. The difficulty is that the number was only 9.5 per cent, a minor discrepancy. This is the person Canada is supposed to trust.

"As a result of the 14, 15 and 16 per cent interest rates", he said, "we have saved the taxpayer \$7,000 in interest payments". Then it was \$8,000 in interest payments and by the time he got out west it was \$9,000 in interest payments. In fact the number is \$2,700, a little less than \$9,000.

We are talking about integrity. We are talking about integrity of government and people who will stand to be counted and tell it like it is.

I am repeating only facts, which is important. I will quote the Prime Minister from television in Winnipeg: "It was a big gamble we took when we decided to have a detailed program like this. I didn't expect that everything will have been perfect, but we will have been well above 90 per cent by the time we will call an election, probably close to 100 per cent".

I guess what actually happened was—

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): It sounds like his imaginary friend.

Mr. Abbott: His imaginary friend got the better of him again.

I guess the people over at the PMO who are so good at putting out distortions of truth decided that 90 per cent was a little too much. They said to the Prime Minister: "Why don't you go to the people on the Liberal convention weekend and use 78 per cent? Do not use 79. That sounds like we are fudging it. We don't really want to get down around 75 because then people will be talking about three-quarters. Why don't we choose 78 per cent?"

We did fundamentally the same thing. The Reform Party put out a score card and came in at 30 per cent. We said the Liberals had not addressed the issue or even come remotely close to solving the issue of interprovincial trade barriers.

What did the Liberals say? This is their brand new pulp fiction, a record of achievement. Now there is a joke. Page 18 of the document states that a Liberal government will be committed to the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers within Canada and will address the issue urgently, and they have a check mark.

We noted they had not even come remotely close to it but they put it in the red book. We are talking integrity. They clearly indicated that as far as they were concerned they had achieved the objective of doing away with interprovincial trade barriers.

Why was it on Monday morning, when I was in their policy session, the following National Liberal Women's Commission resolution passed? It read:

Be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada encourage the Government of Canada to commit itself, in all matters of internal trade, to facilitating removal of the number and complexity of impediments to interprovincial trade.

If, when they put out this pulp fiction on Thursday they had already done it, why was the National Liberal Women's Commission passing a resolution saying they should do it the next day?

I have another one by the Liberal Party of Canada, Ontario. It read:

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Be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada request that the federal government pursue a comprehensive agreement to complete the Economic Union of Canada by introducing a constitutional provision stating that Canada is an Economic Union wherein goods, services, people, and capital can have full mobility within the entire nation".

What a great idea but they just did it the day before, did they not? They said so in their book. What is this? That was not good enough. The Liberal Party of Ontario passed another one. It read:

Be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada urges the federal government to negotiate with the provinces to ensure the portability of professional qualifications between provinces.

• (1635)

The Prime Minister, this person with the imaginary friend, had just finished telling us they had done it. Why did they put out this book when in fact they had not done it, to the extent they even passed resolutions to say they should do it?

Now the big whopper is "an agenda for jobs and growth". This government promised Canadians jobs, jobs, jobs. Is that not terrific? It was like the promise that we would have independence in the chair in this place by putting opposition members in the chair of this place. "Oh, gee, we are not going to do that". There is another broken promise.

What about jobs, jobs, jobs? I would have been just totally mortified if my caucus had done what the National Liberal Caucus did at the convention. Believe it or not, this is really something. They actually put in:

Whereas the twin forces of economic globalization and rapid technological change have resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs throughout all sectors of the labour market;

Whereas the rate of unemployment remains stubbornly high with too many people competing for too few jobs;

Whereas the young people, in particular—

I should parenthesize that they are 18 per cent unemployed.

Whereas the young people, in particular, are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain full time employment;

This is a resolution of the National Liberal Caucus. It is the most brilliant idea the Liberals have:

Be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada recommends that work sharing be promoted with employers and unions as part of the effort to redistribute working time—

That is the most brilliant idea the people on the other side of the House have come up with. Then they have the audacity to send out from the Prime Minister's office, at the expense of taxpayers, distortions about where the Reform Party is coming from and that somehow we do not have any new ideas.

We do have some ideas. For example, one distortion of truth was that our program would rob the poor to pay the rich. Let us take a look at exactly what the Reform Party would do. We would

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increase the basic personal income tax exemption from \$6,456 to \$7,900, giving tax relief to every taxpayer.

We would increase the spousal amount from \$5,380 also to \$7,900 which would level the playing field for parents who choose to stay home to look after young children. It would help families meet their needs in a more demanding economy.

We would eliminate the 3 per cent and 5 per cent federal surtaxes introduced by their brother in the federal Tories as part of our commitment to simplify and flatten taxes.

We would cut the employers unemployment insurance premium by 28 per cent, thereby reducing the job killing payroll taxes.

We would extend the \$3,000 to \$5,000 child care deduction to all parents including those who care for their children at home.

It is a matter of coming up with new ideas. It is a matter of making sure the people at the bottom end of the scale are looked after first. That is what the Reform Party is about. In this instance a family of four with one income earner would see an immediate tax reduction of 89 per cent. There would be one million fewer taxpayers at the bottom end of the scale as a result of the initiatives of the Reform Party.

At the top end of the scale for a family of four with one income earner earning \$100,000 the reduction would only be 3 per cent as opposed to 89 per cent at the bottom end.

And these people have the audacity to say we are robbing the poor to pay the rich. These people are robbing the poor to pay the rich. We will do a complete turnaround so that the people at the bottom end of the scale are the people who are the most advantaged. I just do not understand these people opposite at all.

• (1640)

As my colleague from Lisgar—Marquette noted, if the Liberals cannot keep the small promises, how in the world can they keep the big ones? Here we have an issue of honesty, integrity and moving forward in the impartiality of the running of the House and they cannot even do that. When the National Liberal Caucus has to resort to their very best idea of job sharing, give me a break.

We have some ideas. We would create jobs through smaller government. We would put an end to overspending and lower taxes. We would make government smaller by eliminating waste, duplication and red tape. In particular, if we take a look at the portfolio I am responsible for, we would take a look at why the heritage minister felt compelled to come up with a \$20 million Canada Information Office. What an absolutely brilliant idea when every

department and every ministry of the government has its very own information office.

In addition, there is also Inquiries Canada with a budget of \$4 million. Why did we need this? Maybe we have a bit of a clue in the way in which the Liberals went about hiring the people for the office. It does not come under any rules and regulations with respect to the normal hiring practice of government. I wonder why. I wonder if maybe they may be choosing to hire exactly the people they want. I will bet there is an election coming and they want to have some people they will be able to hand pick at taxpayers' expense to bring into this office.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): No, no.

Mr. Morrison: They wouldn't do that.

Mr. Abbott: Let us take a look at this. What they have done in addition we will never know.

Mr. Morrison: Don't be so cynical.

Mr. Abbott: What am I supposed to say when the Liberals turn around and under a cabinet order provide no information or details to anyone about how the funds are spent? The cabinet has closed, slammed and locked Canadians out of this \$20 million enterprise. No one will ever know anything about what is going on.

We might have a clue about what is going on over there if we take a look at what the Prime Minister's office does with its research funds. It sends out Liberal propaganda to Liberal sympathizers that are absolute distortions of the truth about the Reform Party and has been caught at it.

Although we have had a degree of tongue in cheek in the way we have addressed the issue, we must also take a look at how solemn it is. It is very solemn because we have a government and a Prime Minister who are so arrogant and power hungry that they will virtually do anything to maintain power and control over information from the office I just named. They will do virtually anything in terms of what they say about people they are concerned about who have different or new ideas.

Why is it that we have a situation where we do not have a resolution to the so-called two founding nation problem or however they choose to describe it? We do not have resolution to the point where we almost lost the country a year ago.

For 30 or 35 years the Liberals and Tories have stumbled around with that portfolio, not getting anywhere and making the situation worse. Reform, or any other Canadian, can come along with a fresh new idea and say: "Why don't we try it a different way?" If we are unsuccessful in a particular direction maybe we should change direction. The minute we do that with the Liberals they immediately choose to throw out the mindless invective. They immediately choose to go into overdrive and say all the mean, nasty, negative, distorted statements they can make about their adversaries.

• (1645)

What the Reform Party is out to do, and we will do it in spite of the Liberals, is we are out to create an honest, open, frank, candid debate in this country about real issues, about real solutions, about getting things turned around so that the people of this country once again can see the future as they want it to be. We are turning it around so that we have the opportunities for our people, for the people of Canada.

What can I say? Again, the member who has been proposed for this function, fine, but the way in which he has been proposed and the way in which the Liberals once again have broken a solemn commitment is very sad.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think the Liberals must be down in the market talking to their imaginary friends. I do not see a quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: There clearly is not a quorum.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

[Translation]

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: There are now 20 members in the House.

[English]

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I heard the last speaker refer to the Prime Minister and accuse the Prime Minister of telling a falsehood to young people. Those were his precise words.

• (1650)

The traditions and the procedures of the House are quite clear. I am sure it is not necessary but I would refer the Speaker to citation 489 of Beaudesne's. He will note the lengthy list of examples of how it is unacceptable in the House to question the veracity of a member.

One cannot use the expressions: above the truth; attempted to misrepresent; deceive; falsehood; misleading; misled; dishonest insinuations; dishonest answers; fabricated; intentional deceit; misleading the public; not telling the truth; not the complete truth; wilfully misled; untrue statement. One certainly cannot use: false; fabrication; false representations; false statement; falsehood; falsify.

I would therefore ask the Speaker to rule—

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member. The hon. member for Kootenay East has in fact left the Chamber. We will check the blues and if the situation is as the member indicated, the Chair will certainly make a ruling on it.

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Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are certainly not ready for the question.

I thank the hon. member opposite for making that intervention. I notice it is the first intervention that has been made for quite some time by hon. members opposite. Obviously they are having an exceedingly difficult time trying to justify this move by the government. Indeed, they do not wish to participate in the debate to try to defend the actions of their government.

Perhaps it would be interesting to recap what has brought us to this point on this issue. Clearly, there has been another broken Liberal promise.

We seem to have been subjected over the last day and a half to a number of allegations from across the way that the Reform Party of Canada is wasting taxpayers' money and wasting the time of the House of Commons. I see that the few hon. members who are left across the way are nodding their heads. They agree that we are wasting time.

What this is all about is a matter of principle. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a lot of that in evidence on the other side of the House these days. In fact, I would submit that principles are in exceedingly short supply in the Liberal Party. The opinion across the way is that the Reform Party has a problem with principles, but we feel it is the Liberal Party of Canada which is constantly lacking in that department. Liberal members will not even get up to defend the position which they have taken on this issue.

Why are we in this situation in the House? Yesterday the government put a motion on the floor of the Chamber to appoint the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands to the vacant position of Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole. This was done despite the fact that the member himself was a co-author of a document some years ago when the Liberal Party of Canada was sitting on this side of the House. At that time four members of the Liberal Party drafted a document which became an appendix to the infamous red book. That book was the Liberal Party's platform which it took to the people of Canada during the 1993 election campaign.

The appendix was called "Reviving Parliamentary Democracy". It is certainly a grand title, something I think all Canadians believe we are in dire need of in this country, "Reviving Parliamentary Democracy: The Liberal Plan for House of Commons and Electoral Reform". Number 10 dealt with the independence of the Chair, in other words the independence of the Speaker in the House of Commons. It stated:

In order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship, when the Speaker is from the government party, two of the junior Chair officers should be from the opposition, so that the four presiding officer positions are shared equally by government and opposition.

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• (1655)

It went on to say:

One of the most significant results of the McGrath round of procedural reforms was the decision that the Speaker should be elected by secret ballot by all members. This has gone a long way toward assuring members of the independence of the presiding officer.

The three deputy Speakers, however, remain in effect government appointees. As a consequence, when one of the junior officers is in the Chair, his or her independence and authority is less well established. Their authority would be greatly enhanced and the non-partisan nature of the Chair greatly augmented if the British practice of alternating the Chair positions between government and opposition were adopted. Thus, if the Speaker were from the government party, the Deputy Speaker would be from the opposition, the next officer from the government and so forth.

This is all quite admirable. Certainly all members of Parliament from all parties would agree that a procedure such as that should be instituted.

I note that in one part it is stated very clearly that the authority would be greatly enhanced if this procedure were adopted because deputy Speakers are not elected. It was the feeling of that committee of the Liberal Party of Canada that this type of process should be put in place. That is why it was added as an appendix to the red book. The Liberals ran on this issue. It was a promise they made in the days and weeks leading up to the 1993 election.

Earlier my colleague from Lisgar—Marquette spoke about what is a promise. He talked about the sanctity of marriage vows. He made a good case that it is one promise many Canadians believe is a promise that one simply does not break. The marriage vow of until death do us part means that couples stay together through thick and thin and through tough times. They work out their problems but they keep their promise. He quite eloquently made the case for that.

What constitutes the keeping of a promise? The member went on to say that there are many kinds of promises. Some are simply implied, some are spelled out, some are verbal and some are signed contracts. In other words, they are legally binding in the sense that one has signed one's name to the promise.

What constitutes the keeping of a promise? Simply put, in the case of government it has a very short time span in which to keep its promise. It is up to the government to display to the general public that when its members run for election either in a general election or a byelection that they will keep their word.

There is an old saying that a man is only as good as his word. That is something I was raised with. It is common knowledge in Peace River country where I come from. I heard that many times from my father when I was a youngster. I would submit that is a generic term which also applies to the other gender. We all are only

as good and our credibility is only as good as our word. We have to keep that.

• (1700)

It reminds me of a promise that was made by a number of Liberals during the election but certainly none more so or more strongly or strenuously than the Deputy Prime Minister. The promise I am speaking of is the GST.

I get back to my point. What constitutes the keeping of a promise? Clearly the Deputy Prime Minister during the election campaign spoke many times that if they did not abolish, scrap or get rid of the GST she would resign. That is the promise that she made. Indeed finally through the pressure of the Reform Party of Canada and from the media and from the general public she was forced to honour that promise and resign.

I get back to what I was saying earlier. What constitutes the keeping of a promise? To my way of thinking, simply resigning and then saying "I'm going to run again" is hardly the keeping of a promise. Clearly what she implied when she said "I will resign if we do not scrap, kill, abolish the GST" was that she would quit, give up her seat.

I do not believe that the people of Canada believed that what she really meant was that she would just give it up until a byelection could be called at the cost of some \$.5 million and then seek re-election to that same position. I do not believe that is keeping a promise.

A number of my colleagues have spoken quite eloquently about this subject. What the viewing public needs to understand is what is happening today and what are we really discussing here. Is it simply that the Reform Party is upset that the government intends to appoint the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands to one of the positions of deputy speaker of the House of Commons? Of course that is not the case.

I want to go on record as saying that I do not have any personal vendetta against the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. That is not the case. I am certain that is not the case for any of my colleagues who have been speaking out. Many have reiterated during their remarks that this is not a case of attacking an individual or casting aspersions against an individual. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is we believe a promise has been broken. Promises are very important, especially to this government. It has been said already today and indeed yesterday during the debate that this particular government and this particular Prime Minister have been going on and on at some length during the past, and certainly last weekend was an example of that during the love-in of the Liberal convention held here in Ottawa, about how many promises they have kept.

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Clearly when a promise is as simple as this one is to keep, it is not a difficult promise to keep, the government could pick any opposition member. It does not have to be someone from the Reform Party. It could be anyone from the Bloc Quebecois or one of the independents to fill that position of deputy speaker. Then it would have lived up to its promise.

This particular member who represents Kingston and the Islands clearly would have lived up to the commitment that he made I believe to the people of Canada and to the electorate when he co-signed the document which was attached as an appendix to the Liberal red book.

Reformers believe that this debate is so very important. We are talking about integrity. We are talking about honesty. We are talking about credibility. We are talking about believability.

• (1705)

From the red book in a chapter called "Governing with Integrity I quote directly the promise that was held out to Canadians before and during the 1993 election:

If government is to play a positive role in society, as it must, honesty and integrity in our political institutions must be restored.

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.

This erosion of confidence seems to have many causes: some have to do with the behaviour of certain elected politicians, others with an arrogant style of political leadership. 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 submit that part of this page out of the Liberal red book of campaign promises, "Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada", could have been written this afternoon.

It could be applied to the Liberal Party of Canada, to the existing government. We all know that it was written as a Liberal attack against the former Progressive Conservative government.

Lord knows it deserved to be chastized for the way it behaved over nine years, the way it betrayed Canada, the way it betrayed the promises it made to the Canadian people during two successive elections, 1984 and 1988.

It could have just as easily, I submit, have been written about the government we have in Canada today. I see that same arrogance that the Liberal Party was attacking in this document. I see that same arrogance very much in evidence around this place today.

I would like to go on in the time that I have remaining and talk about a specific promise that was made leading up to the election, another promise by the Liberal Party of Canada, one that I was personally made aware of during the election campaign. It im-

acted directly in some of the support that the Liberal Party got and some of the heat that the Reform Party of Canada took for being honest with the electorate.

This promise, like the promise of allowing for the appointment of alternating positions to the deputy speaker's position in the House of Commons, was contained in a side document to the red book. It is entitled "Food Security for Canadians and a Fair Return for Canadian Farmers". It is the Liberal agricultural policy proposals backgrounder dated May 1993.

This document under the subtitle "International Trade and Marketing: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades" states: "The nature of agricultural production, trade and the global forces of change make it inevitable that farm and trade policies will have to be altered. Canada must make use of the GATT negotiations to aggressively defend and clarify article XI to maintain our supply managed programs, since the ongoing GATT negotiations provide an opportunity to make these changes in a multilateral framework of commitments and rules".

That sounded very good: "aggressively defend and clarify article XI".

• (1710)

That is what the Liberal Party of Canada and its candidates ran on in the 1993 election. I am sure all my colleagues in the Reform Party remember that. Certainly any Reformers who had dairy farms in their riding remember it. Reform was honest with dairy farmers, the supply managed sectors of agriculture, in what they were facing, what was coming down the pipe and Reform took the heat for that. We took the heat in all-candidates forums, on radio open line shows, but Reform stuck by what we said because we felt we had to be honest with Canadians during and after an election.

By the time the Liberals recognized what we were saying about this all along—

The Deputy Speaker: You have one minute.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): One minute. Boy, time flies when you are trying to make real points.

The promise to defend to the death article XI of the GATT, by the time the Liberal Party understood that the Reform was right, that this was going to be gone, it had lost it as a bargaining chip.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Under the present House rules, Standing Order 57, I have read carefully through the closure notice and I did not notice anything specifically in that rule that does not allow for a 10 minute questions and comments portion following 20 minutes speeches.

Government Orders

Could the Chair clarify Standing Order 57 and why we are not having any questions and comments?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member was kind enough to indicate to the Chair his concern in this regard earlier and the answer is as follows. Standing Order 57 states there will be 20 minute speeches only during the period of closure, the debate we are in now.

Standing Order 43 states that unless provided otherwise there will be 20 minute speeches plus question and answer.

I agree with the member that it would have been better if somebody had said under Standing Order 57 that there will not be questions and answers, but it is by implication. In a commentary under Standing Order 43 it is indicated there are not questions and answers under closure debate.

There is of course the availability of unanimous consent. If the member wishes to ask for unanimous consent that there be questions and answers during this closure debate the Chair would be happy to entertain that motion.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I will decline from so moving because I strongly suspect the Liberals will not allow it.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in addressing this motion I would like to start with the Liberal red book and end with the Liberal red book.

Let us start by assuming that there was some good will there that went into the creation of that document, that there were honest, noble members of the Liberal Party who said, sitting in opposition: "We need change. We have to respond to the people of Canada who are saying let us have change, let us revise the rules of the way we are doing things. Let us do things better".

I assume that even the member for Kingston and the Islands was one such person and the report he put forward which forms a contributing document to the red book was made in good faith. Having said that, what happens to it?

• (1715)

When the Liberals were in opposition I think they were sincere and honest in saying that we really must have this. Now they flood the government benches and oh what a difference it makes.

In the creation of the red book the Liberal Party brass, the creators of strategy asked what it is that the people of Canada want. They had a pretty clear message at that point of what the people of Canada wanted, which was integrity and honesty in government. Their red book was created by that stimulus. They said: "Fine, let

us promise to the people of Canada what it is that they want, and we will put all that in the red book". It has wound up as a book of promises and the government says it has kept 78 per cent of them. We give the government 30 per cent at the most.

One of the contributing documents for the red book which has already been cited today is the document "Governing with Integrity". Having read it in my role as an opposition member I totally subscribe to it. It states: "If government is to play a positive role in society, as it must, honesty and integrity in our political institutions must be restored". The Liberals felt that was true at the time and I am sure it was, but it is still true and it has still not been achieved.

Again from "Governing with Integrity": "This erosion of confidence seems to have many causes. Some have to do with the behaviour of certain elected politicians, others with an arrogant style of political leadership". Hold on. This is the Liberals talking about the Conservatives. "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". That is the Liberals talking in the creation of their famous red book in 1993.

Lest anyone say this is sour grapes or this is just a westerner talking, let me quote from an article written by Michel Venne in *Le Devoir* yesterday about the unhappiness of the Canadian electorate:

[Translation]

"For the past week, the Liberal Party of Canada has been congratulating itself in a way bordering on indecency, given that, since the Liberals took office in 1993, the country has come within a hair's breadth of disintegration, while poverty and voter cynicism keeps growing from coast to coast."

[English]

That is the view from Quebec. The Quebecers say that the cynicism of the electorate is prevalent from coast to coast. Let us look at the reasons for that cynicism. Let us examine some of the specific promises made in the Liberal red book.

Number one: "We will restore Canadians' faith in themselves and their government". Has that been done? The answer is a resounding no, and we will get that no from province to province from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

They also promise: "We will implement new programs only if they can be funded within existing expenditures". That is a very nice promise. Certainly it was probably their intent at the time to keep the promise to implement new programs only if they could be funded within existing expenditures.

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• (1720)

How about the latest foray by the Minister of Canadian Heritage into flags at \$23 million, and the establishment of—let us call them what they are—government propaganda offices across the country at a cost of well over \$100 million? These are new programs that were unfunded and magically, funding has been found for them but not for other things.

There is an example close to us in Ottawa, in Chalk River, Ontario. A superconducting cyclotron needs \$3 million of bridge financing to keep it going but the money is not to be found. The government cannot find \$3 million or even half of that amount, presuming that the rest would come from private industry. No, the money is just not there.

The same case can be made for Whiteshell Laboratories in Manitoba. The government simply cannot find the money or the means to make its promise of looking at the privatization of that laboratory. It has simply been left to wither on the vine.

These were promises made and promises not kept. The government, when it wants to implement new programs, we have the example of the grant of a loan to Bombardier in Quebec. Was that necessary? Well it was only necessary from a political point of view. New money is found for anything that suits the purpose of the government.

Promise No. 4: “We will exercise unwavering discipline in controlling federal spending and we will re-order current spending priorities to make sure the maximum return is obtained on each investment”. It really sounds good: unwavering discipline in controlling federal expenditures. Look around and we find example after example of the flagrant disregard for that.

Just to show that the Liberals did keep some of their promises let us look at a kept promise. Promise No. 7: “A Liberal government will cancel the \$5.8 billion purchase of EH-101 helicopters”. They kept that promise. The only problem is that it has cost us a few hundred million dollars just to keep the claimants away and we still do not have a replacement three years later. They kept the promise but to the detriment of the country.

Let us go on to some of the other many unfulfilled promises made by the Liberals. Why did they make these promises? They made them purely to get elected. I will reiterate my opening statement that without a doubt some statements were made in honesty at the beginning and some of those were incorporated honestly into the red book. However, they went on from there to say: “No, winning is the thing. We must win and we must win at any cost. Therefore, do not mind what promises are made, we will just see how we can cope with that”.

Another promise: “The Liberal government will replace the GST”. That one has been pounded into the ground so I think I will leave that for others to hit.

Here is another promise: “A Liberal government will work closely with provincial governments to achieve the maximum possible co-ordination of tax policies”. We have seen where that one has gone in recent months. It has made a hiatus in the Atlantic provinces and other provinces are totally unhappy about it.

Another promise: “A Liberal government will be committed to the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers within Canada and will address the issue urgently”. What has been done on that? I recall there was a little effort made in 1994 and perhaps there are a few minor items going on but the work that is desperately required is not happening.

• (1725)

Promise No. 17: “The Liberals will manage this trading relationship with the United States in a way that best serves Canada’s interests”. They are talking about the GATT, the NAFTA and such things. Let us look at examples from the last year or two with respect to our trading with the United States in fish, in softwood and in wheat. We do not have anything which is serving Canada’s best interests. There are problems. That is not to say that they have not put some effort into it. Of course they have, but it is insufficient. Once again it amounts to a broken promise.

Let us move on through the pages. The Liberals said they would prepare for the transition from school to the workplace and provide a constructive outlet for the skills and talents of younger Canadians who are the innocent victims of Canada’s prolonged recession. They said they would enhance the opportunity for job training and improve the literacy and numeracy skills of Canadian workers, and improve access to employment for women and single parents by making quality child care more available.

Those are wonderful words. It is an admirable aim for the government to have said: “Look Canadians, this is what we are going to do for you. We are going to make 100 more promises like this, but unfortunately we are not going to be able to keep them”. As a promise it was wonderful. It was certainly a worthwhile aim. That is indeed what the government should be doing. It should be keeping the promises which were made in this book.

Let us go on to other promises along the same line. The Liberals said that a Liberal government would gather information on these developments of job training, skills and disseminate it to all those responsible for the education of our children. That has not been done.

In collaboration with provincial governments the Liberals would introduce a voluntary national achievement test in math, science and technology. Again, that is a very worthwhile aim. I laud the Liberals for having thought of all these wonderful things, but I do not laud them for having put them in this book and then not having kept those promises.

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They were also going to work with business, labour and provincial governments to provide funding to establish apprenticeship programs for the new economy. Once again, what could be better than to establish worthwhile apprenticeship programs? This country needs more of them, but we are not getting them. The Liberals have simply not delivered on their promise.

