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(HANSARD)

Monday, September 18, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 18, 1995

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

RECOGNITION OF SAME SEX SPOUSES

The House resumed from June 1 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I would like to point out to the House that there are 42 minutes remaining in the debate on Motion M-264.

[*English*]

There are 42 minutes remaining in debate on Private Members' Business Motion No. 264. When M-264 was last before the House the hon. member for Jonquière had three minutes remaining for debate.

Resuming debate.

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has moved that the government should take the measures necessary for legal recognition of same sex spouses.

By "legal recognition of same sex spouses" I am unclear whether he means same sex partners should be able to register, as I understand they can do on Denmark, or that benefits currently given to married and common law spouses should be extended to same sex partners.

Neither option is viable to my mind given the current state of the law. Perhaps it would have been a better motion had it been made in a provincial legislature rather than here in the House of Commons.

The federal government has very limited jurisdiction in the area of legal recognition of personal relationships. The constitution divides jurisdiction in the area of family law between the provincial legislatures and the federal Parliament. The jurisdiction for marriage is divided, with the provinces being responsible for the solemnization of marriage.

Until fairly recently historical common law spouses were not recognized by our law. The term is a misnomer in any event as common law spouses do not actually exist in common law or judge made law. They actually are created by statute law; not one statute at that but by a large number of statutes at both federal and provincial levels. In other words, unless a particular statute specifically provides that a reference to spouse will include common law relationships they are not included for the purpose of the benefit in issue.

The major statute laws that recognize common law spouses are the provincial family law statutes. These statutes create the major legal obligations imposed on common law spouses should the relationship break down. They deal with the division of property, support obligations between former spouses and any children, and yet even here the provincial law is not consistent across the country. Common law spouses are subject to different legal obligations under different provincial family law statutes across the provinces. They are not even recognized in two provinces including Quebec, the province of residence of the hon. member proposing this measure.

• (1105)

Common law marriage is a quite different concept from that of common law spouses. Common law marriage existed only in the early settlement days of Canada when a minister or a priest was often difficult to find. Although there is some speculation that the concept may still exist in common law in Canada, it would apply only in opposite sex context. Therefore if the provincial family law is the main source of legal obligations between spouses, then it would seem more appropriate that any legal recognition of same sex partners would come first under provincial family law. As I understand it, this was primarily the way in which common law relationships first gained legal recognition.

As a result of several high profile cases before the Supreme Court of Canada, the courts recognized through the doctrines of unjust enrichment and constructive trust the contribution of a woman who had lived for a long period of time with a man as married, even though they had not married.

Legislative changes followed thereafter, starting primarily with family law and then slowly with provincial family law and then slowly moving into the benefits field. This legal recogni-

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tion is recent in Canadian law. The changes to the Income Tax Act to reorganize common law spouses have just come about in the last year or two, after the majority of provincial family law statutes recognized the status. It is only recently that the majority of the Supreme Court of Canada stated in the Miron decision that in the circumstances of this case it was discriminatory to treat unmarried couples differently from married couples.

The only references in federal law to personal relationships either follow blood or marriage relationships, which are relatively easy to prove, or copy provincial family law definitions of common law relationships. At the federal level spouses are mostly included in legislation for the purposes of employment benefits, government pension plans, income tax and so on.

The concern is that if we were to extend these benefits to same sex partners at the federal level first, before the provincial family law extends any legal obligations, this could create a situation of unfairness. Spouses, both married and common law, are currently subject to a package of legal rights and responsibilities created by a combination of federal and provincial laws.

It is because spouses are subject to legal obligations, such as support obligations on the breakdown of the relationship, that they are also eligible for benefits, such as survivor benefits under pension plans. It is for the provinces to extend the obligations before we should extend benefits under federal jurisdiction.

How would we accomplish what the hon. member is asking for? How would we take the measures necessary for the legal recognition of same sex spouses, even were we to agree that this should be done? It is clear from the history of the recognition of common law relationships that this was not accomplished by passing a statute called the common law spouses act, nor was this legal recognition even accomplished by the government at any level.

