



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, October 27, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

## CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 27, 1999

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1400)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada.

[*Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### ANTHONY TOLDO SR.

**Mr. Rick Limoges (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that one our community's leading citizens, Mr. Anthony Toldo Sr., is being invested with the Order of Ontario on Monday, November 1, 1999.

Mr. Toldo is a philanthropist and industrialist who has made an enormous contribution to Windsor and Tecumseh. Over the years he has made many generous donations, the most notable of which was \$1 million to the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre.

Tony Toldo is an example of the Canadian dream. He arrived in Canada as a poor young boy from Italy in 1934 and through hard work and determination built a business empire that employs over 1,100 people in three countries.

Tony Toldo represents the very best of what makes Windsor, Tecumseh and Canada such great places to live. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Tony Toldo on being named to the Order of Ontario, an honour that is well deserved.

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### WEST CENTRAL PELLETING

**Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in the great western tradition of private enterprise and finding opportunities, the West Central Pelleting company of

Wilkie, Saskatchewan has built itself into a successful, value-added operation.

Five hundred shareholders, consisting of retired and active farmers, small business people and other citizens, raised \$2.2 million to start this operation. The company takes in screenings. That is the plant material left over after the grain has been cleaned and processed. Though screenings have long been known to have nutritional value as animal feed, they have usually been shipped elsewhere, along with the employment opportunities.

West Central Pelleting uses nutritional consultants to provide its growing customer base with made-to-order feed products. According to Bonnie Stephenson of *Grainews*, "West Central has met its first year goal of 20,000 metric tonnes of production and has just completed an expansion that has tripled its storage capacity". There are 15 employees there now and I predict a lot more jobs to come as prairie people apply their know-how and determination to succeed.

Congratulations, West Central Pelleting.

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[*Translation*]

### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October is women's history month. In this Année de la Francophonie, which is particularly exciting in Quebec, I would like to pay special tribute to those women who fought for the right to vote for women in Quebec.

In 1907, Marie Gérin-Lajoie and Caroline Béique founded the Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste to promote women's civil and political rights. They called for a reform of the civil code at the time and demanded a commission of inquiry be set up to examine women's rights.

In 1922, still not having obtained the right to vote, Marie Gérin-Lajoie went to Quebec City with a group of women in order to lobby the premier. In the following years, Idola St-Jean and Thérèse Casgrain took over. After a number of years of vigorous efforts, women in Quebec finally obtained the right to vote on April 25, 1940.

Since then, because of the profound convictions of these activists, a number of Quebec women have been elected to the National

*S. O. 31*

Assembly of Quebec and to the House of Commons. Despite that, however, the men to women ratio is far from representative of Canada's total population.

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[English]

**BUFFETT TAYLOR CHAIR**

**Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a near fatal heart attack and a family member's personal brush with breast cancer has prompted my constituent, Mr. Ed Buffett, president and CEO of Buffett Taylor and Associates Ltd., to donate \$1 million to McMaster University for a research chair in breast cancer.

The Buffett Taylor Chair in Breast Cancer Research will conduct independent research and clinical trials in breast cancer, evaluate the use of innovative methods to improve communication between physicians and women with breast cancer, and research methods to improve clinical practice guidelines to enhance the care of women who have the disease.

Buffett Taylor and Associates is a leading Canadian consulting firm that specializes in employee health benefits and worksite wellness, and Mr. Buffett, a member of McMaster's board of governors, is the chairman of the Wellness Council of Canada.

As a direct result of his action, many lives could be saved. I am proud to represent Mr. Ed Buffett, a Whitby resident, in parliament.

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[Translation]

**AIR TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, First Air, the third largest regularly scheduled air carrier in Canada and its Inuit owned parent corporation Makivik oppose the merger of Air Canada and Canadian International Airlines proposed by Onex.

• (1405)

The president of First Air, Bob Davis, is asking the Minister of Transport to oppose any agreement that does not guarantee specifically the interests of northern consumers and of the aviation industry in the north, the positions of First Air employees, Air Inuit and the investments of the Inuit in the compensation funds set up under the terms of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

According to the president of Makivik, Pita Aatami, "the federal government is legally and morally bound to protect the interests of the Inuit covered by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, who might be affected by a reorganization of the aviation industry in Canada".

**IMPAIRED DRIVING**

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, two people in Quebec were killed by Sylvain Boies, who was under the influence of alcohol and driving a stolen vehicle.

We know that Mr. Boies will be eligible for parole after serving only one-third of his sentence, and also that he will serve that sentence in comfort in the leisure and recreation centres the federal government calls prisons.

It is urgent for the federal government to introduce the legislation called for by the Standing Committee on Justice to allow life imprisonment for impaired driving leading to someone's death.

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[English]

**NATIONAL MARINE DAY**

**Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure today to welcome Canada's major marine carriers, shippers and port organizations to Ottawa to participate in the inaugural National Marine Day.

For the first time in its long history, port and marine communities across Canada are meeting in the nation's capital to speak with one strong voice.

There are few places in this great country that are not touched by the movement of products by ships. From Vancouver to Corner Brook, Ungava Bay to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway, Canadians continue to rely on this competitive and efficient community of industries which links Canada with the global marketplace.

Through ports across this country, such as found in my own community of Thunder Bay, the marine industry is responsible for moving more than half of Canada's international cargo trade while providing direct and indirect employment to tens of thousands of Canadians.

I call upon all members and all Canadians to join with me in celebrating not only our nation's great marine past, but also its vibrant and exciting future.

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[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce a Canadian first. On October 5, the city of Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville launched a textile recovery operation.

The people of Saint-Bruno can make use of a “Textilosac”, a blue transparent plastic clothing bag, for clothing, shoes, curtains and other textiles they wish to dispose of.

They can then drop their bags off at a number of designated organizations, or pick-up can be arranged by calling the Centre de récupération et de recyclage du Montréal métropolitain, located in Saint-Hubert.

Use of these textile bags reduces the amount of solid waste that has to go to landfill, because the textiles are recovered and recycled. This is a great plus for the environment, since we are told that each Quebecer produces approximately 23 kilograms of recyclable textiles yearly.

Congratulations to Robert Larue, CEO of the Centre de récupération et de recyclage du Montréal métropolitain, who set up this project.

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[English]

#### INCONTINENCE AWARENESS MONTH

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this House to speak on behalf of more than 1.5 million Canadians, men and women of all ages, who suffer from incontinence. It is time to bring incontinence out of the closet.

[Translation]

The foundation is the only national non-profit organization defending the interests of the incontinent. It has designated November as incontinence awareness month.

[English]

Today, in anticipation of Incontinence Awareness Month, I will be tabling a petition calling on the Parliament of Canada to officially declare November as Incontinence Awareness Month.

I also invite all members of this House to take a few minutes out of their busy schedules this afternoon to visit with some of the volunteers of the Canadian Continence Foundation in Room 256S, Centre Block, and to sign their guest book.

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#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the public accounts of Canada were tabled yesterday. There we find some \$200 billion—that is \$200,000 million—in specific aboriginal claims that the federal government will have to deal with.

*S. O. 31*

• (1410)

Considering that government revenues for the year are only about \$147 billion, what does the government plan to do with these enormous demands on the treasury?

Last week it was \$5 billion to pay for work of equal value and this week it is \$200 billion for aboriginal claims.

There is not enough money in Canada for the government to pay out these demands. Where does the buck stop?

Grassroots aboriginal people have been largely excluded from the government payout loop. Why will the government not listen to aboriginal people who need the money and give them individual property rights and the money they need to take their place on an equal footing with all Canadians?

There is not enough money in Canada to pay the \$200 billion. There has to be a better way that all Canadians can live with.

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#### CANADIAN NEUTRON FACILITY

**Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of duty and purpose that I rise today to speak on behalf of the proposed Canadian neutron facility.

For the past year I have been passionately pursuing, propounding and, plainly put, just pitching the multitudinous merits of the new facility at Chalk River which would serve all Canadians.

The Canadian Neutron Facility will be a world class neutron beam laboratory. It will provide essential materials research for both industries and universities. It will also help advance our multibillion dollar CANDU reactor technology. Not only will our bright, young brilliant Canadian minds stay here to work and do research, the facility will attract scientists and researchers from around the world.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the distinguished students we have visiting today from France will one day be working at Chalk River, in the marvellous region of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

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[English]

#### NATIONAL MARINE DAY

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Marine Day, a day of pride and hope for major carriers, shippers and port organizations.

Canada's marine trade touches many aspects of our development and future. Our ports move over half of Canada's international cargo trade. However, National Marine Day is a day of great shame and disgrace for a Liberal government which does not seem able to

*S. O. 31*

see beyond the city of Ottawa, much less to our coasts. The Liberal government could be brave and creative and it could bring us in line with advantages held by marine industries and workers in other countries.

The Liberal government could move forward with a valid national shipbuilding policy. We are a maritime nation with the skilled workers to do the job and the business would bring Canada's shipbuilding industry proudly into the new millennium. Handouts are not the issue; sound policy is.

The Liberal government could ensure that the proper links exist between CN Rail and our ports. The government could take action to recognize the importance of our major Canadian ports, including Halifax, Churchill, Vancouver and Thunder Bay. It could recognize and take action to support the importance of Halifax as a major container port.

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[Translation]

**MIRABEL AIRPORT**

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on October 21, the Government of Quebec announced that it had passed legislation to create a Montreal international trade zone development corporation at Mirabel.

In the words of Quebec's deputy premier: "This corporation will make it possible for the Government of Quebec to finally do something about the tragic mistakes made by the federal government in the Mirabel airport saga".

The Government of Quebec's budget includes assistance for site investment, business operations, training and recruitment, and bringing in foreign specialists, as well as support for free trade operations, for a period of ten years.

Yet the federal government, which is to blame for the disastrous decision to transfer international flights, is taking its time doing anything about the renewal of Mirabel airport. The Bloc Québécois is therefore calling on the government to announce aid measures similar to those announced by the Government of Quebec.

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**CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is proud to have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 1989.

This innovative treaty recognizes the needs of children and affirms their right to live and develop within our society.

UNICEF Week is the perfect opportunity to announce that Canada's children will have a voice in the first national vote to mark the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

On November 19, UNICEF Canada and Elections Canada invite Canadians under 18 years of age to head for the polls and cast their vote for the particular right of the ten on the ballot that in their view is the most important.

I appeal to my colleagues to renew our support for the UNICEF campaign.

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[English]

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government has created a race relations crisis in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. This problem is growing and has now reached the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador.

● (1415)

Yesterday a native fishing crew from Nova Scotia attempted to fish crab on Newfoundland's south coast. A serious confrontation with local fishermen ensued, resulting in a violent confrontation and four arrests. The federal government must be made to realize that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Newfoundland fishermen are sending a clear message that they will not stand idly by while their livelihoods are put at risk by non-resident native fishermen. Members of the House should be aware that similar confrontations are almost a certainty without leadership from the government and without a sensible plan to prevent further violence.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to note that the premiers of Manitoba and Saskatchewan will be coming to Ottawa tomorrow to highlight the current farm income crisis facing prairie farmers.

I am also pleased to note that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, which I am honoured to chair, will meet with and hear directly from premiers Doer and Romanow and their delegations.

The farm income crisis is real. The government recognizes that many farm families are suffering. Canadians know that it is in our interest to maintain a stable agricultural industry.

That is why the government has allocated \$900 million in assistance to the agriculture income disaster assistance program. That is why the government has modified AIDA to make it more

accessible to struggling farmers. That is why the government has indicated that it will look at further changes to strengthen the program.

The government is committed to helping Canada's farmers get through the current income crisis.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's tax mountain continues to grow. He is not satisfied with the highest taxes in the developed world. He has hiked taxes 60 times since 1993.

Still not satisfied, he has planned the greatest tax hike in Canadian history on January 1 when he brings in the CPP increases. According to the auditor general this insatiable Prime Minister is hoarding an incredible \$21 billion in EI overpayments from workers and businesses.

Reform pointed out this overtaxation to the minister last year, yet the auditor general now says this overtaxation is at record levels.

Why will the government not return the EI surplus to the people it belongs to, the people he taxed it from: overtaxed Canadian businesses and families?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the current rate is \$2.55. That is a 15 cent reduction from the previous year. That is a 52 cent reduction from the day we took office. That is \$4 billion more in Canadian pockets. That is what we have done since we have taken office.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is odd the minister thinks that a \$21 billion surplus is a good thing. It might be a good thing for him, but it is certainly not a good thing for Canadian consumers.

The EI taxes hit low income Canadians the hardest. Premiums stop going up once a person makes \$39,000 a year. That means people making more than \$39,000 a year have a tax advantage over the poor.

The government already takes \$6 billion from people who make less than \$20,000 a year. Why does the minister not climb down off his wallet and start giving tax policies that will help out the poorest in the country?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about what the government has done for low income Canadians. Let us take a look at what we have done.

### Oral Questions

The amount of income for which taxpayers are now exempt before they have to begin paying taxes was increased by \$675. Last year Reform voted against it. The Canada child tax benefit has been increased by \$2 billion. Reform voted against it.

There are now 600,000 low income Canadians who were previously paying taxes who are not paying taxes, and Reform wanted them to pay taxes.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that \$6 billion are gouged out of the pockets of people that make less than \$20,000 a year. That is the legacy of the minister.

Small businesses struggle to win their share of consumers ever shrinking after tax dollars. They struggle to stay competitive in a growing competitive world market. They struggle to hire more people because the government taxes them excessively every time they try to employ a new worker.

Inflated EI premiums are a tax on the poor, a tax on families and a tax on businesses. Why will the government not give tax relief where it is needed: to the poor, the families, and the businesses of the country?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at the questions that have been asked by the hon. member.

• (1420)

He started with his first preamble and asked why we were protecting the Canada pension plan. Why is the federal government and all the provinces protecting the Canada pension plan? We are doing it because we believe that Canadians are entitled to a decent retirement, which obviously the Reform Party does not.

The member talked about small business and why we brought in and increased the Small Business Loans Act. Why does small business have the lowest level of corporate tax of the major industrial countries? They do because of this government.

**Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is getting pretty thick in here.

The government is sitting on a \$21 billion EI surplus while the finance minister pursues his favourite pastime, and that is picking the pockets of Canadian workers and businesses. At the same time those workers and businesses are struggling to making ends meet under this Liberal tax regime.

Why does the finance minister not just do the right thing and return the EI surplus, which belongs to the workers and businesses, in the form of tax relief and give Canadians a break for a change?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party likes to talk about its desire to cut taxes.

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

**Hon. Paul Martin:** Reform members are applauding. Does the House know what they are applauding? In their election campaign

*Oral Questions*

they said that they would not cut personal taxes until the year 2000. That was part of their election campaign.

We cut taxes in 1997. The Reform Party would not have done it. We cut taxes in 1998. The Reform Party would not have done it. We cut taxes in 1999. The Reform Party would not have done it. We cut them three times. We are ahead of the cart and they are down in the hole.

**Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** I will tell you where they are ahead, Mr. Speaker. They are at the head of the class for the highest personal income taxes of all G-7 countries. That is where they are ahead.

They say that they are saving the EI fund for a rainy day. We better go home and start building our ark because there is a heck of a flood coming. There is no doubt about that.

I have a question for the finance minister. With his \$21 billion surplus, what is his problem? The auditor general says that he does not like what he is doing. The money is not his. Why does he not just give it back to the people whom he took it from?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party sure as heck better build its ark because it is drowning. The only thing in the country that is dropping faster than personal income taxes is Reform's share of the popular vote.

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[Translation]

**AIR TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the process presented yesterday by the Minister of Transport relating to air carriers is absolutely absurd.

He is proposing that parliament look at the 10% rule and states that no decision has yet been taken. Air Canada shareholders will be voting on the Onex proposal on November 8, well before parliament has made a decision. If parliament were to decide to retain that 10% limit, and the shareholders had accepted the Onex bid, it would still be illegal. We would therefore be back to square one.

Is this not the best possible proof that the Onex bid will go nowhere if the law is not changed?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I said yesterday is that the government is prepared to consider an increase in the 10% restriction on Air Canada shares, after consultations with MPs and senators.

I think this is a very fair position for the Canadian public, as well as for the Air Canada shareholders, before a choice is made on the bid next week.

• (1425)

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does being prepared to consider an increase in the 10% limit mean 12, 13, 14 or 15%, as was the case with Via Rail, or just that the minister does not want to say that he is prepared to accept 31%, as the Onex bid proposes?

If that is the case, let him say so, so that the issues involved are clear, so that we can understand, so that the matter is not dealt with between buddies and behind closed doors.

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have put in place a process for obtaining the point of view of MPs and senators before making a decision.

If the hon. member has a point of view on a limit of 10, 20 or 30%, let him make it known to the House of Commons.

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the matter of Onex, the Minister of Transport has said since the start that he would like market rules to apply. However, an Onex memo intimates that the company did not submit an offer to Air Canada without first obtaining guarantees that the rules would be modified by the government.

Will the Minister finally drop the mask and confirm to this House that he had already provided guarantees to Onex before its announcement of August 13?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is mistaken. The government made no guarantee to Onex.

I suggest he put his questions to the president of Onex when he appears before the Standing Committee on Transport.

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the political career of the Minister of Transport would indicate that he should distrust memos. The Minister is refusing to enlighten this House.

As the former Liberal Minister, Marc Lalonde, pointed out, is the government not in the process of misleading parliament by assuming that the matter is in the bag?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I respect qualities of my former colleague, Mr. Lalonde. Yesterday, he gave his opinion in an article in the daily, *Le Devoir*, but I must point out that Mr. Lalonde is a lawyer and that his company works for Air Canada.

[English]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the transport minister as well.



*Oral Questions*

The travelling public will be gouged. Workers will lose their jobs. Smaller centres will lose their service unless the government ensures proper protection like the 10% ownership rule.

The government should set out the rules openly and publicly so that the bids can conform to the rules. Instead it is changing the rules to conform to the bids. Why should the tail be wagging the dog?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we launched a very open process under section 47 of the Canada Transportation Act which succeeded in bringing forward two private sector proposals. That will be considered by the shareholders of these companies.

It was very important for the government yesterday, when I met with the committee, to ensure that we have a level playing field and that those shareholders have the ability to vote on both those propositions.

That is why we stated very clearly that the government is prepared to consider raising the 10% limit of the shares of Air Canada after consultations with members in the House.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the game for control of the Canadian airline industry the transport minister is a biased referee. Whether it is suspending the competition law or reviewing the ownership rule, the minister is giving Onex power play after power play.

When will the minister do his job and apply rules that will put the interests of Canadians where they belong at the top of the list?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I had not made a commitment on behalf of the government yesterday to consider raising the 10% limit, that would have favoured one other proposition. I certainly would have been biased in that case.

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• (1430)

**HOMELESSNESS**

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been 216 days since the minister responsible for homelessness promised to put a plan and money in place to help Canada's homeless.

All the Liberals have done to date with their cuts to social programs is to put more people on the streets. With winter just around the corner, why has the minister ignored the needs of Canada's homeless and forced them to spend more winters freezing to death on the streets?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are two issues here.

For the short term for this winter, I want to advise the House that the staff has been in touch with every community that I visited to make sure they have enough shelter beds for this winter. The city of Toronto informed us that in order to have enough shelter beds it needed \$1.2 million which the minister of housing has given to the city of Toronto. Besides that, we are informed that every shelter is fine.

For the long term the secretariat is getting the recommendations that I have received and they will be presented soon.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for homelessness promised action. I am pleased to hear that she is doing a little something for the next few months.

The minister is quoted as saying that she cannot do anything but pass along a few ideas to cabinet and hope that something gets done. Good heavens, I hope cabinet does more than it did for the merchant navy.

The minister says it is not her job to produce a strategy, it is not her job to find money for new housing and it is not her job to lobby the cabinet for new initiatives to end homelessness in Canada. If it is not her job, whose job is it, and what is her job?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has asked me to co-ordinate all the information on homelessness.

I would like to advise the hon. member that I have been working 31 years for the homeless, for the poor and for the children of this country.

