



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, June 13, 2002**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 13, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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### SPECIFIC CLAIMS RESOLUTION ACT

**Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Centre for the Independent Resolution of First Nations Specific Claims to provide for the filing, negotiation and resolution of specific claims and to make related amendments to other acts.

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

\* \* \*

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34 I have the honour to present to the House the report from the Canadian Branch, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, concerning the 51st seminar on parliamentary practice and procedure at Westminster, United Kingdom, which was held from May 14 to 24, 2002.

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, presented in the House on Thursday, March 21, be concurred in.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

I rise today to draw the attention of the government to a very important report by the disability subcommittee on the issue of the disability tax credit and the government's recent initiative to have over 100,000 Canadians with disabilities requalify for the disability tax credit.

The reason I rise on this issue today is because the House is about to leave for the summer recess and we as parliamentarians will have at least a break from the regimen of this place. However, as we all know and hear daily from constituents, for Canadians across the country with disabilities, there is no respite and no break from the relentless struggles for those persons to eke out a living, to maintain self-esteem and a sense of hope in the face of enormous obstacles.

While MPs and the eye of the government will not be focused as intently on the legislative process and the reports of committees over the summer months, the real lives of persons with disabilities will continue to experience the hardships brought about by the recent decision of the government to embark on the arbitrary review of eligibility for over 100,000 Canadians.

Over the past several months 106,000 Canadians, who currently receive the disability tax credit, received a letter from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency that states:

After reviewing your file, we have determined that we do not have enough information to continue to allow your claim for the 2001 and future tax years.

The letter goes on to tell the citizens that they must reapply to maintain their benefit.

The House of Commons subcommittee on the status of persons with disabilities, a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, held hearings over many months on the matter facing Canadians with disabilities, specifically focusing on the form change, the view of the disability organizations and the medical community.

We have heard many things that broke our hearts, that angered us and hardened our resolve to do better for persons with disabilities. A mother, whose adult daughter has an intellectual disability, told us that the whole family had to work so hard to focus on the daughter's strengths and abilities. They will now have to take cap in hand to a doctor to focus on her disabilities to get a small tax credit to assist with the many costs which disabilities bring to individuals and families.

*Routine Proceedings*

We heard from people with lifelong hearing, sight impairment and disabling genetic disorders who were being told that they must spend \$30 to \$150 to have a doctor fill out a form that says: "Yes, they are still blind. Yes, they are still deaf. Yes, they still have Down's syndrome". The whole scheme is so punitive, so unjust and so painful really for the persons involved.

New Democratic members of parliament have received hundreds of calls from Canadians who are being harassed by this policy. Under the DTC, an individual or independent may claim a non-refundable credit of \$960. This credit is designed to provide a measure of financial relief for the increased cost of living with a disability. Approximately 200,000 Canadians claim that credit annually, but if the government has its way that number will be significantly decreased. Here are some of the individuals who will no longer be eligible for the DTC.

These are some of the horror stories we have heard as New Democrat parliamentarians. A former public service employee from Atlantic Canada had one leg amputated and a severe neurological disorder. She got the DTC letter in November and her doctor is now reluctant to re-approve, saying that she can technically walk 50 metres with her artificial leg. However her leg is not always on and even when it is, she cannot walk on an incline or a ramp. She will not appeal this. She is very frightened that she will lose her LTD and her CPP disability benefits if the Liberals can identify her. It is a shameful example of people being targeted by the government on such an important issue.

• (1010)

A Winnipeg woman had been receiving the credit since 1991. During a recent medical appointment caused by the CCRA letter, her doctor informed her that she no longer qualified for the disability tax credit. The reason: thanks to her leg braces she is now able to walk somewhat. As she has said, she cannot do up her buttons and she cannot get out of bed by herself but she is now technically able to walk. If she falls down she would be unable to get up. She is unable to be alone. She is now unable to receive the disability tax credit.

It appears to any thinking, caring person that persons with disabilities, with this initiative around the tax credit, are being targeted and harassed by this government. They are not being supported. They are not being assisted.

We have seen many other examples of that over the course of the last several years. We have seen the CPP disability program shrink. We have seen the benefits shrink and the eligibility criteria hardened. We have seen the elimination of the Canada assistance program, CAP, which was essential in providing disability support for persons across the country. We have seen an enormous patchwork of quality of various kinds of services available for people with the same disabilities across the country. I have personally seen in my community a crisis in education for young people with disabilities who no longer are getting the support they need for them to have equal citizenship in Canada. Why is this happening? Why are we facing this?

In 1982 the charter of rights and freedoms was passed, declaring that all Canadians were entitled to equal protection and equal benefit under the law without discrimination based on race, nation or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. The

charter, combined with disability clauses in the provincial human rights code, protects persons with disabilities from some of the most blatant forms of discrimination.

Canadians with disabilities are a long way from the promised land of full participation, equality and access. Many of the nearly five million Canadians are facing poverty, lack of housing and a severe hardship in the supports that they need to live.

I would like to give time for my colleague to speak on this issue as well, but I would like to tell the House the points that were made in our report of the disability subcommittee. I would like to read them into the record. I want to ensure that these initiatives are looked at very carefully and immediately by the government and that it acts on them. I will then pass the floor to my colleague so he can speak on this.

Disability issues do not take a summer vacation. At the conclusion of our hearings the subcommittee tabled a report on April 21, 2002, critical of the government. The members of the subcommittee recommended the following.

One, that the CCRA apologize to the 106 Canadians who received a poorly explained letter from the agency indicating that they were no longer eligible for the DTC despite the fact that these individuals had been receiving this credit for anywhere between six and 17 years.

Two, we believe they need compensation for the expenses of those who have successfully recertified.

Three, we believe there should be no new reassessment of claimants until the certification process is revised and then new procedures and forms put in place.

Four, we also believe there should be an immediate amendment to the Income Tax Act so that it incorporates recent court decisions.

Five, we believe that consultation with disability communities and medical professionals needs to happen to draft amendments to the Income Tax Act that spell out exactly the eligibility criteria for the tax credit that reflects the reality of living with a disability.

Six, we believe that we need to have an immediate redesigning of form T-2201 that establishes eligibility for the tax credit and streamlining approval process.

• (1015)

Seven, we believe an educational campaign is necessary for the public, for medical practitioners and tax preparers. We need an evaluation of the disability tax credit and a re-examination of all tax measures affecting persons with disabilities.

We rise today to make sure that everyone in the House and that the government is aware that the disability tax credit is an issue on the minds of hundreds of thousands of disabled persons who are feeling the crunch from this cynical and very punitive measure.

*Routine Proceedings*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Dartmouth who brought forward this motion in the House today.

This motion is very important because the government recently decided to send forms to all persons with disabilities. They now have to ask their doctor to fill out the form or their disability tax credit will be cut once they have sent in their income tax return.

Not content to go after the unemployed, the government also went after on the most vulnerable members of our society and now it is going after persons with disabilities who have received tax deductions over the last ten years.

For example, in my riding, a lady with an artificial leg came to my office and said “Look at this; I need a new pair of pants each month because my artificial limb cuts my pants. It is very costly. I was always recognized as an handicapped person and obtained the disability tax credit”.

Now the government has changed its mind and is requiring that a form be filled out. Some doctors have even refused to do so, saying their job is to help sick people. The government sent the form to every person with disabilities in Canada, and that has increased the workload of doctors, who certainly did not need the additional work.

Does the member for Dartmouth have the same problem in her riding? Did she also hear other members say that persons with disabilities in their ridings have the same problem?

What is happening, in this parliament, is outrageous.

• (1020)

[*English*]

**Ms. Wendy Lill:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst spoke with a great deal of passion. As parliamentarians we have all heard from the people who come into our riding offices telling us how desperate they are for disability support and assistance to buy wheelchairs, hearing devices and respite services for families caring for people who have multiple disabilities.

We cannot deny the fact that we are looking at a population that is incredibly disadvantaged. We have a population that has inadequate income support and rehabilitation programs. One out of three severely disabled Canadians live in poverty. At least 40% of Canadians with disabilities are unemployed. Many workplaces are completely closed to persons with disabilities. They are just not able to enter the workforce. Workers with disabilities often are not covered by basic employment standards, minimum wage legislation, occupational health and safety and workers' compensation. Most transportation systems still remain inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities are often without the support they need to exercise their right to an education. There is a shortage of affordable and accessible housing for persons with disabilities.

The rate of disabilities in the aboriginal community is twice that of the general population. Women, aboriginal and visible minorities with disabilities face double and even triple the discrimination. On top of all of this, we have systemic discrimination and harassment by the government with this very punitive measure to try to haul back a

very small tax credit that gave some level of support for some of the most vulnerable people in our society. It is just a disgrace.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Dartmouth for this motion, but my remarks on this motion will deal more with a certain tendency of the government.

I remember the fight the Bloc Québécois and several members of the House waged concerning the guaranteed income supplement. A pervasive tendency in this government and this parliament is to exclude certain groups of citizens, very often disadvantaged people. The guaranteed income supplement issue concerned senior citizens, but the issue raised by my colleague affects persons with disabilities, who are not getting what they are entitled to.

We have here a kind of principle, a basic tendency in this government to exclude the most disadvantaged people, the most vulnerable people in our society. The fact that persons with disabilities are not getting a tax credit is further evidence of the fact that we do not have a policy of inclusion to fight against poverty.

[*English*]

**Ms. Wendy Lill:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we are looking at a government that continues to pull back on services to the most vulnerable in the community. We see it with the disability tax credit and we saw it with the Canada pension plan disability program when the government cut back the number of people eligible and reduced the amount of support. It has done this at a time when we are seeing a demographic wave of seniors who will need more and more supports if they become disabled. We need to have that completely rethought at the government level. I will be very much a part of that happening.

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

• (1025)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to personally congratulate and thank my hon. colleague from Dartmouth who has probably done more than anyone else in terms of parliamentary work to raise the issue of people with disabilities in this parliament.

I also want to send congratulations and kudos to Mr. Jerry Pye, who is an MLA for the New Democratic Party in Dartmouth North. He himself has a disability and has been fighting his whole life for people with disabilities.

*Routine Proceedings*

There is no way I could match the words, comments and tone the hon. member for Dartmouth so eloquently put forth in describing some of the concerns of people over the disability tax credit. What I will bring is the anger I feel toward the government for what it has done to the most vulnerable people in society. If we as parliamentarians cannot help or offer hope to the most vulnerable in our society we do not deserve to be elected. The House should shut down permanently until we get our facts straight. It is a disgrace to our country, not only nationally but internationally, that we treat the most vulnerable in our society in such a despicable manner.

I know a person in Enfield, Nova Scotia who is a quadriplegic and who is a mouth painter by profession. He has been denied a disability tax credit. My question to the government is why in God's name did the government cut that person off his disability tax credit?

Another person, Philip Gubger, whose leg was amputated at the age of 13, has great difficulty moving around. The \$800 a year he claimed for his tax credit is gone. Why did that happen?

The government members should hang their heads in shame. I cannot believe that 106,000 Canadians, and that is just the tip of the iceberg, could be treated in such a callous manner. The political sycophants over there do not deserve to call themselves the government.

I challenge the government members. If they cannot get their own house in order in terms of who wants to lead the party, they should call an election now and we will defeat them at the polls so that every single one of them will be gone from the land. It is unbelievable what those people are capable of doing to the most vulnerable in our society.

I am so angry at the government that I will narrow the discussion down to war veterans. No matter how hard I try to be as nice as I can to the members on that side, I cannot believe how they pick on double amputees. These people fought for this country and lost both their legs in the war. However, because they are in wheelchairs and can go 50 metres they are cut off their disability tax credit. It is unbelievable.

My family was rescued and liberated by the sacrifices of those Canadians. We moved to this country in 1956. My mother is deeply ashamed that those veterans who fought so hard and sacrificed so much are now being treated so callously in their final years.

The government members should hang their heads in shame. They should be ashamed to even call themselves parliamentarians when they do that to the most vulnerable in our society. They go on doorsteps and hand out their householders and say what a great job they have done for the country but they are ashamed to even admit what they have done to those people in our country with disabilities. It is unbelievable.

I cannot thank my colleague from Dartmouth enough for raising this issue in a more passionate and composed manner than I could. It is unbelievable that we as parliamentarians and the Liberal members on that side attack in such a callous way the most vulnerable in our society. We are talking about mothers and fathers with children who are amputees, people with Parkinson's disease and people with muscular sclerosis.

Thousands and thousands of people from hundreds of organizations across the country have written to us asking us to do something to encourage the government to change that form and give these people back their disability tax credits.

What is really sad is that the government makes these people pay on top of that. It costs \$35 to take the form to the doctor. By the way, no one at the Canadian Medical Association was advised that this form was coming. No one told the doctors that 106,000 vulnerable people in our society will have to appear on their doorsteps. Of course the doctors will not lie. They have ethics. They will write down the fact that, yes, that person somehow can go 50 metres on a flat surface with a device. The advice is for them to appeal. It would cost them \$125 to do that, as well as the time it takes.

• (1030)

It is unbelievable. Not only does the government take away their disability tax credit, it charges them even more money. We are talking about people with low or no income. We are not talking about the rich in our society or those who are well off. We are talking about the most vulnerable in our society.

How dare those Liberals call themselves the government. It is absolutely unbelievable. They balance the budget, give the money to their corporate welfare bums and take the money away from the most vulnerable. What do they also do with the money? Against all of the advice from the military and the House of Commons, they buy themselves two nice cushy Challenger jets so they can fly across the country.

I wonder what the Liberals would like to tell the people who are double amputees, the mothers and fathers of children who are disabled, the veterans who fought for this country who are disabled, and those people who cannot even afford to leave their houses? It is a measly \$400 to \$1,000. That is all we are talking about for a person who claims the disability tax credit.

Some insane bureaucrat convinced some useless minister that this was the best way to go. We saw it with employment insurance. The government ruthlessly cut off the workers of the country from any assistance when their jobs were gone. It just carried that on. It attacked the workers and businesses of the country. It thought it could get away with it and continue on with this ruthlessness and pick on the most vulnerable. Who will they pick on next? Who is next so it can turn around and give that money away to its corporate buddies?

I find it absolutely insane that as a parliamentarian I must rise in the House to discuss this issue. It is not an issue we should have to be discussing. It is such common sense. The most vulnerable in our society should have a voice. They should have equal status and should never ever be picked on. This is what the government has done.

I notice that most of the government members are not here because they do not want to hear it. They close the doors. They do not return the phone calls. They do not answer the letters. We in the opposition do. The New Democratic Party is proud to stand up in the House and in any legislature across the country to fight for and defend the rights of people with disabilities.

*Routine Proceedings*

In the most parliamentary manner I encourage the government to reverse the dangerous path that it is on. I ask it to stop picking on the most vulnerable in our society and give those people back their tax credit that they so rightfully deserve so that they can have some sort of a decent lifestyle in this overtaxed country that we live in today.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I noted the remarks of NDP members this morning. We have the same problem in my great riding of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik.

I totally support the remarks these members made, because we must review this government decision, as soon as possible. I know what I am talking about, since one of my brothers is a person with disabilities.

When persons with disabilities are under attack, this is what I have to say.

My staff has recently told me about certain cases. My assistant Françoise Lamarche is working very hard on social issues. As it stands right now, Quebec agrees with tax credits, and is standing firm on its position, but the Canadian government is backing away and penalizing persons with disabilities.

I would like to ask the hon. member opposite if there are many cases like this in all provinces and in Quebec.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take one statement back. There is an individual on the Liberal side from Abitibi who does have a heart and does care. I wish to congratulate the member for that. However I wish to remind the House that it was an all-party unanimous report on this. Nine Liberals including the chair with the opposition agreed to that report. If the government will not listen to the opposition, then it damn well better listen to its own backbench Liberals. I cannot help but thank the member from Abitibi for supporting this effort. I know his constituents will be well served by his efforts.

• (1035)

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the member opposite for telling it as it really is.

I wish to ask my colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore in relation to a statement he made about friends of his who could barely manipulate physically but because they had some movement were being told they do not need a tax credit. I had an individual approach me who told me he had a question to answer which was: “can you walk 150 feet”? He said he could walk 150 miles if somebody would only put on his shoes.

This is what we are running into. This decision by government to retract a tax credit from people who most need it is the most idiotic piece of legislation that we have ever seen in our lives. It is absurd, unbelievable and one that the government should never be let away with.

Does the hon. member have, besides the couple of examples he mentioned, more examples of what I am talking about in relation to the support for putting back this tax credit where it should be?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for St. John's West for bringing this up. He is absolutely correct. I can cite hundreds of examples. However, as my colleague from Dartmouth said, very few people will let their names go public because they are afraid that the government may take away another benefit they may have.

I want to thank the members from Quebec because the Quebec province is assisting any way that it can to help people with disabilities. It is leading the way. If that province can do it, surely the government can do it.

I notice my hon. colleague from Halifax West, who I have great respect for, who is on the other side. I ask him to look into his heart and ask the government what it is prepared to do to change this ruthless act that it has imposed upon the most vulnerable in our society.

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to say to my colleague that we have seen in the past the government pass legislation extremely quickly when it wanted to. It can do that, with even some opposition from this side of the House. Is there a will of the House to ensure that this type of discrimination and this action against disabled people in Canada stops taking place? I would be hard pressed to see why unanimous consent would not be found to get rid of this legislation right here and now and ensure it is done before it comes to a vote. Will we see any justice for that?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I am not sure if the hon. member is asking for unanimous consent to put this motion.

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, certainly I ask for the unanimous consent of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** This is a debate and therefore the member cannot ask for unanimous consent to put the motion. A vote would be taken at the end of the debate.

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Dartmouth for raising this issue today. I appreciate the comments from my hon. colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

I have received calls about this issue. My staff and I have raised the issue with the hon. minister responsible for the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. People have come to us to express their concern about having received in the past the disability tax credit and then were cut off.

The answer I have received from the office of the minister has been that a few years ago there was an audit done of the program and it found that there were many people receiving the disability tax credit who did not qualify under the terms of the tax credit and the department basically told them they should follow the rules of their own tax credit.

I appreciate the facts that the members have raised this morning. Obviously the people who called me did not like that answer and I appreciate their concerns. I feel for what they are saying and for what my colleagues are arguing. It is valuable that this issue has been raised this morning. I am sure the minister will take note of this issue and consider these arguments in looking at the legislation, so I appreciate it very much.

*Government Orders*

At this time I would like to move the following motion. I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

• (1040)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You will rule me out of order but that is exactly what we are talking about. The government is afraid to debate this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 372)

## YEAS

## Members

Alcock	Allard
Anderson (Victoria)	Augustine
Bagnell	Barnes (London West)
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Caccia
Carroll	Castonguay
Catterall	Cauchon
Coderre	Comuzzi
Copps	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Drouin
Duplain	Easter
Eggleton	Finlay
Frulla	Fry
Galloway	Godfrey
Goodale	Harb
Harvard	Harvey
Hubbard	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lincoln
Macklin	Mahoney
Malhi	Manley
Marcil	Marleau
Matthews	McCallum
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers

Nault	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Patry	Peric
Peschisolido	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Richardson	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Shepherd
Simard	Speller
St-Jacques	St. Denis
Steckle	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood— 114

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Asselin	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bigras	Borotsik
Bourgeois	Brison
Burton	Cadman
Cardin	Casey
Crête	Cummins
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Duceppe	Duncan
Epp	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gallant
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin	Guimond
Harris	Hearn
Herron	Hinton
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lebel	Lill
Loubier	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mayfield
Ménard	Meredith
Obhrai	Pallister
Proctor	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Sauvageau	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	St-Hilaire
St-Julien	Stoffer
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Vellacott
Wayne	Williams— 56

## PAIRED

Nil

• (1120)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I declare the motion carried.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT**

The House resumed from June 12, 2002 consideration of the motion that Bill C-53, An Act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests, be read a third time and passed.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-53, to amend the pesticides act.

For almost half an hour, perhaps 40 minutes, I will try to give the background of what the pesticides act was and of what we would wish for in a future pesticides act. I will, of course, talk about the harmful effects of the use of pesticides, both in Quebec and in Canada; about the current legislation, but also existing provincial legislation, particularly in Quebec; about the implementation of this legislation and about some recent supreme court decisions concerning, among other things, the Hudson bylaw on the use of pesticides. I will also talk about power sharing under the current constitution.

We know that the federal government can get involved in this area, and we have never challenged this. This is one of the reasons why we will vote for Bill C-53.

In Quebec, a task force looked at the issue. As a result, the Quebec minister of the environment is preparing a policy that can and must complement the current legislation and the changes that we are in the process of making.

I will also deal with the issue of the analyses done by the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, on which my colleague from Jonquière sat and whose May 2000 report proposed certain avenues to the government regarding pesticides management, registration and use in Canada. In some respects—I will get back to this later—we feel the committee went a little bit too far in its proposals to ban and prohibit the cosmetic use of pesticides. However, some proposals that I pushed for and my colleague vigorously and steadfastly defended when she was on the committee are part of the report and have been a source of inspiration for us both in committee and here in the House as witnessed by the motions and amendment we put forward.

I will talk about the Cousineau discussion group in Quebec looking at the use of pesticides in urban areas, Bill C-53, the amendments put forward in committee and what we want as a model for pest control management. This is the proper term to use.

My first point will be the harmful effects of pesticide use. An increasing number of studies, both in the U.S. and in Canada, show that frequent pesticide use in urban areas, on private land and in agriculture has harmful effects, especially on children. This is one of the reasons why the government introduced this bill.

Several groups pointed it out to us. Even if the children are not affected in their physical development, we know that learning disabilities are frequently linked to the fact that some children grow in an environment where pesticides are used frequently. Several U.S. studies point to what has now become obvious. Moreover, groups specializing in early childhood development told us they wanted tests aimed at evaluating the impact of pesticides on children's learning disabilities to be taken into consideration when registering new pesticides and re-evaluating existing pesticides.

•(1125)

It has been proven that pesticide use has a major impact on pregnant women, infants and children. Thus, the object of Bill C-53 we are addressing today is, as its title would indicate, to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests.

The pesticide industry in Canada is—and this is a very appropriate term—flourishing. Canadian sales are around \$1.4 billion, and we

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are told that, in Quebec alone, half the lawns are treated with pesticides at this time. Pesticide use is, therefore, frequent. The figure given for Quebec alone in 1997 is 8,200 metric tonnes, with a major increase between 1990 and 1996, 60%, for ornamentals alone.

More than 300 kilos are used in public areas alone, that is parks and other public lands, in Montreal. We are told that 80% of pesticide use is agricultural.

This is, therefore, a flourishing industry, a major industry, so we must realize that we cannot just turn up with legislation without at the same time developing alternatives. If we want the public to make use of other solutions, other methods, they have to be made available.

It is wrong to think that a law banning pesticide use would be enough on its own to accomplish a real battle against pests in Quebec and in Canada. Alternatives must be made available so that the industry and the public can find effective solutions.

What we are engaged in today is not without importance. We are re-evaluating a law that has been around for 33 years. The year I was born, 1969, was when Canada enacted pesticide legislation. Thirty-three years later, here we are reviewing it. There has not been any abuse, but the time has come to review the legislation. We are dealing with 6,000 pesticides containing more than 500 active ingredients that were evaluated prior to 1980.

•(1130)

[*English*]

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I apologize for interrupting the hon. member. There have been consultations among all parties in the House about two issues I wish to present to the House. First, I would seek unanimous consent to move without debate the adoption of government business No. 29 which would amend the standing orders. I could read the order into the record but there has been consultation and perhaps the House would agree to dispense with the reading of it. It is the one to do with royal assent.

Could the Chair see if there is unanimous consent to move the motion and that it then be carried?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richardson):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

•(1135)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, I will continue with my speech on Bill C-53, which, as I indicated, seeks to amend an act that has been in effect for 33 years.

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What we are in the process of doing is rather important, and it is also important to pass this bill. However, in my opinion, we should have adopted certain amendments. We are currently faced with a situation where the vast majority of the 6,000 pesticides in Canada, which contain 500 active ingredients, were evaluated by using 33 year old standards. The result of this is that we do not really know the impact of the use of these pesticides, both on public health and on the environment.

This change was urgently required, not only because, in my opinion, the evaluation standards are outdated, but also because we were told—and the environmental commissioner was very clear on this a several years ago—that the agency responsible for the registration and re-evaluation of pesticides is ineffective and is not operating properly.

So, it was important that these changes be made quickly. In her 1999 report, the commissioner indicated that the process lacked clarity and that certain aspects of the special examinations were dealt with in a negligent manner.

She also indicated that there was a lack of re-evaluation programs and that Canada was lagging far behind other countries. An international comparative study was conducted and Canada ranked behind the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia in terms of the percentage of expenditures earmarked for the evaluation of pesticides.

Therefore, it was important that this legislation be reviewed quickly and that the agency be given the means to conduct good re-evaluations and implement a sound registration process.

This is why, at the time, we asked for these legislative amendments. Moreover, as I indicated, Quebec passed its own pesticide legislation in 1987.

We believe that the legislation can and must reflect a degree of complementarity in terms of the measures taken and pest control. Let me explain. We on this side of the House feel that the federal government is responsible for the registration, marketing and labelling of pesticides.

We also believe that the provinces, including Quebec, are responsible for the use of pesticides. It goes without saying that municipalities also have a role to play.

However, the role played by municipalities today is fairly complex. Why? Partly as a result of a supreme court judgment from June 2001. This judgment gave the town of Hudson the power to regulate the cosmetic use of pesticides.

In 1991, the town of Hudson decided to pass a bylaw banning the use of pesticides.

There were many legal challenges in Quebec courts. This ended with the supreme court judgment in November 2001, which stated that since municipalities were provincial creations under Quebec's Cities and Towns Act and the Municipal Code of Québec, they have the right to regulate the cosmetic use of pesticides.

• (1140)

However, this judgment made reference to the fact that municipalities are under provincial, not federal, jurisdiction. That

is when Quebec decided to act, establishing the Cousineau discussion group on October 25, 2001, to look at the use of pesticides in urban areas. For four days in January 2002, the group heard from more than 550 organizations and individuals, and it reached a certain number of conclusions.

First, the group plans on telling the minister “There must be a plan to ban the use of pesticides. We must set a three year deadline for public spaces, such as parks, public sites, schools and childcare centres”.

Is it right that we are still spreading pesticides in urban areas, in parks and childcare centers, when we know full well the impact they can have on children and nursing and pregnant women?

The group said “Let us give ourselves three years to ban the use of pesticides in public places, and five years for trees and shrubs”. This is one of the report's strong conclusions.

The second recommendation says that a training program for environmental management stakeholders should quickly be put in place. It does not make sense that workers, sales persons and people who use pesticides on a daily basis do not know the way to use them. We believe that the provinces should establish management and training programs.

Also, as I have already mentioned, alternative procedures have to be put in place and we must establish, and this is fundamental, a pesticide management code or, as it is called, a regulatory framework.

Following the supreme court's decision regarding the town of Hudson and the tabling of the Cousineau report, I believe that we should implement in Quebec a national standard for the use of pesticides, which could be called a code of environmental management, or pesticide management code, to ensure compliance, so that all municipalities, not one but all, implement this management code across Quebec.

These are the main recommendations of the Cousineau report, which the Quebec environment minister has received and on the basis of which he pledged to introduce a policy.

Before that, in May 2000, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, of which my colleague from Jonquière was a member, tabled its report. The committee did a serious study on the use of pesticides and several conclusions came out of its work. This is what the committee recommends.

First, members of the committee believe that we should eliminate, within five years, the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. This is one of the main conclusions of the Standing Committee, though we should be cautious about that. The federal government itself recognized that it does not have the power to prohibit, under the Constitution, the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes, which is a provincial jurisdiction.

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●(1145)

We feel that the federal government should be responsible for the registration and marketing of pesticides and that the provinces should be responsible for their use. This time, the federal government must be given credit for deciding to mind its own business, unlike with other legislation. It decided to confine its activities to marketing and registration. We will come back to this. The PMRA works very badly and lacks transparency. There are no provisions in the bill for a ban.

But the provinces must act. Quebec has promised to eliminate the use of pesticides in public places over a period of three to five years.

We recommend that the precautionary principle be an important element. This recommendation was made in committee. The member for Louis-Hébert also sat on the committee and, for once, there was no partisanship. We were all of the same opinion; the government should stick to its own business. There was solid unanimity, and this included Department of Justice officials, which was recognized by the federal government.