The fact of social change was first acknowledged by the courts in looking at unfairness and unjust enrichment between two partners who had not married. The courts felt strongly that individuals who were living together as if married and so were getting all of the advantages of being married, such as working together to afford a better lifestyle than either would have been able to achieve living alone, should not be able to avoid taking on the obligations of married persons simply by choosing not to marry. Particularly in a situation such as that represented in the first few high profile cases, the common law wife needed the protection of the law.

However, this is a controversial enough subject with regard to opposite sex common law couples. Many common law couples continue to disagree and feel frustrated that the law deems their

relationship to be akin to marriage after a certain time has passed. Many still feel that their choice not to marry should be respected by the law.

How much more of a problem will this be with same sex couples who may not be public about their relationships? Conversely, is it fair to recognize those same sex couples who do wish to be open about their relationships?

For a number of reasons, the motion is premature and not feasible for the federal government to adopt without the full co-operation of the provincial legislatures.

• (1110)

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with this opportunity to rise in the House today, especially since I unconditionally support Motion M-264, which seeks the legal recognition of same sex spouses. Voting for this motion will give nearly 10 per cent of the population the recognition to which it is entitled.

Since the Quebec government launched its prerferendum campaign, the federal government has spent millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to convince us that Canada is one of the best countries in the world to live in, a country that is tolerant and, especially, a country that accepts diversity.

I therefore ask this government to act accordingly and support the motion standing in the name of my colleague, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. In fact, the hon. member for Central Nova told us in her speech on the same topic that Canadians are tolerant and that they respect and appreciate diversity.

Will the government be as tolerant and show as much respect for diversity as the hon. member? In May 1994, the Minister of Justice also promised to redefine, in fairly broad terms, the ties between people who live together, are interdependent and should therefore have the same social benefits as traditional families, which does not mean—and I can understand that—changing the concept of the family. Let us be clear about this. The motion does not seek to redefine the family but to enhance the rights of certain people and ensure that discrimination against homosexuals is unacceptable in Canada.

Last June, the Reform Party member for Elk Island reminded us, and I quote: "As legislators, we have a responsibility, an obligation, a high calling to do what is right for our country and its citizens". He directed this message to all Canadians, without exception. It included all Canadians. Consequently, our role as legislators, in my opinion, is to set an example by being openminded, by our sense of justice and our sense of fairness.

That is why, according to this motion, we have a duty to amend, yes, amend all provisions of Canadian legislation concerning spouses. It is a matter of justice, fairness and equality for all citizens.

Let us recall that, last May, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously agreed that sexual orientation should be added to section 15 of the charter, thus prohibiting discrimination against homosexual men and women.

While the cities of Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa—to name but a few—as well as many private and public companies also recognize same sex spouses, we in the Parliament of Canada, a supposedly tolerant country that allows anyone to make racist comments or distribute hate propaganda, deny such a basic right to 10 per cent of our population.

• (1115)

I see this as an injustice. A closer look at the definition of the term “discrimination” shows that it means imposing on an individual or group of individuals certain burdens, obligations or—as in this case—disadvantages that are not imposed on other groups. Discrimination also means denying or restricting access to the opportunities, benefits or advantages offered to other members of society. That is discrimination.

In fact, the Quebec human rights commission has recommended that the government review all its laws and regulations and pass a law that would make all legislation dealing with spousal issues comply with the charter, so that same sex spouses can enjoy the same rights as heterosexual common law couples.

Will allowing same sex spouses to take bereavement leave when their lifelong partners die change anything for heterosexual Canadians? Will allowing same sex spouses to receive benefits from public pension plans after their partners die or to contribute to spousal RRSPs change anything for the remaining 90 per cent of the Canadian population? I do not even want to hear the argument that such a measure would result in higher costs.

According to the studies done by many private and even public companies, it would cost less than 1 per cent to correct this situation. Since this Parliament is supposedly not homophobic—as many members keep bragging about in this House—I see no reason why we should not recognize same sex spouses. This would be quite normal and not a privilege granted to one group of people. On the contrary, it would simply be fair to a segment of our population.