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**AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, competition is important to Canadians to ensure fair prices and choices in travel.

The competition commissioner has recommended that the government extend the foreign ownership to 49%. Since this proposal would be good for consumers, why is the government rejecting the advice of the competition commissioner on foreign ownership?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the discussions that we have had with various stakeholders, including the airlines, at no time was it ever suggested that their needs were to have an injection of foreign capital over the 25% limit. We have rejected increasing the limit over 25% because this government absolutely and fundamentally believes that the airline industry in Canada must be effectively controlled by Canadians.

**Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Australia has two profitable national airlines that compete with each other on domestic routes, even though one

*Oral Questions*

of them is 50% foreign owned. Foreign ownership has provided Australians with healthy competition in its domestic market. The competition commissioner recommends that for Canada. Why is the minister refusing to consider it?

**Hon. David M. Collett (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to compare Australia and Canada with respect to air policy is indeed wrong. The population of Australia is smaller. It is somewhat isolated in the Pacific Ocean. Australia does not live next door to the largest economy in the world with a population 10 times greater than the population of Canada.

It is essential that we keep control of our own affairs. Keeping the 25% limit is one way to do that.

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[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, echoing the chief actuary, the auditor general yesterday asked the federal government to state clearly what it intended to do with the large EI surplus, which is up to \$21 billion. In their view, a reserve of \$10 billion would be quite sufficient for the needs of the system.

Does the minister intend to take a page from her predecessor's book and turn a deaf ear not just to unemployed workers and the Bloc Québécois, but also to the auditor general, who is asking her to take a reasonable approach to the management of the EI fund?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that we are doing exactly as recommended by the auditor general, who said in 1996 that the fund should be included in the consolidated revenue fund.

• (1435)

That is what we are doing. That is what the previous government did, and I believe it is consistent with the accounting principles recommended by the auditor general.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Human Resources Development not think that, with the huge surplus in the EI fund, she could tone down the Employment Insurance Act and restore a genuine form of protection against job loss for unemployed workers, as well as lower premiums?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member must understand that employment insurance is there for Canadians who have been working and find themselves temporarily out of work through no

fault of their own. Of those Canadians, 80% are eligible for benefits.

The most important thing is helping Canadians find jobs. That is why we have invested in active measures in employment insurance. That is why we have invested in the Canada jobs fund. That is why we have invested in the opportunities fund for Canadians with disabilities. That is why we have made the youth employment strategy a permanent program.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government's agriculture policies have left thousands of farmers facing the winter with little or no hope. The Prime Minister has to take responsibility.

Tomorrow a delegation of prairie agriculture ministers, farmers and premiers are coming to Ottawa to discuss solutions to this problem. The Prime Minister said this morning that he is refusing to meet with farmers and is opting to meet only with politicians.

Why is the Prime Minister refusing to face the very people who are suffering as a result of his policies?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has had ongoing consultations with the ministers of agriculture from all the provinces in Canada. There will be a meeting tomorrow and the Prime Minister will be meeting with some of the delegation. A number of cabinet ministers will be meeting with the delegation. As usual and as we have always done, we will keep in full consultation to work together to see how we can continue to support and help Canadian farmers.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister has met with farmers and they have not received the help they need. I am asking for the Prime Minister to meet with farmers this time. They are trying to work out a constructive plan to help them through the winter.

Why does the Prime Minister have so little compassion for the plight of these farmers that he is unwilling to hear their concerns firsthand?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very sad that the hon. member and his party do not realize that the federal government puts \$600 million a year into safety nets and that it has put in an additional \$900 million over the past two years. They said that they would cut the agriculture budget. They said that subsidies are not the answer and then they stand in their places and say that they are not significant. We think they are. We would like to do more. We wish there were more resources but we are not prepared to approach it the way they would.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**HOMELESSNESS**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for the homeless, is the first to admit that the federal government has made cuts that hurt the most disadvantaged.

Could the Minister tell us, of the cuts the government has made, which ones most hurt those most disadvantaged in our society: cuts to employment insurance, cuts to social housing or cuts to the Canada social transfer, which forced the provinces to cut services?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in travelling across Canada what we notice most with respect to the homeless is that the provinces have closed psychiatric hospitals. Former residents of psychiatric hospitals are turning up at food banks.

This is one of the greatest problems we have with the homeless living on the street.

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, instead of being content with playing the role of spokesperson for the disadvantaged and the homeless, could the minister become a the funder of the disadvantaged and the homeless by giving them back now the money that the government has taken from them?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I travelled across Canada, community agencies told me that they wanted to work in partnership.

A number of programs were run with money from the federal government and municipalities, which provided housing for the homeless. We will continue this work, as we are doing now.

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[English]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the premiers of Manitoba and Saskatchewan will be in Ottawa tomorrow demanding that our producers be put on a level playing field with our international competitors.

• (1440)

In Europe 56% of a wheat farmer's income comes from the government, while in the U.S. 38% comes from the government. These subsidies are killing our family farmers and are the root cause of the farm income crisis.

Why is the Prime Minister refusing to lead a campaign against European and U.S. subsidies?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have mentioned that problem each time I have met with these leaders. I have said that the subsidy levels for the farming communities in Europe and the United States cannot be sustained and are self-defeating. They should play by the market rules as we are doing in Canada. I have said that time and time again.

However, the Reform Party does not even want to help the farmers at all. Rather than provide money to help the farmers, it has proposed to cut \$650 million from the department of agriculture alone.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, farmers see the lack of effort from the Prime Minister and the results that have happened internationally. Europe's borders are closed to our beef and canola. U.S. protectionism is rising. Both European and U.S. subsidies are up.

The Liberal government has failed. The Prime Minister's lack of concern over the farm income crisis is an insult to Canadian farmers.

I ask again, why is the Prime Minister failing to lead a delegation against European and U.S. subsidies?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that we have added \$900 million this year to help with the agricultural problem that Canadian farmers are facing.

I want to repeat again that while we were doing that, the Reform Party was telling us that we should not put new money there, that we should cut \$650 million from the farming community.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS**

**Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in a recent article in the respected magazine *Nature*, three British scientists were quoted as saying that governments, like the Canadian government, that approved genetically modified foods simply because they were similar to traditional ones, were taking a simplistic and not very safe approach.

Since even the pro-biotechnology scientists are saying that it would be better to look more closely into the effects of genetically modified foods, is the minister going to take the necessary steps?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the hon. member that all genetically modified foods must be submitted to Health Canada in advance. A team of experts examines them all and carries out a complete evaluation, in order to ensure that genetically modified foods are as safe as foods already on the market.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health.

The city of Toronto has designated the last week in October as Epidermolysis Bullosa, or EB, Awareness Week, to bring attention to this group of rare and genetic skin diseases. What is the government doing to facilitate and encourage research and development into the care and treatment of Canadians suffering from EB?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to first acknowledge the hard work done by the member for Parkdale—High Park to increase public awareness of this disease. EB is a rare and devastating genetic disease for which, unhappily, there is no cure. I think the answer lies in research.

For that reason we are creating the Canadian institutes for health research. I expect shortly to be tabling legislation in the House for that purpose. Over the next two years the government will be doubling the amount of money spent by the Government of Canada on health research. Through these efforts we hope the day will come when this devastating disease is wiped from the face of the earth.

\* \* \*

**NISGA'A TREATY**

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Quebecois has publicly stated it is supporting the Nisga'a treaty because it provides the kind of sovereignty association it would like to see for Quebec.

Reform does not support sovereignty association, but it is now becoming clear that the NDP, the Tories and the Liberals do.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to offer the same kind of self-government powers to Lucien Bouchard and the Parti Quebecois as he has to the Nisga'a, yes or no?

• (1445)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have sovereignty association within Canada. Every Canadian is sovereign and we are all associated.

With the treaty, which, under our democratic rules, a majority of eligible Nisga'a people voted for, our Nisga'a fellow citizens will be even more associated with all of us.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the minister understands all he knows about the Nisga'a treaty.

The Bloc Quebecois has indicated it will support the treaty because it provides the kind of self-government powers it would like for Quebec.

I am going to ask the Prime Minister directly if he is prepared to give the same kind of self-government powers to the Parti Quebecois and Lucien Bouchard as he is to the Nisga'a under the treaty, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the same question that the minister gave him an answer to and he did not understand. I will ask the minister to write him a letter.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the front page of the Regina *Leader-Post* and the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* on Monday, the finance minister is quoted as saying that his government has promised \$900 million in new aid to desperate farmers. He said "We announced that \$900 million five or six months ago. That money doesn't refer to what Ottawa put up for AIDA".

Was the finance minister misquoted? Was he mistaken? Was he playing politics? Or, is there a reason to believe that he is changing his view on the crisis facing prairie farmers?

Could the finance minister please confirm today if there will be \$900 million in new aid for farmers, yes or no?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that every year the Canadian government puts \$600 million a year into the national safety net. A little less than a year ago we put an additional \$900 million in to support the farmers. In co-operation with the provinces, we are looking at ways in which we can build on that and will continue to do that.

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food said that in the first six months of AIDA just over one-fifth of the total amount has been paid out. If we contrast that with the \$8 billion in American farm aid assistance, not only is the amount of U.S. dollars impressive, but it is astonishing that cheques for the full amount are being placed in the hands of American farmers within a matter of weeks of the announcement as compared with AIDA's red tape program.

Can the minister explain to the House how the Americans can deliver their cheques so quickly, while our farm safety net programs are always a day late and a dollar short?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the industry itself did not want ad hoc payments being paid to everyone. They wanted

the money that was made available to the producers to be targeted to producers, to be specific to the producers and to be based on the producers' needs according to a set of criteria.

That is the approach we take in Canada. That is the approach of the industry. That is the approach that the safety net advisory committee asked the government to take. We work along with it to the best of our ability and with the advice of the safety net advisory committee.

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### HOMELESSNESS

**Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC):** Mr. Speaker, when the throne speech virtually ignored the homeless, the minister responsible for homelessness said that she was dancing in the streets. The truth is she was dancing in the streets of Manzanillo, Mexico.

How can the minister afford to be dancing in the streets of Mexico when tens of thousands of homeless Canadians are facing another winter not dancing but freezing in the streets?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour was in Mexico meeting her Mexican and American counterparts on labour issues. I must tell the member that we are in the forefront on that issue.

On the issue of me dancing in the streets for the throne speech, when the reporter called I said that I had worked with children for 31 years and that having listened to every budget and every throne speech, and having heard the Prime Minister in his throne speech mention children, I wanted to dance in the streets.

• (1450)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister responsible for the homeless said she was working seven days a week on a strategy for the homeless. Yet she found the time to spend a week in Mexico at the taxpayers' expense.

Will she have a plan to help Canadian homeless people before winter, or is she planning to invite them to spend the winter in Mexico with her instead?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was supposed to be in Mexico Wednesday, but as members are aware, there was a vote in the House on the Thursday evening. I got to Mexico at midnight Thursday, and left after my Saturday evening meetings, or in other words on the Sunday morning. I took part in meetings Friday and Saturday.

I did not say I was the one working seven days a week, but the people who were given all of the recommendations on the homeless after the throne speech and my trip have been working seven days a week.

### Oral Questions

[English]

### EAST TIMOR

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Haliburton—Victoria—Brock, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, can the Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific update the House on the present state of affairs in the troubled area of East Timor?

**Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report to the House that Canada has been working very hard to help East Timor's transition to independence. The Indonesian National Assembly has ratified the results of the August 30 ballot in East Timor. At the same time, on Monday it passed over the authority of East Timor to the United Nations.

These things will help us to help this country to gain its independence.

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### APEC INQUIRY

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that he never interfered directly with the APEC security. It seems to me that he is probably taking more than just golf lessons from Bill Clinton with that answer.

Is the Prime Minister now saying that he never had security relations with that summit?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I hear the Reform Party asking that type of extremely bright question I am very impressed.

I invite the hon. member to listen to what the RCMP officer said so clearly yesterday. He said that he was there to do his job and that is all.

The Reform Party has not much to complain about if it is still arguing about this a year and a half later.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### PLUTONIUM IMPORTS

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last Monday, there was a leak of radioactive material at Dorval airport when a barrel containing uranium was dropped. Last May, employees were contaminated while working on a plutonium extraction site closed since 1957. Several times in recent years, the safety of Ontario's nuclear facilities has been called into question.

My question is for the Minister of the Environment. How can the minister support the Prime Minister's proposal to import plutonium in order to burn it in an Ontario facility, when the Canadian nuclear industry is already experiencing serious safety problems?

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is mixing and mingling a whole variety of unrelated things.

The incident at Dorval, for example, I am happy to confirm, involved a container that was in fact empty. There was no actual spill and there was no health hazard whatsoever.

All the issues the she has referred to are fully covered by Canada's stringent regulations under the Atomic Energy Control Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act. The Government of Canada will ensure that every aspect of those regulations are fully enforced.

\* \* \*

• (1455)

**BANKING**

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Bank of Montreal is about to close 100 branches throwing about 1,400 people out of work. This follows a year when the five men, who are the CEOs of the big banks, together made over \$100 million last year, equivalent to the salary of about 4,000 mainly women bank tellers.

In light of this, can the minister tell us what he is going to do to stop these bank closures in communities that really matter? Or, is he just going to sit back and close his eyes and let the banks call all the shots?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the bulk of those jobs will be lost through attrition. That does not in any way take away from the seriousness of the situation, as the hon. member knows full well. That is why in the new financial services legislation that we are bringing in we have followed the advice of numerous consumer and community groups across the country. We have put in notice provisions which were not there. We have put in consultation provisions. We have put in the kind of structure that would allow the government and the public to deal with this kind of situation in a fair and reasonable way.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, last night four Newfoundlanders were arrested after a violent confrontation with Mi'kmaq natives from Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia natives intended to fish, without licences, the lucrative crab resources off the Newfoundland waters.

After the violent incident last night, will the solicitor general be instructing the RCMP to enforce the Fisheries Act and to arrest anyone who fishes without a proper licence, or is he going to leave the enforcement of that act to Newfoundland fishermen?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I, as solicitor general, do not direct the RCMP in how it does its job.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

As the federal minister responsible for leading Canada's domestic implementation of our commitments on climate change, how does the minister respond to the 100 groups in the Canadian action network who today put forward nine specific recommendations to mitigate global warming which they want addressed in the next federal budget?

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, any specific reference to the federal budget would have to be left to the Minister of Finance.

We welcome the input from the climate action network just as we welcome all the hard work and advice of the 450 Canadians who have been involved in the 16 issue tables that we and the provinces have had up and running on this issue for the past 18 months.

The climate network is talking about transportation alternatives, energy conservation and efficiency, renewables and alternative fuels, new technologies, green procurement programs, building renovations, district heating systems and so forth. We are already investing in all of those fields. I fully expect that we will do more.

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**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the solicitor general has just told us that we are not getting any direction from the government on this issue. The Marshall decision is reaching all parts of Canada.

The Mi'kmaq yesterday started fishing for crab out of season off the coast of Newfoundland. They are so worried about their own security that they have gone to the RCMP for protection. The Mi'kmaq had property torched last night in Newfoundland.

What is it going to take? Does there have to be blood on the water? Does somebody have to die before the government is prepared to bring in a fisheries policy based on equality not race?

**Mr. Lawrence D. O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in response to

the hon. member's question on the issue of violence off the south coast of Newfoundland, the government does not condone violence. We do agree that there should be open dialogue and co-operation. I can tell the hon. member that we are clearly taking this under advisement. It is a subscribed fishery on the south coast in the crab fishery. It is an allocated fishery. We will make sure that if enforcement is necessary, there will be enforcement.

\* \* \*

• (1500)

[Translation]

#### HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CANADA

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, employees of Human Resources Development Canada are so obsessed with making the quotas imposed on them by the department that they are depriving honest citizens without resources of their benefits for ridiculous and improbable reasons.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Does the minister think it is reasonable to cut someone's benefits because they do not have an easy means of transportation, in the view of a departmental official?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the accusations made by the hon. member are false.

Indeed, what we have in human resources development are 20,000 employees who are providing excellent customer service to Canadians. That is the approach we take and will continue to take.

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#### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in our gallery of Senator the Honourable Margaret Reid, President of the Senate of Australia, and her delegation.

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

**The Speaker:** I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in our gallery of His Excellency Edmund Stoiber, the Premier of Bavaria.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### POINT OF ORDER

##### TABLING OF A DOCUMENT

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when I put my question to the Minister of Human Resources Development, she

#### Routine Proceedings

replied that my allegations were unfounded, that what I was saying was false. What I said was the complete truth, and I have here a letter that proves it.

I would ask for unanimous consent to table this document in the House.

[English]

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the document?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

• (1505)

**Mr. Ted White:** Mr. Speaker, at the end of question period you mentioned a presence in the gallery from the Australian Senate. I would like to bring to the attention of the House the fact that the Australian Senate is elected.

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order, but I am sure it is a point of interest.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

#### MUNICIPAL GRANTS ACT

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-10, an act to amend the Municipal Grants Act.

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

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[English]

#### CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DIVESTITURE AUTHORIZATION AND DISSOLUTION ACT

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-11, an act to authorize the divestiture of the assets of, and to dissolve, the Cape Breton Development Corporation, to amend the Cape Breton Development Corporation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

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

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-271, an act to amend that the Employment Insurance Act (self-employed persons).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to introduce this bill, which would allow self-employed persons to become eligible for employment insurance on a voluntary basis.

There have been a lot of changes in our society, in the labour market, and there are now a lot of self-employed workers, particularly women, who are living in difficult financial situations.

By making them eligible for employment insurance, the government would be contributing to stabilizing their level of income to enable them to take advantage of the economic growth in our society and, finally, to permit better distribution of wealth.

This is why I consider it important for self-employed people to be eligible for employment insurance on a voluntary basis.

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

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**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-272, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (waiting period).

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the present context with a surplus in the employment insurance fund of some \$21 billion, this outmoded rule must be eliminated. It requires that an individual in the first weeks of unemployment have no income.

I believe the government is capable, with the plan we have and especially if it were to be managed independently by employers and employees, to ensure that people have benefits from their first day of unemployment. This is the purpose of this bill.

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

\* \* \*

• (1510)

[English]

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-273, an act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to reintroduce my bill to repeal section 43 of the criminal code. This is the only section of the criminal code that is permissive in that it condones the use of force toward a child as a means of correction or discipline. The repeal of section 43 would make it clear that the use of physical force as a means of discipline is totally unacceptable and inappropriate for children and should not be sanctioned by law.

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

\* \* \*

**BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-274, an act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act (student Loan).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present this bill in the House today. Its purpose is to reverse and stop the discrimination facing students who are now required to wait 10 years before they can declare bankruptcy. This new 10 year rule means that unlike other consumers who must wait two years to declare bankruptcy, students must face additional hardship and discrimination. The overwhelming majority of students do everything they can to repay student loans, but when bankruptcy becomes the only option the bill I am presenting today would ensure that students would get a fair deal and would not be discriminated against.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT**

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-275, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, 1999 (rate of benefits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a bill to amend the manner in which EI benefits are calculated.

If passed, this bill will eliminate from the calculation of benefits the many rules that decrease the amount to which claimants are entitled.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that benefits truly represent 55% of income earned. In this way, we will be showing a little more compassion for workers who find themselves unemployed.

Since the EI fund surplus is now up to \$21 billion, I hope that we will have the support of all parties in the House for this bill.

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



[English]

## PETITIONS

### CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents and others I am happy to present a petition which expresses concern over the court decision in British Columbia which has made the possession of child pornography legal and concern that it is spreading across Canada. The petitioners are calling for the notwithstanding clause of the charter to be invoked. As the notwithstanding clause exists, it should be used to strike down this decision until the issue can be dealt with by the Parliament of Canada.

• (1515)

### CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my pleasure to present to the House a petition duly certified by the clerk of petitions and signed by over 2,250 Canadians from many provinces.

Whereas Canadians from many diverse backgrounds have been affected by crimes against humanity throughout the 20th century, the petitioners pray that parliament will support the Recognition of Crimes Against Humanity Act, Bill C-224.

