



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, October 22, 2003**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 22, 2003

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1400)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle.

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

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### MOHAN RAO

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure today to recognize an outstanding resident of Burlington, Ontario. Mr. Mohan Rao is one of hundreds of retired Canadians to donate his time and expertise to the Canadian Executive Service Organization, CESO.

Mr. Rao recently returned from Almaty, Kazakhstan where he assisted a project management group in the planning and integration of the design and procurement of contracts. The company he assisted will now be in a position to respond to bid invitations more realistically and with greater success.

Mr. Rao is part of a great Canadian tradition. For 36 years CESO has been providing highly skilled volunteers to help stimulate development in disadvantaged economies and in our aboriginal communities.

Colleagues, join me in congratulating Mr. Rao for volunteering his time and expertise and for his fine representation of Canada.

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• (1405)

### RAY SPEAKER

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, October 18 the best university in Canada, the University of Lethbridge, honoured one of our own, bestowing an honorary doctor of laws degree on Ray Speaker.

Born in Enchant, Alberta and raised on the family farm, Ray began his public service career when he was elected to the Alberta legislature for the first time in 1963. In total he was elected as a member of the legislative assembly eight times.

He was elected as a reformer to the House of Commons in 1993, serving as the member of Parliament for Lethbridge until 1997.

In 1999 he was appointed a member of the Privy Council and placed on the Security Intelligence Review Committee. In 2001 he received the Order of Canada.

While enjoying time with his lovely wife Ingrid, their children and grandchildren, Ray continues to work for a better Canada, as we have witnessed in the recent agreement to bring conservatives in Canada together.

So colleagues, next time you see former member of Parliament Ray Speaker, remember that from now on it is Dr. Speaker.

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### WOMEN'S SOCCER

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Canada's women's national soccer team made an impressive showing at the World Cup tournament.

The team won their way past the strong teams of Argentina, Japan and China into the semi-final match. After losing tough games to Sweden and the United States, Canada's World Cup team finished a very impressive fourth overall.

Members of Parliament would like to let the team know that their country will be cheering for them in February when they compete in the Olympic qualification tournament in Costa Rica.

The team has made Canada proud. I am sure my colleagues in the House will join me in wishing them good luck next year.

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### CITATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AWARD

**Mr. Shawn Murphy (Hillsborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, each year Citizenship and Immigration Canada awards the Citation for Citizenship Award to 20 persons or organizations who, through tireless work and generosity of spirit, have helped in the successful integration of newcomers to this country.

Last Friday I had the honour of representing our minister in presenting the Citation for Citizenship Award to Joe Byrne of Charlottetown.

*S. O. 31*

Joe started working with newcomers 20 years ago when he was a volunteer for World University of Canada at the University of Prince Edward Island. He has never stopped since. He lived and worked in the Dominican Republic between 1987 and 1993 and upon returning to Prince Edward Island with his wife Rosa, began working tirelessly in helping newcomers to Canada integrate into Prince Edward Island society. They truly made each and every one of them feel at home.

On behalf of the House and on behalf of all Canadians, I want to thank both Joe and Rosa for their dedication and their commitment and congratulate Joe on receiving this well-deserved award.

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**ANTARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I note that the Antarctic Environmental Protection Act received royal assent on October 20. This new act requires the Government of Canada to oversee Canadian activities in the Antarctic to ensure there is no pollution or harmful interference with wildlife in that region.

The Antarctic Environmental Protection Act gives us the legislative basis needed for Canada to ratify the protocol on environmental protection to the Antarctic treaty, commonly called the Madrid protocol.

I look forward to the coming into force of this act which will provide Canada with the tools we need to do our part in global efforts to protect the vulnerable Antarctic ecosystem.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, well, our so-called Prime Minister has once again failed Canada miserably on the international stage.

In response to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's recent anti-Semitic remarks that "Jews control the world by proxy", our Prime Minister remained silent. While other world leaders reacted immediately to condemn such hateful rhetoric, our Prime Minister shook his hand and said nothing. Later our Prime Minister reported that he had told Mr. Mahathir only that his speech was not "well received" in Canada, but then went on to say that the Malaysian prime minister gave an explanation and invited everybody to read the whole speech, as if that would help. Is our Prime Minister suggesting that this is simply a matter of words taken out of context?

After two days of pressure, all our Prime Minister could muster up was "I regret today to have to use such strong words against you". They were not strong enough. Shame.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Bhupinder S. Liddar on his appointment as Canadian consul general in Chandigarh, India.

Born in Nairobi, Kenya, Mr. Liddar came to Canada and made an immediate impact on the diplomatic community in Ottawa. He is

widely respected for his knowledge and analysis of international affairs.

His regular newspaper columns and television commentary have made the world of diplomatic politics accessible to all Canadians. As publisher and editor of *Diplomat and International Canada*, he has provided a valuable news journal to Canada's international community.

With this appointment, Mr. Liddar becomes the first Canadian consul general to Chandigarh, as well as the first Canadian Sikh to head a diplomatic mission. His appointment is an important act of recognition for the Canadian Sikh community.

I would like to offer my best wishes to Mr. Liddar on the occasion of this historic appointment. I am confident that through his customary hard work and dedication he will succeed in this posting.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ISABELLE CÔTÉ**

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Isabelle Côté, a young woman from l'Épiphanie in the Lanaudière region, made an excellent showing in the 37th WorldSkills Competition held in Switzerland in June. Along with her teammate, Jonathan Baulne, Isabelle picked up the bronze medal in the landscape gardening category.

This was an outstanding achievement, since there were 37 nations competing in 42 trade categories, making this the largest world competition for youth in skilled trades.

Thank you, Isabelle, for representing the Lanaudière region and Quebec in this competition, where more than 700 young people showed off their professional know-how.

This competition is well noted around the world, with more than 180,000 people attending and 300 journalists reporting live on the event.

With such talent, now recognized worldwide, Isabelle Côté has a fine career ahead of her, and her region and Quebec are very proud of her.

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[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to Bhupinder Singh Liddar, a well-known household name on Parliament Hill.

He is editor in chief and publisher of *Diplomat* magazine. He is also a regular columnist in the *Hill Times* and on the CPAC TV program *Diplomatic World*.

He has been appointed as Canada's first consul general in Chandigarh, Republic of India. He is also the first Canadian Sikh to head a Canadian diplomatic mission.

The Canadian Sikh community feels proud of this milestone and its century of presence in Canada.

The Chandigarh office, which the Prime Minister will open on Saturday, October 25, 2003, will now provide full consular services to residents of Punjab and Haryana.

I congratulate the government for this significant initiative.

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#### 26TH FIELD ROYAL CANADIAN ARTILLERY

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the 26th Field Royal Canadian Artillery commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Dave Fraser for allowing me to participate in their exercises this past weekend.

The 26th Field is a reserve artillery unit based out of Shilo, Manitoba. What was so special about last weekend was that it was the first time in a year that these troops got to fire live artillery. Imagine if our police force only got to practise shooting their guns once a year.

The government has shortchanged our military to the point that reserves are not able to get proper training. Prior to this Liberal government, our troops held live fire exercises on a monthly basis.

In a time when we are relying heavily on reserves to supplement our commitments overseas, we should be giving them the proper tools to do the job.

\* \* \*

#### JORDIN TOOTOO

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, another great Canadian has made history again, and I am proud to make this statement on October 22, which is usually his sweater number. Our very own Jordin Tootoo of Nunavut became the first Inuk ever to play for the National Hockey League when he skated onto the ice on October 9 for the Nashville Predators in their first season game against the Anaheim Mighty Ducks.

It was evident how much support Jordin received from family and friends as close to 50 people flew all the way from Nunavut to Tennessee for this historic moment.

The Rankin Inlet resident has worked very hard to achieve his dream. Jordin credits his family for his success, but I know personally how hard he has worked and his determination and inner strength have been rewarded.

On behalf of all my constituents of Nunavut, I congratulate Jordin and wish him the best of luck in his new exciting career. We are very proud of him, as are his family and friends, as he makes Canadian history.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

#### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ELECTION

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the PCs under leader Danny Williams rode a Tory tide to victory.

*S. O. 31*

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador elected the PCs in 34 out of 48 seats in the House of Assembly. They demonstrated their confidence in the ability of the new government to bring about effective change in Canada's youngest province.

This election was about sending a clear message that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador want a new approach to economic development in the province.

It was also about the continuous giveaways of our natural resources. I believe the new government now has a strong mandate to take a tougher stand on negotiating new resource revenue deals for the province.

Again, our congratulations to premier-elect Danny Williams and his PC team as they take up the challenge of building a better future for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### NOËLLINE MÉNARD

**Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Noëlline Ménard, of L'Avenir, near Drummondville, was recently elected farm woman of the year, in the Centre-du Québec region.

A member of the Syndicat des agricultrices du Centre-du-Québec since it was founded, Ms. Ménard has taken part in many regional activities to promote and restore the image of women's work in agriculture.

Since March 2003 she has been the representative of the Drummond-Sud area on the regional development and environmental committee of the Fédération de l'UPA Centre-du-Québec.

Ms. Ménard and her husband are currently active in pork production. In addition to taking part in the agro-environmental plan of the Fédération des producteurs de porcs du Québec, their business has been recognized by the Canadian Quality Assurance Program since September 2000.

Therefore, I congratulate Noëlline Ménard, farm woman of the year in Centre-du-Québec, for her contribution to the development of agriculture in Quebec.

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[*English*]

#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was with great pride yesterday that all parties voted unanimously to create a national day of remembrance of the Holocaust. The Holocaust Memorial Day will ensure that Canadians always remember that six million Jews lost their lives.

In 1939, Canada joined the second world war. Over one million Canadians served in uniform, fighting against the Nazi army, fighting against the persecution of innocent people. The Canadian people were shocked by the horrors of the Holocaust and, to this day, we stand up against intolerance and small-mindedness, both at home and in missions abroad.

*Oral Questions*

Next April on Yom Hashoah, the annual day of the Holocaust, Canadians will commemorate the millions of lives lost and reaffirm our nation's commitment to tolerance and justice.

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**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 37 women's centres in B.C. are facing closure because of a decision by the B.C. Liberal government to eliminate 100% of their funding.

Violence against women is on the rise, more women are facing poverty, women are denied access to legal aid and day care is being cut too by the meanest and most vicious provincial government that has targeted the most vulnerable in our society. The question is, why is the federal government not doing anything?

As the report on Canada's lack of compliance with the UN convention on the elimination of discrimination against women points out, the federal government must step in and protect women's equality. It must make it clear that what the B.C. government is doing is unlawful and unjust.

It has been 30 years since the royal commission on the status of women, yet women are falling behind, especially poor, disabled and aboriginal women.

The former finance minister is the architect of that failure, and we demand that the government live up to its international commitments for dignity and equality for women. The federal government must support these vital centres and not let them die by political neglect.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTH**

**Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October is Public Library Month and I am pleased to rise today to pay tribute to the importance of libraries and the work of librarians.

Libraries provide free and easy access to resources and information for lifelong learning, creativity and culture. They are the gateway to global communication and electronic information networks, and form an integral part of our social and intellectual infrastructure. Canadians are using libraries in ever increasing numbers.

The Toronto Public Library has the largest per capita circulation of library books in North America. Its reference section is one of the largest in Canada and it has the most comprehensive collection of theatre materials.

Libraries partner with governments to enhance information services and they lead the way on literacy programs. They bring the world within reach of ordinary Canadians and, by doing so, promote responsible citizenship and personal growth.

I ask all members to join me to salute the wonderful work of Canada's libraries in building strong and healthy communities.

• (1420)

**B.C. FLOODS**

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the recent floods in British Columbia have resulted in the loss of life and millions of dollars of damage. Communities, such as Pemberton, Victoria and Hatzic Lake, in my riding have been hurt by these floods.

We have been warning the government for years that its water course management plan is ineffective and could result in this kind of disaster. For years my colleagues and I have pleaded with the fisheries minister and the government to take the preventive measures necessary to ensure that dikes are properly maintained, that appropriate levels of gravel extraction be permitted, and that local municipalities be allowed to clean out their waterways.

Why does the government care more about fish than the safety of thousands of citizens?

The minister must now take immediate action to prevent future flooding in communities like Agassiz in my riding. The minister has continually refused to allow appropriate levels of dredging.

Instead of putting up roadblocks, the government should allow our communities to implement the tools necessary to solve this problem and prevent future flooding.

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**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the industry minister told me in the House that he was required to co-sign a \$55 million deal for Irving after the ethics counsellor had told him he was subject to a blackout. However, under the Financial Administration Act, the minister clearly had the authority to delegate this signing authority.

The minister apparently chose not to delegate. This is yet another attempt by the minister to provide an explanation for his conflict that simply does not hold water.

Will the Minister of Industry resign?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I also told the member yesterday was that the document for the Treasury Board was months after the decision in this matter. It was to implement a decision that was made by others. After I disqualified myself from this file, the matter was led by the Prime Minister's Office to Privy Council Office that dealt directly with officials in my department. I had no involvement in the decision that was made and contained in the budget of February.

*Oral Questions*

The Treasury Board document, months later, was to implement that decision. I understood it was necessary for the Minister of Industry to sign it and it was signed under those circumstances.

I might say that the ethics counsellor has been asked to examine this as well.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the minister knows he should have delegated this signing authority. He had been subject to blackout on the Irving files. He has entered into a conflict or apparent conflict of interest more than once during this blackout. The minister has all but admitted this to the House by going back to the ethics counsellor and asking for retroactive permission.

Having failed to clear even the very low bar set by the ethics counsellor, would it not be appropriate for the minister to at least step aside while the ethics counsellor invents new reasons to get him off the hook?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think that it is—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I know all hon. members want to hear the answer from the Deputy Prime Minister.

**Hon. John Manley:** Apparently they do not, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes the facts are inconvenient for the opposition.

In this case, the issue of dealing with a restructuring at the Irving yards was something that commenced quite a few years earlier. In fact, I was the industry minister at the time. It came to a decision at the time of the budget in 2003. That was a budget decision taken by the Minister of Finance in consultation with the Prime Minister. That was the end of the matter. The money was authorized in the budget and voted on in the House while the recusal period was being respected by the minister.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, if the government were so confident of the minister's actions, it would let him answer his own questions.

The minister knew what the ethical guidelines of the government were and he did not follow them. He knew he did not follow them and now he will not resign. Now we have a new Liberal leader who has promised to deal with this government's ethics deficit.

I will ask the minister the same question I asked him yesterday. Has he consulted the new Liberal leader to see whether this standard of behaviour is acceptable?

• (1425)

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the person I consulted was the ethics counsellor. I made full disclosure of my visit and full disclosure of my conduct after the visit. I took the ethics counsellor's advice and I have respected that advice. I followed it to the letter.

I am confident that my conduct was entirely within the advice given by the ethics counsellor. The fact that I referred issues to him on Sunday, at my personal request, was because those issues were raised by others last week. However I am confident that I complied with his advice throughout.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Sadly, Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not share that confidence. The growing list of ministers racking up travel miles on corporate jets is disturbing for most Canadians, and it should be. Unlike members of the government, opposition members of Parliament do not sit at the cabinet table, nor do they decide government policies.

Corporations should not finance vacations for cabinet ministers. This is a clear breach of ethics guidelines. The Prime Minister knows that. His puppet ethics counsellor should know that as he is paid to know it. Surely the Minister of Industry knows that.

When will he resign?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I made full disclosure of the trip to the ethics counsellor. I also asked his advice, given those circumstances, on how I could fulfill my duties as Minister of Industry while at the same time avoiding conflicts of interest. The ethics counsellor considered the matter, provided advice and I have followed that advice to the letter.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, how many scandals? Let me count the number: the former public works minister and chateau Boulay; the former defence minister and his contracting gal pal; the Prime Minister and Shawinigate; and now the industry minister's favours for fishing vacation. Those are just a few examples of the rampant level of mismanagement, misrepresentation and corruption in the government.

The rot in the government is running deep. Ministers of the crown should not accept gifts from corporations.

What part of a blatant conflict of interest does the minister not understand?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the substance of the ethics counsellor's advice to me was that I was not to be involved in decisions that affect directly the interests of the Irvings. That was his advice and that was the advice I followed.

I was not involved in the decision with respect to the \$55 million for the Saint John shipyard. That was made entirely without my involvement.

I was careful to exclude myself from decisions affecting the family and its interests. I have followed the advice of the ethics counsellor in this regard.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**1995 REFERENDUM**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on October 24, 1995, a few days prior to the referendum, the Prime Minister made a solemn declaration to Quebecers in Verdun, "To stay or to leave. This is the issue of the referendum—the fundamental and irreversible choice of a country".

How could the Prime Minister talk about an irreversible choice prior to the referendum, when he already had a draft speech clearly indicating that he had no intention of respecting the choice of Quebecers in the event of a yes vote?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Quebecers should have been given a clear choice.

How can the leader of the Bloc Québécois explain that a poll conducted a few days before the referendum indicated that half the voters thought Quebec's independence was conditional on a political partnership? How can he explain that, except to say that they tried to mislead the public with an unclear question? Naturally, like any other leader of a democratic nation, the Prime Minister of Canada could not have allowed the country to be torn asunder amidst such confusion.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has reached the same level of hypocrisy as the Prime Minister on October 24. What we are hearing is the height of hypocrisy. In this case, if the minister's reasoning is right, why did the Prime Minister not say on October 24, 1995, "The question is too confusing: I will not respect the decision of Quebecers under those conditions"? Instead of talking about the irreversible choice of a country, he misled the public, as the minister is trying to do.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie is well aware of the fact that there is never hypocrisy in the House. He must not use such terms to describe an answer. The question is perhaps in order, but I do not like the tone currently being used in the House. The member must not continue in this vein.

The hon. Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

• (1430)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, when there is an attempt at secession, which is an extremely serious and extremely delicate matter, respect must be shown. The way the leader of the Bloc Québécois is behaving today is clear proof that he would be incapable of behaving responsibly during an attempt at secession. He is setting a very bad example for his followers.

Second, the Prime Minister was right in saying that separation was an irreversible choice.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when asked about the government's intentions to send the army into Quebec in the event of a yes victory in 1995, the Minister of Transport maintained outside the House of Commons, that he would not talk about cabinet discussions. For his part, the Deputy Prime Minister said that this issue had never been discussed in cabinet. This is clearly a contradiction.

Could someone who was there indicate whether, yes or no, this possibility was discussed in cabinet?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that in reality, the result of the referendum was no. It is also clear that the Government of Quebec and Mr. Parizeau had very different intentions, with respect to accepting the results simply as a consultation.