I remind you that this is 1995. Today’s reality is completely different from what it was 50, 30 or even 10 years ago. Federalists boast that this institution, the Parliament of Canada, is not out of step, obsolete or ossified. They should just prove it and stop talking about the status quo. The status quo is nothing

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but a vacuum. Again, voting in favour of this motion does not recognize any special rights except for the right to equality. Quebecers are fed up with the double standard inherent in this government’s policies. We already know that a sovereign Quebec will fight such measures. The question is: Will the Canadian government be as courageous as the Quebec government?

[*English*]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, welcome back to the House. It is good to be here.

It is a privilege to speak to this motion today because the issue of same sex marriage has been raised to such a high level of awareness in Canada.

As I see it the motion can be approached in two different ways. We can talk about the morality of the homosexual lifestyle which is a bona fide thing to do. After all, the gay and lesbian community bases its arguments for inclusion on moral grounds arguing that what it does is morally acceptable and therefore worthy of government recognition. However, it is not necessary to cast same sex benefits in a moral framework. We can leave aside the moral question for another day and approach this from a pragmatic viewpoint. To set the stage for a pragmatic discussion, allow me to talk about definitions for a moment because this motion is really about societal definitions.

• (1120)

Our society is becoming less and less categorical in its societal definitions and more graduated in every way. Let me give an example. There used to be a huge distinction between social classes in society. If one was born a peasant one could never be a nobleman and vice versa. However, for a variety of historical reasons the distinctions between classes disappeared and status and influence are now seen to be on a gradual continuum, except perhaps for a few people born lucky like the Royals or maybe the Kennedys.

Morality is another example. Things used to be seen in black and white in a moral sense because the laws people lived by were held to be revealed by God. Although these laws seemed arbitrary, the sharply defined moral categories lent a certain stability to life in society.

Over the last two centuries people became less convinced about God and divine law so the old value categories became blurred and fuzzy. The new values are relative to each situation. People say that there are no absolutes and that each situation must be judged on its own merits.

The assault on all social definitions in our society also applies to the family. Last year was the UN year of the family and the theme was “The Family—The Smallest Democracy at the Heart of Society”. This statement marks an enormous redefinition in our culture, that a family is a democracy.

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Authority used to be categorical with parents giving the orders and the children listening. If the UN had its way, family matters might be decided democratically. I do not know how but that is what the UN suggests.

However since any undemocratic organization is no longer considered to be legitimate in the eyes of the state, this would give the state the rationale to intervene in what it would call an authoritarian family or traditional family. The idea of a democratic family therefore reduces the authority of parents and fundamentally alters the security of the family in relation to the state.

Just as the authority within the family is being dispersed, the definition of family seems to be broadening. Listen to what Hillary Clinton said last year, ironically on Mother's Day. Talking about the family she said: "If it ever did, the traditional family no longer does consist of two parents, two children, a dog, a house with a white picket fence and a stationwagon in the driveway".

The First Lady went on to recommend what she called the extended family to fill the void as traditional families dwindle and to look out for friends, neighbours and fellow citizens as they would members of their own families. She concluded by saying: "When the traditional bonds of family are too often frayed we all need to appreciate that in a very real sense we have all become an extended family".

What the First Lady really said is that the traditional family, the defining boundary between the mom, the dad and the kids is now disappearing and a continuum of other relationships should be added to it. Here a conflict emerges. At the same time as societal definitions broaden, for financial reasons the ability of all governments to grant benefits is being severely restricted. In order to apportion benefits in some rational manner the logical answer for government is to narrow its definitions of who may receive them. Therefore governments should be looking to restrict their definitions, not broaden them.

I am not pronouncing a judgment on whether or not homosexuals should live together. However, I am saying that for the purposes of government benefits society cannot afford to broaden its definitions to apportion benefits to many more new groups, including homosexual unions.

The member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve may argue that he does not want benefits; he simply wants rights, specifically the right to be recognized as a married couple. He might say that a marriage ceremony does not cost anything but in Canada rights are the door to entitlements.

The concept of entitlement is a very powerful thing in Canadian law. If a person is defined as someone who is eligible to receive unemployment insurance for example that benefit becomes a right, an entitlement and no one can deny it to that person. Marriage brings with it entitlements as well. Once the right has been given there would be no way to hold back the benefits.