### THE SENATE

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure I will surprise you. I have a petition to abolish the Senate, signed by a number of residents of the city of Saskatoon.

The petitioners are saying that the Senate is unelected, undemocratic and unaccountable, that it costs the country about \$50 million per year and that it undermines the elected role of members of parliament of the House of Commons. Therefore they call upon parliament to undertake measures aimed at the abolition of the Senate.

### CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the privilege to present to the House a petition with some 130 signatures of concerned citizens of my riding of Cambridge.

The petitioners are appalled at the existence of child pornography and are astounded by the legal determination that possession of such pornography is not criminal.

For this reason they call upon the Parliament of Canada to take measures to ensure that possession of child pornography remains a criminal offence and that police forces be directed to enforce this law for the protection of children.

## Routine Proceedings

I am fully supportive and on the side of the petitioners in my riding of Cambridge.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member knows that it is out of order to indicate support or opposition to a petition being presented in the House. I know that the hon. member for Cambridge would want to set a good example for all hon. members in that regard.

### PROPERTY RIGHTS

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of 226 constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, which brings the total number of signatures to over 15,000 so far.

The petitioners request that parliament support private member's Bill C-237, known as Bill C-304, proposed by the member for Yorkton—Melville concerning the strengthening of property rights.

The protection of property rights is in the Canadian bill of rights. It specifically guarantees that every person has the right to the enjoyment of their property; the right not to be deprived of their property unless they are given a fair hearing, paid fairly, timely and impartially fixed compensation; and the right to appeal to the courts if their property rights have been infringed upon.

### CAMP IPPERWASH

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am honoured to present a petition signed by 1,000 residents of Bosanquet and Ipperwash Beach. They urge the government to complete the Camp Ipperwash army base transfer to the Kettle and Stoney Point first nations.

An agreement in principle was signed by the chief and minister of Indian affairs in June 1998 with little progress to date. Residents want this completed so that the native and non-native communities alike can build their community and their economy together.

### MARRIAGE

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition in defence of marriage signed by petitioners in my constituency in the lower mainland.

They call on parliament to ensure that marriage as it has always been known and understood in Canada be preserved and protected.

[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEBT

**Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am submitting a 902 page petition signed by almost 22,500 people from throughout Canada.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to take the necessary action to eliminate the national debt, which, in their view, is the primary cause of taxes and widespread poverty, by the year 2000.

*Routine Proceedings*

These citizens are also calling on the government to stop borrowing from financial institutions and to print the necessary money to pay down the debt, as it is empowered and obligated to do by the Canadian constitution.

[English]

## TAXATION

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan—King—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present on behalf of Canadians a petition which states the 1998 and 1999 budgets increased the amount of income that can be earned on a tax-free basis, namely the basic personal amounts.

As a result of the past two budgets, 600,000 Canadians have been removed from the tax roles and \$16.5 billion in tax relief have been provided over three years. Therefore the petitioners call upon parliament to further increase the basic personal amounts.

• (1520)

## PAY EQUITY

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I present two petitions.

The first one contains 50 signatures from people either working or living in my riding. They ask the government to implement the decision of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on equal pay for work of equal value.

## THE CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition contains 110 signatures from people in my constituency. They request that parliament oppose any effort to exclude references to the supremacy of God in our constitution and laws.

## YUGOSLAVIA

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present a petition duly certified by the clerk of petitions and signed by some 1,200 people from across Canada, the majority being from the greater Vancouver region.

The petitioners call on the Parliament of Canada to make funding available for humanitarian assistance, emergency relief and reparation to all parts of Yugoslavia, and to urge other members of the NATO military alliance to support similar initiatives.

## HEPATITIS

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud and honoured to stand in the House today to present three petitions from the beautiful people of Edmonton, Alberta, and Swan Hills, Alberta. They concern one of my private member's bills.

The petitioners call upon parliament to support Bill C-232, an act to provide for a hepatitis awareness month, ensuring that throughout Canada in each and every year the month of May shall be known under the name of hepatitis awareness month.

## NISGA'A TREATY

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and on behalf of the people of Okanagan—Coquihalla, I wish to present a petition that is now signed by over 3,000 people in Canada concerned with the Nisga'a agreement.

They pray and request that parliament reject the treaty as it may divide Canadians forever.

## INCONTINENCE

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my pleasure to present a petition to the House on behalf of over 3,000 Canadians who have signed it on behalf of 1.5 million Canadians. It calls on parliament to declare November as incontinence awareness month.

For those who do not know, incontinence is urinary incontinence or loss of bladder control. It negatively affects over 1.5 million Canadian men and women of all ages.

It is my honour to table the petition in the House and to call on parliament to officially declare November as incontinence awareness month.

## THE CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the first petition I present today is on behalf of R. J. Gelling and 49 others in North Vancouver who want to bring the attention of the House to the fact that 80% of Canadians practise personal and corporate religious faiths that recognize the power and universal sovereignty of a supreme being.

They pray and request that parliament reject all calls to remove references to a sovereign God from the charter of rights and freedoms.

## IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition contains 582 signatures including Brian Taylor of North Vancouver. It brings the attention of the House to the arrival of a ship bearing 123 illegal Chinese migrants earlier this summer.

It calls upon parliament to enact immediate changes to Canada's immigration laws governing refugees to allow for the deportation of obvious and blatant abusers of the system.

## THE SNOWBIRDS

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today on behalf of 200 people living in the riding

of Palliser who are concerned about threats and rumours that funding for the Snowbirds will be curtailed. This is the air demonstration squadron 431.

The defence department is suggesting that perhaps funding will be limited. The petitioners feel that the Snowbirds represent an icon with the skill, professionalism and teamwork of the Snowbirds. They are asking the House to take all action necessary to ensure that there is stable funding for the air demonstration squadron 431 Snowbirds.

## IMMIGRATION

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by over 800 individuals from my riding of Vancouver Island North.

The petitioners are asking parliament to enact immediate changes to Canada's immigrations laws governing refugees to allow for the deportation of obvious and blatant illegal immigrants to Canada.

• (1525)

I have a second petition signed by 163 individuals from my riding of Vancouver Island North.

The petitioners are asking parliament to do exactly the same thing as the previous petition regarding the deportation of obvious and blatant illegal immigrants to Canada.

## THE SNOWBIRDS

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of many constituents and people living in Saskatchewan and in Goderich, Ontario. They are absolutely disgusted with the attack the Liberals are making on Saskatchewan and the essence of Saskatchewan. We have seen the Liberals attack farmers by taking away all their subsidies.

These people are as disgusted as the farmers. They are asking the House of Commons to ensure that continued and stable funding for the 431 air demonstration squadron Snowbirds remains a priority.

This is an institution in Saskatchewan of which all Canadians are proud. The petitioners are asking the House of Commons and the Liberal government in particular to back off.

## BILL C-207

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce the signatures of 1,682 petitioners in support of Bill C-207, an act to prohibit coercion in medical procedures that offend a person's religion or belief that human life is inviolable.

*Routine Proceedings*

These 1,682 petitioners want to ensure that health care providers working in medical facilities of various kinds will never be forced to participate against their wills in procedures such as abortions or acts of euthanasia.

They lament the fact that medical personnel in Canada has been fired because the law is not explicit enough in spelling out such conscience rights. They affirm Bill C-207 because it will make those conscience rights explicit.

## MERCHANT NAVY VETERANS

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, after 54 years of denial of equality of opportunity for our merchant navy veterans a Liberal committee offered an empty handshake.

The petitioners disagree with that. They ask the Liberals for compensation for merchant navy veterans for the years of denial of equality.

## THE SENATE

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of petitioners who are quite depressed with the notion that we continue to have the Senate.

They list a whole number of reasons why they consider the Senate to be just sort of a completely inappropriate institution. I will not go into the details. We have heard them all many times before.

They are simply calling upon the Parliament of Canada to take whatever step is necessary to abolish the Senate once and for all.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I also ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***NISGA'A FINAL AGREEMENT ACT**

The House resumed from October 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-9, an act to give effect to the Nisga'a final agreement, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask for unanimous consent of the House for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practices of this House, the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment today, but no later than 10 p.m. this day, for the sole purpose of continuing consideration of Bill C-9, an act to give effect to the Nisga'a final agreement.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Dewdney—Alouette have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** When the bill was last considered last evening, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan had the floor. He had three minutes remaining in his remarks.

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in carrying over my closing remarks from yesterday's debate I wish to say that it is with the deepest regret that I must oppose the current Nisga'a agreement. I oppose it for three main reasons.

• (1530)

First, if this treaty is truly a template for all other treaty negotiations, it does nothing to address the climate of mistrust and fear that exists at the band level between ordinary aboriginals and their band leaders. Until the serious problem of band accountability is addressed, there is no guarantee that the proceeds of any treaty will actually get to the people who need it most.

Second, I do not believe that this bill is good for British Columbia. Much has been said that the economy of B.C. will take on a new vibrancy after the passing of this bill. Who can say this with any certainty? Instead, I believe that this bill will increase confrontation over other outstanding aboriginal disputes in British Columbia. If a businessman was looking for a place to invest his money, would he want to invest it in a B.C. like that?

Third, this bill is not in the best interests of Canada. Look at what is really happening today. The paternalistic environment created by the Indian Act and recent decisions by the courts all point to trouble ahead. Look at what is happening with the Musqueam land in Vancouver, the east coast fishing dispute, and the controversy around the west coast fishing and logging rights. This agreement is a recipe for further disaster.

I have three native children who are part of my family. I love them very much, just as I love my other five children who are non-native. We have made this work in our family because we love and trust each other. I want them to grow up in a country where they will not encounter prejudice because of the colour of their skin. However, I am afraid for them and for all of us. I am afraid that this agreement paves the way for more confrontation rather than less, afraid that it does nothing to address the climate of fear and mistrust and corruption at the band level. I must therefore take my stand against this bill.

In closing, I move the following amendment:

That the amendment be amended by adding the following words:

and that the committee make a report to this House no later than June 5, 2000.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the subamendment to be in order. The debate is on the amendment to the amendment.

Resuming debate. I believe the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan was the second member for ten minutes. I will therefore recognize the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys.

**Mr. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan was not on the second part of 20 minutes. Mr. Speaker, you may want to ask him for clarification.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair has checked with the table officers. I should advise the hon. member for Vancouver Island North that during the debate last evening the last two speakers were the hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla and the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan who just completed his remarks. They apparently had split their time.

• (1535)

Even if they had not, I believe, having had four speakers in a row from the hon. member's party, that it is time for a change as they say, if someone else wishes to speak and someone else does. Accordingly I recognize the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys.

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a very real privilege to participate in

*Government Orders*

today's debate on Bill C-9, an act implementing the Nisga'a agreement.

I have before me the Indian Act which this bill will do away with. The Indian Act has a subtitle which states that it is an act respecting Indian people. That is probably the most erroneous title one could have for this piece of legislation, because it does exactly the opposite. It does not respect Indian people. It is an act filled with disrespect for Indian people.

The fact that the Indian Act will now become redundant at least in the Nisga'a territory of British Columbia is probably one of the brighter things that has happened in a long time. We say enough of this act that disrespects Indian people. As we approach the 21st century, we look forward to beginning a new era in aboriginal and non-aboriginal affairs. Let us face it. That has been long overdue.

Way back in 1887 the Nisga'a people paddled their canoes from the northern part of British Columbia to what is now known as Victoria. They asked the government for the opportunity to negotiate some kind of a settlement and they were rebuffed. They were told to leave, that the officials could not be bothered with that. After paddling more than 1,000 kilometres down to Victoria, they had to paddle more than 1,000 kilometres back home empty handed.

Here we are 112 years later in the Parliament of Canada wrapping up a debate that will eventually see the Nisga'a people become self-determining, self-governing and self-reliant. This has to be a major step forward for perseverance. We have to acknowledge that the Nisga'a people have been very patient. They have persevered. Others would have long since given up, but they knew they were doing the right thing. They knew they had right on their side, which is a great motivator.

As I said, 112 years later, and as we approach the new millennium, we are finally at the stage where we want to enact legislation that will see this treaty become law of the land. It is a treaty that was negotiated in good faith between the Nisga'a people, the province of British Columbia, because of the fact that it holds the resource rights, and the Government of Canada which has the fiduciary responsibility to support aboriginal people. The three groups got together and over a prolonged period of time negotiated a treaty which we are in the process of ratifying today.

To put this in some context, let us go back a few years to before the Europeans came to that part of British Columbia on the northwest coast. The Nisga'a people were there. That well established society had been there not for generations but for thousands of years. For thousands of years the Nisga'a people have lived in the Nass Valley and the surrounding area. They were a very highly sophisticated society, self-sustaining and self-reliant. They were self-sufficient and self-governing. They were prosperous and entrepreneurial. It was a dynamic society.

• (1540)

Europeans then appeared on the scene. I say with some hesitancy and with some reluctance, that a form of ethnic cleansing took place. At that time there were somewhere in the neighbourhood of 30,000 Nisga'a people. After a very short period of time that number was down to 800 individuals, the result of illness and all sorts of inappropriate behaviour on behalf of the European population. The Europeans set out to essentially exterminate the Nisga'a people. We call it ethnic cleansing today. They were almost successful.

Thankfully we can now say that there are 6,000 Nisga'a people in the area and they are making a major comeback. This legislation and this treaty is a major step forward in reversing this very negative process which took place over the last number of years.

A large number of people should be acknowledged today. I note that some of the speakers before me have done that. We should acknowledge some of the leaders in British Columbia and others from the Nisga'a people themselves.

I personally want to acknowledge Joe Gosnell, the Nisga'a Tribal Council chief, who said the other day that this was an example of the Nisga'a now making their way into Canada. Let us think of this, making their way into Canada. A lot of people have said that obviously the Nisga'a have been part of Canada. In fact, they have not been part of Canada like others have been part of Canada.

People say that they just want everybody to be treated equally, in other words, treated the same. It is clear when we look at our history first nations people were not treated the same as others. They were not treated equally.

When my ancestors first came from Norway many years ago, they were eligible to homestead on 160 acres of land virtually for free. They did and they built the family farm and it is still in our family today. They had that right.

Did Indian people have the right to do that? Could they go out and buy 160 acres of land? The answer is no. They were not even able to hire a lawyer to advance their cause for what they called their treaty rights. They were unable to hire a lawyer. It was actually against the law for them to do so.

Could they, living on a reservation, go to the bank and get some money to start up a business and so on? No. Could they vote? The right to vote in a general election is a fundamental right in our society. It is embarrassing to say this but it was 1960 before aboriginal people had the right to vote in our country.

To say that everyone has been treated equally over the years could not be further from the truth. First nations people have been treated very shoddily.

*Government Orders*

I mentioned a form of ethnic cleansing that took place in the western part of our country. I suppose the best example of ethnic cleansing is in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador where first nations were completely eliminated. Not a single person was left from those early cultures.

There is a lot of catching up to do. One thing this bill and this treaty moves us toward in my judgment is that it will bring some stability and certainty to the decision making in that part of British Columbia. It is not going to be the answer. There is still a long way to go and much negotiation to complete. However, it is the beginning of bringing certainty to the landscape.

If there is one thing that capital does not like, it is uncertainty. Capital will flee uncertainty. If there is anything insecure about a particular place, we can rest assured that capital will not stay there very long. That is one of the things happening in our country today. A lot of good economic investment is not being made because of the uncertainty that surrounds the whole issue of land and the jurisdiction over land.

I say with some pride that I come from an area of British Columbia that is often referred to as the Shuswap nation, represented by the Shuswap people. A number of reservations and a large number of people living in the towns and urban areas in this area have their tradition from the Shuswap central part of British Columbia. They are very progressive bands on very progressive reservations and are doing relatively well. Even in this area a number of issues remain outstanding because there is no effort at the moment to negotiate some kind of settlement.

• (1545)

Yes, there is a treaty process in British Columbia. As an aside, some people have asked why we are concentrating so much on British Columbia. As the European population came in contact with aboriginal peoples from the east coast, through the central part of Canada and out toward the west, they negotiated treaties with the native people. The understanding was that with these treaties certain rights would go to the aboriginal people and certain rights to the newcomers.

However, that did not take place in British Columbia. There were no treaties signed for all intents and purposes. The European population basically came in and told the native people they were going to live on a little crummy piece of land while they would take all the rest. Obviously the aboriginal people did not like that but the Europeans said that it was too bad because that was the way it was.

We had all sorts of forced relocation. People were taken from their traditional territory and their traditional lands and told where to live. Rest assured that although today those lands might be well located, in those days they were always the crummiest pieces of property, the most remote, swampiest and rockiest places that the

others did not want. That is where the first nations people ended up. We forced them onto those lands.

I heard an awful lot about the great treatment the first nations people have experienced, of all the things they have received and about how we should all be treated equally. If there is one aspect of growing up in recent times as a first nations people it was that period of time when, in the best interest of our churches primarily, they decided that children should not be part of first nations families, that the children should be taken out of the families, by force in many cases, and put into residential schools to get rid of their aboriginal, traditional and cultural ways and to drop their language.

Can anyone listening and watching television today imagine what it must have been like in those thousands and thousands of aboriginal families to have someone with a European background, who looked maybe like me, come in and say "I am taking your children away from you for the next 10 months and putting them in a residential school where they will not be able to ever speak their language?"

Year after year those children grew up with no parents. Not only did they grow up with no parents, they developed no parenting skills. The parents were devastated and the children were devastated. This went on time and time again.

Let us face it, people who have had that kind of violence perpetuated on their families will not just drop it and forget it quickly. It will probably be many generations before that kind of evil behaviour will be overcome.

When we talk about aboriginal peoples being treated equally and fairly, let us remember what we perpetuated on those people. We took their children away from their homes, their parents, their grandparents and their loved ones and put them into a military style residential school. We cannot understand the incredible human, emotional, psychological and spiritual impact that must have had on all those people. However, that is what happened.

Today we are trying to do what is right. We are sitting down with aboriginal people and offering to negotiate a fair deal for everybody. That is what Bill C-9 is all about. Is it a perfect piece of legislation? I have never seen a perfect piece of legislation, and since human beings negotiate legislation, I do not suppose we ever will.

However, the Nisga'a people on balance have said they like the deal with 72% of them voting in favour of it. The duly elected Government of British Columbia said it supported it. Today we are being asked whether we support it.

What I can gather from the speeches being presented in the House, four out of the five political parties, representing the vast majority of the citizens of Canada, say we support implementation of the treaty.

*Government Orders*

• (1550)

Let us acknowledge right up front that the treaty is not a perfect document. However, I ask those who are naysayers to the process, I ask those who will one day vote against the legislation, what is it that they propose? If we tell the native peoples of the country that we will not negotiate any treaties and will not acknowledge the uncertainty and instability that exists from coast to coast in all sorts of matters, then what do they propose?

This may not be the perfect process, but if the bill and the treaty do not proceed what kind of signal will that send out to aboriginal leaders, particularly militant aboriginal leaders, who are really frustrated at how slow the process has worked and is working across the country today? This slowness has resulted in all sorts of things that we have seen in the last few weeks, in particular with the east coast fishery.

What choice do we have? We have to do something. This is what is before us. For those who say that they do not want to support this, I challenge them to say what they are proposing we do as a country to resolve these outstanding issues and, most importantly, to bring certainty to aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people alike. I think that is a fair challenge to put, particularly to my colleagues who are going to be voting against this and who do not like what the process is all about.

In spite of what others have said, this is not a template. This is not a border plate piece of negotiation that is going to apply elsewhere because first nations groups will not support it. I represent the Shuswap area of my province. Most of the bands in the Shuswap Nation do not support the Nisga'a agreement. They agree that it is what the Nisga'a want and respect their right to decide on their own future, but the Shuswap Nation wants a lot better deal. They want things that will be much different for them because they have a different culture with different expectations, requirements and so on. This is not a template nor a border plate piece of legislation that we can apply willy-nilly to any piece of negotiation across the country. I felt this was one point that ought to be made.