What mattered most was knowing what the Quebec government's intentions were with such a complicated question.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would call the minister's attitude two-faced.

Are we to understand that preparations for sending the army into Quebec were not discussed in cabinet, that such an important decision was made by one man, the Minister of National Defence, at the time? Is that what we are to believe? Well, we do not.

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, the Prime Minister denied the allegations. Second, the current Minister of Transport—who was the Minister of National Defence—also answered questions yesterday, outside the House. I think things are clear.

There is nothing to add except that we have now agreed that if there is to be a secession debate here in this House, then there needs to be a very clear question.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton Southwest, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry knows his actions were wrong when it comes to the shipbuilding file. He accepted a gift that violated the conflict of interest guidelines. He repeatedly lobbied on behalf of the Irving interest at the cabinet table. He wrote letters and signed agreements. He made government appointments with respect to a shipbuilding file he was told to stay away from.

How can the minister possibly suggest he was just doing his job when he violated the terms of the blackout over and over again?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I respected those terms, and from the moment the ethics counsellor gave me the advice to disqualify myself, I did so.

The decision with respect to the shipyard was made entirely without my involvement. It was contained in the budget and was news to me.

I took very seriously the advice that was given by the ethics counsellor and I followed it. In addition to that, in view of the fact that issues have been raised, I have referred additional questions to the ethics counsellor and he has been good enough to agree to consider them.

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton Southwest, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, on October 10 the industry minister defended himself by stating:

The trip took place in the summer of 2001 when I was minister of health.

Once named Minister of Industry...I informed the ethics counsellor of all the particulars relating to the trip.

That is simply not true. In fact the minister waited five full months during which he actively lobbied on behalf of the Irvings: \$100 million for the two shipyards, and the ExxonMobil contract.

Why did the minister wait so long to contact the ethics counsellor?

• (1435)

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I made full disclosure to the ethics counsellor as soon as it became evident to me that it was necessary to do so. I took his advice with respect to conflict. I followed it in every respect and to the letter, and I am satisfied that in no way have I departed from the advice he gave to me.

\* \* \*

#### STUDENT LOANS

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance will know that Canadian students are facing record levels of debt upon graduation, so much so that they are beginning to refer to themselves as “generation debt”. There is nothing in the 100 days of cuts promised by the new Liberal leader for them.

Could the Minister of Finance tell us if he would not agree, given the surplus, that one good day of student relief would be better than 100 bad days of cuts promised by the new Liberal leader?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, we welcome the students to the Hill and are glad to hear the views that they present to us.

The hon. member will know that the question of tuition is clearly a provincial jurisdiction. However I hope he will also know that the government takes the issue of access to post-secondary education very seriously. That is why every year we invest \$1.6 billion in the Canada student loan program. That is why we have also introduced the Canada millennium foundation.

There are more programs that the government has put in place to support lifelong learning, and I hope the hon. member will recognize that.

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#### HEALTH CANADA

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance. It has to do with the Governor of the Bank of Canada, rumoured to be possibly the next Clerk of the Privy Council in the government of the new Liberal leader.

Given that Mr. Dodge presided over a misuse of public funds at Health Canada, at the Fontaine addiction centre in Manitoba, that makes that Radwanski affair look pale, does the Minister of Finance still have confidence in the Governor of the Bank of Canada, and why is this man running the economy when he could not run Health Canada properly?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me reassure the hon. member that as soon as allegations of wrongdoing came to light in October 2000, my predecessor took immediate action. The department launched a forensic audit. We contacted the RCMP. We have launched civil litigation to recover any misused public funds. We initiated other audits.

#### Oral Questions

Dare I say the audits we instituted in relation to this event are the most extensive the federal government has ever undertaken. Those audits have been turned over to the RCMP and, as we all know, charges have been laid and the investigation continues.

\* \* \*

#### ETHICS

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, another minister has admitted to taking advantage of free flights on air Irving. The Minister of Labour however has volunteered to pay for her flight. Clearly, the Minister of Industry has not.

Does the minister need to be ordered to do so by the Prime Minister before he follows his colleague's example and writes a cheque or is the Minister of Industry above the rules?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I made full disclosure to the ethics counsellor. I took the ethics counsellor's advice and I followed that advice to a T.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry is above the rules.

Canadians are all faced with a barrage of licences. Under this government every Canadian has to license every individual firearm they own. They need to buy a licence for their dog. They need to buy a licence for a small motor boat. They need to buy a licence to hunt. They need to buy a licence to fish.

The minister does not even have a cheque for his fishing licence in New Brunswick for \$40.25, assuming the Minister of Industry even bought a fishing licence.

It is unbelievable—

**The Speaker:** I am afraid the hon. member has run out of time and I did not hear a question, so perhaps without a licence we will just move on. The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the Bloc Québécois was asking for a shipbuilding policy, and while the former minister of finance was having his ships built in China, the Minister of Industry, on a fishing trip with the Irvings, was discussing compensation for the closing of shipyards and laughing off the demands of workers.

Will the Minister of Industry admit that his close relationship with the Irving family did not predispose him to bring in a shipbuilding policy and that, at that time, the issue was settled in advance?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker. As I have already explained, under the circumstances, I asked for, received and followed the advice of the ethics counsellor.

*Oral Questions*

Furthermore, as Minister of Industry, I have continued, and I will continue to prepare a pan-Canadian policy for the marine industry, a very important industry for our economy.

• (1440)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Industry admit that, not only has he contravened ethics guidelines, but in addition, and more seriously, his decision has penalized hundreds of workers who have lost their jobs because of his lack of responsibility? This is very serious. Will he finally admit it?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker.  
[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, now that the industry minister has been caught with his hands in the Irving cookie jar, others are starting to admit their breach of the rules.

The latest was the Minister of Labour. She accepted a free trip on Irving's executive jet which was worth far more than the \$200 gift limit. The minister now admits that what she did was wrong. If she knows it is wrong now, she must have known it was wrong then.

Why did the minister not disclose at the time? Did she simply think she would get away with it?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was attending a meeting in Ottawa as regional minister with the Irvings. I was booked on a commercial flight. They offered to take me home to Moncton as they were going to Saint John.

On an oversight I should have phoned the ethics counsellor and he would have told me that I had to pay the Irvings. It was an oversight. I apologize to the House and I apologize to all Canadians. It was an oversight on my part.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour has admitted that she did wrong and at least took steps to correct it. The Minister of Industry has done nothing of the kind. He spent years excluding himself from the business he should have been doing, and still accepted the gift.

Will he now either refund the money he was paid as the minister while he was unable to do the job because he excused himself or pay the full cost of the trip?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, I made full disclosure to the ethics counsellor in May 2002, took his advice and followed that advice to the letter.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to a written response from the government, overall, the companies of the member for LaSalle—Émard have apparently benefited from government contracts to the tune of \$137,000. Yet a search of the government data base indicates that just one of these companies received \$15 million in contracts.

How can the Minister of Public Works and Government Services explain this discrepancy between the government's written response and the government figures?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in terms of parliamentary procedure—and I will restrict my comments to only that—there was indeed a question on the Order Paper of the House of Commons from the hon. member for Edmonton South-west.

This morning, having reviewed the response to the question, I asked the PCO officials responsible to take a second look at it in order to ensure that all information had been made available, and to make any corrections required.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Yet, Mr. Speaker, my question is very clear. The government's written answer: \$137,000, as opposed to \$15 million according to government figures, in contracts awarded to the member for LaSalle—Émard. Does the minister have trouble counting, or does he just want to hide someone, that is the future prime minister?

[*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 procedural issues in relation to this matter will be dealt with as the House leader has explained. However on the substance, in the interests of ongoing transparency, my department has a public website reporting service for much of the contracting done by government departments government-wide.

That is the source of the information for the opposition's questions. The hon. member can hardly allege secrecy when he is in fact using my department and our public website as his factual source.

• (1445)

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the new fat cat cabinet jets cost \$100 million. Yesterday, the public works minister said that it was just a minor contract to explain why this was not tendered.

The rules call for a competitive tender for a major purchase. Was the fat cat cabinet jet contract a major purchase that should have been tendered?

**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 hon. gentleman is doing his very best to twist the nature of my reply yesterday. He asked me if the contract was a major one. Obviously, a contract for \$100 million or thereabouts is a very significant contract. It is bigger than some government contracts. It is smaller than others.

It was a matter for a government decision at the time and all the information before me would indicate that the relevant rules that applied at the time were in fact followed.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, \$100 million is a big contract to most taxpayers. The government usually seeks approval for purchases of this kind. The deputy minister said “no” to fat cat jets. The Clerk of the Privy Council said “no” to fat cat jets.

I would like to know why this minister continues to stand up to try and justify when his own bureaucrats said “no” to fat cat jets.

**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 former deputy of public works made some observations at the time about the legal issues involved. In fact, as it turns out, those legal issues never materialized.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Most of us here in the House recognize that the minister and his officials have worked tirelessly to re-open Canada's borders since May when they were closed due to the discovery of a single case of BSE in Alberta.

However, given that producers and numerous other support industries in my riding of Oxford and across Canada are continuing to suffer the effects of a restricted border, could the minister please inform the House as to the present status of Canada's efforts to restore full trade between our partners?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government continues to pressure the United States and other countries around the world to open the market.

The President of the United States and the Prime Minister spoke yesterday. The Minister for International Trade spoke to a number of countries at the APEC meeting about this issue. I have spoken to Secretary Veneman about this issue this week.

We have made more strides and more advancement in getting the Canadian border open than any other country in the world has ever made in such circumstances. We have more to do and we will continue those efforts. The industry is there to support. I continue to meet with the industry to find ways, not only to open borders but to support the industry through this—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. John's West.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry was wrong on the airbus affair. He was wrong on the Cipro affair. He was wrong on the hepatitis C issue. He was wrong on the gun registry.

Why will he not follow the Minister of Labour and stand, and apologize to the House and admit he is wrong in this affair?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I went to the ethics counsellor and told him all about the relevant circumstances. I asked advice and I took that advice. I respected that advice and followed it to the letter.

That is the way I show respect for the House and that is the way I show respect for the rules.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard the minister's well oiled, well Irving oiled, response over and over.

The minister knows that the ethics counsellor has about as much effect as he has had on the Prime Minister. Why does the minister not do what is right, either apologize to the House or resign?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have explained to the House the steps I have taken which were within the rules. I have told the House what I have done with the ethics counsellor.

I have responded to all the questions put to me and all of the circumstances raised by the opposition. I have explained that I was involved in no decision that affected the Irving companies and I have followed the advice of the ethics counsellor to the letter.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with Maher Arar back in Canada, the government hopes this case will go away, but we need a full blown independent inquiry into why a year of Mr. Arar's life was stolen from him and his family.

Canadians, especially our one million Arab and Muslim Canadians, worry that there is nothing to prevent the same thing happening to them. Justice demands that we determine what happened to Maher Arar and how we will protect our citizens at home and abroad in the future.

Will the government today commit to that independent public inquiry?

● (1450)

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to see that Mr. Arar is back in Canada. The government has worked strenuously to see that he was returned to Canada.

With respect to the specifics of the member's question, this House and previous Parliaments established such a body for what the member is talking about, that is, the commission for public complaints against the RCMP. If Mr. Arar or any others want to avail themselves of that process if they feel aggrieved, then that option is open to them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

*Oral Questions*

Today a meeting was held with people from the Gaspé and northwestern New Brunswick. The Liberal MPs for Gaspé Peninsula, Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Madawaska all agree on the need for an independent environmental assessment.

Will there or will there not be such an independent assessment for the benefit of the people of the Chaleur Bay area?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have explained several times in the House, this problem falls under provincial jurisdiction.

Yesterday, officials of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency received a document from some of the stakeholders, and we are examining it at this time. The hon. member needs to realize, however, that provincial jurisdiction must be respected.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor has said that the labour minister's trip was wrong and she has resigned. The industry minister's trip—

**An hon. member:** She has apologized.

**Mr. Leon Benoit:** She has apologized.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure the hon. member for Lakeland appreciates the generous assistance being offered in framing his question, but he has the floor and I think he has it right. He will now want to continue.

**Mr. Leon Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor has said the labour minister's trip was wrong and she has apologized for that.

The industry minister's trip was wrong and it was far more expensive than the labour minister's trip. Will he do the right thing now and resign?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me try to simplify this a little bit.

Both ministers asked for the ethics counsellor's advice. Both ministers followed it exactly.

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the labour minister took a trip, the ethics counsellor said it was wrong, and she has apologized for that.

The industry minister took a trip, it was wrong, and it was far more expensive than the other trip.

Will the minister do the right thing and resign?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is tripping over the facts.

The facts are that both ministers consulted the ethics counsellor. They received advice and they both followed the advice. That is what is meant by compliance with the ethics counsellor's instructions.

[Translation]

**PRIME MINISTER**

**Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, during the Liberal leadership race, the Prime Minister demanded that all candidates disclose their sources of financing. While taking this hard line with others, the Prime Minister built a secret nest egg of \$62,000 for himself, with the help of lawyers at the Business Development Bank.

How can the Prime Minister circumvent rules he imposes on others?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the officials responsible for this fund have discussed this situation with the ethics counsellor. The fact is that all the money in this account came from the Prime Minister's personal funds. There is therefore no problem.

● (1455)

**Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in his defence, the Prime Minister said these were personal funds. This is so damning and incredible that I would like the Prime Minister to tell me whether he recognizes that he has not only a duty but also a moral obligation to substantiate his claim.

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, has this country become a place where people are presumed guilty? I think not.

\* \* \*

[English]

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, according to an Alliance Order Paper question, the government claims that its new leader's companies only received \$137,000 in public money since 1993. The minister has had 24 hours to explain the discrepancy.

What is today's excuse for this \$20 million difference between the government's answer and the actual truth?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that question was asked a little earlier today. What we have here is a question by the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest.

This was a broad based question involving a number of crown corporations, all of them, I believe, agencies and departments. This morning, I asked officials from the Privy Council Office for a re-examination of the entire question as I indicated about half an hour ago to those who were listening. If there are new facts to be added, I will gladly report them to the House as soon as they are made available to me.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, these are amazing coincidences.

First, the former finance minister, the new Liberal leader, signed a false declaration of assets. Somehow the ethics counsellor missed that, did not realize it was no longer on there, and the government did not catch it, no one caught it except the official opposition.

*Oral Questions*

Next, we get a false answer from the government on an issue dealing with his assets and how they are intertwined with the government. It is looking more and more like this is a cover-up.

My question is, why the coincidence? Why does this keep happening when it comes down to a sensitive political issue like the new Liberal leader's ties to the government?

**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 procedural issues related to answering the Order Paper question will be responded to through the process that the House leader has described.

In the meantime, it is important to note that my department, pursuing ongoing transparency, has an agency called Contracts Canada which routinely posts information about government contracts.

In fact, the information that the hon. gentleman was complaining about was contained on that public website.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, now for a change of pace.

With the impact of climate change, we know that reducing our greenhouse gas emissions is important, but what is more important for Canadians is how they can save money in the process.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources tell the House how Canadians can access the EnerGuide for Houses retrofit incentive?

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for his question.

We are encouraging Canadians to use the EnerGuide for Houses evaluation to help plan those renovations that make good economic sense. Canadians will save every year on heating costs and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

To obtain a grant, homeowners should request a free EnerGuide for Houses retrofit evaluation from a licensed service provider. The list is on our website at [energuideforhouses.gc.ca](http://energuideforhouses.gc.ca), or by calling 1-800-387-2000.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, over the last decade the Liberal government has overcharged working Canadians by \$45 billion on their EI premiums, and it has used it as a slush fund.

The finance minister and his predecessor's phony surpluses have come at the expense of the picked pockets of working families. One-third of this year's so called surplus is really EI overcharges.

Will the finance minister admit that he and his predecessor have overcharged working Canadians by tens of billions of dollars on their EI premiums?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to admit today that, for the year ending March 31, 2003, we had a surplus of \$7 billion. We are the only G-7 country to still be in a surplus.

That surplus has gone to pay down the debt. Since we moved into surplus, the government has paid down over \$52 billion of our accumulated debt. That is good news for all households in Canada and all Canadians deserve to be congratulated for their effort in making this happen.

• (1500)

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the minister tries to take credit for overtaxing working and low income Canadians by \$45 billion.

Halloween is not until next week and he is already dressed up. He is dressed up in the disguise of a good manager, but under that disguise there is a pirate there, just like the previous finance minister, trying to take credit for stealing money from working Canadians.

Does Long John Silver—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar would not want to suggest that anybody is stealing money, even pirates. The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar has the floor. We will stick with the pirates and avoid the stealing.

**Mr. Brian Pallister:** Mr. Speaker, let me use a euphemism and say dutifully misappropriating \$45 billion from working Canadians.

Does Long John Silver over there believe that a \$45 billion EI overcharge belongs to Canadians or does he think it is his personal buried treasure?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, not only are we the only G-7 country with a surplus, but we have reversed decades of overspending. In fact, members of the opposition just appropriated a political party and drove the accumulated debt from \$140 billion to almost \$500 billion. That is part of their legacy.

I think good management is a good thing. As we move forward Canadians will recognize the benefit of the \$100 billion in tax reductions that we gave them. They will see that we have repaid the debt, brought down our debt to GDP ratio, and they will thank us with a big majority.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I feel like I am listening to a flock of seagulls over Belledune.

People affected by the Bennett project in Belledune are in Ottawa today to share their concerns with the government. The Minister of the Environment incorrectly claims that we are asking him to intervene in an issue that is outside his jurisdiction.

I am asking this government to stop acting the fool and tell us why the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans does not want to use section 35 of the Fisheries Act, which gives him the authority to intervene in order to protect resources in Chaleur Bay.

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very odd that the Bloc Québécois would want the federal government to take measures in an area that falls under provincial jurisdiction.

The hon. member truly wants us to get involved in an area of provincial responsibility. That is really strange, coming from a party that has been saying for years that the federal government must stop encroaching on provincial jurisdictions. It is very clear, there is actually no political authority, constitutionally, at the federal level to do what the hon. member is asking me to do.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the health committee, officials from Health Canada indicated that the Treasury Board guidelines have been ignored within the department. The deputy minister refused to indicate where and how much.