There is another reason to decide against this motion. The redefinition of the family would open up a Pandora's box of definition problems for other groups. There is no logical stopping point between a homosexual couple and any number of other unions. If a homosexual couple wants to be a family why not roommates or people living together in group homes? Why not close friends living under different roofs? By surrendering the traditional definition of the family, government would surrender its ability to choose who receives benefits and who does not.

• (1125)

I want to remind members that in practice the concept of the nuclear family is really quite static. As late as 1949 anthropologist George Murdock completed a study of 250 societies worldwide and said: "The nuclear family is a universal human social grouping either as the sole prevailing form of the family or as the basic unit from which more complex familial forms are compounded. It exists as a distinct and strongly functional group in every known society".

A Stats Canada study released last year found that in 1941, well prior to that study, 88 per cent of Canadians were living in nuclear families. In 1991, 87 per cent of Canadians were still living in this husband and wife model. In other words the number of people living in nuclear families or in husband and wife with children families has remained constant for 50 years.

Therefore attitudes toward the nuclear family and real life practice are not changing as much as we are led to believe by activists who manipulate or would like to manipulate members of Parliament and the media. Members should not be stampeded toward redefinition by media criticism and noisy pressure group tactics.

It seems to me that interest groups exercising profound political pressure over several decades have managed to slice up the government benefits pie in ways that are advantageous to them and disadvantageous to nuclear families when the nuclear family is one of the foundations of our society and needs to be strengthened, not weakened.

For this reason I introduced a private member's bill called the auditor general for the family act. This bill would establish a small body with a limit of 20 employees to advise Parliament about the ways it could support and strengthen the nuclear family in Canada. It is interesting that later this week we will be debating in the House the need for the country to have an environmental auditor yet we do not have the same sort of thing advocating on behalf of the nuclear family.

I am proud of the bill I have put together because although society might accept a wide variety of living arrangements it should not be obligated to support every societal arrangement. It must allocate its precious resources to those tried and true social structures which have been common within Canadian society for centuries and are common across literally hundreds of cultures around the world.

The February issue of *U.S. News and World Report* details studies from the states showing that moms and dads together are the ideal parental form. Nothing else is as effective in cutting poverty and fighting crime, teenage pregnancies, suicide and mental illness. Even so, nuclear families continue to be discriminated against even in taxation within our own country. The time has come to expose this government sanctioned discrimination against nuclear families. That is why I hope when my bill does come up for a vote we will be able to deal with that properly.

In closing, I want the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve with whom I sat on the standing committee for human rights in the last session to know that I appreciate him and his work on the committee even though we might disagree on this issue. Although I state freely that I have moral reservations about the homosexual lifestyle, I have approached the issue purely on the pragmatic reasons I have outlined. Same sex benefits are not in the public interest.

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this debate on the motion put forward by my hon. colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take the measures necessary for the legal recognition of same sex spouses.

Mr. Speaker, I would like first of all to commend the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for having the courage to table in this House a motion that makes us see, in terms of human rights, what is really at stake here and, more importantly, where the members of this House, particularly our colleagues from the Reform Party as well as certain members of the Liberal majority, really stand on this issue.

Several of my colleagues, including the hon. member for Chicoutimi who spoke a moment ago, the hon. member for Jonquière who spoke during the first hour of debate and, of course, the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, addressed the merits of the question of recognizing the rights of same sex spouses, the need to take action and the economic impact of such a decision. I therefore have no intention of repeating what was said as these points were quite aptly made.

Private Members' Business

• (1130)

I would like to address what appears to be the main issue: Is this a debate on homosexuality or a debate on human rights?

It is true that we are used to hearing our colleagues from the Reform Party talk that way. One would think that Reform members have become all round right wing fundamentalists. We are used to this kind of language, but there is still a limit to what I can tolerate.

When it comes to despicable, shameful and downright unacceptable remarks, our Liberal colleague from Central Nova takes the cake. She was heard making such remarks more than once in this House; first, during the debate on Bill C-41 and again when she spoke on the motion put forward by my hon. colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. What she said was a disgrace—I repeat, a disgrace—for this House, the Liberal majority and democracy itself.