Second, have we had adequate input into the process? I know the debate today is on second reading, which is the way legislation proceeds. From there it will go to a committee where experts, from a variety of backgrounds, will comment on the pros and cons of the treaty. They will point out some of its strong points, presumably some of its weak points and some of the concerns people have. The bill will then come back to the House for debate at report stage and then a final debate at the third reading stage before it goes on to the Senate where it will go through the same process.

It is a fairly thorough process. It has already gone through a pretty thorough process. In my own area, we had a lot of meetings on the Nisga'a agreement. There were over 500 consultations on the Nisga'a agreement throughout British Columbia. Yes, people

have strong feelings. Yes, many people have deep concerns based on, in my judgment, a lot of misconception because they have not studied the document carefully. They have also been sort of conjuring up a mythology attached to the treaty.

The Nisga'a treaty was achieved within Canada's existing constitutional framework. The Nisga'a government will be a democratic government for the Nisga'a community. It will protect Nisga'a language, culture and property, promote the future prosperity and well-being of the Nisga'a people, and give the Nisga'a the control over their lands and destinies that most of us have had for a long time and have always taken for granted.

It will not create an order of government apart from Canadian law and society. As many people have indicated, the charter of rights and freedoms will continue to apply to the Nisga'a people. Federal and provincial laws, such as the criminal code or B.C.'s family relations act, will apply.

The treaty lays out those areas where the Nisga'a government will have the right to enact laws. These laws will only prevail in matters internal to the Nisga'a people, important to their culture and essential to the operation of their government. In general, federal and provincial laws will continue to prevail. If there is a conflict between Nisga'a law and the laws of Canada or the laws of British Columbia, there is a dispute settlement mechanism that will be invoked.

• (1555)

One of the areas I want to emphasize in this agreement that non-aboriginal people in particular want to hear about is the issue of taxation and the extent to which certain aboriginal peoples do or do not pay taxes. There is a lot of mythology around this area, but the reality is that in most cases people who work and make their livelihood from enterprises on the reservation do not pay income tax.

The Nisga'a agreement will eventually end this. After a 12 year phase-out period, Nisga'a people will pay taxes the same way other Canadians do. If nothing else, this has to be an incredible breakthrough in terms of breaking the kind of mindset that exists between non-aboriginal people and aboriginal people.

The reliance of the Nisga'a people on transfers will be reduced over a time. I suppose we can say that if there is a final goal it will be that the Nisga'a people will be as economically self-reliant as any other Canadian as a result of economic development and wealth growth in their territory.

I am particularly proud to be part of a group of people who, after the process is completed, will vote in favour of the enabling legislation. It is a good day for Canada, a good day for the Nisga'a people and a good day for the province of British Columbia. The treaty will move us toward an element of certainty, predictability and stability in areas which are, at the moment, woefully wanting.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. David Iftody (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his interventions today. I think those people watching his dissertation would agree with me that he has spoken very well.

For those Canadians who are watching the debate, I welcome the member's participation. I have talked to him about this on several occasions. I was quite delighted to see him speaking in the House today. He is a veteran member of parliament from British Columbia and a member of the New Democratic Party. He provides some insights and a different angle with respect to British Columbia.

Many members from rural British Columbia have repeatedly spoken against the deal in the House. I want to ask the member why he thinks, feels, or believes that the Reform members, even those next door to him in his riding in British Columbia, have so strongly opposed what he and I both agree is a great deal for the people of British Columbia? Could he elaborate on that complexity and misunderstanding with the Canadian people?

**Mr. Nelson Riis:** Mr. Speaker, it is not appropriate for me to speak on why representatives of other political parties do what they do.

I will say something that has made me rather curious in times past. My Reform Party colleagues from British Columbia, who work hard in their constituencies, know the uncertainty surrounding the land issue in British Columbia when it comes treaty rights.

I kind of look ahead to the next provincial election which will be coming soon. If there is a provincial election and a change of government, which is possible, and that new government throws out any concept of negotiating treaty rights or land claims with first nations peoples, that province will see complete chaos because it will appeal to the militant extremes on both sides of this question.

• (1600)

What has confounded me, and I say this with all due respect to my Reform friends, is that as a party that espouses a businesslike approach to issues, to do anything that would not advance the cause of certainty, security and predictability economically I think is folly.

I suspect that I will have a question from my Reform friend next, so I will ask, for a political party that does not like these kinds of negotiations, that does not support this negotiation process, what is it that Reform members would suggest we do as a province and as a country to bring certainty and stability to these areas?

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the speech of the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys. There are obviously

many areas where we disagree. I am presumably the next one to speak and I think I will have trouble delivering everything in the time allotted, so I will ask the hon. member some questions.

The hon. member is correct in stating that the Indian Act is gone, but one part remains, and that is the part that deals with who is an Indian, which is the very worst part of the Indian Act.

There are many other concerns I would like to get to, one of which is the fact that we are here to represent a very educated public in British Columbia, a public which is more educated on this issue than those in any other part of Canada. Has the member done any polling in his riding? We have.

**Mr. Nelson Riis:** Mr. Speaker, let me make it clear to my friend that I am not a courier service. I am not someone who exclusively takes the views of my constituents here, but that is part of it. I have not taken a survey, but I suspect that the situation in my riding is relatively balanced. Quite frankly, I am not a courier service. We have Fed-Ex and we have EPS and others to take care of that. Otherwise there would be no point in our being here.

I ask my hon. friend, whom I respect greatly, when he stands to give his speech, condemning the process and the treaty, will he please offer what he is proposing as an alternative? If what he is proposing as a clear alternative will not bring stability, an element of peace to the landscape and certainty to British Columbia, I say he is not doing this process a real service. Yes, he can criticize it. Yes, there are problems with this treaty. It is not a perfect document. However, what is it that he would propose in lieu of this?

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys. I presume the member owns a piece of property. I presume he lives in a community, on a street with other residential properties.

I am wondering if the member could explain to me why he would not want to see the Nisga'a people have the same rights to individual property as he enjoys and the people in his neighbourhood enjoy. Maybe then he could explain to me and to the House how he would feel if one day he was told that he did not have those individual property rights any more, but in fact there were communal rights to the property that he now enjoys. Why would the member not want the Nisga'a people to have individual property rights just as other Canadians enjoy?

**Mr. Nelson Riis:** Mr. Speaker, let me use this as an opportunity, in case there is some misunderstanding, to say that when it comes to treaty settlement in British Columbia, private property itself is not on the table. For the people who own private property in Kamloops or anywhere else, that property is not on the table in



*Government Orders*

terms of being up for negotiation. I want to make that clear, and I realize what my friend was asking.

We all enjoy collective rights. Much of the municipality of Kamloops is a collective right that we enjoy. When it comes to individual territory, I look at the Kamloops Indian reserve, which is part of our city. The same situation exists there. Indian people on the Kamloops Indian reserve cannot own their property. They can obtain rights to their property, which they do, whether it is a home, a business, a ranch or whatever. That is what exists today.

• (1605)

I do not know where my friend wants to take this, but I challenge him and others, because people so far have not raised this and I am going to be here this afternoon to listen to them, that if members do not like this process, if they do not accept that first nations people should have their land and treaty rights negotiated—and I do not think the member suggests that they should be litigated—what is it that they would propose we do immediately to bring peace, stability and certainty to the British Columbian landscape?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member from British Columbia, who is one of the most honoured colleagues in the House of Commons, with over 20 years of service to the Canadian public, knows very well that the Conservative and Liberal governments of before and today have constantly told the aboriginal people to pound sand and take their case to court.

As a long time veteran of the House, could he advise the House as to why governments have constantly done that and why the Nisga'a treaty is so valuable in today's process?

**Mr. Nelson Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague has raised that issue. What has frustrated so many over the years is the inability of governments to deal with these issues, in particular in British Columbia where we do not have any treaties in place to bring stability to the situation.

People have been patient. Aboriginal leaders have been patient in anticipation that there would be a process under way. The government has set up some processes for treaty negotiation which I think are completely inadequate. There is growing frustration from coast to coast to coast that these issues are not being addressed seriously and adequately. There is increased tension on both the aboriginal and non-aboriginal sides and the situation is getting out of control.

I pose again, not so much rhetorically but as a very serious question to my Reform friends, that if this is not the approach to bringing certainty economically, in terms of the business climate in British Columbia, what else is there? If negotiations will not resolve this, the only other alternative is litigation. We have seen what that does, in particular most recently on the east coast of

Canada. Litigation is not the answer to solving these issues. There have to be people sitting down at the table, negotiating something that is fair and equitable for everyone.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before I call for resumption of debate on the motion, I should advise the House that the time for 20 minute speeches with 10 minutes of questions and comments has expired. We will now start 10 minute speeches with no questions or comments.

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a point of clarification. The time before which I would have to speak and still get 20 minutes was 3.53 p.m. We are past that time. I have had a challenge posed to me by the member from Kamloops. I fully would like to respond to his questions. Could I ask the House if I could speak for more than 10 minutes and no longer than 20 minutes?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to speak for 20 minutes instead of 10 minutes?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, this is very frustrating indeed. For those people who are watching, I am going to give them my website, which is [www.duncanmp.com](http://www.duncanmp.com). I do offer proposals as to how to do this differently. I have been doing that since 1996 with regard to the Nisga'a agreement, prior to it becoming an agreement in principle. I also have been making suggestions in aboriginal policy areas since 1994.

I cannot help but respond to the previous speaker. We obviously have a different vision, but we both want to fix what is wrong in the area of aboriginal issues. We both agree that the native population has received shoddy treatment. I would be the last one to say that has not been the case.

• (1610)

Reform believes that equality is created by treating everyone equally, unlike the NDP and the Liberals. They consider it a criticism of us that we want to treat everyone equally. I believe that is a fundamental philosophical difference that will forever separate us and is what separates us on this agreement.

The member from Kamloops talked about residential schools. My wife went to a residential school. I do not need any lessons on that issue from anyone.

A bit of time was spent talking about the taxation issue. I will simply say that, yes, individual taxation exemptions for the Nisga'a under the agreement will be phased out over 12 years, but there was a whole new tax exemption brought into the agreement and that is for the Nisga'a central government.

*Government Orders*

We did not need a treaty to get out from under the tax exemption differential that exists in this country. We could have done it legislatively. It all flows from section 87 of the Indian Act. It is a very simple thing to fix.

I could talk about the Nisga'a agreement for hours, but I am going to focus on only one aspect because my time is limited. I want to talk about public consultation. If I have time I will offer some proposals.

I was the aboriginal affairs critic in the last parliament. I did the first publicly available comprehensive analysis of the Nisga'a agreement in principle. I did that in early 1996, after the agreement in principle came out.

The Liberals would have the public believe that Reform has not dealt with or had discussions with the public, stakeholders or the Nisga'a. The Liberals are revising history and I can prove it. I have a track record of having dealt with the agreement before it was ever unveiled and of having discussions with the public and stakeholders, including the Nisga'a, which is contrary to the revisionist history and statements being made in the current debate coming from Liberals with their public relations spin.

The Liberals are trying to revise history. I am revisiting history. There is a big difference.

Reform MPs in British Columbia, including our current critic, have been talking about the Nisga'a agreement since 1994. We are on the public record, especially in British Columbia.

The only body given official standing as adviser for the Nisga'a treaty was the provincial treaty negotiation advisory committee. The public was excluded other than through this formal committee. I can demonstrate that that committee was also excluded from the process by both the federal and provincial governments.

We have not erected barriers, but the two senior governments, provincially and federally, certainly have. The manipulation of their so-called public consultation has been ongoing.

When the Nisga'a agreement in principle was unveiled in February 1996, a member of TNAC, the committee I just talked about, said publicly:

I can't say we worked on this document, because we never saw it until February 15, just hours before it was initialled. Not one page, not one paragraph of this 150-page document was shared with TNAC, the government's Treaty Negotiation Advisory Committee, or any of the local advisory committees, or any of the people with legal interests in the Crown Land that this agreement would give to the Nisga'a.

That is what the forestry representative said. If the very people who were paid to know the contents of the negotiations were kept in the dark, we know where the average British Columbian was.

• (1615)

Long before the agreement was initialled we knew it consisted of some leaks and from these leaks we prepared an analysis. We took that analysis and other speculations on the road. We visited 10 towns across British Columbia and conducted townhall meetings. We talked about self-government, tax exemptions and other matters that we thought were the direction of the government. It was sponsored by the current aboriginal affairs critic and me.

Nisga'a and other aboriginal groups attended some of these meetings. Representatives from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, its bureaucrats, were also in attendance.

Later in the same year, in November 1995, I held another series of townhall meetings to follow up on the earlier meetings. I remember driving through a blizzard 2,000 kilometres in 36 hours to hold two meetings. We met in Nanaimo, Prince George, Terrace, Penticton, South Surrey and Maple Ridge. Once again there were aboriginal representatives and Nisga'a representatives particularly in Terrace, which is in the front yard of the Nisga'a.

My office prepared a 37 page analysis which was published as a tabloid and sent to half a million households in British Columbia in the middle of 1996. After the Nisga'a final agreement came out that analysis was revised. It can be found on my website today.

The province talks about consultation. The province got into the act with the so-called consultation in 1996. Everyone in the public thought that they were going to something which would allow them to say what parts of the Nisga'a agreement were okay in their minds and what parts were not.

What did the government do? It changed the terms of reference. The public was to tell it what parts of the agreement could be negotiated in other treaties and what could not be. This was done by a very biased chair of the committee. I will quote from something he said to give clarity to my charge that it was biased. He said:

I am just in awe, really. I've been around, federally; I've been in constitutional negotiations and so on. I don't know what the . . . I keep thinking about the Fathers of Confederation as they call them, or whatever the words, putting together the BNA Act and so on. The amount of work you people have done in this is really quite unbelievable.

He was talking to the Nisga'a negotiators. He continued:

You're to be really commended. . . We are coming at it kind of as amateurs seeing your work. I guess that's a long way of saying I'm very impressed.

Is it any wonder that the B.C. Liberals walked away from the process? Obviously no substantive criticism ever came from that committee.

Essentially the public has been excluded by both senior governments. The rationale behind separating the Nisga'a treaty process from the B.C. treaty process was that the Nisga'a treaty predated the creation of the B.C. Treaty Commission. That is how we ended up with the only sanctioned body being this treaty negotiation advisory committee. I have already mentioned how it was excluded.

It is fair for me to say that our current critic has had ongoing dialogue with the Nisga'a and other interests throughout. We have been participants in public consultation. I know, for example, that he had a televised debate with Chief Gosnell from the Nisga'a nation.

If one is to be critical of an agreement, I agree with the hon. member from Kamloops that there is an obligation to provide constructive criticism. I will not deal with that part of my speech, suffice it to say that members should visit my website.

• (1620)

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Since the member who just spoke is clearly one of the most knowledgeable people in parliament on this issue, I would ask again for unanimous consent to give him another 10 minutes. I think it is important to do that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to extend the hon. member's speech?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak to Bill C-9, an act to give effect to the Nisga'a final agreement. My colleagues from South Shore and Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough have already spoken on this ratifying legislation and I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on it today. I will pretty well stick to my script. I do not want to be sidetracked because I want to make sure my remarks are on record.

The Nisga'a final agreement offers new opportunities to the approximately 3,000 Nisga'a people living in the upper Nass Valley region of British Columbia, opportunities they will be able to realize because of the agreement.

The Reform Party has been vocal on its position on the Nisga'a final agreement, a position which contradicts that of every other opposition party. The arguments it has put forth have been misleading and serve only to confuse the issue.

The Nisga'a people have worked hard to reach a negotiated settlement with the provincial and federal governments. Some 61% of them approved the agreement in the referendum last year. The

### *Government Orders*

provincial government in British Columbia did the same in April of this year.

There are three ways that parties often use to try to reach agreements, some better than others. For instance, we all witnessed what can happen when violent confrontation is used as a negotiating ploy and how destructive it can be to any peaceful and reasoned process that may already be in place.

In Oka a few years ago we all saw how quickly such tactics could get out of hand. No one wants to participate in that kind of demonstration. It ultimately delays any agreement and does nothing to develop peaceful, effective and harmonious relations. It does not matter whom we are talking about. Violent confrontation seldom accomplishes the intended objective and does not effectively lead us to peaceful negotiations.

The same type of confrontation was seen recently involving the Burnt Church first nation of New Brunswick. We all know the Marshall decision recognizes treaty fishing rights for Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy people. Since that September 17 ruling there has been confusion and unrest in some communities in the Atlantic region.

Confrontations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal fishermen and community members only emphasize the problems that exist in finding a long term solution to the matter. The violence that we witnessed at Burnt Church resulted from a lack of leadership and a lack of involvement of stakeholders in any kind of a process to outline how the fishery would operate.

There are only three ways to reach agreement. The second one is through the court system where judges determine how parties will interact. As we have seen in the Marshall case, this does not necessarily provide the most effective agreement but instead provides guidelines for future negotiations.

I would argue that the court system has a place in society in establishing common ground among parties or overcoming bias and discrimination that may otherwise exist. It does not establish a solid basis of mutual respect for future negotiations. Instead, the parties involved know the limitations imposed and must work within such a framework to establish an agreement that satisfies not only the court's requirements but the objectives of each party.

The Marshall decision opened the door for more aboriginal involvement in the fishery in Atlantic Canada. What has been lacking, and I emphasize it, is direction from the federal government on how to implement such a decision. That responsibility has fallen to the people involved: aboriginal fishermen, non-aboriginal fishermen, community groups and other stakeholders.

We have already seen in Atlantic Canada some agreement on how the fishery will operate and when and where aboriginal fishers will take part in the fishery in the short term. This was not the result

*Government Orders*

of the federally appointed negotiator's involvement, but the desire on the part of stakeholders to have a peaceful, clear and concise agreement on what will happen in the fishery.

• (1625)

This leads me to the third point that negotiations are the best means of reaching agreements like the one we are debating today. Negotiation is the most effective means because all the parties involved are there for one reason, and that is to formulate the best settlement they can, recognizing the limits, objectives and aspirations that each party brings to the table.

The Nisga'a final agreement provides the Nisga'a people with almost 2,000 kilometres of land and \$190 million to be paid over a 15 year time period. It provides a commercial fishery and a resource ownership including forestry and mining opportunities. The Nisga'a people will establish a Nisga'a Lisims government and will begin paying taxes, an important word in the House, on a phased-in approach over 12 years. The Nisga'a will also have a constitution.

I would like to take a moment to discuss the fisheries aspect of the final agreement. Under the agreement the Nisga'a people will receive a percentage of the Nass River salmon stocks and money toward buying into the commercial fishery. Conservation remains paramount, however, for all aboriginal fishing rights. As with the lobster fishery on the east coast, if stocks do not meet minimum levels established by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, no one including aboriginal fishers may fish. Conservation must remain paramount.

The provisions of the treaty are the result of years of negotiation which have finally culminated in the treaty or agreement we have today. The ratifying legislation we are debating is the final step before the Nisga'a people assume the obligations and, another key word, responsibilities entailed within the agreement. The agreement was negotiated on a nation to nation basis.

The Reform Party suggests that the agreement will be a template for other agreements, particularly in B.C. where there are 50 outstanding land claim agreements. While a number of the basic concepts contained within the treaty may provide a foundation for future agreements, the nation to nation concept precludes this from being an actual template for other agreements.

Each first nation will arrive at the negotiating table with different objectives and will negotiate from a different perspective. Social conditions, geographic location and financial circumstances will all play a role in what future agreements will look like and how they will be reached.

It is important to note that the agreement was reached peacefully. I am sure the Nisga'a people and other negotiators would like to

have seen the process concluded a long time ago. They have been working a long time to bring certainty and closure to the issue. However, they can be very proud of the fact that they did it effectively and peacefully and that harmonious relations among the three parties will prevail.

The Reform Party has tried to minimize and degrade the efforts of the Nisga'a people in reaching and ratifying the agreement. They have made assertions that the charter of rights and freedoms does not apply, that it is a race based government and that non-Nisga'a people will be taxed without representation. All these statements are wrong, false and very misleading. The Nisga'a final agreement clearly states that the charter of rights and freedoms continues to apply to the Nisga'a people. The agreement states:

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to Nisga'a Government in respect of all matters within its authority, bearing in mind the free and democratic nature of Nisga'a Government as set out in this Agreement.