Every day we see more corruption from this government. Why would the minister allow her department to break the rules?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of what the hon. member is speaking about, but let me reassure the hon. member that if in fact he is referring to the situation involving the Virginia Fontaine addictions centre, we took immediate action, both in terms of putting in place a forensic audit and turning over the results to the RCMP, and charges have been laid. Investigation continues. In fact, internally, I want to reassure the hon. member that we have put in place new safeguards, working with the Treasury Board, to ensure that this kind of thing does not happen again.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a U.S. plan to divert water from Devils Lake, North Dakota, will result in the inter-basin transfer of water into the Red River and on into Lake Winnipeg. It is a serious threat to Manitoba's aquatic ecosystem and is in direct violation of the Boundary Waters Treaty act.

Will the government agree today to immediately refer this issue to the International Joint Commission? Will they help us fight the Devils Lake diversion come hell or high water?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with the premise in the member's question that this is a serious matter. We are looking at it and taking it very seriously. The last time I met with the secretary of state of the United States I raised this matter with him. He has assured me that under his responsibilities in respect of the Boundary Waters Treaty act he is referring this to his authorities to ascertain whether it is in conformity with the Boundary Waters Treaty.

From there, there are other remedies. We will pursue them. We will protect Canadians. We always do. We are ensuring that the United States respects its obligations under the Boundary Waters Treaty act.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**The Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 81(14) to inform the House that the motion to be considered tomorrow during the consideration of the business of supply is as follows:

[Translation]

That, although the Prime Minister has a mandate and should be able to end it as he chooses, given the democratic imbalance that currently prevails and that results in the government's decision-making occurring outside this House, and more broadly outside any public institution, this House calls upon the Prime Minister to leave office as soon as possible after November 14, 2003.

The motion, standing in the name of the hon. member for Roberval, is votable.

[English]

Copies of the motion are available at the table.

\* \* \*

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table the report on the Canadian parliamentary delegation to Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay from August 5 to 17, 2003.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 38 petitions.

\* \* \*

**RADIOCOMMUNICATION ACT**

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-52, an act to amend the Radiocommunication Act.

*Routine Proceedings*

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

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

\* \* \*

**ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT**

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-53, an act to change the names of certain electoral districts.

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

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**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 31, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Delegation of the Canadian Group of the Interparliamentary Union concerning the 107th conference and related meetings of the Interparliamentary Union, held in Marrakesh, Morocco from March 16 to 23, 2002.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 49th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the associate membership of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 49th report later this day.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, on Chapter 7, "National Defence—Environmental Stewardship of Military Training and Test Areas", of the April 2003 report of the Auditor General of Canada. Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, the committee requests the government to table a comprehensive response to this report.

## HEALTH

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two reports of the Standing Committee on Health.

First is the seventh report, here pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), wherein the committee, during its consideration of an act to amend the Hazardous Products Act, adopted the following motion:

That the Chair present to the House a report requesting that the Government table within six months regulations regarding fire-safe cigarettes.

Next, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Health is here in accordance with its order of reference of September 23, 2003, to say that the committee has considered Votes Nos. 1a, 5a, 10a and 15a under Health in the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004, and reports the same to you.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

\* \* \*

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-460, an act to amend the Criminal Code (unsolicited electronic mail).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill today, which addresses the serious issue of unsolicited electronic mail, commonly referred to as SPAM, and the practice of selling electronic mail addresses without obtaining permission from the address owner.

The bill would amend the Criminal Code by creating two new offences: those of sending unsolicited electronic mail and selling electronic mail addresses without obtaining prior consent from the owner. The bill provides a sentence of imprisonment for up to two years or a fine of \$250,000 or both for any person convicted of either of these new offences. For any second or subsequent offence, the penalties increase to imprisonment for up to five years or a fine of \$500,000 or both.

Canadians are of course concerned and fed up with receiving hundreds of SPAM messages on their computers. Legitimate companies are also having a hard time doing business on the Internet, which is being flooded by SPAM. It is well past time to stop this unwelcome intrusion and enact appropriate penalties to deter those who would try to profit without any care for the damage they create.

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

\* \* \*

**COMPETITION ACT**

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-461, an act to amend the Competition Act (investigations by Commissioner and class proceedings) and to make a related amendment to another Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my bill to amend the Competition Act would actually allow consumers to pool their resources or band together in a class action suit under the Competition Act. That does not exist today. Consumers, under my act, could initiate an investigation into their complaint and go through the whole process. If successful, they would qualify for compensation. I am sure it has the support of most members of the House.

*Routine Proceedings*

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

\* \* \*

● (1515)

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the 49th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** I that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Miss Deborah Grey:** Mr. Speaker, as you know, I just had the pleasure of tabling the first report of the Library of Parliament. If the House gives its consent, I would move that the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament presented to the House today be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I have not been made aware of this particular item. Could we perhaps put it on hold momentarily while I inform myself about the subject in question? I apologize for this in advance.

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC)** Mr. Speaker, I move that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, presented on Friday, October 10, be concurred in.

The main reason we have initiated debate on this topic is because we know we are approaching the next break time, which will be November 7. After hearing the answers given by members opposite as to what will happen after November 7, we feel we cannot leave any important business on the Order Paper. One of the issues concerns veterans' pensions.

The sixth report tabled by the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs suggested through a motion that reads:

That the committee supports the decision of Veterans Affairs Canada to extend from one year to a lifetime the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) benefits provided to surviving spouses of Veterans who were in receipt of such benefits at the time of their death.

That is laudable as far as it goes. The motion continues:

However, the members of the committee unanimously agree that the Government should take all possible means to provide lifetime VIP benefits to all qualified surviving spouses, of Veterans receiving such benefits at the time of their death, not just to those now eligible for such benefits following the amendments made in June 2003 to the Veterans Health Care Regulations.

What we are doing here is setting up two classes of veterans' widows. We have one class of widows who will receive, forever and a day, benefits that their husbands were receiving prior to their death, while another class of widows are being told that they cannot receive these benefits if their husbands died prior to May 12, 2003.

Therefore if a war veteran died on May 11, 2003, his widow would only receive VIP benefits for one year. If he lived one more day, she would receive the VIP benefits for the rest of her life. This is entirely unfair.

The minister has been asked questions day after day in the House and he has avoided answering them. He has tried to camouflage what he is trying to perpetrate on the widows across the country by defusing the situation and saying that the government will provide benefits. It is providing benefits to widows whose husbands died after May 12, 2003.

I, and I am sure all members of the House, oppose any program that distinguishes between veterans' widows on the basis of time. The program should be fairly distributed to all widows on the basis of need.

I know the Minister of Veterans Affairs has said that his heart is in the right place and that if Veterans Affairs Canada had the resources it needed the benefits would be extended to all widows who were otherwise eligible.

The real question is this: Where is the finance minister's heart? Why will he not give the money? Why will he not answer the questions on this issue during question period? The government just keeps passing the buck instead of handing over the bucks that are necessary.

By most estimates, roughly 23,000 widows will be affected by this double standard. The benefits on average are worth between \$1,000 and \$2,000 annually. Is that a lot of money? Let me give some examples of how much that is in relation to some government decisions that have been made in recent days.

We are talking about a gap in funding between \$23 million and \$46 million. That is less than 5% of what the government spent on the gun registry and it cannot find the money to look after the widows of people who went to war and gave their lives or put themselves in the position, undoubtedly, to weaken themselves, and left behind widows who must try to make a living in society.

● (1520)

That amount is also less than 5% of what the government spent on the billion dollar boondoggle in HRDC and less than 10% of what the government paid just to cancel the EH-101 helicopter contract.

The government has already spent billions of dollars on its mistakes. Why will it not spend a fraction of that to fix one for a change?

Decisions like this are why Canadians do not trust governments. Decisions like this, cold calculations that ignore human suffering, are why so few Canadians vote. This is not taking care of those who have taken care of our national heroes.

Consequently, we ask the minister to please go to the Minister of Finance, on bended need if he has to, which, undoubtedly, is what members over there have to do, and get the money that is necessary.

*Routine Proceedings*

Not only does this policy impose a great injustice on these war heroes, it dishonours their memory by mistreating their loved ones. More important, the vast majority of these brave women are war heroes in their own right. They were the backbone of the war effort here at home. They were the ones who helped fill our military arsenals. They were the ones who cared for husbands, many of whom were injured for life, when they came home from the war.

All this, just to save \$23 million a year. All the anger and frustration just to skim a little off the government books.

I wish I could say that this was an isolated incident but it is not. I wish I could report to the House that the treatment of our war heroes is without injustice and unfairness but I cannot. The truth is that the government has repeatedly forced our most honourable citizens to fight for benefits that they earned more than 60 years ago.

I have the honour and privilege in the House to sit next to the member for Saint John, a member who, over the years, has fought and gained many of the benefits that our war veterans have to today. Without the fight of her and other hon. members on this side, very few of the benefits that our war veterans have would have been achieved.

I am reminded of the merchant navy veterans who had to come here on a hunger strike before they were heard.

I am reminded of the poor veterans, like Mr. Autherson, who had to fight all the way to the Supreme Court for the money they were cheated out of, and are still waiting for.

I am reminded of the brave soldiers who were used to test mustard gas and other chemical weapons so our scientists could prove what we already knew.

I am reminded of those veterans who now sit in veterans' long term care homes that are not up to code, and the countless others who are still on waiting lists.

This is how we treat our veterans. We should be ashamed.

I am reminded of the countless veterans who are carried or wheeled into the legion halls, the legion halls they built when they returned from war, the legion halls that are falling down around their ears, and the government ignores the veterans' pleas for help to rebuild them. Veterans' hospitals should be monuments to sacrifice, perfect in every way.

Those who were cheated out of money by the government should be given it back, in full. Those who were subjected to tests that caused them pain should be compensated.

I am proud of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, a committee that has always put politics aside when it comes to our veterans, for unanimously calling upon the government to correct the injustice.

I am proud that my colleague, the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain, has demanded that this double standard be fixed before Remembrance Day. I add my voice to that.

We have heard that the Prime Minister is preparing to address the problem. We have all heard that the government caucus was told it would be taken care of. If so, when? Why not now? Why make these

widows suffer from further uncertainty? Why leave them guessing as they make their future plans?

For many widows, receiving or not receiving these benefits will be the deciding factor in whether they can remain in their own homes or whether they will be forced to move. The government knows this, it knows the cost, it knows it is wrong and it knows its time is running out.

● (1525)

For anyone listening, the committee is not a committee of opposition members. All committees are controlled by the government. The numbers on the committee always favour government, and yet we have a unanimous report, a report supported by government members, because it is the right thing to do.

How can any government deny benefits? How can any government tell one group of widows they will receive lifetime benefits provided their husbands died on or after May 12? How can they tell other widows whose husbands died the day, the week, the year before or any time in the past, that they do not deserve these benefits?

Everyone knows this is wrong, but only one person can correct it. The Prime Minister must give the order to his minister to go to the Minister of Finance to get the money needed. This could be done by just eliminating some of the waste we have seen. Five per cent of the gun registry would cover the whole bill.

We ask government to do the right thing. We also ask it to allow its members on the committee to stand and express in the House and to the country where they stand and why they gave us such an unanimous report.

We ask the people on this side of the House who sit on that committee and who have concerns, who not only have constituents who are affected by this outrageous decision, but who have family members who are affected by this outrageous decision, to stand and debate, point fingers and put pressure on the government to make the right decision.

However what we will probably see is the parliamentary secretary stand next and ask that we cut off debate. This is what government has done.

We must listen to the people. There is wisdom in the crowds. The government has not listened in the past and it is not listening now but, I assure everyone, it will learn in very short duration.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I would like to see a big headline in the newspaper, as early as tomorrow, reading "Canada fulfills its obligations". In this case it is an obligation. Abraham Lincoln once said that nobody has the right to do the wrong thing. What the government is doing now is the wrong thing.

This can be changed by regulation. It does not require legislation.

*Routine Proceedings*

Everyone in the House should know that many of these widows will be standing teary-eyed on November 11 at the site of the memorial knowing that they have been thoroughly discriminated against by this government. During the two minutes of silence, in which we are supposed to honour our veterans, their minds will go back to the government that brought dishonour upon widows who served this country equally as their husbands did who bore arms to go overseas.

We cannot wait and wait. We must move now before November 11 of this year. I plead with the government not to carry on this discrimination further, bring this to floor and announce this change so that it will be effective, as I have said previously in the House many times, by November 11. Let us pay tribute to our war widows. Let us not ignore them or discriminate against them.

● (1530)

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North):** Madam Speaker, if you were watching the proceedings earlier, you would have noticed that when I presented the report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament I had asked for concurrence in the report pursuant to Standing Order 118(1), but the government House leader was not aware of that.

I would like to say that it has been cleared with him now, and I therefore move for concurrence in that report.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

NATIONAL DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Madam Speaker, what can I say? I think the hon. member has put it in a clear perspective.

He drew attention to the fact that we were only a couple of weeks away from Remembrance Day. Every Remembrance Day as all of us stand around memorials in our ridings, we think of those who paid the sacrifice. We see the few remaining veterans, and in the words of that great song the *Band Played Waltzing Matilda* written by Eric Bogle, every year their numbers get fewer and some day no one will answer at all.

Even though we have very few veterans, it seems we have more veterans widows because many of the people who went to war did not return and many who did return were so weakened that their deaths came prematurely. These people stand at the memorials thinking and remembering at a time in their life when most of them have very little on which to live. The small benefits that these widows receive makes a lot of difference to them, yet we are going to discriminate against one because her husband died before someone else's husband died.

This should have nothing to do with time. This should be based upon need and fairness. I agree totally with the comments made by the hon. member.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Madam Speaker, I also concur. I want my hon. colleague to know that all members of our

veterans committee voted in favour of what was brought before us, but we also all voted in favour of an amendment. We put forward a motion indicating that we wanted every widow across the country treated equally.

I have received a letter that I would like to read to the House. It states:

I am writing concerning the VIP Program for Widow's. My husband was Neil Alexander Beaton..., he was a D-Day soldier with the 3rd Division R.C.A.S.C. He saw a whole lot of action. He returned home in 1945 and spent two years in the hospital and was discharged with a 60% disability.

We were parents of five children. My husband could not pass a medical for the purpose of getting a job with any amount of wages [whatsoever]. He could not get life insurance either because of his disability...

My husband was hospitalized many times over the years as a result of his disability, for as long as six months at a time. Life was not easy.

I cared for my husband at home the last four years of his life. In the end the days seemed 40 hours long as he had developed dementia. There was little wonder he developed this dreadful disease after all the surgery, medication and suffering he had endured.

He was on the VIP Program when he passed away April 27, 1990. I feel he earned everything he ever received from Veterans Affairs. I feel as does everyone I've spoken to, that I have earned the VIP Program by caring for my husband for over 45 years.

This is the worst case of discrimination anyone has ever heard of in Canada.

She has asked that the minister and the Prime Minister to think again. No veteran I have ever known has been discriminated against more than Mrs. Beaton and her husband.

That is why every member of this Parliament feels that it is an honour to have veterans like Mr. Beaton and also an honour to have wives like Mrs. Beaton. We cannot tell these wives that we will not give them the VIP benefits but we will give it to everyone after the June date. I cannot believe this has happened in the House of Commons and that this is what we as elected people would allow to take place.

What does my hon. colleague think will happen in the future to Mrs. Beaton?

● (1535)

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Madam Speaker, I recognized earlier the efforts by the hon. member for Saint John on behalf of veterans and their widows over the years. Many of the benefits they have obtained, they obtained simply because of the hard work she has put into this, and they recognize that fact.

The example my colleague gave is one of many. It is an example similar to those many members have received from people who are going through a terrible time simply because they have been forgotten by the government.

I find it very hard to understand, when the issue was addressed and when government developed this program to help widows, why it included a cut off date. How can we say to one group that we will provide them with pensions and then say to another group, whose husbands fought side by side, that they do not count any more? I am sure it was an oversight, whether it was in the bureaucracy or whatever, but the minister should have picked up on it.

Lack of money is not an excuse as it is only 5% of the gun registry or 10% of the amount that would be paid just to cancel a contract. That should not be the excuse. It is not an acceptable excuse.

What will happen those people? With the efforts of members collectively in the House, let us make the government change its mind to look after those widows as well as the others who now fit under the program.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** There is one minute left. The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will be brief, so that my hon. colleague can reply. With regard to this program, which could be extended and could apply to the 23,000 widows who have been ignored, I would like him to explain to the House how that could have an impact on the quality of life of these women, that is, being able to keep their homes because of the amounts provided for household and garden upkeep. It seems to me that this is as important a concept as the widows' quality of life.

[*English*]

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Madam Speaker, very briefly, the member is correct. Many of these people are living on very little income anyway. Even though we are talking about a few thousand dollars, a few thousand dollars to a person who is already living on only a few thousand dollars makes a tremendous amount of difference. A thousand, or two thousand or three thousand dollars in rural Canada, or even in urban Canada, could make the difference between someone having comfort in their home or not having comfort.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.)** moved:

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

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Call in the members.

• (1625)

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

## Routine Proceedings

(Division No. 248)

### YEAS

#### Members

Adams	Allard
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Bagnell	Barnes (London West)
Barrette	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Castonguay	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cullen	Cuzner
DeVillers	Dion
Discepolo	Easter
Finlay	Fontana
Fry	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Harvey	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings
Jobin	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marcil
McCallum	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Parrish	Peric
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Robillard	Saada
Scherrer	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	Speller
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Stewart
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Torsney	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wilfert— 119	

### NAYS

#### Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Bigras	Blaikie
Breitkreuz	Brison
Burton	Cadman
Casson	Comartin
Crête	Davies
Desrochers	Doyle
Duceppe	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Fitzpatrick	Forseth
Fournier	Gagnon (Champlain)

*Government Orders*

Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gagnon (Québec)
Gallant	Gaudet
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Gouk	Grey
Guay	Hearn
Herron	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Laframboise	Lancôt
Lebel	Lill
Loubier	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau	Mark
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
McDonough	McNally
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Nystrom
Pallister	Paquette
Penson	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Rajotte
Reynolds	Ritz
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Schellenberger	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	St-Hilaire
Stinson	Stoffer
Strahl	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Toews
Tremblay	Vellacott
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
White (North Vancouver)	Williams
Yelich — 91	

## PAIRED

## Members

Alcock	Bergeron
Cardin	Cauchon
Dalphond-Guiral	Guarnieri
Guimond	Harvard
Lalonde	Martin (LaSalle—Émard) — 10

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I declare the motion carried. We will now proceed to orders of the day.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*Translation*]

**ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT**

The House resumed consideration from October 21, 2003, of the motion that Bill C-49, an act respecting the effective date of the representation order of 2003, be read the third time and passed; and of the previous question.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-49 to amend the Canada Elections Act. At the start of the debate at third reading, it is important to remember the history behind the current situation.