What is it that the member for Central Nova said and was applauded for by Reform members? In her remarks on Bill C-41, she said, and I quote: “Homosexuality is not natural; it is immoral and it is undermining the inherent rights and values of our Canadian families and it must not and should not be condoned”.

And she added: “—a faction in our society which is undermining and destroying our Canadian values and Christian morality—We have the majority—I suppose she is referring to the heterosexual community here. We have a democracy. I am representing in my viewpoint the majority of Canadians”.

If this is the kind of society and the kind of freedom that Canada has to offer, and if the member for Central Nova is, as she claimed, speaking on behalf of most Canadians, then it is urgent for us Quebecers to get out of this country.

We take exception to such comments. The debate in this House is on the motion tabled by my colleague, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, and it has to do with human rights, not homosexuality. If there are members in this House who have doubts as to their own sexual orientation, they should go for some therapy. This is not the place for group therapy. As a democratic institution, Parliament must ensure that democratic values are respected and promoted. I dare say that one of the most important democratic values is the respect of individuals in each and every one of our families.

We all know men and women who live their homosexuality. Do Reform Party members claim that these people should be eliminated, that their most basic rights should not be recognized? We are not saying that the House should pass a motion to promote homosexuality, no more than it should promote heterosexuality. What we are saying is that if two people, whether a man and a woman, two men or two women, decide to live

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together, why should they not be treated with respect and fairness in our laws? This is what the debate is all about. This is the issue that we will vote on in a few minutes.

I did not hear many Liberal Party members speak in favour of this motion. Am I to understand that they support the views expressed by the member for Central Nova?

• (1135)

I am putting the question to them. There are a few minutes left and I would appreciate an answer. This is a fundamental debate on human rights. These days, and this is particularly true of Liberal Party members, many are trying to champion individual freedoms in Quebec. I would like to hear some Liberal members address the issue today.

It should also be pointed out that values evolve with time. Let me quote the member for Central Nova. She made these comments in this House, during the debate on this motion. I could not believe what I was hearing. On June 1, 1995, the member said, in reference to the motion tabled by the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve: "All these demands are encroaching on and undermining the inherent and inviolable rights of families. Families have existed before the church. Families have existed before the state. Parliament has absolutely no legal or constitutional authority to redefine family, or to enter into the realm of the sanctity of marriage". Given the reasoning of the member for Central Nova, there would never have been a Parliament, since Parliament is there to pass legislation and grant rights to the population.

Again, since Parliament necessarily came after families and after the church, it would never have existed, based on the member's reasoning. As we all know, and as the member for Chicoutimi pointed out just a few moments ago, values change over time. Thirty or forty years ago, there was no recognition of common law spouses. Divorced people were pointed at, perceived within their communities as abnormal, as needing to be watched and reported on. Unwed mothers had to hide away, give birth to their babies in institutions and then give them up. All that barely 30 or 40 years ago. That is how it was in Quebec and I imagine it was the same everywhere in Canada.

The disabled were seen as invalids who generally had to be institutionalized. Seventy-five years ago, Canadian women did not have the right to vote. Fifty years ago that was the situation in Quebec. There was slavery in the United States 150 years ago. Four hundred years ago Galileo was imprisoned for saying that the earth was round. Human kind has evolved since it first appeared on this planet. I trust that this process will continue and that the example of the member for Central Nova will be nothing more than one unfortunate anecdote in the history of humanity.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I remind the House the question will be put at 11.45 a.m. We entered this debate at 11.03 a.m. with 42 minutes of maximum debate time. I want to forewarn the House.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Motion No. 264 I will focus my discussion on three of the concerns I have relating to this motion: the opposition Canadians appear to hold in recognizing same sex relationships; the extremely limited number of people such drastic changes would benefit; the excessive cost both in time and money resulting from the passage and implementation of Motion No. 264.

Much of the debate over this motion has centred around the various financial and legal benefits currently available only to opposite sex couples. The reasoning behind these benefits lies in the desire of all levels of government to protect and preserve the two parent nuclear family.