The Nisga'a people will not tax non-Nisga'a people living on Nisga'a lands and non-Nisga'a people will continue to vote in municipal, provincials and federal elections. As well, non-Nisga'a people will have voting privileges where their interests are affected by Nisga'a law. More important, they will have more rights than currently exist under the Indian Act where non-aboriginal people have no opportunity to vote.

The Nisga'a final agreement will be the first modern day treaty in B.C. I commend the Nisga'a people for their perseverance in seeing the agreement to its conclusion.

• (1630)

The situation on the east coast only emphasizes the importance of having agreements among stakeholders, agreements that set out the role of each party involved and that are negotiated with the input of all stakeholders without confrontation or court involvement. The Nisga'a final agreement shows how effective negotiation can be.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Surrey Central, Aboriginal affairs.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, of all the issues we will be dealing with in this parliament this issue will have the most profound impact on the state of our nation now and for the next 20 years. With a combination of our collective guilt and a recognition of the appalling conditions that exist on aboriginal lands and for aboriginal people both on and off reserve, we are pursuing a course with the Nisga'a deal that will carve up this country. It will balkanize our nation and do little to improve the health and welfare of aboriginal people in this country.

This deal is an extension of the racist Indian Act which has acted like a lodestone around the necks of aboriginal people and which

has ensured that they cannot develop as non-aboriginals have. It is nothing other than the continuation of separate development.

In the past decade I worked in South Africa during the dark days of apartheid. I saw the appalling conditions under separate development. I have been privileged to work with aboriginal people both on and off reserve. I have seen them raped. I have seen them assaulted. I have seen them overdose, some successfully and some unsuccessfully. I have seen their children abused. I have seen their bodies broken and their spirits destroyed.

That is the direct result of the separate development we have pursued for more than 120 years. Whether we are speaking about South Africa under apartheid or Canada under the Indian Act, both engaged in separate development and were equal failures.

The Nisga'a deal is nothing but an extension and an entrenchment of the same type of separate development. It will do very little to improve the health and welfare of these people. In fact, Canada is engaging in apartheid today.

The Nisga'a deal represents more than 16 different powers that supersede the federal and provincial powers. As my colleague from the Progressive Conservatives mentioned, this is a deal nation to nation. It cannot be looked at in isolation for there are 50 other so-called deals that will be made in British Columbia. So far those claims represent 110% of the land mass of B.C. The rest of Canada cannot be complacent in believing this will not affect them.

The Delgamuukw decision said very clearly that aboriginal title was not extinguished. The implicit nature of the decision was that oral tradition would be equal to written tradition and there has been an opening up of treaties from coast to coast. This will have the profound impact of balkanizing our nation. It will divide it up into mini states where rights are not given to the individual but are given to the collective.

Part of the problem we have had is that individual rights have never been given to aboriginal people. As a result, powers have been given to the collective. This cannot be underestimated. We have been doing this for years.

Some \$6.5 billion per year and \$3.5 billion goes directly to more than 600 bands representing over a quarter of a million aboriginal people who are suffering from the same or worse conditions today than they were 10, 20 or 30 years ago. They have the highest rates of suicide, substance abuse, unemployment, diabetes and tuberculosis. By many other parameters they have the worst conditions in this country, conditions that approach those of the third world. That is what separate development has done for aboriginal people.

We are going beyond that. The courts are now developing separate rules. Under the courts, an aboriginal person would be treated differently from a non-aboriginal person for committing the

### *Government Orders*

same offence. Is it right for an aboriginal person who has committed a murder or another serious offence to go back into the community because it is the right thing to do from the court's perspective?

• (1635 )

That is exactly what happened recently on a reserve that I worked on. Somebody who had committed murder, not once but on two separate occasions, was being released into the very community where the murder had been committed. Where is the justice for the aboriginal people, for the victims who live in that environment? The family members of the murdered woman were mortally afraid that the person who murdered one of their own was going to come back again. That is what happened in the judicial system.

We all care about this issue very much. There is not a person in this House who wants to see the aboriginal people continue living under the conditions that they have been living. We all want to see an improvement. We all want to work with them. But the difference between the Reform Party and the rest of the House is that we do not want to participate in the same separate development that has compromised the ability of aboriginal people to live lives of freedom, to live lives of security and to live lives of hope. We want that for them as they want that for themselves but some things have to happen.

One, we have to scrap the racist Indian Act. It has acted like a lodestone around the necks of aboriginal people for so long.

Two, there has to be one law for all people. If we have different laws for different people, we have no law at all. How can aboriginal people on and off reserve have any faith in a judicial system that is going to treat them differently from other people?

Three, we have to invest in education and health care for these people so that they will be able to stand on their own feet.

No matter what our racial group is, we cannot get pride and self-respect unless we take it and we cannot take it without being self-sufficient. People must be able to provide for themselves, their families and their communities. No one is going to give that to them.

The aboriginal leadership has to start behaving like leaders. Some leaders have done an excellent job and many have not. More than 150 aboriginal bands out of some 600 have been investigated for gross mismanagement of funds. The reason is rooted in the fact that funds are going directly to the leadership and not to the people.

The Pacheenaht band is in my riding. The hereditary chief and people on the reserve are trying to find out about what is going on in their band, about decisions that are made by the leadership. They were told that they could not have that information. I stood right beside them when they were promised that information but it was

*Government Orders*

not given to them. I asked the Indian affairs minister to please help this group. The department said it could not intervene, that it was a band issue. Who is going to defend these grassroots aboriginal people when their own leadership is not going to bat for them? That is what is happening.

We see these people on the ground, the horror of children falling into open sinkholes. The ministry will not give them money because the band has the money but the band is not giving them the money. These people have absolutely no recourse and nowhere to go for help.

We cannot do it by giving collective rights to a group. We have to give it to the individual. That is critically important.

We want to ensure that people have independence. But do we really need to have political independence to ensure economic emancipation? That is what this is about. We have not been able to help the aboriginal people to work together with us to engage in economic emancipation.

Everybody here who speaks with aboriginal people knows they want to have what everybody else has, congruent with their customs and rights which are protected under the constitution and the charter, thankfully. Thankfully, they can still engage in their rights and traditions and enrich and empower us and teach us about what they have. Following that line does not absolve us of ensuring that an aboriginal person is treated the same as a non-aboriginal person, that an aboriginal person will have the same opportunity as a non-aboriginal person.

The department of Indian affairs spent \$6.5 billion and has very little to show for it. Money is sucked up by the bureaucracy. Imagine developing a new layer of government, which is what this Nisga'a agreement and others are going to do.

• (1640)

A huge amount of money will go into other bureaucracies at the provincial and federal levels to interface, non-aboriginal groups with the aboriginal governments. Would it not be better to use that money to ensure the aboriginal people have the improvements in health care, education, welfare and housing that they desperately need? Why are we putting money into a bureaucratic solution when these people need a solid solution?

In closing, I can only impress upon every member and every Canadian that this is the most important decision the House will have made in four years. Please do not take it lightly. Please let us work toward a common objective of ensuring that we will have the power to work together, aboriginals and non-aboriginals, to build a future we can share and work in as equals congruent with our customs and traditions. It is the fair thing to do. Pursuing this

Nisga'a treaty will only end in the balkanization of Canada and apartheid in Canada.

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the amendment before the House at the moment is to institute a six month delay on the bill. I would like to approach the discussion from the angle of representation.

When asked about the fact that the polls in B.C. clearly showed that a majority of people were opposed to this deal, the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys said that he did not want to be a courier to this place or what would be the point of being here. There was a time, in a former lifetime perhaps, when the NDP prided itself in being representatives of the people or what was the point of being here. That marks a major departure in political philosophy between the NDP and the Reform Party. We feel we have an obligation to represent the concerns of the people of B.C. in this place.

From a philosophical position I can understand why the NDP would support a socialist structure of government, which is certainly the structure that is to be set up by the Nisga'a deal. But the evidence from all around the world is that socialism does not work. It depresses the people. It suppresses initiative and it always results in a lower standard of living. I think we can see that in what has happened with existing treaties on reserves across Canada. In fact, I would challenge any member in this place to show any treaty passed in the last 200 years that has resulted in a higher standard of living for people on reserves.

In terms of representation, why has the government side not bothered to ask those Nisga'a who voted against the deal why they are opposed to it? If it had taken the time to do so, it would have discovered that the opponents are afraid that the treaty will entrench a system which will confer benefits on a few at the expense of many, particularly at the expense of individual rights.

As my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca said a few moments ago, it smacks of segregation. I can tell the House that literally dozens of immigrants from South Africa who live in my riding have phoned and written to me to tell me that they call it apartheid. They pull no punches about it. They told me on the telephone, in person and in letters that they do not understand why Canada is pursuing exactly the same course that they were criticized for in South Africa. The whole world reacted against South Africa and imposed sanctions. They do not understand why we are going down the same road.

Speakers from other parties asked us what Reform would have done to solve these problems. Let me put in a suggestion based on representation.

If the people of B.C. had been asked or allowed to vote and indicate to their government whether they agreed to land being involved, whether there should be individual or collective rights, whether there should be money transferred, and the basics of treaty

*Government Orders*

making had been passed in some sort of referendum in the province of B.C., the politicians would have had the mandate to go ahead and negotiate a treaty. It would have been endorsed and supported by all of the people of B.C. That did not happen.

Today we have a situation where poll after poll in B.C. is showing strong opposition to the agreement. In fact in the ridings of Liberal MPs in this House, Vancouver Centre and Vancouver South—Burnaby, up to 70% and 80% of the people are opposed to the Nisga'a deal.

• (1645)

It is just not good enough to say that they do not want to be couriers to this place. They should be coming here, standing in the House and saying why the people in their ridings are opposed to it.

Instead, we have a situation where all of the other parties are attacking Reform, and completely unfairly. We saw today in question period a member of the PC party standing to ask a question about the Mi'kmaq and the lobster fishers on the east coast. There was not a single word of criticism or an attack against the PCs for expressing tremendous concern about what is happening in their ridings.

Look at what has happened in the House over the last six years. The member for Delta—South Richmond, five and six years ago, talked about the illegal fishing that was going on in the Fraser River and all of the fish that were being sold illegally in B.C. by native fishers. He was attacked. We were labelled as bigots and that other *r* word that I am not allowed to use in this House. We were attacked for representing our constituents. Now it is happening on the east coast.

Perhaps it is a little wake up call for the government and for everyone who does not understand what is going on in B.C. They will share in the strife if they continue with the process of setting up governments based on race.

Over 90% of all Indian bands in the country are in B.C. People who live anywhere else in the country, who have not experienced the difficulties, do not have even the slightest concept of what is happening in B.C.

The Liberal Party of B.C. fought this bill tooth and nail as it went through the legislature in British Columbia. It even filed a court case, claiming that this bill was unconstitutional. The fact that it was rammed through by the NDP government has put an aura of mistrust in place. The people of B.C. do not trust the NDP government. Just the fact that it was rammed through by the NDP is a bad mark for the deal. It would have been much better had the people of B.C. been allowed some say in it. The member for Vancouver Island North went into great detail about the process and how flawed it was.

I have on my desk many newspaper articles written by people who could not be labelled with the *r* word or called bigots or extremists. Barbara Yaffe, Rafe Mair, Gordon Gibson and many commentators in British Columbia have written about this treaty. A headline in one of Barbara Yaffe's columns read "Reality check for the Liberals: alienation is real and justified". She went on to criticize the Prime Minister's task force and to explain why segregation based on race is not the way to go with Indian land claims.

Another column by Barbara Yaffe was entitled "Special rights for natives threaten our otherwise civil society", and she related the Mi'kmaq situation to what is happening now in British Columbia.

Rafe Mair wrote:

A pall of madness has settled over the province of British Columbia and will soon spread across the country. Our representatives, both provincial and federal, have utterly betrayed our interests. We have, with the Nisga'a agreement now before Parliament, ensured there will be at least 50 semi-autonomous "nations" in B.C.

Despite what you may be told, these will not just be native "municipalities". Nisga'a sets up a separate style of government to which powers, reserved for the federal and provincial governments, will be permanently ceded. Does all this really mean anything? You bet it does. It means that in British Columbia there will be between 50 and 75 "nations" that will govern themselves with constitutions, not on the level of municipalities but as part of the power-sharing process envisaged by the Constitution of Canada.

And B.C.'s voters have also specifically rejected the Nisga'a treaty when given the chance. Since the B.C. government refused to hold a province-wide referendum, some B.C. citizens' groups held their own instead. Earlier this year, 7,200 Prince George residents...voted on the Nisga'a treaty and more than 97% cast their vote against it. Residents of the northern region of Vancouver Island...said no to the tune of 97%. A poll in Ladner-Tswassen found 93% of 3,400 voters against the treaty. The turnout itself was damning: Two weeks later a school board election was held in a nearby area with twice as many voters as were eligible for the Nisga'a vote. There, only 2,600 people showed up to cast ballots.

• (1650)

That gives an idea of the relevant importance of these two issues in the Ladner area.

The article by Rafe Mair continued:

Am I some anti-native, red-necked racist looking for a forum to peddle hatred? Those who know me know I'm anything but. What I am, however, is one who, in a long life, has seen his country reach a point where, far from reducing racism, it is about to sanctify it for all time in the constitution of the country.

I congratulate Rafe Mair for the article that was printed in the *National Post* and I would ask members to read it in full. It illustrates and demonstrates beautifully what is happening in B.C. at the moment, why the Reform Party is so vigorously opposing it and why the member for Kamloops should be doing the same thing.

*Government Orders*

He is not just a courier. He owes it to his constituents to bring their concerns to this place.

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues of the House in this debate, and particularly the members of my party who are standing to oppose the treaty which is before the House for ratification.

It has been interesting to listen to opposition and government members talk about the treaty. I hear them say that they have been there, they have seen this. I remember one of the Bloc members even describing the colour of the Nass River and I wondered what insight he had obtained on this treaty from the colour of the river.

I have spent some time on a reserve. After my university, seminary work and ordination I was the minister, or the missionary to use the traditional term, at an Indian village on the west coast. During the orientation, before I took that posting, I was told that I may think I would go there with my university work behind me, with my study of sociology, anthropology and the course work on native Indians, particularly in British Columbia, and I may have lived next door to reserves as a boy on ranches for virtually all my life; however, I was told that I did not know anything about what I would be doing and would not know until I had been there for two or three years, and that I would then begin to know.

I had a position to fill on that reserve, a place in the community, but understanding the people and their traditions only began to come when there was some way of hearing their stories and experiencing the familiarity between people that comes with sharing at that deeper level.

People who have been close to native Indian people, who understand the hardship and the effects of their powerlessness, understand also that they live in a power structure and most of the people in that power structure have not had the opportunity to exercise that power. There is power, but most people do not have an opportunity to put their hands on it.

Something else I have heard in the debate is that under this treaty people can own property. That is true, they can. The difficulty is that individual property rights come with power and those property rights come as that power is given to them. However, there is no guarantee that there will be individual property rights. Without those property rights and power, native Indian people will never have the resources they need to insist upon their rights.

How important are property rights? I will tell a story or two from my own personal experience. The first story begins probably before I was born.

I remember a friend of my father's who was a resident on one of the reserves near our home. His mother had a piece of property. Traditionally she had owned it. She had tried unsuccessfully to get title to it. His mother died.

I will not use names because these people are still living and still do not have the power to protect themselves.

• (1655)

This man wanted to own his mother's property. I remember, as a friend of my father's, they would discuss how this might be accomplished. I lost track of this story, but interestingly enough this man was one of the first constituents to come to see me in my office after I was elected as a member of parliament. It was a great reunion. I had not seen him for a long time.

He said "I am here for a reason. Do you know that property of my mother's?" He showed me all the papers of all the applications, rejections and the difficulty he had in getting the money. Finally it all came together and he got title to that property.

After that he included it in the reserve lands. The reason he came to see me was to see if there was some way he could get control of his property again because now the band owned it and the band would not let him use his own property for which he had worked so many years to get title to.

In my mind this relates pointedly to the need for property rights for individuals. Band members should be able to own their property, use it as they wish, buy it, sell it, mortgage it and take full advantage of it for themselves. Unfortunately this piece of property is still beyond the grasp of my father's old friend, but he is still working at it.

I also want to talk about property rights in a way that currently affects many native people. Native people know the value of the vote. They know that without being able to vote they do not have any power at all.

A man came to my constituency office and said "When I left my village I lost my house. Somebody else began to live in it. Now I want to go back. I went back to vote, but I was told that I did not have a house, that I did not live there, so I could not vote. So I said that I would like to have my house back and they said that was not possible".

This is a man who was caught in the catch-22 of not being able to vote unless he had his property, but he could not get his property so that he could vote. He is a very unhappy person. I see this man regularly.

I want to talk about another instance where property rights are important. A man on a reserve in my constituency has agricultural land. He liked to cut and sell the hay. He had an agreement with one of the local ranchers who needed that hay. For a long time this agreement worked. The hay was cut, it was hauled to the ranch, the money went to the man who cut the hay and did the work. One day the chief of the reserve said to the rancher "The hay is coming from reserve land. The money that you pay belongs to the band, not to



the individual, so I will be taking the cheque". The rancher checked it out and that is what he had to do.

Needless to say, the man who did the work, who put the sweat into the effort, did not get the money and he does not cut hay any more. He has lost a big part of his livelihood simply because he did not have the right to the property and the right to take payment for the work that he had done on land that he considered his own.

As a minister on the reserve on the west coast one of the things that I discovered was that, according to the west coast reserves, there are a whole variety of little reserves up and down the coast, usually at the mouths of rivers or at points of land, places where it is reasonably easy to beach a boat. These traditionally belong to individuals and to families. They are passed down through families. I would not want to suggest that they go from father to son because that is not always the way it is done in native Indian culture. However, to say that the Indian people have no concept of private property and no concept of the right to private property is not correct. I know of native Indian people who own land on reserves in their name and it is held within the reserve system in trust for them.

• (1700)

I cannot overemphasize the importance of the right to personally own land, the right to personal property, if we are going to empower native Indian people to take responsibility for themselves by having the power they need to defend themselves. They cannot defend themselves according to their rights under the constitution if they have no means of grasping those rights, of defending those rights and of prosecuting those who would jeopardize those rights.

This is a bad treaty. It is going to leave people in the old system rather than bringing them into the new Canada of the new millennium with the same rights, privileges and freedoms that all Canadians expect and enjoy.

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today to Bill C-9 and to the amendment to hold it up for six months, which I think is an extremely good idea. One of the reasons I say this is that most of us from B.C. know that the issue of the Nisga'a treaty will come before the courts. A number of court cases are already pending.

We are here today in the House trying to debate a bill that our democratically elected government has put time allocation on. We do not have enough time to speak on it and to bring all the issues forward to properly inform the people of Canada with regard to what is going on here.

The treaty was jammed through in British Columbia without the consent of the people of British Columbia. It was not brought to the people of British Columbia. The hon. members of the NDP should remember that the instigator, the premier of the province at that time, has now resigned in disgrace over this issue and a number of other issues.

### *Government Orders*

I have a lot of difficulty with this because of four reasons. First, since B.C. fulfilled all of its obligations to our Indians before it entered confederation, Ottawa alone should bear all the costs of the Nisga'a treaty, including reimbursing the province for fair market value of the additional land and natural resources involved. This is very critical. The treaty will not cost just the people in British Columbia, it will cost everyone in Canada. When British Columbia entered into confederation, the federal government at that time said that it would take over Indian affairs. This is just one of the arguments.

Second, all the people in British Columbia, not just the Nisga'a people, should have the right to vote on this. I shall clarify that. Not all of the Nisga'a people voted on this. Some were not allowed to vote on it.