The Canada Elections Act has existed for many years. It establishes the conditions under which the electoral map is reviewed. Every ten years, given population trends, the electoral map is subject to a review. This legislation is as non-partisan as possible.

In the past, some commissioners have behaved in ways that were more or less appropriate. Sometimes, there were partisan actions or some more or less adequate commissioners were appointed. Overall,

this legislation ensures that the electoral map is reviewed with the least possible partisan influence.

Under this legislation, a first draft of the new electoral map is tabled following consultations, based strictly on mathematical criteria. For example, in Quebec, ridings must have an average of 96,500 constituents. After the first draft, the commissioners held public consultations to learn what changes should be made to their proposals.

Representations made by all members from eastern Quebec, particularly those from the Bloc Québécois, resulted in four ridings for that region. Moreover, this redistribution took into account the boundaries of the regional county municipalities, or RCMs.

Unfortunately, we were unable to retain the four ridings at the edge of the Lower St. Lawrence region. Two RCMs have been attached to the westernmost riding of the region. All in all, after the consultations and suggestions, this revision is creating an interesting new electoral map.

However, especially for the future prime minister, the member for LaSalle—Émard, the federal government has decided to fiddle with this election legislation, which is supposed to be non-partisan. The current legislation provides that the new electoral map should take effect one year after it is adopted, so that the various political organizations can prepare and that our fellow citizens can take note of the change and see what is coming, basically allowing all the tools necessary for the expression of democracy to be put in place.

These efforts we were expected to make were already set out, and the time provided was not provided unnecessarily. With Bill C-49, which was introduced by the government to move up the effective date of the new electoral map from August 2004 to April 2004, there will no longer be twelve months to prepare, but just six.

This is just to please the member for LaSalle—Émard. He is off to a bad start as the Prime Minister, and this hints at rather dubious behaviour in the future. He who said in the past that he wanted to ensure greater democracy and to address the democratic deficit in Canada is backtracking. Instead of making things better, he is making them worse by taking the position he has taken.

The need for a one-year period is evidenced by the fact that an amendment to Bill C-49 respecting the effective date of new electoral map had to be rushed through and, because the normal time frame had been shortened, an amendment was put forward so that the political organization, the recognition of the parties and new ridings, can be put in place in January 2004.

Here too, they are trying to rush things through in order to please the potential prime minister, conferring upon him a power that the Elections Act did not. The Elections Act had been drafted with some wisdom, in order to avoid any partisanship in determining the effective date for the new electoral boundaries. The time frames set were those agreed to by all parties, and they appeared to be logical. Now we find ourselves dealing with a bill that is tailored to the thinking of the new prime minister.

*Government Orders*

•(1630)

Why does he absolutely insist on calling an election sooner? The main reason, I think, is that he is afraid of having to deal systematically with this House over a number of months. The purpose of the next election will not be just to elect a government for the future, it will be a judgment on the one we have before us.

Since the member for LaSalle—Émard held the position of finance minister for most of the years this government was in power, he will have to defend this government. While not yet the party leader, he is taking advantage of every opportunity to avoid debates and to escape having to provide answers to questions. The best thing for him is to ensure that the election is held sooner, so we will not have long to sit.

There are even rumours going the rounds that the House will adjourn as soon as possible, before the Liberal convention, and not resume until February 2004, with a new throne speech and budget. This would mean that democracy would be denied for months, in a country where we have not known for the past year who the real prime minister was. We have been wondering for the past year whether decisions taken by this government would be reversed by the next. This democratic deficit will be made worse if Parliament adjourns as quickly as possible.

At first we thought that the plan simply had to do with calling an as quickly as possible and to avoid debates in the House. We now know, as of a week or so, that it is also intended to avoid debate on the Auditor General's report that will be tabled very soon. It could be tabled in November. This devastating report will say that the 10 years of Liberal government—under the current Prime Minister and including the member for LaSalle—Émard, who was the finance minister for many of those years—was a time when a system of patronage was established that was used to win the 1997 election with an investment fund, with which they tried to buy ridings.

We have also seen that, in all crown corporations, there is a system for money laundering. In 1994, the former finance minister invented the system of foundations into which money is placed and on whose boards of directors sit government appointees who are friends of the party. In this way, political contributions can then be made. The bottom line is that a whole system is going to be unmasked, the same one we have referred to countless times here in the House.

Because of the credibility of the Auditor General, we now know that the report will show in black and white that the situation is deplorable and unacceptable. The people of Quebec and Canada will be persuaded to judge this government very harshly.

In the end, as we debate Bill C-49, we are tempted to say that it is a bill that just changes a date, making it possible to call the next election in April 2004 rather than September 2004, and to ask ourselves, why not just pass the bill?

But in view of what I have just said, when we know what is waiting for us and when we realize how important this political choice is, I think the Bloc Québécois is justified in opposing this bill. Do not forget that the new electoral boundaries will mean that, for the first time, Quebec will have less than 25% of the ridings in Canada.

That is a dangerous precedent. It is sad, because it ensures that Quebec will be under-represented. Still, we were ready to take part in the electoral redistribution process, in the consultations as planned, and play the game with all the democratic correctness for which Quebecers are known.

People will say this makes no sense whatsoever. This is the straw that breaks the camel's back, because the federal government wants to tamper with the Canada Elections Act. It is important to be able to oppose this.

The Bloc Québécois opposed the principle of Bill C-49 and its referral to a committee before second reading. Now, at third reading, it is clear that there should have been a vote on this amendment, which enables the creation of electoral district associations as of January 1, 2004, because otherwise, this legislation could not have been given effect.

•(1635)

The current government has a piecemeal approach to management. This is in keeping with the spirit in which the current Prime Minister has led this country for many years. He called elections, based not on the public's needs but purely on his election needs. When the Canadian Alliance changed leaders, he took advantage of the opportunity to call an election at the earliest possible date. The basic rules of fair play have not been followed.

The future prime minister, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, will have to seek a mandate from the voters. Probably, he will no longer be prime minister once he does, but until then he will be. It is obvious that he thinks along the same lines as the current Prime Minister. He must be told loud and clear that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable.

Obviously, we are not objecting to the process by which changes are made to the electoral map. It is normal to have a review mechanism, even if in practice this means that, occasionally, some things about the new electoral map are not very logical.

For example, the riding I represent at the present time, and will continue to represent until the election, is Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques. It covers half the Lower St. Lawrence region. It has a natural connection on the economic, social and cultural levels, with Rivière-du-Loup, the county seat. Over the years, this connection has made some worthwhile progress possible. We deal with the various federal departments with one voice.

The new electoral district that will be created with the new map, where I intend to be a candidate, is going to straddle the Lower St. Lawrence and Chaudière-Appalaches regions. It will have to deal with two regional offices of Economic Development Canada, two regions for employment insurance, and there will be different criteria for such things as farm tax credits. We are monitoring that situation closely, because we do not want to see the government lower the figures, taking advantage of this change in orientation to deprive the farmers in our region of an advantage they have enjoyed for some years because of the economic situation in the Lower St. Lawrence.

*Government Orders*

These advantages must absolutely be maintained. We can see that the changes to the electoral map are not always to the advantage of the regions. We have, however, accepted the principle, and the game rules. But what we cannot accept is for the effective date of the act to get changed along the way, merely to please the potential future prime minister, the member for LaSalle—Émard.

We are anxious to see that hon. member become PM and be here in the House, so we can question him about all the situations he has created.

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

**Mr. Paul Crête:** I see I got some reaction from the Liberals across the way. We will indeed be asking the member for LaSalle—Émard, when he is Prime Minister, why he has diverted \$44 billion from the employment insurance fund. Those who are the least well off in our society, the unemployed, the workers, the employers, who have contributed to the employment insurance fund, whose pay stubs show that a certain amount has been deducted for EI, did not expect to see that money go to the government's general expenditures. What is more, the federal government has done a lot of spending in areas that were not its responsibility.

I look forward to being able to ask the member for LaSalle—Émard these questions once he is prime minister. We will have to grill him to get him to admit that under the guise of eliminating the deficit, he was taking money from the less fortunate during all those years. Those who contributed the most to eliminating Canada's deficit are the people from the regions and seasonal workers. They are the ones who were unable to have an income over the entire year because of the new EI plan. They are currently experiencing cuts of 8, 10, or 12 weeks a year. During those weeks, in the spring gap—as it has come to be known—they have no income. It is their money, money that was not given to them, that eliminated the deficit and is now going to be used to eliminate Canada's debt.

There are decisions the member for LaSalle—Émard will have to take responsibility for. I hope we will have the opportunity to question him at length in the House.

● (1640)

No one from this side of the House wants an early adjournment. Only the hon. members from the majority want to avoid debate in the House. That is clear.

November could be an interesting month. Indeed, in November, if the House is sitting, if the government decides not to prorogue, we will be able to question the new prime minister, if the current Prime Minister decides to step down. Tomorrow, the House will be called upon to vote on this.

At present, we truly have a major democratic deficit. We are in a situation where the current Prime Minister is no longer taking his responsibilities. His decisions are overturned by a parallel caucus led by the member for LaSalle—Émard. We really have no idea any more where the Canadian government stands. Why not clarify the situation and replace the current Prime Minister as soon as possible with the new one, the member for LaSalle—Émard? He will then have to answer to the public for the decisions he made as finance minister and especially for tolerating the questionable behaviour we see daily from the government.

Every day, we hear about another minister who is in a conflict of interest situation. This is the end of a reign, so to speak. Also, it is not true that, just because one wants to call an election as soon as possible, one is not required to justify one's positions. The member for LaSalle—Émard should not be allowed to have the legislation tampered with and have this kind of change made. It is very significant that the Liberal machine is allowing this kind of change to be made.

While saying that things will be different in the future, the member for LaSalle—Émard is doing exactly what the current Prime Minister did in the past. In fact, he plans to act that way in the future. We have seen that he knows a lot about finance. He has established foundations. He also made personal arrangements not to pay the tax his companies should pay in Canada. That is serious problem.

The fact of the matter is that the member for LaSalle—Émard, who will be the Prime Minister and who has created a kind of economic empire, is not doing his part for the Canadian economy. In the next election, the public will have an opportunity to judge. That is why we really wanted to use all the time provided in the election legislation to put in place the appropriate democratic processes, so that the riding associations for each party can be up and running. This would promote democratic debate. It would give those people used to voting in one riding the time to learn that they will be voting in another one. Voters could also familiarize themselves with the new rules, what the new electoral map will be exactly and what impact decisions will have. Instead, they are trying to move things up, to not give the time needed.

In my opinion, this is really an ambiguous situation. The future prime minister told us he wanted to enhance the quality of the democratic debate, but the first thing he does is just the opposite. He is creating conditions that do not promote democratic debate. He is trying to hide so that he does not have to answer questions here in this House.

The government is tinkering with the electoral boundaries in a partisan way, which is totally unacceptable. As the leader of the Bloc Québécois said earlier, if we start interfering with non-partisan operations, as the Liberal members seem inclined to do, we are not out of the woods. It comes down to public trust. I think the leader of the Bloc was speaking on behalf of all Quebecers and reminding the House of our serious concerns about democracy.

*Government Orders*

From a book published yesterday, we learned that, a few days before the 1995 referendum, the Prime Minister said, "We are about to make a very serious decision. It will be irreversible. If Quebec decides to create its own country, then the decision will be final and irreversible". However, the Prime Minister had another speech drafted just in case he would lose the referendum. That speech said, "Oh no. This is not your final decision. We will keep negotiating with you in the hope of saving Canada as we now know it". Such behaviour on the part of the Prime Minister does nothing to promote the public's trust in the electoral process. Which is why it would be better to keep the Elections Act as it is and to hold an election under the best possible process.

• (1645)

In closing, I think the government bill now before the House is unacceptable. The effective date of the new electoral boundaries should not be moved up. We already have a non-partisan Elections Act. By moving the date up, the current government is undermining the electoral process.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, Status of Women; and the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Foreign Affairs.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, for a question or comment

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will put the issue another way to my hon. colleague for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Despite the fact that there is a new electoral map and that it is in accordance with the election legislation, we cannot ignore the reality in the regions. I had the opportunity to visit my colleague's riding. The region is struggling with the serious problem of highway 185. It was supposed to be a four-lane superhighway in order to eliminate the disasters and fatal accidents that happen on it.

So, I had a chance to spend a few days in that region. What surprised me was that the people identify with the local radio station, KRTB, that gives the weather in the morning and all that. What impact will splitting the ridings have on radio station KRTB, as it is known to the people around there? With this redistribution, what has the federal government done in this region? I would like him to explain that.

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

It is true that, today, highway 185, the Trans-Canada Highway, serves two purposes. It is used by local traffic and by many large transport trucks. There are also many accidents: unfortunately, this is the deadliest stretch of highway in Canada. For many years, we, with the full support of the public, have been asking the Canadian government to invest in upgrading this highway.

It is a perfect example: it divides the riding of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques in two. Témiscouata, a regional municipality in this riding, is located near highway 185. It will become part of the Rimouski riding. This change is not very logical.

In our region, a good example is the effect on the corporation responsible for promoting exports for the Lower St. Lawrence. In the new riding, half of which is transferred to the Lower St. Lawrence and the other half to the Chaudières-Appalaches region, the members of Parliament will have to go to two export corporations with different goals and means sharing the same territory.

When I will need to see HRDC in Rimouski about programs like summer career placements for students, obviously in concrete terms I will have less clout when it comes to the division of resources. We will be told that there are already two other members for the Lower St. Lawrence in the same territory and that, with half the riding, we will get half the resources, which obviously are not the same. In the neighbouring riding of Chaudières-Appalaches, which has very different economic conditions, the future member will face an entirely different reality and will not be able to speak with one voice regarding the development of a natural economic region like Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

I have come to this realization, and I am not alone. My Liberal neighbour has reached the same conclusion; we made similar representations on this subject and were both ignored. Such changes to the electoral map lead to aberrations. Perhaps the Canada Elections Act needs to be reviewed in order to make sure that each vote has equal weight in terms of quality, not just quantity.

Today, we played the game; we went to make our representations and, ultimately, this is the map that will apply.

What is unacceptable is that for the past several years the legislation has set out a one-year timeframe to prepare for the new electoral map. However, the future prime minister's sole concern is getting votes and he has no intention of being hampered in calling an early election. That would be like deciding at the ice rink to eliminate the centre line because the new player does not want one. Changing the rules and regulations in this way, simply to give the governing Liberal Party the competitive edge, is inappropriate and unacceptable. This is something the public will have to decide during the next election.

In the meantime, I am calling on them to look at the other side of the issue. Will the Auditor General's report be tabled in this House? Will we be able to debate it? If the government prorogues, I would ask my constituents and our voters to look at the impact this has and at what happened during those years.

There are recommendations that say that during the 1997 election, among others, several ridings were bombarded with subsidies as a vote-buying mechanism. If there is an election next year, we will have to prevent this same thing from happening.

*Government Orders*

If we had had the time to analyze the Auditor General's report from every angle, perhaps we would have made changes to the Canada Elections Act. In any event, we would have had the time to ask the right questions, something we will not have if the bill is adopted as it stands.

I am calling on the public to judge the government's position in comparison to ours. The government wants to rush a democratic decision, which was planned for, and change non partisan rules to give itself a partisan advantage. I have no problem asking the public to judge this or any of the Bloc Quebecois' actions during this mandate.

• (1650)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on behalf of all residents of Windsor and identify an important problem with Bill C-49. Our party will be supporting this legislation but we are faced with a dilemma in Parliament. It seems that when we have business like this the government fast tracks it. The government has the political will to move it forward to meet its schedule.

The hon. member sits with me on the industry committee and he does some tremendously good work. I compliment him not only on the research that he does, but also the research which his staff does on a number of issues. Whether we agree or disagree on the subject matter, a lot of effort goes on behind the scenes and in public on important issues.

There are a lot of things that do not seem to be surfacing as priorities of the government. It seems to be in limbo. These issues will continue to exist because of the political infighting in one political party which is having a bloodless coup and whether it is bloodless or not depends on whom one asks. The Liberals are in a transition period which is leaving us in a vacuum.

The government is moving ahead with Bill C-49 so it can meet its timetable. At the same time I find it personally frustrating, as do others, that other things are not receiving the same type of priority. The House of Commons may rise in November and not return for some time. A lot of important business still has to be handled. As the world continues to turn, Canada will basically be at a standstill.

I would like the hon. member's opinion about that situation. Not only does it affect the work that we do in our offices but it also affects the country's keeping up with the rest of the world.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. Indeed, I do believe that the government strategy needs to be looked at as a whole. The date is being moved closer so as to be able to call an election and ensure there is as little debate as possible. As well, they are likely going to prorogue the session within days, in order to be able to avoid tabling the Auditor General's report.

What is more, this will spare them having to deal with the debates that are supposed to be held. My colleague referred to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, on which we both

sit. There are a lot of important issues to be dealt with there. In recent weeks and months, we have addressed gasoline prices, Kyoto, and a number of other important matters. Recently we were working on the auto industry. These are the topics we are working on at this time.

We can see prorogation looming, and these issues will be shoved aside until after the next election, whereas our constituents would be expecting business as usual until an election was called as set out in the Elections Act. This would have been a totally normal way of doing things, and would have allowed a far more serious type of democratic debate. We could have found out the positions of all parties on each issue, having first taken the time to look at them properly.

What is happening in the industry, science and technology committee is also going on in a number of other areas where we need to keep on working. There is no reason for us to stop this fall. Neither was there any reason for changing the electoral calendar in this way. There is no urgency here in Canada to call an election tomorrow morning.

We are not afraid of dealing with the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard. We are familiar with his record and with the way he has made off with the money of the jobless, the money they contributed to employment insurance.

I will conclude by saying that when we do go before the electorate, we will be ready. The government would, however, have been well advised to respect the democratic process as set out in the present Elections Act.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-49. Sometimes, Canadians who are listening to us think we are discussing lengthy bills. In this case, the bill is quite simple. I will read it for the benefit of those who are listening to us:

Despite subsection 25(1) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act and the proclamation issued under that subsection on August 25, 2003 and registered as SI/2003-154, the representation order referred to in that proclamation is effective on the first dissolution of Parliament that occurs on or after April 1, 2004.