From biblical times to the present day, the traditional family has been viewed as an ideal family structure. As well, it is the building block of the extended family, the cornerstone of contemporary Canadian life.

The dozens of programs directed toward traditional couples and families have been brought in over many years after careful study and discussion.

• (1140)

Support of the traditional family remains widespread today. According to a recent Angus Reid poll, 68 per cent of all Canadians believe the traditional two parent family is the very best family model in which to raise children. If we talk to educators and counsellors across the country they will tell us that on average the most well adjusted, well behaved children are those who come from the traditional ideal family model consisting of a father, a mother and children.

The sorts of radical changes advocated by the motion do nothing whatsoever to enhance the nuclear family. Rather, they remove the distinctiveness and uniqueness, reducing the traditional family structure from the ideal choice to simply one choice among a range of options. I refuse to stand by and let this happen.

It appears this opinion is shared by the vast majority of Canadians. Again according to a recent Angus Reid poll, a poll conducted for the international year of the family, a solid 60 per cent of Canadians rejected the idea of benefits for same sex couples and 85 per cent objected to paying higher taxes to fund benefits for same sex couples.

As well, a recent constituency poll showed me that 77 per cent of the people in my riding oppose the official sanctioning of same sex couples in the manner the hon. member is advocating. The people of Cariboo—Chilcotin and the people of Canada have spoken out on the motion. They are not saying no to the principle of personal choice and they are not saying no to

members' sexual orientation. They are saying no to full legal recognition of same sex couples.

Motion No. 264 is asking for our opinion as MPs on the issue. Members of Parliament are charged with the duty of representing their constituents and reflecting the will of Canadians in legislation. Canadians have clearly stated their opinion in the matter and I certainly intend to respect it.

We must also be realistic about the number of people the motion and the changes it could bring into being will affect. Often the figure of 10 per cent is cited as if to create the impression of a large invisible minority clamouring for rights. However, numerous studies have placed the percentage of homosexuals within Canada at between 1 per cent and 3 per cent. According to Professor Edmund Bloedow of Carleton University, fewer than 5 per cent of these individuals are in some form of permanent or committed relationship. Sociologists Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg, in their book *Homosexualities*, assert that a mere 1 per cent of people within the homosexual community are committed to a single lifetime partner.

I therefore question the necessity and urgency of debating the principle of same sex couple recognition. The hon. member has shared with the House the normality of same sex couples and how they are virtually identical to opposite sex couples. However, academics have gone on record to argue that committed same sex couples are more the exception than the norm by far within the homosexual community.

Before the House even considers making the kinds of changes advocated by the hon. member, we as members of Parliament have to see proof that committed relationships are the ideal majority preference, not the abnormality in the homosexual context.

To grant the sort of recognition the hon. member is seeking he would have the House use hundreds of hours of precious time, changing every piece of legislation mentioning the word couple and spending millions upon millions of dollars in legal fees, additional payouts, and supplemental benefits. The end result of the motion, when all is said and done, would be either higher taxes, increased debt, or reduced funding for programs supporting the traditional family. These are results Canadians do not support.

Canada has little to gain and much to lose with the passage of the motion. When the matter comes to a vote I intend to heed the wishes of my fellow citizens and my constituents and vote against Motion No. 264 as it now stands.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a tradition in this House allowing the sponsor to close the debate. If I may I would therefore request the consent of the House to make use of that entitlement, two minutes more.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Since the period of debate is over, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve is requesting the unanimous consent of the House to conclude the debate, for a maximum duration of two minutes. Is there unanimous consent?

[*English*]

Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to close the debate?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1145)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There is no consent. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

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

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

Before the taking of the vote:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): As is the practice, the recorded vote will be taken row by row, beginning with the mover. I will then ask the other members supporting the motion on the same side of the House as the mover to kindly rise. Next, the votes of those supporting the motion on the opposite side of the House will be recorded. The votes of those opposing the motion will be recorded in the same order.