I do not know whether the present leadership struggle has anything to do with the apparently greater receptiveness to a provincial role, but I think that we had some good exchanges in committee. In any event, we concluded that the federal government should not ban cosmetic use.

At the time, the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development thought that the precautionary principle should be the cornerstone of Bill C-53. Unfortunately, this was not to be. Both the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party put forward amendments in committee so that the precautionary principle would not be confined to a single clause of the bill—clause 23, if I am not mistaken—but would also be part of the preamble. We wanted the precautionary principle to become the cornerstone of pest control legislation in Canada.

The government steamroller operated in committee, as it has for many other bills. There was no infighting because the steamroller had paved the way. The amendments put forward by the member on my left, from the Progressive Conservative Party, were rejected. The New Democratic Party amendments were rejected. The Canadian Alliance party, to my right, had a completely different vision of pest control. It wanted more powers for the industry, because it feels that it is an industry.

If we want to protect the environment and public health, the precautionary principle must be part of more than just one clause in the bill. It must be included in the preamble, the law, and the regulations, which is not the case at present.

We are really disappointed with the government's attitude. The environment commissioner came before the committee to tell us that if Canada wants to meet its international commitments to the environment and sustainable development, it must do more than just settle for signing conventions, as it did with the Rio Convention in 1992. As we prepare, ten years post-Rio, to go to Johannesburg, the federal government is still refusing to include the precautionary principle in its legislation.

●(1150)

The commissioner was clear on this. If Canada wants to meet its international commitments, it must take steps to ensure that all its environmental legislation includes the precautionary principle. Unfortunately, this is not the case with this bill. The government rejected the amendments presented by the four opposition parties in this House.

We also feel that deadlines need to be imposed for the process of re-evaluation, although of course there are some set in the bill. But we never know when this will be over. As a result, there are still pesticides on the market that were evaluated years ago, up to 33 years ago. They are in the process of being re-evaluated, but the public still has access to them without necessarily having any information on their public health impact.

Those of us, the majority of us, in opposition believe that a date must be indicated by which re-evaluation will be terminated. This the government has refused to do.

As I have said, there will never be a real battle against pesticides if we choose to ban their use without developing any alternatives to the present use of pesticides on public and private property.

We on this side of the House believe that the government missed a golden opportunity to speed up the registration process for biopesticides. We should not talk only about pest control or pest management, but also about biopesticides.

As we know, in Canada there are only 30 biopesticides available on the market, compared to over 150 in the United States. If the government wants to come up with a true alternative to the pesticides that are currently being used by over 80% of the agricultural sector, why did it not speed up the registration process for biopesticides, particularly in the ornamental horticulture sector?

People from the ornamental horticulture sector came to both Quebec City and Ottawa and said that if there were alternatives, they would use them. They told us that they did not like using pesticides. The reason they do is because there are no alternatives.

So, we must speed up the registration process for biopesticides in Canada, so as to make up for the lost ground, because Canada is seriously lagging behind in this area. We also believed that a support program should be set up for farmers who want to stop using pesticides on their land.

Earlier, I said that agriculture accounts for 80% of the pesticides used in Canada and in Quebec. This is a significant critical mass. This is what, to some extent, ensures the industry's survival. We on this side of the House think that an incentive and support program must be set up for farmers who want to eliminate the use of pesticides and promote organic farming in Canada.

Why would Canada not have programs similar to those that exist in Europe?

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•(1155)

In Europe they offer financial incentives to eliminate pesticides. They have programs to support organic farming, and technical programs to promote organic farming and offer competitive products. This is something the Canadian government refused to do and is still refusing to do, leaving us very disappointed.

If we are serious about protecting the environment and public health, the PMRA must do a better job. In this respect, the 1999 report by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development is very enlightening. She said that out of 500 active ingredients found in registered pesticides, over 300 were approved before 1981, and over 150 before 1960.

This means that there are still 150 active ingredients in approximately 6 000 pesticides available on the Canadian market. These pesticides were registered before 1960 without knowing what their true impact on public health and the environment was. There is obviously a problem with regard to registration.

Moreover, the commissioner said there was a blatant lack of re-evaluation programs. This is what she said:

In 1986, priorities for re-evaluation were developed by Agriculture Canada, which at that time was responsible for pesticides registration.

According to the PMRA, it is obvious that this delayed the implementation of re-evaluation programs. The commissioner believes that without efficient re-evaluation programs, there is no guarantee Canadians are not exposed to unacceptable risks.

This is the reality of pest control management in Canada, which is lagging far behind other countries.

The federal government wants to interfere in the area of health care and impose national standards while in its own areas of jurisdiction, areas under its own responsibility, it is unable to manage pest control in Canada to ensure that Canadians are not exposed to unacceptable risks.

This is a pretty damning observation by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. She tells us that an international benchmarking study commissioned by the PMRA ranked Canada behind the United States, the U.K. and Australia in the ratio of spending on re-evaluation of existing pesticides to spending on registration of new pesticides.

She indicates that in 1997-98, the government spent 25% more on re-evaluation activities than on the registration of new pesticides. She also tells us that few re-evaluations are undertaken in Canada and that the special review process is exceptional. Finally, she says that a clear process is lacking at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which should be developing and implementing a program to re-evaluate pesticides now registered for use in Canada.

•(1200)

In conclusion, we will be voting in favour of Bill C-53. I am my party's environment critic, and rare are the government bills which do not interfere in provincial jurisdiction. The endangered species legislation interfered directly in provincial jurisdiction through the introduction of a double safety net.

As for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act process, the former environment minister for Quebec, Pierre Paradis, decided in the early 1990's to denounce the earlier version of this bill, which we are now considering. He said "The government's approach when it comes to environmental assessment is completely unacceptable".

Since then, Quebec has withdrawn from discussions on environmental assessment. Quebec has spoken with a single, unified voice on this, as well as endangered species. Incidentally, I see the sponsor of the Quebec legislation, Quebec's environment minister from 1989, in the government benches.

This government accepted provisions of the legislation that created a double safety net, which led to the situation where federal law applies in Quebec, but not Quebec legislation. We denounce this fact, because today, we are in the House with members of Robert Bourassa's cabinet. They voted for bills that cancel all of the work done under one administration, Bourassa's.

I am talking about the member for Bourassa and the member for Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles. The latter was a minister in the Bourassa government. They voted for federal legislation that contained provisions that already existed in Quebec law.

In closing, we will be voting for the bill because we believe that registration and marketing come under federal jurisdiction. We believe that Bill C-53 is a step in the right direction, but I am not sure that it will really improve the registration and re-evaluation process.

The federal government needs to do some work on this. Furthermore, we believe that the sale and use of pesticides comes under provincial jurisdiction. Municipalities are in charge of enforcing standards, which I am thoroughly convinced will soon be accepted in Quebec, thanks to legislation. This is the model that we need to promote in Canada, which respects the different jurisdictions while protecting public health and the environment.

•(1205)

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just to remind everyone, the next five hours of debate members will have a 20 minute maximum, subject to 10 minutes for questions and comments.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to express our concerns over Bill C-53 and what the bill actually does not do.

One of our concerns is that the legislation is still extremely vague. Many of the details such as timelines for re-evaluation processes, types of tests used in risk assessments, et cetera, will be left to regulations. The precautionary principle is not enshrined as one of the principles of the act and that is a serious flaw in the bill. Although the legislation is an improvement over what was there before, no new money has been committed to look at the long term effects on our natural environment, on children and those people who are susceptible to pesticides.

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I am proud to say I come from Nova Scotia. The city of Halifax is moving forward in terms of its pesticide bylaws. To my friends who live in Hudson, Quebec, that was the first city in Canada to make a supreme court challenge to be able to say what can and cannot be used in terms of pesticides in their natural environment.

We as parliamentarians should ensure that the health of the planet and the health of our children come first and foremost. That should be in the minds of all legislators and bureaucrats when they are drafting a bill. What will the bill do to enshrine and protect the interests and security of children and those most susceptible and vulnerable? It is not just for the human species but for other species as well.

We hear constantly about the horrors in Canada of bad drinking water. When pesticides are applied to lawns, golf courses or any area, there is a runoff effect. Eventually the pesticides end up in the water table and eventually end up in our drinking water. That should be of grave concern to all Canadians.

I can understand the use of pesticides in agricultural concerns, but I am quite glad that some golf courses in Nova Scotia where I partake in the odd round or two have reduced their pesticide use by almost 80% over the last six years. They are working to eventually say they run the course without using any pesticides at all. It will be a very good day when that happens not only for the grand game of golf but also for the natural environment.

We should be enshrining it in any legislation. The government cannot honestly say to the children of the country or the world that the legislation will protect their interests down the road. There are still serious health risks out there.

Although the bill is a slight improvement over what was there before, the New Democratic Party cannot support the legislation at this time. We would like to see further amendments made, especially when it comes to funding commitments and other concerns. We should be encouraging our society and industries to wean themselves off pesticide use.

As a little side note, I always get a kick out of people who spray their little postage stamp size lawns to get rid of a dandelion. Since when was a dandelion so offensive? What is really ironic is we can buy dandelion greens in specialty food stores or as in Nova Scotia, a superstore. It is quite ironic that someone would spend a couple of bucks to buy dandelion greens and would turn around and spray Killex or other materials on their lawns to get rid of them. It is unbelievable.

If people do not like a weed, a dandelion or anything of that nature, they should use a little shovel, get on their knees and dig it out. They do not have to spend all kinds of money on pesticides. Eventually the pesticides will get into the drinking water. This also affects birds, worms, dogs, cats, and children who play on their lawns. People should be more reflective of the actions they take when it comes to pesticide use.

People have to realize that what they put on their lawns has a downstream effect. I am proud that Halifax is moving forward on this issue. The Halifax council should be complimented and congratulated, just like those great people in Hudson.

● (1210)

We in the New Democratic Party oppose this legislation. We think it is a small step forward but the government could have taken the time to move it much further ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise for the last time to speak about Bill C-53.

After 30 years, we are finally going to have a new bill on the products used to control pests, products we commonly call pesticides. It took a long time; the process stirred up various forces throughout the country and drove governments and political parties to action or inaction.

For a few years now, we have seen environmental groups, community groups and municipalities adopt one position, and the pesticide industry and farmers take the opposite stand, of course. I must remind the House that the agriculture and agrifood industry uses 90% of all pesticides.

This means that there were some fears, especially on the part of Canadian farm producers. For several years, they have been severely hit by the environment, because of the droughts and the floods. All over Canada, farmers have to face some harsh realities. So naturally the industry was concerned about rules that would make it more difficult to use certain products to increase production whenever nature gives farmers a chance to do their job.

The other industry, which had even more concerns, was the pesticide producers. Invoking all sorts of arguments to justify their intentions, they wanted to hide as much as possible some of the active or inert ingredients used in pesticides.

This being said, the committee managed to make some progress towards public protection. I say "some progress" because we had asked that the precautionary principle be mentioned in the preamble to the bill and in some clauses of Bill C-53. The government turned down most amendments put forward by opposition parties including the Progressive Conservative Party.

We had some success though with an amendment aimed at informing the public. When a product is about to be registered and reviewed by the government, the information must be put in the registry, which is public. Should the product be harmful and so dangerous that the government might have to intervene, there is a nationwide notice.

We had put forward amendments to Bill C-53 regarding labelling for instance. We believe that labelling, which is central to consumers' information, to the men and women who purchase these products on a daily basis in Canada, should be much more detailed. The government refused. We know that pressures came from the industry.

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We wanted to redefine the whole issue regarding confidential data, again to inform the public, so that people would be aware of the risks linked to the use of pesticides and pest control products.

However, like the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development that put forward an excellent report on the issue, we realized that the federal government was lagging behind municipal governments and several provincial governments in Canada. This is not the first time a government lacks vision, and this is yet another example. It becomes apparent, as I said a few days ago here in the House, at report stage.

In Quebec, there is an ad campaign. I say it again because it is important. In Quebec, the ad campaign is very well done and subtle. You see someone entering a store, a hardware store, and asking a clerk, a man or a woman, "Do you have something against bugs?" The clerk answers "No". It is not because he does not have any product, but because he does not have anything against bugs. In another ad, someone asks "Do you have something against dandelions?" And the answer is "No".

• (1215)

With these ads, people realize that there are means to control pests and weeds.

Some say that dandelions are not weeds, that dandelion wine is good for lowering cholesterol, and that dandelions are great in salads, as they have a delightful, different taste. They say dandelions is slightly bitter, but very good. I never tried them.

That being said, we see that things are changing as far as public education, awareness and practical measures are concerned. It took 30 years to get some action from the federal government, no matter what party was in power. And, even then, this bill does not go far enough.

I remember I was hopping mad at report stage. An amendment by the Progressive Conservative Party got through the committee with unanimous support. We imagined it would stay in the bill, but, at report stage, the government moved an amendment to throw it out. I was dumbfounded.

The parliamentary secretary was in the House at the time. Furious, I told him that, politically, he was gutless, because his government was moving against an amendment he supported.

Regarding the whole issue of the way committees operate—you know, Mr. Speaker, you have always shown great sensitivity toward committees—this is like a slap in the face for members of House committees.

If the government votes against opposition amendments, that is fine. This can make sense and be legitimate, in part. There is quite often a very political element, because the government may not want to constantly redraft bills based on amendments brought forward in committees. Unfortunately, we understand this is the way things work, at present. We hope this will change.

However, using a government motion to reject an amendment that was unanimously passed during clause by clause study, is a slap in the face, not in terms of the balance between government and

opposition forces, but in terms of the whole House. This is unbelievable. It is absolutely unbelievable.

We had several amendments. We even withdrew some. In committee, we must also try to have the most important amendments passed. The precautionary principle was one. Labelling was another one. Information and the inputting of all the information into the registry was dealt with in another amendment. Most of the amendments were rejected.

However, we try, we negotiate and we raise awareness to move things forward. We manage, after one, two or three days, or one or two weeks of work, to have an amendment passed. This makes us proud. We say everything is working fine. We can make a positive contribution to a government bill. This makes us happy, this makes us proud.

We spend hours, days, weeks and years considering an issue to get to a report. Then there is a draft bill and, finally, hopefully, legislation that corrects a problem and that provides a vision.

We work hard in committee. We work long hours. We negotiate. We talk to opposition members, to government members, to parliamentary secretaries and even sometimes to the ministers' offices to try to have at least the principles behind the amendments accepted. If the principles are understood, we then move our amendments.

We manage to get a few amendments accepted that have an impact and that help improve the bill. But, over a period of four to five years, all our work is destroyed. It is enough to make one wonder if committees exist just to keep members busy. We should be sent back to our ridings. We have a lot of work to do there. I find that very disappointing.

That being said, Bill C-53, with all its flaws—we must be aware of this—replaces a 30 year old act.

• (1220)

Despite all these flaws—the list is quite long and I do not have the time to mention them all—and despite the fact that the government acted in bad faith in committee and especially at report stage in the House, we will support this flawed bill.

We would have liked a review of the bill after five years. Everything goes so fast in this field. The government said ten years, and we suggested five years. In committee, we negotiated and agreed on seven years. Seven years is a long time before new regulations can be tabled, but the life expectancy of the bill will be four to five years.

If we can get information through annual reports and if it becomes urgent to amend one or two sections, we can do that in the House. The Conservative Party is very open to the whole idea of modernizing anything that is related to the environment.

We can see that, since 1993, the government has done virtually nothing about the environment, and now it is patting itself on the back about Bills C-5 and C-53.

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In ten years of Liberal reign, there have been two bills, one of which spent years with the standing committee on the environment. My colleague from Fundy—Royal has devoted a huge number of hours, weeks, months and years to it. The same thing happened in the standing committee on health. We can push the government all we like, but if what we are promoting does not fit into its vision, its partisan Liberal strategy, there will not be much progress made. They do not want to rock the boat. Visions are all very well for partisan politics, but when it comes to government, what they do instead is to appear to be a little more flexible, take their time, get their members involved in each of the committees, and do the same thing over and over, two, three, four times.

How many times have we wasted time over the endangered species bill? It is an important bill. How many times did it go back and forth? The same topic comes up three different times in committee and in bills. It makes no sense.

The standing committee on the environment did its job with respect to Bill C-53. It was not a matter of reinventing the wheel; it is just that the government neglected to move on. The vehicle was there. There was a significant consensus within the committee. There was an absolutely amazing list of witnesses, and the committee went out to meet with them. Its reaction, "Yes, that is fine, but we are going to start all over again. We think that it involves health, not the environment". I have spoken with my colleague from Fundy—Royal on this and asked him what was different about it. His answer, "Nothing. We have to start over. By the way, here is a copy of the environment committee report. You are going to do more or less the same thing over again". That is what happened.

We were not able to improve on it further. The issues that the standing committee on the environment raised are essentially the same ones that were raised by the Standing Committee on Health. We were unable to promote our amendments anymore than the standing committee on the environment.

The bill has been described as flawed, cobbled together, but it is better to have a flawed bill than outdated legislation. The act is thirty years old; for an act, that is old. I know there are some acts that are older, but in an industry that evolves so quickly, where competition is so strong, we must act. We must not wait. The government has finally decided to act.

•(1225)

Of course, people often point to the town of Hudson, but it is important to note what is being done in Aylmer, Quebec, and what Ottawa city council will be doing. People are acting across Canada. People are being proactive and there is a vision. They have not been waiting for 56 regulations to raise awareness and educate the public. It is too easy to grab a product and apply it.

Some day the government will have a vision, a strategy. It will be prepared to make important decisions for the people it represents and for those it wants to represent, future generations.

In order to implement any type of environmental program to help communities, people who live in urban or outlying areas, there must be a vision. The government has thrown together some sort of a sponsorship program, where big PR firms pocket 12% commissions just to pass on a cheque. Meanwhile, a former Liberal minister,

André Ouellet, who is the president of Canada Post Corporation, says that stamps do not cost much and that it is even less for members, with franked mail. So, it might be an idea to have a vision for people who live in our municipalities, in our regions and provinces.

That said, it is indeed better than nothing. We have a bill that has been cobbled together, instead of a dead system. The Progressive Conservative Party will support it. However, we hope that some day, the legislation will go much further and that there will be a partnership between both houses of parliament and the public who will be supporting a party that has a vision for the people of this country.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska.

What the hon. member is saying is true. That is exactly what is happening now with the government opposite. I sat with his colleague on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development when we agreed to the report entitled "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice". All the items in it were discussed and the committee decided unanimously to go ahead and prepare this report.

Today, we are forced to acknowledge that, instead of moving forward, the government is starting all over again, as it has been doing for ages.

In view of what the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska just said at the end of his 20 minute speech, I would like to ask him this: Based on this bill, which will be passed by a majority of members in this House, even though it has been cobbled together, should he not recommend to the government something more that would not put people at risk but instead would help the population of Canada and Quebec?

**Mr. André Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague who has effectively done an enormous amount of work with the members of the standing committee of the environment. She is very familiar with the issue of pest control products.

This bill is cobbled together as if it were going around on crutches. Unfortunately, we cannot push this government too hard. I repeat—and I may be rambling a little—but, at some point, it is a reality. When, for example, we meet government members and raise the issue of the environment, they say "Oh yes, we are all for the environment. Yes, this is an important issue. That being said, we will not do a thing about it that because it is provincial jurisdiction".

Where this is the case and the Liberal government says it is respectful of provincial jurisdictions, as my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie said, we say "Hear, hear". We are surprised. That would mean that the intergovernmental affairs minister is not very busy these days.

In several areas, such as the environment, one cannot say that the jurisdiction belongs to another level of government. Some jurisdictions are shared. There are grey areas, as my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie said, in terms of registration and international role.

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When we talk about a bill and the OECD, the province of Prince Edward Island can do many things, but the Government of Canada has to act.

We pushed all we could. I know that my colleague is a tenacious woman. But tenacious though we have been, the system has ground to a halt. The mechanism is blocked; there is salt in the inner workings.

When one wants to stop a piece of machinery, one can put sand or coarse salt in the gears. But this government is throwing salt in its own gears. We are not the ones doing it. We are trying to move things forward. There is a principle we wanted to see in the bill and it is called the precautionary principle. But we did not want the government to keep using it to its own advantage.

The precautionary principle applies to the government. It is afraid. Look at the legislative agenda. It is empty. Look in the other place. Same thing. We are waiting and tapping our feet, wondering what is going on. They are the legislators. What is going on? There is no vision. The government is pretty much at a standstill.

So they are using the precautionary principle to their advantage. We wanted it to be included in the environment bill. Species at risk, what is that? Is it democracy that is at risk? Things are at a standstill. So, yes, we are going to keep on pushing.

But it is most effective when others do the pushing, when individuals and groups take up the cause, when municipalities, the governments of Quebec, Ontario, and other provinces take action.

Eventually, the government will say "Ah, that is not a bad idea, not bad at all". I am not a partisan politician, as members know. That is not how we operate in the House, but the present government will help itself to the ideas of others on the eve of an election campaign or a throne speech.

We know that there is a possibility that Her Majesty will be paying us a visit in the fall. Knowing her interest and that of her heir in the environment, we hope that the government will get its thumb out and propose a vision for the environment.

• (1230)

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, along with my government colleagues, I voted in the House to pass Bill C-53 at report stage. It has a long title, which reads as follows: "An Act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests".

It is obvious that this new legislation is a clear improvement over the current act, which is 33 years old. As was strongly recommended by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and by the environment and sustainable development commissioner, it was urgent to act and to renew the legislation.

So Bill C-53 is a step forward. This new legislation deserves our support.

[English]

However, as a number of environmental and health organizations that I respect have stated, the government has lost an opportunity to bring in progressive legislation to replace the 33 year old laws now governing pesticide registration in this country. I will quote from a

communiqué issued by some of these groups at the time of the tabling of the law. Stated Sandra Schwartz of Pollution Probe:

Bill C-53 enshrines current practice. We were looking for the new Pest Control Products Act to substantially improve our current practice.

Kathleen Cooper, researcher with the Canadian Environmental Law Association said:

Some new provisions that specifically refer to children are welcome, but the bill doesn't even match what has been in place for years in the United States to protect kids.

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, after extensive study, made recommendations that would vastly improve Canada's pest management practices. This it did in its substantive report entitled "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice for the Protection of Health and the Environment". Yet this legislative proposal does more to reaffirm present practices, albeit more safely, than embark on the bold course of renewal recommended by the committee. Fortunately, the health committee amended the bill to ensure regular review of the bill, albeit only once every seven years rather than every five years as proposed by four motions at the committee. This review will ensure that major problems not now addressed in the bill can be revisited and improvements can be made.

A great deal of detail still needs to be set out in regulations and it is up to us to make sure that there is follow through in these regulations. We must take full advantage of the annual reporting provisions that have been provided through committee amendments to see that the details are turned into reality.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, new pest management legislation is desperately needed. Bill C-53 is certainly not a huge step forward, as was hoped, but it is worthwhile supporting. Our farmers want new legislation to provide faster access to less harmful pesticides and also better information that will enable them to reduce their need for pesticides. Canadians all across the country want greater protection from harmful chemicals that are used in and around our homes, our schools and places of work.

The legislation, although no panacea, is a start. Prudent avoidance is something we all need to practice. Implementation of Bill C-53 should lead to safer products on the market, but we must all make an effort to learn about the inherent dangers of these chemicals, be ever conscious of them and indeed be extremely aware of the dangers of these chemicals so that we can make changes in our buying habits and our behaviour to substantially reduce our risk of exposure.

The health committee made a number of significant improvements to the bill. I am particularly grateful to members for accepting an amendment I proposed to strengthen the educational mandate of the minister.

I would like to underline some of the improvements made by the health committee. First, on the mandate of the minister to inform the public, the health committee amended Bill C-53 to give the Minister of Health a mandate to actively inform the public about pesticides. Unfortunately, much of the wording I suggested on educating the public about pest control products, the health and environmental risks associated with their use, the need to avoid non-essential uses and the availability of alternatives to the use of these products was not adopted, but the essence was retained.

● (1235)

It is my hope that we will build on this and create something along the lines of a non-smoking campaign to reduce pesticide use, which will one day lead to a phase-out of chemical pesticides in our homes and gardens.

When I was privileged to introduce and pass the pesticides act of Quebec, we insisted that the powers of the minister include the following duties. I will quote from subsection 9(2), which states:

carry out or commission research, studies, inquiries or analyses pertaining to the effects of the use of pesticides on the quality of the environment and on human health and, generally, on any topic relating to pesticides and alternatives to their use;—

Subsection 9(3) states:

devise, foster and ensure the implementation of plans and programs to train specialists, educate and inform the public and promote awareness in the field of pesticides;—

For if we make the public more aware, if we take special steps to educate them as to the dangers of pesticides, as to the fact that safer alternatives might be there, but better still that no pesticide use is far better, especially in homes, schools and parks, then we will have carried out a very worthwhile task for our citizens.

One of the improvements in the bill is that “acceptable risk” is now defined. This is extremely important for the interpretation of this legislation and the definition is a tremendous improvement over what the current practice provides. The onus would now be on the applicant to provide evidence that its products would cause no harm. Besides that, future generations are also taken into consideration in the new definition. This is an important measure.

Formulants are now included in the definition of a pest control product. For this, credit must be given to the committee for listening to the many public health advocates and environmentalists who have been calling for formulants to be given full consideration within the act.

A number of amendments increase the protection of human health and the environment provided for by the bill, such as the consideration of aggregate exposure and cumulative effect in risk assessment, re-evaluations and special reviews, which is a key measure indeed. The protection of children is extended to future generations. Lower risk products will have expedited review. Stronger language favouring alternative products and strategies is included in the preamble.

Finally, in terms of public accountability there is now a seven year parliamentary review and the annual status report is to include registrations, including lower risk products. Seven years was a compromise made by the committee. Although I would have preferred a five year review, I would hope that at review time

### *Government Orders*

significant changes could be made to improve the workings of our pesticide law.

There are indeed shortcomings, especially compared to the recommendations of the report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, which will need to be addressed when the review is carried out.

We must all be vigilant in ensuring that regulations promised by the bill are brought forward without delay and that steps are taken to address the fundamental problems at the first review of the legislation. In particular, I would hope that at that time the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the PMRA, would be given a statutory mandate. That was one of the key issues referred to in the standing committee's report.

I would like to quote from the committee's report, at page 144, where the committee said:

When the PMRA was created in 1995, it was given the following mandate: To protect human health and the environment by minimizing the risks associated with pest control products, while enabling access to pest management tools, namely these products and sustainable pest management strategies.

● (1240)

The committee goes on to say:

Given that the PMRA is directed both to protect human health and the environment and to make pesticides available, it is small wonder that concerns have been raised about its “dual” mandate, particularly when no clear priority is given to minimizing risks to human health and the environment over access to pesticides. Both interests appear to be placed on an equal footing and require a delicate balancing.

This is essentially what the Minister of Health said in the House of Commons when responding to a question raised by a member of parliament. It is quoted in the report that the minister said:

As the Member knows, the PMRA has to balance public safety and environmental concerns against the needs of producers and growers. In the opinion of the Committee, the PMRA's dual mandate sends out decidedly “mixed” signals. These signals are even more mixed in light of the goals the federal government has set for the Agency. In the opinion of the Committee, one of the root problems with the PMRA is its weak and equivocal mandate. Protecting human health and the environment must be given priority over all else.

The committee goes on to compare the mission of the office of pesticides program, OPP, of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency whose mission statement is as follows:

To protect public health and the environment from the risks posed by pesticides and to promote safer means of pest control.

The committee recommended the following:

—(a) give absolute priority to the protection of human health and the environment when considering whether to approve a pesticide for use in Canada or allow its continued use; (b) promote the use of sustainable pest management strategies that seek to reduce use, risk and reliance on pesticides; (c) emphasize the development of safer pest control products; and (d) inform and educate the public about pesticides and the risks associated with their use.

These were the four items of the mandate suggested for the PMRA by the committee.

The government chose to give the authority to the minister herself, and rightly so because the minister is ultimately responsible for the law. However the fact is that the application of the law on a day to day basis has always rested with the PMRA which makes decisions on registration of pesticides, on regulation and on review.