Now that I have read out the bill before us, you will have understood that the government wants to change an existing act, which is called the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. This process was not supposed to be a political one. This is why all colleagues in the House tell us that this process is apolitical.

Parliament had passed legislation that provided for a redistribution process that had been triggered and that all parties in the House and all politicians knew about. Indeed, ignorance of the law is no excuse.

*Government Orders*

Why are we discussing today a change to this act, which was supposed to be quite clear? Under the current act, since the readjustment process was proclaimed by order on August 25, 2003, the new electoral map was supposed to be effective one year after proclamation, that is on August 26, 2004. This is the act that all members of the House know about. The Liberal government is asking us to change this act that all Canadians, all members of Parliament know about.

Why change the act? We are here today to discuss this point. This bill should never have been introduced in the House. We should have used the democratic process that was agreed to by previous parliaments, which wanted to have a readjustment process that everyone knew about.

There is a problem though. There is only one individual who did not want that, the future leader of the Liberal Party, the member for LaSalle—Émard. He decided that the next federal election had to take place in the spring of 2004. That is what he wants. That is the reality. If he wants an election, we could say to him, as we would to any good citizen: "You know what the existing law is. If you want an election in April 2004, you will have to go with the law as it stands and the old electoral map." It is as simple as that.

Everybody in the House and across Canada knew what the law was. Everybody had to abide by it. What is to be gained with the new electoral map? It is important to understand why the member for LaSalle—Émard would like the new electoral map to be in place next spring, before it was supposed to come into force, namely August 26, 2004. Why does he want to speed up the coming into force of this electoral map?

It is simple. The number of ridings will change. There will be 308 ridings instead of 301. That is the reality. There will be seven new ridings. Strangely enough, none in Quebec. There will be three new ridings in Ontario, two in Alberta and two in British Columbia. As you know, the Liberal Party is extremely strong in Ontario. The number of federal liberal ridings in Ontario is no secret. Ontario will gain three ridings. That is why it would be advantageous for the member for LaSalle—Émard to call an election under this new electoral map.

Moreover, strangely enough, in Quebec ridings in the regions are disappearing in favour of urban ridings. As you know, the Bloc Québécois is very strong in the regions. Some ridings, including the Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay riding, will disappear. The whole area of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean will lose one riding. That is the reality.

Then, the riding of Charlevoix, on the North Shore, will disappear. It is represented by my colleague in the Bloc Québécois. The same will happen to the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, represented by my colleague who won the last byelection. The Champlain riding, represented by my colleague, will also disappear as a result of these decisions.

• (1700)

And what results follow from that? The rural regions of Quebec are losing political weight to the urban centres. Oddly enough, we see more of a Liberal presence in urban centres, but more of a Bloc Québécois presence in Quebec's rural regions. It is a fact.

Thus, this is an attempt to please one man, the member for LaSalle—Émard, who has decided that he would call an election in the spring and that, moreover, he would use Parliament to give himself as many advantages as possible in the next election, such as more ridings in Ontario and a more favourable distribution in Quebec.

Some people—particularly the Liberals—will tell us, "Sure, that is just fine; he is using everything he can to try to win". Except that there is one hard fact. An act was passed in this House, by parliamentarians other than myself, certainly, because I am one of the newcomers, being a member of the class of 2000, and I was not here when the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act was passed. Still, that act was passed in this House specifically to prevent political interference in the electoral redistribution process, concerning boundaries, riding names or whatever.

To please the member for LaSalle—Émard, the Liberal Party is using the law and this House basically to circumvent the whole electoral process that was established by previous parliaments. What is of concern is that it is being done to please a single person. This is being done because he feels that the best time to call an election is this spring. Everyone knows that. This is no secret; everyone says so, even journalists and political analysts. Why? The member for LaSalle—Émard wants to call an election in the spring for the simple reason that he will likely, probably, surely get chosen on November 15, will not have to reconvene the House or even to show up here before the next election, and will therefore avoid answering to us or answering questions all opposition parties could ask him in this House in his new capacity.

The best time for him to call an election, of course, is in the spring because the number of ridings will be to his advantage. The number of ridings in Ontario, among other places, is increasing. In Quebec, ridings are undergoing redistribution, with a shift toward urban ridings, which are generally more supportive of the Liberal Party.

Obviously, this would allow him to avoid taking part in the debates in the House of Commons or answering questions in the House and do as he pleases without having to answer to anyone or anything.

Consequently, democracy is in trouble. It happened again this week: during the past two days, people have been revisiting what happened during the 1995 referendum. In Quebec, the referendum process was respected by all the parties in the National Assembly. A referendum process exists. A decision is made. Some parties vote no; other parties vote yes.

Right now, the Liberal Party is in power. The Liberal Party certainly will not hold a referendum on Quebec's sovereignty, although it recognized at the time that the Quebec government had the right to hold one.

There was a process, with a question and two possible answers: yes or no. There were not three possible answers. People could only answer one way. The answer was either yes or no. Obviously, the no vote won.

Nevertheless, we realize today that, despite the speeches made by the current Prime Minister, who led the government, cabinet discussed certain things.

*Government Orders*

That is a facat. It is not just the Prime Minister. The entire cabinet discussed it with the then Minister of National Defence, now Minister of Transport, and then the Minister of Finance, still the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard and future prime minister. They discussed ignoring Quebec's decision, which they would not have recognized.

Lawrence Martin, who by the way is not a francophone, wrote this in a biography. It was not a member of the Bloc Québécois who wrote it. There is no cause for alarm because this person is not on our side.

Except that he wrote the truth. He reported that the Liberal government, which was in power, would not have recognized Quebec's sovereignty. Worse, it was prepared to use the military to try to fight the big bad sovereigntist movement, which is the most pacifist movement of all time. That is reality. Quebecers had decided to discuss their future democratically.

● (1705)

It is doing so without raising its voice unnecessarily and under existing laws. That is the reality.

Two days ago, we learned in the Lawrence Martin biography that the Liberal government would not have abided by the decision of Quebecers.

Today, we are discussing Bill C-49, which is a means to circumvent democracy. It changes legislation that was intended to be apolitical, legislation passed by previous parliaments, and legislation that simply provided a review process with which all members of this House are familiar.

They have decided to get around this electoral boundary readjustment legislation just to please one person, as I have said, the member for LaSalle—Émard, the future Liberal Party leader. He has chosen to make use of the new electoral map for his own political agenda, at the time he chooses to call an election, that is in the spring. That is the reason we are discussing this change today.

What is happening today is that democracy is being made use of for personal gain, it is being highjacked, circumvented, tortured even. Democracy is being tortured by this discussion of Bill C-49, which will do away with a democratic measure that was adopted by previous parliaments, one that called for an apolitical process with which everyone was familiar. That is what we used to have, an act that was enacted specifically to ensure that no political party could make use of legislation in order to gain an advantage over others for purely partisan electoral purposes.

Today, they are doing this openly, right under the noses of everyone, very candidly as most would tell me. I find the Liberals pretty candid about this. I will restrain myself from saying more. They are telling us nonchalantly that this is good legislation. Good, yes, for them. That is the reality.

They are calculating, counting heads, realizing that they will end up with more MPs because there will be more ridings in Ontario. They tell themselves that in Quebec, by doing away with Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, Charlevoix and Champlain, all ridings now held by the Bloc Québécois, they may obtain certain advantages. They are

shifting the ridings toward the urban centres, because they know that their strength lies there. That is the reality.

I hope that the people will see through their game. It is too easy to claim to be great democrats but act in a totally undemocratic way. That has become a serious concern now, in society and in this Canadian Parliament. They even go as far as to use the law to torture democracy. It has become a habit.

As I said, in his biography of the Prime Minister, Lawrence Martin wrote that the government was using this legislation, and using taxpayers' money, referring to the sponsorship scandal, to win votes and increase its visibility in places more important than others. We know that 80% of the sponsorship contracts were awarded in Quebec. This was a political choice. Even the Prime Minister has said that one must do what it takes when at war.

**An hon. member:** The money went into their pockets.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** That is right, it went into the pockets of friends of the government, to better brainwash Quebecers. This constant confrontational attitude makes things difficult. It is clear that they are at war with the big bad sovereigntists in Quebec.

They were prepared to call in the army to counter the sovereigntists in Quebec, in spite of the fact that the people of Quebec are among the most peace loving in the world. We saw that in the war in Iraq issue: Quebecers are pacifists. We will never take part in a war to oppress people.

Similarly, we wish never to be oppressed as a people. That is the reality. Often we try to win our case by leading by example. We want the rest of Canada to see that we are pacifists. We will win democratically, provided that our opponents do not keep torturing democracy in an attempt to get rid of us.

That is what they are doing, among other things, though Bill C-49. An election will be called in the spring in spite of the fact that, under the act passed by previous parliaments, the new electoral map should have become effective on August 26, 2004. That is the reality.

● (1710)

Anyone who aspires to run the country should abide by the law. The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard should have set the example and told his Liberal colleagues, "Look, there is a democratic process in place and we cannot have an election in the spring of 2004. If we want to use the new electoral boundaries, we will have to wait until the fall of 2004 to have an election. If we go to the people in the spring of 2004, the old legislation will still be in force". It is that simple and that easy to uphold democracy.

We have yet to find out what the member for LaSalle—Émard is afraid of. As you know, you are leading in the polls, but the other parties are moving up. Slowly but surely, we are getting back into shape, which augurs well, since nobody is fooled by the way the government is running the country.

*Government Orders*

The public does not always have the time. That is the problem with Quebecers and Canadians alike. They work hard. In most families, both spouses work. They do not have the time to follow all of our political debates. They are working, so they do not always have the time to watch us debate the future or the situation of our country each and every afternoon. We understand why Quebecers and Canadians do not follow what is going on in the political arena on a daily basis. They have had to work hard to pay all their taxes, especially since the Liberal Party has been in office.

Waste is rampant, it is a well-known fact. We saw it in the Radwanski scandal a few weeks back, and in other departments. It will not stop there, I am sure. Some ministers are in hot water. Of course, it is the duty of the opposition to raise such issues, as well as the duty of the media and all those who want their country to be run in a fair and honest way.

Reality will eventually catch up with the Liberals. They will not remain in power forever. I hope that Liberal members do not think they will all stay here until the end of time and go directly from their seats to the great beyond. I feel confident that, some day, others will replace them. The Liberal Party will certainly not be there till the end of time.

However, one thing is certain. In the meantime, members of this House must protect democracy. When we are no longer here, I hope my children and grandchildren will still have decision makers sitting here who respect democracy, whatever their political stripes.

Today, I have an opportunity to say that democracy is not being respected. The Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act has been known and passed by other parliaments before us. Today, the Liberal government is using it for partisan purposes. This is a major departure from democratic process. This is why I was so keen to take part in this debate. I wanted to speak today. One day, I will be able to tell my children and grandchildren, "If we had not been there, we would have missed the opportunity to open other people's eyes to this problem". Democracy must prevail.

The problem is that by trying to move up the election date in order to win as many ridings as possible, they are torturing democracy. If they are doing that now to move up a date, they will do it again tomorrow for something else. They might do it tomorrow to spend money in certain ways to win.

What they are doing today is very serious. We are debating a very short text. This is why I wanted to read it to you. It is only a quarter of a page long. It is a very short text that fits in a small box, but it is very important for democracy, for the future of democracy in Quebec and in Canada.

I take this opportunity to commend my colleagues. It is not always easy for them. My colleagues from Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, Charlevoix and Champlain are quite simply losing their riding. This is not easy for them to accept. It is not easy either for their constituents, who were used to dealing with a specific member of Parliament and to obtaining services from one person or one office. Suddenly, they have been completely cut off, separated, divided and shifted to other ridings. I hope that we will one day stop dividing political power according to the number of voters and that we will take regions into account.

● (1715)

All Quebecers and all Canadians have the right to be represented. Whether they live in a remote rural community in Quebec or near the big cities, they all have the same rights, because they all pay the same taxes. They all deserve to have fair and equitable representation. What is being proposed today will deny them all that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the situation with Bill C-49 is that it moves the issue more quickly to the forefront in terms of asking for changes to the electoral boundaries in order to meet the timetable of the member for LaSalle—Émard to enable him to call an election. In fact a lot of people are cozying up to the idea. We would not be surprised if they would be interested in getting rid of elections altogether. What is happening is we are pushing democracy out of the way or at least pushing it to a very difficult position, which is affecting communities.

At the same time we are not moving House business forward or at least abiding by general rules of having the opportunity to ask questions, to finish committee work and to bring other legislation forward. This is very much about electoral reform in terms of democracy. We recently had a vote in the House about proportional representation.

The issue before us is boundary adjustment which is important for electoral reform, but it is only a small part of the larger issue of democracy in our country.

How does the hon. member feel about the larger picture of democracy in Canada and in Quebec and whether things can be done to restore the confidence of people so they feel their votes count? By fast-tracking this legislation, does he think this might also create some cynicism among the voters? At the same time we cannot fast track other legislation or debate.

The House actually closed down debate a few hours ago on pensions for veterans' widows, which is a very serious issue affecting Canadians. The government closed it down so we could get to the issue we are now debating. My concern is that this will also lead to greater cynicism.

However, I would like to hear from the member himself as to whether the larger picture of democracy is being well addressed in this and whether the government missed a great opportunity to support our motion on proportional representation which called for a referendum to see how Canadians wanted to renew democracy. This would have given them a more meaningful say on democracy. What we have now is certainly incomplete.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I said at the beginning, he is perfectly right. This bill should never have been introduced in the House. This is a non political bill that was passed in another Parliament. We should have abided by it entirely; we should not even be discussing it today.

*Government Orders*

However, I am not surprised that the member for LaSalle—Émard is applying pressure to ensure this bill is debated and will give him an edge in the next election. This is what he thinks.

When a man avoids paying his taxes in the country where he lives by encouraging tax havens, I am convinced he is capable of using the Elections Act to his advantage.

**Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-49, an act respecting the effective date of the representation order of 2003.

This bill is very important. It is so important that, pursuant to Standing Order 26, I move:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of consideration of Bill C-49.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The House has heard the terms of the motion moved by the hon. member. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Pursuant to Standing Order 26 (2), if 15 members rise in opposition to a motion, it will be withdrawn. Is the motion agreed to?

*And fewer than 15 members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Fewer than 15 members have risen. Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2), the motion is deemed to have been adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1725)

**Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about my region.

The Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay region is a beautiful region of which I am so proud that I am ready to continue this debate in the House to try to convince all my colleagues of the need to defeat this bill.

Why? Because I am lucky enough to represent that region. I must mention that the region is in mourning today. Indeed, the redistribution has eliminated one riding from the region. This is something that is hard to accept for the people in the region. The decision was based on the demographic deficit. All those who appeared before the commission had warned it of the danger of basing such a decision solely on the number of voters.

There is a deficit of about 7,000 people since the last review by the commission, and it is on that basis that the decision was made to eliminate one riding, one elected representative, from the Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay region. That region pays 50% of its taxes to Ottawa, but it is still being deprived of 25% of its power of representation.

However, hard as it may be, we have to realize the lack of sensitivity of the federal government. The opposition to the elimination of one riding was unanimous. The fact that it was unanimous is important. All private citizens, all sociopolitical stakeholders, all four members of Parliament for this region were

opposed to the elimination of one riding. But the electoral boundaries commission turned a deaf ear to their recommendations.

We took part in the whole process democratically and somewhat naively. We took part in the public hearings with some naiveté. We appeared before the commission. We read its report and brought up objections. We also made representations to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. We took part in the process, we applied pressure, and we tried to get some support from colleagues.

But we have to come to the conclusion that the objectivity of this approach is questionable. Again today, with this bill which will make it possible to have an earlier effective date for the electoral map, we have every reason to doubt the impartiality of the government in this issue.

This insensitivity can be seen in various issues, like employment insurance. How come the same policies apply throughout this country, when some regions struggle with high unemployment?

Here is a tangible example. A tourism student at the CEGEP in Jonquière, for example, cannot work in his region because he needs to accumulate 900 hours to be eligible for employment insurance benefits. What will he do if, after working during the summer period, he finds himself out of work? What will he do? He will move out of his region.

In the case of softwood lumber, the government can duck the problem by pointing to the dispute between Canada and the United States. Yet, there are solutions. The Bloc Québécois suggested some, namely loan guarantees; direct support to workers by increasing the number of weeks of work; and eliminating the two-week waiting period. It is not as if these measures are beyond the government. Indeed, it implemented them in Toronto during the SARS crisis. These are tangible examples.

I could give others. We have motion M-393 introduced by my colleague, the member for Saint-Jean, to help the community. Again, the government has shown a total lack of sensitivity. What answer did the government give community organizations? It refused to help them.

Because of our demographic deficit but also because of the lack of sensitivity of the federal government, I have my doubts about this approach and vigorously oppose the bill, which could give us more time to swallow the pill.

Therefore, I invite all hon. members to oppose the bill. Electors from the Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay riding will remember this in the next election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The member for Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay will have five minutes remaining after private members' business, since he has ten minutes as first speaker.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division under private members' business.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1750)

[English]

### INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from October 10 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 293, and on the amendment. The question is on the amendment.

● (1800)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 249)

### YEAS

#### Members

Asselin	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bigras	Blaikie
Caccia	Comartin
Crête	Davies
Desrochers	Duceppe
Fournier	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gagnon (Québec)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Guay	Herron
Laframboise	Lanctôt
Lebel	Lill
Loubier	Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
McDonough	Ménard
Nystrom	Paquette
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Proctor
Robinson	Rocheleau
Roy	Sauvageau
St-Hilaire	Stoffer
Tremblay	Wasylcia-Leis— 44

### NAYS

#### Members

Abbott	Adams
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Bagnell	Bailey
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Barrette	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Brown
Bryden	Burton
Byrne	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Casson
Castonguay	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Collenette	Comuzzi
Cullen	Cummins
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dion	Discepola
Doyle	Duncan
Easter	Elley
Epp	Farrah
Finlay	Fitzpatrick

### Private Members' Business

Fontana	Forseth
Frulla	Gallant
Goldring	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Grose	Harvey
Hearn	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hill (Macleod)	Hilstrom
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jaffer
Jennings	Jobin
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Keys	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Lincoln	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	Macklin
Maloney	Manley
Marcil	Mark
McCormick	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McNally	McTeague
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell	Moore
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Pallister	Parrish
Penson	Peric
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Rajotte
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Reynolds	Ritz
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Schellenberger
Scherrer	Scott
Sgro	Simard
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Speller
Spencer	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vellacott	Volpe
Wayne	White (North Vancouver)
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Wilfert
Williams	Yelich— 170

### PAIRED

#### Members

Alcock	Bergeron
Cardin	Cauchon
Dalphond-Guiral	Guarnieri
Guimond	Harvard
Lalonde	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)— 10

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I declare the amendment lost.