Let us turn the page. What do we have? "A Liberal government will provide the necessary funds and administrative support to launch pilot projects in community projects across Canada within the first year of a Liberal mandate. We will invest \$100 million a year in the Canadian Youth Service Corps". I have to say that is not a totally ignored promise. There has been something done.

I have in my own riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan a very worthwhile project concerning the Canadian Youth Service Corps. The trouble is, it only involves 16 or 17 young people. The promise was to invest \$100 million a year. That is not being done. Again I will give credit for what is being done, but what is not being done is what we are calling the Liberals to task for.

All of these are examples of broken promises. They are good intentions. If the Liberals want good parliamentary government and good government across the country, they should read their red book again. They should read again the contributory documents that were made probably in good faith to say what the red book is all about, that they are the basic documents. They should read them again and ask themselves if they have kept their promises to the Canadian people, starting and ending with the promise to have a deputy speaker who represents the opposition in the House. It was a good intention. They simply did not measure up to it.

The Deputy Speaker: 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]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.) moved:

That this House unequivocally reconfirms the undoubted rights and privileges of the House of Commons, won from the Crown and which became part of the law many centuries ago, and in particular the unfettered right of the House and its committees to at all times compel the attendance of persons and require them to answer questions and to

compel the production of such papers and documents as the House or committee considers necessary for the due carrying out of its mandate.

He said: Mr. Speaker, if this motion were to be voted on today it would cause this House of Commons for the first time in its 129-year existence to publicly articulate, declare and confirm its absolute right on behalf of all citizens to send for persons, papers and records.

The authority to require the attendance of persons, to have the persons answer questions and produce documents, as well as the right to institute inquiries, are essential elements of our parliamentary process. They are part of the law of Canada. They are founded in the Constitution Act of 1867 and the Parliament of Canada Act. Each of Beauchesne, Bourinot, Erskine May, Maingot and the Supreme Court of Canada in 1993 has recognized this historic and longstanding body of parliamentary privilege.

Unfortunately these powers are not commonly understood by or in some cases respected by parliamentarians, the executive branch and the public. That is why I have moved this motion on what I consider to be a very important matter for Parliament.

Let me draw to the attention of the House some of the problems that have been encountered in this area, that have arisen in the past and that continue to recur today.

In 1991 the then solicitor general and Correction Services Canada refused to provide to a committee of the House the complete, unexpurgated reports of inquiries into escapes from correctional institutions of an individual by the name of Leger and another individual by the name of Gingras. Each of those individuals had escaped and had killed innocent Canadians.

Inquiries were held and the House of Commons committee on justice at that time was undertaking a review. As I said, the solicitor general and Correction Services Canada refused to turn over the unexpurgated versions of those two reports.

In the end it took approximately 12 months to receive the reports. We had a number of lawyers, a number of parties, committee hearings, privilege moved in this House and ultimately the unexpurgated reports were provided under the basis of a House order which was consensually agreed to. That process which took 12 months is not sufficient. Everyone in the House knows it. That is one example of why the House should adopt this motion at this time.

I am also personally aware of confusion and sometimes ignorance at the Department of Justice where lawyers continue to advise their clients as lawyers to the clients, but we must forgive them in some cases. They are in fact advising their clients. They are not advising the House of Commons. They are not advising parliamentarians, they are simply telling their clients the limits of their legal rights. In some cases this manifests confusion and, I regret to say, ignorance of the law of Parliament.

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• (1735)

Clearly this is not acceptable to parliamentarians. I am sure there are many other examples being experienced by parliamentarians in committee from time to time. I know there are some instances extant right now.

Why this motion now? The Canadian House of Commons has never formally articulated this element of parliamentary privilege. It is noteworthy, however, that other parliaments have done this, especially when confusion has arisen. For example, the House of Commons in the United Kingdom reconfirmed its power over witnesses in 1947 and the Senate of Australia did the same thing in 1975.

The way to reconfirm and re-assert the authority of the House of Commons and clear up the confusion is by the adoption of a resolution such as this. In my remarks I want to discuss a bit more of the background to this motion, the purpose of privilege and the enforcement remedies available to the House. Finally I will comment on some practical implications.

Why do we have this particular authority or power to call for persons, papers and documents? The power to send for a person's papers and records is central to the ability of the House and its committees to discharge their responsibilities. This was confirmed in the first report of the standing committee on privileges and elections in February 1991 dealing with the Gingras and Leger matters to which I referred earlier.

There is a phrase of which members may be aware where the House has been described as the grand inquest of the nation. Historically, the House of Commons has been considered to be a grand inquest in the United Kingdom and also in Canada.

Lord Coke first described the House of Commons in this way in the 17th century, and courts have continued to use that phrase ever since. The House of Commons and the other place act as a kind of a check on the executive branch and I will talk a little more about that later.

What is the legal basis of this particular privilege? First, section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867 which I will not read because it is there for reference. Second, it has been restated in sections 4 and 5 of the Parliament of Canada Act. Of course, a recapitulation of all of that is in Standing Order 108(1)(a) of the House. It states, and I will paraphrase: "Standing committees shall be severally empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters as may be referred to them by the House and to send for persons, papers and records". In effect, that is a comprehensive delegation by the House to its committees of that power to call for persons, papers and records.

The courts have commented on this and I just want to note that for the record. The Supreme Court has stated its opinion on several occasions. It has described these privileges as fundamental. It has

stated: "It is clear that the privileges inherent in legislative bodies are fundamental to our system of government". This was in the case of *New Brunswick Broadcasting Company v. Nova Scotia*.

Second, the court has commented that these privileges are necessary. It has said that parliamentary privilege and the breadth of individual privileges encompassed by that term are accorded to members of the Houses of Parliament and the legislative assemblies because they are judged necessary to the discharge of their legislative function.

Third, these privileges are a part of our Constitution. They are part of the fundamental law of our land.

By this brief review of the statutory basis of parliamentary privilege, it will be noted that it is within the scope of the House or its committees to inquire into any matter within Parliament's authority to enact legislation.

• (1740)

What are the documents that must be produced? What are the questions that must be answered?

For the reasons I have just discussed, Parliament and its committees have a very broad range of powers. No person may ignore the order to appear, nor decline to answer a question, nor refuse to produce a document. To do so is a contempt of the House for which the House may exercise its lawful power to enforce sanctions which include the power of detention.

Here are some of the authorities I want to cite for the record: "A committee is not restricted in the scope of questions it can pose and a witness must answer all questions put to him". That is from Maingot, page 163.

"Committees may send for any papers that are relevant to their orders of reference. Within this restriction, it appears that the power of the committee to send for papers is unlimited. Witnesses must answer all questions directed to them even over their objection that an answer would incriminate them". That is from Beauchesne, page 239, citation 862.

Canadians may be asking what protection is afforded to a witness who provides such evidence or documents. Even if a claim were made that a witness violated a statute's provisions by providing information or documents to the House or a committee, that witness would automatically be clothed with the protection or immunity of the House and cannot be prosecuted.

This immunity is described in Beauchesne as follows: "Every witness attending before the House or any committee thereof may claim the protection of the House in respect of the evidence to be given". That is page 237, citation 853.

"Nothing said before a committee, or at the Bar of the House, may be used in a court of law. Thus a witness may not refuse to

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answer on the grounds of self-incrimination". That is Beauchesne, pages 27-28, citation 109.

Finally, article 9 of the Bill of Rights, 1688, which the Supreme Court of Canada noted in the 1991 Patriation Reference and which is part of the public and general law of Canada, states: "That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament". Forgive me for going back 400 years to find that one.

The enforcement mechanisms that are available to the House are available to the House and not to committees. These are the procedure to be used where a witness refuses to appear as set out in Beauchesne, among other volumes: "If a witness should refuse to appear on receiving the order of the Chairman, or if a witness refuses to answer questions, this conduct may be reported to the House and an order immediately made for the attendance of the person at the Bar or before the committee.

"On further refusing to obey, the witness may be ordered to be sent for and brought to the Bar in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, or may be declared guilty of a contempt and ordered to be taken into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms". That citation is from Beauchesne, page 238-239.

In my research, I went back another couple of hundred years to the year 1704 and found the case of an unfortunate Mr. Lee of Clement Inn who I am sure was not an ancestor of mine. He might have been. In any event, Mr. Lee had failed to respond to an order of a committee of Parliament. The resolution of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom which was adopted found him guilty of contempt and required that he be taken into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Even a former Canadian Prime Minister has been held in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. That was in 1873. Sir John A. Macdonald failed to attend a committee meeting of which he was a member and was ordered into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. The former Prime Minister was not discharged until after the reading of his doctor's affidavit indicating his ill health that existed at the time.

• (1745)

In 1913, not that long ago, Mr. R. C. Miller refused to answer questions before the public accounts committee. The matter was reported to the House. He was summoned to the bar but he persisted in his refusal to answer. The House committed him to the Carleton County jail until prorogation or until the House otherwise decided. That citation is at page 30 of Beauchesne's.

Occasionally the matter of crown privilege arises. It is not truly a privilege but a claim that is put to the House of Commons and Parliament on behalf of the crown that usually involves a matter of state. Rather than being an absolute exception to the rule, the

matter is taken under advisement by the committee or the House and is disposed of on a common sense basis. I put it that way so as not to derogate unnecessarily at this time from the main principle found in my motion.

I would like to recap for a moment. I have discussed the legal basis for the privilege. I have talked about why the privilege applies, the remedies and the enforcement. Why is this motion important to us? I have thought this through carefully and I think there are three or four reasons.

First, it deals with the public perception of the role and the authority of the House of Parliament and the other place. In my experience the production of documents is the single greatest obstacle I have ever encountered as an MP during my work at committee. The existence of this circumstance is eroding the public's confidence in Parliament. Parliamentarians are more than just a debating club and a cheering section for the government. If parliamentarians cannot get the information our committees are out of business; we cannot do our job.

My second point is fairly simple. If we do not establish the principle all other questions regarding exceptions, privileges and privacy are all moot. We will never be able to deal with the exceptions until we have the principle.

Third, I reiterate how other houses in the Commonwealth have dealt with the matter. Perhaps I will avoid too much detail recognizing that the clock is running faster than I am flipping pages of my speech.

On August 13, 1947 the House of Commons in the United Kingdom reconfirmed its authority to require the attendance of witnesses by resolving:

That the refusal of a witness before a select committee to answer any question which may be put to him is a contempt of this House, and an infraction of the undoubted right of this House to conduct any inquiry which may be necessary in the public interest.

The attorney general of the United Kingdom at that time said:

We are now putting the matter beyond all possibility of doubt by this motion.

The mover of the motion, Mr. Morrison, said:

The point is not one on which any doubt can be allowed to continue. It should be cleared up and the motion is to make the position entirely clear for the future as regards any committee of the House.

The Senate of Australia passed a similar resolution in 1984.

My final point is that we can clear up doubt on this matter once and for all by confirming this privilege with a motion. We must act in such a way as to fortify and buttress the powers of Parliament, the rights of Parliament and the privileges of Parliament as they exist now and as they have always existed. This resolution does not create new law. It simply confirms what is there. The House has not passed a resolution of this type in its entire 129-year existence.

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There is some ignorance, denial and confusion out there with which we must deal.

• (1750)

It is an embarrassment to me as a parliamentarian that for 129 years we have muddled along without articulating it. We simply assumed that all the authorities and authors who have written for us would do the job. It is not their job; it is our job. It is our duty as parliamentarians to deal with the issue in this way and the time has come to deal with it.

The House will confirm the principle. It will be there for all parliamentarians, all writers, all the Beauchesnes who write about Parliament and study our rules.

I hope the debate will not fall on deaf ears. I would like to think this motion could be passed but of course it is in the hands of members. I thank members for giving the matter their consideration.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River and I am pleased to speak to his Motion M-142. And in doing so, I am in good company, since I have the hon. member for Gaspé at my side to support me, should I become weak.

Motion M-142 reads as follows:

That this House unequivocally reconfirms the undoubted rights and privileges of the House of Commons, won from the Crown and which became part of the law many centuries ago, and in particular the unfettered right of the House and its committees to at all times compel the attendance of persons and require them to answer questions and to compel the production of such papers and documents as the House or committee considers necessary for the due carrying out of its mandate.

The English version of the motion translates the French word “indubitables”, in reference to privileges, as “undoubted rights and privileges”. If rights are undoubted, unchallenged, there is no need really to reaffirm or reconfirm them.

In fact, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River provided a brilliant historical demonstration, and knowing his attachment to the parliamentary system, I am sure he feels this demonstration even in his frustrations as a parliamentarian. I will share some of my own with you in a moment.

I do not think that it is necessary to pass the motion again. That said, should the question be put again, I will gladly vote in favour. But it is worth reaffirming from time to time rights so longstanding in the British parliamentary system, probably dating back to the Magna Carta of 1215, the Oxford provisions of 1258, the Bill of Rights of 1689 and all the legislation that, little by little, over the

course of centuries, have affirmed the rights and privileges of the House of Commons and Parliament.

I assume that the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River has put this motion before us today not to have a purely academic debate, but in response to actual situations. I will not speak for the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, but for myself. Since the very beginning of this Parliament or almost, I have been sitting on the sub-committee on national security, which was set up by the Standing Committee for Justice and Legal Affairs.

One of the matters we have worked on was the Heritage Front affair. On many occasions, at in camera sessions, with members of Parliament in attendance, we have had members of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, better known as SIRC, appear before our committee as witnesses.

• (1755)

These people systematically refused to answer questions, to table uncensored versions of documents they had sent to the Solicitor General and to co-operate in any way with the committee.

At the time I moved a motion before the committee to have the Chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, Mr. Jacques Courtois, cited for contempt of Parliament. It was divine providence that prevented the motion from being debated because, meanwhile, Mr. Courtois had died.

The other members of the Security Intelligence Review Committee had never volunteered their co-operation either. Neither the chairman *pro tempore* nor the other members of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. We had to sit for months and months to try and get clear answers to clear questions. All the members did was look at the clock to check when the committee's time was up, and they then rose without having answered the question.

These same members of SIRC, although they had been informed of their obligations by the general legal counsel of the House, Ms. Diane Davidson, refused to answer our questions. They refused to answer, even when the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, chairman of the sub-committee, ordered them to answer.

In spite of all that, they left us in great good humour, but we never got an answer to matters of substance. Our report to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs was, to all intents and purposes bereft of substance. We could not include any pertinent elements because we had no evidence, which was the fault of those who were supposed to serve the Canadian people by providing accurate replies to the elected representatives of the people.

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By hiding behind the oath of office they had taken to keep their information secret, members of the Security Intelligence Review Committee refused to answer the questions asked by the elected representatives of the people. In a parliamentary democracy, this is a moral sin.

Unfortunately, the text of the motion of the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River does not solve the problem. These rights are not discussed but are perhaps open to discussion in connection with the contemporary element which might be added. These rights are not really being questioned, it is the exercise of those rights which is being questioned. That is where politics enters into it.

There was nothing to prevent the subcommittee on national security from promptly making a report to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, which would in turn have reported to this House so that the Security Intelligence Review Committee could have been brought before this House for contempt of Parliament and subjected to sanctions commensurate with the offence committed. But no political majority ever came together to have these people charged with contempt of Parliament.

For months and months the question hung fire, and I understand the political constraints under which the chairman and member for Scarborough—Rouge River found himself. Despite all of his attempts at negotiation, he could not compel the members of SIRC to provide answers.

When a parliamentary committee is totally paralyzed, rendered incapable of action by people who refuse to bow to the laws of the country, we are—you will pardon the expression, which may seem to be going almost too far—almost in a state of insurrection. People mandated to do something, who are categorically refusing to do it.

If the question were to be raised again, as it will be—we have already had to adjourn a meeting of the subcommittee on national security—the next time the people of the Security Intelligence Review Committee come before the subcommittee on national security and again refuse to respond, as they have for months, for years now, to the legitimate questions asked of them, I shall be the first in line to table a motion that they be accused of contempt of Parliament.

[*English*]

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the issue I address today relates to the investigative and probative powers of committees. I certainly applaud the member for Scarborough—Rouge River for his very informative review of the rights of the House and its committees. Too often it is forgotten that Parliament is the highest court of the land and that the committees as creatures of this House are component bodies of the high court.

• (1800)

In the discharge of our duties as parliamentarians to carry out our mandate it is imperative that committees be given the unfettered right of the House to compel attendance and subpoena witnesses, and such powers must be afforded every committee and every full member of these bodies.

I listened intently to the Bloc member relate the circumstance regarding the subcommittee on national security and the efforts that committee went through to get full evidence before the committee. It should not be the case.

Unfortunately I must report that my personal experience with committees has not been consistent with the high goals advanced in this motion. Take the recent case put before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs on which I serve as a full member. It was advanced that the standing committee use its probative and investigative powers to study a certain matter of alleged employment insurance fraud and report its findings to Parliament.

It was explained that Elizabeth Roux of Montreal went to the University of Southern California in September 1994 but kept collecting employment insurance benefits to the tune of \$5,200 until January 1995. It was further presented that the RCMP was called in to investigate the matter. It determined that Roux “did by trickery, lies and other misleading methods defraud the Canadian government”. I explained to our committee that the RCMP recommended that charges be laid.

I also presented evidence that the Montreal office of Human Resources Development Canada also recommended trying Roux. The department sees hundreds of cases a year of EI recipients studying or vacationing outside the country while continuing to collect benefits in violation of the law requiring claimants to be actively seeking and readily available for work.

The Roux case would appear on the surface to be just like any other case but it is more involved. Many of these EI snowbirds and scholars cost Canadians at least \$60 million annually. They are such a problem that human resources recently began cross-referencing EI records with customs declarations Canadians file when they return to the country to help them spot the cheats.

I also explained to my committee colleagues that most fraud cases of this type have accomplices, someone back home, usually a close friend or relative who collects the EI cheques and forwards them to the absentee claimant. In Roux's case her partner in deception was her mother who mailed her daughter's false declarations of employability to the EI office from Montreal so they could be postmarked in Canada. She then collected Roux's cheques and deposited them in a joint mother-daughter bank account.

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I explained to the committee that charges are almost always laid against accomplices even if the unlawfully obtained benefits are paid back as was the case with Roux. There is in effect a zero tolerance policy. In the case of globetrotting claimants they are invariably fined and almost always charged with fraud.

I imparted to the committee that most Canadians would expect that Roux and her mother would be charged. But they were not. Justice department lawyers refused to proceed. Coincidentally Roux's mother is a Canadian senator, Senator Thérèse Lavoie-Roux. Senator Lavoie-Roux was a provincial Liberal cabinet minister for 12 years and it was apparent that her pedigree and political connections may have very well factored into the decision not to lay charges.

• (1805)

Herein is the issue. Two independent federal organizations, the RCMP and the human resources fraud investigators, recommended that charges be laid. Immediately thereafter the justice department, inexplicably, refused to lay charges. The subject of the investigation had real and substantive ties to the political process and the standing committee refused to allow an investigation.

That the government in power would use its majority to suppress my motion for parliamentary investigation into a matter as important as the case illustrated today demonstrates the need to effect the goals advanced in the motion we debate today.

No one can tell me that the Liberal government does not recognize the need to have a more open process in the committee. In fact, the subject for debate prior to Private Members' Business dealt with the promises of the red book. The Liberal red book promises point to several sore spots which need to be corrected.

I noted yesterday that clearly in the preamble to the red book there is a concern on the part of the Liberal government that there have to be some changes. It reads: "Mounting criticism of the House of Commons and its proceedings reflects the frustration of citizens and parliamentarians alike with the continuing failure of Parliament to address effectively the problems that face us". It continues: "Canadians, including those who are elected to serve Parliament, expect the House of Commons not merely to discuss openly the problems of the nation, but also to advance solutions".

Time and again the public has viewed parliamentarians and senators as being above the law. This has been questioned on numerous occasions and there have been regular press reports on these cases.

I will continue to quote from the second paragraph of the preamble to the red book: "They expect the Commons to explore Canada's problems rationally and to establish policies for resolving them. These expectations are not met". That is the statement made

by the Liberal government in its red book. I do not believe it is being met adequately.

Parliament must remain the highest court in the land. We the elected officials must possess the tools to carry out our duties and to ensure that justice and the law apply equally to all Canadians. By refusing the right of our committee to investigate the matter of fraud, for instance, involving Senator Lavoie-Roux, the members opposite who serve on the justice and legal affairs committee have contravened the spirit and substance on which the motion which we are debating is founded.

An article in the Edmonton *Sun* reports that these occasions will hit the press time and time again. I will quote briefly from the Edmonton *Sun*, the press' view as outlined with the information at hand: "The RCMP reportedly recommended laying charges, as did the Montreal office of Human Resources Development Canada. But the justice minister says his department has looked into the case and found insufficient evidence to warrant charges. Last week the Liberals used their majority in the Commons to defeat a Reform demand for a parliamentary investigation. Lavoie-Roux claims there was no attempt to defraud. She did not know there are EI rules against making claims while resident in another country".

"From a former social services minister this is impossible to swallow", the press said. "She didn't see a problem. Why not mail the claims then from California if there was no problem? We could demand to know why mother and daughter have not been charged. Unfortunately that is rather obvious".

Situations of this nature bring the whole parliamentary system into disrepute. If this motion is to have any meaning, Senator Lavoie-Roux, should be called before a committee, questioned by its members and the findings reported back to Parliament.

• (1810)

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I take peculiar pleasure in speaking to this motion. This is quite incredible because it pertains to one of my direct ancestors. I refer to one Thomas Percy who, on November 4, 1605, was chased by the soldiers of James I because he had been involved in the gunpowder plot.

Thomas Percy joined up with Guy Fawkes and they rented a building next to the Houses of Parliament, spent six months burrowing through the wall into the cellar under the House of Lords. They filled it with 20 barrels of gun powder and intended to blow up the entire House of Lords, the privy council, James I, and hopefully get his successor as well.

The plot failed, as members know, and my ancestor was pursued on the road to Dover and was captured at an inn where the king's

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men rode up in the rain. Thomas Percy and other members of the conspiracy had laid their gunpowder out to dry in front of the fireplace and a spark ignited it. There was an explosion and the king's men successfully captured my ancestor, Thomas Percy. He was hanged, drawn and quartered, all in the name of trying to obtain parliamentary privilege for members of Parliament.

This issue of privilege goes back for centuries in parliamentary tradition. In fact, the English civil war was fought over this issue. It is not just a matter of summoning documents, it is also a fundamental issue of free speech and the ability of MPs to have freedom from arbitrary arrest or interference by the crown, by the state. James I, who was the target of the gunpowder plot, on several occasions arrested members of Parliament. This led directly to the English civil war which, I am happy to report, parliamentarians won against the royalists. This is one reason why we have privileges entrenched in the Canadian Parliament today.

I should say that privilege, the right to speak freely in the House of Commons, the right to order documents, the right to have true witness from those we call before us, is something that has been fought long and hard for in the British tradition.

However, we Canadians were fortunate because in 1867 we adopted these privileges in the Constitution Act without a war, without bloodshed and they became an essential part of our parliamentary tradition and an essential part of the way the House of Commons functions. If we cannot have immunity from arrest, if we cannot have freedom of speech and if we cannot summon the evidence that we must have in order to make our decisions clearly, then this Parliament cannot function adequately and serve the people who elected it.

I come to Motion No. 42 from the member for Scarborough—Rouge River. He raises the question of whether we have left behind the sense of privilege. Is there something the matter? Are we getting the return on the sense of privilege as it pertains to the summoning of documents and questioning of witnesses? I suggest we are not.

Indeed, what was conferred on us by the Constitution Act of 1867 we are losing through a process of neglect. As MPs we have over many decades failed to establish our need and our right to have the proper documents and the proper testimony from witnesses who come before us.

Indeed, I regret to say that when I was elected as an MP for the first time in 1993, veteran MPs who had been in the House previously told me that there was not much point in taking part in standing committees because it was all by rote. It was all decided by the government in power. It was all decided by parliamentary secretaries who sat in the standing committees.

• (1815)

There has been criticism in the House about the performance of standing committees. Nevertheless I have been very satisfied, for the most part, that MPs who are willing to speak out in standing committees, whether they are opposition MPs or government MPs, can be heard and can make a difference.

It is true—and this is where the motion of the member for Scarborough—Rouge River is so very important—that the one place where we hit a log jam is the repeated instances where officials called before the committee have refused to testify or have refused to give an answer.

The motion is long overdue. It merely reminds Parliament of a privilege it has had for centuries, centuries of parliamentary tradition that should require proper testimony and evidence before the committee.

I remind the House of something that we implement very rarely. Parliament has the option of compelling testimony under oath. This is one occasion on which we can bring people before us. If they fail to satisfy us, they are actually subject to a penalty equivalent to perjury.

In conclusion, looking down the centuries I must say that we in Parliament should remember the origins of privilege in the British tradition which wars were fought over. We should remember that every one of us on all sides of the House have a fundamental obligation to defend the rights of every MP to obtain good information and adequate testimony both in committees and in any other location on Parliament Hill.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague about the history of his forefather. If he were hanged and quartered I was wondering how my colleague evolved. I will speak a bit about history, democracy and the privileges we should have and should not have.

Democracy comes from two Greek words, part of my ancestry, *demos*, which means people, and *kratos*, which means country. In the old ages in Athens people would gather at the bottom of the hill to have a say in what the state should be doing. At that time they did not have elected members of Parliament or an elected system but collectively they were there and made a decision.

As we evolved we came to what we have today, the Westminster system and the parliamentary systems of different countries. People have different elections. Other people get elected at large. For example, in the parliamentary systems in Europe in the second district of Paris 20 or 30 members of Parliament are elected. In Canada we have a plus one system which means one parliamentarian gets elected for one seat.

The constituents who have sent us here want us to voice their opinions in caucus. We all come here, as I did in 1988, with dreams

and aspirations. We find out there is a larger game. We find out we have to listen to our colleagues. We find out there are rules and procedures. It is not what we want it to be but by working in committees and here we can make changes.

I always ask my constituents what one member of Parliament can do. I raise the example of when the Prime Minister put forward a private member's bill back in the sixties and changed the name of the Trans-Canada Airlines to Air Canada. Members of Parliament are effective.

I commend my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River, for bringing this important motion to the floor of the House. It gives us the right to access information. It gives us the right to ask. We do not have to be wary that if I ask this question somebody will crack my knuckles.