Third, due to the sweeping changes the treaty proposes, it should be subject to periodic review, perhaps every five or ten years, rather than being entrenched as it stands now in Canada's constitution. I say that because we have lived for a number of years under basically two governments in the country, the Liberals and the Conservatives. We have seen what they have done to the country. We have seen what they have done with regard to the Indian Act. They still believe that this is a workable document. They have gone on for years and years holding up our native people, holding up the reserves and holding up the process of the Indian Act as a great workable document for the people of the country.

However, we know it is a failure. We have heard time after time from speakers from all parties in the House about just how detrimental it has been to our Indian population in Canada. That is one of the reasons why, before we sign off on all these agreements, that we should have reviews every five to ten years.

• (1705)

My fourth and final point is that the B.C. legislature and parliament are legally required to pass, amend or defeat this and other modern day treaties yet to come because it is our responsibility to ensure the legislation is as good as we can make it rather than merely rubber-stamping it, which is exactly what we are doing here. We are just rubber-stamping the document.

The government is not open. It has already said that it will not accept amendments. I have no doubt that it will bring in closure when it goes committee. It will try to ram this through. It has said in the paper that it will try to get this through before Christmas. They stand over there and say that this is not so, but it has been stated in the papers.

If that is not rubber-stamping, if that is not forcing an issue, if that is not showing total disregard for the people of British Columbia, I do not know what is. It is not only total disregard for the people of British Columbia but, in my humble opinion, also for the Nisga'a people.

*Government Orders*

I had the honour and privilege of visiting the Nisga'a country and meeting with the chiefs. I had lunch with them and talked with them. We decided to disagree very politely in regard to a number of these issues.

After having travelled through the Nisga'a country and visiting New Aiyansh, I visited the bordering reserves and met with many of their chiefs. They had great concerns about the treaty because it infringed on their traditional territory. Here we have other bands saying that the agreement infringes on their territory and the government just sits over there and goes ahead with it anyway.

When the agreement hits the court, the government will say "We didn't know that. Nobody told us that or put that out". Well, we have and I want the government to remember that.

I also want hon. members on the other side to realize that British Columbia is a part of Canada. When it comes to an issue of this importance, where we are basically reshaping and redefining how Canada will look on maps and how the laws will apply in different parts of Canada, I would really think that a government that says it is so concerned about the well-being of Canada, of its people and of the native population in the country would at least have the common decency to sit in the House. However, government members do not. They just leave. Hardly any of them stay around with regard to this.

We can go back years and years, long before your time, Mr. Speaker, to when British Columbia first came into confederation. In my home province it has been proven by order in council that British Columbia has fulfilled its obligations with respect to its Indians.

I have strong objections to the Nisga'a treaty and to the remaining hundreds of treaties which B.C. Indians still have to come forward with. The government says that this will not be a template of what is to happen but it will be. The ex-premier of British Columbia has also stated very strongly that it will be. It is strange that the government says that this will not become a template to what will go on in our province because it is a template. There is absolutely no doubt about it.

I understand the NDP with regard to the issue of private property rights. Private property rights are nowhere to be found in the agreement. I understand that from the NDP members, with their socialistic attitude regarding private property rights, and that governments should own everything and that they should be the government that will tell us what we can do.

I also do not have any trouble understanding it coming from the Conservatives down on the other side of us because the red Tories are almost exactly the same thing as what we have sitting here as the NDP.

I did have a little trouble though trying to understand where the Liberals are coming from on this. They profess time after time that everybody in the country should have the opportunity to own something, to have security of that ownership and to be able to better themselves in regard to that ownership. However, here they are ready to rubber-stamp this without giving that right to the natives themselves. It is almost like they want to keep that entrenchment upon the reserves so that they cannot better themselves. I have great difficulty with that after listening to how they profess they care and what they say to the public outside.

● (1710)

I sincerely hope that the government will at least open this up to proper debate and allow us to speak on this instead of keeping us to 10 minutes and shutting off debate with no questions and answers in the House. This is supposed to be the most democratic House in Canada. I would think the rest of the world would have to shake its head at that.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when my hon. colleague from British Columbia speaks, it is always very interesting to hear what he has to say.

For his attention, for the Reform Party's attention and for the attention of the listening audience, of which I am sure there are hundreds of thousands of people watching this now, I want them to know that I also grew up in British Columbia from 1956 to 1979. I travelled the province extensively during the time that I lived there.

I also lived in Watson Lake in the Yukon Territory for nine years. I toured the Kitwanga area, the Nass area and the Stikine. I visited the whole area very extensively and met with tremendous numbers of wonderful people, aboriginal and non-aboriginal. That is why I have always had high admiration for people from British Columbia. However, when I say that, there is a certain political party from there with which, in many ways, I agree with some of its concerns and I am sure it agrees with some of our concerns.

Individually, its members are great people, but politically they have made some mistakes. First, the previous speaker talked about private property rights. They keep talking about private property rights. The fact is they are the only ones talking about private property rights. In negotiations, and not litigation, there are people on both sides who negotiate what they would like to have. It was the Nisga'a people who wanted to have the communal rights to the property on the land. That is what they wanted. Over 70% of the people voted for the Nisga'a treaty in favour of it. That is a clear majority right there.

Second, as everyone knows, I now live in Nova Scotia. We have a huge crisis in the fishing industry because this government and past Conservative governments refused to negotiate. The aboriginal people were told to get lost, to go pound sand and to take their

*Government Orders*

case to court. Three straight decisions have ruled in favour of the aboriginal people: Delgamuukw, Sparrow and now the Marshall decision. It has caused chaos in my part of the country and is now causing uncertainty right across the country.

There is one aspect of the Nisga'a agreement that I would like to read aloud for the benefit of my Reform colleagues. I do not believe the treaty will be a template, but I do believe that some aspects of it could and may be used for other treaties across the country. If we had the descriptions on page 107, sections 31, 32 and 33, which I will read for Reform's benefit, prior to the Marshall decision, we would not have the chaos that we have now. It is titled "Disposition of Salmon Harvests", but it could equally have said "any harvest on the Atlantic coast. It reads:

Subject to paragraph 33, the Nisga'a Nation, and its agents, contractors and licensees authorized by Nisga'a Lisims Government, have the right to sell Nass salmon harvested under this Agreement.

For greater certainty, in accordance with paragraph 13 of the General Provisions Chapter, federal and provincials laws of general application pertaining to the sale of fish, in respect of commercial transactions, health and safety, transport, inspection, processing, packaging, storage, export, quality control, and labelling of fish, apply to the sale of all Nass salmon harvested in Nisga'a fisheries.

Here is the key to this. If we had the next key in Nova Scotia, we would not have a problem today.

If, in any year, there are no directed harvests in Canadian commercial or recreational fisheries of a species of Nass salmon, sale of that species of Nass salmon harvested in directed harvests of that species in that year's Nisga'a fisheries will not be permitted.

• (1715)

That means if the non-aboriginal recreational and commercial fisheries are not operating due to conservation measures or other reasons, there will be no Nisga'a fishery. That is a tremendous opportunity for co-operation from both sides.

It clearly states that the non-aboriginal and aboriginal people have in mind conservation first, long before any commercial or sport recreational activity. If we had had that kind of agreement in Nova Scotia prior to the Marshall decision, we would not have the problems or the millions of dollars that are being wasted as a result of the confusion the Marshall decision caused. This is what happens when we negotiate, not litigate.

It really upsets me that governments in Canada have continually told aboriginal people to go away. They are told to take their case to court because the government refuses to talk to them.

Yesterday in the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, Mr. Wayne Wouters, one of the deputy ministers at DFO, said quite clearly in his presentation that it would have been unrealistic to have expected DFO to have put in any kind of a game plan for the

Marshall decision because they did not know what the ruling would be.

In March, April and May, the Mi'kmaq from Nova Scotia came to Ottawa to start a dialogue process with DFO and the Indian affairs department. If the Marshall decision went in favour of the Mi'kmaq, they wanted to set up a plan of action to avoid the kind of turmoil which we see now. The government told them to go away.

Mr. Wouters also said in his presentation to the committee yesterday that they had a legal obligation to talk to the aboriginal people of Nova Scotia. But they did not talk to them. One minute he said that they could not be expected to talk to them. The next minute he said that they had a legal obligation to talk to aboriginal people. He was talking out of both sides of his mouth. No wonder we are frustrated.

On behalf of the Nisga'a people, my colleagues in British Columbia and my party, I say that the B.C. New Democratic Party, headed at the time by the great Glen Clark, in negotiations with the previous Indian affairs minister who is now the Minister of Human Resources Development, and all the parties that negotiated this treaty have done a good thing. They have now brought the aboriginal people into Canada. They are now going to be full-fledged partners in Canada. It is the way it should be done. Negotiation, not litigation.

This will not be a template across the country because every region will be different. There is no question. The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia may have different aspirations or rules, but the fact is that we must negotiate. That is what has to happen. When we bring all the stakeholders together and discuss their concerns in an open and friendly manner, there are compromises on both sides. The fact is that they will become full citizens of the country, which they so rightly and richly deserve.

It is no secret that when we go to the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec the first thing we see in the great hall is totem poles, aboriginal artifacts. Why is that? Because we as Canadians are very proud of our rich cultural history with the aboriginal and first nations people. This is something we have to respect and encourage for further dialogue down the road.

The Nisga'a treaty is a good agreement. I recommend that all parties support the agreement. I thank all members of the House who do.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the hon. NDP member from Nova Scotia is that as the goalie for the official opposition hockey team, I wish he could block shots nearly as well as he can block out the facts about this treaty. If he did, maybe we would beat the Liberals for a change.

*Government Orders*

I rise today to speak not only on behalf of the people of Prince George—Peace River, but on behalf of the majority of British Columbians whose concerns and rights have been ignored by the government.

In the limited time allocated to me today, it is my intention to focus my remarks on the merits of this legislation by asking two fundamental questions. Will the Nisga'a people be better off as a result of this legislation? Will Canadian society as a whole be better off as a result of this treaty?

• (1720)

My riding is located in the northeastern corner of British Columbia adjacent to the east of the Nisga'a treaty lands. My constituents are concerned about this issue because the ramifications of the Nisga'a treaty will impact on the yet unsettled land claims throughout Peace country in northern B.C.

As a Reform MP I am motivated to vote against this bill based on philosophy alone. This philosophy was articulated eloquently by the Leader of the Opposition in his remarks yesterday. The remarks of the Leader of the Opposition illustrate a better way of serving our aboriginal people. His arguments clearly outlined Reform's guiding principles of equality and fairness. These principles will lead not only to prosperity for our aboriginal peoples but to a more harmonious relationship with other Canadians.

As a Reform member of parliament I do not vote based solely upon my philosophy or that of my party. I balance these interests with the interests of my constituents who I am pleased and honoured to represent.

Last March I hired a research company to survey my constituents on the Nisga'a treaty and on other issues. The following questions were asked. First, should the people of British Columbia have a voice on the principles of the Nisga'a treaty through a province wide referendum? Seventy-five per cent of the people in my riding voted yes. They felt B.C. resident citizens should have that. Second, with the information you now have about the treaty, how should your federal member of parliament vote when it comes before parliament in Ottawa? Only 17% of my constituents said that I should vote for this treaty.

In January 1999, I along with the members for Skeena, Prince George—Bulkley Valley and Okanagan—Shuswap sent out a Nisga'a treaty householder to 30 ridings held not only by Reform but by Liberal and NDP MPs. The following are the questions and answers from that householder survey.

First, do you believe the public has had adequate opportunity to provide input into the Nisga'a treaty? Eighty-nine per cent said no and only nine per cent said yes.

Second, do you believe that the people of British Columbia should have the right to vote on the principles of the Nisga'a treaty

in a provincial referendum? Ninety-two per cent said yes and only seven per cent said no to a referendum.

Third, how do you want your federal MP to vote on this treaty in the House of Commons? Of all the returns that came in, 91% were against it and only 8% said that their MP should vote for it. In Prince George—Peace River, 96% were against and 3% were for. In Vancouver Quadra, currently a Liberal held riding, 91% were against and 7% were for it. In the riding of the Secretary of State for the Status of Women, 81% were against the treaty and 17% were for it. In Victoria, the riding of the former minister of fisheries, 92% were against and 8% were for it. In Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, the riding of the current yes man, 94% were against and 6% were for it. In Kamloops, 95% were against and 4% were for it. We just heard from the hon. member from Kamloops yet he did not even poll his riding to see how his constituents felt about this issue. In Burnaby-Kingsway 87% were against it and only 11% were in favour of it.

Those numbers say a lot about the intentions of British Columbians on this issue. Unlike the minister of Indian affairs I believe that the people of British Columbia are more than capable of comprehending and deciding this issue. Based on that and on the overwhelming will of my constituents, I will be voting against this bill.

What reason do the rest of these members have for not opposing this bill? Even if they did not want to go with the wishes of their constituents, what reason would they have for not opposing it? They are in opposition after all.

**Mr. Jim Hart:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is such an important issue. It is very disappointing that there do not appear to be enough members in the House. Could I call for a quorum count, please.

• (1725)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There is quorum.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I note there is quorum now because of course once my colleague called for quorum a whole bunch of Liberal members came scurrying out from behind the curtains and from their lobby where I am sure they were sitting.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We called a quorum and we asked for a head count of the members opposite and the members on this side. Do they not have to be in their seats rather than just milling around outside?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** No. Just as a point of interest, provided the Speaker is able to see a member and recognize a member as a member of this parliament anywhere within the Speaker's vision, that member is considered to be here. That includes the galleries. For instance, it is possible to deny consent provided the Speaker is able to see and recognize that person as a member.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Jim Peterson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I could not commend you more for your judicious ruling. It is so critical to us as members of parliament that we have the opportunity to discuss with our colleagues, not only on this side of the House but on the opposite side of the House, the important affairs of state which have been entrusted to us by the people of Canada. This is why your ruling is so important.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The points of order are really out of order.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, despite the humour of the hon. member across the way whose stand-up comic routine I always appreciate, I do hope that I still have time to finish my remarks. I want to take up where I left off.

Could those members not find anything in this legislation that they oppose in order to show their constituents that they are listening to them, or are they like the Indian affairs minister and believe they are smarter than their constituents? My suggestion is that is for the electorate to decide and it will decide at the next election.

I would now like to discuss the two questions I posed at the outset of my remarks.

Will the average Nisga'a person be better off as a result of this legislation? Absolutely not. Aboriginal Canadians have been treated as second class citizens for hundreds of years. This legislation does nothing to remedy that.

I want to go out on a limb here. I hope it does not cost me my re-election, but I have to agree with the words of the current Prime Minister and his mentor Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Just listen to these quotes:

What we want, and the Indians are in agreement, is that they should become equal citizens of Canada.

That was the current Prime Minister when he was Indian affairs minister in 1968. Another quote:

There is a long term intention on the part of the government... to arrive eventually at a situation where the Indians will be treated like other Canadian citizens of the particular province in which they happen to be.

That was Prime Minister Trudeau in 1968.

Equality was the long term intention of the Liberal government's Indian policy. Why has it abandoned this policy? Do Liberals no longer believe in equality? It has been over 30 years since these statements were made. How long are their long term intentions? They have an opportunity to put the words of Pierre Trudeau into action. Carpe diem, seize the day. Withdraw the Nisga'a legislation so that the aboriginal people can take a step forward into the next century instead of passing into law the mistakes of the last 200 years.

This agreement does not grant the Nisga'a people the property rights that the rest of us enjoy. Nisga'a women are left unprotected by this legislation. The charter of rights takes a back seat to Nisga'a law. These are just a few examples of the shortcomings of this.

Mr. Speaker, you just signalled two minutes. I am sure that two minutes did not go by in that period of time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Time flies when you are on your feet. Just wind it up, please.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I am watching the clock too.

The second question is will Canadian society be better off as a result? Ask the people of New Brunswick if they are better off today than before special rights were granted to members of their community by the Marshall decision. We should ask them if they are better off now that their access to fish is not based on conservation rather than ethnicity.

• (1730)

I have reached the end of my speech. It was a great speech. It would have been even greater had I been left a bit more time. I move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 26, the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of continuing consideration of the subamendment regarding Bill C-9, an act to give effect to the Nisga'a final agreement.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The motion is in order. The House has heard the terms of the motion. Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

*And more than 15 members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** More than 15 members having risen, the motion is deemed withdrawn.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe, if you were to check, that several of the members were not in their places, which I think is crucial to this vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** We will start over again. The House has heard the terms of the motion. Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

*And more than 15 members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** More than 15 members having risen, the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

(Motion withdrawn)

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to rise today to speak to this

*Government Orders*

issue. Indeed we are dealing with a very historic occasion. We are in fact creating history as we discuss this very important topic.

The hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys spoke quite eloquently with respect to the situation concerning the Indian Act and how that has crippled a people for many years. We are at a point where we can now start to rectify some of the wrongs that have been done over the historic period of time when we have been living side by side with the aboriginal people in Canada.

We have heard a lot of objections being raised as to why the treaty should not be supported. Many of them have come from the Reform Party. In many instances the objections have been centred on things that are not accurate in terms of what the treaty actually says.

• (1735)

Concerns about individual property rights were raised. Yet, if we look at and understand the treaty, there is provision whereby the Nisga'a can organize and arrange for people to have individual property rights. It is a question of self-determination and self-governance.

Why should someone outside the Nisga'a community be overly concerned about the property rights of individual members of that community? We have to ask ourselves what attitude is prevalent that is raising that concern. The Nisga'a people have approved the treaty. They understand the principles involved with respect to property rights and they have made decisions in their interest.

We talk about self-government for a people. Yet, when it comes right down to it, a lot of people do not really want to adhere to that principle. Self-government is okay as long as they can dictate what that means to a people.

We are looking at very important principles with respect to the support of the treaty. When we support the treaty we support the right of the aboriginal people to determine their destiny, to make laws and to deal with issues of importance to them as a people. Some people may ask right off the bat why that should be.

All we have to do is look at the history of what has taken place. Under the other system, as my hon. colleague from Kamloops indicated, the Indian Act treated people with disrespect rather than with respect. It is the only piece of legislation that determines who people are and spells out that they are or are not Indian, no matter what their blood lines may be. Certainly the rest of the people living in Canada have not been subjected to such legislation.

Now we have a situation where we can rectify some of the wrongs. Yet we hear people crying out and saying how terrible it is and how it ought not be supported.

He heard statistical information from surveys that were conducted. We all know that we can make surveys say what we want. I

would be quite interested in seeing the householder that was sent out and the information that was put forth to inflame the attitudes that might come back through those surveys. Certainly we can make any kind of statistical analysis, but the proof of the pudding is what resides within our hearts when we are dealing with these issues, not what is written down on a piece of paper in terms of a statistical answer.

We ran into that problem on another issue concerning national sovereignty and how a question should be worded, what it should say. In reality we know what people want. We know that the Nisga'a people want self-government. We know that we want to support self-government. We know that we want to support the treaty because it is good for the Nisga'a people. It is good for Canada. It creates a sense of certainty. It rectifies many of the wrongs that have been done. We have to be cautious when we hear people putting forth strong objections based upon their culture, their background and their perception of equality.

People say that we should all be equal. When we think of equality we should realize that being equal does not mean everybody being the same. I must point out to hon. members who put forth the concept of equality that two people can be standing side by side, toe to toe on a line, about to run a race. Some would say they are equal because they are both standing at the starting point and will go to the same finishing point. However, if we look at the history of the two competitors we see that one has been in chains for years and years—

**An hon. member:** Like him.

**Mr. Gordon Earle:**—and has not had the opportunity to train. I heard that racist remark but I will ignore it.

The other person has had the opportunity to train and all the advantages that come with that. Suddenly the chains are taken off the person who has been bound and inhibited and the person is declared equal and ready to run a race with the person who has had all the opportunities over the years.

For people to be considered equal and have equal opportunity there quite often has to be differential treatment which makes the ground rules fair and gives a level playing field for all. Anyone who is familiar with sports will see how on a circular track runners are staggered so that there is equality. People have opportunity to train.

• (1740)

What we are really getting at in the treaty is how as Canadians we can fulfil our obligations to our fellow human beings in a way that will be fair, equal and just. This whole issue is very important because as people say it has ramifications right across the country and not just for the people in British Columbia.