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Although the ultimate decision and the ultimate authority is given to the minister and the goals are stated that protection of human health and the environment is our priority in the law on behalf of the minister, I still believe that there would have been no inconsistency in setting out a clear mission statement for the PMRA so that the PMRA and all its members would be under no illusion that protection of human health and the environment are paramount and that registration of pesticides is the ultimate last resort.

Apparently there is a great deal of creative debate about the implementation of the precautionary principle in legislation. The government has issued a discussion document to solicit input as to the development of government policy in the area of the precautionary principle.

It was my hope, as many witnesses suggested during hearings on this legislation, that the precautionary principle would be enshrined throughout the bill. Bill C-53 falls far short of this. I would hope that during the review of the bill, a truly precautionary direction would be adopted.

In this connection, I would like to quote the head of the PMRA. She said:

—the ultimate precautionary approach [is]: If we have any questions or reasons to believe that we need more information to be able to assure ourselves that there's reasonable certainty of no harm, we simply do not register the product. We don't need another tool to be able to say what should we do in the event that there may be people exposed and there may be a problem. That's why we've tried to very clearly point out that the precautionary approach or principle on a product that's out there, gives you that little extra piece that you may want to have to take quick action, but we don't put that product on the market if it's a brand new active. That's why it's inappropriate to utilize a precautionary principle to define what it is that's done for a brand new product that is not already on the market.

● (1245)

This in my view is a classic example of saying “Don't worry, we do it already”. If that is the case, then why not put it in the law? There are really no answers to that question except to enshrine the precautionary principle.

I note that the head of the PMRA mentioned brand new active products, and certainly not mentioning the thousands of other ingredients that are out there.

I believe that with regard to pesticides, Bill C-53 goes a long way to address the gaps that the commissioner for the environment and sustainable development identified in his May 1999 report entitled “Understanding the Risks from Toxic Substances: Cracks in the Foundation of the Federal House”.

The new commissioner, Johanne Gelinas, came before the health committee this spring and stated:

—the main message in the May 1999 Report was that there was a substantial gap between talk and action on the federal government's environmental and sustainable development agenda. I believe this is still the case today and we are paying the price in terms of our health, environment, standard of living, and legacy to our children and grandchildren.

She further stated:

—effective legislation will be key for addressing some of the issues confronting the government and the PMRA. Key areas in this regard include provisions for reporting and information sharing, requirements for conducting re-evaluations and special reviews, and the establishment of a national sales database.

Bill C-53 is not perfect but it is a good start. It deserves our support and I hope it will become law very soon.

I will end on a note about the financial aspect. No matter how good a law may be, if the financial resources are not made available to implement it, the law will not be effective.

The commissioner's 1999 report remarked that within existing budgets departments were struggling to meet legislated responsibilities, policy commitments and international treaty obligations, and in many cases are failing to do so.

The environment committee recommended that the government provide the Pest Management Regulatory Agency with the necessary additional financial resources to effectively carry out its entire program.

In fairness, I should put on the record that in the last budget a sum of many millions, I believe \$20 million, was provided toward the process of controlling pesticides. This is of course both required and welcomed. We must now ensure that the new law be supported by whatever necessary funds are needed to implement and enforce the law and its regulations, especially with regard to the re-evaluation of pesticides that have been in the field for years and years and in special reviews.

● (1250)

[*Translation*]

In closing, I wanted to recommend that, once the bill is passed, we follow its implementation very closely to ensure that it is as effective as possible, until we can definitely improve it in 2009.

Meanwhile, I will certainly support this bill with great conviction.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks made by my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis, who was environment minister in Quebec and for whom I have great respect. I sat with him on the former environment committee, and we were guided by his good advice as we adopted several amendments in connection with the report on pesticides entitled “Making the Right Choice”.

While listening to him earlier, I read through entire pages of the report that we tabled. At present, Bill C-53 does not prohibit the cosmetic use of pesticides. Yet we know how harmful it can be to children and pregnant women.

He also talked about the re-evaluation of pesticides registered before 1995, saying that they will not all be re-evaluated and that there is no deadline for re-evaluation. When I sat on the environment committee, this issue was debated and witnesses were heard.

What does he think about the fact that his government was not sufficiently specific regarding the re-evaluation of currently registered pesticides? We know that not allowing the re-evaluation of pesticides registered before 1995 prevents the evaluation of new pesticides.

I want to know what my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis thinks of the fact that two entire sections of our report barely made it into Bill C-53. I would like to have his comments on that.

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**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, to be absolutely clear, I would say to my colleague, with whom I enjoyed working at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, that this report is one of the best documents produced by a House committee in years.

Naturally, I would have preferred that the committee's recommendations be more extensively reflected in Bill C-53. I think the other members of the committee would also have preferred that. I would especially have liked to see the bill reflect the committee's recommendations in the area of the precautionary principle applied to the cosmetic use of pesticides, and in the area of re-evaluation and review for new products.

As far as the cosmetic use of pesticides is concerned, the government has decided, in accordance with recommendations from the justice department, that it would be unconstitutional to refuse to register pesticides if, for example, we had proof that they posed no risk to human health. However, we know there is always a human health risk.

I agreed to be the sponsor of a private member's bill tabled by my colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, who is now a parliamentary secretary. That bill asked that the federal government ban the cosmetic use of pesticides by refusing registration. I hope this bill will be debated in the House so that we can thoroughly discuss this important issue.

In passing, I am very pleased to see that the present Quebec environment minister, whom I know very well, has decided to adopt a policy on the cosmetic use of pesticides. I believe he aims at reducing that practice with the ultimate goal of eliminating it altogether. I hope this legislation will pass in Quebec and that it will influence the rest of Canada pending a change in direction, here in this House.

• (1255)

[*English*]

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the member has left the impression that chemicals available to Canadians are dangerous and unhealthy. He used those words. The PMRA mandate has been to approve products that, when applied as registered, do not damage the environment. Many of these chemicals have been studied for decades.

Why does the member continue to cling to the false assumption and leave the false impression that many of these chemicals, when used properly and in accordance with their registration, are unhealthy and dangerous to Canadians?

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague should have spent a year and a half, as some of us did, on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development listening to witnesses. I would suggest to him that he read the 1999 report of the commissioner of environment and sustainable development about managing the risks of toxic substances.

The fact is that some pesticides have been in the field for as long as 40 years or more without any re-evaluation. There are horror stories. One story is about acrolein being used in drainage ditches to eliminate weeds. The acrolein was so strong that it would kill the fish.

I asked the head of the PMRA why we were not banning this product when the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans had advised the PMRA to ban acrolein because it was killing the fish in drainage ditches. She told me that acrolein was destined for drainage ditches and that it had nothing to do with fish.

I then asked her: If acrolein is used in drainage ditches for irrigation and this water permeates into the groundwater are we saying it is safe to have acrolein in our groundwater and waterways, especially when it kills fish and then goes into the food chain?

I would suggest that the member read the report from the commissioner, as well as the statement the commissioner made when she appeared before the committee on May 8, 2002. The member will see that today there are stacks of pesticides that have not been re-evaluated or made subject to special reviews for years and years when safer alternatives are now available and have not yet been registered. We need this new law to push the process forward and eliminate those dangerous pesticides that are in the field today.

• (1300)

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise and speak to third reading of Bill C-53, the pest control act. I know it is too late to make amendments to the bill but I hope to make some suggestions to which I hope the government will listen. Perhaps at some future date it will implement some of these suggestions and the positive changes we hope to see take place.

Unlike the debate earlier today in which the government found itself on the wrong side of an issue, the disability tax credit and having to defend its treatment of disabled persons, we find that this bill is politically correct in every way.

I think this bill is part of a trend. When I came to Ottawa, I was under the impression that bills would be written with a positive objective. It is surprising to me to see that a number of bills have been introduced with a negative objective.

The first one I came across was Bill C-15B, which was the animal rights legislation. It has a very strange definition in it where it defines animals as "any being that has the capacity to feel pain". That is a very strange and negative way to define an animal. We could just as well have been defined animal as one that can feel excitement. It could have been defined either way. It was interesting that the government took a negative tact to define one of the major definitions in that bill.

When we read the primary objective of Bill C-53, once again we see that it has a negative tact of what it wants to do. It says that it is "in the national interest that the primary objective of the federal regulatory system be to prevent unacceptable risk to people and the environment from the use of pest control products". It begins with the assumption that the bill needs to do something negative.

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It is too late now to change the bill but the objective of the bill could have easily been to promote good health and environmental stewardship through the regulation of products which are used for controlling pests. That throws an entirely different flavour on the objective of the bill and its direction.

The perspective of the department is revealed in a large way by how it put the bill together. The objective sets the direction for how the bill will be enforced and how it will be applied. I have a lot of concerns about that. The words "prevent" rather than "promote" have been used. The words "stop" rather than "provide" have been used. I think already we can see what the intention of the department will be in applying this legislation.

The bill also seems to be very politically correct in that it is discriminatory. Once again, by picking out special interest groups, the government misses out on protecting the people it should be protecting. In the preamble of the bill it mentions that we need to take into account the effects of chemicals on major identifiable subgroups, including pregnant women, infants, children, women and seniors. However it completely misses mentioning the effects on the people who use chemicals the most and who are most closely exposed to them, and that is men.

It is fine to identify the other identifiable subgroups. It is true that some of them are more susceptible to chemicals than others. In my constituency the men are exposed most closely to the majority of the chemicals. Men are working with them consistently. I would expect that to be fair government legislation should deal with everyone, not just the politically correct groups. It is an insult that seems to always accompany special interest politics by people who either do not really understand how things work right on the ground or bureaucrats who have an agenda.

I would like to talk a bit about the people at home. I come from an agricultural area where chemicals are used. The people who use them are primarily the men in our area. The farmers use them in spring to treat seed crops, fungicides and in a number of other ways. Later in the spring they use them for weed control and insect control. In the fall there are chemicals that are often applied as well. I suggest men do have special characteristics. There are a number of illnesses that are often ignored because it seems they are male in origin, while other more politically popular and perhaps more politically correct diseases get a lot of funding and attention from different places.

The bill discriminates. I am not too sure the people who wrote it realize that. My question would be this. How used to that way of thinking have we become that we begin to discriminate but do not realize it?

As so many other bills, this bill also has a coercive element to it. We have seen other coercive government thinking. We have seen the big stick approach in a number of other bills as well. Just lately, in Bill C-5, the government insisted on passing a bill without providing for compensation for landowners who would be affected by it. The government said that we should be comforted by the fact that at some point in the future it would put compensation in regulations.

• (1305)

We have seen it in Bill C-15B where there are very strong penalties for animal rights abuses, yet at the same time the

government has chosen not to protect farmers and ranchers from frivolous claims and attacks on their normal way of life. We have seen it also in Bill C-68 which over the years has been a source of a lot of contention and problems.

We see it here again in terms of the transportation, disposal and handling of these products. Clause 6 reads:

No person shall handle, store, transport, use or dispose of a pest control product in a way that is inconsistent with...

Then it states the regulations and a couple of other options.

Later we see that the fines are very substantial. Penalties are severe: \$200,000 or six months in jail for a summary conviction and \$500,000 and three years upon conviction from an indictment.

I would suggest that farmers will be caught in this. It may be news to the government but containers are not always disposed of in the manner that the bureaucrats have decided is good. That happens for a number of reasons. Often the regulations are made with no accommodation for compliance. The regulations are set up but it is not practical to comply with them or there is no funding in place to make it possible to comply with them. Often there are physical barriers to compliance which includes things like no local facility to dispose of the product or the extra containers.

The best solution I saw on this was in my home province of Saskatchewan. It came out with a program where the containers were triple rinsed and then returned to the local landfill site. It was very successful, it was voluntary and it had educational component to it. Farmers were very happy to comply with the program. They just needed a bit of encouragement and some education on the fact that the program was there for them. Fines of \$200,000 will not encourage compliance as much as encouragement and a good program with a bit of education.

I have some concerns as well about the re-evaluation process. Clause 16 talks about that. It mentions that all chemicals shall be re-evaluated at some point. It talks about the fact that if the pest control product was approved in the past years, then the review process would have to be implemented fairly quickly. There is a time limit on when new chemicals will have to be re-evaluated.

This could be a very good process or it could be a disaster. We need to know more about the provisions to re-evaluate all chemicals on the market. If the government tells everyone to begin from the start with these chemicals in order to get them re-evaluated, we will find ourselves with a very expensive, cumbersome process.

*Government Orders*

The PMRA has not exactly been successful at its registration of new products. I do not know that we can throw every chemical that we have approved in the last 30 years on it without causing a huge backlog. If the government expects companies to start over with the registration, it will be just about impossible. However, if at some point it is willing to set up with an ongoing evaluation system and give approval to chemicals that demonstrate that they are not a problem that are not causing problems in the environment, then this re-evaluation process could be an excellent thing. All of it depends upon the application of the process.

I have great concern over subclause 17(2) which talks about a special review every time any OECD country takes a product off the market. We know that trade concerns can often be hidden behind health and environmental issues. We have already run into that a number of times in other areas. I suggest this ties us too closely to other countries and their activities. The Liberal government seems to be very wary of getting too close to the United States, yet in this legislation says that if any OECD country decides to pull a chemical off the market, we need to do an automatic review of its registration.

If it is good to do it that way, why do we not do it the other way as well. If any one of the OECD countries approves a product, then we approve it as well and put it on the market. That would be a fair exchange. That is not part of this bill and it is not likely that would ever happen.

There are other concerns as well. One is harmonization. We were pleased to get one of the Alliance amendments through on harmonization. Under our amendment when an applicant applies for a registered pest control product or to amend the pest control product registration, they would now be able to submit information from reviews and evaluations conducted in other OECD countries.

• (1310)

We heard this a PMRA hearings. People want the opportunity to bring information here that has already been developed in other places and use as part of our registration. If we use a chemical under similar conditions, it makes good sense that we use that information. It avoids costly duplication for pesticide makers. It cuts down on the cost of the registration process. It actually hastens the process of getting those chemicals onto the market where they can replace some of the older and maybe more hazardous chemicals.

Minor use is one of my other concerns. A major shortfall in Bill C-53 is that it gives no consideration to minor use products. The agriculture committee has heard this a number of times. It is very important for horticulture and vegetable specialty crops. It is important that there be a discussion about minor use and the way it will work in Canada. Minor use applications are increasing as we go to more niche marketing.

There are a lot of times that the economy of scale absolutely does not support full registration. There was a situation last spring on the prairies regarding chick peas. Because the Bravo chemical was not working in stopping the ascochyta, I approached the government to try to get another chemical approved. It took some time but the other chemical, Quadras, was approved and it worked very well. However the approval process for that chemical took quite a bit of time. That approval time has to be shortened up. If a chemical is available, if it has been used in other places and if we seem to have similar

conditions here, then it should be available quickly. This is important for Canadian competitiveness.

Fruit and vegetable growers have told us that they need these chemicals. If they are available in the United States, if they have been approved and are on the market and if we have similar conditions, we need to be able to use them. The government has recognized the importance of minor use but has done nothing about it.

Concern about access to minor use products was brought up prominently in the recent report of the agriculture committee on registration of pesticides and the competitiveness of Canadian farmers. According to the report:

Canadian farmers...do not have access to the same safe and effective pest management tools as their competitors, particularly American producers.

I was glad to be part of the committee that put that report together. It called for several improvements and I would like to read two of them to the House.

First, the committee has called for at least \$1 million a year in funding for research and an analysis program similar to the U.S. IR-4 that will be developed in co-operation with agricultural stakeholders to generate the necessary data for approval of new minor use pesticide products or to expand the use of previously approved products.

A second recommendation is that an adviser on matters pertaining to minor use pest control products be appointed to intervene in decisions and policies to facilitate activities relating to minor use products. This adviser's mandate would include a special focus on harmonization issues with the United States such as the equivalency of similar zone maps and the consideration of data already existing in an OECD country. The adviser would report to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Another concern the committee is that the bill does not address the issue of reduced risk products. It makes no provision for getting these new, safer reduced risk products directly into the marketplace. We need to expedite the reviews of such products.

The United States has reduced risk category and timelines in approving them. Last year the timelines to get these products onto the market was approximately 35% less than conventional pesticides. There are some big savings in terms of efficiency and cost.

Bill C-53 also does not mention any timelines for registration. That is an important change but perhaps it will be made later. There needs to be some timelines put on registration because presently this is taking far too long.

The health committee also heard from a number of witnesses that registrations were taking too long compared to the United States. That was consistent with what the agriculture committee heard as well. Our party has pressed for timelines to be drawn up but the government has chosen not to put them into this legislation.

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I would like to take a few minutes to talk about the PMRA, which seems to be an ongoing problem in the agriculture sector. This legislation will be completely wasted unless changes are made to the PMRA.

Unfortunately, the bill does not bring accountability to the PMRA. Timelines are a concern within the PMRA, but also the audits that this legislation calls for do not go far enough. There is no requirement in the bill to report the financial information of the agency. We already saw the failure of that in the Canadian Wheat Board audit where wheat board directors were allowed to set the conditions for the audit.

● (1315)

The auditor general did a good job on the area she was allowed to study but she was not allowed to study the overall operations. She ended up doing a study of office management but could not study the overall efficiency of the board. Because of that she was prevented from reaching any conclusions about the kind of job the CWB was doing for farmers. I would not like to see the same thing happening with the PMRA. We need to know if the agency's objectives are being achieved in an expeditious manner.

Both the health and agriculture committees heard a number of times from witnesses their concerns about the PMRA. Many of their administrative and management practices were called into question repeatedly. The agriculture committee highlighted problems with the PMRA. We were told that seven years after the PMRA was started up it had advanced the pesticide registration system but the impatience and frustration of farmers persisted and was systematic of a glitch in the agency's overall operation.

We heard from many witnesses who were frustrated with having to deal with the PMRA bureaucracy and feeling that they could not get through the registration process. They could not talk with the people who could make decisions and often regulations were changed while they were trying to work on registrations.

The agriculture committee recommended that an independent ombudsman be appointed to facilitate discussions on the needs of farmers regarding pest control within the PMRA. We made a recommendation that the Auditor General of Canada conduct a value for money or performance audit to examine the management practices, controls and reporting systems of the PMRA.

We feel it is important that for the legislation to work that the problems within the PMRA be resolved if any of the worthy goals of the legislation are to be realized. The bill is only as good as the PMRA's ability to administer it.

I will go over the agriculture committee recommendations made regarding the PMRA. It is important that we get them on the record because we heard a lot of concern about these needs. The report that the agriculture committee submitted dealing with pesticide registration had four recommendations.

First, it recommended there be an ombudsman independent of the PMRA that would report to the health minister. Poor communication between farmers and the PMRA has been a concern. Having a third party reporting directly to the Minister of Health would certainly alleviate disputes. We thought it was a good idea and that the time had come for this to take place.

Second, it called for the auditor general to do a full audit of the PMRA. The PMRA has been slow in registering products. It has been far too slow. Bureaucrats from the PMRA told the committee that it was due to inadequate funding. There are people who would dispute that but the auditor general's recommendation would allow general performance and management practices to be audited for efficiency and we could then see whether this bureau is funded adequately or not. It would be important to do a value for money check to examine the management practices and the efficiency, or the lack of efficiency, that we may find within the PMRA.

Third, we called for a recommendation dealing with funding to enhance broader product access. More funding is needed for the approval of minor use pesticides. In the United States, for example, the EPA has approved 901 new pesticides and new uses for existing pesticides. The PMRA has only approved 24 products since March 2000. Are we getting good value for our money?

The committee recommended at least \$1 million a year in funding from Agriculture Canada for research and analysis development in co-operation with stakeholders for the approval of new minor use products.

Fourth, we made a recommendation for a scientific data adviser. The PMRA often seems to reinvent the wheel every time an application comes in for a minor use product. The committee recommended an adviser on minor use pest controls to intervene in decisions and policies. The minor use registration is a growing and significant part of what the PMRA will do. It is important for it to have a scientific adviser in place to make good and quick decisions on minor use. The person could work specifically on the harmonization with the U.S. There should be some equivalency with the United States and encouragement to use existing data so that we do not have to repeat the research that was done several other times.

The bill is needed and it is time that it was passed. It is long overdue. We have some reservations about it and I have tried to make some suggestions of areas that the government might consider improving. I know that they will not be in the bill but hopefully in the future the government would take a look at putting some of these improvements into place. The government could have done a better job but the bill serves the purpose of beginning the process.

● (1320)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks of my colleague of the Canadian Alliance on Bill C-53.

Like several other opposition members, the Canadian Alliance member is suggesting that this bill is a step forward. But it is not a big enough step, given the bill's purpose. The bill should address the whole issue of pesticides.

*Government Orders*

When pest control was discussed in the previous parliament, we submitted a brief, and several witnesses told us that the federal government should give money to the provinces to allow them to consider providing university training to help farmers make the transition to organic farming.

Would this proposal be agreeable to my colleague from the Canadian Alliance? At the beginning of his remarks, he told the House that a certain form of pesticide use was important for agriculture. Would it not be time to move to organic farming?

[*English*]

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, my area of southwest Saskatchewan has been one of the leaders in the area of organic farming. We have a number of organic farmers. I have a brother-in-law who has been involved in it for over 20 years so I understand a little bit of the philosophy and the interest that goes with it. It is a great development in western Canada and throughout the rest of Canada that we are moving toward organic farming. At the same time there are a lot of positive impacts from people who are farming with conventional methods.

The problem is not with pesticides. It is not with the fact that they exist and that we have them. We need to have pesticides approved that are good for the environment. There are lots of situations, times and places where those chemicals are good. They are good from a scientific, economic and environmental perspective. I do not buy into this idea that the use of pesticides is somehow destroying our world.

I would suggest that the improper use of them is one of those things that we must correct, but we also need to fix the regulatory system so that we can bring those new pesticides that have less impact on the environment on stream as quickly as possible. We need to work with the American government in registering some of those so that we can also use them and that the older ones can be taken off the market if they are a danger to our environment.

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to relate this legislation to the foundational principles that were set forth by the Canadian Environmental Law Association and the World Wildlife Fund with respect to how prospective legislation of this kind should be evaluated. I will run through the principles as set forth by these groups and look at the present legislation in that context.

The first and most important principle is that pesticide legislation must protect the most vulnerable among us. In other words, protecting the health of the most vulnerable populations must be the benchmark for the evaluation of any pesticide. For human beings this may be a child or a senior, whereas currently pesticides are evaluated based on risk to healthy adult males. For environmental protection it may be a fish, a bird or a tadpole, depending on the nature of the pesticide and its use. It is particularly important to ensure protection for the embryo and the young of all species whose reproductive and nervous systems are developing and most easily damaged.

In that regard at present, under the existing Pest Control Products Act, modern risk assessment methods are used but they are not incorporated in the law.

Under the proposed new pest control products act, PCPA, health evaluations of pesticide would take into account sensitivities of vulnerable groups such as children and seniors. There would be extra protections for infants and children. In my view it still does not go far enough and does not reach, for example, the threshold of American legislation, as has been mentioned earlier in debate in this House.

Pesticide exposure is aggregated and includes exposure through food, water and pesticide use in homes and schools, and cumulative effects of pesticides that act in the same way are considered.

Principle number two stipulates that pesticides should be considered guilty until proven innocent. In other words, the responsibility needs to be, as it is not yet now, on the applicants to demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that their pesticides will not cause harm to people and wildlife. Under the proposed legislation the onus would be on the applicant to demonstrate that these pesticides would not cause harm to people and wildlife and would not be on the public to bear the burden to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that a chemical is safe.

Principle number three is the importance of reviewing existing pesticides regularly. Simply put, most pesticides in use today were developed and registered for use decades ago. New data about risks to health and the environment are emerging all the time. New proposed legislation now under consideration in the House must provide for regular reviews of pesticides in the light of new data.

I would like to make specific reference to the provisions for re-evaluations and special reviews, which would include re-evaluations of older pesticides that would be mandatory 15 years after the registration of the product. A request from the public could trigger a special review of a pesticide. If a pesticide registrant does not respond when information is requested for a re-evaluation or a special review, that pesticide's registration may be cancelled or amended, again putting the burden on the pesticide registrant or applicant.

The precautionary principle would be applied during re-evaluations and special reviews. That means where there are threats that a registered pesticide could cause serious damage it would not be necessary to await full scientific certainty to take cost effective measures. The principle was set down in the recent supreme court decision in these matters.

Principle number four would ensure reporting, monitoring and follow up for adverse effect. At present there is no formal requirement for reporting or monitoring the adverse effects from a pesticide's use. Without this data reviews are difficult to undertake. Under the proposed bill pesticide applicants and registrants would be obligated to report information on the adverse effects of a pesticide.

Principle number five is that one needs to automatically ban pesticides when critical health and environmental problems are identified. In other words pesticides should be automatically banned if they build up in the food chain or pose hazards to health and the environment.

*Government Orders*

The proposal for automatic bans of pesticides in my view does not go far enough in the bill. However, the bill would provide enhanced enforcement capability through clearly defined offences, increased powers of inspectors and higher maximum penalties. For example, importation of an unregistered product could lead to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and three years imprisonment. Recklessly or wilfully causing harm to the environment or causing serious bodily harm would carry the maximum penalty under the act of \$1 million or three years imprisonment.

• (1325)

Principle number six is that the cosmetic use of pesticides should be banned. In other words, pesticides used only for cosmetic purposes are not acceptable. This is an issue to which I have spoken in the House and which is of particular concern, among other things, to the constituents of my riding. Regrettably, Bill C-53 contains no prohibition on the cosmetic use of pesticides. If the precautionary principle were to be applied the cosmetic use of pesticides would be prohibited.

In this regard we should look to the province of Quebec which is moving toward reducing and gradually eliminating the cosmetic use of pesticides. We have municipal initiatives to that effect. A co-operative federal-provincial-municipal framework would be appropriate if it were unpinning by the precautionary principle.

Principle number seven states that we should not permit registration of pesticides when alternatives are available. The essence of Bill C-53's risk management approach is to prevent registration of products that would pose unacceptable risks to human health or the environment and to manage the use of registered pesticides in a manner that would preclude unacceptable risks.

Principle number eight would ensure public participation in the regulatory system and public access to information on hazards and use. Canadians have a right to know what pesticides are being applied to the food they buy, to the parks they use and at their children's schools.

In this regard some important features of the legislation which would promote public participation include provisions for public comment prior to major decisions for full registration; access to information; support for pesticide registrations; an opportunity to request a review panel to re-examine major registration decisions; and an opportunity to request a special review of registrations. The documentation to be used as a basis for public consultation would contain a description of the product and its intended uses, a summary of the risk and value assessments, as well as the proposed decision and the rationale for it.

Principle number nine emphasizes the importance of education, awareness and support with respect to alternative and transition programs. In other words, the federal government should support the extension of education and research on alternatives to pesticide use. Farmers need support. Support for making the transition to pest management systems that reduce reliance on pesticides makes sense both ecologically and economically.

My hon. colleague also spoke to the issue when he was minister of the environment in Quebec where he introduced a legislative

framework. That is the objective we should have in mind for this legislation as well.

Principle number 10 is that the precautionary principle should be enshrined throughout the bill. It is not at present. It is referenced only with regard to evaluation reviews and the like. However with regard to the supreme court decision and public policy in these matters, the precautionary principle should underpin the legislation as a whole and be read into it. I trust the courts would read this into it and incorporate it by reference throughout the legislation.

Regarding the oversight principle, there would now be a seven year parliamentary review. I would have agreed with the proposal that there be a five year review, but I am pleased there is at least some provision for oversight and review.

In conclusion, the legislation is an important first step. It incorporates some of the principles recommended by groups such as the Canadian Environmental Law Association and the World Wildlife Federation. However it does not go far enough. Bill C-53 deserves to be supported because it would address the important principles to which I have referred. However for the legislation to be effective regulations would need to be brought forward to give it specific powers of implementation. The PMRA should be given a statutory mandate. As I mentioned, the precautionary principle should underpin the legislation as a whole. It is at the core of public policy and how we can protect and evaluate such legislation.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part to the third reading debate on Bill C-53, an act to protect Human Health and Safety and the Environment by regulating products used for the control of pests.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate my colleague, the member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, for the excellent work he did throughout the study of this bill and also congratulate several opposition colleagues for putting their arguments so forcefully and, by so doing, getting the health minister, who introduced the bill, to really protect human health by including the precautionary principle in the bill.