• (1820)

I support the motion my colleague has brought forward.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Motion No. 142 in the name of the member for Scarborough—Rouge River. It states:

That this House unequivocally reconfirms the undoubted rights and privileges of the House of Commons, won from the crown and which became part of law many centuries ago, and in particular the unfettered right of the House and its committees to at all times compel the attendance of persons and require them to answer questions and to compel the production of such papers and documents as the House or committee considers necessary for the due carrying out of its mandate.

I listened carefully to the mover of the motion, a second term member of Parliament who has worked very diligently in a particular area of the House in which many members do not get to participate. It has to do with security, intelligence and review, et cetera.

The issue is important to the member because of the sensitivity and the importance of that area of responsibility in the House of Commons in terms of its mandate to create legislation and to ensure the laws of Canada are abided by.

The principal issue I want to deal with, rather than referring to some of the history, is whether or not the House of Commons should be a body that is prepared in advance for a problem or whether or not it is presently exposing itself to a situation where should there be a problem there would be some confusion.

The principal point raised by the member for Scarborough—Rouge River is a very good point: the House has not in its history dealt with the confusion or uncertainty of the powers of the House.

In my experience over the past three years as a member of Parliament dealing at the committee level, there have been times when I wondered whether or not there was an opportunity to bring to the committee forum additional information or expertise I knew

was available but had not accepted an invitation of the committee to be there.

When I think of the important aspects that are dealt with by committees on behalf of the House, it raises a very important issue about whether or not committees have looked for opportunities to exercise this right which exists in law.

The fact that it has not been affirmed within our place and the fact that it has not been tested or applied here are all the more reason for the motion to have been brought before the House.

This is not a votable motion. At the end of the hour debate will cease. However it has raised the issue to a point where all hon. members will be looking for opportunities to test this right of Parliament.

As the member for Scarborough—Rouge River pointed out in his presentation, the Canadian House of Commons has never reaffirmed this right of Parliament and of its committees to call for persons or papers.

There has been a failure to articulate this right which leads to confusion. In the absence of a clear statement of authority, cabinet ministers and government officials may at some time be unaware. The powers of the committee must be more fully articulated.

• (1825)

Another issue raised was public confidence in Parliament. In terms of historical context, committee work in Parliament has not garnered public attention to any great extent.

The role of a member of Parliament is very broad. It is most unfortunate that many Canadians feel the performance of members of Parliament and the credibility of this place are more reflected in the activities during question period, which is only 45 minutes of each day even though the House starts at 10 in the morning and continues to 6.30 at night.

Committees operate in virtually every discipline. Members of all parties are represented on those committees. These facts are not well known to the Canadian public. It is unfortunate the Canadian public does not know what happens at committee. As a result or a consequence of Motion No. 142, possibly the role of committees can be reconsidered in light of the responsibilities seconded to them by the Chamber.

I congratulate the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River for raising an important issue in terms of the fundamental aspects of the operation of the House of Commons of Canada, the important role committees play, and the potential for confusion or a problem down the road.

Should a matter of importance to all Canadians and to the laws of Canada arise which would tend to put the House in some difficulty

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or jeopardy, it would reaffirm the right of Parliament and the right of the committees to call for persons or papers.

I thank the member for raising the motion. Possibly he would consider reintroducing it at an appropriate time to ensure that the House does not miss the opportunity to be prepared.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to say a couple of words. Obviously there is no disagreement with the intention of the motion. There is a strong feeling about the importance of this principle and the entitlement of Parliament as the highest court in the land to have before it whatever information or witnesses it requires.

I make one point which I hope we all bear in mind. We have exercised this right to be able to fulfil our responsibilities on behalf of the people who have sent us here to govern our country. It is not for our privilege as individuals but in our role as members of Parliament and representatives of the Canadian people. That element has been missing from the debate today.

I compliment the hon. member for bringing forward the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for Private Members' Business has now expired.

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[English]

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The House resumed consideration of the motion and the amendment.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on the motion which is not meant in anyway to be pejorative of the member in question, a person whom I respect greatly.

The government motion basically asks that the member for Kingston and the Islands be made a deputy speaker of the House. As I said before, while I have a lot of respect for the individual we oppose it on the grounds that it is a breach of promise the government made to the House and Canadians.

It is even more hypocritical because one member who put forth a document when in opposition recommended that two junior chair officers be from the opposition. That was a recommendation made by four prominent government members, one of whom is the hon. member nominated as the deputy chair.

• (1830)

We feel that in order to honour the intentions of the promise made by the government when it was in opposition, it should fulfil

its obligation and make an opposition member a deputy chair. That would ensure that the Chair is non-partisan. It would increase the democracy which the government promised. That is one of the many promises which the government has failed to fulfil.

We have put forward the name of the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam to fill the position. We strongly suggest that the government take that nomination into consideration and make this well qualified individual the deputy chair and thereby live up to its promise.

That is only one of many promises on which the government has failed to deliver. I will address a number of those promises in my speech today.

This weekend I was pleased to attend the Liberal convention in Ottawa as an observer for the Reform Party. The government made repeated claims to its members and to the Canadian public that it had lived up to 78 per cent of its red book promises. That is completely untrue. The government has kept 62 of 198 of its promises. It has failed to keep 136 of its promises. I would like to cite a few of the promises as examples because I do not believe the people know that the wool has been pulled over their eyes on a wide range of issues which deeply affect them.

The first promise I would like to speak about is the GST. The government promised that it would abolish the GST. When we go to the stores what do we pay? GST. The government has had three years to do something about it, but it has done nothing.

Second, it wanted to co-ordinate tax policies between the provinces and the federal government. That was a very worthwhile initiative. It is one from which all Canadians would benefit, whether in the private sector or in the public sector. Has there been any co-ordination? No.

In three years there has not been any simplification of the tax system. The Reform Party has given to the government the elements of a flat tax proposal which would greatly simplify the system. Numerous suggestions have been made by Reform's finance people to simplify the tax system. Has the government adopted any of these measures? No.

Then there was the promise to remove interprovincial trade barriers. I find it ironic that there are more trade barriers between Quebec and Ontario or any two provinces within Canada than between Canada and the United States. There is freer trade between Canada and the United States than between the provinces. That is deplorable. How can businesses become aggressive exporters, aggressive in their areas of endeavour, when the government has created trade barriers?

Trade barriers dampen productivity, increase the costs of doing business within Canada, increase the unemployment rate and generally put a damper on the economy. What a great initiative it would have been if the government had taken the bull by the horns

and brought down interprovincial trade barriers. Unfortunately that has not happened.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I thought that this evening's debate was to deal with the qualifications, the worthiness and the appropriateness of an eight-year veteran of the House of Commons who is being considered for a deputy chair position.

I have listened carefully in the last six or seven minutes. I believe that the litany of all the things which we have or have not done as a Liberal government is not relevant to the issue of this debate.

• (1835)

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, could we call quorum, please?

The Deputy Speaker: Can we do one thing first. I think I will rule on the question of order before I do the quorum call. The House belongs to the members. The standing orders reflect, at least in theory, the views of the members. The Chair is not at liberty to say if the member is off the subject.

Accordingly, when the issue is raised as it was by a member, the Chair is entitled to ask that the member speaking, whoever it might be, and I have great respect for the member who is speaking, might please bear in mind the subject matter that we are discussing.

I am sure the member from Esquimalt will quickly be getting to the point that relates to the motion that is actually before the House.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, for the attention of the—

An hon. member: On a point of order. Quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry. Yes, in fact there are not 20 members in the House. I would ask that the bells be rung.

And the bells having rung:

[Translation]

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We now have a quorum. There are more than 20 members in the House.

[English]

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, the point I was getting to by raising this subject was to show that while the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is a very competent individual and one for whom we have very great respect, this issue comes from a much larger issue. The issue here is a breach of promise. It has to do with credibility of the government. That is intimately associated with the issue.

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The government promised when in opposition that when it became the government, it would democratize the House. One initiative was to ensure that at least two junior members of the Chair would be members of the opposition. That is not what is being done here. Every member of the Chair right now is from the ruling party. There is a vacancy now. The proposal in the House today is to ensure that the vacancy does not go to a member of the opposition but to a member of the government. That is a breach of promise, a breach of a contract and it belies the much larger issue which is that this government is not living up to its promises. These are just a couple of examples.

I want to get to the member's question by raising a couple of other issues which are very much related to the Chair and have to do with democratizing Parliament.

When the government was in opposition it wanted to democratize the House. The Liberals wanted to make sure that committees would be empowered to truly bring the wishes of the public to the House and empower individual MPs and committees to bring forward solid solutions to the problems that affect us all. That does not happen because committees are an utter sham. I do not think the public recognize that. Committees are repeatedly asked to deal with subjects which have very little relevance to the problems that affect the country.

When they deal with relevant matters and work very hard, long hours writing a document, using the expertise and time of members of the House, research staff, witnesses as well as thousands of taxpayers' dollars, what happens to the document? It gets about a day of play in the media then it is tossed on a shelf to be ignored. It has no relevance, no meaning, no input into legislation.

• (1840)

What a waste of time, money and effort. What a waste of the potential and expertise of members in this House. I do not think that the public understands that the committee structures in this Parliament are very much a sham. It is in no way a reflection on the good, hard working members of Parliament, the research and ancillary staff that work very hard to try to make a difference. The structure prevents them from doing that. It is a real shame.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands with his colleagues had proposed initiatives to democratize the House and the structures under which we labour. However, absolutely nothing has happened.

Today I introduced a private member's bill. Eight came to this House to determine votability. Out of those eight, only one private member's bill has a chance of being votable and therefore becoming law. Why do we have private members' bills that are not going to be made votable, and therefore can never become law? The whole issue becomes a sham and completely misrepresents to the public the fact that their individual MPs have the power to

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introduce legislation that can become votable, can become law so that it can have an effect.

It cannot happen because the structure does not allow it to happen. The government has had ample opportunity to make those changes. One of the changes is to make all private members' bills votable. That would empower the members to actually make an honest effort, make an impact on the welfare of Canadians.

MPs also labour under a culture of fear. Because of the whip structure, if they do not do what the higher ups say in their respective parties, individual members of Parliament have their fists put down on them, as the government has repeatedly done. Their privileges to speak are removed. They cannot get on the committees that they want. They are removed from them. They become superfluous to the issues that affect them.

Where are all the big decisions made in this House? The big decisions are made in the Prime Minister's Office by a few selected members of cabinet and by some of the captains of industry. These are the people who make the decisions. It is not this House that makes the major significant decisions that can truly have an impact on the country. It gives democracy in Canada a bad name to see this happening. We do not live in a democracy because this House and this Parliament are not a democracy.

The government has had an opportunity to make changes that would empower individual MPs, would empower committees to actually make a change, to actually give people the power to speak through their MPs and affect the legislation that comes to this House. Unfortunately that does not happen.

The public would be appalled if they truly knew what happens in this place and how powerless most of their MPs are to make changes within our fine country. What great opportunity do we have to do this?

Perhaps the greatest disappointment I have had concerns health care. The government had a great opportunity. Its members said when they were running for office that health care was going to be a priority for them, that they were going to ensure that Canadians were going to get their health care when they medically needed it. They recognized that today Canadians from coast to coast are not receiving their health care when they need it. Instead, the government is adhering to the status quo. Why? Purely for political reasons.

The Liberals want to look like the white knight that is going to defend the principles of the Canada Health Act, defend the status quo and defend the declining state of the health care system within Canada.

The public does not realize that because most Canadians are healthy. However, some are not. It is sad that the sick people are the ones who truly understand the state of affairs of our health care system today.

• (1845)

One of the wives of a member in the House is quite sick. She has been diagnosed with a serious illness. The member's wife will not receive treatment for over 30 days, which is not unusual.

If someone is in British Columbia and requires treatment for breast cancer, the wait is over 40 days. If treatment is required for prostate cancer, the wait is over 40 days. If a new knee or hip is required by an elderly person who is in severe pain, the wait is over seven months. That is not access to timely health care. In fact, it is a transgression of one of the basic pillars of the Canadian health system: accessibility for all Canadians.

We cannot defend the current system as it stands. We can and we must build a better system. Not an American system; that can stay south of the border. We do not want an American style health care system in Canada, period, end of story. What we can do is build a better, made in Canada health care system that will provide timely access for all people regardless of their income and ensure that their essential health care services are going to be met when it is medically needed, not when the bottom line allows it.

Adhering to the current principles as they stand is fallacious. Right now portability does not exist. Quebec and the other nine provinces do not have an agreement. Therefore, somebody in Quebec would not necessarily get their services in other parts of the country.

I have dealt with the accessibility issue. There is no universality. If somebody in British Columbia or any other province chooses not to pay their medical premiums, they do not have coverage. They do not have to be treated. There is a significant pool of individuals who do not have coverage because they choose not to. These people are not covered under the health plans as they exist and they put themselves forward as wards of the state. This is only because they choose not to be covered. Comprehensive coverage also does not exist because coverage varies from province to province.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy I see in this issue is that there is a great opportunity. We have to put aside the rhetoric. The rhetoric the government is putting forth on health care is only going to do a huge disservice to Canadians.

Giving people a choice, for example by allowing for private health care clinics where only private moneys are exchanged and no tax dollars are spent, enables people to come off existing waiting lists if they choose to go to the private sector. This would provide more money for and better access to the public system. The private system would be subsidizing the public system; the rich would be subsidizing the poor. It would provide better access for everybody.

In closing, we disagree with this motion because it transgresses a basic promise the government made. We hope the government does not break this promise as it has broken so many others in its

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red book. We hope the government will listen to the ideas put forth by the member for Kingston and the Islands and three other distinguished members from the Liberal government to democratize this House and allow a member from the opposition to sit in the Chair as one of the deputy speakers. We suggest that the member be one from the Reform Party.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour to speak to this motion. I have gone through the report, which I am sure all of us have puzzled over, which looks at reviving parliamentary democracy. The member for Kingston and the Islands was one of the people who put the report forward. It is rather shocking, after this report which says that two opposition members should also share in the role of Speaker, that the member now finds himself in conflict in this situation.

• (1850)

I would like to demonstrate the true meanspirited nature of the Liberal government, the true spirit of the spin doctors and manipulators and the whole despicable performance that has been created within this Parliament and this country. We have had years of this sort of government and Canadians are sick and tired of it. Canadians are sick and tired of the old Canada which is withering and full of these problems.

The Prime Minister is really yesterday's man and is leading us backward into the past. There was the situation today where an individual was telling us, totally incorrectly, that because Reformers would dare to visit Washington and talk to all the politicians there, including Mr. Newt Gingrich, that it somehow makes us part of the extremist right. The point to make clear is that the Reformers were probably as surprised as anyone else at just how different we really are, just how much difference there is between a Canadian and an American. Whether we are looking at our political system, social system, hospital system or other systems, the differences are obvious.

Yes, we are annoyed. We are more than annoyed when we get this kind of treatment from that sort of an individual in our country. We Reformers are annoyed when we see posters of an evolutionary chart and we are at the bottom and the Liberals have the arrogance to put themselves at the top. It is that kind of arrogance that would cause a motion to appoint all speakers from the one party, even though there is a promise to democratize this place; a promise to open it up and to make it more transparent, to enter the 21st century with some kind of a vision rather than the meanspirited dictatorship which we are now subject to in this place.

As we examine this motion we can see the deception that has gone on. We can go through the list and talk about some of the promises. There is the member of Parliament pension plan. The

Liberals said they were going to reform and fix it. Sure, just a little dust over and now it is fine. Canadians are not going to accept that sort of deception. Who opted out? The members across know who did and we Reformers are proud of it. Reform is showing a vision for the next century.

The Liberals said: "Yes we will get rid of the GST, we will scrap it, we will get rid of it. We promise we will. Elect us and we will do it". Who are the ones who are making politicians the low lives of this country? Who is doing that? It is not Reformers who are doing it. It is the party opposite that is just adding more and more fuel to the fire by the sorts of things that we have seen it do this week.

The GST harmonization: another billion dollar grab from the other provinces. It is not even acceptable in the provinces that have agreed to it but it is better than nothing.

What about health care? Again we have heard the deception, that we are the ones who will burn and scrap this system, that there will be a two tier system. Our health care system is in disarray. Look at it in this province, or look at it in my home province. There are waiting lists. People are waiting 30 days, six months and seven months. My wife has a serious problem and she has to wait three months to see a specialist.

That is the sort of quality we have in our health care system. That is what makes this government say: "Those people across the way, they are destroying the system". It is the \$3 billion cut from the feds. It is not just the provinces. Canadians are going to see that and then they will understand what the government is like.

• (1855)

Canadians will then understand why it is going against the recommendation of the member himself, that there should be a person from the opposition put in the Chair. That was a recommendation from the member for Kingston and the Islands and now the government is going against that. It is deception of the worst kind in this place.

The list goes on and on. In 1969 the debt was zero; in 1972 it was \$17 billion. Would it not be nice to be back there? Then we really got into it and by 1984, when we were all totally disgusted with the Liberal government, we were up to \$180 billion in debt and we said that we could not let it go any further. But it did go further and the day we all got elected it was \$489 billion.

Now the Liberals are saying that they have it under control. Canadians are asking: "Do they really have it under control? Do they really? What are they going to tell us in 1997?" They are going to say \$610 billion or \$620 billion. Under control? Again the whole picture before us is one of total misrepresentation and it goes on and on.

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We are told that the unemployment problem has been solved and infrastructure programs are taking place. Boy, that is fixing everything. Tell that to the 1.4 million people who are unemployed, the two million to three million who are underemployed, the one in four people who are worried they will lose their jobs. Tell them it is under control.

Again this deception, this smoke and mirrors, saying one thing and doing something else, saying there will be a more open Parliament, a speaker which will represent all parties. No offence to the position, Mr. Speaker. It is one that all of us in this place honour, but here is a chance to reform this place. Here is a little way of doing it. However, we see closure, shutting down the debate. Again, we add to the nails in the coffin of the people who say what they think about this place.

We can talk about the criminal justice system and how it is doing. Talk to the victims. Yesterday I spoke to a constituent of mine who was victimized by a 10-year old. We are not solving these social problems. We are going down the middle saying that if we close our eyes, we will not have to see them. People are watching and they are seeing what is happening here. When the government does have an opportunity to fix a situation, it does not. It just does not make any attempt to try to change the perceptions people have.

What do Canadians think about the other place? Just ask anyone what they think about it. I do not care what political party they belong to. Ask them if they think the other place needs to be changed. On the kind of change we might have differences of opinion but just ask the people if it should be changed. They will say without a doubt, probably in the 90 per cent range, that the other place needs to be changed.

The government has a chance to make some changes here tonight, but it is not going to because it is status quo. The government believes in the old line of thinking. We can look at how things work in the House, how the committees work, free votes and private members' bills. All of those things present an opportunity to make a change.

I cannot help but think back to a couple of years ago on an access to information bill. I was more naive three years ago. I said: "What do you think of this?" I got it from the access commissioner. He recommended this change. It came out of his report. The Liberals endorsed it back in 1990. They said it was a great idea. However, it did not pass the House. The reason it did not pass was two and a half years ago everybody got up and said: "Yes, it is a very good motion, but there will be amendments made to the Access to Information Act. The justice minister will put them forward in the next year or two. Do not worry about it. That is why we voted against your motion". We are still waiting for those changes.

• (1900)

I have put forward another private member's bill which deals with peacekeeping. Should we vote in the House for peacekeeping?

Should we have all the facts before we vote? Should there be a tree vote?

That seems very straightforward. Certainly that is what Canadians want. However, it will be defeated in the House because we have to keep the status quo and we have to let a few guys at the top make the decisions.

We have a centralized, sluggish organization that wants to keep the status quo. It could be made much better.

I feel very fortunate to be involved in the foreign affairs area. In that area, if in no other, we should be able to work together on things. We try to work together on issues which are good for Canadians.

Parliament could be much more constructive if we could work together for the betterment of Canadians. Somehow we have to change the system to do that. As long as attendance is like this, and as long as there is so little chance to make a difference we will not make any changes. We will just carry on until finally the Canadian people will say "enough". It should not have to go that far. The country should not have to be hurt that much. Can the country survive if we do not act?

We are now celebrating what happened a year ago. A year ago the vote was 50.5 per cent to 49.5 per cent. That well could have spelled the end of this country. That is how close we are to Canadians losing faith in their Parliament.

What can we do to bring back the faith? Certainly one little tiny thing would be to elect an opposition member to be the junior speaker. I have heard some say that it cannot be a Reform member. Why does someone not amend it to make it a Bloc member? Make it one of those other guys. Make it whomever, but make it an opposition member. At least start the process of change, change that is so necessary for this House.

We might say that it really will not make a difference anyway because of the Liberal majority and the way majorities work. If we started making changes we might be surprised at how they might catch on. We might be surprised at how that might lead to a better place. It would be a better place for the country, for the members and for all those associated with this place. We would all benefit from that.

I am sure that all of us are asking ourselves if we are going to run in the next election. We are asking ourselves what else we could do. We are asking ourselves if we have made a difference. The thing which makes it most rewarding for all of us is when we go home and we have our town hall meetings and people say: "Thank you for representing us. It must be a tough job".

If I did not hear that a lot I might say "enough is enough".

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• (1905)

Because they say that, we come back down here. I often tell them that it is sort of like getting thrown out of the ring, going back home, getting picked up, sorted out and thrown back into the ring. We get on a plane and come back down here and try again.

When we go through something like this, we say: "Is it worth it? Am I making a difference? Are they going to just slam stuff through whether it is good or bad? Is status quo the only thing we think of in this place?"

I plead with the members across as we vote on something like this to think about it, make an amendment, make any kind of amendment to improve this. Show Canadians, show parliamentarians, show the people who are watching that we care about this country.

Obviously the Prime Minister has said enough times in this House: "The only reason there are people who want to leave this country is that they have given up on it". The best way to defeat separatism in any part of Canada obviously is to make it better, make it some place that people can respect and feel part of.

I am saying that this motion that is before us tonight is just one step that might help put us that one more step.

When we hear parliamentarians, as we did this past weekend, rating themselves as A+, as the very best, Canadians are saying: "Boy, let's look at the list on taxation. Are we better off? No. It is \$23 billion, We are paying more taxes than we were before".

On the whole social policy, are we better off? No, the line-ups are longer. There are more social programs today than ever before. On labour policies, are we better off? No, not at all. Look at the problems we have in that whole area.

Cultural policies, the unity issue and the report card could go on and on. Canadians out there have that report card. They are keeping score. Again I say to this House that this is a chance to make one little change and show that at least this House is prepared to look at some kind of reform of this place to make it better.

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You might want to check the blues or the hon. member might want to confirm it, but I think I heard him a few minutes ago use the word meanspirited in referring to this side of the House.

If he indeed used that word, I would ask that he withdraw it. I base that request on a ruling that you made in this House a couple of years ago.

The Speaker: My colleague, I did hear the word meanspirited. It is the age old story of what is parliamentary today may be unparliamentary tomorrow and vice versa. Sometimes the word is not used in the same context as the other. In this case I found that in the context that it was used it was not unparliamentary. I thank you for bringing it to my attention. It shows that we are all in this

debate. I would say at least at this point from what I heard it would not be a point of order.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying it is really sad on an evening like this when we will be voting to ask someone to be the deputy chair of the House that we have not had more time discussing the background and the qualities that the member for Kingston and the Islands has exhibited in this House over the last eight years.

With respect to many of the members of the Reform Party, had they been here when we were in opposition when the Conservative government was operating this place they would have witnessed a man who showed a tremendous amount of love for this Chamber. He practically lived in here for his first term.

He developed a keen sense of understanding about the technical aspects of the House. He committed himself to becoming a master of the House, understanding the rules and making sure that there was fair play and accountability on the government side of the House.

• (1910)

I think the members of the Reform Party are at a bit of a disadvantage when it comes to assessing the member for Kingston and the Islands because they did not witness that experience. He has served a tremendous apprenticeship which suits him to take over this assignment.

It is too bad that tonight, what should be a total acclamation of a great member of Parliament, is being stained and clouded by a diversionary tactic of the opposition to prevent this member who has such merit from being appointed.

For the last little while I have listened to the members of the Reform Party. I want to go back to the very first time that the leader of the Reform Party stood in this House. He said the members of the Reform Party over this term would only stand and criticize the government if they had constructive alternatives to the government pathway and that they would do it in a way that was not like the traditional jousting and bickering that tends to go on during question period.

We can see that after three or four months in this Chamber Reform Party members have fallen into the traditional partisan habits of opposition parties. I find that sad because there were many good thoughts put on the table tonight and many good observations about what really does happen in this House of Commons and in committees. Many of their observations are about the fact that effectiveness of the utilization of committee recommendations is not really high. There is a lot of good talent and good ideas which go on in those committees which really never see the light of day. I thought that some of the Reform members who brought that point up made a good observation.

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However, we know that the real root of the problem for this Chamber is not what goes on in the committees and in debate here on bills as they come through the House. The real root evolves from question period. The members of the Reform Party over the last three years had a chance to do something different.

I do not think many Canadians realize how question period operates in this country. I do not think many Canadians realize that most of it is sort of a rigged deal. In other words, every morning we all know that the tacticians from both sides of the House meet in their offices and the opposition members sit there and say "okay, let us see what the media is saying about issues all across the country and let us see how we can sort of find one or two things to embarrass the government". These are not ideas coming from the members from their own committee experiences. By and large they tend to design their questions from what they see in the media.

Lo and behold, on the other side of the House we have tacticians sitting there for the government almost having a contest as to what questions opposition members are going to ask today. They wonder how many questions they can anticipate are going to be asked and how accurate are they going to be. What do we have here? We have a phony joust every day in question period. There is not a member of Parliament in this House who will say that this is anything other than an almost predictable exercise every day.

This is what Canadians are fed up with. They are not fed up with what goes on in committee because they see very little of committee. The members are right, that is where a lot of good work goes on. However, what is the face that we put to Canadians in this Chamber? It is the face of that 30 second little joust clip that goes on in question period. In the last three and a half years Reform members had a chance to try to change that and make question period a more meaningful exercise. That is what the leader of the Reform Party said he would do the first time he spoke in the House.