[English]

The next question is on the main motion.

● (1810)

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

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 250)***YEAS**

## Members

Assad	Blaikie
Caccia	Castonguay
Charbonneau	Comartin
Davies	Frulla
Godin	Herron
Jaffer	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Kraft Sloan
Lebel	Leung
Lill	Lincoln
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
McDonough	McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally	Neville
Normand	Nystrom
Peric	Proctor
Robinson	Scott
St-Julien	Stoffer
Wasylcyia-Leis— 33	

**NAYS**

## Members

Abbott	Adams
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Anderson (Victoria)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bagnell	Bailey
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Barrette	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bellemare
Benoit	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brison
Brown	Bryden
Burton	Byrne
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Casson
Catterall	Chamberlain
Collenette	Comuzzi
Crête	Cullen
Cummins	Cuzner
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dion	Discepola
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Easter
Elley	Epp
Farrah	Finlay
Fitzpatrick	Fontana
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gagnon (Québec)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Goldring
Goodale	Gouk
Graham	Grose
Guay	Harvey
Heam	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hill (Macleod)	Hubbard
Jackson	Jennings
Jobin	Johnston
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacAulay
Macklin	Maloney
Manley	Marceau
Marcil	Mark
McCormick	McGuire
McLellan	McTeague
Ménard	Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)	Mitchell
Moore	Murphy
Myers	Nault
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly

Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Pallister
Paquette	Parrish
Penson	Perron
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Rajotte	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Reynolds
Ritz	Robillard
Rocheleau	Rock
Roy	Saada
Sauvageau	Schellenberger
Scherrer	Sgro
Simard	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Speller	Spencer
St-Hilaire	St-Jacques
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Stinson
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews	Ur
Valeri	Vanclicf
Vellacott	Volpe
Wayne	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Williams	Yelich— 172

**PAIRED**

## Members

Alcock	Bergeron
Cardin	Cauchon
Dalphon-D-Guiral	Guarnieri
Guimond	Harvard
Lalonde	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)— 10

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

\* \* \*

**FOOD AND DRUGS ACT**

The House resumed from October 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-420, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-420 under private members' business.

● (1820)

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

*(Division No. 251)***YEAS**

## Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Assad
Asselin	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Barrette
Bellemare	Benoit
Bigras	Binet
Blaikie	Borotsik
Breitkreuz	Brison
Bryden	Burton
Cadman	Casson
Chamberlain	Comartin
Comuzzi	Crête
Cummins	Davies
Desrochers	Doyle

*Private Members' Business*

Duceppe  
Elley  
Fitzpatrick  
Forseth  
Frulla  
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)  
Gallant  
Gauthier  
Godin  
Gouk  
Guay  
Herron  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Jobin  
Karygiannis  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Lancôt  
Loubier  
Marceau  
Mark  
McCormick  
McNally  
Ménard  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Nystrom  
Pacetti  
Paquette  
Penson  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Rajotte  
Ritz  
Rocheleau  
Sauvageau  
Scherrer  
Skelton  
Sorenson  
St-Hilaire  
St-Julien  
Stinson  
Strahl  
Telegdi  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Tremblay  
Vellacott  
Wasylycia-Leis  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Williams

Duncan  
Epp  
Fontana  
Fournier  
Gagnon (Champlain)  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Gaudet  
Girard-Bujold  
Goldring  
Grose  
Hearn  
Hill (Macleod)  
Jaffer  
Johnston  
Keddy (South Shore)  
Laframboise  
Lebel  
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)  
Marcil  
Masse  
McDonough  
McTeague  
Merrifield  
Moore  
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
Pallister  
Parrish  
Peric  
Picard (Drummond)  
Proctor  
Reynolds  
Robinson  
Roy  
Schellenberger  
Simard  
Solberg  
Spencer  
St-Jacques  
Steckle  
Stoffer  
Szabo  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Toews  
Ur  
Volpe  
Wayne  
White (North Vancouver)  
Yelich — 124

Pagtakhan  
Petigrew  
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
Proulx  
Reed (Halton)  
Robillard  
Saada  
Sgro  
St. Denis  
Thibault (West Nova)  
Valeri  
Wilfert — 85

Peterson  
Phinney  
Price  
Provenzano  
Regan  
Rock  
Scott  
Speller  
Stewart  
Torsney  
Vancief

**PAIRED**

## Members

Alcock  
Cardin  
Dalphond-Guiral  
Guimond  
Lalonde

Bergeron  
Cauchon  
Guarnieri  
Harvard  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard) — 10

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

Accordingly the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**THE CANADA LABOUR CODE**

The House resumed from Tuesday, October 21, consideration of the motion that Bill C-328, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code be now read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-328 under private members' business.

● (1830)

[*English*]

*After the taking of the vote:*

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to be recorded as voting in favour of the motion. I inadvertently rose the wrong way on the motion.

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the motion which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 252*)

**YEAS**

## Members

Abbott  
Asselin  
Barrette  
Bellemare  
Binet  
Bonin  
Caccia  
Comartin  
Cummins  
Desrochers  
Duceppe  
Farrah  
Forseth  
Frulla  
Gagnon (Champlain)  
Gagnon (Québec)

Assad  
Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Bélanger  
Bigras  
Blaikie  
Brown  
Charbonneau  
Crête  
Davies  
Doyle  
Duncan  
Fontana  
Fournier  
Fry  
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)  
Gaudet

**NAYS**

## Members

Adams  
Bagnell  
Barnes (London West)  
Bélanger  
Bertrand  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonwick  
Bradshaw  
Byrne  
Calder  
Castonguay  
Charbonneau  
Cullen  
DeVillers  
Discepola  
Farrah  
Goodale  
Harvey  
Ianno  
Jennings  
Karetak-Lindell  
Knutson  
Lastewka  
Lee  
Lincoln  
Macklin  
Manley  
McGuire  
Mitchell  
Myers  
Neville

Anderson (Victoria)  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bennett  
Bevilacqua  
Bonin  
Boudria  
Brown  
Caccia  
Cannis  
Catterall  
Collenette  
Cuzner  
Dion  
Easter  
Finlay  
Graham  
Hubbard  
Jackson  
Jordan  
Keyes  
Kraft Sloan  
LeBlanc  
Leung  
MacAulay  
Maloney  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
McLellan  
Murphy  
Nault  
Owen

*Private Members' Business*

Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin	Gouk
Grose	Guay
Harvey	Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Jobin
Karygiannis	Kraft Sloan
Laframboise	Lancôt
Lebel	Leung
Lill	Lincoln
Loubier	Maloney
Marceau	Marcl
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
McDonough	McGuire
McNally	Ménard
Nystrom	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Paquette
Parrish	Peric
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Price
Proctor	Robinson
Rocheleau	Roy
Sauvageau	Scherrer
Scott	St-Hilaire
St-Julien	Stoffer
Telegdi	Tremblay
Volpe	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne	White (Langley—Abbotsford) — 86

**NAYS**

## Members

Adams	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Anderson (Victoria)
Bagnell	Bailey
Barnes (London West)	Benoit
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Bryden
Burton	Byrne
Calder	Cannis
Casson	Castonguay
Catterall	Chamberlain
Collenette	Comuzzi
Cullen	Cuzner
DeVillers	Dion
Discepolo	Easter
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Goldring	Goodale
Graham	Herron
Hill (MacLeod)	Hubbard
Jackson	Jaffer
Johnston	Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Keyes	Knutson
Lee	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Manley	Mark
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell	Moore
Murphy	Nault
Neville	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Pallister	Penson
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Rajotte	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Ritz	Robillard
Rock	Schellenberger
Sgro	Simard
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	St-Jacques
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Toews
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanelief
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Williams	Yelich — 104

**PAIRED**

## Members

Alcock	Bergeron
Cardin	Cauchon
Dalphond-Guiral	Guamieri
Guimond	Harvard
Lalonde	Martin (LaSalle—Énard) — 10

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

It being 6:32 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HERITAGE LIGHTHOUSE PROTECTION ACT**

(Bill S-7. On the Order: Private Members' Business)

October 6, 2003—Mr. Keddy (South Shore)—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage of Bill S-7, an act to protect heritage lighthouses.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia on a point of order.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question about the propriety of Bill S-7 as it relates to the relationship between the House of Commons and the Senate.

I would like to make a brief presentation because I want to get onto the debate of Bill S-7. I am in favour of the bill. That is not the question. The question is the relationship between the House and Senate. The question is whether it violates the financial privileges of this House and the constitutional requirements of responsible government.

Standing Order 80(1) states:

All aids and supplies granted to the Sovereign by the Parliament of Canada are the sole gift of the House of Commons, and all bills for granting such aids and supplies ought to begin with the House, as it is the undoubted right of the House to direct, limit, and appoint in all such bills, the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations and qualifications of such grants, which are not alterable by the Senate.

Section 53 of the Constitution Act, 1867 provides that:

Bills for appropriating any part of the Public Revenue, or for imposing any Tax or Impost shall originate in the House of Commons.

Section 54 states:

It shall not be lawful for the House of Commons to adopt or pass any Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill for the Appropriation of any Part of the Public Revenue, or of any Tax or Impost, to any Purpose that has not been first recommended to that House by Message of the Governor General in the Session in which such Vote, Resolution, Address, or Bill is proposed.

Marleau and Montpetit, on page 711, states:

—private Members' bills involving the spending of public money have been allowed to be introduced and to proceed through the legislative process, on the assumption that a royal recommendation would be submitted by a Minister of the Crown before the bill was to be read a third time and passed.

Bill S-7 originated in the Senate and on that basis may be in violation of the privileges of this House.

*Private Members' Business*

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I raise this issue is that I would like you to take a look at the need for a ruling on whether there is the need for a royal recommendation with respect to this bill. If we look at the provisions of Bill S-7, subclause 3(c) refers to the fact that there must be “requiring that heritage lighthouses be reasonably maintained”.

There is another reference in clause 17 which states:

The owner of a heritage lighthouse shall maintain it in a reasonable state of repair and in a manner that is in keeping with its heritage character.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I draw to your attention subclause 19(e) which refers to what presently is in place and that is:

national parks, national historic sites, historic canals, national battlefields, national marine conservation areas, heritage lighthouses, heritage railway stations and federal heritage buildings;

As the heritage critic, I am very much aware of the fact that the government has a budget for all of those buildings and all of those properties.

Although the bill does not specifically state that money shall be spent, clearly it says that if this bill were passed, it is only logical and reasonable that if lighthouses are in the environment that they are in, which is near salt water and extreme weather, that those buildings would probably require expensive renovation.

Therefore, prior to this bill coming to a vote in the House, I would like to ask for a ruling as to whether there must be a royal recommendation included with the bill.

• (1835)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I shall only comment briefly to submit to your honour that I cannot agree with the submission that has just been made by the hon. member. I have no doubt about the sincerity of what he is advancing; however, I believe it to be factually incorrect.

First of all, as he himself has admitted, the bill does not expend public money and does not levy a tax or impost. The levying of a tax or impost would have the prerequisite of ways and means. The expenditure of money would require a royal recommendation.

The hon. member said that a private member's bill introduced in the House, even if it were to expend money, would proceed, but at third reading could not be read a third time without a royal recommendation. That is quite accurate. The hon. member is drawing a parallel to a number of other heritage structures listed in subclause 19(e).

I would like to draw the House's attention to the heritage railway stations which were designated in like manner by way of a private member's bill of the House when both you, Mr. Speaker, and I were sitting as opposition members. No royal recommendation accompanied that particular bill which operates in like manner, and draws a parallel between it and what the member of the other place is proposing to us by way of Bill S-7.

I believe that the Chair should consider that before making a final decision, and then it will no doubt conclude that the bill does not require a royal recommendation and therefore can originate in the other place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I thank both members for their interventions. I will take them under advisement. The Speaker will review the blues and the arguments for and against, and will render his decision as soon as possible.

Because of the points of order, private members' hour will start at 6:39 p.m. and end at 7:39 p.m.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC)** moved that Bill S-7, an act to protect heritage lighthouses, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to sponsor the heritage lighthouse act on behalf of our members in the Senate.

I would like to recognize the member for Dauphin—Swan River for seconding the bill. It shows that this is not just a bill for coastal Canada. This is a bill that is important to all Canadians, whether we live inland or whether we live near one of the three great oceans that surround the country.

I would like to pay tribute to both Senator Forrestall and Senator Carney who worked on the bill in the Senate, and the good work that they did on this particular piece of legislation.

The bill will go a long way toward preserving and protecting an important emblem of Canada. Certainly, for the Atlantic and Pacific coasts there is not a Canadian who does not have a vision in his or her head of a lighthouse somewhere along one of our coastlines.

Without question, in Atlantic Canada alone, millions of tourists visit the area and take home strong memories of our lighthouses. It will always remind them of the time they have spent on the Canadian coastline.

It does not matter whether that coastline is in Atlantic Canada, the Pacific Ocean, the Arctic Ocean or even on the Great Lakes or Lake Winnipeg.

Lighthouses are part of Canadian culture. Not only are they part of our culture, they are part of our storytelling, our folklore, and our songs. There is as much of a lighthouse inside every Canadian as there is a maple leaf.

I would argue strenuously that there is not a Canadian living today who does not have a picture in his or her mind of a lighthouse somewhere, whether it is the lighthouse in Peggy's Cove or whether it is a lighthouse on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

Lighthouses stand as historic focal points for communities where they have watched over generations of our forefathers as they have traversed our seas. Further, some of these lighthouses serve as an important part of local economies across the country, as many have restaurants, inns or museums nearby.

The bill is of personal importance to me. There are 135 heritage lighthouses in Nova Scotia that could be protected under this proposed act. This figure does not include a great many of the smaller range towers, but it does include 28 major lighthouses in my riding of South Shore. These lighthouses are not just a part of our culture and our seafaring tradition but are a part of our communities.

There are dozens and dozens of communities in Nova Scotia that see the light coming from the lighthouse when darkness falls. It is a tremendous part of the very fibre that makes us Maritimers.

*Private Members' Business*

Can anyone in the House, can anyone in Nova Scotia, truly imagine our province without its lighthouse at Peggy's Cove, West Head or Hawk Point? I cannot imagine the South Shore without lighthouses at Sandy Point, Coffin Island or Seal Island, to name only a few.

Yet many, if not all, of these historic lighthouses are in danger of falling into serious disrepair or being destroyed from neglect. At last count, only 19 of 500 have full heritage protection, while another 100 have some protection or degree of recognition as a historic site.

Those that currently have protection fall under Parks Canada, while the others fall under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Coast Guard. The majority, however, are in danger of joining the very oceans that they watch and have watched for decades.

Current legislation is not doing enough to protect heritage lighthouses. Two federal government bodies have the power to select and designate heritage lighthouses: the Federal Heritage Building Review Office and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board.

● (1840)

As it stands, the process has its problems since more lighthouses are being rejected than protected. The Federal Heritage Building Review Office has rejected a total of 157 lighthouses for heritage status. In fact, only 3% of lighthouses across Canada have heritage protection and only 12% have some partial protection.

In the United States, by contrast, a full 70% of the lighthouses over 50 years of age are protected. We have a little catch-up ball to play here. We pride ourselves on being a step ahead of the Americans on social legislation and on our health care system but they have done a better job at protecting their historic monuments than we have and it is time for us to join the race.

An additional problem with the current system is that the very public that wants to protect these buildings is unable to participate in the process of selecting or designating heritage lighthouses. This is despite the fact that there are many community groups, such as the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society, that are passionately involved in preserving and protecting the history of these essential parks of our maritime heritage. Groups such as this would love to be involved with the renewal of lighthouse sites, but the regulations in place continue to hinder their efforts while local light stations deteriorate.

Another difficulty with the current system is that there is no specific provision to protect sites that have been given heritage status. The Canadian Coast Guard does not have a mandate to protect the cultural significance of lighthouses and it is not in a position to provide the care needed to maintain these heritage buildings.

The Coast Guard, however, does recognize the significance of these heritage lighthouses and has welcomed some proposals for their protection within the limits of the current legislation. Unfortunately, this has not been enough.

Bill S-7 would address all those concerns. It would put into place a regulatory structure that would remedy this situation and allow for the preservation of heritage lighthouses.

The bill was first introduced in the Senate in April 2000 and was originally modeled after Bill C-62, the Heritage Railway Protection Act, which was introduced in the late 1980s. Before the act was made law, heritage railway stations that had existed since before Confederation could be sold, transferred, altered or destroyed with very little recourse to the public or to the concerns of the public.

Canada's heritage lighthouses are currently in the same precarious situation as the railway stations were before the Heritage Railway Protection Act, a situation we intend to change with this bill.

Let me explain to the House how the heritage lighthouse protection act would preserve our heritage lighthouses.

First, the act reads:

The purpose of this Act is to preserve and protect heritage lighthouses by

- (a) providing for the selection and designation of heritage lighthouses;
- (b) preventing the unauthorized alteration or disposition of heritage lighthouses; and
- (c) requiring that heritage lighthouses be reasonably maintained.

For clarity's sake, an unauthorized alteration is defined in the act as an effort "to restore or renovate, but does not include to perform routine maintenance and repairs".

The responsibility of this proposed legislation would fall under the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Clauses 6 through 10 of Bill S-7 would enable the governor in council, upon recommendation of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, to designate lighthouses and their related properties as heritage lighthouses, and to set out a process for their designation as heritage structures.

Clauses 11 through 16 would protect heritage lighthouses where clause 11, in particular, holds that:

No person shall remove, alter, destroy, sell, assign, transfer or otherwise dispose of a heritage lighthouse or any part of it, unless authorization to do so has been given by the Minister under this Act.

These same six clauses also outline a process for public consultation. It is extremely important that we have public consultation during this process with regard to the disposition of heritage lighthouses.

Clause 17 simply maintains that:

The owner of a heritage lighthouse maintain it in a reasonable state of repair...in keeping with its heritage character.

● (1845)

We are not trying to completely tie the hands of individuals who may own now or may want to own in the future these heritage buildings, but we would like to think that anyone passing by would be able to look at this building and recognize it as a lighthouse. This is no different than what most municipalities require of homeowners.

Clause 18 empowers the governor in council to make regulations. The clause simply amends the Department of Canadian Heritage Act, giving the minister jurisdiction over heritage lighthouses.