It must be recognized, as my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska said earlier this afternoon, that this bill is cobbled together, or leaning on crutches, if I can put it that way. Now, when people move around on crutches, they often go hobbling along, unsure of their footing, and move cautiously to protect themselves. This is the case of the bill as it now stands.

With this bill, we will never be able to meet the expectations raised by the study by the former environment committee on the impact of pesticides on the health of children, women, pregnant women, as well as on the health of vulnerable people like seniors or people who are in poor health, in particular those with asthma.

The former committee did the work and produced an excellent report under the leadership of the Liberal member for Davenport. I am pleased to say it, because he did a good job. As my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis said, I believe this was the best report tabled in the House in many years.

*Government Orders*

The health minister had everything she needed to finally draft legislation that would allow us to go forward. However, today, even if my colleagues from the opposition, the member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie and myself, believe that there are many flaws in this bill, we will support it even if it is cobbled together, leaning on crutches and represents a feeble and uncertain step forward.

This is unfortunate, because since 1969, we have not taken the necessary steps to bring about environmental changes adapted to today's and tomorrow's needs.

I do not know what kept the health minister from adopting this approach, but it is certainly sad to discover that fact in the House today. We are convinced that the government had a good momentum at first. We went to committee hearings and the government adopted broad principles. However, the more the committee sat and the more we debated, the government backed down. This is unfortunate, because the government had everything it needed to act. I do not know what made it back down.

Today, I can say that the new minister of the environment for Quebec, André Boisclair, decided to act on pesticides. He created a committee, which made some recommendations, and he said he would eliminate the use of pesticides on lawns for cosmetic purposes.

• (1335)

That is what this report suggested to the health minister. However, she was not there. Fortunately, this is legislation concerning a jurisdiction shared by the federal government and the provinces. I must admit that, for once, the bill does not infringe upon provincial jurisdiction. It is important to point this out. In fact, the provinces will have the opportunity to act in their own area. However, the federal government should have taken steps to make its own area ironclad and should have said “we are moving in a new direction”.

Let us just talk about the PMRA. The government keeps saying that the basic principle of the PMRA should be the regulation of pest control, with the sole objective of protecting health and the environment. However, we know that, since 1965, with the Pest Control Products Act, which controls registration, marketing and standards on product labelling, there are 6,000 products, and the government refuses, under the new Bill C-53, to ensure that all these products that were registered before 1965 are re-evaluated. No deadline is set. We know that today, as the Canadian Alliance member was saying, there might be products that are less harmful to the environment and human health. They cannot be registered because all the other products must currently be re-evaluated and the government has not established a deadline. The fact that there is no deadline in this bill is a major shortcoming.

This bill also has very serious shortcomings regarding the registration process. Nowhere in this bill it says that the PMRA will expedite the registration process. This is very important. Some people came to testify on this during our study on pesticides and told us “We would really want to act, but products that are very harmful to the environment are still on the list. Our hands are tied”. As we can see, these products are very harmful to health.

The bill does not propose alternatives to current pesticides either, as recommended by all the reports, focus groups and the standing committee on the environment.

The Minister of Health should have acted to ensure that, finally, Canada has legislation based on the principle of human health. In the report from the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development entitled “Pesticides: Making the Right Choice”, we stated very good reasons for taking action with regard to the vulnerability of children.

Most of the public health and environmental protection organizations received by the Committee, in particular the Canadian Institute of Child Health, the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, the World Wildlife Fund, the Canadian Environmental Law Association and the Ontario College of Family Physicians, denounced the Canadian pesticide management system because it does not specifically address the vulnerability of children, and emphasized the importance of correcting this deficiency. In the view of the Canadian Institute of Child Health, and I quote:

Most regulations and policies are designed to protect adults and refer to the healthy 70-kilogram male, and not the 7-kilogram child.

May I remind members that, in the summertime, when children go outside to play when the weather is nice, when it is not raining—unlike the weather we had for most of this week—they come in contact with people's lawns. When pesticides are used, it is the children who come in close contact with these very harmful products who are the most vulnerable.

• (1340)

We know that children are in close contact with pesticides; credible studies prove it. The Minister of Health should come to the defence of Canadians' health. She had the authority to prohibit, in the bill, within three years, the cosmetic use of pesticides. She did not do so, even though we had credible studies showing that there has been a spectacular increase in asthma and allergies over the last few years.

Also, statistics show that in Quebec and Canada women have fewer children for reasons directly linked to the environment. We know how pleasant it is to have children and grandchildren. I am a grandmother and it makes me very happy. Our children are our future. Studies show that everything in the environment has a direct impact on the health of pregnant women. The minister was given reports showing the link between health and pesticides and hazardous products, but she did nothing about it.

I am thinking that maybe this bill should not have been entrusted to the Department of the Environment. The government introduced the bill, put forward some proposals, rejected every single amendment the Bloc Québécois introduced regarding registration and restricting the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes, and to accelerate the registration process and the review of the current list. The government rejected all these amendments and did not include the precautionary principle, which should have been the basis of this bill.

This bill is an unfinished piece of work. Some people might like to buy unfinished pieces of work. Health and the environment are too important to allow just anyone to play around with concepts that are so important for the people we serve.

*Government Orders*

We have to say that the bill before us today is unfinished. People are way ahead of the minister and her bill. People are attuned to the environment.

In 1991, the municipality of Hudson in Quebec introduced a bylaw banning the cosmetic use of pesticides. It is now 2002, and the minister has not reached that point yet. Does that mean that she has forgotten an important step in the evolution of the municipalities and provinces that are directly affected by bills that do not go far enough?

I think that she has not finished her homework. When we visit our ridings, we meet a lot of people who are very attuned to the environment. How many seniors, parents, children and young people tell us “Why is nothing being done at the federal level for the environment? Why is your legislation is so obsolete?”

● (1345)

A short while ago, in my riding, I witnessed a primary school pilot project promoting the environment.

I was amazed. These children were nine and ten years old. They were so attuned to the fact that the environment had to be central to their life. They knew that previous generations, their parents and their grand-parents' generations, were directly responsible for what is happening now in the environment because of what they did.

These children were aware of that. They told me and their parents that something had to be done, that corrective action had to be taken, that we had to go green to give people the feeling that the environment is both the alpha and the omega of life on our planet.

We have to admit that we have done things that have resulted in the elimination of a good part of our forests. Let us think about acid rain. Let us think about all the pollution we released into the atmosphere without a second thought. We were under the impression that everything was eternal and renewable.

When we know and think that something is renewable, at some point we have to face the facts and say “We must protect what we have. If we lose that, it will be very difficult to make up for lost time and for natural assets that have resulted from a certain way of doing things”.

In Bill C-53, the Minister of Health has greatly disappointed me. Being the Minister of Health, she should take the health of Canadians and Quebecers to heart. I see that she did not.

This is unfortunate because, what is more, she is a woman. Women are very much aware—we bear children and take care of them—of the fact that more and more children are very fragile and quite affected by their immediate environment. They suffer from a many allergies, have problems with asthma, sleeping disorders and are hyperactive.

This would have been a way to solve a lot of health problems for children, pregnant women and the elderly. The population is aging. People can expect to live longer, but they are more and more fragile.

Instead of being sick for the rest of their lives, they must be allowed to lead a very good life, in a healthy environment that will allow them to be in contact with their children, to be healthy and to say “Life is beautiful. Perhaps we have been a little irresponsible, but

today's laws will protect our young people, our children and, consequently, will protect us too”.

I would have liked to congratulate the minister, but I cannot. I say that she has taken a step forward, but I encourage her to go further and to speed things up so that we can finally have legislation that is truly designed to protect health and the environment.

● (1350)

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleagues, the hon. member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie and the hon. member for Jonquière, who did excellent work on this extremely important committee.

I am also disappointed that the health minister did not go far enough on such an important issue. I had the opportunity to do exactly the same study on pesticides in the standing committee on agriculture. I think that the members of that committee were ready to go further. We thought the health minister would go further.

I would also add that it has become extremely important to stop releasing poison into the atmosphere, especially around homes. An important mayor in my riding said “In my city, I am ready to pass a bylaw tomorrow; my seven year old son has cancer because of pesticides spread around the house”. Similar examples are to be found everywhere.

Can my colleague from Jonquière explain why more research is not being conducted on natural products, among others, which could replace chemical products and would be less dangerous? Could she also explain what lobby, what power is stopping the minister from doing more on this issue?

We know that chemical products used in the maintenance of lawns, golf courses and so forth cause more pollution than the same products used in the whole agriculture sector.

I would like my colleague to explain what, in her opinion, is stopping the minister from doing what she ought to be doing to protect human health.

● (1355)

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Champlain.

I hope no lobby is powerful enough to prevent the health minister from taking action to protect health and the environment. If such a lobby does exist and she is influenced by it, I think she has a big problem. I think it would be a big problem, and I hope it is not true.

Moreover, I think that in the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, a local business has indeed come up with a natural product for spraying on grass for cosmetic purposes. Its product was registered by Quebec authorities. Right now this new business is marketing its product and is urging people to use it.

Some research has been conducted, and products are now available to replace pesticides. I urge Quebec municipalities to make bylaws banning the use of pesticides. I think that they will have to assume this responsibility to make up for what the minister has failed to do with Bill C-53.

[English]

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I compliment the hon. member for Jonquière on her commentary. I worked side by side with her on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development when we put out the report on pesticides.

I have two questions. First, does the hon. member not think it is a major shortfall that the precautionary principle would not be made operational throughout the legislation as we had recommended in the committee report? If the PMRA uses a precautionary approach why would it not want to enshrine it in the act?

Second, is it not also a shortfall that the bill would not incorporate non-active ingredients with more clarity by giving full disclosure of the potential toxic effects of formulants?

Does the hon. member not agree that these are two shortfalls—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I regret but I am going to have to intervene and start with members' statements. The hon. member for Jonquière will have the opportunity in the last five minutes left in her intervention to respond after question period.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIPS

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate 15 Hamilton and area students recognized by the federal government for academic achievement and community service.

Established by the government three years ago, the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation excellence awards are divided into local, provincial and national levels and give students either a one-time gift of \$4,000, an annual scholarship of \$4,000 for four years, or \$4,800 annually for four years.

These scholarship awards ensure that the best and brightest of Canadian students receive recognition for their hard work, academic excellence and community involvement.

Sidra Abid, Danny Auron, Catherine Kates, Adrian Brook, Krista Cranston, Julian Tam, Bikramjit Nahal, Anna Chew, Sarah Muller, Lindsay Scott, Julie Strychowsky, Brynne Stainsby, Megan Bauer and Leslie Allchin have all been rewarded with—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia.

\* \* \*

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are disgusted as they hear report after report

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about millions of their tax dollars being handed out to sponsor phantom events, millions more being paid for reports never received, and still more millions being blown on questionable government advertising.

The government is out of control and out of touch when it promises it will return some federal tax dollars to pay for important projects that affect the well-being of small communities. The Liberals promise project money for safe drinking water, health care facilities and safe highways, then withhold the funds even when they are approved.

Better yet, the federal Liberals say there is money for important projects like the expansion of the Cranbrook airport in my constituency, but the Liberals cannot decide on the rules because the Prime Minister and his cabinet are at each other's throats over the leadership issue.

It is phantom money for real projects, yet for their Liberal cronies it is real money for phantom projects. It is vacuous Liberal promises. The reality is that there is little money for community projects because it went to Liberal buddies and golfing friends.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

### MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIPS

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada created the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation in 1998 to assist Canadians in pursuing their post-secondary education goals.

Each year through its bursary program the foundation awards over 90,000 bursaries to Canadian students based on financial needs. Furthermore, through its Excellence Award Program the foundation recognizes academic achievement, community service and interest in innovation with grants to hundreds of Canada's top students each year.

As a former principal and as member of parliament for Oxford I am pleased that two students from my riding have been chosen to receive millennium excellence awards this year. I congratulate Justin Deluca of College Avenue Secondary School and Catherine Hignett of Huron Park Secondary School, both in Woodstock.

On behalf of the Government of Canada I wish Justin and Catherine continued success as they move on to post-secondary studies for the next important step in their lives.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### HEALTH

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, many of us, of our friends or relatives are living in hope that new medications will be found to treat the disease they suffer from.

*S. O. 31*

New drugs that are the outcome of research must, however, go through an entire system of review and approval before they can be marketed.

Unfortunately, however, the deadlines for approval are not always met, for a variety of reasons, the consequence of which is intense worries for a number of patients.

One of the ways of attaining this objective is to create a mechanism to ensure that the deadlines for new drug approvals are really improved and adhered to.

Finally, all stakeholders must work together in the patients' interest.

\* \* \*

[English]

**DISABILITY PROGRAM**

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pleasure to invite everyone to explore the new website of the Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities at [www.parl.gc.ca/disability](http://www.parl.gc.ca/disability).

[Translation]

We want Canadians to become more aware of, and involved in, our work as parliamentarians and as members of this subcommittee.

[English]

We hope that this website will become a way for citizens to participate in our study of the Canada pension plan disability program. Why is this site important? One can use the site to get information and resources about the subcommittee's study.

For us it is vital that people have information about what we are doing so they can understand more about the CPP disability program, the largest federal disability income program, how it works and what can be done to improve it.

[Translation]

We want Canadians to understand the challenges that exist with this program and to participate in our search for ways to deal with them.

[English]

We are putting a broad range of information on the site: evidence and minutes, the presentations that the subcommittee has heard, and previous reports and how the government has responded to them.

As we move through our study of the CPP disability program the website will—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. Catharines.

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**WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House of Commons today to offer congratulations to Ms. Sue-Ann Staff, the wine master of Pillitteri Estates Winery, who was the first woman to be voted Winemaker of the Year at the Ontario Wine Awards.

Ms. Staff's family has deep roots in the Niagara region. Her ancestors settled in the region in the late 1700s and the Staff family started farming grapes in 1895. Sue-Ann studied winemaking at the acclaimed Roseworthy wine university in Australia and remained there for several years to perfect her craft by making wine for Simon Gilbert Wine Services.

Winning the prestigious Winemaker of the Year Award at a relatively young age and after only six years as a winemaker is certainly a testament to Sue-Ann's skill and craftsmanship.

I congratulate Sue-Ann Staff and Pillitteri Estates Winery, and I say well done.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, they say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The first nations governance act is another in a series of well meaning federal government initiatives that would not work.

The species at risk legislation would not work to protect species because it does not show respect for landowners. The animal cruelty act would not protect animals because it does not show respect for farmers. The first nations governance act would not work either because it does not respect Canada's aboriginal peoples.

The consultation process was designed to circumvent democratically elected first nation leaders, and the participation rates were abysmal. The act would not address the principal concerns of the Canadian Alliance and aboriginal peoples such as health care, poverty, housing and economic development.

The Liberals love bureaucracy, and if one loves bureaucracy one will love this act. However if one is really interested in building a partnership that respects the priorities of aboriginal Canadians and non-aboriginal Canadians alike, this act is a road to nowhere.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC**

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Government of Quebec once again demonstrated its lead position in North America as far as social policy is concerned, by introducing an anti-poverty bill and action plan that reflect the wishes of a determined community.

Having cleaned up public finances and passed anti-deficit legislation, the Parti Québécois government has completed the cycle of the collective and profound wish of Quebecers to live in a society that is financially healthy, one with equal opportunity for all, and compassion for its least advantaged members.

Quebec can be proud of the steps it has taken to battle the deficit and create this safety net: \$5 a day daycare, indexed social assistance. Now it can be prouder still of this masterpiece: a stringent and stimulating anti-poverty bill.

Congratulations to Bernard Landry, who committed himself to battle poverty as far back as his Verchères speech. Bravo to Linda Goupil and the Parti Québécois government.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### FIRST CAPITAL DAY

**Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as you so well know, when tracing the history of our great nation one of the key dates that deserves attention is June 15, 1841, the day on which the first parliament of the united provinces of Canada was opened by Governor General Lord Sydenham in Kingston, Ontario.

One hundred and sixty-one years later Canada has given Kingston this attention by recognizing it as Canada's first capital, and June 15 is officially celebrated in Kingston as First Capital Day.

Shortly after the union of Canada in February, 1841 a large building originally commissioned as a hospital was rented out to the new Government of Canada to house the legislative council and the legislative assembly. Eventually, however, Kingston's insufficient number of office buildings forced parliament to move to Montreal where it opened on November 28, 1844.

I congratulate Kingston on this celebration and invite all Canadians who take pride in our past to visit this historic first capital on June 15. I expect to see you there, Mr. Speaker, leading the parade.

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#### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance):** The Shawinigan sidewinder strikes again.

Early in 2000 when decent Canadians were embracing the new millennium and their promises of self improvement it was bad business as usual for the Liberals. An internal audit of public works revealed the next 1,000 years would be like the last 100 with Liberals bilking taxpayers to enrich cronies and supporters.

Red flags went up and the Prime Minister sent his most trusted advisers to bury it. A sanitized version went on the Internet and the Prime Minister breathed easy knowing he could campaign with no worry about a scandal with his fingerprints all over it. He could have put an end to that terrible waste of public money. He could have said "Stop, because it stinks to high heaven". Instead he scuttled for cover and let the torrent of dollars continue to flow to cronies and supporters.

What are we witnessing today? A government in meltdown led by a Prime Minister who had plenty of opportunity to do the right thing but chose not to.

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#### DISTINGUISHED CANADIAN RETAILER OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the award winning efforts of Mr. David Margolis of Winners Canada in Mississauga.

*S. O. 31*

As this year's winner of the Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year Award this retailer has demonstrated outstanding leadership in both the business and public sectors. The Retail Council of Canada presents the award annually to a retailer who has a key role in the local community.

Giving back to the community has always been a personal and corporate priority for Mr. Margolis and Winners Canada, so it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate both Mr. Margolis and Winners Canada on their accomplishments.

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#### DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate to the House before it rises that one of the most despicable acts the government has ever performed on the people of Canada is the attack on those most vulnerable in our society: people who claim the disability tax credit.

Last September over 106,000 Canadians received a shock in the mail when double amputees, people who are deaf, people who are blind and people with severe disabilities were told they had to go back to their doctors to prove that indeed they were missing their legs, they were still blind or they were still deaf so the government would not take away their small disability tax credit that is a maximum of \$960.

Shame on each and every Liberal government member for attacking the most vulnerable in our society.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

#### AWARD WINNERS AT GALA DES MERCURIADES

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at the recent gala des Mercuriades, two municipalities from my riding particularly distinguished themselves.

I want to congratulate the City of Boisbriand for being named the 2002 City of the Year. Mayor Robert Poirier, his administrators and the residents of Boisbriand have every reason to be proud of this honour.

Even though they are very affected by the upcoming closure of the GM plant, all are making huge efforts to maintain their town's excellent financial situation and to ensure an enviable quality of life.

I also want to mention that the town of Rosemère distinguished itself by winning the "Coup de coeur" award for its taxation system.

Mayor Deschênes was able to manage efficiently the municipality's finances, thus maintaining one of the best taxation levels in Quebec.

The Bloc Québécois sends its warm congratulations to those who are responsible for these successes, and it is very honoured to represent them in the House of Commons.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**WINDSOR, NOVA SCOTIA**

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, as early as 1800 the game we now know as hockey was played in Windsor, a town in Canada's oldest province of Nova Scotia.

The Kingston, Ontario based Society for International Hockey Research which meets annually in that central Canadian city released a report yesterday to refute Windsor's legitimate claim as hockey's birthplace. It is wrong, and its anger at Windsor's legitimate claim is a poor reason to issue a study that the organization itself concedes is both unfinished and does not represent the full story.

Windsor residents Mayor Anna Allen, historian Garth Vaughn, and hockey enthusiast Howard Dill welcome all Canadians to visit their town and the Windsor Hockey Heritage Centre to view for themselves the substantial evidence supporting Windsor's claim.

From Canada's first college to the oldest continually operating agricultural fair in North America, to the home of the father of North American humour himself, Thomas Haliburton, Windsor is the town of big firsts including the birthplace of Canada's number one pastime: hockey.

\* \* \*

**FIREARMS REGISTRATION**

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, access to information documents show that the justice minister has already privatized the gun registry and has spent more than \$17.6 million in the process.

Documents show that BDP Business Data Services Limited has been processing firearms licences for two years and gun registrations for at least the last six months. This despite the fact that the Privacy Commissioner of Canada has still not completed his investigation into the privacy implications of the government's privatization plans for the Canadian firearms program.

The justice minister said privatization would improve services, but since BDP became involved in July of 2000 the number of firearms licences issued with the wrong photograph increased from zero in 1999 to hundreds in the last two years, a dramatic increase.

What happened to the justice minister's claims that the gun registry was working well and his promise of offering very good services through privatization? That is certainly not happening.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FIGURE SKATING**

**Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, I want to pay tribute to the Canadians who proposed changes to the figure skating judging system. These changes were approved by the International Skating Union, at its congress meeting in Japan, from June 2 to June 6, 2002.

Major questions were raised regarding the judging of figure skating competitions, and we are pleased that Canadians played a key role by proposing solutions that will improve the sport and allow all Canadians to compete in a fair and just context.

We all remember the incident at the Salt Lake City Olympic Games, which resulted in medals being awarded to Canada following protracted appeals, and in response to public outcry over the conduct of figure skating judges.

We hope that, following the most recent proposals adopted by the International Skating Union, our athletes and all the athletes of the world will be able to take part in fair competitions and be judged on their sport achievements.

Once again, I congratulate the Canadian Figure Skating Association for the key role that it played in proposing such solutions.

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**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

● (1415)

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor was surprisingly candid today in committee. He plainly stated that he is powerless, that the Prime Minister's actions when he contacted the BDC president were outside the new guidelines and that these new guidelines had no impact whatsoever on the ethical problems that the government has been under for the last two months.

Why is the Prime Minister paralyzed and cannot give us an ethics commissioner who reports to parliament which he promised?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the first words out of the hon. member's mouth are not an apology for the outrageous accusations made yesterday that somehow or other the property at Harrington Lake was misused. After a cheque, I might add cashed, has been made public for \$20,000 to compensate the NCC for the use of that property, I cannot believe the deafening silence from the Alliance Party for not getting up and apologizing. Day after day they make these outrageous—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for MacLeod.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I thought my question today was about the ethics counsellor. I guess it was not.

Here is what the ethics counsellor had to say further. He has no legislated power to subpoena. He has no legislated power to sanction. He in fact is a paper tiger just reporting to the Prime Minister.

I will ask my question again and maybe I will get an answer. Why do we not have an independent ethics commissioner reporting to parliament instead of reporting to the Prime Minister? That is the question.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we had an independent parliamentary ethics counsellor to deal with members of parliament themselves, we would have that person asking that member to stand in the House and apologize for what he did yesterday.

What is it that prevents him from being a big enough person to stand here and say “We got it wrong. We have been on this witch hunt now for so long, we forgot to check the facts before we got up and threw mud at the government”.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Let me ask another question about the ethics counsellor. It might surprise the Deputy Prime Minister to say that I am asking the questions, not him.

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

**The Speaker:** Order. I am sure the hon. member for MacLeod appreciates the assistance but the Chair does not because he cannot hear the hon. member. All hon. members would want the Chair to be able to hear him in case he says something out of order. The hon. member for MacLeod has the floor.

**Mr. Grant Hill:** Mr. Speaker, here is another thing the ethics counsellor told us this morning. He did not come up with the leadership guidelines for fundraising. They in fact came up very late in the process and they came directly from the Prime Minister.

Is it not true that the only reason those guidelines are in place is so that the Prime Minister through spite can attack the member for LaSalle—Énard? Is that not true?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, those guidelines give us the ability to attack the Alliance Party because its members do not have any guidelines. We do not know who contributed to their leadership campaigns.

We do know that the member for Red Deer said that their position on Kyoto would help their fundraising. We know their positions are for sale but we do not know who gave them the money. How about if they come up with guidelines for themselves?

By the way, where is the apology?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor admitted in the industry committee this morning that if the Prime Minister lobbied the head of the BDC for a loan to the Auberge Grand-Mère today, he would be in violation of his own new ethics guidelines.

Will the government finally admit that what the Prime Minister did was wrong?

• (1420)

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, who brought in the guidelines? The Prime Minister himself acknowledges that the guidelines prevent ministers from calling heads of crown corporations but those are the rules now.

How about the Alliance Party and its allegations about Harrington Lake? I hear a lot of noise from over there, a lot of heckling but I do not hear a word of apology. When is it coming, Mr. Speaker?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, so in other words, what the Prime Minister did was wrong. Finally the Liberals are admitting it.

The Prime Minister has made ministerial fundraising activities for the Liberal leadership retroactive. Will he also make the guidelines as they apply to ministerial lobbying of crown corporations retroactive?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, disclosure of ministerial activities is already public. There is no problem with that, but where are the disclosure rules for the Alliance Party? Those members want to talk about—

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** We don't write the cheques.

**Hon. John Manley:** They don't give cheques. Mr. Speaker, they just give away policy positions. That is what they do. That is what is for sale over there.

The Canadian public does not think that is good enough. Who gave them the money?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Media IDA Vision announced—

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

[English]

**The Speaker:** Order. We do have to have some order. We are wasting time in question period today and that is not good. We do not hear questions and we do not hear answers.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie has the floor, and shall be heard now.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, Media IDA Vision not only received generous commissions through the sponsorship program, but the August 2000 audit report also reveals that in addition to its 3% cut, the Groupe Everest subsidiary pocketed hundreds of millions of dollars annually in interest on public money, money it was given at the outset of each new contract.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister acknowledge that before the events even got a whiff of the money, Media IDA had filled its pockets with interest on it, thereby abusing its exclusive contract with the government, and getting off scot-free?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the period in question, that particular firm was performing the function of an agency of record.

*Oral Questions*

I have indicated that for future business I am anxious to develop a system that does not use agencies at all. Therefore not only would commissions be unnecessary, an agency of record would be unnecessary.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that was not the question. That has been raised. All of the money was given to this group, which earned interest on the money and then passed it on to the events.

In other words, it made money with public funds in the form of the interest that it was paid by the banks where it put this money.

How is it that the government never noticed this, that it allowed this system to continue, even after 2000, when we were told here that all of the standards were verified?

This was admitted by senior officials in committee. I expect the minister is aware of what his officials are saying, or will he do like the other ministers and hide behind his officials in order to hide the truth?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the issue the hon. gentleman raises goes to the question of value for money and that is a question that lies at the very root of this file.

I will be working with experts both inside the government and outside to come up with a stronger definition of what constitutes value for money in an area like advertising or sponsorships. It is extremely important for taxpayers to be assured that they have in fact received what they have paid for.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to help the minister, the sponsorship program has budgeted between \$40 million and \$60 million annually since 1997. Media IDA Vision, a subsidiary of Everest, racked up interest on this amount, which sat in its accounts at an average rate of 3%, to take a very conservative figure, for an average of two months until the payments were made.

Will the government admit that Media IDA Vision received an outright gift of over \$200,000 annually from the government?

• (1425)

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the auditor general will be examining the question of value for money. That is something she is obviously deeply concerned about. She will determine on the basis of her audit to be done over the next number of months with respect to advertising sponsorships and that kind of activity, whether or not proper value for money has been received.

One of the issues I am examining for the future is that if and when an agent is used, perhaps the government holdback should be 100% until the work done has been verified.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, instead of trying to tell us that they will no longer do this in future, that they will be taking a look at it, the minister should be outraged.

This government put in place a system which handed Media IDA Vision a gift of \$ million over the life of the program.

I urge the minister to give this some thought. A gift of at least \$1 million went to Media IDA Vision without any professional services being received in return. That is serious.

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an agency of record does provide services. The issue is what the value of those services is compared to the money paid. That is the question that is going to be audited by the auditor general. Indeed I have serious questions about the commission's system. That is why I have suggested that we should develop a delivery mechanism that does not use commissions at all.

\* \* \*

#### PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today the public works committee took the important step of summoning a former, now retired, senior civil servant to appear before the committee. There have been public news stories that this individual, Mr. Charles Guité, was planning to sell his residence and leave the country.

What steps will the government take to ensure that Mr. Guité remains in the country until he has been summoned and indeed has appeared before the committee?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am told that this issue is still before committee. Given that it is still before committee, no report has yet been filed with the House. Therefore may I suggest that at best, the question is out of order.