• (1915)

I want to be specific. I am not criticizing the Reform Party just to criticize. I am trying to convey the genuineness they are trying to show with regard to making the Chamber more meaningful. I say question period could be different. Reform members or the members of the opposition should not govern themselves or design their questions based on the media. They should base them on their own committee experience and what they personally believe is the issue of the day. They should control the agenda rather than letting the media control it.

That is one of the sicknesses around here. By and large the media controls the agenda of most members of Parliament, and it should be the reverse. Members of Parliament should be controlling the agenda.

I give a specific example. Members have stood in the past few hours to talk about the flawed health care system as it is evolving and about some of the shortcomings of government.

I could make the case the Reform Party has caused most of the flaws. I should not say flaws. If the Liberal government has been a little less liberal than what it has been traditionally, it is primarily because of the Reform Party which has an obsession with deficit and debt. How can it be so obsessed with deficit and debt and expect the health care system to be anything other than what it is?

We have a pathway of deficit and debt reduction around here that is crazy. We are cutting off our nose to spite our face. We are destroying national institutions because of the deep cuts that are going on.

The Reform Party has taken some credit for the heavy duty focus on deficit and debt. We in the Chamber are supposed to be here not for the advantaged but to speak for the disadvantaged. Traditionally the opposition party is supposed to make sure government is accountable and there is some balance.

I humbly say those members of Parliament have not been a factor in ensuring a balance as we go through reconstruction or modernization. They have been too extreme and that extremism does not help the quality of life. It exacerbates the breakdown of some institutions going through a very difficult period.

I have a great respect for the Chamber. I continue to enjoy my experience in the House of Commons. I have a deep understanding and respect for where the Reform Party is coming from. However, if Reformers want to make this work, they have to carve out a new pathway or a different approach which should start at question period. Until we clean up the House at question period to make it real and not a gimmick, nothing will change. It will go on.

There is not a kid or a serious person in Canada who will tell us to our face that they love what goes on in question period, that they think what goes on there is great, that they admire what happens there. I have never found the person, anyway. If the Reform Party were serious about making the House more meaningful it would focus on the root problem.

• (1920)

I end by saying that I came to the House of Commons with the member for Kingston and the Islands who is a fabulous Chamber member. He loves the Chamber. He has worked his buns off to ensure that fair play is part of the rules and the different sorts of things that go on here. It is part of his being.

If the members of the Reform Party believe in change, they should not stain an evening like tonight when such a fine member will be appointed in any event. We should all get behind him and

put trust that he and the Speaker over the next few months can perhaps make a few changes.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise tonight to participate in the debate.

The member for Broadview—Greenwood has joined us. As usual he was very eloquent in making his point, but he missed the point of the debate that is taking place tonight and indeed earlier today. The debate is not about the qualifications of the member for Kingston and the Islands. Speaker after speaker on this side of the House has made that point and I will make it. I think he is very well qualified for the position. I have been a great admirer of his but that is not what it is about.

The debate tonight is about his appointment being another Liberal broken promise. It is not about the member. It is about the fact that promises made to Canadians to get elected have not been kept. I will focus my remarks on the severity or the impact of those broken promises on Canadians. This is a small one by comparison to some that have been made.

Last weekend there was a great deal of accounting: “78 per cent of our promises kept”. Numbers were kicked around. I have done my own tabulation and I have rated the impact of the promises that were made. The Liberal government made two promises to get elected that I would put in the 90 per cent category: job creation and the GST. Those two promises rated with the Canadian people somewhere about 90 per cent. The others were nickel and dime stuff compared to those two promises. Very few Canadians went beyond the third or fourth promise, but those two broken promises had a great impact on Canadians and played a great role in getting the government elected.

I focus on the jobs promised at election time and the GST. In 1993 during that election campaign Canadians wanted to believe the government would be able to create the jobs they so desperately needed. Some 1.4 million Canadians were out of work. They wanted to believe the Liberal government and voted for the Liberal government on that promise.

They wanted to get rid of the GST. They voted for that Liberal government because it was to abolish it. It was to scrap it. They hated it and I think the member for Broadview—Greenwood would agree. He knows the impact of the GST promise in his riding and many ridings across Canada.

Those two major promises were not kept. They got the Liberals elected but once elected they were soon forgotten. I am not referring to the member for Broadview—Greenwood who did the honourable thing.

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Let us talk about the broken promise on jobs for a minute. Three years down the road we still have 1.4 million unemployed Canadians; 18 per cent of our youth and several million Canadians with jobs are worried sick about how much longer they will have them. They just do not know if they will be employed a year from now. That is the reality of the broken promise. It has turned out to be a cruel hoax. Unemployed people were looking for that promise, looking for those jobs which in fact did not materialize.

The Liberal government has yet to make the connection between the high tax burden and the lack of job creation. There is a relationship there and it still has not made it.

● (1925)

That was evidenced a little over a week ago when the Prime Minister said: “No, if we get a few extra bucks there won’t be any tax relief; we will put those extra dollars into social programs”. There was arrogance in that statement. For hard working overtaxed Canadians there was no hope for tax relief. The indication is that if there are extra dollars they will go into social programs. That is not what Canadians wanted to hear. It is further proof there was misplaced trust in the government when it was elected in 1993.

To find out about creating jobs why not go to the people who create jobs and find out how it is done? The Chamber of Commerce is the organization that represents the job creators.

I quote from a letter sent to all members of Parliament and the Senate in December 1994 from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce which represents 170,000 entrepreneurs, hard working small business people that create the jobs: “The next federal budget will be crucial to the future of our country. Tough choices will be necessary. Despite the overwhelming consensus that the deficit must be cut we fear that the cuts will not be deep enough. The finance minister’s promise to meet his target of a deficit that is 3 per cent of GDP by 1996-97 is simply not good enough. The deficit must be reduced to zero by 1997-98. The consequences of the government not following through on this is unthinkable”.

Those are the people who create the jobs. That was the result of a survey of 6,000 of their members. Perhaps it was not what the government wanted to hear. The government ignored it because it still had not made the connection on how to create jobs by reducing the tax burden of Canadians.

I think back to when we were first elected. We in Reform ran on the deficit and the debt. The member for Broadview—Greenwood thinks we are fixated on the deficit and the debt. It is not the deficit and the debt. It is what the government is doing to job creation, taxes and our social programs. That is what Reform is concerned about. That is the impact or the connection the government has not been made yet. That is what is killing jobs. That is why our taxes

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are so high. That is why medicare is in trouble. It is the deficit and the debt. Until the government gets that message it just will not happen.

Reform campaigned on it. When we were running on that platform in 1993 the Liberals were saying: "It is not a problem. What are you worried about? You are fearmongering". Because of that the first budget brought down by our finance minister did absolutely nothing to deal with the deficit and the debt. Actually it was worse than nothing because part of that first budget gave in to the smugglers and gave away \$300 million to \$400 million in tobacco taxes. It was unbelievable in the position we were in that they threw away tax dollars so desperately needed.

The first budget from the finance minister ignores the most serious problem we have today. I have heard members say: "We just got here. We didn't know anything about it. We didn't know it was that serious. We were just elected". That might hold for some of the backbenchers but most in the front row, most of the cabinet ministers in government, had been in opposition. They were not rookies. They knew the state of the economy. They knew the state of the tax burden. In fact when they were in opposition they opposed most attempts by the Conservative government to do something about it.

In the second budget the finance minister all of a sudden started to talk about the serious problem with the deficit and debt. It was killing jobs. It took two budgets. He found out in the second budget that we had a problem, but even in the second budget he failed to do anything about it.

The finance minister did nothing about it even with a warning shot from Moody's, the bond rating people. They told the finance minister there was a serious problem: "The people who buy your bonds come to us for advice. Unless you do a couple of things we will not be advising them to buy your bonds or if they are going to buy them we will advise them to look for an extra point". Moody's said: "Your 3 per cent target of GDP is too low. You could fall over that. That is not a target. We want a date for when you are going to get to zero. Don't give me rolling two-year targets somewhere down the road". When I heard that from the finance minister I saw myself in business going to my bank manager with my overdraft which I had for many years and the bank manager says: "When are you going to have it paid off?" I would say to him: "I'm not going to tell you—somewhere down the road". I would be out the door, I would be gone and my note would be called.

● (1930)

However, we play that game on the Canadian taxpayers. They are not buying it. That advice of Moody's was ignored and we were downgraded, unfortunately. However, by the third budget he was really starting to get the message. He realized that yes, we have to

make some cuts. We did not get cuts. We got scrapes. We did not get the cuts that we needed; too little, too late.

Here we are, three years from when the government took office. We were just under \$500 billion in debt. It will have added over \$100 billion to the debt. We are approaching \$600 billion of debt.

The finance minister stands up and brags about 3 per cent of GDP. He does not talk about the \$400 billion, \$500 billion, \$600 billion of debt that he has put this country in. Of course the real cruncher is \$50 billion in interest payments to service that debt. The 68 cent government is what the Canadian people have now. One-third of tax dollars goes to pay the debt, just the interest on our debt. The interest on our debt now is equivalent to our social program spending. It is growing faster than any item in the budget.

What do we get from the finance minister? Interest rates are the answer. We get reduced interest rates. It is not interest rates. It is taxes. Canadians want lower taxes, not lower interest rates. We need to leave more dollars in the pockets of the people who are going to buy the goods and get the economy moving.

I have to quote the Prime Minister because I think this is at the mind block that is there on this deficit and debt. This is a statement the Prime Minister made during a town hall meeting and it was reported in the *Ottawa Sun*: "PM downplays massive serving cost. The debt load is no problem. Of course we have a debt but we can pay off our interest. We have no problem at all. Fifty billion of interest payments is not a problem". We just tax the people and get more taxes from those compassionate, caring people.

What about health care? We are not creating jobs, but not a problem, \$50 billion is not a problem. This is the leader of the party. If that kind of thinking is what is coming down from cabinet we are never going to get tax relief because we do not have a problem. Tell that to the 1.5 million unemployed who say: "What is the problem? Why can't I get a job?" Those unemployed people are not interested in interest rates. They are interested in doing something about getting their taxes reduced and there is absolutely no hope.

The other big broken promise of course was NAFTA. They were going to rewrite NAFTA, scrap NAFTA. Thank God it did not happen. The only jobs we have in this country are because of free trade and NAFTA. That is a broken promise.

Right now it is not Canadians who are spending money. It is our exports that are keeping us going. Of course free trade was opposed by the Liberals when they were in opposition. It is interesting now to hear them stand up in the House and rant and rave about the 600,000 jobs. Those jobs have been created by free trade and NAFTA and they opposed it. They do not know how to create jobs. That is the sad truth of the situation today.

Let us talk for a moment about the GST. I know that is very near and dear to the heart of the member for Broadview—Greenwood. He did the right thing on that. He knew that he was elected by a large number of people in his riding on the basis of that being scrapped and when the government did not deal with it he did the right thing. I applaud him for it.

That won a lot of votes. That was the most hated tax by Canadians and may still be because of the way it was put through. Not that it is a bad tax; I happen to think that the GST is a very fair tax. It replaced the old manufacturers' sales tax. I think it was brought in at a higher level than it needed to be but it was sure a lot fairer tax than the one it replaced.

Nevertheless, Canadians hated it. It still comes up at meetings and I am asked, as I am sure the hon. member across the aisle is, "When are you going to get rid of it? Why isn't it paying off the debt?" A lot of Canadians thought it was a brand new tax, the receipts from which were going to do something about the deficit and the debt. They did not understand the difference.

Those were two major promises, scrap, abolish, get rid of. Never mind the fine print in the red book, those were the words that were used and of course the words that were used by the Deputy Prime Minister ended up costing her job. She had to resign because she did not honour the promise that was made to the people. It was unfortunate that it took as long as it did for that promise to be honoured. This was the government that was elected on another promise of restoring integrity in government and faith in the process, yet we had the Deputy Prime Minister not honouring her word.

• (1935)

All members of this House, indeed all politicians, were being hurt by the fact that her word was not being kept. It was so typical of politicians who will say one thing to get elected and do whatever once elected. Then we get this excuse: "I was only running for office. What are you getting so worked up about? It was just a little white lie. Not to worry".

I want to talk about Ontario because I am from Ontario. I am the only Reformer from Ontario. Ontario is not being looked after by this government. Ontario is suffering badly even though 98 of 99 in '93.

I am going to talk about Pearson airport, the jewel of Canadian infrastructure. In my view, and I think the member for Broadview—Greenwood would agree, there is not a more important piece of infrastructure in Canada. The government was elected on an infrastructure program with \$6 billion of borrowed money and it completely ignored this major piece of infrastructure right in Toronto. It was not just the jobs that were going to be created in overhauling terminals I and II. Four or five thousand jobs could have been created immediately. That airport impacts on jobs all

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across Canada. That is where industries fly in and out of when they are looking to expand or locate their plants.

The irony there is a government elected on an infrastructure program completely ignores Ontario's and Canada's most important piece of infrastructure. We are getting into Pearson and the hypocrisy of the Liberals. When they were campaigning they said they would examine that complex deal.

They had Mr. Nixon do a 30 day review of that contract. That review raised a lot of questions and a lot of suspicion but contained no hard facts to suggest this was a bad deal, not one hard fact.

The government introduced a bill on the basis of that report which had no concrete evidence that the deal should be cancelled, yet the government cancelled it. Again, it was the government's right to do, but it introduced a bill that would deny Canadian citizens their day in court. Those developers would not have the opportunity to defend their good names. There are some Canadians whose names have been dragged through the mud because of the Liberal government and this bill would deny them their day in court.

The bill was defeated in other place and now it has been defeated in a court of law. The Liberals have failed to prove that was a bad deal. In a court of law it has been established that it was not a bad deal after all. When the government appealed the decision, it even lost the appeal.

It has gone through the process and it has been proven that the original deal would have been a good deal for Canadians. Both those terminals would be functioning more efficiently now. We would have created those jobs and many more jobs right across the country.

Now the only thing that is being debated in court is the compensation which the developers are entitled to because it was a good deal. Now what is the government arguing in court? It is now arguing that it did the developers a favour in cancelling it because they were going to lose their shirts. I cannot believe the hypocrisy of that position, that the government would have the nerve to do that. It will end up costing us \$400 million or \$500 million before that is through. It was unbelievable to see the Liberals denying citizens their day in court.

The other issue is Toronto as an international banking centre. I would like to quote the former mayor of Toronto. When the decision was made to bypass Toronto and give it to Montreal and Vancouver, the former mayor called the decision crass politics at its worst: "All this adds up to is bad news for Toronto because we have been openly discriminated against by the federal government".

• (1940)

It just so happens that former mayor of Toronto is now a member of the Liberal cabinet. He is a cabinet minister. He had 98 members

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from Ontario to do something about crass politics, to do something about the fact that Toronto was bypassed, the capital of Ontario.

In three years with the former mayor now sitting as a cabinet minister nothing has happened. Toronto still has not been given the distinction that it so rightly deserves.

As a matter of fact, there was a lawsuit. The lawsuit originated by this former mayor of Toronto. It is still coming forward. This government is going to be sued for bypassing Toronto and not giving it the status it should have received three or four years ago.

I appreciate the opportunity to bring out some of these broken promises. Really that is what we are focusing on tonight.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion. It is interesting that it is the appointment of a replacement for one of your deputies that has sparked this very interesting debate in the House.

I am pleased to speak regarding the appointment of my hon. colleague from Kingston and the Islands to the position of Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole.

I have the honour of knowing the member. I worked with him on the procedure and House affairs committee when I was first elected and served as Reform's House leader. As a parliamentarian, of course, I have no objection whatsoever to the hon. member's holding the position of the Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole. I would hope that the hon. member is following the debate. I am sure he is watching this debate with great interest.

In a report released in January 1993 regarding the independence of the Chair, the authors firmly stated that the assistant deputy speaker should be alternated between government and opposition parties, citing the Westminster model as an example. By using this model, they said that their authority would be greatly enhanced and the non-partisan nature of the Chair would be greatly augmented.

Most ironically but not surprisingly, the report is titled: "The Liberal Plan for the House of Commons". The authors are the current Minister of Health, the labour minister, formerly the government whip and the opposition whip before the last election, the Minister of International Co-operation, the former government whip who was recently appointed to cabinet, and even the hon. member who is being considered for the appointment, the member for Kingston and the Islands.

The member for Broadview—Greenwood paid quite a tribute to the hon. member and suggested that somehow Reform was going beneath the dignity of the House to even have a debate on his appointment to the Chair.

He talked about the wonderful qualities of the MP for Kingston and the Islands and what a great parliamentarian he is. I do not quibble with those observations.

Then he went on to somehow suggest that we should not review the hon. member's statement here, his paper, about opposition members being appointed as deputy chair.

He got into the whole issue of question period and my leader's statement that we wanted to make this House work better, that we want to be a constructive opposition. We are still a very constructive opposition.

I want to talk about the early days, because I remember them very well. I remember coming into the House and at times even giving the minister opposite previous notice of what the question would be, in good faith, in an honourable way. We would ask a minister of the crown a question and the minister would get up in shock and dismay and ridicule the questioner. He would be very undignified about it.

I suddenly realized it takes two to be honourable and to function in a very dignified manner in the House. We found it did not matter how we asked the questions, what our decorum was. The Liberal respondents, ministers of the crown, were lacking in respect and dignity when they answered our questions; very seldom did they answer our questions.

• (1945)

Then he talked about the tacticians. He said question period is run by a bunch of tacticians. Opposition people sit in their little rooms planning their questions and then unfortunately the government has to respond with its tacticians. It just so happens that one of those tacticians was the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands when he was parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. I knew he was because we would talk about it. He would tell me they were in their rooms cooking all this up.

This is same hon. member who the hon. member from Broadview—Greenwood said is above all of this and here he had been involved. The picture that the member for Broadview—Greenwood painted was not an accurate picture whatsoever.

I hope that the member for Kingston and the Islands is paying close attention to this debate. He has been very aggressive in debates in the House and we have had a good time debating many issues. Every once in a while he will take the opportunity to quote from the New Testament. He did it very recently.

I would like to remind the hon. member—because I am sure he is listening—about a story where a father had two sons and he asked the two sons to go out and work for him. One son said sure he would go do it. That son went out, forgot about obeying his father and did not do the job he was told to do. The other son said he was not going to do it but then he thought carefully about his decision

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and he said, yes, he would obey his father and carry out the task he was given.

I hope the member for Kingston and the Islands reads the report he authored some time ago that said opposition members should have two of the four chair positions. I hope he is the son who said he would go sit in the chair. I do not care about promises made in the past. I hope he will reconsider. I hope he will do the honourable thing tonight as he thinks about his commitment to democracy in this place and he will say that he will not accept that. It is not the right thing to do until the Liberals have kept their promise to make sure that two opposition members are appointed as deputy speakers sitting in the Chair. I trust he will do the right thing.

If the hon. member does not he is open to criticism. I guess we cannot use the *h* word in the House but we can certainly talk about the *h* word outside the House. That is what the member for Kingston and the Islands will be if he accepts the position that has been offered to him by the government.

An hon. member: What is the *h* word?

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, the word is hypocrite.

This demonstrates to Canadians that the Liberals say one thing during election campaigns in opposition and then they slap us in the face and do exactly the opposite. This is not only apparent with protocol and House affairs but in all sectors.

I must speak about agriculture because I am the agriculture critic for the Reform caucus. I love agriculture and I am dismayed with the broken promises of this Liberal government with regard to agriculture.

The Liberals have been patting themselves on the back over this past weekend saying they have been keeping promises. Reform looked at their promises with regard to their agriculture platform document prior to the last election and they made 28 promises.

An hon. member: They have kept them all.

Mr. Hermanson: The hon. member says they have kept them all. I will bet that the hon. member does not even know what one of those promises are.

The Liberals made 28 promises with regard to agriculture but have kept only 7. That means they have failed with only a 25 per cent mark. No matter how you look at it, that is pretty dismal.

I will mention a couple to put them on the record. Liberals promised that they would provide a greater commitment to research and development, both applied and basic. The opposite is true. They cut funding for research in agriculture by 16 per cent.

The fresh start proposal that the Reform is taking to Canadians in the next election calls for an increase in spending for agriculture research. We would find the savings by streamlining the department in other areas.

A Liberal red book promise says that they would use GATT negotiations to aggressively defend and clarify article XI to maintain supply management. The Liberals were barely in office when they scrapped article XI. Everybody knew that was a promise they could not keep but they made it anyway. That is disgraceful. They should not be allowed to get away with that.

An hon. member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hermanson: The hon. member opposite is saying hear, hear. He thinks article XI is still there. He thinks a different government signed it away. It was his own government that signed article XI of GATT away after it promised Canadian farmers it would defend that article to the death. Not one of them died or even lost a night's sleep over the loss of article XI.

• (1950)

The Liberals broke their promise when it came to standing up for Canadians in their trade relations with the United States. I happen to be a durum grower and I know they put a cap on durum exports to the United States. They did not have to. We have a trade agreement that says that we do not have to put a quota or a cap on our exports of durum into the United States. It does not matter.

The Americans put a little pressure on and said: "You be good boys up there in Canada, you Liberals, you co-operate with us. We do not want any more of your durum for a while". The agriculture minister said: "Okay. We'll just close off the flow of our high quality durum that is bringing a good return to Canadian farmers. We'll oblige you. To heck with these trading arrangements we made. We'll punish our own farmers just to help you poor Americans out". That was the response of the Liberal government.

The Liberals made promises about agriculture stabilization that they did not keep. They promised a whole farm NISA for all of Canada. They failed to deliver. There were two provinces that were not interested and they forgot to ask the provinces whether they would go along with their proposals for agriculture stabilization.

They promised a spring cash advance. They just reneged on that one the other day.

They did keep seven promises. One of them was to establish an Agri-Food Development Council to improve Canada's competitive position in the agri-food industry. I expect they kept it because it is a council. They had some Liberals who needed a job and they want to create jobs. So they said: "We'll create a council and we'll put some Liberals on this council. In that way we have kept our

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promise and have also dished out some patronage at the same time". That is agriculture.

The Liberal government made a whole lot of other promises. That is what this debate is about, keeping your word, keeping your promise. If you say you are going to appoint deputy speakers from both sides of the House, you had better do it, Mr. Speaker. Canadians are not going to take being lied to any longer.

The red book is full of promises that have not been kept. The success rate is just about as dismal as it was with their agriculture promises. Let us go to promise number one: "We will restore Canadians' faith in themselves and their government". They failed dismally. In stark contrast Reform has offered in its fresh start proposals a guarantee that we will listen or we can be recalled.

Promise No. 2: "We will work with the provinces to redesign the current social assistance programs so sorely tested in recent years to help people on social assistance who are able to work to move from dependence to full participation in the economic and social life of this country". Nothing has been a more dismal failure than this promise.

They go on to say in promise No. 4: "We will exercise unwavering discipline in controlling federal spending". What a laugh. The recent contracts offered by the former and disgraced minister of defence are a testimony to the failure of promise number four. That is in stark contrast to the fresh start promise of things like balanced budget legislation that would prevent the foolish spending that we have seen from the Liberals.

Promise No. 10: "A Liberal government will replace the GST". My colleagues have talked about that, so enough has been said.

Promise No. 12: "A Liberal government will work closely with provincial governments to achieve the maximum possible co-ordination of tax policies". That one was a blow-out too. Only three provinces agreed to any kind of co-ordination of tax policies. For those three provinces to agree they took a \$1 billion pay-off. That is a broken promise and again is in stark contrast to Reform's fresh start proposals that take seriously—

Mr. Easter: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member from Kindersley earlier said that the public is not going to take being lied to any more. I believe that is unparliamentary and should be withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order, the hon. member that has just raised this matter should understand when one is not imputing any kind of motives or not speaking of the motives of any one individual in this House that the word that was used as my hon. colleague has used it, is acceptable. There are no grounds at all for this point of order.

• (1955)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)): I have listened to both comments and the context. I understand the member for Lethbridge. I would ask the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster to continue.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, you should come and join the opposition benches. Maybe you could get appointed to the Chair.

I was at promise No. 12 where there was a billion dollar pay-off to get three provinces to co-operate on a co-ordination of tax policies between the federal and provincial governments.

I could go on, there are a lot of promises here. There is promise No. 19 which deals with NAFTA. We do not need to talk about it because that has already happened.

I want to talk about promise No. 26 which states: "We will better prepare for the transition from school to the workplace, provide a constructive outlet for the skills and talents of younger Canadians, the innocent victims of Canada's prolonged recession, enhance the opportunity for job training and improve literacy and numeracy skills of Canadian workers and improve access to employment for women and single parents by making quality child care more available". There are so many broken promises in that one promise alone that I do not know where to start.

Let us talk about youth unemployment. Conservative estimates have the unemployment rate for young Canadians at 18 per cent. One of my colleagues mentioned that there are 1.4 million Canadians unemployed at the current time. The member for Broadview—Greenwood indicated that two million Canadians are currently unemployed.

Then we could talk about all the day care spaces that were promised by the Liberal government. The Liberals had no hope of ever fulfilling that promise yet they made it to young single mothers and others who needed help with child care. What an irresponsible thing to do. How can Liberal MPs look their constituents in the face when they make promises they do not have a hope of keeping?

That is in contrast to our fresh start proposal which recognizes child care whether it is in the form of day care or care in the home or care by other trusted caregivers. There is no discrimination based on the type of child care. That would create far more child care than the broken Liberal promises could ever have hoped to accomplish even if they had been able to keep their promises.

There are pages of broken promises here. There is No. 41: "A Liberal government, if it can obtain the agreement of the provinces, will be committed to expanding existing child care in Canada by 50,000 new quality child care spaces each year that follows a year

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of 3 per cent economic growth up to a total of 150,000 new spaces". A broken promise again.

Here is a kept promise, No. 56. Every once in a while we come across a promise that the Liberals kept and it is quite notable when we do hit one: "The Liberal government will enhance the role of the trade commissioner service by adding to its staff qualified technology and science attachés who can gather information for diffusion back in Canada and identify opportunities for Canadian exports abroad". Here again the Liberals were able to add some positions and increase the spending of government. We are not sure how effective it has been but they were able to keep that promise.