In summary, the bill would enhance the powers and responsibilities of the Minister of Canadian Heritage with respect to these important buildings. It would allow for public consultation, which is in dire need of being implemented; designation; preservation; and the general upkeep of Canada's heritage lighthouses.

Most important, it would ensure the survival of important icons of Canadian maritime history and culture. It would protect local tourism and small businesses across the country. It also would preserve the potent images of lighthouses protecting Canada's coastlines for generations to come.

I would ask that all members in the House set aside any partisan notions and support the bill before any potential prorogation of Parliament. This has happened to the bill once already and it does not deserve to go through the process a third time.

I have had ongoing discussions with all parties in the House. I hope other parties will curtail debate on the bill so it can proceed immediately to committee. I am not asking members to not speak to the bill but I certainly would appreciate it if members would curtail their time.

The heritage lighthouse protection act is a bill that serves the interests of all Canadians and all those who have visited our nation's shores.

The longer the bill takes to pass through the House the more we risk losing an essential part of Canadian history and heritage, and a very personal part of maritime culture.

● (1850)

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, when raising the point of order just a few minutes ago, I said that I am in favour of the passage of the bill. I am making that recommendation to the members of my party.

The bill is something that is necessary. Certainly in taking a look at Canada's heritage structures, excellent work has been done by many museums with respect to the structures. One example is the great Canadian Museum of Rail Travel in Cranbrook. The amount of volunteer work that has occurred there has been exemplary. We have to be very conscious in Canada of ensuring that we maintain our heritage and structures so that we can go back and physically touch them and certainly see them.

My concern is not about the bill itself. I have had an opportunity to review the clauses in the bill. I am certainly not a legislative expert but it seems to me it would not require a tremendous amount of amendment in order for it to be a very good bill. The issue of people being able to consult, get information back and have input is a very transparent process, and one which the public at large could buy into.

My concern is on two levels with respect to the fact that the bill has come to us from the Senate. The first one which I have just explained is that this is a Senate bill and one which in my judgment, and I will leave it to your wisdom to decide, Mr. Speaker, will require the expenditure of public funds. Therefore, it is very likely outside the ability of the Senate to propose, particularly as a private member's bill. And this is a private member's bill.

This is very important. It is not just a whole bunch of detail. It is not arcane. It is not unnecessary. It is indeed vital that we make sure

### *Private Members' Business*

that we maintain the relationship between this House and the other place. This House has the legitimacy that all its members were elected in a free and democratic vote. It is our responsibility as members of the House to come here and to represent our constituents and to make good legislation in the best interests of Canadians.

If we do not make legislation in the best interests of Canadians, then we deserve to be defeated. If we do not speak up for our constituents or watch what the government is doing with respect to its expenditures, again the people of Canada have the ability to hold us accountable. That is the essence of democracy and I am very pleased to be part of that democratic process. Therefore, the House of Commons must remain supreme in the process, which leads me to the second point.

The difficulty that we have is over a number of years, and particularly most recently as we have been going through a process of trying to update the ability, to advance the ability, to refine the ability of private members to bring matters before the House for the consideration of the whole House, we have been going through in some ways has been very much a learning process.

Bill C-250 is a classic example of an item that was brought forward by the member for Burnaby—Douglas and which the House became gripped with. It was an issue of a tremendous amount of interest to people in Canada. It was an item on which we as members of Parliament were, and should have been, held accountable for our position because it made some very substantial changes. Interestingly it was not a bill that was in the cross hairs or in the focus of the government, in spite of the fact that at the end of the day the government ended up voting in favour of the bill. All members ended up voting in favour of the bill.

The ability of a member of this duly elected, representative place to bring forward a bill or motion is a very vital part of how we function as a democracy in Canada.

● (1855)

Therefore, with respect to Bill S-7, the other place has a different way for senators to bring forward private members' bills. As I understand it, from advice that I have received from the Table of this House, once the bill has gone through the Senate process, it basically has the ability to then advance that bill to this place. It then goes into the same order of bills as ours do, as private members' bills. It goes to the bottom of the order of precedence and works its way up through the order of precedence.

In a way, somebody might choose to argue, that means it is treated in exactly the same way, but the fact is that it starts in the other place and goes through a totally different process and, in fact, because of the practices of the other place, this gives more freedom for those members of the other place to get their bills through, to have them advanced. I submit that it in fact ends up interfering with the ability of the members of this place to be able to carry out their duties and responsibilities to their constituents and to the causes about which they are talking.

*Private Members' Business*

Therefore, as I said, I stand in favour of the bill. I speak in favour of the bill. I think it essential that we continue to focus more energy on our history. Certainly, as my colleague from the Conservatives said, lighthouses form a part of the story of who we are as Canadians and of what our great nation stands for. Therefore, to have a bill that is a responsible bill, a bill that enables us to protect those properties, is essential.

In summary, the reason why I raise my point of order is this. I want to see that as we take care of those places and as we invariably incur costs on them, they come under the proper scrutiny of the Government of Canada, and that we do not end up in some way getting past the whole concept of getting royal approval for the expenditure of funds, that we do not suddenly find ourselves locked into a box.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to your ruling on this matter and I certainly will continue to encourage my colleagues in my party to vote in favour of the bill.

● (1900)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to discuss Bill S-7, an act to protect heritage lighthouses. This bill gives suggestions on the best way to identify them. It also suggests holding a public consultation before giving authorization to remove, alter, destroy, sell, assign, transfer or otherwise dispose of a heritage lighthouse. This would ensure that the designated heritage lighthouses would be well maintained.

More specifically, Bill S-7 suggests that heritage lighthouses be designated by the governor in council, on the recommendation of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The bill also provides for public petitions to begin the designation process. If requested to do so by the Minister, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada would be responsible for considering all lighthouses and making a recommendation. If the board is involved, it will have to hold public hearings.

Bill S-7 also establishes an objection system. A person may object to the proposed alteration or destruction of a lighthouse. In such a case, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has to decide, in consultation with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, to approve the proposal or not.

Even if the government of Canada supports the principles underlying Bill S-7, we are still concerned that this bill only deals with only one type of historic buildings, heritage lighthouses. As the members are no doubt aware, of all the federal historic sites, only national historic sites managed by the Parks Canada Agency are protected by the legislation. All historic sites administered by other federal departments or organizations are, at best, protected by a policy.

Apart from shipwrecks that are covered by the Canada Shipping Act, there is at present no federal protection for the archeological resources that can be found on federal properties, along our long coastlines or on the ocean bottom.

The Historic Places Initiative was launched in 2001 as an overall strategy to seek to involve the public, private and volunteer sectors in

the conservation of our man-made heritage. Since then, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Parks Canada Agency have worked with their provincial and territorial partners to create three basic tools to support the Historic Places Initiative: first, a Canadian Register of Historic Places; second, Conservation Standards and Guidelines, and third, a certification process to assess the eligibility of the expenditures and proposals under the contribution program. That program was announced in February 2003 to encourage private investment in the restoration of historic places.

In the fall of 2002, the Minister of Canadian Heritage released a working document entitled "Towards a New Act Protecting Canada's Historic Places". It included proposals for legislation to provide the Government of Canada with the tools needed to address gaps in legislation in order to protect federal heritage and fulfill its obligations for stewardship of historic places owned by the Government of Canada.

The proposed legislation on historic places, as set out in the consultation paper, would offer legal protection for all historic places on federal lands and protection for archaeological resources on or under federal lands or waters. It would also formally recognize the Canadian Register of Historic Places and commit the Government of Canada to the agreed-upon Conservation Standards and Guidelines.

The proposed legislation would provide protection for federal buildings with heritage value and national historic sites.

● (1905)

The federal government departments would be required to ensure that their "classified" buildings are appropriately maintained and protected against harmful or destructive actions.

Maintenance and any proposed change or addition to a "classified" building would have to be carried out in accordance with the new conservation standards and guidelines. Twenty-eight lighthouses would be covered by these two designations.

If a "classified" building were ever sold or leased out by the Government of Canada, the consultation document proposes that specific legal instruments be put in place to ensure that the building would continue to receive the same high level of conservation protection.

For "recognized" buildings, the proposed legislation would encourage the use of the standards and guidelines, and require departments, agencies and crown corporations to take into account the heritage status of the building. Ninety-nine lighthouses would be in this category.

The proposed legislation would also ensure that no demolition of any part of national historic sites or "classified" federal heritage buildings could take place without the consent of Parliament.

The consultation document proposes that all federal departments, crown corporations and agencies be required to give priority consideration to using these sites and buildings before opting for new construction or leases.

*Private Members' Business*

The conservation of Canada's historic places requires enormous effort by a vast array of Canadians. The government is determined to engage Canadians in ensuring that our country makes the most of the Historic Places Initiative launched in 2001.

The principles behind Bill S-7 deserve our warm applause. In many ways they match the principles of the 2001 initiative and the historic sites legislation proposed in 2002.

Still, the government believes that an approach focusing more on heritage protection is required, an approach that imposes a high degree of rigour in determining which properties should be listed.

The government also believes that the responsibility for protecting the heritage value of these federal properties should be shared by the organizations that take responsibility for the management of real property.

The most important point is that Bill S-7 adopts a fragmentary approach, since it addresses only one type of historic structure, heritage lighthouses. That is unfortunate. We believe that protection should be extended to all federal buildings with a heritage designation.

For these reasons, although the government supports the overall objectives of Bill S-7, it cannot support the bill as introduced without major amendments to allow to meet the objectives effectively. By doing so, the government wants to ensure that the appropriate resources have been identified to allow it to fulfill its obligations under the law.

Canada's historic places are the soul and spirit of this country. These places are evidence of the life and history of those who built Canada. The famous Haida totems, our Parliament Buildings, Africville in Nova Scotia, the historic district in Quebec City, the Cabot Tower in Newfoundland and Labrador, all these historic places are as important to our Canadian identity as the maple leaf, the beaver and the Rockies.

Historic places may be buildings, battlefields, lighthouses, shipwrecks, parks, archeological sites, cultural landscapes, bridges, houses, cemeteries, railway stations, historic districts, ruins, wonders of engineering, schools, canals, courthouses, theatres and market-places. They may be large, they may be small.

● (1910)

There may be only fragments left or they may have survived intact.

Historic places provide tangible benefits on the economic, environmental, social and cultural level. They contribute to Canada's social cohesion.

Buildings that have a heritage value enhance the warmth of urban centres. They may be a source of tourist dollars. When visitors come to see them, they spend money in the communities they go through.

Thus, historic places really contribute to job creation, community pride and national well-being in modern Canada.

Historic places connect us to our past, to our future and to one another. Unfortunately—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, but her time is up. She had an extra minute almost.

The hon. member for Matapédia—Matane.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak to Bill S-7.

I am shocked and astounded by what I just heard. It was like hearing a wish list. Indeed, after some research on the issue, one realizes that it was in 1970 that the federal government decided to abandon the existing lighthouses and replace them with automated ones. This program exists since 1970.

I only wanted to point out that, since 1970, many studies have been carried out and numerous recommendations made. A large number of people have asked the federal government to at least take proper care of its lighthouses.

There is a very good example in my riding, namely the Madeleine-Centre lighthouse. We could say that it is a heritage lighthouse. However, it does not meet the extremely strict criteria established by the board.

My difficulty with Bill S-7 is that it wants these lighthouses to be dealt with by a board that has no money to look after these structures but sets standards so strict that it will deal with the fewest structures possible. Therefore, the lighthouses, not being maintained, continue to deteriorate.

Many people, especially those in Quebec and Canada who care about our heritage, have harshly criticized the government for its attitude, which is why Bill S-7 was introduced. Had the government done its job, we would not need this legislation. After all, we already have all the tools; the only problem is that the federal government has totally abandoned these structures, in the hope that they could be demolished so that it would no longer have to take care of them and spend money on them.

I simply want to quote this from the Auditor General's report of 1983, which was published 13 years after the introduction of the lighthouse replacement program:

Despite the fact that the unmanning program has been under way for 13 years, we had difficulty obtaining satisfactory cost information.

Thus, 13 years after the start of the program, there were still no real data on what was done by the government. I continue:

—we had difficulty obtaining satisfactory cost information. A breakdown of direct and indirect costs for manned versus unmanned lighthouses is not available.

This means that the program was put in place at the time without any idea of how much it would cost or of what was going to happen to the abandoned lighthouses and to those that were no longer manned. I continue:

Nevertheless, the Coast Guard has indicated that an estimate of annual cost savings of \$50,000 per station would be reasonable.

*Private Members' Business*

That is an estimate that was never verified, and the Auditor General confirmed this back in 1983:

Thus, unmanning lightstations would result in annual savings of from \$6 million (based on the 118 lighthouses identified in the survey) to \$12 million (if all 234 manned locations were included).

This means that, for the unmanned lighthouses, it is \$6 million and, for the manned lighthouses, the amount is \$12 million.

Offsetting these annual reductions in costs is a one-time cost for new monitoring equipment, which the Coast Guard estimates would range from \$8 million to \$15 million.

So we put in place this program, we abandoned the infrastructures that were there. Instead of using the infrastructures we had, we replaced the historic infrastructures by aluminum structures. In the end, we realized that it was as costly and that there were no savings. This finding dates back to 1983. Now it is 2003 and it seems, according to the information we have, that we will not have the answer before December 2003.

● (1915)

In other words, we will not know what went on from 1970 to 2003 with respect to lighthouses. We are talking about a 33 year period during which the government had no idea what was happening with the lighthouses when it abandoned them and created an unmanning program.

We were to have the answer by December 2003 and find out whether there really were any savings. It is 30 years later. People are asking questions and Bill S-7, the purpose of which is to protect heritage lighthouses, was introduced.

What is a heritage lighthouse? There is absolutely nothing in the bill that describes the criteria for determining that.

On the contrary, it is left entirely to the discretion of the minister and the government to determine which are heritage lighthouses and therefore set out the criteria and, knowing this government, eliminate as many as possible. The stricter the criteria, the fewer heritage lighthouses there are and the less money will have to be invested.

Look at how this government has acted with the Coast Guard, among others, for a number of years now. Since 1983, we know full well that the Coast Guard has been utterly underfunded. After the events of September 11, we woke up and realized that we had a bare bones Coast Guard. It is the Coast Guard that is currently responsible for the lighthouses. It is the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that is currently responsible for the lighthouses. Nothing is being invested in the infrastructure, which was completely abandoned.

I would go further. In the bill before us, the normal procedure, when the federal government wants to sell property, is first to offer it to the provinces, to repair the infrastructure and maintain it properly. If the province does not want to acquire the infrastructure, then the federal government can offer it either to the municipality or an independent corporation.

We do not need a bill for this. We do not need Bill C-7 for this. This already exists in procedure. It is already there.

The problem is that the government never invests money. It does not invest the necessary money or offer anything to the communities

that want to operate or acquire these lighthouses to maintain them for the benefit of the public.

My main concern about this bill is that it looks as though the minister is being given full discretion. He or she can do pretty much whatever he or she wants and the public has no input because, in the end, despite all the consultation, the criteria have to be met.

If the minister sets the criteria, even if there is a public consultation process, we will have to rely on the heritage board criteria. It is these criteria that have to be changed so as to include a greater number of lighthouses, so that the government will have to invest the necessary funds before it transfers them, if it wishes to do so.

The same principle applies to train stations, airports and ports that the government has transferred in the past. It is the same process. With regard to ports, the federal government made the commitment to repair the facilities before transferring them to the community.

The same thing should be done with lighthouses. They should be repaired and maintained. If the government wants to transfer them, then the community can take over.

I would also add that there are some questions with regard to ports, because it is the same process. Right now, certain communities that have taken over these infrastructures are in trouble because they are unable to absorb the costs of maintaining a port or an airport.

We have a good example of that in our regions. I am referring to the Gaspé airport and to the Mont-Joli airport. We realize today that the communities are unable to assume this responsibility because they do not have the necessary funds.

The same thing should not happen with lighthouses. The criteria should be not be so strict, so as to force the government to maintain these facilities.

● (1920)

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise on behalf of the federal New Democratic Party and also those provincial New Democratic Parties across Canada that have paid active attention to the concern of our lighthouses within this country.

First, I want to thank Senator Carney and Senator Forrester for their initiative through the Senate in order to bring the bill to this place. I believe both are genuinely interested in what goes on with our coastal communities and lighthouses, and they should be thanked for their hard work in this regard.

People who come from Nova Scotia know the value of our lighthouses. We know how disappointed we were when they went from man light stations to automatic stations. Of course we were not in the House at that time, but if we had been, we would have put up a big fight for them, similar to our fight now to preserve the heritage lighthouses throughout the country.

*Government Orders*

Your predecessor, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Roméo LeBlanc from northern New Brunswick, was a very fine man in the House of Commons. His son now sits in the House. Mr. LeBlanc's picture hangs in the hallways of the Senate. When we look at the picture, what do we see? A very beautiful picture of Roméo LeBlanc looking out his office window. What is he looking at? A lighthouse.

It is quite ironic that the picture of one of the best speakers this House has ever had and a fine governor general would portray a very significant aspect of our culture. I encourage everyone who has the opportunity to go see the picture. It rolls into what this bill is all about, and that is the preservation of the historical and cultural aspects of lighthouses.

I would also like to give credit to the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society. The folks involved with that society do a fabulous job of maintaining, protecting and preserving the integrity of lighthouses that have been abandoned or moved more or less to the cultural sector because DFO, through the government, has dissolved itself of that.

I would also like to give very special credit to a Mr. Dave Molloy, formerly of Newfoundland and Labrador, who wrote a fabulous book back in 1994 called *The First Landfall*. The book details the historical and cultural aspects of a particular number of lighthouses throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. I have a copy of the book at home and I find it an exquisite example of what people can do when they do their research.

I spoke to Mr. Molloy. For over four years, he did research on his book. The book exemplifies the deep meaning and deep rooted historical aspect of what these lighthouses mean to people. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you have ever had the opportunity to travel throughout the country, especially to our coastlines, to witness these lighthouses and to see the ruggedness of the areas in which they are. They are strikingly beautiful.

I also have had the opportunity to live in British Columbia. I have travelled up and down the coast and have seen many of the lighthouses. Senator Carney actually referred to them in our Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans yesterday.

I believe all members of Parliament can and should support this bill. It is extremely important to the integral history of our country, as well as to future mariners. Once they are gone, we cannot get them back. That is really the essence of it.