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the terms of negotiation may be still before the committee but it was passed 14 to 2 that Mr. Guité would appear before the committee, so my question is very relevant. We simply want to make sure, and the Canadian public wants to ensure, that the gentleman remains in Canada until such time as he has appeared before the committee, be that next week or next year.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. opposition member seems to be advocating the arrest of a person who has not been charged. That is an unusual procedure. I do not know whether he was at the committee to which he is referring but I hope that his testimony before that committee, if such were the case, was different from that which he is saying in the House today.

*Oral Questions***ETHICS**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, today at the committee it was confirmed by Howard Wilson that before he was appointed ethics counsellor, he himself demonstrated a serious lack of ethics while on the job at Industry Canada. A damning audit carried out by Mr. Wilson's own department found that he himself had acted unethically with respect to contracting irregularities. This resulted in the suspension of his signing authority.

This morning Mr. Wilson admitted that the Prime Minister was aware of this prior to his appointment. How could the Prime Minister appoint an ethics counsellor whose own ethics he knew were so severely compromised?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I would point out to the House that the Prime Minister consulted with leaders of the other parties before appointing Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson has shown in the course of the years that he has held his important position that he is capable of carrying it out responsibly and effectively.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor has been advising the Prime Minister and the cabinet on ethical conduct for eight years. He is the one who advised the Prime Minister that sleeping at a chalet owned by one of the government's chief advertising contracts was ethical. He is the one who exonerated the Prime Minister for his call to the president of the BDC over a loan to a friend while holding an interest in an adjoining property.

Was this atrocious appointment due to an appalling lack of judgment or was this a deliberate ploy to give the Prime Minister leverage just in case the commissioner questioned his own lack of ethics?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** And, Mr. Speaker, he is the ethics counsellor who appeared before the committee this morning, answered questions and very openly explained how he does his work.

The ethics counsellor has for a number of years been giving good advice to the Prime Minister and the government.

Perhaps the member might tell us the next time he is on his feet, just who was the ethics counsellor for Brian Mulroney? Who was the ethics counsellor for the right hon. member for Calgary Centre?

• (1430)

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, for the record, that consultation was a phone call telling us who the ethics counsellor was.

In March of this year, a B.C. firm, Dynamic Maintenance Ltd., won a \$77,000 contract to provide cleaning services to the Natural Resources Canada building in Calgary.

On the face of it, this would seem like an ordinary matter. However, the Minister of Natural Resources owns Dynamic Maintenance and his company is now making money from his department.

Does the Prime Minister agree that it is wrong for a minister to do business with his own department?

**Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know how the system works.

This is a contract that is put out by Public Works and Government Services Canada. As the hon. member and members across know, I have a number of businesses and they are in trust but they continue to operate. All contracts are done through the normal process. Public works puts them out, not natural resources.

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Prime Minister's toothless suggestions on ethics: "public office holders have an obligation to perform their official duties and arrange their private affairs in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny, an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law".

The Minister of Natural Resources is not meeting that standard by doing business with his own department. Does the newest contract with his own department not violate the Prime Minister's own rules?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously there are particular challenges every time a person enters parliament with private interests. These need to be dealt with in accordance with rules that are well understood and are well documented. The procedures need to be followed very carefully.

In this case I am sure that if the hon. member has the decency to look at the facts, something they did not do on the question of Harrington Lake, she will find that the ministry acted in accordance with all standards for ministers.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the minister of public works does not seem to understand the questions we are asking him, I have one for the President of the Treasury Board.

While Media IDA Vision was enjoying the use of taxpayers' money, the President of the Treasury Board was happily telling us at every opportunity that all treasury board rules had been respected.

How can the President of the Treasury Board, the person responsible for the proper management of taxpayers' money, explain that she failed to notice that millions of dollars were going through Media IDA Vision's accounts, constituting an undue advantage to a company—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again the hon. gentleman raises the question of money that was paid in the form of a commission to an agency of record that held that money for some period of time before paying its subsidiary accounts.

That is part of the nature of an agency transaction. That is why we are examining the issue of value for money and that is exactly why we want to dispose of the agency system so that this problem does not occur.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how does the President of the Treasury Board explain that she rose in her place and told the House that the rules of proper management were being scrupulously followed, when that was far from being the case?

How does she explain this, except to say that, like her other colleagues who are involved, she was always trying to put a lid on things?

*[English]*

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the treasury board encourages every department of government to have a strong internal audit division that can investigate issues of financial probity within the various departments.

My department happens to have a particularly good internal audit section. The auditor general herself has said that. It was the internal audit that disclosed that some treasury board procedures had not been respected and that is why we have taken corrective action.

• (1435)

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's actions make a mockery of his own ethics guidelines.

The newly revealed audit from HR speaks of companies that may have been set up just to defraud, companies in the Prime Minister's riding. It shows that the Prime Minister broke the rules in trying to arrange money for those selfsame companies.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister not see the irony in the Prime Minister proposing ethics guidelines that still allow the same sort of behaviour that the RCMP is investigating today in Shawinigan?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, here we go again, throwing mud, unsubstantiated allegations, smear campaigns. Yesterday they got up and accused the government of misusing Harrington Lake. We have demonstrated the falsehood of that allegation.

Do we hear a word of apology? Do we see any contrition? No, because these people are in the scandal-mongering business. Questions like that are not worthy of a response.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister's indignation will not rearrange the facts for him. The truth is, we have an audit from the Department of Human Resources Development and the Deputy Prime Minister denies the truth. I think he has an ethical problem.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Why does he sit there and defend ethical guidelines that today would allow the same sort of behaviour that the RCMP is investigating today in Shawinigan?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Canada are just getting a little tired of hearing these people get up, and a whole bunch of them do it—

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

**Hon. John Manley:** And they all yak, yak, yak while I answer.

They get up day after day, throwing mud, making allegations, unsubstantiated allegations. They will not make them outside where they are not safe, with the legal protections of parliamentary privilege. Yesterday we caught them dead to rights making allegations that were totally wrong, and today they will not even get up and say that one was wrong. That is the measure of their integrity.

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*[Translation]***GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in a few days, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services will be announcing changes to the sponsorship program. Last month, the Bloc Québécois proposed an alternative: elimination of the middle-man so that all of the funds would go directly to a support program for cultural and sporting activities.

Is the Minister of Public Works and Government Services in a position to tell us whether he plans to announce the conversion of the present sponsorship program along the lines of the Bloc Québécois proposal?

*[English]*

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Bloc has indicated its support for my position that we should find a system that performs without the use of agencies. That is certainly my objective for the future.

The hon. member will know that we are in the middle of an administrative year where it is difficult to make changes partway through, but I will do my best to deliver a system that does not use agencies.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Public Works and Government Services give us the assurance that there is sufficient staff in his department to manage this program, and does he therefore plan to do away with the needless middlemen?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the department involved here is Communication Canada and it is one that is relatively small in terms of the Government of Canada overall. I will be looking at the resource requirements, both human resources and otherwise, within Communication Canada to ensure that it does have the physical capacity to do the tasks I ask it to perform.

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**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, why is it that here in Canada the security of a federal building can be so easily breached in this post-September 11 era?

The recent break-in and theft at Citizenship and Immigration is a sorry commentary on just how the government has taken the threats of the security of our country.

I ask the minister of public works: How can a federal building, particularly one housing such sensitive and confidential information, be so easily broken into?

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the official opposition is so eager for security, why does it not pass Bill C-55? They should support Bill C-55 because there are some issues there.

Second, when that happened we reacted immediately and I can assure the Canadian people that there is no problem regarding security. They stole some information and some computers, but it was nothing relating to important information.

● (1440)

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we are left wondering if the government is taking the integrity and security of its own resources and information as seriously as it should. If the government cannot keep one of its own offices secure from either ordinary burglars or perhaps potential terrorists, how can it assure Canadians and the international community as a whole that it can keep our country safe?

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, they have to do two things. First, they have to apologize, like the Deputy Prime Minister has said, and second, if they pass Bill C-55 they will not have that kind of problem. I can assure the House that information is placed on a network and not on hard disk, so, another scapegoat.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-

Food. Last month the U.S. farm bill was passed, giving massive subsidies to U.S. farmers and undermining our efforts to reform world trade. I wonder if the minister of agriculture could tell the House and Canadian farmers what actions he is taking to make the U.S. aware of the global consequences of its actions.

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just had the honour of leading the Canadian delegation to the five year review at the world food summit.

At that location, I had the opportunity to talk to a number of ministers from around the world and to spearhead a press conference, including members of developing countries, less developed countries and developed countries, where we pointed out very clearly that the actions of the United States in its farm bill have put the timely conclusion of the WTO rounds in jeopardy. It has hurt Canadian farmers. It has hurt farmers in developing countries. It came very clearly from everyone that commodity specific support and protectionism helps no one but hurts many.

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**G-8 SUMMIT**

**Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. On the eve of the G-8 summit in Alberta we see growing evidence of the Liberal government's efforts to block peaceful dissent against the G-8 agenda of corporate globalization. Leaders are in a bubble far out of sight and hearing, borders are closed to peaceful protesters, RCMP threaten lethal force, and now we learn that the Liberals paid \$300,000 to the Stoney Nation to block a solidarity village on its land.

Why did the Liberals spend \$300,000 of taxpayers' money to shut down a place for peaceful dissent, education and protest? Why this attack—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we know, the RCMP are in charge of making sure that security is safe and secure in Kananaskis. That is precisely what we will do. We will ensure that protestors, people who come from around the world and residents who live there are safe and secure in that venue. I think it is important that all Canadians know that, because that is precisely what the RCMP will do on behalf of all Canadians.

*Oral Questions***DISABILITY TAX CREDIT**

**Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last fall 106,000 vulnerable Canadians received a form letter telling them to reapply for their disability tax credit because the government no longer believed they were blind or had Down's Syndrome or schizophrenia. In response, MPs from all sides of the House wrote to the minister of revenue demanding that these letters be withdrawn and passed a unanimous committee report which recommended: a written apology to everyone who received a letter; compensation for re-certification; immediate amendments to the law to incorporate recent court decisions; plus consultations on the process and medical forms.

Will the government implement this unanimous committee report?

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is very sympathetic to all disabled groups. We have to carry out periodic reviews on that. Also we are going to look into reviewing the process and forms, as the hon. member said. We will do the best we can to improve that.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, never before has a defence ombudsman report been delayed and never before has a minister of defence employed these stall tactics to avoid the House of Commons.

It is clear to everyone in the House that there is something in the report that the minister does not want discussed in this House. What is the minister trying to hide?

Will the Minister of National Defence honour his commitment to transparency and public accountability and release the ombudsman report today? If may he need 60 days to read it but we only need 24 hours.

•(1445)

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I met the ombudsman yesterday and I made two points to him. First, having just received the report, I wanted to have a little bit of time to read it before he released it to the public. I can assure the House it will not take me as much as 60 days.

Second, I reassured him that in terms of his mandate to protect members of the armed forces and ensure that they get a fair hearing in case of difficulties, I was 100% on his side.

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**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC):** Mr. Speaker, today I received in my office a 59 page book from the Minister for International Trade outlining the wonderful efforts the government is making at the WTO to deal with softwood lumber. However I also learned today that it lost the decision at the WTO.

The U.S. trade representative has said that Canada does not seem to be interested in negotiations. Will the minister take this as a wake-up call, go back to the table and negotiate our way out of the softwood mess?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that this was not at all a key element of our strategy that the member is referring to. The first real test on our softwood lumber case comes in mid-July. The WTO panel ruled that Canada's case was premature and that we were challenging U.S. legislation that had not yet been applied against Canada.

We are sorry it did not deal with the substantive issue but I can say that we will challenge any actual application of the U.S. legislation.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, trade failures are Liberal failures and this trade delegation is one more failure. The agriculture minister has failed internationally to protect our farmers from rising subsidies and protectionism. Foreign governments have reacted by compensating their producers but this government's only reaction is to blackmail the provinces.

Trade is a federal issue. The Liberals have failed at trade, then expect the provinces to pay for their disastrous mistakes. Why should the provinces pay for an international trade war?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member fails to recognize the constitution of this country, which is that agriculture is a shared jurisdiction between the federal and the provincial governments.

As I have said before to him and to the provinces, the benefits of trade are shared by the provinces and the federal government. The challenges of trade will be shared by the provinces and the federal government.

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, every trade issue that arises is a failure for this government. The government failed to confront the protectionist U.S. farm bill that deliberately targets Canadian producers. The expansion of U.S. subsidies into pulses is an example of that. Canadian grain and oilseed farmers are hardest hit and most affected by this government's international failures.

Will any new funding coming out of the agriculture minister's department be directly targeted to grain and oilseed producers for trade injury compensation?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have shown before that we are there to support the Canadian farmers in a number of different ways with programs to improve the marketability and the profitability of the agricultural industry out there. We will continue to be there and we will be making an announcement in that regard soon.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**SOIRÉE DU HOCKEY**

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of heritage says she could intervene to force the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to broadcast *La Soirée du hockey* on its French network. However, yesterday, the spokesperson for the CBC questioned whether the minister had jurisdiction over the crown corporation's business decisions.

Could the minister, who is suggesting that she intends to take action, tell us specifically what she intends to do about this?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every crown corporation must comply with the Official Languages Act. When a corporation negotiates for rights in one language only, rights for the broadcast of hockey games in English only, it shows a lack of respect for the francophone minority of one million people living outside Quebec.

The CBC has a responsibility not only toward sports fans, but toward all minorities, including francophones outside Quebec.

• (1450)

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we must gather from the response of the heritage minister's answer that she intends to file a complaint with the CRTC, to get the CBC to comply with the Official Languages Act?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** If necessary, Mr. Speaker.

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[English]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the U.S. farm bill took three years to draft and it attacks Canadian farm families. The Liberals did nothing to stop these attacks and have no effective plan to offset the trade injury. The government expects the provinces to pay for its failures.

Agricultural trade injury was not caused by provincial mistakes. The provinces have zero per cent of the of the responsibility for this disaster, so why should they pay 40% for federal failures?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government negotiates as far as trade is concerned. In so doing, when there are benefits of trade the provinces share. When there are challenges from the ends of those negotiations, as a result of those negotiations between countries, the provinces share as well.

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the U.S. farm bill is completely federal and the minister knows it. The president signed that bill a month ago. Parts of the bill breach our trade agreements, yet the Liberal government refuses to act.

The bill has been in the works for three years. The government has no action plan. Now it wants more time to study it. Why has the government failed to keep its promise to Canadian farmers by refusing to launch WTO and NAFTA challenges?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been working with our Cairns partners. We

have been working with many countries around the world that precisely object to the U.S. farm bill.

We are extremely disappointed that the United States has adopted the farm bill. We believe it goes contrary to the direction we all adopted in Doha, Qatar last year.

We will continue to work with our partners to see whether the farm bill in its present shape respects the WTO obligations. The Americans pretend it does. What we know is that legally maybe it does but we are not sure. We are checking into it. However, legitimately it was the wrong way to go.

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**TERRORISM**

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

In light of the continuing terrorist threat to North America and many other places in the world, could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue tell the House what Canada is doing to stop weapons of mass destruction from crossing our borders and what we are doing to meet the challenge of high tech smugglers without clogging our border crossing points to the U.S.A.?

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the CCRA will spend \$110 million over five years to purchase high tech equipment to enhance protection for all Canadians.

The equipment will include a radiation detector that will seize all nuclear weapons. The government will also purchase a high energy x-ray machine to examine all the containers at sea ports, airports and at land border crossings.

The government strongly believes that the number one priority is the safety and security of all Canadians.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the military ombudsman's report is to be hidden from parliament for months.

It is not a defence minister's main squeeze report that shamefully should never be. It is not a Groupaction Liberal fundraising report that proved to be no report at all. This is a military ombudsman report that should be released with pride immediately to the public unless the Liberal government has something to hide.

Will the minister release it today?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member was not listening when I answered this question.

As I explained before, yesterday I met the ombudsman in my office. I suggested to him that I needed time to read the report before he released it. The rules stipulate that I can have it for 60 days before it is released.

*Oral Questions*

I will not insist on the 60 days but it is not unreasonable that I have a little bit of time to read it.

• (1455)

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, following procedure. This is more like following in Gagliano's footsteps.

This government has a long history of burying information damaging to the government. It tried to bury damaging audits. It tries to stop public inquiries. We had to fight for years to get access to information requests.

The minister states that he needs time to read the report, or is it time to sanitize it? Will the minister commit to the House that he will release the military ombudsman's report before we rise for the summer break?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the report will be released shortly.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FERRY SERVICES**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport is refusing to restore ferry service between Trois-Pistoles and Les Escoumins because the current state of the facilities does not meet existing safety regulations.

But the minister himself mentioned a temporary solution which would cost about \$750,000 and which would make it possible to salvage the ferry season for this year.

Yes or no, does the minister intend to take the necessary action to implement this temporary solution now, or any other solution which will make it possible to salvage the 2002 season?

**Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our officials are negotiating with community stakeholders to find the most appropriate solution possible. The member does have to understand that there are extremely serious safety issues. In the meantime, two other crossings are available.

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[English]

**INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM**

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the secretary of state for rural affairs.

I have been discussing the infrastructure program with many of my municipal councils across my riding and I know councils across the country are interested in this for development of roads, sewers and water.

With these discussions, I wonder whether the secretary of state can bring us up to date as to what is happening with the infrastructure program.

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontar-**

**io), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that to date we have been able to include 291 projects for an investment of almost \$400 million. Additional investments will made.

As the member is from a rural area of the province, he will be pleased to know that over \$85 million of investments were made in water, sewers and other safety features in rural areas.

This is an example of three levels of government working together for the benefit of the citizens of Ontario.

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**PAROLE BOARD**

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, recent news reports confirm some crime victims' worst fears. An audit has revealed that an overwhelming majority of parole offices failed to meet minimum standards for parole monitoring. Most of the cases involved the highest risk offenders, those posing the greatest danger to the public, and the solicitor general has the audacity to stand in the House and say that public safety is his number one priority. Is it any wonder that some victims of violent crime dread the day their offenders will be paroled?

What assurances will the solicitor general give Canadians that not only will the rules be followed but that there will be consequences to management when those rules are not followed?

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, public safety is the number one priority of not only the government but of the solicitor general. We will continue to make that a basic value for Canada and all Canadians.

I am appalled that the members opposite always want to tear down the great institutions that we have instead of supporting and ensuring that they support, as do most Canadians, the institutions that make us a great nation.

That is our priority as a government and that is our priority as a country.

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[Translation]

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, the Deputy Prime Minister told us it was too soon to indicate the priorities of the Strategic Infrastructure Fund.

Yet, in May he announced that he had some 12 to 15 projects in view. This past Monday, he announced that the bulk of the funds available would be going to the municipalities.

Given the contradictory nature of these statements, can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us which is the right one?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if I have been the cause of the hon. member's confusion. However, when all the rules for the program are ready and have been adopted by cabinet, I will be announcing them.

We will then start discussions with the other government levels concerning the projects to be included in phase one of this program.

[English]

### DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Deputy Prime Minister wishes to have an apology from the Alliance Party but why does he and his party not apologize to the 106,000 Canadians who received that insulting letter on their disability tax credit?

My question is for the veterans affairs minister. Cliff Chadderton of the veterans associations has written to us saying that 34,000 veterans and their families will be seriously affected by the changes to the disability tax credit. These are veterans who are amputees who fought for this country.

What will the minister do to tell his government to stop this attack on those who served this country?

• (1500)

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's concern. As everyone knows, we have to reassess eligibility periodically. We have to examine it very carefully. The government is very sympathetic to the disabled. We share the member's concern and we will do our best.

The hon. member should understand how serious we are about this issue and that we will do our best.

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### ETHICS COUNSELLOR

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knew that the person he appointed as ethics counsellor had on the job training in awarding untendered contracts. The Deputy Prime Minister was minister of industry at the time and would have known Mr. Wilson's record.

Why did the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister appoint an official whose personal history they knew would compromise the counsellor's authority on ethical questions?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the right hon. member is not being fair with the facts. First, the ethics counsellor was appointed only after the leaders of the other parties were consulted. Second, the record shows that Mr. Wilson's career in industry was a distinguished one. He has carried out his responsibilities since his appointment as ethics counsellor with honesty and effectiveness.

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### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 29

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there has been consultation among political parties and I think if you seek it you would find unanimous consent to adopt immediately government orders, government business No. 29, which are the recommendations to change the rules of the House regarding royal assents.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to proceed with government order No. 29 now?

### Business of the House

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved:

That the Standing Orders be amended as follows:

1. By adding, immediately after Standing Order 28(4):

(5) During adjournments of the House, upon receipt of a written declaration of Royal Assent and the prior receipt of messages from the Senate concerning every bill in the declaration, the Speaker shall inform the House of the receipt of such declaration by causing it, along with any message received pursuant to Standing Order 32(1.1), to be published in the Journals.

2. By adding, immediately after Standing Order 32(1):

(1.1) When the House stands adjourned, any message from the Senate concerning bills to be given Royal Assent may be deposited with the Clerk of the House and such message shall be deemed for all purposes to have been received by the House on the day on which it is deposited with the Clerk of the House.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1505)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 23

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there has been further consultation and I also believe that you would find consent to replace the text of government orders, government business No. 23, with the following, and to deem the motion to have been adopted. The new text would therefore read as follows. I move:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen in the following words:

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY:

We,...the House of Commons of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg to offer our sincere congratulations on the happy completion of the fiftieth year of Your reign.

We wish Your Majesty health and happiness and wish that Your reign continue in peace and prosperity for many years to come.

That the said Address be engrossed; and

That a Message be sent to the Senate informing Their Honours that this House has adopted the said Address and requesting Their Honours to unite with this House in the said Address by filling up the blanks with the words "the Senate and".

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Speaker:** I conclude from that government item No. 23 on the order paper is therefore withdrawn. Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

WEEKLY STATEMENT

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, today being Thursday it is my duty at this time to ask the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons what business he has for the remainder of today, tomorrow and the following week.

*Privilege*

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that many members would have suggestions about the government business over the next few days. However, in the absence of hearing all that, I will inform the House of the following.

We will continue this afternoon tomorrow with the following: Bill C-53, the pesticide legislation, to be followed by Bill C-58, the Canada pension plan investment board bill and any time remaining on Bill C-55, the public safety bill.

On Monday we will begin with a motion by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to refer to committee before second reading the bill on first nations governance that he will introducing tomorrow, notice of which is already on the order paper. We would then turn to report stage and third reading of Bill C-54, respecting sports. We would then turn to the specific claims bill introduced earlier today and any business left from this week, that is the bills I named a moment ago.

We would also like to debate report stage and third reading hopefully of Bill C-48, the copyright legislation and, subject to some progress, I would also like to resume consideration at second reading of Bill C-57, the nuclear safety bill.

In addition, it would be the wish of the government to dispose of the motion to establish a special joint committee to review proposals made concerning the code of conduct for parliamentarians.

This is the list of legislation that I would like to see completed over the next several days.

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**PRIVILEGE**

## CANADA PENSION PLAN ACT

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege to charge the Minister of Finance with contempt for his failure to comply with the legislative requirement compelling him to table a report from the chief actuary in compliance with section 115 of the CPP Act.

Subsection 115(2) of the CPP Act says:

—the Chief Actuary shall, whenever any Bill is introduced in or presented to the House of Commons to amend this Act in a manner that would in the opinion of the Chief Actuary materially affect any of the estimates contained in the most recent report under this section made by the Chief Actuary, prepare, using the same actuarial assumptions and basis as were used in that report, a report setting forth the extent to which such Bill would, if enacted by Parliament, materially affect any of the estimates contained in that report.

On June 6 the government introduced Bill C-58, an act to amend the Canada pension plan and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act. The speaking notes given out by the government indicate that this will change the earnings of the fund by \$75 billion. This is a material effect on the fund and must be accompanied by a full report of the chief actuary.

Moreover, the report must be laid before the House of Commons by the Minister of Finance forthwith. That is subsection 115(8), which states:

Forthwith on the completion of any report under this section, the Chief Actuary shall transmit the report to the Minister of Finance, who shall cause the report to be

laid before the House of Commons forthwith on its receipt if Parliament is then sitting, or if Parliament is not then sitting, on any of the first five days next thereafter that Parliament is sitting, and if at the time any report under this section is received by the Minister of Finance Parliament is then dissolved, the Minister of Finance shall forthwith cause a copy of the report to be published in the Canada Gazette. (Section 115(8).

The chief actuary has completed his report. The speaking notes from the department read:

The transfer is expected to improve the investment performance of the CPP. The Chief Actuary of Canada estimates that the change will increase CPP assets by about \$75 billion over 50 years.

The last time a bill was introduced in the House making changes to the CPP Act, the chief actuary had his report prepared one day before the bill was introduced in parliament. Bill C-2 was introduced on September 25, 1997, and I have a copy of a letter sent to the minister from the chief actuary dated September 24, 1997, one day before the bill was tabled indicating that:

In compliance with subsection 115(2) of the Canada Pension Plan Act, which provides that a periodic actuarial report shall be prepared whenever a Bill is introduced in the House of Commons to amend the CPP, I am pleased to transmit the sixteenth actuarial report on the Canada Pension Plan.

I will table both of these documents with you, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly, our chief actuary is on the ball and respects parliament and follows the law. The fault does not lie with the chief actuary but with the Minister of Finance. The report regarding Bill C-58 is obviously finished and should have been tabled.

Members of the House cannot evaluate the impact of these changes properly without a report. For example, an extra \$75 billion may allow the 9.9% rate to fall. On the other hand it could be that the CPP would be unsustainable without this act and that this act was assumed in the preparation of the last, that is the 18th, report. Parliamentarians need to know this.

● (1510)

In 1993 the Speaker ruled on a similar question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River. The issue at that time concerned the failure of the Minister of Finance to table an order made under the customs act as it was his statutory duty to do. The member for Scarborough—Rouge River stated that he entertained no doubt that:

...the minister's failure to table a document required to be tabled by this House, whether intentional or accidental, tends to diminish the authority of the House of Commons and is something that might reasonably be held to constitute contempt by this House

Speaker Fraser ruled on April 19, 1993, that a prima facie case of breach of privilege had been made and allowed the member to move a motion referring the matter to the standing committee on House management. In his ruling Speaker Fraser reiterated that:

The requirements contained in our rules and statutory laws have been agreed upon by this House and constitute an agreement which I think all of us realize must be respected. Members cannot function if they do not have access to the material they need for their work and if our rules are being ignored and even statutory instruments are being disregarded.

The Speaker also agreed that disregard of a legislative command, even if unintentional, was an affront to the authority and dignity of parliament as a whole and the House in particular.

*Government Orders*

On November 21, 2001, the Speaker delivered a ruling in regard to a complaint by the member for Surrey Central who cited 16 examples of where the government failed to comply with the legislative requirements concerning the tabling of certain information in parliament. In all 16 cases raised on November 21 a report deadline was absent from the legislation. As a result the Speaker could not find a prima facie question of privilege. However the Speaker said in his ruling on page 7381 of *Hansard*:

Were there to be a deadline for tabling included in the legislation, I would not hesitate to find that a prima facie case of contempt does exist and I would invite the hon. member to move the usual motion.

The reporting date in section 115 of the CPP Act is “forthwith”. The term forthwith is used all through our standing orders, Mr. Speaker, and I have watched you comply with such orders. When our standing orders instruct us to put a question to the House forthwith, that is exactly what we do. We do it right away without delay. We do not do it the next day or a week later.

By breaching a statutory requirement to table the chief actuary's report in the House the Minister of Finance is in contempt of the House. I am prepared to move a motion to refer this matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I would also request that Bill C-58 not be allowed to proceed until a report of the chief actuary has been tabled. This is more of a point of order and ask that you rule on that related matter as well.

• (1515)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there has been a reference to a deadline made by the hon. member regarding this issue, which of course is a serious issue and I am not diminishing the importance of it. He says to buttress his argument that there is no deadline in this and it is based on the consideration which he refers to as forthwith.

Notwithstanding the fact that it is there, during the course of his presentation the hon. member might have forgotten one of the original propositions he raised in the House. It stated that it was in the chief actuary's opinion to trigger the mechanism of issuing this letter, or note which was the expression the hon. member used a while ago. I do not know, nor do I suggest the House knows yet whether the chief actuary has given such an opinion at this time.