I must mention promise No. 71: "A Liberal government will work with the provinces and the territories to provide Canada's natural resource industries with greater certainty by co-ordinating a specific system of land access, settling aboriginal land claims and resolving delays and uncertainties in current regulatory processes".

At the Liberal convention last weekend, aboriginal people were outside burning the red book because the Liberal government failed to keep its promises to aboriginal people. The aboriginals were pulling the red book apart page by page, using it to light a bonfire. That again is in stark contrast to Reform's fresh start proposals based on our aboriginal policy task force, which consulted with aboriginal and non-aboriginal people alike to put forward some very solid proposals.

There are a hundred and some promises here. I am trying to get to the last one. "A Liberal government will also expand the rights of Parliament to debate major Canadian foreign policy initiatives such as the deployment of peacekeeping forces, the rights of Canadians to regular and serious consultation on foreign policy issues".

• (2000)

We all know that the take note debates happened after the decision was made. It was another slap in the face of Parliament just like we have been slapped around by not having the Liberals fulfil their promise of appointing two deputy speakers from the opposition benches. This has to change. The Liberals are not going to change it. The alternative is to start with a fresh start, a new opportunity for Canadians, one that is offered by Reform.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have just a few words to say after listening to the hon. members opposite concerning promises.

It is a funny thing that the Reform and the Tories in this House do not talk about the promises they have made. Perhaps it is because if they talked about the promises they made in the budget they

presented and in their policy statements, nobody would vote for them.

The hon. member a few moments ago was talking about infrastructure, about airports. They promised to pass all the airports in Canada to private enterprise. Imagine going into an airport anywhere in Canada and having a policy of the money bags, the multimillionaires in Canada owning all the airports. That is the policy of that opposition party.

Not only that, but they make a very big point of it in their promises. It is all there in black and white. The hon. member obviously has not read it lately. If he wants to hear the exact words, I can read it for him.

If someone picked up the policy papers of the Reform Party and the Tories, what would they see as far as infrastructure and highways are concerned? They would see that party is suggesting that the Trans-Labrador Highway be built by private individuals. Then in order to get their money back, toll gates would be placed on those highways. How else could they get their money back?

Imagine people driving along a highway, the Alaska highway or the new highway going up to Labrador, and having to pay for the highway and the bridges and then a profit over and above that for all time due to multi-multi-multimillionaires and the big banks in this country. That is the promise being made by the Reform Party of Canada and the Tories.

Even worse than that, let us get to the real promise they have made as far as ordinary Canadians are concerned. It involves medicare. Let us read the promise. They have been talking about promises of the government, this great administration. Now let us read from their budget.

It should not take me very long to find it. It is on page 24: "The public may in time agree that although access to a broad range of basic health care should be guaranteed to everyone, the original medicare model in which everyone received everything health care professionals wished to deliver is not only intolerably expensive, it is undesirable for other reasons". Awful. Just imagine.

• (2005)

What about that promise? It would mean one health care system for the rich in Canada and another health care system for the poor in Canada. They do not even hide it. They even put it in their policy book. The Tories have done the same thing.

I know the Speaker would rule me out of order if I used a prop. I am not supposed to do that. Anyway, it is called the taxpayers budget. It is the Reform Party's plan to balance the federal budget.

Let us understand this completely as far as the promises are concerned. Let us understand the Liberal promises versus the promises of the Tories and the Reform Party of Canada. It is no

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wonder they are so low in the polls. It is no wonder the government remains so high in the polls.

Hon. members opposite keep referring to our great deficit problem. What country are they talking about? The recent analyses have not been done in Canada by the chambers of commerce or by any Canadian economists. Look at the great analyses on the economic performance of the Government of Canada in the past three years. What do they say?

The OECD is made up of 28 nations. Its head office in Paris, France. Its job is to analyse the economies of the countries of the world. What does the OECD say about the great G-7? Which country is it that leads the G-7? Is it Japan?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Baker: Is it Italy?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Baker: Is it France?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Baker: Is it the United Kingdom?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Baker: Is it Germany?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Baker: Is it the United States?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Baker: There is only one country left in the G-7 and that is Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Baker: Of course, we should not forget the head of that administration. I am allowed to say this because it is the administration. It is the Chrétien administration. I believe that is parliamentary, but I will not use it again, Mr. Speaker, if you object to that phrase. He is a great leader of the administration.

Which country is it that the United Nations in two out of the past three years has said is the best nation in the world in which to live? It is not Japan. It is not the United Kingdom. It is not France. It is not Germany. It is not the United States. It is Canada.

Members opposite would have the Canadian public believe that we have gone downhill from the days when we were not number one, when we were actually number six of the G-7. Those were the days of the Tory administration to which the Reform Party would love to return.

In analysing all of these promises and all of the promises of the Government of Canada, we should never forget and the Canadian public should never forget that we are dealing in this House with a difference in philosophy. It is a great difference in philosophy.

They would have the banks own our highways and our airports. They come out and say it in this document, which I will not show you, Mr. Speaker, because that is against the rules. On page 14 they say that given our current fiscal climate governments are ill equipped to spend money on infrastructure. And they say Canada should privatize airports and aviation. Privatize it, not pass it over to management boards. They say we should allow the private sector companies to build and maintain roads and bridges. Imagine. What a change of philosophy that is.

• (2010)

That carries through in practically every discussion we have had in this Chamber, including those on taxes. Which party was it in this Chamber that stood up and demanded greater tax cuts for American companies that were operating in Canada? It was the Reform Party of Canada. Somehow the Reform influenced the Tories and the Bloc because the Bloc did the same thing.

Bloc members claimed their excuse was that they had many friends living in the United States. That is what they said. The Bloc members stood in this Chamber, the official opposition of this House of Commons which is supposed to represent the commoners, the ordinary people of Canada, stood in this House and agreed with the Reform Party.

They demanded a 50 per cent cut on all taxes, on all the moneys that go back across the border into the United States, on all the interest made by foreign banks that goes back to the United States. They demanded that tax credits be given to people who have relatives in universities in the United States of America. Not only that, but they demanded that tax credits be given if per chance one happened to be subjected to the death tax in the United States, that we call the inheritance tax in Canada, and if a person owned over \$600,000 of property in the United States.

The Reform Party and the Bloc members stood in this Chamber and demanded more. Why? Because it is a matter of philosophy with the Reform Party. It is a matter of philosophy with the Tories. And it is a matter that the Bloc said they have friends who have lots of money in the United States.

What we have here is this great difference in philosophy. On the one hand political figures are in favour of what? In favour of the very rich. That is why this party, the government leads the polls today because Canadians are asking: "What other choice is there? Where do we go? Why would we vote for a party that would want the banks to own our highways, our airports, our bridges and which would want to throw our medicare system down the stream?" Not only that, but they have the gall to put it in black and white in their policy statement for distribution to the people of Canada.

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We can understand why they are all frustrated. They are trying to change their policies. Their leader now has a new policy statement—

An hon. member: And a new haircut too.

Mr. Baker: He has not only flipped his hair, he has flipped his lid.

We are judged to be the country that has dealt with its deficit better than any other industrialized nation in the world today. They are frustrated because of the progress this government has made.

The Canadian people will never allow them to get into power, either the Reform or the Tories, to go ahead and ruin our medicare system as they promised and to pass our infrastructure over to the banks.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a tough act to follow, at least in terms of theatrics.

I came here as a new parliamentarian in 1993 to debate issues. I came here to talk about the different ways my party thinks things ought to be done, to talk about the way the finances of the country ought to be run, to talk about what we can do to maintain a good, healthy education program for our young people, and a health system that is satisfactory to Canadians, old and young alike. I came here to talk about true parliamentary democracy and true representation. What I have found is considerable frustration in that process.

• (2015)

I would like to begin by saying that it is a false assumption, as was made by the previous speaker, that unless the government does it, it is not done right. He has been talking about the privatization of airports. He says it is terrible and awful. I fly quite frequently in and out of airports which have been turned over to regional governing authorities in Edmonton. The improvements in that airport since that was done are immense. The cost to the taxpayers is little or nothing.

Whereas, when the governments run these things we always find an infrastructure so large and so cumbersome that we get much less for our money. I also think of the Pearson airport. If we would not have had the interference of the Conservative government followed by this Liberal government, who knows what condition the Toronto airport would now be in. Instead it is now languishing. Nothing is happening there, while we are fighting and spending \$600 in how to get out of doing anything at all and trying to cancel the contracts.

The member opposite just asked what was wrong with it. It is adequate.

An hon. member: When were you last in the airport?

Mr. Epp: I was there about 48 hours ago. It needs to a lot of improvements made to it. That is generally accepted. It was established and it is time it proceeds.

I would, however, like to say a little about the motion that is before us today which has to do with the election of the chairman of committee of the whole of this House. The standing orders state that this position is elected by the House. This of course brings me immediately to one of the first commitments that I made as a member of Parliament to the people who elected me. I made this commitment during the campaign and am doing my best to keep that commitment.

However, it is interesting that the Liberal candidate in my riding made exactly the same commitment; at least the people thought there was no difference between us on that particular issue. The issue was on votes. When we actually come to the vote on this particular motion, and if I were a betting man I would put up to a nickel on this one, I would predict that every Liberal member will vote for the motion. This of course will elect the person nominated, the member for Kingston and the Islands, to the position, which is fine. I do not mind that.

However, the problem I have with this is that each member who ran under the Liberal ticket with the red book in hand promised, as did the Liberal candidate in Elk Island, that if they were elected they would assure more free votes in the House of Commons.

I really do not expect that the vote on this is going to have the appearance of being a free vote at all. I do not know whether it is going to be whipped, as they say—probably not, but it is going to certainly look that way. The incredible thing is that in so voting the Liberal members will actually be breaching another one of the commitments they made in that same campaign, which was in one of the ancillary documents to the red book, that opposition members would also have a role to play in the House of Commons and in parliamentary committees.

I have to confess that my disappointment in the process and in the results of that process is very great. I am very disappointed in the fact that in this House we cannot have a free and open vote on an issue such as this. Some members, particularly those in my party, have said that they have nothing personally against the member for Kingston and the Islands gaining this position. That may be true for most of the members here. I would suspect, and this has come from both sides of the House, that most people here believe he has an adequate command of parliamentary procedure, that he would certainly be well qualified in that regard. He is a man of experience. I think that one of the qualifications of the person in the chair of this House at whatever stage of the debate we are in has to be a very high level of impartiality. I say as carefully as I can that we need to assure in this House that we have people who are guiding our deliberations who will be impartial, who will not display disdain or contempt for any member of this House regard-

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less of which side of the House that member is on. I believe that is a very important qualification.

• (2020)

Let us talk about the particular member who has been nominated at this stage and who is the object of this motion. When I think of some of the antics that he has used during his parts of the debate, speaking about the Reform Party, he is going to have to have a real change of attitude.

I would expect that to happen, but it will have to happen if he is elected. Very often he hauled out his infamous green book, full of short quotations taken out of context, distorting the message of Reform. He is going to have to, if he is elected to that position, put all that behind him and prove to us his impartiality.

Beyond that I want to talk to the members on the government side who will drive this vote to its conclusion, and again I accept that process. I accept that in a democracy majority should rule. All 295 members in this House will have the opportunity to stand in favour or in opposition of this motion. I challenge the members of the governing party to individually think, as the Deputy Prime Minister did, what the meaning of a promise is.

You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that this had to do with the great goods and services tax which everybody in the country hated. The member running in the riding that I ran in said under the Liberal handbook: "We will abolish the GST". The Deputy Prime Minister, recognizing the depth of the commitment that she made on that, came to the point where she admitted she could no longer look people in the eye. She felt so bad about not keeping that promise, she actually resigned from this place and sought the reapproval of the people in her riding. It is significant to note that the support level for her because of that experience dropped by about one-third.

It is very important for every member in this House to think about the commitment they made when they were running. They ran with the red book in hand. Included in that red book and in the attached documents, the appendices, was this article that said: "We intend if we are elected to make Parliament work better, to give more responsibility and more freedom to our members of Parliament, to make committees work better". Included in that was a commitment that the deputy chair be shared by members of the opposition.

If those words during the campaign did not mean what they said, then they should not have been said. If they did mean what they said, then how should there now be this debate wondering as to whether we should elect a Liberal member to this position?

This is now an opportunity to fulfil, to put into practice the words that were said during the campaign. I am challenging the

Liberal members. I am challenging them one on one to exercise here an act of conscience, to ask whether when this election is over, when this vote is over later on tonight, they will be able to stand beside their bank machine and look at the person beside them and say yes, to the best of their ability they kept the promises they made. That is a very critical point.

• (2025)

Something else that is very closely related to this is the appointment of deputy chairs of committees. It is the same principle. I know there have been some heavy politics involved in this. I know the Liberals are languishing under the burden of ensuring they do not in any way offend the opposition. Of course the separatists who sit beside us got every deputy chair position in committees. It must be frustrating.

I cannot accept intellectually or emotionally that every one of the Reformers who could have been eligible for one of those positions was inferior in ability, inferior in leadership qualities, inferior in the ability to conduct a meeting if called on. I cannot believe that Reformers were inferior to act in that role to every member of the Bloc. I just do not accept that.

I know enough about statistics that by the law of averages, as we have about the same number of people, we would have expected about half and half. Half the time it would have been one of them, half the time it would have been one of us. Did that happen? No.

Did MPs get more independence as promised in the red book? No, they did not. They were told, orchestrated from the Liberal hierarchy: "When you get into those committees, you will elect a member of the Bloc". For the life of me I cannot understand that quite aside from the fact that these are members whose primary goal is to take their wonderful province right out of our country.

It totally escapes me why this arbitrary decision was made to take away the independence of members of Parliament who are serving in committees. It is a severe flaw in the system. I bring this up because it is the same principle. I am talking about the principles of parliamentary democracy, one of the issues I was elected on and which I believe in very strongly.

I believe that the majority in a democracy should prevail. I believe that in this House of Commons that is the only way it can be, but I do not accept that every one of us in representing our constituencies has to be shackled and not permitted to represent our constituents because of some party hierarchy and party discipline. That is not acceptable in a democracy and that is one thing I am committed to change if my people in Elk Island will re-elect me next time and if we in the Reform Party can form the government of this wonderful country. It is one thing that we will change because it is one of the founding principles. It is one of the key things that attracted me to the Reform Party.

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We need to have what was actually promised in the red book. We need to have a greater freedom of members of Parliament to represent their constituents. Some will say that has its dangers; now the government will not be able to fulfil its programs. I do not accept that either. That is not a fair assumption or a fair conclusion.

Whether it is the Liberals or the Reformers or the Bloc or maybe some other party in the future that may come to sit in this place as a party, there may be a motion to introduce a bill or to amend a bill, a really good bill that would carry the support of the majority of Canadians under a free vote system. Members will be representing each of their constituents. If that carries the day, if that carries the judgment of the people across this country, then we will have good laws passed but we will also finally have a mechanism to defeat bills that are bad or at least to pass amendments to them if needed. That is a crying need in this country. It is a need in this Parliament. It is one of the deepest most frustrating flaws I have experienced.

• (2030)

Members in this House probably without exception have come here with high ideals. I know. I have spoken to members, not only those in my own party but also to others. Some in all of the different parties that I have spoken to have expressed similar frustrations.

I remember talking to one person. I will not identify the party but it was a person from another party. I asked why he voted the way he did in committee. He looked at me and said: "I really did not have a choice". That is a sad commentary. The red book promised more freedom, more accountability. It promised more independence for individual MPs. I would like to see that exercised in the vote that is coming up later tonight.

I would like to see every member of Parliament, particularly people like the member for Broadview—Greenwood who gave such an eloquent speech earlier, once again exercise their power of independent thinking, do what they believe is right. It is not going to cause a big failure in the system. It will enhance the system.

I want to talk just a little bit in response to a previous speech here this evening. It was mentioned at some length. I have finished the comments I wanted to make here, so I am going to use my remaining few minutes to talk about question period.

The member for Broadview—Greenwood talked at length about question period. I too am very frustrated with question period and the direction in which it has gone for a very simple reason. In debates in this House, whether on a bill or motion such as the one we are conducting now, or in question period, what we ought to be doing is dealing with issues that affect the public. We should be debating those issues.

I do not appreciate the fact that a campaign has begun to discredit members of my party and myself with statements that are not true. The subject in question period today was a great distress to me. It was not particularly what happened in question period although that bothered me too, but more so it was what generated it.

Can we, as parliamentarians, not say to our people: "Here is what we believe, what we stand for". Let the other parties say: "This is what we stand for, what we believe in". Then the people would have their options. They could choose and cast their votes. If we cannot do it on that basis, then how will this country be governed correctly and efficiently?

What is happening instead is that a campaign has already begun with statements which, if repeated often enough, come to be believed even though they are not accurate. That is a tremendous disservice. When we react in question period as we did today, it is as a direct response to the fact that we are not satisfied with that kind of campaign, that kind of tactic.

One of my goals is to openly and honestly debate issues, to talk about what affects Canadians, to offer alternatives and options. Frankly, if the constituents of Elk Island believe that the model of democracy, the model of a health care system, the model of a tax system, the model of all these other aspects which affect us, are best represented by a Liberal rather than a Reformer, they have the right to choose. But let us give them the facts. Let us let them choose. Let us stop all the vindictiveness.

• (2035)

Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really puzzled by the antics of the Reform Party members in this debate. I find it puzzling and absolutely amazing that they would object to the appointment of the member for Kingston and the Islands to the position of deputy chairman.

The member for Kingston and the Islands is eminently qualified, immensely qualified to carry out the duties for which he has been nominated. I feel absolutely confident that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will do an outstanding job. For the Reform Party in a very straightforward way or obliquely to criticize this appointment is amazing to me. I must say again that I am puzzled.

I will say one more thing about the appointment. The hon. member for Elk Island said that the member for Kingston and the Islands would have to, and these are my words but I think he was suggesting that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands would have to suppress his partisan Liberal feelings. I can assure members that I know the member for Kingston and the Islands. I have been in the House with him for eight years and if there is one man who can suppress his partisan feelings when sitting in that

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Chair, it is the member for Kingston and the Islands. There is absolutely no question about it.

Why are we puzzled by the antics and performance of the Reform Party members in this debate? The member for Elk Island said he was frustrated. I think he is frustrated, but it is not for the reasons he would like to have us believe. He is frustrated because he knows that his party is going absolutely nowhere in this country. The party across the way has been totally rejected by the Canadian people. That is why the member for Elk Island is frustrated. That is why all the Reform members are frustrated. It is because they know they are not going anywhere.

They are not even halfway up the polls to where they were in the 1993 election. That party elected over 50 members in the 1993 election and they cannot even sustain themselves in the Canadian public opinion polls. What does that say about that party? It certainly says a lot about their frustrations.

The Reform Party likes to go on about the red book. Reform members like to go on about the government and they love to talk about our promises. I will tell the House why they are frustrated. It is because they do not like the fact that we are doing as well as we are.

The Prime Minister, the cabinet, the entire government came out with a record of achievement based on the commitments made in the red book. What does the record show? It shows that we have kept 78 per cent of our commitments. It is not 100 per cent, not 95 per cent, it is not even 90 per cent. It is 78 per cent.

By any standard put forward, it is a very good mark. Whether it is a public institution or a private institution, if it hits 78 per cent achievement, it is not doing a bad job. Remember, it is not only the keeping of 78 per cent of our commitments, but another 10 or 12 per cent of those commitments are in progress. We have not finished the job yet. We still have a year or two to go in our mandate. We still have some time to make the mark even better than 78 per cent.

That is why those members over there are frustrated. They do not like the job we are doing because we are doing it too well. They know that if we do our job as well as we have been that the Canadian people will support us strongly. Canadians want good government and that is exactly what they are getting under this Prime Minister.

• (2040)

Let us talk about promises specifically.

In the red book we talked about deficit reduction. We talked about deficit reduction in a credible manner. We did not say: "Elect us and we will eliminate the deficit in 12 months". We knew the Canadian people would not buy that. We knew they realized it was a huge task. We said to the Canadian people in the 1993 election

campaign and in the red book that we would deal with the deficit in an incremental way. We would do it slowly and gradually, but we would do it with credibility.

The first target that we set was to reach 3 per cent of GNP. We promised that we would clean up the fiscal mess and our first target was to reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of GNP. Did we do that? You betcha. Not only that, we have surpassed our goal. The finance minister has done the job so well that he has revised his target. It is no longer a 3 per cent target; it is a 2 per cent target and is well on the way to 1 per cent.

Our finance minister has done the job so well that in a couple of years we will not have to borrow any more money. That is how well the job is being done. It will not be long after that before the deficit is zero. It will be gone. It will be eliminated. That is why those members are frustrated. They do not want that kind of success. They do not want the government to succeed. They would rather we fail. But we are not going to fail. We are keeping our promises.

What does it mean when we clear up the fiscal mess? What does it mean when we bring down the deficit? It means lower interest rates. How low are our interest rates today? I wonder if the Reform Party is spreading the good news. I doubt it very much. I do not hear Reformers talking much about the deficit these days. They are mute on that issue. When it comes to the deficit, not only have we surpassed our targets, it has led to the lowest interest rates in 40 years, in four decades. What does that mean for the average Canadian?

Reformers talk about tax cuts. There are different ways to assist Canadian workers, borrowers and consumers. With the interest rates we have today, if a person holds a \$100,000 mortgage, what does that mean in terms of cash in their pocket? It means an additional \$3,000 in their pocket. That \$3,000 is after taxes. If a person buys a car and they pay the modest sum of \$15,000, what kind of saving is it? It is a saving of \$500 a year.

These savings as a result of low interest rates are not only realized by individuals and families; they are also realized by the provinces. I was looking at some statistics today. Ontario is the province with the largest population in the country. As a result of the low interest rates, the Government of Ontario is realizing a saving of over \$300,000 a year. I do not think that is bad.

That is why those members are frustrated. Because we are doing the job too well for them.

• (2045)

However, we on this side are not satisfied. We think we can do even better. We have committed ourselves to doing better. We are not going to be smug. We are not going to be complacent. As the Prime Minister has said over and over again, there is still lots of work to do.

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What else? What about trade? The Reform Party I think has mentioned, in a rather oblique way, that we have done quite well on the trade front. Well, you betcha we have done very well. How well? The Team Canada effort; the Prime Minister led Team Canada three times overseas, a couple of times to Asia. He came back with contracts worth \$20 billion. That is a lot of money, a lot of investment and lot of work for Canadians. How much is it for Canadians?

I do not think a lot of Canadians realize, and why I want to mention it, that every billion dollars in trade—listen to this closely and especially the Reform Party members—translates into 11,000 jobs for Canadians. Does anyone know how much our trade has gone up since we came to office in 1993? It is over 30 per cent. Thousands and thousands of Canadians have been employed because of our trade initiatives and the Team Canada effort.

The Reform Party talks about the fact that we did not keep our promise on jobs. Oh no, we really slipped in that department. I and the government are not as happy as we would like to be. The unemployment rate has come down since the government came to office about 2 percentage points or a little more. I think it was about 11.6 per cent when we came to power and now it is about 9.4 per cent.

Let us look at the job numbers. Despite all the transitions in the economy, despite the transformation of the economy and despite all the difficulties in the economy as a result of globalization and so on, how many jobs have we created? We have created well over 600,000 jobs at the very time when governments at all levels are downsizing.

When we take a look at it from that point of view and take into account that the private sector has had to create jobs at a time when the public sector is getting its house in order, we still have well over 600,000 new jobs. I do not think that is bad. It is not the greatest and we are going to do better.

I think it was the previous speaker from Newfoundland who referred to figures given out by the OECD. If everything goes according to Hoyle, if things pan out as well as they might or as they should, Canada is going to have the best record when it comes to GNP growth in 1997. That is the best record of all the G-7 countries. I do not think that is bad. That is why Canadians support this government. Canadians realize that we have the right policies. Canadians realize that we are on the right track and that is why they support us. That is why the Reform Party is so frustrated.

It talks about frustrations but it likes to give some other reasons. Reform members would like us to believe that their frustrations have to do with something else. It has nothing to do with something else. It has to do with our performance.

Remember in the red book back in 1993 when we talked about how important our children and youth were in this country, especially when it comes to the economy? We talked about a youth internship program. What have we done? As of the last few weeks I have noticed a figure: 37,000 young Canadians are now involved in youth apprenticeship programs. I would like it to be 137,000 but it is a lot better than what it was. It is a lot better than what it was under the previous administration. I suspect, God forbid it, that it would be a lot better than if the Reform Party were ever in power. There are 37,000 young apprentices getting the necessary experience and exposure to the workplace. It is a start and it is going to get better, but I think 37,000 is not bad.

• (2050)

When we are talking about promises, the Reform Party never talks about these promises. In the campaign of 1993 the Prime Minister to be said: "If I become Prime Minister, if I become the head of the government, the former prime minister's VIP airplane will be gone. There will be no more of that style of a king belonging to the Prime Minister". He kept his promise.

The Prime Minister to be said: "No more of that bullet proof limousine". What did he do? No more. No Cadillacs. None of that big long limousine stuff.

He also talked about trimming the government at the very top. He was not talking about just trimming the bureaucracy, which we have done. If you are going to trim the bureaucracy then trim the ministerial offices. Has he done it? You had better believe he has, to the tune of saving about \$10 million.

While we are talking about promises, what did the Liberals say about the Canada Health Act? We said we would uphold the five basic principles of the Canada Health Act and we have done exactly that. We have not wavered not one bit.

The premier of Alberta thought we will take them on. We will not stick to the principles of the Canada Health Act. We will allow some eye clinics to be established and we will levy so-called facility fees which is a disguise for a user fee. Do not worry, the Liberals back in Ottawa will not uphold the principles of the Canada Health Act. The government will cave in when the going gets tough. Did this government cave in?

Who blinked when it came to a showdown over those facility fees at an eye clinic in Calgary? Was it the Prime Minister? Was it the federal Minister of Health or was it the premier of Alberta? I think every Canadian knows the answer to that question. It was the premier of Alberta. He realized we were going to stick to those principles and that if he did not cave in it was going to cost his taxpayers a lot of money. When the Prime Minister talked about upholding the principles of the Canada Health Act he did exactly that.