I want to let everyone know that we support the bill without reservation. We know the bill can be stronger. It is quite vague, but it is vague in the sense of encouraging the government to adopt it. We look forward to improving aspects of the bill so my grandchildren can visit these places and see the same lighthouses that my forefathers saw and that I have seen.

● (1925)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**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):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 29 before the beginning of private members' business.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

### ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, an act respecting the effective date of the representation order of 2003 be read the third time and passed; and of the previous question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Before the interruption for the taking of the division, there were five minutes remaining to the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay. He now has the floor.

**Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few points to show that today's initiative lacks objectivity and is intended not only to advance the implementation date of the new electoral map but also to promote the political agenda of the future prime minister.

Some disturbing elements led me to that conclusion, and I will explain them to the House.

I presented my objection to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee, which heard the four members from my region, told us that there was a problem with the municipality of Chibougamau-Chapais. Apparently, that community had asked to leave the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay and be transferred to the riding of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik.

Considering that there was limited leeway—they wanted to take a riding away because there were 7,000 fewer residents—they decided, according to the resolution introduced by the mayor of Chibougamau-Chapais, to take that part of the region and include it in the riding of Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik. Therefore, we did not lose 7,000 residents, but 20,000.

*Government Orders*

That said, given that this was the issue that might cause a hitch or be unfavourable for Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, which was losing its riding, we did our homework. We met with all the city councillors. We realized that the document issued by the mayor was not valid. It was simply a letter of intent on the city's letterhead with the mayor's signature.

All of the municipal representatives were against this proposal and wanted to stay in the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay. A resolution was then signed by five of the seven municipal representatives.

We went back to the committee with this procedure, but now, it is no longer the primary reason. We are back to the numerical issue. We have lost 7,000 inhabitants over the past few years and therefore the riding of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean is being eliminated.

A vast majority of the members agreed that eliminating the riding of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean could have a dramatic effect on this community. Yet, government representatives on this committee rejected a unanimous report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. That is my first objection.

My second objection is that we find ourselves here today in a situation where, in order to help the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard in his ascent to the position of prime minister and to fill in his agenda, the coming into force of the new electoral boundaries is being speeded up.

Our community would benefit from a pause and perhaps from the next election in order to improve its demographics. We could then say to the people that here is a clear signal that we have to take charge of our destiny and that the young people must come back to the region. The population has to be informed; jobs have to be created. Instead, the opposite is being done; we have had one riding taken away and they tell us, "That is the way it is."

That is not surprising coming from the government, when we are struggling every day for the most basic things. We must not forget that all citizens send 50% of their tax dollars to Ottawa. That is \$560 million in income taxes, not counting other kinds of taxes.

Looking at employment insurance, we see there is little or no flexibility. If we look at the softwood lumber crisis, we see that the government is able to duck the issue because this is a bilateral dispute between Canada and the United States. People find it is impossible to respect the two-week waiting period and they are unable to get loan guarantees to help, for example.

And that is how it is. There is one thing I would like to say to all the members of the House. This is very bad for a community. The government is sending a very bad signal when it introduces bills like this that put communities at a disadvantage.

That said, I once again invite the House to think about the disaster this will be for our community.

• (1930)

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise this evening to speak on Bill C-49. This bill should never have come to be. The readjustment process that was announced stems from the Constitution Act, 1867. I am talking about the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

This approach to establishing the boundaries of electoral districts dates back to that time. Until now, no one has tried to change the process, which was intended to be democratic and free of political interference.

Many things are happening within the Liberal Party of Canada. It will soon be giving us our next prime minister. We all know that the member for LaSalle—Émard has his eye on the position currently held by the member for Saint-Maurice. This member of Parliament, who is not a minister of the Crown, is using the Liberal majority to distort a process that used to be a democratic one. That is serious. This situation we are facing on this October 22, 2003, is a very serious situation for democracy in Canada.

This new approach has hurt Quebec in general, and the regions of Quebec in particular. We must bear in mind that the regions of Quebec are grappling with depopulation. We have a big company economy. Big companies are no longer creating employment. They are only maintaining employment. Consequently, our young people, who are more and more highly educated and need jobs in their region, are forced to look for jobs elsewhere. That is our situation in the regions.

I think that this was not done in a way that is respectful of the regional democracies. I am my party's critic for regional development issues. This government is constantly boasting about its commitment to regional development. However, with this bill, the government, and first and foremost the member for LaSalle—Émard, is distorting the democratic process.

I have always been a political organizer. During an election, the election organizers must have everything under control so that all voters can vote. Even during the 2000 election campaign, many streets, neighbourhoods and houses were left off the voters' list. The Chief Election Officer will not be able to do his job within the time allowed. One year was set aside to establish all the new territories and new ridings to ensure transparency and accessibility so that all voters could go and vote. He will not be able to do it.

In 2000, there were huge problems with the voters' list. Things are going to get worse. The Chief Electoral Officer will never be able to enumerate everyone in all the ridings.

What is happening in the House is serious. This bill has serious consequences. It goes against the interests of my region. It deprives my region of its deserved political clout. My region, like all other regions in Canada, has the right to its share of the taxes it paid to Ottawa.

By eliminating one riding from my region, it loses its political weight. This is serious.

• (1935)

I am not opposed to the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, but I am opposed to the process undertaken by the future prime minister of Canada. This is a sign to voters and those listening that, in Canada, the Liberal Party can do anything if it has a majority.

*Government Orders*

I am a democratic sovereignist, but the federalist Liberals are not democrats, because they want to move up a process regulated by the Constitution Act, 1867. As a result, we have a right to know what the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard is hiding behind this process.

He wants more seats in Ontario, because he knows that Quebec will lose political weight in the regions. The Bloc Québécois had asked to increase the number of seats in Quebec to 77 so the regions could maintain their political weight. We are trying to bring people back to the regions, but this process will not help. It will undermine our efforts.

The more we participate in political fora to defend our regions—before municipalities, the provincial legislatures or the federal government—the more we can talk about our own region and sing its praises. I am not saying that the three members who are elected will not do so, but I am talking about the consequences of this bill. It reverses a process that was already established.

I will run in the Jonquière riding, which will include Alma, Saint-Ambroise, Saint-Charles-de-Bourget, Saint-David-de-Falardeau and Bégin. These additions enlarge the riding, but as I have always been a regional member, I do not think the voters who are added to the Jonquière riding will lose any political weight.

However, I think this process should set off warning bells. I do not know what they will try to impose on us next. You know what has happened with the Liberal Party. There was the whole sponsorship affair. They took taxpayers' money and used it the way they wanted with their cronies.

Have the Liberals launched this process because they are afraid to face the voters? Is the member for LaSalle—Émard concerned about not having a majority in Quebec?

We have to wonder, and I think Quebeckers do wonder. Democracy is an accumulation of many small actions that make us a democratic society. But I do not think the Liberal Party can pretend to be democratic in this legislative process.

As the member for Jonquière, in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean area, and as the Quebec critic for regional development, I think the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard is sending signals that should scare the regions. He is telling them he will not take care of them, that they should fend for themselves, that he just does not care.

The opposite approach should be taken. The 17 administrative regions of Quebec are very important. What would Quebec do without them? It would be a serious problem, because it is the identity of the regions that has helped make Quebec different from other Canadian provinces.

I do not have anything against those Canadian provinces who will get more members, when Quebec regions will lose representatives they are entitled to because of the taxes they pay.

The Bloc Québécois, the member for Jonquière and all members from my region who have the interests of their constituents at heart will vote against this bill, because it is undemocratic. But I am not sure the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord will vote against it.

● (1940)

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, like my colleague from Jonquière, I too will speak to Bill C-49.

There are a number of aspects to this bill which we find disturbing. First of all, the partisan and anti-democratic aspect of this process. Then there is what they want to do to the regions, which is contrary to the communities of interest and will be to their detriment.

We know that Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia will have more members representing them in the House. Then there will be other ridings that will disappear, including Lac-Saint-Jean and Mauricie

I will begin with some examples of the partisan nature of this bill. Today we are speaking out against rushing through the process of adopting the new boundaries. This is partisan, because it appears that the chief electoral officer has been approached—by the member for LaSalle—Émard via one of his policy advisers—and advised of that member's intention of holding an early election, as soon as next spring.

We are aware that the new electoral map was to take effect according to the rules, that is to say 12 months after the Electoral Boundaries Commission tabled its final report, or in August 2004.

The future prime minister, the member for LaSalle—Émard, wants to rush the election. He wants it in April. That is why we are debating this today, and why members are going to be forced to vote in favour of this bill, so that it can take effect in April. As a result, there can be new electoral boundaries in April. My riding, I would add, is one of those affected.

For the member for LaSalle—Émard, he who is so concerned about the whole business of the democratic deficit being experienced here in Parliament, this was a good opportunity to show his concern. But no, he does the same as all parliamentarians, all governments before him, desirous of retaining power. He thumbs his nose at the democratic process for enacting this bill. What is more, he takes the liberty of intervening with the chief electoral officer, through his policy adviser.

He himself clearly told the procedure and House affairs committee that he had intervened and that he had told the Chief Electoral Officer or a member of his staff that he intended to call an early election.

There is therefore this aspect, the democratic deficit, that taints the process. Why would we want to call an early election in April when we know that legislation is on the table and that we could be here in the House for three months working to implement important bills? The minister says that he is very concerned about the democratic deficit, but where is his concern when it comes to the exercise of democracy?

We find this very annoying. Instead of waiting until August, which would be the normal process, we will move it up. This means that the current session will be very short because this is what the member for LaSalle—Émard wants.

*Government Orders*

There was a vote tonight on a very important bill dealing with anti-scab provisions. One of my colleagues worked for years on this bill. Where was the member for LaSalle—Émard, who claims to be very concerned about democracy in this House? He is already out campaigning, but we do not know where he stands on several important issues that will be discussed in the House during the months to come.

● (1945)

There is also another irritant, and that is the fact that Quebec's political weight is reduced compared to Parliament as a whole. We wanted the number of members representing Quebec to be increased. We wanted the number of ridings to be increased from 75 to 77. Instead, the opposite will happen.

Out of the 301 members representing Canada, Quebec now has 75. The number of members will be increased by seven, but they will come from Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta.

I would like to make this point, because I think the regions' political weight is also being eroded. Several regions have lost a riding, including Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay. This riding will disappear. Instead of four members in the region of Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, there will be three. The same thing will happen in Mauricie; there will be only two members instead of three.

I repeat that those new boundaries are being created to the detriment of Quebec. The Bloc Québécois had proposed that the number of ridings be increased from 75 to 77. We wanted to preserve the identity and increase the representation of the regions, and that was entirely warranted. We wanted ridings of a reasonable size.

Let me give you one example of an absurd situation. The member representing the Manicouagan riding, a Bloc Québécois member, will have to cover 340,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land, more than 58 times the size of Prince Edward Island, where there are four ridings.

I mentioned that fact during our visits in each of our regions. Members of the commission present during our proceedings told me that it was not a valid argument and that it seemed a bit partisan to insist on the difference between Quebec and Prince Edward Island.

However, Manicouagan, one single riding 58 times the size of Prince Edward Island, will cover 340,000 km<sup>2</sup>. This is unacceptable and I think it is unfair for the regions in Quebec.

I would also like to point out another fact. In some circumstances deemed to be extraordinary, the commission does not have to abide by the rules on electoral quotas. Do the circumstances in the Manicouagan riding not qualify as extraordinary? It could have been allowed to depart from the provincial quota, set at 96,500 residents for each riding, by 25% so that the community of interests and of history was better represented.

The commission could have treated us like Prince Edward Island and allowed fewer people in an electoral riding in the interests of maintaining a human quality. Just think about it. The Manicouagan riding covers 340,000 km<sup>2</sup>, or 58 times the size of Prince Edward Island, where there are 4 ridings.

Quebec was cheated in this readjustment process. We must denounce it and let our constituents know about it.

● (1950)

In my own area, we are always happy to welcome new constituents, but there was a community of interest in the Quebec riding with the Limoilou sector, which will now be part of the Beauport riding. Limoilou and Beauport will be in the same riding. Part of my own riding will extend further north. There are deep differences of interest.

There is also the problem of accessibility to our riding offices for constituents. Just imagine how many riding offices we will need. Will members' budgets be increased so they can have several offices in these vast ridings?

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to this bill, as all my colleagues have been as well. As the last one to speak, I think it has all been said. All I need do is emphasize the importance this bill holds in the eyes of the Bloc Québécois, the people of Quebec and the population of Canada as well, we hope.

To explain the context a bit, even in my own riding the people are wondering why the changes to boundaries. Often ridings include municipalities that are a sort of buffer zone. Each time there is a revision of the electoral map, people find themselves bounced from one riding to another, from one region to another.

This is likely one of the reasons for public disaffection and poor voter turnout. Looking for example at the regions where ridings are slated to disappear, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, for instance, the people have been told that their three ridings will be changed to two. More or less the same thing is happening in Côte-Nord. The community of interests is gone. People are integrated within a new reality with which they really cannot identify. Perhaps—maybe I should say probably—people feel more and more distant from their elected representatives. They wonder why they should even bother to go out and vote in the next election, since they will be in a different riding next time anyway. So there is a poorer turnout.

Why are these changes being made? It must be acknowledged that it is not because the party in power woke up one morning and decided that this or that riding would be eliminated. That is not how it works. I will give a quick explanation, for the benefit of our constituents.

Representation in this House is readjusted after each decennial census done by Statistics Canada, to account for any population changes and movements in Canada and Quebec. This process is governed by the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

*Government Orders*

I am in a good position to discuss this subject and I will take this opportunity to thank the people I had the privilege to work with during my first term in 1993. I used to represent the riding of Terrebonne, which is now Repentigny. This shows how ridings can change. Changes not only affect borders, but also names and representation. During the second election campaign, in 1997, I lost the municipalities of Terrebonne and Bois-des-Filion. I had developed affinities with some of the people living in these communities. I enjoyed working with these people and the mayors of Terrebonne and Bois-des-Filion.

There were 50,000 people living in Terrebonne at the time. I was told, after the decennial census, these two major municipalities would be taken away from my riding, leaving me with the five municipalities included in the present riding of Repentigny, which I still enjoy working for. Now I have learned that my riding will be cut up once again for the next election. Three more municipalities, Lachenaie, Mascouche and La Plaine, will be taken away.

After 10 years, we have even more things in common and more pleasure working with the elected officials as well as with the representatives of the business world and community groups. More than half of my riding is being changed. Luckily, there is an RCM in this riding. In Quebec, RCMs are homogeneous regions sharing communities of interest and history. For once, as far as the boundaries of the riding are concerned, the right decision was made. However, at what price and how? It came about after we asked the RCM and the Chamber of Commerce to file briefs, and asked various stakeholders, such as the school boards, business people and myself, to intervene to have these boundaries changed.

I think that the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act does not give enough opportunity for elected officials to say how the community of interests is reflected in the new electoral district.

• (1955)

The committee that hears complaints about the Electoral Boundaries Commission as a last resort, gets involved too late in the process. It is rushed through the process and accepts the decisions made by three of the commission's representatives. One person represents Quebec; there is a representative for each province and each territory of Canada.

What bothers the Bloc Québécois is the idea of moving up the implementation date for this act, which has been around since 1867. New provisions always come into effect one year after the reports are tabled. Why throw a monkey wrench into the works? My colleague from Québec said earlier that they are trying to pull a fast one. We are being told that the new electoral map will come into effect five months sooner, in April. Why? For one simple reason: to give the future prime minister enough leeway to call an election.

When we are told about the democratic imbalance in the House of Commons and are asked to have a partisan vote on fundamentally non-partisan legislation, this begs the question as to why the one who wants to address the democratic deficit in the House of Commons says one thing and does another.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall the red book of 1993, since you were elected in 1993. The red book said there would be an independent

ethics counsellor to resolve the problem of ethics and of the perception of the House of Commons.

What have they done since 1993? It is true that the Liberals put it in writing first, but it is also true that the Liberals were the first to do just the opposite. Is that because the ethics counsellor is a friend of the Prime Minister? The ethics guidelines that were followed later—the government House leader will certainly agree with me—were in total contrast to the 1993 red book. I see the House leader nodding, but he does not dare do so during oral question period.

What I was saying is that this bill, which attempts to move up the date on which the electoral redistribution comes into effect by five months, and the partisan aspect of the electoral process is not acceptable to us. If they had wanted to change parts of the Elections Act, they could have responded positively to a request from the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Kingsley, when he asked that the returning officers in each riding be appointed—

**An hon. member:** —in a non-partisan way—

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau:** Yes, that they be non-partisan, as my colleague suggests.

He asked that returning officers be appointed, based on a competition, by the chief electoral officer. The Liberals refused. Why? I told them, in committee, “Do not worry: I am sure there are some competent Liberals”. I would not say they all are, but there must be some who could get through the competition for returning officer and there are some who could do the work and do it well during an election. They rejected that, too.

I am curious and I would like to do a study to find out how many countries there are where the prime minister appoints the returning officers, and the returning officers control the ridings. We have been hearing about the democratic deficit and there is a real one here, because they rejected the idea of the chief electoral officer, who is non-partisan, making such improvements to the Elections Act.

They have gone away from the democratic and non-partisan principle that has prevailed since 1867 in establishing electoral boundaries. In Quebec, we are also seeing the disappearance of regional entities, as has happened on the North Shore and in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

Demographic weight is also being lost. Yes, the Constitution and the patriated version of 1982—which Quebec did not sign—guarantees us 75 seats. It is true that Quebec did not sign the Constitution, the government House leader cannot deny that. We are guaranteed 75 seats, but that was when there were 280 seats in the House, so it was fair. However, we have remained at 75 seats, and the House of Commons has increased the number of members to 308.

If, one day, there are 500 members and we still have 75 seats—which will not happen because we will be a sovereign nation—Quebec will have no demographic weight. Under exceptional circumstances, we can have more or less 20% or 25% in certain ridings, as my hon. colleague from Québec and my other colleagues stated earlier in their speeches.

*Government Orders*

• (2000)

What we asked, simply to ensure Quebec's demographic representation, was for these exceptions to be taken into consideration. To ensure real regional representation for Quebec, mainly with respect to the North Shore and the Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, we had also asked that the economic and historical realities of those living in the regions be respected, and that the wishes of the representatives of Quebec not be set aside by making a partisan decision in a bill that should not be partisan.

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** The question is on the motion, that the question be now put. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** At the request of the chief government whip, the vote on this matter is deferred until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[*Translation*]

It being 8:05 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:05 p.m.)

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