I have asked officials to verify and to report to me. I will report to the House as early as possible. Hopefully later this day I would be able obtain that information for the benefit not only of the Speaker but of course for the benefit of all hon. members. However I do think that the triggering mechanism, which the hon. member admitted is there, is the chief actuary's opinion.

I would undertake to verify if he has given such an opinion and what the opinion is. If the chief actuary has given an opinion that in fact the triggering mechanism does not apply, the point of course is not valid. If he has not given an opinion at all, it is not valid either because the whole argument is based on the chief actuary providing that opinion, and that is the contention of the hon. member who raised the proposition in the House.

Perhaps I can assist the House and undertake that if, by the time we complete consideration of the bill now before the House, I have

not obtained the information to be able to rise and give further explanation to hon. members, I would then call the other bill that is on the order paper instead, namely, Bill C-55, and call Bill C-58 at a later time, perhaps tomorrow. That would satisfy the hon. member because the proposition is not before the House given that the bill has not been called for debate and I could delay perhaps for a little while.

That being said, if anytime between now and the completion of the debate on the other bill, Bill C-53, I could rise on a point of order and give further explanation to the House, I would do so at that time.

**The Speaker:** I do not want to reply. The Chair is prepared to take the matter under advisement. The hon. member may get a chance to reply later, if and when the government House leader comes back to the House with additional information as he has undertaken to do. We should wait until we get the additional information and then if the hon. member has additional comments, perhaps the Chair could hear the matter at that time.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

### PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-53, an act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** Before question period, the hon. member for Jonquière had the floor. She has five minutes left on questions and comments.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as you said, before question period, my colleague from Fundy—Royal asked me what I thought about the government not including the precautionary principle in Bill C-53.

It is a serious mistake on the part of the Minister of Health. The precautionary principle is an essential component that should have been included in the bill's preamble. It would have been the basis for all the provisions contained in Bill C-53.

Anyone who reads this bill can see that the minister did not do her homework properly. It is very disappointing to see that, because the bill was supposed to give us indispensable tools to protect our health and our environment.

• (1520)

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on that same point about the precautionary principle, as my colleague said, the government decided not to mention the precautionary principle in the preamble and referred to it only once, in one clause of the bill, and that is not a trivial matter, it is very important.

*Government Orders*

When the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development came before the environment committee, she told us that in order to meet Canada's international commitments to the environment, all Canadian environmental and health legislation must provide that the precautionary principle is a fundamental principle in Canada.

I would like my colleague to tell us what she thinks of the fact that, internationally, Canada signs agreements like the Kyoto protocol, the convention on biological diversity and other international agreements, but when the time comes to introduce domestic legislation that could be tailored to these international commitments, Canada backs away and refuses to do so.

I would like to know what the member thinks about Canada tabling and passing an act of parliament that is not in line with the commitments Canada makes at the international level.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take advantage of my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie's intervention to congratulate him once more for the great work that he has done on Bill C-53. He has done a remarkable job representing my party, the Bloc Québécois, and I would like to pay tribute to him for that.

As my colleague said, we have to recognize that this government does speak from both sides of its mouth. On the international scene, it is boastful but when the time comes to pass legislation, it backs off. And what are we presented with? Nothing but an incomplete bill, when what we needed was a super bill. What is the government doing? I do not dare repeat the phrase we use in my part of the country because it would be declared unparliamentary.

The government just turned around and said "You know, we can pull the wool over the eyes of Canadians and Quebecers; they will not notice a thing. But on the international scene, we have to look good".

These are people with an empty shell. This government is nothing but an empty shell. It looks good wrapped in cellophane, but when you unwrap it, you find a lot of incomplete things.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in this important debate, the third reading of an act to replace the Pest Control Products Act which dates back to 1969.

The stated objective of the legislation is to protect the health of Canadians from the ill effects of pesticides and to protect the environment at the same time. Both are laudable goals and we support them. However we cannot support the bill because we do not believe that the bill succeeds in setting out what it proposes to do.

This legislation has been a long time in coming. The existing Pest Control Products Act dates back to 1969. A great deal has changed since then. The Liberal government promised this legislation in its first term of office in 1993 but it has taken nearly a decade to get from there to here. We acknowledge that the bill is a significant improvement over the 1969 legislation.

It would use modern risk assessment practices, taking into account the consideration of vulnerable populations, such as children. It would require mandatory re-evaluation of pesticides, some of which

have been around for decades without the benefit of re-evaluation. It would increase public participation in the decision making process and would make mandatory the reporting of adverse effects.

However as the lead critic for our caucus, the member for Winnipeg North Centre, and our environmental critic, the member for Windsor—St. Clair, have both pointed out, the bill does leave a great deal to be desired.

We all realize that there are trade-offs to be made between the need we currently have for using pesticides to produce food on the one hand and the health of Canadians on the other. When it comes to those trade-offs it is the health of Canadians that must take precedence and priority. That is why we are concerned that there is no precautionary principle in this legislation. A precautionary principle would ensure that the health of Canadians is our overriding and major concern. The bill does not enshrine this principle. We find this strange because the basic premise of the bill is to protect the health of Canadians from the adverse effects of pesticides.

Another area of disappointment in Bill C-53 is that it does not adequately address pollution prevention or reduction, and the reduction in the use of pesticides. In other areas the legislation is vague and we see that far too many details would be left to regulations. I speak for example of the details in timelines for the process of re-evaluation of pesticides.

As my colleagues have pointed out earlier in the debate there is nothing in the bill to indicate that the government wants to or has plans for reducing our overall reliance on pesticides.

I have the privilege of representing a Saskatchewan constituency, one that has a mix of urban and rural communities and individuals. I want to talk briefly about some of the trade-offs that must be made in an industrial society where people produce goods and market products for others to enjoy. I want to talk about the method for registering pesticides and of re-evaluating them. This is a task that does fall to the Pest Management Review Agency, the PMRA.

A report was prepared by the committee on environment and sustainable development in May 2000. I know that everyone in the House agrees that the chair of that committee on environment and sustainable development has sterling credentials as a strong environmentalist.

The report stated clearly that it intended to make the protection of human health and the environment the absolute priority in pest management decisions with a special emphasis on the protection of children and other vulnerable populations. This accords very closely with the position of our party in this area and with the position outlined in this debate earlier by my colleagues.

• (1525)

The environment committee indicated that the precautionary principle must be the approach used in all decision making, again mirroring the policy of our party. The committee chair expressed his hope that Canadians would move toward organic agriculture even while acknowledging that this will be a long term project.

*Government Orders*

On that score, the recent 2001 census is interesting when it comes to agriculture. It indicates that more than 2,200 Canadian farms produce at least one category of certified organic agricultural products. These 2,200 organic farms represent only about 1% of farms, but there is no question that the number of organic farms is growing faster than any other type of farming in the country. I am pleased to report that more than 700, almost one-third of those 2,200 farms, are in the province of Saskatchewan and growth is continuing at a great rate.

In its report the environment committee pointed out that the European Union has also experienced remarkable growth in organic agriculture. Even there the total number of organic farms is only in the range of 2% of all the farms in Europe.

I want to make the point that the government and the federal department of agriculture have not made it a priority to assist in the development of organic agriculture. I believe that is a mistake. There has been a very modest amount of money given recently by the department of agriculture, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$600,000, for the development of organic agriculture. This amount is not to be sneezed at, but it is a very minute amount in comparison to the amount of money available for the study of agriculture biotechnology.

We will be using pesticides to produce products for the foreseeable future. I refer again to the chair of the environment committee because in the preface to his report last May the chair said "our reliance on pesticides in agriculture is so overwhelming, it would be impossible for us to abandon their use in the short term".

It then becomes crucially important that we have a safe and transparent process for the registration and evaluation of pesticides and those tasks fall to the pest management review agency, the PMRA. When this organization was created as a standalone agency, it was supposed to streamline the process of getting new pesticides onto the market and getting old and untested ones reviewed and cancelled if necessary. It has not worked out that way and criticism comes from all sides and all quarters.

When it comes to the PMRA there is a rare unanimity among industry groups, environmentalists, health groups and legislators. That unanimity is that the pest management review agency in Canada lags well behind its U.S. counterpart in approving newer, safer chemicals that could allow older and more hazardous products to be removed from the market.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, of which I am a member, discussed this very matter at some length this year during our deliberations. In a report on the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, one of the four recommendations was that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provide at least \$1 million a year in funding for a research and analysis program similar to the IR4 in the United States. This was to be developed in co-operation with agricultural stakeholders to generate or complete the necessary data for the approval of new minor use products or to expand the use of previously approved products.

●(1530)

That was a significant recommendation of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food to deal with the minor use policy of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture and other farm groups wrote to the health minister regarding Bill C-53 about a month ago. In a letter to the hon. Minister of Health, the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Bob Friesen, indicated that on timelines the Canadian Federation of Agriculture recommended that product registrations be included in the legislation or applicable regulations should be referred to therein in order to create greater accountability of the PMRA's performance and management regarding submissions.

The federation also had recommendations on the auditor general's requirement for the agency's financial statements, information about the agency's performance with respect to the objectives established in the corporate business plan and a summary statement of the assessment by the Auditor General of Canada of the fairness and reliability of the information. There has been some concern.

The CFA went on to say that there is no mention of minor use in the legislation and that too is of concern. The CFA and others are insisting that farmers need faster access to newer and lower risk chemicals. The CFA stresses that product registrations have to be dealt with in a more timely manner. We in this caucus certainly agree with that observation.

For one reason or another the PMRA has not been up to its task. The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food found the problem so vexing that it held hearings and wrote a report. I have already alluded to recommendation No. 3 in the report. It was a report on the performance of the PMRA from the perspective of farmers and the competitiveness or lack thereof.

The agriculture committee chose to send a strong message to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency that improvements to its management and registration process were crucial and overdue. We have to ask why the PMRA has not performed better than it has. Part of the problem is the conflicting mandate. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency is charged with protecting human health and the environment while at the same time supporting the competitiveness of Canadian agriculture, forestry and other industries. In this latter role there is pressure on the PMRA to promote the use of pesticides.

These, we submit, are conflicting interests. As well, there appears to be a corporate culture at the PMRA that does not promote transparency in decision making. We submit that transparency is extremely important in order to guard the health of Canadians and the environment.

Regrettably, the bill before us does nothing new to clarify the statutory responsibilities of the PMRA. That is a serious concern.

*Government Orders*

We have looked at Bill C-53. We certainly concede that it is an improvement over the situation that has existed under the old legislation that was passed in 1969 called the Pest Control Products Act. We have to say in all sincerity that we are disappointed because the government had a golden opportunity to fix the process of registering and reviewing pesticides in a way that would set a clear priority on protecting the health of Canadians and at the same time protecting the environment. The government had the opportunity to establish a review process that was both transparent and efficacious but somehow it managed to fail on both fronts.

The legislation has been promised for nearly 10 years. The former Minister of Health promised legislation in the fall of 2001. The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development produced a study in May 2000 on the management and use of pesticides, including an examination of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency.

• (1535)

The primary objective of Bill C-53 as we understand it is the protection of human health and the environment. It is much stronger than the current legislation which must balance health and environmental concerns against those of industry. Some of the key provisions that will do this are the use of modern risk assessment practices, that is, consideration of vulnerable populations such as children, and of aggregate exposure and cumulative effects; mandatory re-evaluation of pesticides; increased public participation in the decision making process; mandatory reporting of adverse effects; and mandatory material safety data sheets in workplaces where pesticides are used or manufactured.

Bill C-53 does not adequately address pollution prevention and reduction in the use of pesticides. There is nothing to indicate that the government is seeking to reduce overall reliance on them.

There are concerns that the legislation is too vague and I hope I have covered that. Much of the details will be left to regulations, including details and a timeline for the re-evaluation process, types of tests used in risk assessment, et cetera.

The precautionary principle, which is very important, is not enshrined as one of the principles of the act. This is an extreme deficiency in our opinion.

There is a failure in the act to ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes; the lack of a fast track registration process for lower risk or minor use products; a failure to reduce the number of pesticides being used, to reduce the use of pesticides in general and to prevent the most harmful pesticides from being registered; and a failure to require labelling of all toxic formulants, contaminants or micro-contaminants.

The mandate of the PMRA is not set out in the legislation. Unfortunately there is a failure to commit money for research on the long term effects of pesticides, especially on vulnerable groups like our children, and for public education about the dangers of pesticides and for support of alternatives.

In conclusion, the proposed legislation is an improvement. It is still flawed. Much of it is based on U.S. standards which will bring some of our standards up, but we will still be far behind countries in the European Union.

Harmonization may have dangerous effects in the long term. Given the scientific evidence that exists, the bill could have and should have been much stronger in the government's efforts to protect both human health and the environment.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my NDP colleague for his excellent speech. He obviously has a good knowledge of the pesticide issue in Canada. He made a good assessment of Bill C-53.

I would like to inform him, if he does not already know, that a discussion group on pesticides was set up in Quebec. That group, known as the Cousineau group, met with over 50 people and organizations to reflect on this issue.

One of the requests that this Quebec group made to the federal government concerned the whole issue of speeding up the registration process for biopesticides.

We know that only 30 biopesticides are currently available on the Canadian market, as compared to over 150 in the United States. Consequently, contractors in ornamental horticulture have too few alternatives available to them.

Does the member think that the government should have included in its bill provisions to expedite the registration of biopesticides, as requested by the Cousineau group in Quebec, so that we can not only prohibit the use of pesticides, but also develop in Canada organic products and alternative methods for pest control? Does he not think that this bill should have contained provisions to speed up the registration process for biopesticides in Canada?

[*English*]

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie for his questions and his kind remarks. I was not aware of the Cousineau report on bio-pesticides, but let me make a couple of points.

First, under the Pest Management Regulatory Agency I think that in general we have been far too slow in this country in terms of dealing with minor use products. The numbers are quite startling when we contrast them with those in the United States. It seems to be able to move much more quickly than our regulatory agency can in order to get some of these minor use approvals through in a narrow timeframe. Members will realize that when crops are at certain stages it is extremely important that the application be applied then or it is wasted, the money is lost and the product just does not work. Generally speaking there is a concern.

*The Royal Assent*

However, to specifically answer the member's question about using bio-pesticides to reduce our involvement with the more harmful products, this is something that I think is extremely important. In my speech I tried to contrast the differences we see in this country in terms of money available for biotechnology from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the very minuscule amounts of money that are available on the organic side including, in this case, the bio-pesticides. I think there needs to be a balancing.

The organic industry is growing extremely quickly in this country. I know it is only 1% or 2% of the overall farms, but it is surging ahead and I think those farms need some additional assistance. Something in this area like Quebec is apparently doing on bio-pesticides would certainly be a step in the right direction.

• (1545)

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have one question for the hon. member. Would he concede that in fact biotechnology has the capacity to actually help in terms of improving environmentally sustainable farming practices in some ways?

For instance, some genetically modified strains of wheat require less pesticides or no pesticides. The impact of these genetically modified strains of wheat and other produce can in the long term reduce the use of pesticides and as such have a positive impact on the environment. In fact, some of the environmental organizations are starting to identify some of the positive elements of biotechnology in terms of its capacity to improve the sustainability of earth-sensitive agriculture.

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He essentially asked about GMO wheat, for example, without using pesticides. There are some real concerns about GM wheat. It has not been licensed for use in this country. The Canadian Wheat Board came before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food and said that 65% of its current customers have indicated that they would not buy a GM wheat product. It may receive a bill of approval, but if consumers do not want it then I think our Canadian farmers will be very reluctant to grow it.

On the broader question of soil degradation and so on, a lot of people in the organic industry are convinced that going organic is a much better way to ensure that the soil of our arable lands will be better protected and that we will ensure sustainable agriculture with more of a commitment to organic farming methods.

Just before I take my seat, let me say that I think some of these biotech promises deserve further scrutiny. For example, we are told of GM rice to which vitamin A can be added to help children in third world countries who may otherwise suffer eyesight problems at an early age. However, when we look at it a little more closely we realize that for that product as it is currently available to be of any significant use in assisting on the eyesight front, an individual would have to consume more than four pounds of rice a day. I dare say that there would be very few people who would be able to eat that much in one day to help with their eyesight.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if my colleague thinks that the use of pesticides, especially cosmetic use, should be more strictly regulated.

The other day, because of the abundant rain we had this week, I noticed a very beautiful golf course that had just been sprayed with all sorts of pesticides meant to make it nice and attractive. The following day, torrential rain washed all these pesticides into streams and rivers.

Does my colleague not think there should be some form of regulation, and perhaps some education to increase people's awareness of the fact products are used, which are often carcinogenic and dangerous? I am asking my colleague what he thinks about that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Yes, I do think more education and more information should be available, but I have to note that I think we see some improvements in this regard. I think the word is slowly getting out about pesticides.

I think the member raises an important point, because we are talking about agriculture primarily but in our urban areas we admire the lawns that look so green and beautiful and are devoid of dandelions and other weeds. However, I think people are beginning to rethink that, to recognize that this has a cost and that it is perhaps dangerous to young children who play in parks and gardens that have had pesticide use or when children play with their pets that have been running around in those places.

It is an important point. I do believe more should be done, but I think some things are beginning to be done.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we resume debate, pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, Fisheries.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed certain bills.

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### THE ROYAL ASSENT

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

*Government Orders*

Government House  
Ottawa

June 13, 2002

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 13th day of June, 2002, at 4.30 p.m. for the purpose of giving royal assent to certain bills of law.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Uteck  
Secretary to the Governor General

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I understand that some hon. colleagues in the House were inquiring earlier as a result of a point of order, which was somehow described as a question of privilege, as to what the next item on the agenda would be after the completion of the bill that is before the House.

Should I not obtain the answers on Bill C-58 that I had committed to getting to the House, which it does not look like I will get now, I will not call the bill. I will not call Bill C-58 if I cannot get the answers by the time we get to the completion of this. Instead I will call Bill C-55 as the next item.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1555)

[Translation]

### PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-53, An Act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to take part in the debate on Bill C-53, which is aimed at protecting human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests.

By way of an introduction, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie for his excellent job in raising the awareness not only of his own Bloc Québécois caucus, but also of the public at large. I congratulate him not only for his work on this bill dealing with the proper use of pesticides, not only for his major concern for organic farming for instance, but also for his interest in anything having to do with the environment. He is becoming an expert like no one else in this parliament.

It was high time the federal government took action in its jurisdiction. Indeed, pest control is an area of shared jurisdiction, the federal government having certain powers, specifically with respect to registration and the safe use of pesticides.

This act, which had become obsolete, outdated and criticized by just about everybody, should have been reviewed at least 25 years ago. We are talking about everything that has to do with pesticide use. Naturally, it was not criticized by those who sell pesticides; I believe the old legislation served them well these past few years. Updating this act was long overdue, especially since, for the past 25 years, a lot of scientific research has been carried out on the dangers

of uncontrolled use of certain pesticides. This often resulted in the outright ban of products found to be dangerous, particularly in the United States, where more stringent controls of pesticide use were imposed in the early 1980s.

I recall that, these past few years, whenever pesticides were withdrawn in Canada, it was because the United States had carried out the necessary research, with the proper resources, in order to review the past registration of a given pesticide. They would come to the conclusion that given the state of research at the time, the pesticide in question was now deemed a hazard to human health. Canada benefited from the resources the United States has been investing for a long time in the protection of human health.

Talking about research, we talk primarily about what was done over the last few years, which has demonstrated beyond any doubt the link, sometimes a direct one, between the use of pesticides and certain conditions that develop over time, such as allergies in young children. Children are more sensitive to pesticides than adults. They also play merrily outside in the summer, precisely on the grass made so perfectly green by the use of pesticides, and easily develop allergies. Researchers link certain cases of cancer to the use of pesticides.

Thus this becomes a serious issue. It calls for a tightening of controls, notably through this legislation which, incidentally, will be supported by the Bloc Québécois. However, we would have liked the bill to go much further, particularly with regard to alternatives to chemicals currently used. However we will come back to that at the end of this demonstration.

As I was saying, research has been developed, which established a link between illnesses developing over time, such as allergies and even cancer, and the use of pesticides. However, we have not yet reached the point where doctors receive training adequate enough to make a link between certain symptoms of these illnesses or short term symptoms associated with pesticide use, and the health of children and even that of adults. Often we think that an indigestion is simply an indigestion. The fact is, however, if we took a closer look at what the child visiting the doctor for some indigestion had been doing, we would realize that he had likely been playing on grass that had just been sprayed with pesticides to prevent it from yellowing or from being taken over by dandelions or other pests.

•(1600)

We should not only pay special attention to the use of pesticides, but also consider the fact that this industry is dominated by big players, essentially transnational corporations which control the entire agricultural production in the world. They control just about everything.

Companies have challenged bylaws passed recently by municipalities to ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes in their jurisdictions.

*Government Orders*

Take for example companies like ChemLawn or Spray Tech, which specialize in massive chemical spraying of lawns. They tried to challenge the jurisdiction of municipalities and their authority to regulate the use of pesticides in their jurisdictions. They even went to the supreme court, but they lost. When I learned that they had lost at all three judicial levels, I was very pleased, because there is big money behind pesticide use.

We are talking about two companies in particular, namely ChemLawn and Spray Tech, but we should not forget those that supply their inputs, the likes of Monsanto and CIL.

If there are businesses that take advantage of people and of this planet, they are the ones, along with other similar transnational companies. Why do they take advantage of the planet and of people who live on it to the point of devastating complete regions? Let me explain briefly.

They have complete control, from the seeds to the finished product. They produce genetically modified seeds for crops of wheat, soya beans, rapeseed and canola. The genetic modifications make the use of the pesticides produced by these companies essential. Therefore, the whole world is dependent on their genetically modified products and the pesticides that go along with them.

If you use Monsanto seeds but not the Monsanto pesticides, your crop will not yield as much or could even be completely devastated by pests.

Internationally, farmers and peasants in Africa and Europe are at the mercy of these companies controlling the agrifood industry upstream and downstream.

Those large companies manufacturing pesticides and seeds to match are so destructive that they were the cause of the devastation observed in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. Efforts to boost several regional economies through agriculture, which represents on average 80% of the GDP of these countries, except for South Africa, were a failure. This initiative was a failure because the only seeds available on the world market were genetically modified seeds. Following harvest, it was impossible to keep any portion of the crop to seed the next crop, because the seeds must be used together with the pesticides produced by CIL or Monsanto. Besides, they are not reproducible.

Agriculture is a very simple thing. For centuries, it has been the result of nature's miracles and human intelligence. For planting, one sows seeds or plants and transplants seedlings. Once they have grown, you set some aside. This is what people have been doing from time immemorial. Part of the crop is set aside to be used for seeds the following crop year.

● (1605)

It is no longer possible to do that because these big companies have control over seeds, pesticides and all the rest.

Do not think that having allowed the pesticides control and registration legislation to become outdated did not help these companies. It served them very well because once pesticides were registered, 25 years ago, there was no reason to be concerned. As a matter of fact, after registering products once, the government did

not re-evaluate them. This allowed producers to sleep tight, do research to improve certain aspects of their products, while knowing that with such an outdated legislation, they had nothing to fear in Canada.

Coming back to pesticides used in Canada, this is a large market. Sales total \$1.4 billion a year. In Quebec, since the late 1970s, there has been a massive increase in the use of pesticides because of the enthusiasm for green lawns free of pests and undesirable plants, like dandelions—I wonder why people do not like them; they are so nice.

During the 1990s alone, over a five-year period, I believe it was from 1992 to 1996, there was a 60% increase in the use of pesticides in ornamental horticulture.

In Montreal alone, 300 kilos of pesticides are used in parks, in places where children play. Children develop allergies and they can also develop cancer. Three hundred kilos of this junk is used in parks where our children play.

This reform was long overdue, but it does not go far enough. We congratulate the government for at least dusting off the old act. However, when one wants to do a good cleaning job, one has to do more than dust; one must also do some polishing. If the legislation can be improved, it is a good opportunity to do so. The government could have gone much further in this modernization of the pesticide registration legislation.

Had the government heeded the recommendations of my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, who is becoming an expert on this issue and on the environment in general, someone with convictions who is working hard to bring the government to keep its word on the Kyoto agreements, for example, perhaps we would have had an act worthy of its title, true legislation dealing with pest control, but pest control with no risk to human health and not interfering with the protection of animals and plants.

But no. As usual, the government does things grudgingly. It does them in stages and says “We will try this first; we will remove the dust and then, in two or three years, we will pick it up”. We sometimes wonder whether Liberal legislators know how to clean up.

When one picks up the dust, one can say that the housework is done. However, as long as one leaves it there, the housework is not done. And the government is leaving the dust in this bill, when it could have gone much further. Even if it had used the U.S. legislation as a model, it would have been a clear improvement, compared to the bill before us.

Why did the government not listen to my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, when he suggested a data bank on alternatives to current pesticides?

There are natural pesticides in use in the United States and also in a part of Europe. They are not harmful to human health and, if they are used wisely, they do not represent a threat to the environment. Why did the government not give the example with this bill?

*Government Orders*

A government that claims to take the environment and health seriously and that keeps talking about its so-called deep convictions has introduced an incomplete bill. Why did it not create this bank? Why, also, did it not increase research on alternatives?

In this regard, even though there are natural pesticides, there is a lack of research on their large scale use, to ensure that producers in Quebec and Canada can get results and be as competitive as the United States or Europe.

• (1610)

Why did the government not increase significantly the resources allocated to research and to enforcement of the modernized version of the act? My colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie was pointing out to me that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled a report in 1999 in which she identified serious problems that could have guided the government in drafting this bill.

For example, the report refers to the lack of re-evaluation programs. This bill provides for a certain degree of re-evaluation of registered pesticides, but we think that it is not enough. The bill does not go far enough in that area.

The report said that Canada was lagging way behind other countries throughout the world, not only with regard to pesticide registration, but also with regard to spending for the implementation of standards and regulations to protect human health as well as animals and plants. Agriculture means plants, animals and humans. We must find the right balance between protection, yield and the health of users.

The commissioner said that Canada lagged far behind in terms of the resources for the enforcement of provisions on the use of pesticides and their re-evaluation. No resources worth mentioning were added in the bill. A major part is missing, and the bill does not fill the gaps mentioned by the environmental commissioner.

Clear processes are also lacking. Did the bill settle the issue of certification, of re-evaluation and so on? Does the government know where it is going with this bill? I do think so.

I see my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, who is nodding. There is a lack of clear processes for things like certification and the time it can take. In the United States, it is clear. A product is certified within a year. There is no fuss.

Indirectly, we are dealing not only with human health, but also with the profitability of the agricultural sector. For example, there are consequences if we cannot certify biological control agents. It would be best to be able to certify them for their use in this country. If our competitors in the U.S., for example, use biological control agents that are as cost effective as chemical pesticides used in this country, or more cost effective, we will be at a disadvantage. Since we are a net exporter of farm products, it is very much to our advantage to keep our competitive edge.

We are really disappointed with the registration process. We would have liked a much faster process, access to an alternative products databank and access to a much more efficient model, like the one that has been adopted in the United States for example, which does not threaten, as is the case here, human health and competitiveness in the agricultural sector.

We would have supported this bill with a lot more enthusiasm. However, we will support it anyway. As my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie mentioned more than once in his speeches on the protection of the environment and human health, it is a good start. We hope that the government will speed things up to further improve this area of shared jurisdiction, that is the registration of pesticides and the search for alternatives.

I wonder why the government acts like this for all its bills. In the more or less eight years that we have been here, we have made all sorts of proposals with respect to the criminal code. The government was rather hesitant and came back three years later with other amendments to the criminal code. Why did it not accept the Bloc Québécois' recommendations which, in the case of pesticides, put forward a full plan for a real pesticide control bill promoting health protection. There again, we will keep on working to convince the government, because it has a hard time understanding.

• (1615)

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that my colleague is taking part in this debate on Bill C-53 for a very simple reason. You will quickly understand why.

We have dealt with various aspects of this bill throughout our discussions, but the agricultural aspect as opposed to pesticides has hardly come up. My colleague, who worked for many years for the Union des producteurs agricoles, is in a better position than anyone to really understand the important link between pesticides and agriculture.

He also took the opportunity to remind the House that we have moved and tried to put through a number of amendments in committee. We did not move a hundred amendments or so, but we moved amendments that we thought were relevant. This is the difference between wanting to be constructive and wanting to hold up the process.