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I want to conclude by reiterating what I said at the beginning. The Liberals have kept most of our promises. Seventy-eight per cent is not bad compared to most standards if not all standards. We would like to do better and we are still working on our commitments and I think we can get that above 78 per cent before the next election. We are doing too well for the Reform Party members. They do not like us doing that well because they cannot find an issue. That is why the Reformers are frustrated.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a part of this debate this evening.

When I sought the nomination to run for the Reform Party in Cariboo—Chilcotin I was reminded by some people who had been a part of the political scene there that I would get used to Cariboo—Chilcotin's not being a high profile constituency.

• (2055)

Cariboo—Chilcotin has not been a terribly high profile part of the country. Most of them have gone to that part of the country because it is that way. It is a place where people can go. We are used to sending a lot of our money to the city. We are used to politicians coming and telling us how things should be.

People have become very independent there. I can tell an interesting little story. There is a place there called Rudy's Bridge, put up by an entrepreneur. It crosses the Fraser River, just north of Williams Lake.

There is a need for a bridge there but there has not always been a bridge there. The people of Cariboo—Chilcotin petitioned the government for a long time for a bridge there. What we were told it is impossible to do it. The ground is not right. The location is not right.

One of our people, Rudy Johnson, went and looked it over. He needed a bridge there and therefore he scouted the country and found a bridge. He bought it, he hauled it there, built the approaches and he put the bridge across.

He said: "If you have a commercial vehicle, it will cost you \$5 to cross, but everybody else can use it for free". Today, of course, it is possible to have a bridge there. Rudy was glad, finally, to turn that over to the government which maintains it. It is not improved it but it is maintained.

I can tell another story about what is impossible. At the coast is a community called Bella Coola. For years the people in the Bella Coola valley were told they are so far away, so far below the high country of the Chilcotin that they cannot have a bridge there and will have to depend on boats and aircraft.

Quite a few years ago two people said they thought they could put a road in there. One started at the bottom of the hill with a

bulldozer and another started at the top with a bulldozer. What the government could not do because it was impossible to build a road there this community did by itself.

We are used to having to do things ourselves. We are used to the government telling us what is impossible and what we must do as well.

We may be used to it but we do not very much like it. The biggest difficulty I had as a budding politician was dealing with the cynicism people hold in their hearts and their minds toward government. It is a cynicism out of years of excuses why things cannot be done, years of why it costs so much for the government to do what it does, years of government now more and more being in the face of people without really providing the services people need and years of government simply not performing as politicians have said it would when they come to seek people's votes.

I got into politics because I perceive a great need for reform, for change of direction of politics in our political system, the way we do our business. We need to have a system of politics in which we talk about the issues, in which we do not hammer each other because of the colour we are, the way we talk. If we like their policies and we like the proposals that they have, we want to vote for them.

In dealing with this cynicism, what I often had to do was look the person in the eye and say: "Look, I have been as cynical as you have been. I know what governments have done to us but I see what they are doing to our children, to our young people. Unless we face them and look them in the eye and stare them down, we are not going to change the system". Are you going to revel in your cynicism about the way politicians do their business or are you going to try to change the system? Will you help me to do that? Will you join me in trying to do that?" That is what I am about in this Reform Party, trying to bring a political system into being that will serve people's needs.

The cynicism is still there, alive and well. A couple of weeks ago I was at a meeting at 100 Mile House. The whole question period after the speech on government spending was to do with politicians and the way they do not keep their promises. Canadians are terribly frustrated and are sick and tired of politicians that make promises and then do not keep them. A great deal of their frustration is now directed toward the Liberal government. The Liberals have broken so many promises we can hardly count them. If there is one thing that is said to me with regularity as I leave the Cariboo—Chilcotin to come to Ottawa, it is: "Phil, give them hell. They deserve it".

• (2100)

The track record of broken Liberal promises is the topic of this entire debate today. As members of Parliament we want Canadians

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to have faith in their leaders, to feel confident that politicians will do what they say they will do and will do it fairly and honestly.

As legislators we have a role in establishing this positive reputation for ourselves. The Liberal government has an opportunity to begin to repair its tarnished record today by appointing an opposition member as deputy chair, which is no more than keeping a promise it made during the election campaign of 1993. If that was done that action would begin to instil some small measure of confidence in its sagging reputation.

The debate today is not about the member for Kingston and the Islands and his ability. I hope that the member for Broadview—Greenwood understands that. In fact, the member for Kingston and the Islands very likely would be a very good deputy chair. His abilities to do this are sound, so I am told. The member for Calgary Centre attested to this yesterday. We all agree he has the qualifications.

However, that is not the issue. The issue is the integrity of the government and its willingness to not simply seek more and more power, but to do what it says and to have as its first priority serving the people of the nation, the welfare of the nation. The issue today is about politicians doing what they say they will do. It is about honesty and principle.

As we all know, in 1993 the Liberals came out with their list of campaign promises, the Liberal red book, which might also be called Creative Opportunism, I suppose. Others refer to it as the Liberal dead book. In the book, listed in appendix B at the back entitled Platform Papers is a document; “Reviving Parliamentary Democracy—The Liberal Plan for House of Commons and Electoral Reform”. On page 9 of the document can be found something very interesting which relates to the debate today.

“In order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship, when the Speaker is from the government party, two of the junior Chair officers should be from the opposition so that the four presiding officer positions are shared equally by government and by opposition”.

This document was co-authored by none other than the member for Kingston and the Islands. It is the member for Kingston and the Islands the Liberals want to appoint to the deputy chair position, not an opposition member as the document states would be the best idea.

The Liberal decision to appoint the member for Kingston and the Islands violates the integrity of the government because the document I just quoted from is part of their red book, the list of promises. The Liberal decision also violates the integrity of the member for Kingston and the Islands. How can a person say one thing at one time and then turn around and do the opposite at another time and still keep his or her integrity? That is exactly

what the people of Canada object to. That is exactly what their cynicism is rooted in.

• (2105)

I say to the member for Kingston and the Islands that he has an important decision to make. He has the opportunity to do something that his colleagues are not used to doing. He could begin to clean up his party's tarnished image on integrity. Most importantly, he could preserve his own integrity. I know he is a person of integrity.

I urge the member for Kingston and the Islands to do what he said he would do in 1993 and show real leadership. I urge him to help his party keep at least one of its promises which it made in the red book. I urge him to encourage his party to appoint a member from the opposition benches to the position of deputy chair.

If he made this bold move he would take an important step for the people of Canada. He would show Canadians that the Liberals can be trusted to keep their word at least once.

I know his colleagues want to discourage him from taking the high road. They do not think their record is tarnished. They boasted at the Liberal love-in last weekend that they kept 78 per cent of the red book's promises. We heard that repeated here a minute ago. The Prime Minister even boasted that any student would be happy with this score. I suppose any student would be happy to keep a score of his own test results, too, like the Liberals do.

The reality is that the Liberal record is tarnished. Liberals made all kinds of promises during the last election campaign and, according to a very honest and accurate analysis, the Liberals only kept about 30 per cent of the pledges they made to the Canadian people. It is no wonder Canadians are cynical about their government.

That is why the motion which we are debating today is so important. It is why we are not prepared to sit down and let the government roll over this matter. The Liberals and the member for Kingston and the Islands could take this opportunity to be different than their record of the past. They could show Canadians that they are a party of their word, that they can be trusted, that their promises mean something and are not imaginary. Such a step would go a long way in instilling public confidence and trust in our political institutions.

Let me give the House a little more detail on the Liberal record of broken promises.

The Liberals could add to this list today or they could start down a new road, a fresh path toward integrity and honesty by appointing a member from the opposition benches to the position of deputy chair.

During the last election campaign the Prime Minister promised Canadians jobs, jobs, job. On October 15 the Prime Minister said

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that Canadians did not have to read his lips, that they could read their record. Let us read that record today.

First, 1.4 million Canadians are unemployed. Second, two million to three million Canadians are under employed. Third, four million workers are worried about losing their jobs. Fourth, this is the longest stretch of unemployment above 9 per cent since the great depression of the 1930s. That is the record. Where are the jobs, jobs, jobs? What we have, sir, is another Liberal broken promise.

The Liberals would want us to believe that they are still working on fulfilling this promise, that they have a plan to create jobs. We have not seen it. The finance minister's message to Canadians is that low interest rates are the best medicine for the economy. Despite the lowest interest rates in many years, unemployment increased last month from 9.4 per cent to 9.9 per cent. That is half a percentage point.

It is quite clear that the economy cannot be pushed uphill with interest rates. There has to be growth. There has to be job growth. To create jobs in the country the government must reduce taxes. Reduced taxes will mean more money in the pockets of consumers, small business people and investors. Consumers who spend more money will create permanent, well-paying jobs that the Liberals promised and that Canadians desperately need. What consumers need is a tax cut, not another interest rate cut.

On top of going back on their word and giving Canadians high unemployment, the Liberals have dished out more pain for Canadians through social program cuts. The Liberal red book states: "It is essential to provide financial certainty and predictability for our health care planning". The Liberals have not done this at all.

• (2110)

What they have done is cut transfers to the provinces by 40 per cent. They have cut health care payments by \$3 billion a year. They are dismantling social programs to pay the interest on the ballooning \$600 billion federal debt.

All Canadians have received from the Liberals is pain, pain, pain. In many communities if people knew the truth about Liberal slashing of health care transfers there would a sign in front of many closed hospitals saying: "This hospital closed by the Liberal Party of Canada" and I quote my leader on that.

To repair this gaping hole in the social safety net a Reform government will commit \$4 billion a year to increasing federal transfers to the provinces for health and education. These funds will come from the savings generated by our refocusing and downsizing of the federal government and not from increased taxes.

I urge the Liberals to keep their commitment to sustain health care. I urge them today to begin to rebuild their tarnished reputation. They can begin by keeping their promise to appoint an opposition member as deputy chair.

There are so many Liberal broken promises that I could mention. I could take all night listing them. What about the GST? The Liberals promised Canadians they would scrap, kill and abolish the GST but the tax is still here, blamed on acts of God and loose lips and a \$1 billion bribe paid to the Atlantic provinces to shore up the government's image after harmonizing the GST and the PST, hiding the taxes in the sticker price. Where is the integrity? Where is the promise kept?

No wonder Canadians feel cynical toward the government. The Liberals promised stable multi-year financing of the CBC, but when they became the government the Liberals slashed more than \$400 million from the national broadcaster. The Liberals promised to renegotiate the American free trade agreement to obtain codes on subsidies and dumping and a more effective dispute resolution mechanism. But when they came to power the Liberal signed NAFTA without renegotiation. The list goes on and on and on.

Just to give you an idea, Mr. Speaker, of how blatant the Liberals have been breaking their word, let me read a bit more of their patronage record: 18 partisan appointments to the Senate; Richard Campbell, former campaign manager for Lawrence MacAulay appointed director of Marine Atlantic; Richard Cashin, long standing member of the Liberal Party and MP from 1962-65 appointed member of the Canadian Transport Harvesting Adjusting Board; Dorothy Davey, wife of former Liberal Keith Davey appointed to the Immigration and Refugee Board; Fred Drummie, executive assistant to minister Doug Young, appointed to the International Park Commission Board; Raymond Guay, Liberal member from 1963-68 appointed to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal.

The list goes on and on and on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Szabo): I would remind hon. members not to refer to members of Parliament by their names during debate.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could not help but speak after listening to the Reform Party attacking a colleague whom I have known for the past eight years since I came to this House, a colleague for whom I have a lot of respect, a colleague who probably knows the ins and outs of this House like the back of his hand.

None of the people in the opposition have had time to talk to the individual or to come to know him as some of us on this side of the House have.

Personal attacks by the Reform Party are constantly being made against the member for Kingston and the Islands. I heard with great interest the speaker before me saying that one of their members attested to the knowledge of the member for Kingston

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and the Islands. This is not something they want for the opposition party. They did not say a member from the Bloc. They want their member.

Reform members who were elected in 1993 and came here said they were going to make changes. There are no changes. They are politicians just like the rest of us. They just speak differently. We see the whip get up and say "or anybody who wants to vote differently". Nobody stands up and wants to vote differently. They all sing the same tune. They were going to do things different; anybody else who wishes otherwise. If they wish to do otherwise here comes the leader and they are out of here. They will be kicked right out.

• (2115)

An hon. member: They whip them and cane them.

Mr. Karygiannis: They cane them, as my colleague says.

The Liberals presented their platform which was called the red book. We had enough guts after three years to come and say this is our accounting and what we have done, 78 per cent. By any accounting, we presented 78 per cent. I do not see what the Reform Party promised. I do not see the Reform Party accounting for what it promised and what it is doing.

I challenge the Reform Party to bring its accounting. Not only can it not do its accounting, it forgot about the leader pointing graphs up and down. There is no accounting here.

An hon. member: They crossed the road.

Mr. Karygiannis: They crossed the road, as my colleague says.

I want to speak about my constituents who were unemployed three years ago and who now have jobs. I want to speak about the bank rates going down and stimulating growth and potential. I want to speak about the industries in my riding that do not have to go to the banks and borrow at 12 per cent to 15 per cent as they did in the previous administration. Now they can borrow at 5 per cent.

I hear my colleagues across the way. They do not like the words 5 per cent interest at the bank. Ladies and gentlemen, if you do not like it, tough. My constituents like the 5 per cent. My constituents enjoy not having to carry 10 per cent and 15 per cent on rates that they have to borrow. That stimulates the economy.

I as an individual have a mortgage. I wanted to renegotiate my mortgage. It dropped down.

An hon. member: Now we know why these rates came down.

Mr. Karygiannis: You have mortgages.

An hon. member: They do not have any mortgages.

Mr. Karygiannis: No, they do not have any mortgages.

The Speaker: I hate to bother the hon. member, but you must address your remarks to me in the Chair rather than to your colleagues across the floor. I hope you get back in full flight.

Mr. Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, I guess sometimes the blood flows very heavily and when you do not hear the truth and you hear things in remarks that sort of make the blood boil in your head you sort of forget the procedure. This is why colleagues like the member for Kingston and the Islands are people we need.

In Toronto we were just named number one of all the cities. That is something that the Reform Party does not like because it does not have any members elected in the vicinity of Toronto. It has one, just north. In the next election I promise we will work hard to make sure it does not have any.

We have kept 78 per cent of the promises. More than any other previous administrations or any other party we have had the guts to stand up and say: "These were our promises, these are what we kept and this is what we are". By all accounting we have the guts to account and put the numbers down.

Some of my colleagues across the way do not like those numbers because they know what they are showing in the polls is the same as the interest rate, 5 per cent and it is going down.

In closing, I hope the interest rate goes down and along with the interest rate going down so does the performance of the Reform Party.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a well established fact that most governments are not defeated but in fact defeat themselves. Let us just think back to the Trudeau government. The Canadian people finally got tired of this arrogant, spend thrift government after 15 years and booted it out in 1984. When the people threw it out they turned to the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney. They said they would give that government a chance: "We are tired of the amount of overspending this government does, the fact that it does not consider the best interests of the Canadian people, and we are going to give the Progressive Conservative Party an opportunity".

• (2120)

The people gave the Conservatives a huge majority in 1984. They told the Mulroney government to clean up the mess. Mr. Mulroney and his government were only in power a short while before it became obvious that they were not going to do things much differently from the Liberal government before them. If anything, they were worse, if that is possible.

The result of nine years of the Mulroney government was that in 1993 the Canadian people were so absolutely fed up with the

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Conservatives that they decided to get rid of it. And this government across the way, the Liberal Party, did not win that election; rather, the Conservative Party lost it. These people are sitting in government now almost by default. In getting to government, the Liberals offered Canadians a booklet of promises they refer to as the red book.

I knew a fellow in my riding who passed away some time ago. I knew him for a long time. I was in the construction business before I became a member of Parliament. I remember this fellow by the way he did business. He used to say: "I really like to do business with people I can shake hands with, look in the eye and feel that the commitments we make to one another are going to be respected and honoured without going to a lawyer and getting a seven page legal document drawn up so I can go back to court and enforce it. I like to do things on a handshake. I like to do things on the strength of people's words. Their word is their bond".

I always had a great deal of respect for that gentleman because I knew that I could go to him on a construction project, on a business deal, we could sit down and negotiate a deal. We could shake hands on it, without ever going to a lawyer, without ever having to rely on the systems in place to enforce agreements. I could sleep at night knowing that he would respect the agreement we had between us.

I wonder how my friend would view the Liberal Party on the strength of the book of promises it gave the Canadian people and on its performance.

Let us examine some of the promises that have been made. My colleagues in their earlier interventions highlighted a number of them, but I will talk about some of the promises in depth. This government campaigned—it started before the campaign—that it would scrap and abolish the GST. It did not say that it would try to deal with it, that it would try to find a replacement tax, that it would try to find a way to soften the blow for Canadians. The Liberals were unequivocal in their statements and in their promises: "We are going to scrap and abolish the GST. We are going to get rid of it".

That was a very ill advised promise to make, and I think many of them knew that at the time. Evidence that has come to light in the last few months reveals that there were advisers within the Liberal Party who said they should not make that promise, it was a dumb promise to make. I agree that it was a dumb promise to make but they went ahead and made it anyway and now they have to live with it.

What did the Liberals do? They came back three years later and said: "Sorry. First, we did not really mean we were going to scrap and abolish it. We just meant we were going to replace it. Maybe we did say that we were going to scrap and abolish it but we are sorry about that. We can't meet that promise. Canadians understand". Frankly, I do not think Canadians understand.

• (2125)

They understand that getting rid of the GST, put in place by Brian Mulroney and his government, is a very difficult thing to do. What they do not understand is why a political party made this a major plank in its election platform, in its bid to win Canadians' votes in the 1993 election then turned around and said "shucks folks, we made a mistake".

The Liberal government in its red book campaigned on a promise to reform MP pensions. Canadians from one end of this country to the other were livid when they came to understand the terms of the MP pension plan. Canadians were absolutely beside themselves. How is it that the richest pension plan in the private sector pays benefits on a scale of 2:1 and yet parliamentarians, politicians, can go to Ottawa for six years and collect a benefit package on a ratio of 7:1?

This government made a solemn promise to the Canadian people in its red book to reform the pension plan. It left no doubt in the voters' minds that the government did not mean it was going to tinker with it a little bit, that it was going to reduce it a little bit. It was made very plain that what it intended to do, what it was promising to do, was to get the MP pension in line with private sector pensions. Three years later we see that the government tinkered around a little and left it at that.

My colleagues, 51 Reform MPs, looked at the pension plan and said when they had an opportunity they were going to opt out. As a result, Mr. Speaker, all the MPs you see here tonight are not going to get an MP pension regardless of how long they serve in this Parliament.

With regard to the member for Beaver River, she had already qualified and was fully vested in the pension plan. If she had resigned and left office she would be collecting her pension the next day. Mr. Speaker, you and I both know that. Her pension was worth approximately \$1.4 million.

It would have been easy to say: "We disagree with the MP pension plan but under the circumstances until we can form a government and actually change it ourselves we are all stuck going along with it. I do not agree with this but until we have an opportunity to change the system there is really not much we can do about it". No, she took the high road.

I ask every Canadian watching tonight to think about the integrity, the ethics, for somebody to turn around and walk away from \$1.4 million simply because they know it is not right. This government could learn a lot from this lady from Beaver River. Obviously it has not.

This government campaigned and attacked the Reform Party: "The Reform Party is going to kill medicare. The Reform Party is out to gut medicare. Do not vote for Reform, they are bad people, they have no scruples when it comes to budget cutting, no scruples

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when it comes to spending cuts. Reform is going to cut you out of medicare". Three years later the reality is the Liberal Party has done far more cutting in the area of medicare and education than the Reform Party ever proposed in its campaign in 1993.

When it comes to ethics the Liberal Party in the red book said: "We are going to restore Canadians faith in their government and their politicians. We are going to make Canadians feel good about politicians, about Ottawa and the federal government. We are going to restore integrity". Let us look at the record there.

Without tender, Liberal cabinet ministers hired consultants at hundreds of thousands of dollars. Is that ethical? It might be technically legal, but is it ethical?

• (2130)

Liberal junior cabinet ministers are flying around the world with a government credit card, on holidays purchasing clothes. Is that ethical? Then they say: "Oh, I am sorry. I am going to pay it back. It is okay because I meant to pay it back". It may be technically legal, although I question whether it is even technically legal. But it is a big stretch for anybody in this country to believe that it is ethical by anybody's standards. Yet this is the record of the government.

Let us examine the \$87 million no interest loan to Bombardier. I cannot suggest that the fact that Bombardier made a \$170,000 donation to the Liberal Party over the last three years was the reason it got the \$87 million loan. What I will suggest is that there is a longstanding cosy relationship between Bombardier, SNC-Lavalin and the Liberal Party. It goes back many, many years. We know that. We also know that the Liberal Party defends this no interest loan by saying it is doing it in the interests of providing research and development.

In the same week that the government went to Montreal and announced the \$87 million loan to Bombardier, it announced a \$7 million slash in the coast guard budget in British Columbia and \$30 million across the country. It announced that it did not have enough money to fund fish hatcheries in British Columbia. It announced that it would have to destaff light stations in British Columbia. Let us examine the cost of those three items alone.

Light stations in British Columbia cost \$5 million a year. Destaffing them does not mean there is no cost. It means that the cost will be reduced by about \$3 million. So it is saving about \$3 million by destaffing light stations, maybe.

The cuts to the coast guard are about \$7 million a year. I assure the House that the coast guard presence in British Columbia was razor thin prior to the cuts being made. The search and rescue capability of the coast guard on the north coast is virtually non-existent. I do not know how many fishermen I talked to who

fish out of Masset, Prince Rupert and Port Simpson, who tell me that they are sure happy that the American coast guard is not far away because that is who they rely on to pick them out of the water if their boats ever go down. It is not the Canadian coast guard. There is no presence capable of doing that for Canadians. And what is the government doing? It is cutting more.

The government has destaffed light stations and has cut money from the budget of the Canadian coast guard, \$7 million, in the same week it announced the \$87 million loan to Bombardier.

The Liberals said they had to cut back on the funding of fish hatcheries in British Columbia. In the fall last year they announced they were going to cut \$4 million out of the budget. Thankfully, there was a huge amount of pressure from elected representatives and from the people of British Columbia in the face of the fisheries minister saying they had to downsize the fleet in British Columbia because there were too many boats chasing too few fish, the Mifflin plan. Then in the same breath he said that by the way, at the same time they were going to cut back the funding to hatcheries.

In the case of the community of Kitimat where I live, there is a world class fish hatchery which is extremely productive. It costs the Canadian taxpayers about \$850,000 a year to own and run that hatchery. But no, the government had to cut that. Maybe not specifically that hatchery. We do not know which hatcheries because they were never announced. The Liberals did not go ahead with the cutback in 1996 but we are now told it is back on the books for 1997.

• (2135)

The people of British Columbia are losing valuable and in some cases essential services as a result of government cutbacks. Let us not forget that British Columbia is a net contributor to this federation and it has been for a long time. It puts more money in than it takes out every year. Then the government turns around and punishes the people of British Columbia and at the same time gives an \$87 million interest free loan to Bombardier. Bombardier is a company that has accepted \$1.2 billion in corporate welfare over the last 15 years.

That kind of announcement does not play too badly in Ottawa or in Montreal, but if we talk to the men and women on the street in British Columbia we will find that their blood is boiling. The people of British Columbia have suffered government cutbacks. They have seen the government make a loan to a company which has made hundreds of millions of dollars in profit in the last several years. It is one of the wealthiest corporations in Canada. It has billions of dollars in fixed assets. The people of British Columbia have lost their faith in the government's commitment to restore ethics and integrity.

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The government also promised in the red book to appoint deputy speakers from the opposition benches. It is another promise that is going by the wayside.

The premier of British Columbia set up a forest renewal fund two years ago. He promised the people of British Columbia that he would under no circumstances touch the fund. It was going to be there for silviculture, for the restoration of B.C. forests and for no other purpose. They are now dipping into that fund because there is a big budget shortfall.

I was interviewed recently by an announcer in northern B.C. who said: "I suppose this is probably good news for you". He was thinking cynically that anything which tarnishes the NDP will help me in my bid to be re-elected. I said: "On the surface it appears that way. Yes, it may as a result tarnish the NDP and make my re-election a little easier, but in the long run it hurts me". It hurts anybody who runs for public office in Canada because it is yet again a politician who is not keeping his promise, who is not ethical and who is not prepared to act with integrity. That is what we have with this government.

I started out by saying that governments usually are not defeated, that they defeat themselves. This government and this Prime Minister are so afraid right now that they have to put out memos to their supporters across the country trying to counsel their friends on how to slander and libel the Reform Party of Canada. That is how concerned they are about the position they are in. I know that their polling numbers do not look very bad right now, but I believe their support is a mile wide and an inch deep. If it is an inch deep, we are bailing out right now and it will not be an inch deep by the time the next election rolls around.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating a motion which deals with the Deputy Chairman position. From all of the debate which took place yesterday and today it is clear—

• (2140)

The Speaker: It was probably someone from the gallery. I heard some words coming from some place.

Mr. Szabo: Mr. Speaker, the debate that has been taking place has been very helpful and useful to all members of Parliament in expressing some views on what has happened within the House over the past three years. The debate has actually changed to a debate on what is the record of achievement of the government and what is the reaction of the opposition parties to that.

The national political party, the Liberal Party, presented its detailed election platform in a red book. I recall during the election campaign that the Prime Minister was grilled on that book, on each and every point, particularly on page 111, the page where the financial specifics were included regarding the cost of the various

programs and the commitments that the government was going to make.

I will never forget that the Prime Minister said to all openly and publicly that during the mandate we would be able to go through the red book page by page by page, point by point, dollar by dollar to see where we were in terms of the commitments that we made and the record of achievement that we have made.

At this point, the government has indeed put forward a report on its level of achievement on its campaign commitments. If members would look carefully, they would find within that book several sections that indicate areas where the government has gone beyond those platform undertakings, and other areas that were not specifically committed to but on which the government has made significant progress in the first three years of its mandate.