It also has lessons for those of us in other parts of the country. It has lesson for those of us in the fishery as mentioned by my hon.

colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore. If the government had been seriously negotiating and dealing with the aboriginal people, as indicated in the Delgamuukw decision and in other decisions, we would not be in the situation we are in now with respect to the fisheries. It waited for a decision to come down that caused people to have a knee-jerk reaction.

I must compliment the aboriginal people and many non-aboriginal people in my area for the calmness they have shown with regard to this decision and the respect they have to one another. The media portrayed the few hotheads on both sides who are taking advantage of the situation, not the majority of people who want to peacefully negotiate a settlement. I give praise to the people who looked at the decision as a way to move forward together with respect for each other and to learn to share the resources in a way that would benefit all of us collectively.

It is an honour to have had the opportunity to speak to this matter. When all members of the House consider the issue, I sincerely urge them to vote with their hearts, not with some statistical information, not with some fear they have flamed up about how some things will be disadvantageous to them and to people in British Columbia. British Columbians will benefit from the treaty as will Canadians and all of us who want to see justice and equality for our citizens.

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this debate. I listened to the member who spoke prior to me call people who oppose this matter hotheads. I found it a little disconcerting that a party debating a bill that represents a majority viewpoint of the people in British Columbia can be called hotheads because they disagree with the government.

I read with interest today a little brochure the national Liberal caucus put out called “Dancing with dinosaurs”. I was really proud when I opened it up because I was the first one they quoted. I want to read it because I think it is a very interesting quote. I hear the Liberals over there yelling and screaming. They get a little excited and I think it is quite funny.

I look at the government over there and the things it has done over the years. The Liberal Party misled Canadians on the GST. It promised to do something and did not do it for their two terms of office. That is the same party that said it would eliminate free trade. It did not do a darn thing. How can we believe the Liberals on anything? How can Canadian people, especially westerners, believe the Liberal government on anything?

My Liberal friends say “Dancing with dinosaurs”. I would rather dance with a dinosaur than be in the water with a Liberal shark. Sharks eat people for no reason at all, do things for no reason at all, and are vicious animals. I would rather be dancing with a

### Government Orders

Reform dinosaur than be in the water with a Liberal shark. That is what these people are. They are sharks.

**Mr. David Iftody:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know we want to keep the debate in line and civilized. I know the member, as a former member of parliament under the Tory government, does not want to get into an unhelpful debate. I ask him to continue a proper and civil debate for Canadians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Respectfully, in my opinion, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast was not saying anything inappropriate.

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, neither would I say anything inappropriate. I am quoting from a Liberal document. If he wants to keep this debate at a certain level they should stop printing documents which do not contain the truth. That is what the Liberal Party should do.

• (1745)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just for clarification for my hon. colleague from British Columbia, my hon. colleague from Halifax West did not refer to him or the Reform Party as hotheads. He was referring to other people who resort to violence on the east coast.

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, the truth really hurts in this place when we start speaking the truth or reading some of their own documents back to them. I think I have been up for five minutes but time-wise I have only had about a minute and a half.

Let me talk about what the Liberals say in their document. They refer to myth No. 1, a third order of government. The member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, as reported in *Hansard* of June 3, 1999, said:

There are some frightening and constitutionally questionable aspects to this treaty. . . . The Nisga'a creates a new level of government, the Nisga'a national government.

This is the Liberal myth document. Let us see if what they say is the reality. They indicated that the treaty recognized the right to self-government and returned stewardship over the land to the Nisga'a, that the Nisga'a government would not have any exclusive jurisdiction, and that concurrent jurisdiction in this case between Nisga'a laws and all existing federal and provincial laws was a common feature of Canadian communities. That is what the Liberals say in their document *Dancing with the Dinosaurs*.

Let me quote from a Liberal friend in British Columbia, a friend of mine too over the years, Rafe Mair. Rafe and I have had some disagreements on politics. He said publicly that he would vote Liberal in the next election, so he is a Liberal. This is what he says in this Liberal myth document:

*Government Orders*

At the end of it all, the Nisga'a deal does three things: it denies rights, i.e. voting, to resident non-natives; it creates a fishery—

**An hon. member:** That is wrong.

**Mr. John Reynolds:** The hon. member says that is wrong but Rafe Mair says that is right and I say it is right also. He continues:

—it creates a fishery every bit as racist as if “a whites only” fishery were enacted; and it constitutionalizes a special, entrenched style of government to which, irretrievably, are granted powers hitherto reserved to the federal government or the provinces.

We will have 50 to 75 of these constitutionaled, unamendable, self-governing jurisdictions in B.C.

And you think the Nisga'a agreement is just a British Columbia problem? Dream on, fellow Canadians, dream on.

This man is well respected in that province. He served in the provincial legislature. He said he would vote Liberal in the next election. He totally disagrees with the Liberals on this matter.

Let us get off the issue of who is calling whom a hothead. We are debating an issue that is very important to all the people of British Columbia and Canadians.

**Mr. David Iftody:** Stick to the facts.

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, I just gave him the facts on the myth versus his myth. They are wrong and they get very upset when they hear the truth. The majority of the people of British Columbia and the NDP Government of British Columbia, which our friends down here support federally, do not like the agreement.

They talk in this document about fair treatment of British Columbia. I was Speaker of the British Columbia legislature for nine years. It was the worst sham I have ever seen when this bill went through the British Columbia legislature. The Government of British Columbia did not let it get halfway through the legislature before it brought in closure. The government opposite just denied us the right to sit tonight to debate the bill until 10 p.m., but in the next few days it will bring in closure on it.

That is not debating legislation the proper way. We can go back to the pipeline debate a number of years ago that went on for days and weeks and months because it was a right of Canadians, no matter how small their group in the House, to debate a bill until it was fully debated and fully discussed, so the people of eastern Canada can understand what is the problem with the legislation in British Columbia.

I suggest to people out there, as my friend said earlier the hundreds of thousands that are watching, that they should look at the treaties we have had in eastern Canada for the last 100 years. Are natives in eastern Canada living any better because of the treaties they signed? I do not think they are.

**Mr. David Iftody:** We have not fulfilled the treaty. That is what we are trying to do.

**Mr. John Reynolds:** The Liberals say that they have not fulfilled the treaty. What makes them change? The Liberals and the Tories have been in government for the last 100 years. They have had treaties with these people and not a darned thing has been done for them. Are the Liberals telling us now that they will change? No Canadians believe that. This is a phony document. It needs some changes.

We have to ensure native people get treated just like other Canadians get treated. Some people may not think it is all that good, the way the rest of Canadians get treated by governments because of our taxes and all other situations.

I will go back and quote what some well known Liberals have said.

**Hon. Jim Peterson:** Will the hon. member tell us what the Nisga'a people say about the Nisga'a treaty?

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, the gentleman across the hall asks me to quote what the Nisga'a people say about the treaty. I will tell him something. I heard in the House today from the minister of Indian affairs that our member for Skeena had never talked to Nisga'a. That is absolutely untrue. He has met with them many times. He has asked to meet with them over the last while and they do not show up for the meetings.

• (1750)

Those are the facts and the member does not want to know them. He knows that area better than anybody sitting on that side of the House. He gets elected by a very big majority of people who live in that constituency. The people in his constituency do not want this treaty and that is why he is here debating it.

Let us look at what the Prime Minister said. He said:

—what we want, and the Indians are in agreement, is that they should become equal citizens of Canada.

The Prime Minister of Canada said that they wanted to become equal citizens of Canada. That is not in the bill. It creates a fishery that is racist. That has been quoted not only by the Reform Party but many other prominent people in western Canada. It is a racist treaty. It does not make everybody equal in Canada. Yet the Prime Minister said that we all should be equal in the country, and I believe that too. I have another quote from a well-known Liberal:

There is a long term intention on the part of the government, and this to be debated, I suppose, as part of our Indian policy, to arrive eventually at a situation where Indians will be treated like other Canadian citizens of the particular province in which they happen to be.

This was said by Pierre Trudeau in the House of Commons on November 5, 1968. If members read the legislation it does not



*Government Orders*

match that paragraph. Yet this man was a great Canadian, well respected by his party and won a number of elections. The legislation does not allow that to happen. I have another quote from a well-known person across the hall:

For many Indian people, the road does exist, the only road that has existed since Confederation and before. The road of different status, a road which has led to a blind alley of deprivation and frustration. This road—cannot lead to full participation, to equality in practice as well as in theory—the government will offer another road that would gradually lead away from different status to full social, economic and political participation in Canadian life. This is the choice.

This was said by the present Prime Minister in June 1969. That was their position then. They have a different one now. They say we should vote for the bill, let it happen and we will all do fine. As I said earlier, this is the government that said it would ban the GST when it defeated the Tories who had really messed up the country, got elected and became the Government of Canada.

This is the same government that said it would get rid of free trade. It did nothing about that. This is a government which does not know how to keep a major promise. How could anybody in British Columbia believe the government when it says that we should trust it?

As I said, I would trust the Reform dinosaurs before the Liberal sharks on the other side. They act like sharks when it comes to legislation. They have acted like sharks when running the country. They are not doing what is good for Canada. They are trying to make the issue look like it is good for the native people. It is not good for native people. It is not good for Canadians. It certainly is not good for British Columbians.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to debate the Nisga'a final agreement. The people watching need to remember that once the agreement comes to this place it cannot be changed, not a jot or a tittle.

I find amazing, when dealing with this kind of agreement and other agreements that we develop internationally, that we in the House of Commons never get to see it. When it comes to us it comes as a done deal. It is not to be changed. It is not to be trifled with. We cannot propose an amendment. It is a done deal. It is very unfortunate that we are talking about the act to implement the Nisga'a agreement and not the actual terms of the agreement.

I would like to dwell for a few minutes on the manner of development of the Nisga'a agreement. The treaty negotiators portrayed a grassroots treaty development process in British Columbia. Both native and non-native members of my riding were on the treaty development process. They went through the process of how it could be developed, what kind of consultations should take place, and so on.

When the first draft of the Nisga'a agreement, which is basically unchanged today, came back members of my riding quit the treaty negotiating team. Not a single sentence resembled anything like what they had talked about in their meetings to develop the treaty. There was no resemblance in any way, shape or form to the topics or the depth of discussion they had. Even though they had travelled the province and had hundreds of hours of discussion, nothing resembling those discussions ended up in the final document.

• (1755)

It reminds me of something. In my own riding there is currently another treaty development process. It may be the next one coming in a rearview mirror near us. It deals with the Sto:lo nation. The Sto:lo nation in my riding consists of 17 or 18 bands. They have been negotiating under the same treaty development process.

Four or five years ago I contacted the minister's office to say that there was an ongoing treaty development process. I asked if he could send some maps to show what areas were involved. The answer was that I could not know what maps were involved in my riding as a member of parliament. I asked for some idea of the economic implications of what was being negotiated. No economic implications were allowed to be discussed until it was a done deal.

What about how much territory was involved or what was the claim? I was not allowed to know that. What about the rights of the Sto:lo and non-Sto:lo in my area? I asked what kind of parameters or guidelines there were. I was not allowed to know anything.

When the deal is completed it is dropped down upon us like an epiphany from heaven. When it comes on to our plate we have to approve it, every jot and tittle. We can express concern in the meantime, but we are not allowed to enter into the negotiations in the meantime. That is unfair.

Many areas are still to be negotiated with the Nisga'a people. All the side agreements will have to be negotiated. I wonder if any of them will end up like the agreement in my hometown of Chilliwack dealing with aboriginal fisheries.

This is the situation in my riding. There is, by the way, no commercial fishery on the Fraser River this year because there just are not enough fish. Coincidentally after four or five years of the aboriginal fisheries strategy there are no fish this year.

Regardless of where the blame should be pinned, this is how DFO must deal with it now. This is the negotiated settlement in the DFO arrangement. For the most part DFO has given no permission outside of food fisheries to the aboriginal people to fish for commercial purposes on the Fraser River. There are no agreements. There is no regulated commercial fishery.

*Government Orders*

However, because there are armed militia on the river, complete with balaclavas and working openly with the native people, there is an agreement now. DFO has been asked to sign an agreement that as long as a native is attending a net, no DFO officer will remove that net from the river. That is the agreement. We must remember that there is no regulated fishery right now. It is not a legal fishery. There is no permission to do it, but the DFO is not allowed to remove the net.

The DFO is drifting down the river at night with the lights off, hoping to bump into an illegal native net with no natives attending it so it can be withdrawn from the river. DFO is so afraid of the policies the government has put in place and the restrictions on its officers that we are reduced to the farce of having DFO officers agreeing that illegal activity is okay as long as the natives are right there. That is the situation in my riding. At any given time in my riding alone a dozen nets can be found illegally strung across the Fraser River.

A month ago one native person was caught with 100,000 cans of salmon. What will be his penalty? DFO says it is very concerned and quite worried. It was kind of like last summer when in that same stretch of river the same group of people dredged 100,000 tonnes of gravel out of the middle of a spawning bed without permission. All other dredging operations had been shut down, but it was okay because they did it the previous summer too. Their argument was that they could do it because they knew the river better than anybody else. They had been there for thousands of years so that when they dredge gravel it does not hurt the salmon.

• (1800 )

Do government members not see what is happening? If they would come to my riding they would see thousands of sports fishermen with their gear in a box on the shore because they are not allowed to fish. There are so few damned fish left in that river that people cannot even fish with a rod and reel, and yet there are a dozen nets stretched across that river and we all know it because the floats are right there every single day. One hundred thousand fish for one guy.

What is the solution? To close their eyes to the problem and pretend it does not exist.

I have said this time and again about the Nisga'a agreement. I have a lot of respect for the current Nisga'a leadership and the way some of its people have conducted themselves. As the Leader of the Opposition said previously, they had no choice. They had to negotiate the best deal they could, given the parameters of the discussions. However, we have to develop a system for getting along in the country that is not for this year, not for this leadership, not for this government, and not for the current leadership of the Nisga'a people. It has to stand the test of time. It has to be

something that when we look at it a hundred years from now it will have been a solution that was good for all people. We are not going to have some people move in there, strong arm their way into a position of unreasonable power or not treat the people right.

There are no guarantees in a system where people are divided up and where, like it is in my riding, there is a set of rules for one group of people and the rest can pound sand. In my riding there are literally thousands of people who sit on the shore in frustration. They cannot even catch one fish for supper, while illegal fishing takes place every single day under the watchful eyes of DFO officials who know this is going on and are not allowed to intervene because of the orders of the justice department of this government.

Nobody is denying that hundreds of native people absolutely have the right to a food fishery, but that has somehow been transformed into an abusive commercial fishery that is dredging that river dry. How can we possibly say it is a good thing over the long run? It is unsustainable. My worry, as we negotiate the 50 or more side agreements to come, is that if there is a conflict the federal government will fold its cards, will throw up its hands, and whatever happens happens. A country cannot be governed in the long run like that.

I can speak from experience. I brought this to the attention of Brian Tobin when he was the minister of fisheries. I met him outside the doors and told him what was happening in my riding. He named the people involved, including the chiefs. He knew the amount of fish going out of there. I told him that he had a fiduciary responsibility to fix the mess and he said that they were going to do nothing. That is what happened.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say that I am delighted to enter this debate, but I cannot because I am so concerned about what is happening to our country.

I want to tell the House why I became a member of the Reform Party. There were a number of reasons. One reason was the basic bedrock principle of all decent democracies in the world, the equality of all citizens. When I see what is happening here and the mishandling of this issue, not only by this government but by successive governments over the last 130 years, I am deeply concerned.

I am quoting directly from the Reform Party when I say that we believe in true equality for Canadian citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities for all. That is one of the things that attracted me to the Reform Party. When I first joined the Reform Party I realized that the Conservatives of the day and the Liberals before them had totally violated that basic principle in many different areas. I think it is absolutely shameful that the present government, the present leadership in our country, is totally unwilling to face this issue head on and do something right about it.

*Government Orders*

• (1805)

I need to take a few minutes to talk about process. People who have been watching on television have observed that in the last few minutes there have been several occasions when members of the Reform Party have tried to extend the debate for today. We have asked to continue the debate because we anticipate that the government, like the NDP government in B.C., wants to jam this bill through before too many people find out about it.

That is a violation, again, of a very basic principle of democracy. In a democracy the governed must accept the governance of the country. In other words, we have to have consensus among the people for the laws that are being passed.

There have been other occasions when a government has, within the rules of the House, which I say are dysfunctional, passed different laws and used the rules of the House, the ones that make it dysfunctional, to jam things through which it knows do not have the majority support of the people, and our democracy is crumbling. The best example I can think of is the GST. Former Prime Minister Mulroney not only jammed the thing through this House, he even evicted from his party several members who had the nerve to respect the wishes of their constituents and vote against it. He had the gall, in my opinion, to appoint extra senators to the other place whose only qualification for office was that they could stand on command and vote in favour of what has now become the most hated tax in the country.

The principle that we are missing is that the majority of Canadians who opposed that tax had it right.

I think it is arrogant in the extreme for a government to say "Here we are, a small group of people, and we know best". We heard it from the NDP member from Kamloops earlier who said "I am not here to represent my constituents". I am paraphrasing him of course. "I am here to make wise decisions on their behalf because they just don't understand".

With respect to the Nisga'a agreement, we have found that particularly in the province of British Columbia where the people will be most profoundly affected by this agreement immediately, as well as across Canada where the effects will be felt later as they accumulate, the people do not support the agreement in large numbers. We are talking of a disagreement level which exceeds the number of people who were opposed to the GST. We are finding that support for this agreement is not there among the people.

Let us face it, there cannot be an agreement without two parties. There cannot be an agreement just because the leaders of the Nisga'a have agreed to it. Forty per cent of the Nisga'a people, when they voted on it, seriously questioned it. About 90% of the other side of the agreement, namely the other citizens of British

Columbia, the non-natives, are saying "We do not agree with this treaty".

Therefore it bears slowing down. It means that it is incumbent on the government not to shut down debate, as it did a few minutes ago when we asked if the debate could be extended tonight before it invokes closure and all of those silly things. Government members stood and said no. There were not enough Liberals in the House to stop it. They needed 15. That is shameful. We are dealing with an issue that has long term implications into the next millennium for the country.

• (1810)

There are not 15 Liberals in the House to stand to say they do not want the Reform Party or other members of parliament to debate this matter tonight. That is a shame. However, they have their allies. The Bloc members, the NDP and the Conservatives stood. They said "Let's not debate it. Let's just jam it down the minds of people. Let's forget about whether or not the people agree. It does not matter".

I care profoundly about the country. I care profoundly about the equality of Canadians. For us to give approval by the actions of a whip telling his people how to vote and jamming the thing through, with all its implications, will have profound effects for many years to come. We will see our children and our grandchildren living with the consequences of this dastardly deed. This will go down in history as one of the dark points of the 36th parliament because of the fact that they will have put into the constitution rules that divide us based on race.

I would like to read another blue book policy which attracts me. The Reform Party's ultimate goal in aboriginal matters is that all aboriginal people be full and equal participants in Canadian citizenship, indistinguishable in law and treatment from other Canadians.

I believe that is a high goal based on a valid human principle. It is excessively superior to the lack of principles demonstrated in the Nisga'a agreement in which we have the country divided up based on bloodlines, based on race.

I also believe that we have been sitting on our butts far too long with respect to native affairs. I am saying this now collectively. I am blaming the governments of the last 130 years. There has been inaction and any action that has been taken has been wrong action.

The Indian Act is a bleak part of Canadian history. When the agreement says that we will move this group of native people out of the Indian Act, I have to say that I agree with that part of it, because the Indian Act has been used in order to keep native people in their place. That is very wrong.

I have only been in Canada for a scant 60 years. I was not here 132 years ago when some of this was done. I was not here 250

*Government Orders*

years ago when some of these fishing agreements were made. Yet I look back and say those who were here made an error.