We only moved about 10 amendments that we felt were relevant, but the government refused to adopt these proposals by the Bloc Québécois. The Liberal bulldozer went into action, and our proposals were rejected.

What did we propose? We proposed a deadline for the re-evaluation of pesticides already available on the market. There is no sense in taking 10 years to complete this re-evaluation. Not only does this create uncertainty for the pesticide industry, but it also create uncertainty for environmental protection and public health, in the sense that people cannot know in the short term what the impact is and whether the products are safe.

*Government Orders*

We asked that the bill provide for deadlines for the re-evaluation of products already available on the market. We also asked that the precautionary principle be included right in the preamble of the bill.

I am aware that a number of parties in the House do not agree with our proposals. I know, however, that the Conservative Party and the NDP do agree with these proposals.

We believe that Canada must be consistent not only internationally but also nationally, in its own legislation. Canada cannot sign international conventions dealing with the environment, like the Rio convention, where the precautionary principle is recognized, and then refuse to include this principle in its own bill even though the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development said that the government had to include this principle in the preamble if it wanted to honour its international commitments concerning the environment. But the government refuses to do so.

Finally, we have proposed an organic farming program, and I would like to hear what my colleague has to say on that issue. We know that, in Europe, there are programs under which a number of financial incentives can be given to farmers who decide to eliminate the use of pesticides on farmland.

I would like to hear what my colleague, who is an expert on farming and who knows about the impact of pesticide use, thinks about that. I would like to have his opinion on this issue.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** Mr. Speaker, in all modesty I must admit that I am no expert in agriculture, even though I have worked for experts in that area, namely the agricultural producers in Quebec.

**An hon. member:** What a modest man.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** I am not saying this out of modesty. It is true that we do not have enough resources for the promotion and development of organic agriculture, and this has always been the case.

I remember that, in the mid 1980s, the MAPAQ, which is the department of agriculture, fisheries and nutrition, began implementing various incentives. However, it was not enough then, and it is not enough now.

The situation is clearly evolving. A number of citizens now oppose the massive industrialization of agriculture. This sector is more industrialized than ever before and becoming even more so every day.

I believe we will have no choice but to provide, rapidly, significant financial and technical resources to promote a type of agriculture that is more respectful of the environment and of human health.

The United States have just passed the *Farm Bill*, which I consider to be the toughest and the most inhuman policy in the agricultural sector. Under this bill, billions of dollars will be used to finance exports of surplus grain and milk products, among other things, on world markets. As a result, this will flood markets, bring prices down and eliminate farmers, especially in developing countries. A part of those resources should have been used to develop alternative means of production and to produce less massively but in a better way than what is being done at the present time.

However, industrialized countries have not reached that point yet. This is our role. When I hear my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie talk about the protection of the environment and about sustainable development, I think this also applies to the evolution of modern agriculture.

We should take a first step and make a first improvement by doing what we used to do 30 years ago, when we started using pesticides. We used to target pests and use only the desirable quantity of pesticide, according to directions. We used small quantities.

Today, however, the use of pesticides has become so prevalent that they are being used in a preventive way. When there is prevention, there also is exaggeration. This is the real problem at the present time. The problem is not that we use pesticides but that we use them in the wrong way and massively.

We have the same problem with manure management. This may seem trivial, but natural compost has fertilizing virtues far superior to the chemical fertilizers that are being sold.

For the past 30 years, however, farmers have been brainwashed into buying chemical fertilizers because that way the percentage of phosphorus and other elements is known, they know it is always balanced, whereas with compost you never know, it varies from one week to the next.

So for the past 30 years, we have been lazy, going with technology and saying “We are going to use chemical fertilizers; we are going to use pesticides in a preventative manner and, as for the rest, manure, it is worth nothing, we will have to dispose of it”. The natural reflex should have been to use this natural fertilizer and to have the same reflex as 30 years ago: if there are pests, if there is a risk of infestation, only use the required quantity. Of course, more resources should have been invested in organic alternatives.

However, I believe we are at a crossroad. We know political will develops under public pressure. Today, the pressure is too great to have farming practices that are more environmentally sound and less harmful to human health, and to break away from the control of Monsanto and CIL.

This is very important. It is a major concern. These big transnational companies have control over the world agricultural economy. We should never forget it.

If we are serious about our vision for the future of the farming sector, and if we want to go organic, we will have to keep on breaking up international monopolies and take away from them the privilege of having control over life and the manipulation of life and all those rights that are very harmful to the future of mankind.

• (1620)

This too is a major issue, which will not be solved here alone but which must be solved here and by international bodies. It is urgent.

• (1625)

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk briefly about a point that was mentioned at the end of the speech of my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. He knows agriculture very well and even its global aspect.

*Government Orders*

Last fall, in October, during World Food Day, I remember that we had people who work with developing countries. My colleague talked about this. It was mentioned how it was important to really help developing countries to take charge of their own destiny.

One of the aspects that was brought up by the people who worked in these countries where, unfortunately, the population is often suffering from famine, is that they begged parliamentarians not to allow companies to control genetically modified seeds. They told us that the only way they have to provide food to these populations is to keep the seeds that are produced to be able to put them back in the ground year after year and not be at the mercy of the companies that my colleague mentioned.

I would like him to comment further on this issue to demonstrate the importance of the human aspect.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I know a little bit about that, but once again, I repeat that I am not an expert.

We are rather hypocritical in the industrialized countries. I am not talking about my colleagues, but rather in general terms, about the industrialized world. We are acting somewhat hypocritically. I think I should tone down my rhetoric here.

For example, when we say that we are increasing international aid from the commodities that we produce, that we are sending tons of grain or of milk products to the developing countries to help them, it is not really true, we are not helping them at all. Under cover of this international assistance program, we are disposing of surpluses that we cannot control. That is what we are doing.

People should not believe that the new U.S. farm bill, which will pump billions of dollars into the agricultural sector, will help the world. Overproduction is not going to end in the United States and world markets will keep being flooded. The local economies will be destroyed, particularly in Africa and in South America, and this will not help them at all.

What does not help them, and my colleague has mentioned it already, is that the seeds, the pesticides and everything around them, is controlled by the same companies and that the seeds cannot be reproduced. How can these countries pull through when they are in the middle of this massive industrialization movement in the agricultural sector and cannot get their local economy moving again? It is complete nonsense. It is therefore a question of principle that will have to be settled without delay.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to speak today to Bill C-53, the Pest Control Products Act.

I would like to start my speech by congratulating my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, who made a point of speaking up for Quebecers at the standing committee on the environment, which reviewed the bill.

I will start by asking a question the committee must have asked itself: Do pesticides have harmful effects on health? We live in an era where we are faced with diseases, we all know it, and the problems our health care systems across Quebec and even Canada must deal

with regarding an aging population that is living better and longer, but that suffers from diseases too.

We are faced with diseases such as cancer which were not common half a century ago. It has now become a plague that we are trying to fight with every conceivable research program and other means. We need to ask ourselves questions. When a disease appears we must always try to find out what causes this disease.

I do not want to blame pesticides alone, but we must understand that the use of products harmful to health has resulted in contamination. Cancer causing agents have been found near facilities. It happened recently in the Atlantic provinces.

We have changed our attitude regarding the massive use of pesticides for field crops. Medical studies have been carried out to see whether groundwater was contaminated, and whether there was an increase in the number of cancer cases in some areas. Some comparisons were made, and it was found pesticides were used on an industrial scale on field crops. All this raises questions. Whose fault is it? Who should be blamed? Has a culprit been found?

This is not the purpose of my speech today. However, it is certain that pesticides have harmful effects on health. The question is settled. Witnesses were heard by the committee, positions were taken and today we have Bill C-53, which, again, is unfinished.

We heard from witnesses, and I am going to share with those listening the recommendations of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. I would like us to read them together. Those who listened to my learned colleagues all afternoon, and at other times since the beginning of debate on this bill, have surely understood that the government, in order to protect a segment of the industry, is introducing a bill which does not go as far as the authors of studies and analyses would like.

I am going to cite the recommendations of the standing committee, which went as follows.

We would have liked the new Pest Control Products Act to establish human health and the environment as priorities by creating databases on the sale of pesticides, their adverse effects, and alternatives to pesticides.

We wanted pesticides used for cosmetic purposes, those we use on our own lawns, eliminated over the next five years.

Earlier, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot told the House that the pesticide industry is a very lucrative one, with sales of \$1.4 billion. As we speak, one out of every two lawns in Quebec is being treated with pesticides to eliminate pests, as our colleague would say.

I went through this with my lawn. I have not used pesticides for four years, and I have never had so many dandelions. Members can laugh, but I eliminated them just four years ago with pesticides. Now, I have stopped using pesticides, but I have never had so many dandelions. But that is fine.

• (1630)

My neighbours find it a bit discouraging. But I am not doing anything about them. I used to use pesticides and I had no dandelions at all. Now, I have the lawn with the most.

So there is something in pesticides. When I do not use them, all the dandelions in the neighbourhood end up on my lawn.

Obviously, I have decided not to use pesticides any more. You will have understood that this is fine by me. But my neighbours are a bit discouraged. I am trying to convince them not to use pesticides. When they see my lawn, they obviously have a few little problems.

There is a hard reality behind this little anecdote. Obviously, when we use chemical products, we change the course of nature. That was the point of my story.

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## THE ROYAL ASSENT

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

*And being returned:*

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber, the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-43, an act to amend certain acts and instruments and to repeal the Fisheries Prices Support Act—Chapter 17.

Bill C-10, an act respecting the national marine conservation areas of Canada—Chapter 18.

Bill C-50, an act to amend certain acts as a result of the accession of the People's Republic of China to the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization—Chapter 19.

Bill S-41, an act to re-enact legislative instruments enacted in only one official language—Chapter 20.

Bill C-27, an act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste—Chapter 22.

Bill C-47, an act respecting the taxation of spirits, wine and tobacco and the treatment of ships' stores—Chapter 22.

Bill C-59, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2003—Chapter 21.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

### PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-53, An Act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I continue my speech by going over, one more time, the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Environ-

### *Government Orders*

ment and Sustainable Development, which, on the issue of Bill C-53 on pesticides, recommended among other things that there be a transparent and open process in order to build the public's trust in pest management regulations.

It also recommended that the new legislation make it a condition of registration that applicants carry out ongoing monitoring after registration.

It recommended that existing pesticides be re-evaluated.

It also recommended that adequate independent funding be provided under the legislation. Indeed, because of the shortfalls in the 1997-98 and 1998-99 budgets, the agency responsible for monitoring and registering the products has delayed its re-evaluation program of existing pesticides, because it ran out of money. Of course, this was a very legitimate request by the committee.

It also recommended that the government immediately establish a research program on pesticides that is specific to child health and that it ensure adequate funding.

Why child health? Our children are those who are the most likely to develop health problems that may be caused by pesticides because we continue to tell them to play outside. They roll in the grass.

We want them to play, to be vigilant and to be active. Of course, they take advantage of nice lawns and nice landscapes. They have a lot of fun, but this puts them in direct contact with pesticides that are sprayed not only on lawns, but also on field crops.

Since these pesticides are sprayed, winds can carry them to the lawns of people who do not use pesticides. Pesticides sprayed on essentially agricultural areas may end up on lawns; it is possible.

Of course, it was a very legitimate request on the part of the committee to ask that there be a research program on pesticides that is specific to child health.

The committee also recommended that incentives be provided for organic agriculture, that chemical pesticides be banned and replaced with natural or organic fertilizers, which is totally normal.

When we talk about incentives, we mean money. It takes money to develop organic alternatives to chemical pesticides and put them on the market. Therefore, investment in research is necessary. Incentives are also required to encourage farmers to use natural or organic pesticides.

The report also recommended that the government develop a policy on organic farming. Such a policy should include tax incentives, an interim support program for the transition period, and technical support for farmers.

Obviously, there is nothing in the bill before us in terms of tax incentives or other forms of incentives in favour of organic farming. There is no money. This is typical of what we have been seeing from this government. It proposes nice policies and sets nice priorities but it does not invest the money required to achieve our objectives and our ideals.

*Government Orders*

Again, it can never be said often enough. I support my colleagues who took part in the work of the committee and who had the opportunity to propose amendments. The amendments put forward by the Bloc Québécois were rejected because we were asking for real incentives for the development of organic farming, with organic and natural pesticides. We wanted tax credits and other incentives for farmers.

Nearly 60% of my riding of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, located along the Ottawa River and the Lac des Deux-Montagnes, is made up of farmland. It must be noted that in the Mirabel area, a beautiful area that all my colleagues in the House should visit this summer, we have witnessed one of the largest migration since the deportation of the Acadians, with the Mirabel expropriations.

• (1650)

At the time they had announced 90,000 acres. Of course retrocession occurred in 1985. From that year on the voracious appetite and the requirements of the federal government have been reduced considerably. No later than yesterday, we learned—through documents that were released from the archives under a federal government's act requiring that these documents be released after a 30 years period—that Cabinet already knew in January 1971 that 22,000 acres more than needed had been expropriated.

Moreover, some 1,700 people were about to or had been displaced. In 1971, the government was already aware of that. Our current Prime Minister, who was then Minister of Indian Affairs, was part of the Cabinet involved in this decision. It was decided to go ahead with the purchase of these 22,000 acres anyhow because the process had been set in motion and the government did not want to be sued by the public. The fact remains that at the time it already knew that 22,000 acres more than needed had been expropriated and that 1,700 people were going to have to move, to be deported in fact.

Some of them were able to get their land back starting in 1985. The fact remains that for 14 or 15 years they were victims of a terrible expropriation and their land was ruined. As a result field crops in the Mirabel area and large farms were broken up. Later land and properties were rented out. New farmers came in. Today we have a wide range of farmers.

This gives you an idea of the riding of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel where farms are now smaller but just as profitable and increasingly more into organic farming. They use less and less GMOs. All they want is to practice organic farming. We support labelling to be able to say that indeed we sell natural and organic products.

I am proud today to speak on behalf of the farmers in my riding of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel. They have fine and economically viable farms. These farms are modern, with a diversified production. More and more, farmers are turning to organic farming and natural foods with a much better yield. More and more consumers, especially in Quebec, are interested in organic food. There is good reason for the Quebec government's wanting to ratify the Kyoto protocol. This is what is wanted by the people of Quebec, who are concerned with environmental balance. This is a societal choice by Quebecers.

Once again, it is for good reason that the municipality of Hudson went to the appeal court and fought for its right to ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. In Quebec, this is a societal choice. Quebecers care about the environment. That is their choice as a society.

Today, I am proud to stand up for Quebecers and tell the Liberal government that, once more, this bill is too little and too late. The government is not doing enough. As usual, there is no money. But the scandals that have been unfolding in the last few weeks have shown that there is always money for friends of the government and contributions to the Liberal Party. There is always plenty of money for that.

In this bill, we should have told our farmers that if they want to use natural and organic pesticides, we will help them with tax credits, incentives and research money. But there is none of that in the bill.

Once again the people of Quebec made a collective choice, which is not reflected in this bill. Quebec is one step ahead of the rest of Canada, and this bill is holding us back. Our farmers would be ready to receive funds and develop natural fertilizer and organic farming. However, the federal government has chosen not to go that far. Once again, a large part of Canada, Quebec, which represents 25% of the country's population, is being penalized by this bill. This legislation does not go far enough and does not meet the expectations of the people of Quebec.

• (1655)

This is always hard to accept. The fact remains that Quebecers pay 25% of all the income tax collected by Canada. We pay our share in this Canadian system, which is far more profitable for the federal government. Under the Constitution, the federal government is not accountable to anyone for its spending. The federal level does not take care of health, education and transportation.

We have seen what happens; we are trying to get infrastructure programs to help provincial governments reach their goals and give our constituents from all over Quebec a good road system. They made promises, but there are no funds here at the federal level.

Few people blame the federal government because it always acts like a rescuer in all these situations. The terrible part about how Canada is organized is that the federal government has no responsibility whatsoever regarding the true problems of the people.

The federal government is not responsible for health, education, transportation and agriculture. So the federal government passes legislation—on pesticides, in this case—but does not invest money to help producers convert to organic agriculture, to the use of natural or biological pesticides, which, like everything else, always cost more. In the early stages, it means more research.

*Government Orders*

But no. The federal government is involved with big business, major pesticide sellers, major chemical companies that go and get their resources throughout the world and that sometimes make people work for paltry salaries, to get a better return on their operations and to sell their products here to our producers.

They are often products that are processed or made in countries where these companies use children, cheap labour and women. They take advantage of the situation and, basically, exploit people in other countries to sell to us chemical products that are also harmful to our health.

The amendments put forward by the Bloc Québécois were very realistic. Finally, we want the government to be able to provide funding through this legislation. I repeat, I am pleased to repeat the standing committee's recommendations, which are very realistic: that the government develop a policy on organic farming. Such a policy should include tax incentives, a transitional income support plan and technical support for farmers.

It is simple. This simply means that farmers using chemical products and pesticides will have to incur costs in order to convert to natural and biological pesticides. They may have to incur losses. A certain balance might not have been reached. Let us compensate those farmers and we will see that things will go well.

We will start a green revolution, as Quebecers want. It is in the image of Quebec. It would be very beneficial for the rest of Canada if they converted to the image Quebec is now projecting, that is being more focused on the environment and the protection of our children.

Finally, everything we do and every decision we make, I hope we are doing for our children and our children's children. We are doing it for our posterity not for ourselves. I hope we will have a little vision.

This is a bill introduced by the federal Liberals who lack vision and will leave nothing to our children and our children's children.

• (1700)

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

All of the aspects that he mentioned to those who are listening to us today, including members of the House of Commons, are very important. In the riding of Jonquière, farmers have also taken a greener approach to ensure that the next generations have a future, as my colleague pointed out.

However, as he said and I would like him to repeat that, the government always ensures that it has a good image internationally, but instead of being true to that image, when the time comes to take constructive measures to go forward, unfortunately it chooses to go backward. It provides no money to give some real meaning to this small step that it is taking. It does not even provide, in this bill, for the re-evaluation of registered pesticides that are already available. It does not open the door to the use of organic pesticides.

I want to ask a question of my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, who is the Bloc Québécois transport critic. Having been president of the Union des municipalités du Québec

for several years and having been in contact with Quebec municipalities, he knows how important banning the use of pesticides is to municipalities because of their effects on health and the environment.

I would like to know if, in his discussions with his colleagues from municipalities, he felt that they were ready to adopt these new methods and if they were anxiously waiting for the federal government to take action in that regard.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Jonquière who is always well informed and who keeps abreast of the situation in Quebec.

She has understood that Quebec's municipalities have once again been the forerunners in Canada. It is obvious that when a municipality takes action and passes an environmental bylaw, it is because there is absolutely no federal regulation in effect.

You will of course have understood that further to the decision rendered, the municipality of Hudson had to defend itself and to challenge this decision in court. People who were expecting to get the spraying contracts for this territory challenged the decision.

Since then, with the victory of the municipality of Hudson, more than 100 municipalities in Quebec have introduced bylaws to prohibit the spraying of pesticides. The numbers are growing weekly.

This is what I was saying earlier and my colleague is entirely right to say so. The Saguenay is turning more and more to agriculture. New farms are being created. They are small operations, but still economically viable. However, the number of megafarms is dwindling.

In Quebec, we are trying to have farms that are not too big in order to take care of them with love and to improve them, mainly in a organic and natural way. This is what the people of Quebec want.

The fact that my colleague from Jonquière knows the agricultural situation in her riding so well and of course that she recognizes that Quebecers want us to reduce the use of pesticides speaks very well for her.

Once again, we say that the federal government, with this bill, wants to look good. There is no money to help the farmers and all those who are using pesticides get rid of the harmful chemical pesticides and adopt more natural and organic practices.

In this regard, the federal government has once again missed the boat for future generations.

• (1705)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

*Private Members' Business*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Madam Speaker, if you were to ask the House, I think you would find consent to see the clock at 5.30 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Does the House agree to see the clock at 5.30 p.m.?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

### INTOXICATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS

The House resumed from April 29, consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion introduced by the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.

The purpose of this motion is to amend or improve the regulations under the Migratory Birds Convention Act in order to protect the environment and migratory birds.

The hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert spoke to this motion and said "It is a matter of protecting migratory birds from a highly toxic substance, namely lead, which is found in sinkers and lures used in sport fishing".

She suggested we should use any other non-toxic substance.

I live near the St. Lawrence River, in Champlain, near Trois-Rivières. I used to be a hunter, but I do not have as much time for this activity now. Each year, in the fall, the opening of the duck hunting season was a great occasion, something memorable in our life. All hunters gathered on the shore in Champlain, and, after checking the gear of their boats, their rifles and hunting gear, they would go duck hunting.

I must confess that I was one of the worst polluters of the St. Lawrence River because of lead. At that time, we hunted with shot cartridges. Unfortunately, I was not a very good shot, and many of my cartridges ended up at the bottom of the river. Since I hit very few ducks, I can say that I have polluted a lot. I missed my target most of the time.

This is to say that in 1999, legislation was introduced, which rightly prohibited the use of lead for duck and migratory bird shooting.

We know that lead is one of the worst pollutant that one can find. Lead is harmful not only to children, but also to animals. It is a transmissible product. If a migratory bird eats lead or eats fish

having lead in their body, and if the bird is afterwards eaten by humans, it can be harmful.

The intake of lead is also probably one of the greatest causes of mortality among certain migratory birds and diving birds, such as the loon. We know that the loon is a bird of which Canadians are proud.

On an evening in the forest, by a lake or at the cottage, who does not like to hear the song of the loon? One of the causes of the loon mortality is the lead shots that fishermen lose on the bottom of lakes. If you like fishing, you know that it is difficult to fish without losing any fishing gear.

Each time we go fishing, we leave several lead shots in the water. Those shots, swallowed by fish, also intoxicate the migratory birds that eat the fish.

Through that motion, my colleague wanted us to amend the hunting legislation in such a way as to not only prohibit the use of lead in cartridges for hunting but also to change fishing gear and use products less toxic to the environment and also less toxic to migratory birds.

• (1710)

It seems odd to address such an issue. When I was asked to speak about this, I said to myself that we cannot be leaving much lead that on the bottom of streams and rivers. But in fact, scientific studies show that 500 tonnes of lead are left on the bottom of waterways every year. According to the studies we have checked, it happens mainly in Quebec and Ontario.

A minimum of one hundred tonnes of lead is sold by big companies. It is estimated that every year, 500 tonnes of lead are left on the bottom of waterways by people who make their own fishing tackle, at home or at the cottage.

Lead is so toxic that it has been banned in gasoline. In big cities, they discovered that leaded gasoline caused numerous illnesses, including deafness in children due to lead poisoning.

This motion is extremely important. It says that we should amend the regulations so that hunting supplies, cartridges, fishing gear and troll lines that are too often left in lakes and rivers should be considered dangerous products and banned. They are a major cause of mortality. It has been estimated that 75% of deaths among loons are due to the fact that they eat lead objects left in lakes and rivers.

Both sides of the House will probably agree that we should ask for the inclusion of this provision in the regulations on hunting in order to ban toxic substances such as lead in this important sport.

It pays to protect the environment, because if there is an animal or a bird that attracts visitors, it is the common loon. The same thing goes for all other divers. We often go into the woods, on the shore of lakes, to watch, admire and hear these extraordinary birds.

I remember a fishing adventure in an area north of Manic-5, in Quebec, on the shore of Lake Paradis. I saw there something I will probably never see again. It was very early in the fall and the migratory birds were getting ready to leave.

I saw a flock of loons. First, they called back and forth from one lake to another. After a while, I saw a dozen of them flocking together, which is quite unusual because there is normally only one loon on any given lake. Twelve loons had gathered in the middle of Lake Paradis, offering an incredible concert.

I believe the privilege of attending such a show is worth the trip to this unparalleled area of our country. This was a rare opportunity in my lifetime.

I realized how important it is to put forward such a motion to change the regulations, in order to protect these birds, which not only are something we are proud of, but are also a major tourist attraction.

• (1715)

[English]

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, again it is my pleasure to speak to this very important issue.

As with many environmental issues that come before us, this issue has a lot of emotion, but the science is really lacking. I am not saying that the science will not eventually prove that there is some need for regulation in this area, but at the moment the proposed ban on lead fishing sinkers or weights is premature.

In a nutshell, I am rising today to make the point that this motion may appear all right, but it lacks the necessary background research required. All of the arguments I have heard so far have been primarily emotional. I received a letter from a key group that was never consulted and that is why I am speaking out today.

I am proposing that we wait to hear from all the stakeholders and interest groups on this issue before we vote to use the full force of the law on unsuspecting parents out on the dock teaching their kids how to catch their first fish. In fact, this is exactly the approach recommended by the Minister of the Environment in his July 27, 2000 letter to the World Wildlife Fund which stated:

I am also concerned that acting too soon on the regulatory front could compromise the building of the broad alliance needed to make early and meaningful progress on this issue.

Let us listen carefully to that advice. The minister used his letter to outline the following action plan to address the issue.

First would be to ensure the report on the scientific assessment of the impact of lead sinkers and jigs ingested by wildlife has undergone a peer review.

Second would be to initiate a communications effort to build awareness of the issue to encourage voluntary use of environmentally friendly sinkers and jigs.

Third would be to develop a communications theme and some initial products to be used in building a broad coalition of agencies, organizations and companies that could implement a sweeping comprehensive communications and awareness program.

#### *Private Members' Business*

Fourth, at the end of a reasonable period, stakeholders would be well positioned to assess the effectiveness of the voluntary approach if we pulled together a coalition of federal, provincial and territorial governments, non-governmental organizations, manufacturers and retailers that would implement the national campaign.

Sixth would be to implement the necessary interdepartmental, intergovernmental and stakeholder consultations.

It is clear the minister's action plan which he outlined two years ago has still not been fully implemented. In fact, just yesterday the Canadian Wildlife Service said the new scientific study and peer review on lead sinkers and jigs will not be published until December of this year.

I was pleased to also read the comments of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment in *Hansard* on April 29, 2002. She once again expressed the government's commitment to this logical step by step plan before proceeding with any legislative measure.

She explained that the government's plan would include getting a clear understanding of the impact of lead fishing gear on wildlife and consulting to engender the support of stakeholders and other government agencies that would be partners in any attempts to reduce the input of lead fishing gear into the environment. Scientific understanding would be used as the basis of the government's actions. The science review currently under way would be completed.

It would include developing the support of anglers who use lead sinkers and jigs and consult with them on the effectiveness of non-lead sinkers and jigs. It would include developing the support of manufacturers, distributors and retailers who make lead sinkers and jigs available. It would ensure the federal government had the support of the provinces and territories which manage recreational fishing, to ensure that any actions, including the potential use of non-voluntary control on fishing gear would be enforceable.

Consultations would be completed to ensure that whatever action the government took was supported by the Canadian public. Lastly, it would expand the government's public awareness efforts including working with government and non-government agencies to effectively and efficiently get information to anglers.

Let us heed all of those points of advice.

• (1720)

I find myself in the very odd position of supporting the government, a rare occurrence in the eight years that I have been here. I only wish the government had taken such a logical approach when it proceeded with its ill fated gun registry.

Before I finish, I would like to point out that the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association also supports the government's consultative and co-operative approach to develop effective solutions to this problem.

*Private Members' Business*

Recreational fishing in Canada is a \$7 billion annual economy, employing over 40,000 people. Over eight million Canadians fish and recreational fishing is a major component of Canada's tourism economy for residents and visitors alike. No wonder the government is making such a deliberate effort to find the right solution.

One of the main reasons for my speaking today is to let people know how little science is behind this motion. I received a letter from Mr. Phil Morlock, the chairman of this association's legislative committee. He wrote:

It is the position of the Canadian sportfishing industry that any fish and wildlife policy or legislation should be based on credible scientific research that meets accepted North American research standards, including an independent peer review. Much of the research information being circulated and quoted in Canada regarding lead fishing tackle and its impact on loons and waterfowl does not meet these standards.

As such, fish and wildlife professionals do not agree that a waterfowl mortality problem with lead fishing tackle even exists. There are strong indications that waterfowl rarely encounter fishing sinkers or baits of any kind. The State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources conducted extensive research on the presence of toxic and non-toxic shotgun pellets in waterfowl in the Mississippi Flyway. The study involved thirteen states and 93 sample areas in 1996-97.