The primary areas of the platform had to do with the creation or stimulation of an environment to promote job creation and economic growth. Our approach to restoring the health of that has been measured, deliberate and responsible. The approach has been balanced: carefully reducing spending, restructuring government and strengthening the economy. Using rolling two-year targets is the right way to reach our ultimate goal of eliminating the deficit. It keeps the government's feet to the fire.

The deficit for 1995-96 was \$28.6 billion, \$4.1 billion below our target. This is the second year in a row that we have beaten our targets. We are on a clear path to fiscal health. We are also on a track to meet or better our deficit target of \$24.3 billion in 1996-97 and to meet our deficit target of \$17 billion in 1997-98. Our deficit target for the following year, 1998-99, is \$9 billion or 1 per cent of GDP.

This is down from \$42 billion or 6 per cent of GDP when we took office. We have reduced the deficit by \$33 billion or nearly 80 per cent in those five years. It will mean that in 1998-99 the federal government will no longer have to go to the financial markets for new borrowing requirements. That is the way most G-7 countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., measure their deficits.

We have used spending cuts, not tax increases to reduce the deficit. Spending cuts in the last three budgets account for almost 90 per cent of actions taken to bring down the deficit. By 1998-99, program spending will be 14 per cent lower than the peak level of the 1992-93 year. Program spending will then represent only 12 per cent of GDP, its lowest level since 1949-50. Between 1993-94 and 1996-97, the percentage decrease in federal program spending will be three times larger than the percentage decrease in overall provincial program spending.

Reducing the deficit is essential for job creation and growth. Our strategy is beginning to pay off. The government's number one priority has been and continues to be job creation. Getting interest

rates down is the most effective way for the government to help create jobs. There is no more effective way to get interest rates down than to get government finances under control. The strategy is already beginning to pay off. Short term rates are down by more than 4.5 percentage points since early 1995. They were 2.5 percentage points above the U.S. rate in early 1995 and they are a full 1.5 percentage below.

• (2145)

Canadians interest rates are below the U.S. rates for maturities up to five years. Except for five weeks in early 1994 the bank rate has not been at its current level of some 4 per cent or a little lower now, down to 3, since October 1964.

Lower interest rates produce real savings for Canadians. That is an important point. Earlier this day one of the members said: "We don't need lower interest rates. We just need tax cuts". Lower interest rates to Canadians are effectively a tax cut because they put real dollars after tax in the pockets of all Canadians. In fact, consumers are saving almost \$500 annually on a \$15,000 new car loan over a four year term. To someone renewing a \$100,000 mortgage this means saving over \$3,000 annually.

A new report by the Royal Bank says that owning a home is the most affordable it has been in 10 years. Payments on a five year \$100,000 mortgage now costs \$765 a month.

In 1990 the same mortgage would have cost more than \$12,000 and according to the report that is equivalent to getting an \$8,000 raise. Clearly the economy is improving.

Two hundred and twenty thousand jobs have been created in the private sector since last November, housing starts and resales are up sharply, business investment intentions are improved, GDP was up by .5 per cent in July, and for the first time in 12 years Canada has had a surplus in its current account.

The private sector forecasters are expecting the economy to strengthen during the rest of 1996-97 and the International Monetary Fund in its latest world economic outlook predicts that the Canadian economy will grow faster than any other economy of the G-7 countries.

I know there are many other members who would like to get up and share some of the great successes that this government has achieved in the first three years of its mandate. I would urge all members to stand up and let Canadians know, let their constituents know, let the Reform Party know, let the Bloc know, let the NDP and the Tories know that the Liberal government is doing a very good job for the people of Canada.

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Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as I rise this evening to speak to this bill, I listened to the rhetoric of the member across the way. I hear in that rhetoric a hollowness that does not reflect the loss of hope of many Canadians who are looking at no job. They are looking at the potential of no position that matches the training for which they have invested their time. They are looking at the possibility of losing the job they presently have.

For all the numbers and all the rhetoric Canadians do not feel secure today. That is compliments of the activity of this Liberal government.

Tonight as I rise I address the issue that is at the very heart of this discussion. That issue is at the heart of the disillusionment of Canadians. It is at the heart of the national distress, the national feeling of insecurity for the future. That is not helped by the rhetoric that we hear tonight.

It is the history of politics of Canada, the history of promises, promises, promises that lead to taxes, taxes, taxes. We have seen that in the last three years. It is a history of governments bent on serving their own interests.

• (2150)

The members across the way try to say that taxes have not gone up. Twenty-six billion dollars more is coming into the federal coffers every year from the Canadian taxpayers than there were three years ago.

Governments are bent on serving their own interests, not the interests of the Canadian public. Canadians now look to an insecure future. They look to the future of their children as being unknown, without jobs and possibly without the means for an education or a means to use that education.

Tonight we are specifically talking about the appointment of the member for Kingston and the Islands. This member I believe is an honourable and concerned individual, as many members are, and he certainly qualifies for the position to which he is going to be appointed.

It is interesting that this member was the driving force behind a report referenced in the red book during the last election. In that reference this member co-authored a report entitled "Reviving Parliamentary Democracy", something that perhaps many of us came to this House for. However, this was the Liberal plan for the House of Commons and electoral reform. That very member, when he co-authored this report, made a recommendation that two of the junior Chair positions in this House be occupied by members from the opposition members. That is two of the four positions. That was in the red book and part of the Liberal promises during the last election.

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In the last while the Liberals in this term have a record of patronage appointments in different areas. Recently they have had a resignation of a senior minister, a minister of the crown. I remind the public and this House that it was certainly under questionable circumstances. Now they have had to shuffle ministers and mix people from bench to bench without notice to this House. Our party made mention of that.

This same individual, who was appointed without notice to answer the needs of shuffling patronage appointments and the resignation of a minister for a real cause that perhaps was not identified in his resignation, is the same person who, in his own words, said that he should not be the one to fill the position but someone from the opposition. He will be four of four Liberal members occupying the Chair of this House and he will be occupying it as Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole.

Where is the integrity of those who would ask him or where is the integrity to accept that appoint? I challenge that member to own up to his own words and to deny that appointment. This, may I mention, is one day after a convention when these same Liberals, who are nattering at me at this moment, said that they have kept their promises or will keep them. We have a promise they made in their book and one day later they are blatantly against what is in that book. Where is the honesty and commitment to serve the people?

We wonder why there is cynicism and disillusionment that grows in the public minds. Each person in this House pays the price for promises broken. I take exception to that because for many of us that is the reason why we came to this place. It was because of that very cynicism that we felt three years ago. Perhaps the choice three years ago of the majority of this House was not as wise as it could have been.

This same party gave itself a rating of 78 per cent in keeping its promises at a recent convention. I wonder if any mention was made of this issue as part of that percentage and I wonder how many students in a classroom would grade their own papers and come up with such a poor mark.

• (2155)

If we listen to radio shows or if we take our own poll of those same promises we get results of 30 per cent, 20 per cent, 10 per cent. Seventy-eight per cent is a construction of the very party whose behaviour we are considering.

We hear that the Liberals have reached their target of 3 per cent of GDP. They have a target the size of a barn door. In the last three years the debt of this country has gone up by \$111 billion. We have a deficit of \$27 billion. It does not make sense that a government could be proud of that.

We have promises broken. I want to go on but I must discuss the promises of NAFTA to look at the subsidies, to look at the resolution mechanisms, to take a closer look at that legislation. That has not been done.

There were promises for day care spaces which have not been answered. The GST fiasco has been blamed on everything, as my colleague mentioned, from acts of God to loose lips. Nothing has been done to make that real. There has certainly been a sellout of the Canadian people in a \$1 billion plan for a partial program that will probably cost the taxpayers across Canada, including the very places concerned, more in the long run.

The aboriginals have completely rejected government progress in terms of their priorities. Where are we with interprovincial trade barriers? Nowhere. Health care? We have line-ups growing. Seniors, people from coast to coast do not feel secure with our health care system. CBC funding, stable? Let us take another look at it.

Youth unemployment is at 18 per cent. Overall unemployment is at almost 10 per cent. As I mentioned, 1.4 million Canadians are unemployed and 2 million to 3 million are underemployed. What is wrong? What is wrong with what the government seems to feel is just fine, thank you? I suggest it is the basic philosophy of this government, as with governments before. The questioning of that philosophy is what brought many of us as Reformers to this place.

That philosophy is one of government knows best, government will solve all the problems of this country. Government will create jobs. Government will sustain Canadians. Government will sustain aboriginals. That is rejected by them. Government will sustain and protect children. I believe government cannot do all things and that individual Canadians should be trusted and empowered to do those very things that this government and previous governments have felt they can do in a better way. With the basic philosophy that government knows best, we have bigger government, more intrusive government.

Taxes have grown by \$26 billion in the last three years. We have a less responsive, less accountable, more arrogant government as it takes the reins and control of the lives of Canadians. This is in stark contrast to the Reform approach.

In our fresh start program we feel that government can be less. Government can be less expensive, less intrusive, \$15 billion less, from \$109 billion to \$94 billion in government expenditures. With this philosophy we will balance the budget by March 31, 1999. With that we will provide Canadians with the ability to create the employment they need, to create the freedom from government that they need. By increasing the basic deduction for every taxpayer in Canada and matching the spousal deduction to the basic deduction to \$7,900 we would level the playing field for one and two income families. That would give Canadians a choice and more money in

their jeans, more money to use in the economy, more money to create the jobs that are needed.

• (2200)

The Liberals are afraid of the new and fresh approach they see from Reform. Maybe it boggles their minds to think perhaps things could be done differently. I saw in this morning's paper: "Liberals turn sights on Manning". They have labelled us with things which simply display their own arrogance and their discomfort with something which may be different and that might work.

One thing the Liberals have said is that Reform does not understand the modern family. I find that very interesting. What is Liberal definition of a modern family? I would like to tell the House what I see their definition of a modern family to be. I would like to ask Canadians if it is their definition.

The Liberal definition of the modern family is two wage earners by decree having to pay exorbitant taxes on what they earn. If they have a job they are afraid of losing that job. They are unsure of their children's future. They are unsure their pension plans. They are earning less and less after tax income each year as the government strips more and more money away to fund programs that it invents. That is the Liberal definition of a modern family. That is the way they would like every family to be. I question if that is what Canadians want.

We have a government which gave \$87 million to Bombardier and in the meantime families pay higher taxes. In my province the coast guard has been cut by \$7 million, the fish hatcheries which create a livelihood for many people in my riding have been cut back. They have cut back the staffing of light stations which many people depend on for their security. This is a choice which certainly does not serve the families in my area.

There is a \$23 million flag program. We are not sure which budget it comes out of but it certainly comes out of the pockets of taxpayers. In the meantime health care has been reduced by \$6 billion in the last three years. People are worrying about what will happen if they need care in a short time.

Our plan would give tax relief of \$2,000 to the average family by the year 2000. We would create job opportunities through a capital gains tax cut of one-half of what is now being paid, down to 37.5 per cent. We would reduce job killing payroll taxes by reducing the employer's contribution to UI by 28 per cent. We would remove the surtax and move toward a simplified flat tax.

What do Canadian families care about? They care about the best possible care for their children. That, as opposed to the Liberal view is choice, not coercion in day care. Canadians would like to have the choice of how and who takes care of their children, including being able to take care of their own children.

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Presently the day care deduction is only for receiptable day care. Reform would change that to a deduction for every child below the age of 13 years. Families could choose to take care of their own children or they could have grandmother or Aunt Bessie or Uncle Jim. Right now that choice is not theirs. It has been stripped by the Liberal vision of the Canadian family, and a wonderful vision it is.

• (2205)

Reform values choice. Reform values parenting. Reform values the safety and security of Canadian families in their homes. Reform wants to address the issues of family violence, child prostitution and child pornography. Reform wants to look at the issue of victims' rights and address them. Reform wants to eliminate the parole of violent offenders. We want them to serve their full sentences. Reform wants to take a look at the Young Offenders Act, eliminate it and make young offenders more accountable in the process.

In terms of the social safety net what do we want to do? We want to give priority in education and health. Those are the priorities of Canadian families.

In the last four years the Liberals have worked hard to destroy the health care system. They talk about supporting it but in fact they have taken \$6 billion away from health and education through their CHST changes. Reform would like to restore the UI program to something that works, something that is restored to its original purpose.

Reformers would like Canadians to have security by having control over their own pensions. Certainly it would like the security for existing plans. Our fresh approach to national unity just boggles the mind of a Liberal. We want that plan to speak for all Canadians. We want it based on the equality of all Canadians in all provinces.

Reform wants greater control given to provinces and to municipalities and we want the federal government to focus on what it does best.

Much of tonight's discussion has been about promises. Reform will give money back promises in the form of our democratic reforms in recall where we can fire a liar if necessary. We will give those tools to Canadians and that will be a cure for a political trend that we have seen for too long and too often. We look for real democracy, legislation that can be brought through citizen's initiative, decisions by the people through national binding referendums and free votes in this place. MPs must represent their constituents' wishes if those are known.

Not too long ago an MP on the other side asked about accountability. Reform does what it says. One promise the Liberals made that they did not keep was to reform pension plans. The pension plan held by most Liberals is still five times greater than any other Canadian can get. Reform was presented with that same decision and Reform rejected the gold plated pension. One member probably lost \$3 million when she signed her name on that line that said

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what she could accept. The integrity of the member for Beaver River made her say: "This is not good enough. This is not what Canadians want. I lead by example".

Members on the far side of this House will not lead by example. In fact their leadership is something that Canadians must and will challenge in the next election.

Integrity is on this side. Reformers do what they say they will do. We walk the walk. Fresh start is the option to old politics. Instead of promises and big government and old politics we believe Canadians deserve better. There is a choice for change. The cruel reality is that Canadians made the wrong choice last time. They will be able to change—

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel west to Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg and Toronto, and east to Montreal, Fredericton, St. John's, Halifax and Charlottetown during the week of November 4, 1996 to hold a pre-budget consultation and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

● (2210)

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE

MOTION ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor on the motion on the appointment of a deputy chairman of the committees of the whole House.

The position of deputy chairman is sufficiently important that we should appoint someone worthy of the honour, such as the individual the government recommended. The government has recommended the member for Kingston and the Islands. He is a well balanced individual, well educated, who weighs things carefully and has many merits, and who, above all, is familiar with procedure.

The members of the Reform Party are objecting to this appointment. They would like to see someone from the opposition appointed. What sort of people do we have in the opposition right now?

There are the members of the Bloc Québécois, who do not want to abide by the Constitution. This morning I proposed to a committee on procedure that a swearing in, in addition to an oath of allegiance to the Queen, should include an oath of allegiance to the country known as Canada and to the Constitution. The Constitution means a great deal. One of the things it means is respecting the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Should we appoint a member of the Bloc Québécois as deputy chairman? I think not, given that members of that party do not respect the Constitution, nor do they support my proposal that allegiance be sworn to the Queen, the country and the Constitution.

As for the members of the Reform Party, how can we appoint we appoint someone from such a grumpy, ill tempered bunch, who have forgotten how to smile? And when they do, it is because they are about to pounce on someone they disagree with. They make fun of people, so when they are smiling, watch out.

You know, the members of the Reform Party put me in mind of old westerns. They form a sort of posse. These fellows in the Reform Party—and a few women, a very few, because the Reform Party is mostly for macho types—would like to see anyone accused of a crime, any crime at all, immediately strung up.

This describes our friends in the Reform Party, a sort of cowboy posse. They are a gang of cowboys. What they would like, if a child is accused of wrongdoing, is to see him beaten, whipped, kicked, taught a proper lesson.

If someone is accused of a violent crime, well my goodness, why wait for the judge? Why waste a jury's time. Who has a rope? Let us lynch him.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bellemare: You see, now, what a show the Reform Party is putting on. They are losing it completely.

Can you see one of those guys as Deputy Chairman? The Deputy Chairman must be someone who weighs things, who must be reserved and knowledgeable. Not a gang of yahoos like this bunch of cowboys—and I say this with the greatest respect for real cowboys. I am comparing them to the Hollywood type cowboy. Those guys from the other side of the House, those Reformers, who subscribe to the principle that those who yell the loudest get the most. That is their attitude, their philosophy.

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• (2215)

[English]

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to bring the member back to some relevance. I do not appreciate the huge disinformation he is giving about us. I want him to be relevant.

The Speaker: It is my great wish that all members this evening will be relevant. I know we are going to get there. The hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester.

[Translation]

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, I would dearly love to have the Reform Party's definition of the word "relevant" in English. I am sure that they could not give me one in French, indeed would not give me one in French since, in my opinion, they hate francophones, having brought out a resolution last year to abolish the commission on bilingualism. What is their definition of bilingualism?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bellemare: You hear the applause for abolition of the commission on bilingualism?

[English]

Mr. Epp: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: My colleagues, I respect when you rise on a point of order and I do hope we are not taking advantage of one another. I am going to listen to the hon. member's point of order.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully request that you check whether we have a quorum in this House. I do not believe we do.

And the count having been taken:

The Speaker: By all counts, my dear colleague, we do have a quorum. I am going to give the floor to the member for Carleton—Gloucester.

[Translation]

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor again. I am glad to be able to tell my constituents that I upset the members of the Reform Party, those Hollywood cowboys who all want to gang up on people who are more sensitive than most. I think I know how sensitive they are.

These are people who believe that all francophones should go to Quebec and all anglophones should live outside Quebec. They have great respect for Quebec's anglophones and they have great respect for francophones. They have great respect for the history of our country.

I bet you that if we had a history test, if we had a high school history teacher, but no, that would be getting our sights too high. I was too demanding. If we had a grade school teacher, maybe a second grade teacher who would ask them elementary questions

about the history of Canada, how Canada was formed, I am sure they would score a big fat zero, because that is what they are on the other side, just a gang of zeros.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bellemare: Listen to those Hollywood cowboys shout. They are talking about the Plains of Abraham again. They want me to go back to the Plains of Abraham. These people forget what francophones did for Canada. They forget that the reason we are not the fifty-first state of the United States is that the francophones joined up with the British, who conquered this country and entered into a relationship that was to form a new country.

I know it is a very sore point and that these complainers like to play rough and tough. That is their whole attitude. You see, their friends are very rich, so one of their priorities here in the House is to cut taxes. In fact, what they would like to do is close the whole government down. They could not care less about immigration or citizenship or the poor. They could not care less about families or the poor worker.

• (2220)

I almost forgot to remind the House that when health care is on the agenda, they would like their friends to take advantage of our health care system and make our hospital and health care system more like the one in the United States. Down there, private companies take the money and prevent people from getting the medication and the kind of hospital care they need, but everything is based on systems à la Ross Perot or Newt Gingrich. These people have no interest in the common good.

The members of the Reform Party, those Hollywood cowboys who, as they say, want to lynch anything that moves, believe only in the rich and protecting the rich. They do not believe in the middle class and especially not the poor, except when they feel like giving some money to help people who are in need, to make their consciences feel better.

As you can hear, during my speech, the Reform Party members just keep shouting. Can you imagine one of this gang of tough guys sitting in your seat as Deputy Chairman? They would just spend their time shouting at us. They would not spend their time saying that we have to improve the circumstances of the average citizen. They will not recognize what the Liberal government has done since 1993. They do not believe in all this. They believe in the law of the jungle. They want to see the deficit completely eliminated within a very short time. They would like to take us back to the time of the depression and cut everywhere.

This afternoon in committee, we were talking about government cuts in public service spending. I really felt uncomfortable, because a lot of public servants have lost their jobs. Reform Party members told me that if they formed the government, public servants would really get the short end of the stick, because they want to close the whole government down. They want to cut everything. They would like to fire all public servants, then turn around and give all these

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jobs to their friends so they can make a buck at the expense of Canadians.

The worst scenario we could have during this session would be to have a member of the Bloc—but at least Bloc members are often reasonable—but Reform Party members are never reasonable. Can you imagine a member of the Reform Party as Deputy Chairman of the committees of the whole House? Do you want to work with someone from the Reform Party? Absolutely not, no one could work with them.

They would sit over there with their whips—and we must not forget the rope too, since someone needs to be hanged from time to time. As for those accused of something, not someone found guilty, they deserve a royal thrashing.

I would be greatly disappointed if the government were to decide to have a Reformer as Deputy Chairman. There is an anti-people party, a party for the strongest, one which believes that he who yells the loudest get the most. For anyone who is sick or poor, theirs would be the last party in the world to vote for.

Mr. Lee Morrison: What do you know about poverty?

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak and for giving me far more attention than I got from those yahoos on the other side, with all their uncontrolled bellowing, and with absolutely no qualifications or qualities to be the Deputy Chairman of the whole House.

[*English*]

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand to speak to this motion.

• (2225)

I first want to say that the remarks I am about to make should not be construed as being remarks that are negative toward the hon. member who is pursuing the position of deputy chairman. As everyone knows, the hon. member has done a good job in the House in terms of being able to understand the rules and certainly he is up on the rules. Nobody would quarrel with that.

I think the quarrel that the people in the Reform Party have and anybody who has read the red book has is that this is completely contrary to what the government promised it would do. The great irony is that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands who is pursuing the position is the one who wrote the policy for the red book. There is a great inconsistency here.

We do not need to hammer too much on that broken promise. I think it has been done fairly sufficiently this evening. It is pretty obvious for anybody who wants to have a good look at it. The fact is the hon. member himself wrote the red book promise and is

breaking it himself. People can judge for themselves whether that is integrity. I would say it is not.

I want to follow up on some of the comments I have heard tonight and perhaps talk a little bit about the two fundamental visions we are hearing about in the House. One of course is the Liberal-Tory vision and the other is our vision.

Before I do that I feel compelled to follow up on the smear campaign that we are hearing. Certainly the member for Carleton—Gloucester was going on calling us all kinds of names. That is fine. I do not think that carries much weight with ordinary Canadians.

I do want to make reference to his point where he said that he thought the Bloc Quebecois members were very rational thinkers. He seemed to agree with them a lot. He is certainly entitled to his opinion, but I am surprised at his comments. I would be surprised if the people in Carleton—Gloucester really agreed with him. We are talking about the people who are proposing to break up the country. The hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester seems to be supporting them. That is quite shocking. In a sense, when we consider how close the government came to losing the last referendum campaign, within 50,000 votes, perhaps it is not so surprising after all.

I do want to talk for a moment about the two fundamental differences which really relate to this whole issue. This whole issue is a microcosm of the two fundamental differences in visions of the country between the Liberal-Tory regime and the Reform Party regime. The best way to explain the differences is to look at the history.

An hon. member back here is continuing the smear campaign that was started earlier in the day. Hopefully they will find out that it is futile.

Let us look at the record. With the Liberals and Tories in power, going back to the early seventies the debt has gone from about \$13 billion to about \$600 billion. I will do for my Liberal friends across the way what I often do for high school students. I will point out to them how much money that is. If I had a stack of hundred dollar bills about two metres high, that would be a million dollars. If we stacked our debt in one hundred dollar bills, it would be 1,200 kilometres high. That is an astounding amount of money.

Only a few weeks ago the finance minister made a presentation to the finance committee. It was a sort of state of the nation address with respect to the economy. I was quite surprised when, knowing that we had this huge debt problem, the finance minister came in and announced that the deficit for last year was only \$28.6 billion. Only \$28.6 billion. And what happened? The Liberal members began to clap. They said: "Is that not wonderful. It is only \$28.6 billion".

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As my leader pointed out, only in the never never land of Ottawa would \$28.6 billion in the hole be applauded. There they were lined up like crows on a telephone wire applauding away as if this were some great accomplishment. However, I can assure the people across the way that back home in the real world there was no applauding because the people back home know the only place that money comes from to pay for these deficits is out of the pockets of ordinary Canadians.

• (2230)

I think this is a fundamental difference between the Liberal-Tory vision and the Reform vision. The Liberals and the Tories have for years and years piled up the debt, ran up taxes. Hon. members across the way have probably heard over the last few days, because we have mentioned it once or twice, that in the three years they have been in power the average Canadian family has seen its purchasing power go down by \$3,000 per family per year; a national pay cut courtesy of the Liberal government.

The Liberal member across the way is laughing. But I can say that the people who do not have incomes of \$64,300 plus all the expense money that MPs have are not laughing because they have to pay for that out of their savings.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Colleagues, it is getting a little late. I am having a tough time hearing the hon. member. I know you want to hear him, so I wonder if we could just keep it down a bit.

Mr. Solberg: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the courtesy. I am sure I can expect it from hon. members across the way as well.

Taxes are not the only thing that separates the Liberal-Tory vision from the Reform vision. Their belief in big government, high taxes and bloated bureaucracies breeds something perhaps even more insidious. There is no question that it does. I am talking about the record high levels of unemployment in this country.

There is no coincidence that as the debt started to grow in the early 1970s so did the unemployment rate in the country. When Pierre Trudeau took power in 1972 somewhere in the range of 535,000 people were unemployed. By the time he left office in 1984 it was up to 1.45 million people.

The Tories continued that trend and again there was record high unemployment. What kind of unemployment do we have today? There are 1.4 million unemployed.

It would be bad enough if it were only the 1.4 million unemployed, but that does not take into account the 500,000 to 1 million people who have completely given up looking for work because the Liberal vision of bloated government has not worked for them.

There are 2 million to 3 million people who are underemployed. By that I mean people who have an education but who cannot find a job that suits their skills. One in four Canadians is very concerned about losing their job.

Canadians have no confidence in the economy. Too many people have been laid off, too many tax cuts have come down the pike to ever be assured they will have a job for very long.

This is also a key difference between the Liberal-Tory vision where they seem to tolerate high levels of unemployment and can offer up nothing creative, nothing new to give people some hope.

A great concern I have and which I gather has been shared lately by the Prime Minister and the finance minister is their dependence on these make work programs like infrastructure. The Prime Minister and certainly the finance minister in the past have said that these programs simply do not create long term, permanent jobs. But what do they do? They keep coming back to the same old ideas because they cannot bring themselves to face the fact that big government and bloated bureaucracies cannot do it all. The government cannot have its fingers in everybody's business all the time because it kills jobs. Surely by now, after 25 years of social engineering, big government in everybody's face, we have to arrive at the conclusion that big government does not work. It does not create jobs, it kills jobs. The facts speak for themselves.

It is not only about taxes and unemployment but also the tremendous strain this puts on families by both parents having to work, one to simply pay the taxes for the government.