As any person will say, it is the height of folly not to admit when one has made a mistake. It is a greater folly to say that what we have done in the last 130 years has not worked and if we do more of it now it will work. That does not make sense. We need to deal with this matter in a way which is rational, addresses the problem and does not continue to sweep under the rug the real issues. My closing statement is that the fundamental issue is the equality of all Canadians.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just heard the member's speech. I wish I could compliment him on it but I cannot. I do not agree with much of what he said. I do not at all share the views I have just heard or a lot of what I have heard over the last couple of days.

The hon. member said one thing with which I agree, though. He said that we were living in a bleak part of Canadian history. In a way we are, but I think the bleakness in what we are hearing now comes from across the floor.

• (1815)

On the Yukon bills, one party in the House voted against them. On the Nunavut territory and on the Manitoba land claims, one party in the House voted against virtually all of the bills. All of these bills were for aboriginal people, and one party and only one party has the bleak distinction of having voted against all of them. That is the bleakness in which we are living.

Yes of course hon. members across the way will want to raise other topics to try and erase that bleakness, but I am afraid it is in indelible ink. It will stay for a long time. It will be bleak, but I do not believe ultimately that that bleakness will reflect on this parliament nor this institution. Rather, it will reflect on those who have perpetrated this on the people of Canada as a whole, on the House and I would say, on the people affected adversely by what we hear today in the claims of some hon. members.

In any case, there is the possibility for us to listen to the speeches of the hon. members. I am not saying that I will like them. As a matter of fact, I suspect I will disagree with most of them because they will probably be similar to what I have heard over the last couple of days and they have not been good.

The exercise probably will be bleak. Members want to be permitted to speak on this issue and they think that a hopelessly long time is required not to debate the bill, not to debate an amendment which said that we should not debate the bill, but to debate an amendment to the amendment as to whether or not we should debate the bill. They are trying to tell us this is serious

debate on legislation to make the life of aboriginal Canadians better. I do not believe it.

However, I am willing at least to take a chance to see what they have to say. We will listen to the speeches of the hon. members if they want to make them. We will listen to those speeches later this evening if they are willing to extend the debate.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like the House, the table and the Speaker to take note of what is about to be asked here. The fact is that this party has asked not once but twice today to extend the sitting hours into the evening. If the government House leader is going to insult us with a request after we have sent our people home, he has another think coming.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to engage in this alleged point of order that is not one. Just moments before I heard the hon. member for Elk Island speak. He unfortunately let the cat out of bag, but perhaps it was fortunate for all the House to know. He said that he wanted to do everything he could to debate this bill as long as possible so that it would not pass.

The objective is not constructive debate, it is to stall the process. That is out of the bag now. We now know the truth. We suspected it all along of course. Nevertheless, let us hear more of that proof from across the way.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. What the member is saying about my statement is not factually correct. I want to debate this with the Canadian people so we can get consensus among the governed on something of great importance.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That certainly is a point of debate. Very often there are differing points of view on the same issue, depending upon the side of the House.

• (1820)

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I have just listened to what the hon. member said in his alleged point of order. To put it in terms that my children would understand, yeah right.

In any case we will now see whether or not the members want to debate. Pursuant to Standing Order 26, I move:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary time of adjournment for the purpose of considering Bill C-9.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would like you to check with the table officers to see whether the hon. government House leader can present that particular motion. I must say, not having had the courtesy to be informed of the content of the motion, and having presented the House with a

*Government Orders*

request twice today and having been refused twice by the government, the Progressive Conservatives and the separatists, I find it totally irresponsible at this time of the night that the government plays this little dumb game with the House of Commons.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The motion is in order.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their place.

*And more than 15 members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2) the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

(Motion withdrawn)

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I believe there must be such a thing in the House of Commons as dignity in debate and a respect for all members of the House. It is a terrible thing what has happened here at this point in time. The government has come in to give itself a better image, after we made a request twice today and the government refused to extend the hours. It has basically lied.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am going to deal with one issue at a time.

First, I am not going to ask the member for Langley—Abbotsford to withdraw “lied” because it was not directed at any member or any ministry. It was a generalization. However without question the use of the word, in my estimation at this time in the way it was used I am not going to deem unparliamentary but it was certainly not gentlemanly.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not want to further aggravate the House with respect to this issue. It was very obvious and should have been obvious to everyone, including the House leader for the official opposition. When matters such as this debate were discussed, a blind man on a galloping horse could have seen that this issue was going to arise today.

For there to be any suggestion by members of the Reform Party that they did not realize that this debate was going to be extended, it was discussed openly at the House leaders meeting yesterday and this is just misleading the House.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I will ask the man galloping blindly off into the distance who just spoke to remember that on the Thursday question last week which details the business for this week, not only was it not discussed at the House leaders meeting, but the government House leader said that we were not even going to debate Nisga’a today.

The member cannot say that this was openly discussed at the House leaders meeting. The government House leader unilaterally changed the schedule a couple of times. We have asked twice to extend the hours so we could plan an evening debate and have been denied twice by the government and the galloping horseman down there. They would not do it.

• (1825 )

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** This has been most enlightening to me and I am sure it has been most enlightening to everyone watching. I am sure that the next House leaders meeting will be really interesting. However, we have five minutes left for debate. I am asking if there are any members who would care to rise on debate.

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing here is absolutely unacceptable. I will focus on what has happened here in the last few minutes.

A number of people in our caucus have been asking to debate this issue, including myself. I came here because I happened to be working late in my office. I had no intention of being here. I have been asking to speak on the Nisga’a agreement and I am slated about 20 speakers down the list. Most of our people have gone home. In order that we can have an opportunity to debate this later, we asked that we debate this late into the evening.

To focus on the Nisga’a agreement itself, I have spent considerable time reading it from cover to cover. I have spoken to some of the top legal authorities in this area. I talked with Mel Smith at length. He is a very respected man in the legal community and I would suggest he is probably one of the authorities on this matter, if not in Canada then in North America.

This agreement at the end of the day will polarize the native and non-native communities. We as a society and the previous governments over the last 30 to 40 years should be absolutely embarrassed by how the first nations people have been treated. Very few non-natives would trade places with native persons on any of the reserves in Canada. We have driven in wedges. We have not made life any better for them. We have taken away their dignity and self-worth.

All of a sudden we have come up with the famous Nisga’a treaty. We have created another fork in the road. We will only drive wedges between the native and non-native communities. We will polarize those people. We will only make matters worse. By no stretch of the imagination are we helping those people.

We have created another level of government. Where I live in British Columbia, in my own backyard, there are five levels of government. We are now creating another whole bureaucracy and system of government.

### Adjournment Debate

I suppose the most troubling aspect for me is that there is absolutely no provision in the Nisga'a agreement where a Nisga'a person living on the Nisga'a lands has the absolute right to title to the property they hold. Some people would suggest it is within the power of the band or the minister to decide if they want to have title to the property but they do not have the right to have title to the property.

Many Canadians have used the title to their property as collateral for bank loans, to launch business ventures, fund prospects, a whole host of things, as have I. One takes a lot of pride in one's property and in building up self-worth in what one does. People in the native community cannot do that. They live in horrific conditions.

I met with two chiefs last Saturday in my riding. We went over some of the problems on their reserves with respect to housing and other things on which they have to deal with government. They do not have much faith in the process. They say they are promised one thing by the government and then the door is shut on them.

The problems in the aboriginal community have been culminating over the last 30 to 40 years. They are massive and cannot be solved overnight.

There are some very good parts to the Nisga'a treaty which I fully support, but there are some fatal flaws which will make matters even worse and which will drive wedges between communities. I ask all members to really look at the treaty and the government propaganda and make a decision for themselves because it will not help matters on the reserves.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

• (1830)

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, during question period last Friday, I asked why the government was promoting the Nisga'a treaty that abolishes equal opportunity.

The Liberals have fixed it so that success in our country is now based on race. Hard work is no longer the factor that determines how successful one can be making a living in forestry, fishing or mining?

The government has quashed the principle of equality with the Nisga'a treaty. It is assigning democratic rights according to race not based on needs. Canadians find that offensive and an attack on the very foundation of our country. Equality is at the core of what it is to be Canadian.

Imagine my surprise when the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans jumped gleefully to his feet to address my question. *Hansard* shows that his carrying on required the Speaker to ask for calm. In his blathering, the fisheries minister attacked, with rhetoric and misinformation, the Sikhs willing to join the RCMP. What a peculiar notion. Where does he get this stuff from? As a Sikh, I find his remarks offensive. As a Sikh himself, the minister should apologize.

At the Reform Party convention in 1996, the Reform Party passed a resolution supporting a change in the dress code of our RCMP. The fisheries minister, like his government, is living in the past. He should be kept up to date. If he was up to date, he would know that he was wrong about the Reform Party policy.

Later the same day during question period, I rose again and asked point blank why the fisheries minister supported a treaty that segregates Canadians and creates inequality. I informed him that the Reform Party believed in the equality of all Canadians, and that was why, as a Sikh member of the party, I was living proof. The Reform Party of Canada has more members representing ethnic minorities than any other party in the House.

Finally, I challenged the minister to a debate on the Nisga'a treaty in Vancouver, B.C. If the Nisga'a agreement is so representative of the Liberals' position on equality, why does the minister not debate the issue with me? By the minister's refusal, it is obvious to me that he is uncomfortable with the government's bill on the Nisga'a agreement. The Liberal government's bill on the Nisga'a agreement creates inequality for aboriginal women and maintains band control over individual property rights, among other important issues.

After my second question, the Speaker of the House gave the minister an out by saying that the minister did not have to respond, and the minister chickened out again. He refused to answer my challenge. Instead, he attacked me personally based on my religion. He should apologize.

Is he refusing to debate me? I do not know. What is he afraid of? I have no clue. I again ask: Why is the government promoting the Nisga'a treaty that abolishes equal opportunity for all Canadians?

**Mr. David Iftody (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here tonight in the final closing hours of an exciting day to respond to the questions and concerns raised by the member from British Columbia.

*Adjournment Debate*

I will just repeat a number of things that I think are important with respect to clarification on this matter and some of the concerns that he has raised in the House today and on other occasions.

• (1835)

First, it is very important to recognize that section 15 of the charter, the equality sections of the charter of rights and freedoms, apply here to all people. There is no distinction based on race or gender. Those sections are very clear.

Second, with respect to the Nisga'a legislation, section 28 of the charter provides even further clarification on those equalities. If that were not enough, in the 1983 amending conference on the charter of rights and freedoms, section 35(4) was put in the constitution to guarantee that wherever we have aboriginal rights in Canada they would not detract from men or women in any unequal way.

I commend my colleagues, the Liberal members from British Columbia, who have been working on the bill. We debated Bill C-9

in the House this afternoon and we will continue to debate it in the days to come. The opening section of the legislation states quite emphatically that the Nisga'a agreement is subject to the charter of rights and freedoms. This is not a distinction between people based on race and creating inequalities. This is an opportunity for Canadians and all of us to do the right thing, to embrace the Nisga'a people and to welcome them into Canada.

I would remind the hon. member of those first nations people in northern Quebec in 1995 when we had a referendum. They filed into the polls at 40-below to support Canada and Canadians because they wanted to be part of the country. I can tell the House with certainty that the Nisga'a people want to be part of the country as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to be adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.37 p.m.)

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# CONTENTS

Wednesday, October 27, 1999

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

<b>Anthony Toldo Sr.</b>		Mr. Duceppe .....	742
Mr. Limoges .....	737	Mr. Collenette .....	742
<b>West Central Pelleting</b>		Mr. Guimond .....	742
Mr. Ritz .....	737	Mr. Collenette .....	742
<b>Women's History Month</b>		Mr. Guimond .....	742
Mr. Saada .....	737	Mr. Collenette .....	742
<b>Buffett Taylor Chair</b>		Ms. McDonough .....	742
Mrs. Longfield .....	738	Mr. Collenette .....	743
<b>Air Transportation</b>		Ms. McDonough .....	743
Mr. St-Julien .....	738	Mr. Collenette .....	743
<b>Impaired Driving</b>		<b>Homelessness</b>	
Mr. Hill (MacLeod) .....	738	Mrs. Wayne .....	743
<b>National Marine Day</b>		Mrs. Bradshaw .....	743
Mr. Dromisky .....	738	Mrs. Wayne .....	743
<b>The Environment</b>		Mrs. Bradshaw .....	743
Mrs. Venne .....	738	<b>Airline Industry</b>	
<b>Incontinence Awareness Month</b>		Ms. Meredith .....	743
Mrs. Jennings .....	739	Mr. Collenette .....	743
<b>Aboriginal Affairs</b>		Ms. Meredith .....	743
Mr. Mayfield .....	739	Mr. Collenette .....	744
<b>Canadian Neutron Facility</b>		<b>Employment Insurance</b>	
Mr. Clouthier .....	739	Mr. Crête .....	744
<b>National Marine Day</b>		Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	744
Mr. Earle .....	739	Mr. Crête .....	744
<b>Mirabel Airport</b>		Mrs. Stewart (Brant) .....	744
Mrs. Guay .....	740	<b>Agriculture</b>	
<b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>		Mr. Hilstrom .....	744
Mr. Patry .....	740	Mr. Vanclief .....	744
<b>Fisheries</b>		Mr. Hilstrom .....	744
Mr. Power .....	740	Mr. Vanclief .....	744
<b>Agriculture</b>		<b>Homelessness</b>	
Mr. Harvard .....	740	Mrs. Gagnon .....	745
<b>ORAL QUESTION PERIOD</b>		Mrs. Bradshaw .....	745
<b>Taxation</b>		Mrs. Gagnon .....	745
Mr. Strahl .....	741	Mrs. Bradshaw .....	745
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	741	<b>Agriculture</b>	
Mr. Strahl .....	741	Mr. Breitreuz (Yorkton—Melville) .....	745
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	741	Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	745
Mr. Strahl .....	741	Mr. Breitreuz (Yorkton—Melville) .....	745
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	741	Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	745
Mr. Harris .....	741	<b>Genetically Modified Foods</b>	
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	741	Ms. Alarie .....	745
Mr. Harris .....	742	Mr. Rock .....	745
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	742	<b>Health</b>	
<b>Air Transportation</b>		Ms. Bulte .....	746
Mr. Duceppe .....	742	Mr. Rock .....	746
Mr. Collenette .....	742	<b>Nisga'a Treaty</b>	
		Mr. Scott (Skeena) .....	746
		Mr. Dion .....	746
		Mr. Scott (Skeena) .....	746
		Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) .....	746
		<b>Agriculture</b>	
		Mr. Solomon .....	746
		Mr. Vanclief .....	746

Mr. Proctor .....	746
Mr. Vanclief .....	746
<b>Homelessness</b>	
Mr. Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac) .....	747
Mrs. Bradshaw .....	747
Mr. Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac) .....	747
Mrs. Bradshaw .....	747
<b>East Timor</b>	
Mr. O'Reilly .....	747
Mr. Chan .....	747
<b>APEC Inquiry</b>	
Mr. Abbott .....	747
Mr. Chrétien (Saint—Maurice) .....	747
<b>Plutonium Imports</b>	
Ms. Girard—Bujold .....	747
Mr. Goodale .....	748
<b>Banking</b>	
Mr. Nystrom .....	748
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard) .....	748
<b>Fisheries</b>	
Mr. Power .....	748
Mr. MacAulay .....	748
<b>The Environment</b>	
Mr. Jordan .....	748
Mr. Goodale .....	748
<b>Fisheries</b>	
Mr. Lunn .....	748
Mr. O'Brien (Labrador) .....	748
<b>Human Resources Development Canada</b>	
Mr. Laurin .....	749
Mrs. Stewart (Brant) .....	749
<b>Presence in Gallery</b>	
The Speaker .....	749
<b>Point of Order</b>	
<b>Tabling of a Document</b>	
Mr. Laurin .....	749
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	749
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>	
<b>Municipal Grants Act</b>	
Bill C-10 Introduction and first reading .....	749
Mr. Gagliano .....	749
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	749
<b>Cape Breton Development Corporation</b>	
<b>Divestiture Authorization and Dissolution Act</b>	
Bill C-11. Introduction and first reading .....	749
Mr. Goodale .....	749
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	749
<b>Employment Insurance Act</b>	
Bill C-271. Introduction and first reading .....	750
Mr. Crête .....	750
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	750

<b>Employment Insurance Act</b>	
Bill C-272. Introduction and first reading .....	750
Mr. Crête .....	750
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	750
<b>Criminal Code</b>	
Bill C-273. Introduction and first reading .....	750
Ms. Davies .....	750
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	750
<b>Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act</b>	
Bill C-274. Introduction and first reading .....	750
Ms. Davies .....	750
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	750
<b>Employment Insurance Act</b>	
Bill C-275. Introduction and first reading .....	750
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic) .....	750
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.) .....	750
<b>Petitions</b>	
<b>Child Pornography</b>	
Mr. Benoit .....	751
<b>Crimes against Humanity</b>	
Mr. Assadourian .....	751
<b>The Senate</b>	
Mr. Nystrom .....	751
<b>Child Pornography</b>	
Mr. Perić .....	751
<b>Property Rights</b>	
Mr. Lunn .....	751
<b>Camp Ipperwash</b>	
Mrs. Ur .....	751
<b>Marriage</b>	
Ms. Davies .....	751
<b>National Debt</b>	
Ms. St-Jacques .....	751
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Bevilacqua .....	752
<b>Pay Equity</b>	
Mr. Cadman .....	752
<b>The Constitution</b>	
Mr. Cadman .....	752
<b>Yugoslavia</b>	
Mr. McWhinney .....	752
<b>Hepatitis</b>	
Mr. Stoffer .....	752
<b>Nisga'a Treaty</b>	
Mr. Hart .....	752
<b>Incontinence</b>	
Mrs. Jennings .....	752
<b>The Constitution</b>	
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	752
<b>Immigration</b>	
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	752
<b>The Snowbirds</b>	
Mr. Proctor .....	752
<b>Immigration</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	753
<b>The Snowbirds</b>	
Mr. Solomon .....	753
<b>Bill C-207</b>	
Mr. Vellacott .....	753

<b>Merchant Navy Veterans</b>	
Mr. Goldring .....	753
<b>The Senate</b>	
Mr. Riis .....	753
<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
Mr. Lee .....	753
<b>Motions for Papers</b>	
Mr. Lee .....	753

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

<b>Nisga'a Final Agreement Act</b>	
Bill C-9. Second reading .....	754
Mr. McNally .....	754
Mr. Elley .....	754
Amendment to the amendment .....	754
Mr. Duncan .....	754
Mr. Riis .....	754
Mr. Iftody .....	758
Mr. Riis .....	758
Mr. Duncan .....	758
Mr. Riis .....	758
Mr. Hart .....	758
Mr. Riis .....	758
Mr. Stoffer .....	759
Mr. Riis .....	759
Mr. Duncan .....	759
Mr. Epp .....	761
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest) .....	761
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) .....	762
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	764
Mr. Mayfield .....	766
Mr. Stinson .....	767
Mr. Stoffer .....	768
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	769
Mr. Hart .....	770
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	770
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	770

Mr. Peterson .....	771
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	771
Motion .....	771
Mr. Epp .....	771
(Motion withdrawn) .....	771
Mr. Earle .....	771
Mr. Earle .....	772
Mr. Reynolds .....	773
Mr. Iftody .....	773
Mr. Reynolds .....	773
Mr. Stoffer .....	773
Mr. Reynolds .....	773
Mr. Reynolds .....	774
Mr. Iftody .....	774
Mr. Reynolds .....	774
Mr. Reynolds .....	774
Mr. Peterson .....	774
Mr. Reynolds .....	774
Mr. Strahl .....	775
Mr. Epp .....	776
Mr. Boudria .....	778
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	778
Mr. Boudria .....	778
Mr. Epp .....	778
Mr. Boudria .....	778
Motion .....	778
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	778
(Motion withdrawn) .....	779
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford) .....	779
Mr. MacKay .....	779
Mr. Strahl .....	779
Mr. Lunn .....	779

**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

<b>Aboriginal Affairs</b>	
Mr. Grewal .....	780
Mr. Iftody .....	780

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