Of 16,651 ducks examined, only one had ingested a lead fishing sinker.

This Motion is before Parliament with the potential to negatively impact on thousands of Canadian jobs in the fishing and tourism industry—yet [the hon. member moving this motion] never bothered to speak to a representative of the recreational fishing industry—the people most affected. The economic impact of her motion in Quebec will be severe, especially in rural areas. So too across Canada.

In fact, the sport fishing industry has never been contacted by any agency of the federal government, including Environment Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service, to discuss any aspects of the lead fishing tackle issue, or any proposed legislation—including this Motion.

The fishing industry is as always, willing and available to work with the federal government—and to lead on behalf of the conservation of fish and wildlife. First, there must be an inclusive discussion with the people whose livelihoods are affected, and who have relevant information to contribute. If legislation is appropriate, it should be the result of a consultation process that includes the facts from those with the most relevant information—clearly this has not happened in this case. An entire industry has been left out of the process.

It is the position of the Canadian Sportfishing Industry that this Motion is ill conceived, too broadly worded and essentially unnecessary. The fishing industry would recommend that Parliament vote against this Motion.

That is a very long quotation from the letter but I needed to read that into the record. Parliamentarians need to consider the facts. A large group of people could be greatly affected by this and they have not even been consulted. There is no need to rush this through at this point. We have to do the proper research. We can act with emotion, and I have heard it today, but we also have to act reasonably and with sound science.

Consequently, until the government's plan has been completely implemented and the results are made available to parliamentarians, I cannot support the motion.

• (1725)

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to follow the member for Yorkton—Melville in the debate because it is a fantastic opportunity for a rebuttal on almost every point he made in his intervention.

One wonders in listening to the member for Yorkton—Melville whether he has thought about the reasons that lead has been banned from gasoline, from toys and from batteries. Evidently the member's historical recollection is not long, otherwise he would know that lead

was even banned in Roman times because of the knowledge that lead is a poisonous substance.

For the member for Yorkton—Melville to say that the motion is ill-conceived is hilarious to say the least. It is a demonstration of backward thinking of the kind I have not heard in a long time.

The science is lacking according to the member for Yorkton—Melville. One only has to speak to accredited scientists at any university, to chemists, to people in the field of the science related to botany and related subjects in nature, to environmentalists. They say there is a substantial problem in nature caused by lead objects created by man, which when ingested by birds or other animals cause serious disease and poisoning that leads eventually to death.

For the member for Yorkton—Melville to say that we need a communications effort, as he did, and that we need a voluntary approach and further consultations with stakeholders really ignores the reality of the issue. He is proposing a recipe for inaction. If we were to do all the things that he proposed in his intervention today, we could be here for another 10 or 15 years.

Why does the member for Yorkton—Melville think that the use of lead sinkers by fishers are now banned in national parks? That happened in 1997. The environment committee wrote a report in 1995 on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act in which it examined the issue of lead sinkers and in which it recommended their phaseout. Two years later, to her credit, the then Minister of the Environment banned their use in national parks. Why was that done? Certainly it was not because of incomplete science and not because it would cause, as the member said, the loss of thousands of jobs in Quebec. It is utterly ridiculous to say that.

It brings back to my memory the very same arguments that were made in the early 1980s when the issue before us was the removal of lead from gasoline. The same argument was made that it could not be done because thousands of jobs would be lost, that the refineries would have insurmountable costs and that there was not enough scientific proof that lead was dangerous and harmful.

• (1730)

There are piles of studies related to the fact that lead causes an impairment to a child's ability to learn. This has been established in communities near factories producing lead batteries in Toronto and Montreal. It is in any major centre where there has been a lead battery factory.

Has the member for Yorkton—Melville ever visited a facility that produced lead batteries? Is he aware of the studies before he would call for further ones? He said there is too little of it and therefore we need better communications and better consultation with stakeholders. This is trying to turn the clock back a hundred years.

What we should be doing is applauding the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert for this motion. This is very timely and long overdue for all the reasons that one can bring forward.

*Private Members' Business*

We had the benefit in recent months of a witness before the environment committee in the person of Dr. Vernon Thomas from Guelph University who studied the subject for years. He is an international expert who has devoted virtually his life to the link between the presence of lead in nature and its effect on species. He has come to the same conclusions that the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert has, namely that these items should no longer be used because the swallowing of lead intoxicates migratory birds. It intoxicates any living being that eventually ingests this type of toxic substance.

Dr. Thomas has produced a number of extremely interesting and substantive studies indicating that it is desirable to phase out the presence of lead and to gradually reduce it because the technology is there, and replace it with other substances which are a little bit more costly. There is no doubt about that. However the cost of non-lead fishing sinkers, for instance, would add something like \$4.00 or \$5.00 per individual amateur fisherman, which is a small amount considering the totality of the cost of the equipment which a fisherman uses when sport fishing. It would be a modest increase per se and affordable.

As the trend would increase in shifting away from lead to metals like tungsten then the mass production would permit a lowering of the cost of the new product. In the same way, the only mild observation that one can make about the motion before us is that it stops with fishing weights and baits and it does not include shots and pellets. They should be included in this overall discussion because they should also be banned.

The use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting was banned or announced as a possible policy by Environment Canada in 1999, so we already have an initiative that has been announced. It only needs to be implemented. Unfortunately none of the provinces have undertaken a similar action within their jurisdiction unless it has been done in the province of Quebec. I defer here to my learned colleague from Quebec who is a member of the environment committee. That is probably only a matter of time. Here is a situation where the provinces could take the lead with the federal government.

● (1735)

The ideal step would be to ban lead fishing weights and lead shot Canada wide so that we would put to rest this notion that we need more studies, consultations and involvement of stakeholders on a matter that has been studied to death.

**Mr. Garry Breitzkreuz:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has set me up as kind of a straw man and misrepresented my points. I am wondering when I will be allowed to reply to him.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Unfortunately, the member has already spoken and the rules of the House do not allow a second round at this point in time. The member may want to see his colleague afterward.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Davenport who gave an informed and articulate synopsis of this issue as he often does. I commend him as the dean in the House of Commons for the leadership he has shown on many environmental issues. This is certainly no exception. It is a daunting task to follow the member

for Davenport because of the passion and intelligence that he brings to issues such as this.

The motion is to be commended and aimed in the right direction. It is one that might be described or criticized for being broad in nature. It is calling upon the government to ban this substance. As the member for Davenport quite correctly pointed out lead is a substance that has long been listed as a toxic substance. It causes real harm to all living creatures great and small. There is no lack of evidence. We have a significant amount of evidence that we can point to that demonstrates the harm.

The migratory birds convention is a treaty with the United States and the Migratory Birds Convention Act makes it Canadian law. It gives the federal government the responsibility and the obligation to protect migratory birds. There are many elements in the motion which would impact on other creatures. If a bird ingests lead, whether it be by shot, sinker or jig, and is poisoned, that bird may be preyed upon by other animals. It may in its natural process of breeding, pass on this lead poisoning.

Let us refer for a moment to the effect of what happens when an animal ingests this type of toxin. Birds experience physical and behavioural changes as the lead is broken down in the stomach and moves into the bloodstream affecting major organs like the brain and the kidneys. Effects include a loss of balance, gasping, tremors and an impaired ability to fly. Birds become vulnerable to predators and have trouble feeding, mating, nesting and caring for their young. They lose weight as their digestive systems break down and usually die. What a horrible death, slow and torturous.

I wish to demonstrate, as the hon. member for Davenport did throughout his remarks, the science is clear. The evidence is there as to the effect ingesting this type of substance will have. In Canada it is estimated that 500 tonnes of lead sinkers are lost each and every year. Nearly three million pounds of lead are lost in the United States annually. Birds can die after ingesting just a single lead sinker.

It is important to point out that there are options. This is not something that would devastate an industry in any way. There are alternatives to lead sinkers and jigs made from substances that include tin, bismuth, steel and tungsten-nickel alloy. Many of these lead sinkers, as anglers and fishermen would know, are disguised inside a rubber sheathing to appear to be a worm or another microbe. This is often the problem. The birds feed upon these same said organisms. Once it is in a bird's system it is literally doomed to a slow and horrible death.

These sinkers can be ingested directly or indirectly when birds eat fish that might contain lead sinkers. Predatory birds like eagles often ingest sinkers from their prey. The other birds that can be affected include: dabbling ducks, loons, grebes, sea ducks, cranes, herons, geese, swans, eagles, hawks, ospreys and vultures. They also include endangered species like peregrine falcons and whooping cranes. It is horrible to think that these beautiful creatures, some of them at risk of extinction, would die in such a way.

*Private Members' Business*

In eastern North America up to half of all the common loons found dead have died from eating a lead sinker or jig. In 1980 and 1986 the University of Minnesota did a study that reported lead poisoning in 138 of 650 eagles that were treated at that centre.

● (1740)

Lead weights in water will release slow toxins into the environment. The rate at which the lead dissolves depends on the levels of nitrate, chlorine and oxygen in the water, but clearly the substance released into the environment has a noxious effect.

With respect to the amount of lead ingested, death may occur quickly from acute lead poisoning or the bird may become so weak it will die of starvation over a prolonged period of time. Polluted sediment from the accumulated toxins can affect the aquatic bottom and bottom dwellers like shrimp, crab, oysters and clams, making them unfit for consumption by humans or birds.

High mercury levels in some types of fish including swordfish, sharks and tuna already limit fish consumption to once a week. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Science Advisory Board have recommended that lead be considered a probable human carcinogen. It is clear that lead is a real danger to birds and humans alike.

Of those who have been consulted many have expressed support for this type of ban. Ducks Unlimited Canada supports the motion. The Canadian Wildlife Service has already initiated bans in national parks and national wildlife areas, as has been mentioned. Parks Canada initiated a ban in national parks and wildlife areas years ago. The Nova Scotia department of agriculture and fisheries issued lead advisories in pamphlets and literature distributed throughout the province. The Cape Breton Sport Fishing Advisory Committee issued similar advisories.

In the year 2000 the U.S. states of New Hampshire and Maine issued bans on lead sinkers with jigs and diameters of less than an inch. Great Britain has also banned the substance. It has had restrictions on the use of lead sinkers since 1987.

The issue has been around and the problem continues to exist. I am therefore supportive of the motion. There is an obligation to put substance to the effort. The hon. member for Davenport, an active and able member of the environment committee, will want to act on the initiative. I am sure he has made efforts in that direction already. The minimum action we can undertake is to bring legislation forward that encapsulates the concept of banning the use of lead.

Support for the motion should be wide ranging. It should be found in all corners of the House. It is not a partisan issue. As I stated before, we must underline that this would not impact the industry. Alternatives are available. It would not impact parents who wanted to teach their children to fish, spend time in certain locations or indulge in leisure activities.

This is a simple, straightforward, common sense initiative that the Progressive Conservative Party wholeheartedly supports. It is shameful that it has taken some time to get to this point. With the greatest respect to the hon. member opposite, it is shameful that the government has been somewhat lax in bringing forward environmental protection legislation. A bill was passed this week that took nine years to reach fruition.

I support efforts to bring about a ban on the use of lead sinkers, as do groups such as the Canadian Wildlife Service. The threat to and impact on loons in Canada is severe. Loons are dying from lead poisoning after eating fish that have lead sinkers in their bellies, possibly after picking up discarded sinkers from lake bottoms. The lead is sometimes partially dissolved in the liver and found in the blood and body tissues of these beautiful birds.

In Nova Scotia statistics indicate that a number of birds have been affected by poisoning from lead sinkers. It is difficult to bring forward statistics and science because many of the birds are never found. They die from toxicity and sink to the bottoms of lakes or are consumed by other animals. However over the past few years three or four loons have been found in my home province by the Department of Natural Resources whose testing has indicated this was the cause of death.

We in our party wholeheartedly support a ban on lead sinkers. I hope other members of parliament will do likewise.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to the motion by my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert. I will read the motion a little later, but it seems so obvious to me that I would have a hard time speaking about it for 10 or 20 minutes. It is quite basic.

How could the members of this House not support such a simple and practical measure, which would not cost as much as my colleague from the Alliance tried to make us believe a few minutes ago?

The motion brought forward by my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should, in compliance with the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994, amend its regulations to replace the use of lead fishing weights and baits by any other non toxic matter that would end the intoxication of migratory birds, including the loon, caused by the swallowing of lead.

As my colleague from Davenport said a few minutes ago, we have had the opportunity to study the matter for a short while. At least, we had the opportunity to make up our minds as far as the consequences that the ingesting lead can have for wildlife species like the loon.

As my colleague mentioned, the committee recently heard testimony from an expert on this, Dr. Vernon Thomas. He was obviously very concerned about this issue.

It is as a parliamentarian, of course, but also as an avid fisherman, that I rise to speak to this motion today. Even though the Alliance would want us to think otherwise, I do not believe it is true that fishers do not want to make a commitment to the development of alternatives in the area of sport fishing.

*Private Members' Business*

I am totally convinced that those who like to fish are essentially nature lovers. They believe that Quebec's and Canada's natural heritage, our wildlife, must be protected.

I was listening to my colleague from Champlain who told us about his expeditions on the shores of various lakes in Quebec where he would hear the calls of the loons at night from one lake to the next. It is quite interesting. In that regard, we, as parliamentarians, want to adopt measures to improve and preserve our natural heritage.

Studies show that the lead contained in rippers and fishing baits is responsible for the intoxication of the loon. It is estimated that between 5 to 50% of the deaths in loons is caused by lead poisoning. Obviously, the percentage varies from one region to the next. However, for Quebec, lead intoxication is the main cause of death in loons.

Knowing that the loon is, to a certain extent, an important symbol in Quebec, we must propose simple and obvious measures, like the one brought forward by my colleague, to protect that species.

Knowing also that, each year, over 500 tons of lead end up in Canadian waters, there is cause for concern, especially when one is convinced that there is a direct link between loon mortality and the ingestion of lead by the loon.

If it were only the loon, perhaps I could understand why certain colleagues would oppose this measure. But such is not the case.

● (1750)

Several wildlife and waterfowl species are hit hard by the ingestion of lead. It has an impact on their mortality rate. When the Canadian Wildlife Service tells us that it found lead in the body of several Canada geese, at least two of them in Quebec, lead they had ingested, when we know that it found lead weights in the throat of some seagulls and that fishing leads were also found in herons' nests, when we know the problem also affects cormorants, all we want to do is act in a simple, obvious and long-lasting way to protect these species.

One thing should be understood. We talked a lot about the loon. Of course the motion deals specifically with the loon. However, any diving bird is directly affected by this sport fishing practice while there are alternatives today.

We talked a lot about the impact of lead on children. We talked about the issue of toys and the use of lead in their manufacture as being an important aspect of a fight that was called a fight for environmental health. It naturally became not only a public health issue, but also an environmental health issue. There is no doubt that we would want to try and develop the same kind of approach to protect our natural heritage.

The motion was well received by several Canadian organizations such as Ducks Unlimited. I remind the House that Ducks Unlimited is a non-profit international conservation organization. Its mission is to preserve wetlands and wetland habitats for the benefit of waterfowl in North America, and to promote a safe environment for wildlife and human beings.

On March 25, 2002, my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert got a letter of support from Ducks Unlimited regarding the

debate we are having today on the use of lead by sport fishermen. They support it for two reasons. First, they too are convinced that swallowing lead is a major cause of death especially in loons. Moreover, in the letter they wrote to my colleague, they said it was all the more desirable as there are already several alternatives available on the market.

As any sport fisher well knows, it is possible to engage in one's favorite sport or activity and use non toxic lures. Both arguments mentioned in the March 25 letter from Ducks Unlimited are forceful and should convince this parliament to act. In my opinion, the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994 allows us to amend Canadian legislation to protect the species. Under the convention, the Canadian government can certainly act within its jurisdiction while insuring the protection of diving birds.

As a parliament, we must make the change and clearly indicate that we do not accept practices that go against the protection of our natural heritage. If we are to continue enjoying it and engaging in sport, we must adjust our legislation accordingly.

● (1755)

[English]

**Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the House today in connection with the motion by the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert concerning the regulation of lead sinkers and jigs for fishing.

I support the intent of the hon. member's initiative and I commend her for bringing this important issue to the attention of parliament and to the Canadian public.

Every year in Canada, water birds die from the ingestion of lead sinkers and jigs. Lead sinkers and jigs are a concern because water birds can mistake them for food or stones that they swallow to aid in their digestion or ingest them while consuming lost bait fish. A single lead sinker or jig is sufficient to expose a loon or other water bird to a lethal dose of lead.

Recreational anglers often attach lead weights to their fishing line to sink the hook and bait or lure in the water. They may also use lead jigs, which are weighted fish hooks. Fishing sinkers come in all shapes and sizes and scientists estimate that about 500 tonnes of lead sinkers and jigs are lost in Canadian waters every year.

In Canada, the bird that is most commonly reported as poisoned by eating lead sinkers is the common loon. Ducks, geese, swans and herons are also known to swallow fishing sinkers. Sinkers weighing less than about 50 grams or smaller than 2 centimetres are the ones usually swallowed by these water birds.

*Private Members' Business*

The actual number of birds poisoned by lead is not known but poisoned birds hide themselves and die in out of the way places where they are never found. They are also eaten by predators which leave no trace of their prey. What we do know is that, depending on the location, poisoning from swallowed lead sinkers or jigs accounts for up to half of all common loons found dead in eastern Canada and the United States.

Many bird populations are shrinking because their habitats are being destroyed. Lead poisoning is one more problem that confronts these birds. That is why conserving these birds and protecting them from hazards that we can control is an important undertaking.

The government is currently moving ahead with the completion of the enactment of the species at risk legislation. To date there are no reports of any endangered birds having died from the ingestion of lead sinkers or jigs. We must be extra vigilant with these species since the death of even a few birds may affect the survival of an endangered species.

As implied in Motion No. 414, loons are one of the main species affected. We know there are between 250,000 and 500,000 common loons breeding in Canada and that overall the loon population is not in decline.

A variety of environmental contaminants, including acid rain, mercury and lead, have an impact on the common loon. However the relative influence of these and other stressors, such as disease, predation and severe weather, on the health of the loon populations is unclear. This is not to minimize the impact of lead on water birds and loons.

We now know that an estimated 500 tonnes of lead in the form of lead sinkers and jigs may be lost in Canadian waters annually by approximately 5.5 million anglers who participate in recreational fishing each year. This represents about 14% of all lead releases into the environment.

We also know that lead poisoning from these releases has an impact on wildlife, particularly water birds like the loons. We know that in locations where recreational angling occurs, lead sinker or jig ingestion causes adult loon mortality and is the leading cause of death for loons in these areas. Recent studies indicate in Canada lead poisoning accounts for 22% of adult bird mortality where mortality factors are known.

Because of these facts the government is committed to addressing the issue. Any action must be done in a way that is supported by all stakeholders. The issue of lead toxicity is not new and the government has addressed various aspects of lead toxicity in the past, including when lead was found to have effects on wildlife.

When the severity of the problem to waterfowl from lead shot was understood, the government undertook a phased in approach to the banning of lead shot.

● (1800)

Beginning in 1991, Canada banned the use of lead shot in hot spots across the country, places where of course lead shot poisoning of waterfowl was known to be a problem. These areas were mostly in eastern Canada and a province-wide ban was established in British Columbia.

In the intervening years the Minister of the Environment banned the use of lead shot for hunting in national wildlife areas and for hunting most migratory birds in and around wetlands. A full national ban came into effect in the fall of 1999.

As we found with the situation with lead shot, immediate regulatory action on lead sinkers and jigs would severely impact manufacturers and retailers. These companies now have inventories in place for the coming summer fishing season and indeed many have sinkers and jigs in sufficient quantity for the next year or two. Additionally, it will take a little time for the industry to ensure that there are sufficient non-lead sinkers and jigs for anglers.

Moving too quickly, for example, on a regulation could create availability problems for alternatives. However, it is important to note that the number and availability of non-toxic alternatives continues to increase and importantly the cost of these alternatives is similar to lead sinkers and jigs.

The member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert is proposing action and action we will take. Most important, we will consult with all stakeholders and ensure that a regulation or other instrument regarding prevention or control actions in relation to lead weights and baits can be supported by a comprehensive impact analysis.

From our experience with lead shot as outlined earlier, it is clear that an education and awareness program would help to ensure a smooth transition to non-toxic alternatives. It would be important to work with the industry to determine how best to provide samples of these alternatives to anglers. For example, perhaps the enhanced use of exchange programs where those who possess lead sinkers could trade them for non-toxic alternatives would foster a speedier transition to non-lead sinkers and jigs. The cost and benefits of these types of programs would have to be determined.

I am convinced that all these and other actions will in the end achieve the objective of Motion No. 414 by building support from the very people who will ultimately determine whether this effort is successful and by setting the stage for regulatory or other policy instrument or approach.

I would like to thank the hon. member for her interest in this issue and in the welfare of Canada's wildlife.

● (1805)

**Mr. Shawn Murphy (Hillsborough, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the House today in connection with the motion of the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert concerning the regulation of lead sinkers and jigs for fishing.

The motion proposes that the government should, in compliance with the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994, amend its regulations to replace the use of lead fishing weights and baits by any other non-toxic matter that would end the intoxication of migratory birds, including the loon, caused by the swallowing of lead.

*Adjournment Debate*

I would like to echo the comments of the other members who spoke here today and tell the House that I too support the intent of the member's initiative. In particular I want to associate myself with the comments from the hon. member for Davenport. Obviously he has spent a good part of his career studying this issue and I agree with him that this issue, whether or not the lead causes harm to human beings and animals, does not need at this point in our history further research. It does not need further study. It does not need further debate by the House.

Lead has been acknowledged as an environmental and health problem for humans and wildlife. As everyone in the House is aware, it is listed as a toxic substance under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The federal government, along with other levels of government, has been extremely active in removing the hazard of lead from our environment by getting lead out of gasoline and household products like paint.

We have also required manufacturers such as base metal smelters and steel manufacturers, which release lead during their processes, to implement control measures to reduce releases of lead into the environment.

Lead is a naturally occurring metal found throughout our environment. While concentrations of lead in the environment increased significantly following the industrial revolution, the most dramatic increase of course has occurred since 1920—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Unfortunately the member only had two minutes left in the time allocated.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

### FISHERIES

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Madam Speaker, on April 15, I asked a question of the minister of fisheries with respect to the value of Canada being a member of NAFO and the failure of NAFO to protect the Canadian fishery industry.

Communities in my province of Nova Scotia like Canso, Mulgrave and others are feeling the effects, and have been for many years, as a result of overfishing. For example, a Russian trawler recently caught 247 tonnes of undersized redfish, the same species incidentally that the minister of fisheries has refused to grant increased quota to places like Canso and Mulgrave for processing.

Although the minister says it is not illegal, under the NAFO agreement, redfish quota is not regulated nor is there a net size regulation. This is essentially a catch and release for those who breach the rules of overfishing. I suggest that the minister cannot

reconcile the lax rules and regulations of NAFO while at the same time ignoring the needs of communities like Canso and Mulgrave.

This issue is one that has severe ramifications for communities like Canso and Mulgrave where individuals, who rely on the fish processing industry for work for their livelihood, are faced with the horrible decision of having to relocate. Some of them are facing bankruptcy and do not have the financial means to relocate. A horrible human impact is playing out as we speak.

I was astonished to learn recently that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans had rejected his own committee's unanimous report, less than 24 hours after it was tabled. The minister stated "I deal with the facts. The committee tends to deal with the perceptions and the presentations that were made to them".

What an amazing statement. Of course the committees deal with the presentations that are made to them. Of course they deal with the facts as they are presented. Talk about a penetrating statement of the obvious. Yet the minister has condemned the findings of his own committee. Members of the government side have strongly urged the minister to reappear before the committee to answer questions as to what he intends to do about the shortcomings of NAFO with respect to protecting the Canadian fishing industry.

The minister has essentially turned a blind eye to the destruction of vital and vulnerable fish stocks at the hands of foreign trawlers, in spite of the economic hardships and suffering it is causing people in his own home province.

The minister has sat idly by while Russian, Spanish and Faroese trawlers have caught undersized redfish off the coast of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Yet he refuses to grant quota to these said communities, these Canadian communities, which are crying out for the ability to access quota.

The minister has made many claims and promises, yet he has delivered zero for people in this industry since taking over as the minister of fisheries.

Again I urge that he revisit this issue of quota allocation, that he meet with stakeholders in places like Canso and that he reverse this irresponsible attitude that he seems to have toward ensuring that Canadians in his own communities and in his own province have access and the ability to live and thrive within the fishery.

• (1810)

**Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough for his continuing interest in the situation facing the community of Canso, Nova Scotia.

The minister has heard the frustrations expressed by fishermen and industry representatives throughout Atlantic Canada about foreign non-compliance with the rules of NAFO.

The Government of Canada takes the issue of foreign overfishing very seriously. We know the very real toll this issue can take on communities like Canso that rely on a strong, healthy fishery for their livelihood.

*Adjournment Debate*

We have taken action. We have closed our ports to the Faroese and the Estonian fishing fleets because of their non-compliance with NAFO's conservation measures.

We are also pleased that Russian authorities responded to Canada's concerns in a serious fashion and revoked the *Olga's* licence to fish in the NAFO regulated area for the remainder of the year, and that it will conduct further investigations into this vessel's activities.

Canada will not tolerate the systematic and wilful abuse of NAFO quotas and rules that has been exhibited by these fleets. DFO officials continue to monitor the fishing activities of all fleets in the NAFO regulatory area to ensure compliance. If there is evidence of non-compliance, appropriate action will be taken on a case by case basis.

Having said that, the department fully recognizes that more needs to be done.

At the most recent NAFO meeting, which was held from January 29 to February 1 in Denmark, we brought the problem of foreign overfishing to the table. We achieved positive results on a number of fronts.

However, some of our key conservation proposals did not meet with success.

As the minister has said before the House, DFO officials are currently in the process of developing the strategy in preparation for the NAFO annual meeting this coming September. I can assure the House that the department will work with our provincial and industry partners to put together the strongest case possible for that September meeting.

I know that some members of the House would prefer a more drastic, unilateral course of action such as the extension of Canada's fisheries jurisdiction beyond the Canadian 200 mile limit to include the nose and tail of the Grand Bank and the Flemish Cap. This approach is misguided.

A unilateral move by Canada to extend its jurisdiction over fisheries, either through custodial management or outright extension, would be seen by the international community as the same thing and inconsistent with accepted international law. Other nations would never accept this.

It is important that Canada work with the NAFO process. Indeed, without NAFO in place the entire Atlantic fisheries resource would be jeopardized. That is certainly not the way to manage a fishery.

Indeed, there are challenges with regard to NAFO but there are no easy solutions to these challenges.

We must work diligently and with our international partners. That is what we intend to do when we put forward our case in September.

In the meantime, I can assure members that the minister will use any and all tools at his disposal to stop overfishing outside Canada's 200 mile limit, and ensure a strong, sustainable fisheries resource for Atlantic communities in the years to come.

•(1815)

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the words of the parliamentary secretary but we have been hearing this for a long time. We have been hearing about Canada's tough stance and how NAFO was going to listen to these pleas and yet the overfishing continues.

The member is right to suggest that more can be done. Much more can be done. Clearly we have to start enforcing. We have to bring about greater monitoring of these ships that are sailing in Canadian waters and outside the 200 mile limit.

He mentioned the need to impress upon these countries that these rules are there and that they will be enforced.

The issue of overfishing has had a devastating impact on communities like Canso, Mulgrave, Burgeo, Trepassay and many communities on the east coast.

He is also right in suggesting that the precarious state of the east coast fishery is directly influenced by decisions that will be taken at the NAFO meetings. The minister of fisheries will be attending those meetings and we cannot impress upon him enough the need to be a strong advocate for the east coast for all Canadian fisheries.

**Mr. Paul Harold Macklin:** Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment to review the steps the ministry has taken with respect to the Faroese and the Estonian fishery.

Since we have closed our ports we actually have now entered into negotiations with these fisheries. We do believe we will arrive at a successful conclusion with them.

Going back to the same basic problem though, in the end if we do not support the NAFO process of regulation we will have nothing. I think that is where we have to exhibit a strong, united front with respect to the stakeholders, the provincial interests and the federal interest in this entire process of keeping a good, solid fishery for the east coast.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** A motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a. m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.)





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