• (2235)

The other issue that we run into when there is a government that spends \$600 billion over 25 years, more than it takes in, a deficit last year of \$28.6 billion, is that we have interest payments on that debt that this year will be about \$49 billion.

The hon. member across the way thinks that is funny. I should point out to the hon. member that the finance minister writes cheques to bankers in Japan, Germany and the United States for amounts that are much larger than he writes to the provinces for things like health care, old age security and unemployment insurance. That is \$49 billion.

I do not think that is a laughing matter. I would argue that it is deadly serious. It is deadly serious because of the impact it has on social programs.

My friends across the way have cloaked themselves in the flag of medicare. They have run around telling Canadians how they are going to save it.

The last election campaign I remember extremely well. I am sure my colleagues on this side do as well. I remember how members

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over there were engaging in a smear campaign at that time and said that Reformers were out to get health care.

As it turned out, it looks like the Liberals were wolves in sheep's clothing. Not only were they not telling the absolute truth about the Reform Party, they went out and cut \$3 billion plus out of health care themselves.

They have closed more hospitals, have put more health workers out of work than any provincial government in this country. The provincial governments combined have not taken a whack out of health care like the federal government has. That is a fact.

It is about time that the Liberals started to face some of the scrutiny falling on the provinces which are taking a lot of the heat for health care cuts.

I would dearly love to see Canadians get on planes, get in their cars and get on trains to come to Ottawa to protest on the lawn of the Parliament Buildings over the cuts to health care. That is where the cutting started. The federal government cut \$3 billion and left the provinces no choice.

By the way, I am going to say how the Reform Party would remedy that. Forty-nine billion dollars a year in interest payments has also pinched the federal government with respect to payments to old age security.

I remember in the last election campaign the Liberals went after us hammer and tong: "You guys are going to cut benefits to seniors". I remember it very well.

I hope I run against the same guy I ran against last time. I can hardly wait to confront him with the fact that it was the Liberals who cut seniors' pensions more than any government in the history of the country.

Who was it? It was the Liberals. That is the difference between the Reform vision and the Liberal-Tory vision. We have always been straight with Canadians. We have told people the truth.

I do not know what the members opposite were saying in the last election campaign about social programs. I expect a lot of people are going to be examining those documents as we get closer to the next election campaign.

There is another important way that we differ from the Liberal-Tory vision.

An hon. member: We are sane.

Mr. Solberg: We are sane, as my friend says.

The Liberal-Tory vision is one that is full of broken promises. We talked a minute ago about the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands who has broken a promise himself, in effect, even though he is pursuing the position of deputy speaker.

He has written, basically, the red book promise to allow deputy speakers to be chosen from the opposition benches but he, himself,

is allowing his name to stand, rather unbelievably. That is just a microcosm of the overall bigger problem.

We have broken promises on the GST. I hope my hon. friends across the way have not forgotten that the Deputy Prime Minister was finally hung by her own words last spring and had to run for re-election. It was a national embarrassment.

I could not believe that the Deputy Prime Minister had to take a poll in her own riding to determine whether it was safe for her to finally hand in her resignation after she had been shamed into it by not only this party but Canadians from around the country. Absolutely shameful. That is only one of the broken promises. There are a lot of them.

• (2240)

I could not believe the spectacle, again involving the Deputy Prime Minister, on the weekend. She was running around telling people that it was not her fault the CBC was being cut. She said that it was the finance minister's fault. I believe she is the Deputy Prime Minister. I believe she sits around the cabinet table. I believe there was a red book promise to provide stable funding.

Stable funding does not mean funding enough to run a stable. It means that the funding will be there in the same amounts as it was in the beginning.

That is only another of many promises. I remember during the NAFTA debate how hon. members across the way railed against free trade: "Free trade is going to kill Canada. It is going to be horrible. It is going to be something that steals our sovereignty". We heard it from every single member across the way, and what did they do? As soon as they got in they signed the agreement. They broke both legs to sign the agreement. Again, we see that their actions cannot meet their words and they should be ashamed.

On the issue of day care the Liberals said that when there was growth in the economy of over 3 per cent, or whatever it was, they would create 150,000 day care spaces. That has still not happened. What is going on here? That was a promise that undoubtedly got the Liberals a lot of votes. They told people they wanted to ensure working parents would have some support.

I personally do not agree with their promise but they used it to lever themselves into power, which is absolutely ridiculous. They should be ashamed of that.

I do not want to tie up the whole time talking about the Liberals' poor record. That is too depressing. People need some hope. Let me talk about Reform's fresh start. Let me talk about the new way to do things.

Reformers want to give Canadians a government they can afford, a smaller government, a government with lower taxes, a government that will leave more money in the pockets of taxpayers and the job creators so they can make these decisions, so they do not have big government in their faces at every step, so they do not

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have a government in their faces that tells them how they have to raise their children, what they have to do at every turn.

For crying out loud, ordinary Canadians are asked to raise their families. They are expected to fill out their income tax forms. Surely they can decide what to do with their own money. We do not need big government in our faces at every step. No way.

We are going to do more. We are going to provide lower taxes for the people who create the jobs. I cannot think of an economist in the country who has not spoken of the need to lower unemployment insurance premiums. Reform is offering a 28 per cent cut. That would be an immediate surge of energy to the job creators in the economy and we would see a tremendous amount of job creation.

I ask members across the way to compare that to the government approach to job creation. Recently Atlantic Canadian provinces signed the GST harmonization deal with the help of \$1 billion to make it a little easier for the premiers to go along with it. But now housing prices in Atlantic Canada are going to go up by \$3,000 to \$4,000.

An hon. member: That is not true.

Mr. Solberg: The hon. member across the way says that it is not true, but I ask him to check with the Canadian Real Estate Association. Those are not my numbers. They come from the Canadian Real Estate Association, which is very concerned. It will kill hundreds of jobs in Atlantic Canada. It will cost people thousands of dollars. That is the Liberal vision.

Our vision is to give people lower taxes, not different taxes, not higher taxes, lower taxes. Reformers will give more incentives to job creators through lowering the inclusion rate on capital gains. That will bring all kinds of investment into the country. That way people like the finance minister will not have to send his assets outside of the country. We would like to have those assets inside the country. I am sure it would create a lot of jobs if we could have them all here. The Reform Party speaks for ordinary Canadians. It speaks for people who have been beaten up by Liberal and Conservative governments over the last 25 years. Canadians have had a \$3,000 national pay cut since the Liberals came to power. People cannot take it any more.

• (2245)

I urge my friends not to be quite so partisan about it and please come on board and sign up with the Reform fresh start program.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq, Lib.):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I like what the member had to say in his last remark about representing ordinary Canadians. I have not seen any aboriginal people, blacks—

Mr. Abbott: You weren't at our conference in Vancouver or you would have seen them.

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, the truth must hurt. The truth seems to hurt the member for Kootenay East. He seems to have a bit of a sore spot about aboriginal people or blacks or ordinary Canadians that this party on this side of the House represents.

All day the members across have voiced their great outrage at being singled out by the Prime Minister by being called extremists. They have a problem with that extremist label.

This is the same party that had problems with the member for Calgary Centre. They ousted the member for Calgary Southwest. These are very ordinary members but they had a problem with them. I guess those two members are not extremist enough, along with the member for Calgary West who is not running again. That party is now advertising so that they can get somebody to run in that riding in Calgary, because I think that particular member is not extremist enough.

This is the same party that has members like the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan who if he had his way would have me in the back of the room because I might be losing business for him. This is the same party that has the member for Capilano—Howe Sound who thinks that we belong on some far off island wearing shades and shorts so that we can get a tan. He thinks that is all we do.

This is the party that objects to being called extremist but has no tolerance for people other than the people who are around that particular area. This is the same party that when it was politically convenient thought that Newt Gingrich was the best thing since sliced bread. Now because Newt Gingrich is not so popular, all of a sudden they are sort of backing off from having any association with him.

• (2250)

This is the same party in which the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia says: "I am a red neck and I am proud to be one". That is the same party that espouses the kind of attitudes and policies which are detrimental to other people.

All of a sudden the Reform Party seems to be the champion of the needy. Reformers are the champions of the poor. It is now politically convenient to defend the poor. The government defends the poor whether it is politically convenient or not. Liberals have always defended the poor.

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Let me talk about the constituency which I represent as envisioned by the hon. member for Kootenay East. That member has a problem with Nunavut, a new territory which will be incorporated when the division of the Northwest Territories occurs on April 1, 1999. The member for Kootenay East calls it the illegal new province of Nunavut. What is illegal about it? It is a very big area. It has three time zones. It is larger than the area which he represents. He has a problem with it. The population is only about 20,000, but those 20,000 people—

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know you will understand what I am saying. The time will soon run out and this member is so far away from the topic that I know you would want him to be relevant.

The Speaker: Yes, and I know that all of the members this evening have been relevant and I know that member is relevant also. He is going to be relevant right now.

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, this same member thinks that Nunavut is an illegal province. Admittedly, there are about 20,000 people in Nunavut. However, those 20,000 people can record their history back thousands of years. They have occupied that land for at least 4,000 years. I would be careful if I was the hon. member for Kootenay East when calling it an illegal province.

Eighty-five per cent of the population is Inuit. However, in negotiations with the Government of Canada we have managed to convince it that we should divide the Northwest Territories in 1999. We should be celebrating. I know the Prime Minister will be with us when we celebrate the new territory of Nunavut in 1999.

The hon. member has a problem because so few people inhabit Nunavut. If the member had his way he would probably move them into apartment buildings in Toronto, Ottawa or Montreal. The difference between that member and me is that I love the north. I love the land. It is my home. There is no way that any member is going to force me to move down here or force the people of the north to move down here just because they do not agree that we have a right to our self-determination within the country of Canada.

• (2255)

It seems that all of a sudden the Reform Party is now the champion of the poor.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Where did you buy a house?

Miss Grey: Where do you live, Jack? Here in Ottawa? Where are your kids?

Mr. Anawak: For the record I live in Rankin Inlet and my family is in Rankin Inlet. As a matter of fact I was talking to my children in Rankin Inlet earlier tonight before I came to the House. They are in school in Rankin Inlet.

All of a sudden Reformers are champions of the poor because it happens to be politically convenient. With help like that we do not need any enemies. As far as that party is concerned aboriginal people should not have recognition.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): A party? We are not even enjoying ourselves.

Mr. Anawak: Some aboriginal people have been in Canada for 36,000 years. The Inuit are relative newcomers. We have only been here for 4,000 years.

I do not know if my other colleagues, the aboriginal leaders across the country, welcome the support of the Reform Party when it is convenient for the Reform Party to support the aboriginal people. I do not know how my other colleagues feel.

Mr. Hanger: Turn around ask them. They are right behind you.

Mr. Anawak: I will depend on the people who have always championed the rights of the poor, of the aboriginal people, of minorities such as our present Prime Minister of Canada. They talk about the fact that the Deputy Prime Minister ought to have kept her promise to resign. She had the courage to resign and run again and win. She won big by the way.

To paraphrase what the Reform is doing there must be something that is bothering the Reform Party.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Yes, it is you. It is called Liberals.

Mr. Anawak: They seem to be protesting a little too much. I do not know how to say it but it is along the lines of “thou doth protest too much”. English being my second language sometimes I am not quite sure of the proper pronunciation. Yes, it is Shakespeare: “Thou doth protest too much”.

It is an honour for me to speak in this Chamber and be able to say the kind of things I say to the Reform Party. They are protesting what I am saying but that is politics or debate. At the same time, the Reform Party has problems with the rights that were gained rightfully through treaties and they start doing certain things.

A Reform member from British Columbia was arrested for illegal fishing. What if it had been an aboriginal person doing the same thing? I did not see the Reform Party protesting the law. This is a party that considers itself a law and order party but it is condoning breaking the law. Are they protesting the fact that this member broke the law? I did not hear any of that, Mr. Speaker, but thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

• (2300)

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Government Orders

The Speaker: We have run out of time. I will hear the member's point of order.

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, my point of order is very short.

The hon. member has made an absolute statement saying that one of my colleagues is guilty of an offence under the law. Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable to make that comment. The hon. member in question has not been before the courts of this country to determine that one way or the other. I think it is unfair that a member in this House makes an accusation that is absolutely untrue and unfounded.

The Speaker: I do not remember all of the words that the member said. I do not know that he said them. I will be happy to review the blues. The hon. member is here and he knows what he said. My colleague, did you say that?

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, I was just reading the news that a member was arrested by officers of the law. Usually one gets arrested when one breaks the law.

The Speaker: Colleagues, if you will just leave me a little bit of time, I will review the blues. If it is necessary, I will come back to the House.

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House. The question is on the amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 145)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Duncan
Epp	Frazer
Grey (Beaver River)	Hanger
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (MacLeod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Johnston
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Penson
Ringma	Scott (Skeena)
Solberg	Solomon

Speaker
Williams—27

White (North Vancouver)

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anawak
Anderson	Assadourian
Augustine	Bachand
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Bethel	Bhaduria
Bodnar	Bonin
Brien	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Caccia	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clancy	Collenette
Collins	Crawford
Crête	Cullen
Dalphondu-Guiral	Davialt
de Savoye	Debien
Deshaies	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dion	Discepolo
Dromisky	Duceppe
Duhamel	Dumas
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	Finestone
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier
Gerrard	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lalonde	Landry
Lastewka	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lebel	LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lee
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Lincoln	Loney
Loubier	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Manley	Marchand
Marchi	Marleau
Massé	McCormick
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McTeague	McWhinney
Ménard	Mercier
Mifflin	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Murray
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Paré
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pillitteri	Plamondon
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rocheleau	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd	Sheridan
Simmons	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Solomon	Stewart (Brant)
	Szabo

Government Orders

Telegdi
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Valeri
Verran
Wappel
Whelan

Terrana
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Ur
Vanclief
Walker
Wells
Zed—170

Cauchon
Chan
Clancy
Collins
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Dion

Chamberlain
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Collenette
Crawford
De Villers
Dingwall
Discepola
Duhamel

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin
Bélisle
Caron
Cowling
English
Galloway
Mitchell
Serré
Torsney

Bélaïr
Canuel
Cohen
Dubé
Fillion
Jacob
Pomerleau
St-Laurent
Wood

Dromisky
Dupuy
Eggleton
Finlay
Fontana
Gerrard
Goodale
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin

Easter
Finestone
Flis

Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Itody
Jackson
Keyes

• (2330)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*English*]

The next question is on the main motion.

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, if the House would agree, I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Dalfond-Guiral: Members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting against, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, Reform members will vote against this motion with the exception of those who wish to vote otherwise.

Mr. Solomon: Mr. Speaker, we vote no on this matter.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this motion.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 146*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allmand
Anderson
Augustine
Barnes
Bélanger
Bertrand
Bodnar
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Calder
Cannis

Alcock
Anawak
Assadourian
Baker
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bethel
Bonin
Brushett
Caccia
Campbell
Catterall

Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lee
Loney
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marleau
McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McWhinney
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Payne
Peters
Pettigrew
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Sheridan
Speller
Steckle
Szabo
Terrana
Valeri
Verran
Wappel
Whelan

Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacDonald
Malhi
Marchi
Massé
McKinnon
McTeague
Mifflin
Minna
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patri
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Shepherd
Simmons
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Telegdi
Ur
Vanclief
Walker
Wells
Zed—130

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Bellehumeur
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bhaduria
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalfond-Guiral
de Savoye
Deshaies
Dumas
Epp
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Guay
Hanger
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Johnston
Landry

Bachand
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Brien
Crête
Davialt
Debien
Duceppe
Duncan
Frazer
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Guimond
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner
Lalonde
Laurin

Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
 Leblanc (Longueuil)
 Leroux (Shefford)
 Marchand
 McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
 Mercier
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Paré
 Picard (Drummond)
 Ringma
 Scott (Skeena)
 Solomon
 Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
 Tremblay (Rosemont)
 Williams—67

Lebel
 Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
 Loubier
 Mayfield
 Ménard
 Meredith
 Morrison
 Penon
 Plamondon
 Rocheleau
 Solberg
 Speaker
 Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
 White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin
 Bélsisle
 Caron
 Cowling
 English
 Gallaway
 Mitchell
 Serré
 Torsney

Bélaïr
 Canuel
 Cohen
 Dubé
 Fillion
 Jacob
 Pomerleau
 St-Laurent
 Wood

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—MONTREAL

The House resumed consideration, interrupted on October 24, 1996, of the motion that this House recognize Montreal as the economic mainspring of Quebec society and, therefore, condemn the federal government's lack of concrete initiatives in supporting the Montreal area economy, primarily: the federal government's under-investment in research and development; its inequitable allocation of federal purchases of goods and services; its lack of willingness to support Montreal as a major financial centre in North America and its termination of Montreal's role as a major transportation centre; of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Ménard.

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was defeated on the following division.)

(Division No. 147)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
 Bellehumeur
 Bernier (Gaspé)
 Brien
 Crête
 Daviault
 Debien
 Duceppe

Bachand
 Bergeron
 Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
 Chrétien (Frontenac)
 Dalphond-Guiral
 de Savoye
 Deshaies
 Dumas

Supply

Duncan
 Frazer
 Gauthier
 Grey (Beaver River)
 Guimond
 Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
 Hayes
 Hill (Macleod)
 Hoepfner
 Lalonde
 Langlois
 Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
 Leblanc (Longueuil)
 Leroux (Shefford)
 Marchand
 Ménard
 Meredith
 Paré
 Picard (Drummond)
 Ringma
 Scott (Skeena)
 Speaker
 Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
 Williams—63

Epp
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Godin
 Guay
 Hanger
 Harper (Simcoe Centre)
 Hermanson
 Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
 Johnston
 Landry
 Laurin
 Lebel
 Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
 Loubier
 McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
 Mercier
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Penon
 Plamondon
 Rocheleau
 Solberg
 Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
 Tremblay (Rosemont)

NAYS

Members

Adams
 Allmand
 Anderson
 Augustine
 Barnes
 Bélanger
 Bertrand
 Bhaduria
 Bonin
 Brushett
 Caccia
 Campbell
 Catterall
 Chamberlain
 Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
 Collenette
 Crawford
 DeVillers
 Dingwall
 Discepolo
 Duhamel
 Easter
 Finestone
 Flis
 Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
 Godfrey
 Graham
 Guarnieri
 Harper (Churchill)
 Hickey
 Hubbard
 Itody
 Jackson
 Keyes
 Knutson
 Lastewka
 LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
 Lincoln
 MacDonald
 Malhi
 Marchi
 Massé
 McCormick
 McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
 McWhinney
 Milliken
 Minna
 O'Brien (Labrador)
 O'Reilly
 Paradis
 Patry
 Peric

Alcock
 Anawak
 Assadourian
 Baker
 Beaumier
 Bellemare
 Bethel
 Bodnar
 Brown (Oakville—Milton)
 Bryden
 Calder
 Cannis
 Cauchon
 Chan
 Clancy
 Collins
 Cullen
 Dhaliwal
 Dion
 Dromisky
 Dupuy
 Eggleton
 Finlay
 Fontana
 Gerrard
 Goodale
 Grose
 Harb
 Harvard
 Hopkins
 Ianno
 Irwin
 Karygiannis
 Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
 Kraft Sloan
 Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
 Lee
 Loney
 MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
 Manley
 Marleau
 Mayfield
 McKinnon
 McTeague
 Mifflin
 Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
 Murray
 O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
 Pagtkhan
 Parrish
 Payne
 Peters

Supply

Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pillitteri	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd	Sheridan
Simmons	Solomon
Speller	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Verran	Walker
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Zed—135	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin	Bélaïr
Bélisle	Canuel
Caron	Cohen
Cowling	Dubé
English	Fillion
Galloway	Jacob
Mitchell	Pomerleau
Serré	St-Laurent
Torsney	Wood

• (2340)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

[English]

The next question is on the amendment.

[Translation]

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, the House would give its unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members being recorded as voting nay.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this motion.

[English]

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, Reform members will support this motion with the exception of those who wish to vote otherwise.

Mr. Solomon: The NDP will vote no this matter.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this motion.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this motion.

Mr. Mayfield: No, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

[Editor's Note: See List under Division No. 147.]

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated. The next question is on the main motion.

• (2345)

[Translation]

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, the House would give its unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members being recorded as voting nay.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this motion.

[English]

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, Reform members will oppose this motion with the exception of those who wish to vote otherwise.

Mr. Solomon: Mr. Speaker, the NDP will vote no on this matter.

Mr. Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I did not bother to vote on those silly amendments, but I do vote with our hon. whip on this one.

Mr. Bhaduria: I will be voting against this motion, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 148)

YEAS

Members

Bachand	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Brien
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Dalphond-Guiral	Daviault
de Savoye	Debien
Deshaies	Duceppe
Dumas	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier	Godin
Guay	Guimond
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Marchand	Ménard
Mercier	Paré
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Rocheleau	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont) —40

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Adams
Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Anderson

Assadourian
Baker
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bethel
Bodnar
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Calder
Cannis
Cauchon
Chan
Clancy
Collins
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Dion
Dromisky
Duncan
Easter
Epp
Finlay
Fontana
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Hanger
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes
Hickey
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Johnston
Keyes
Knutson
Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacDonald
Malhi
Marchi
Massé
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
McKinnon
McTeague
Meredith
Miliken
Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Penson
Peters
Pettigrew
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Ringma
Scott (Skeena)
Sheridan
Solberg
Speaker
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Telegdi
Ur
Vanclief
Walker
Wells
White (North Vancouver)
Zed —159

Augustine
Barnes
Bélanger
Bertrand
Bhaduria
Bonin
Brushett
Caccia
Campbell
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Collenette
Crawford
De Villers
Dingwall
Discepola
Duhamel
Dupuy
Eggleton
Finestone
Flis
Frazer
Gerrard
Goodale
Grey (Beaver River)
Guarnieri
Harb
Harper (Churchill)
Harvard
Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner
Hubbard
Iftody
Jackson
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lee
Loney
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marleau
Mayfield
McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McWhinney
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Payne
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Simmons
Solomon
Speller
Steckle
Szabo
Terrana
Valeri
Verran
Wappel
Whelan
Williams

Government Orders

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin	Bélair
Bélisle	Canuel
Caron	Cohen
Cowling	Dubé
English	Fillion
Galloway	Jacob
Mitchell	Pomerleau
Serré	St-Laurent
Torsney	Wood

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-35, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (minimum wage), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on report stage of Bill C-35.

The question is on Motion No. 1.

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, if the House would agree I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting nay.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this procedure?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this motion.

[English]

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members will oppose this motion with the exception of those who wish to vote otherwise.

Mr. Solomon: Mr. Speaker, the NDP votes yes on this motion.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this motion.

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 149)

YEAS

Members

Bachand	Bellehumeur
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Brien
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Dalphond-Guiral	Daviault

Government Orders

de Savoye	Debien
Deshaies	Duceppe
Dumas	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier	Godin
Guay	Guimond
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Marchand	Ménard
Mercier	Paré
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Rocheleau	Solomon
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Tremblay (Rosemont) —41	

Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Ringma	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Scott (Skeena)	Shepherd
Sheridan	Simmons
Solberg	Speaker
Speller	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Verran	Walker
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Williams	Zed —158

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Adams
Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Anderson
Assadourian	Augustine
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bertrand
Bethel	Bhaduria
Bodnar	Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Caccia
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clancy	Collenette
Collins	Crawford
Cullen	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Duhamel
Duncan	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
Epp	Finestone
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Frazier
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gerrard
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Grey (Beaver River)
Grose	Guarnieri
Hanger	Harb
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)	Harper (Churchill)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Harvard
Hayes	Hermanson
Hickey	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Irwin	Jackson
Johnston	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacDonald	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
Massé	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)	McCormick
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McTeague	McWhinney
Meredith	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Morrison	Murray
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Payne
Penson	Peric
Peters	Peterson

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin	Bélair
Bélisle	Canuel
Caron	Cohen
Cowling	Dubé
English	Fillion
Gallaway	Jacob
Mitchell	Pomerleau
Serré	St-Laurent
Torsney	Wood

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 defeated.

Hon. Fred Mifflin (for the Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, if the House would agree I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, members of the Official Opposition will vote with the Government.

[English]

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, Reform members will oppose this motion with the exception of those who wish to vote otherwise.

Mr. Solomon: Mr. Speaker, the NDP will vote yes.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting yes.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 150)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anawak
Anderson	Assadourian
Augustine	Bachand
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand

Bethel
Bodnar
Brien
Brushett
Caccia
Campbell
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Clancy
Collins
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
de Savoye
Deshaies
Dhaliwal
Dion
Dromisky
Duhamel
Dupuy
Eggleton
Finlay
Fontana
Gagnon (Québec)
Gerrard
Godin
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Iftody
Jackson
Keyes
Knutson
Lalonde
Langlois
Laurin
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee
Leroux (Shefford)
Loney
MacDonald
Malhi
Marchand
Marleau
McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McWhinney
Mercier
Milliken
Minna
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Parrish
Payne
Peterson
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri

Bhaduria
Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Calder
Canniss
Cauchon
Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Collenette
Crawford
Cullen
Davialt
Debien
DeVillers
Dingwall
Discepola
Duceppe
Dumas
Easter
Finestone
Flis
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guay
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kraft Sloan
Landry
Lastewka
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Lincoln
Loubier
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Manley
Marchi
Massé
McKinnon
McTeague
Ménard
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Paré
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Plamondon

Proud
Regan
Rocheleau
Shepherd
Simmons
Speller
Steckle
Szabo
Terrana
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Ur
Vanclief
Walker
Wells
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Richardson
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Sheridan
Solomon
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Telegdi
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Valeri
Verran
Wappel
Whelan

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Epp
Grey (Beaver River)
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Ringma
Solberg
White (North Vancouver)

Duncan
Frazer
Hanger
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Johnston
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Penson
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Speaker
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Asselin
Bélisle
Caron
Cowling
English
Galloway
Mitchell
Serré
Torsney

Bélair
Canuel
Cohen
Dubé
Fillion
Jacob
Pomerleau
St-Laurent
Wood

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to retract any words that I said about the member for Delta having broken the law. I apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for Nunatsiq for that courtesy.

It being 11.50 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

(The House adjourned at 11.50 p.m.)

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