(*Division No. 331*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Bakopanos
Bélanger
Bellehumeur
Bouchard
Caccia
Caron
Clancy
Copps

Bachand
Barnes
Bélisle
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Brien
Campbell
Catterall
Cohen
Crête

Points of Order

Daviault	de Jong
de Savoye	Debien
Duceppe	Dumas
Fillion	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier
Godfrey	Godin
Graham	Guay
Guimond	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lafonde
Langlois	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Loubier
Marchand	McLaughlin
Ménard	Milliken
Minna	Nunez
Picard (Drummond)	Pomerleau
Ringuette-Maltais	Sauvageau
St-Laurent	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)—52

Nil/aucun

● (1210)

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

* * *

[English]

PAIRED MEMBERS

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anderson	Assadourian
Asselin	Bélair
Bellemare	Benoit
Bertrand	Bonin
Boudria	Breitreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud—Est)
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Calder
Canuel	Chamberlain
Chan	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Collins	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
Deshais	DeVillers
Discepola	Easter
Epp	Flis
Frazer	Gagliano
Gilmour	Goodale
Gouk	Grey (Beaver River)
Grose	Grubel
Hanger	Hanrahan
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Harris	Hart
Harvard	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ifody
Irwin	Jackson
Jacob	Jennings
Jordan	Kerpan
Kirkby	Landry
Lastewka	Lebel
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lefebvre	Lincoln
Loney	Malhi
Maloney	Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud—Ouest)	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McTeague	Mercier
Meredith	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mills (Red Deer)	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nunziata	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Payne
Penson	Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Proud	Ramsay
Reed	Rideout
Ringma	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Serré
Shepherd	Silye
Skoke	Solberg
Speaker	St. Denis
Steckle	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Thalheimer	Thompson
Valeri	Vanclief
Venne	Verran
Volpe	Wappel
Wayne	Wells
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)	Williams—124

POINTS OF ORDER

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order under citation 501 of Beauchesne's sixth edition and a ruling of the Speaker last June with regard to the wearing of exhibits in the House. I would like to challenge that the member for Halifax is wearing an exhibit which I do not think is proper in this assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I thank the member for Lethbridge for his intervention. Perhaps I might seek the counsel of the table officers for a moment, please.

The member for Lethbridge raises an issue following a ruling made by the Speaker on an issue as we drew near to the summer recess period. I would hope, as an occupant of this same chair, to maintain the consistency of the ruling of the Speaker at that time.

I must state unequivocally that I did not personally view the exhibit, be it a lapel button or otherwise. However, if in fact it drew the attention of a member or others we would hope and call upon members on both sides of the House to be mindful of the ruling of the Speaker in June regarding exhibits, lapel pins, et cetera. The Chair will endeavour to maintain a consistent interpretation of that ruling throughout this session.

● (1215)

I thank the member for Lethbridge for his intervention. I regret I cannot act differently. As I said, I did not personally view this exhibit. I trust that this intervention will remind us all of the ruling in June, that we will be respectful of that ruling and adhere to the intervention of the Speaker.

I thank the member for Lethbridge for his intervention.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

I believe you will find unanimous consent to have the following motion put to the House without the usual notice and that it be disposed of without debate.

I move:

That the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be modified as follows: Arseneault, Guy; Beaumier, Colleen; Boudria, Don; Catterall, Marlene; Duceppe, Gilles; Frazer, Jack; Langlois, François; Laurin, René; Malhi, Gurbax Singh; McWhinney, Edward; Milliken, Peter; Parrish, Carolyn; Ringma, Bob; Speaker, Ray.

And that the associate members of the said committee be as follows: Bélanger, Mauril; Bellehumeur, Michel; Bertrand, Robert; Brushett, Dianne; Cowling, Marlene; Epp, Ken; Gauthier, Michel; Grey, Deborah; Jordan, Jim; Leroux, Gaston; Pickard, Jerry; Plamondon, Louis; Solomon, John and Williams, John.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

AUDITOR GENERAL ACT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.) moved that Bill C-83, an act to amend the Auditor General Act be now read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, today with the proposed amendments to the Auditor General Act, I believe the government is making profound changes in the way it does business in order to make sure that its environmental agenda is integrated with Canada's economic agenda.

Today we are also fulfilling a major election commitment of the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party. In the red book we said:

Sustainable development, integrating economic with environmental goals fits in the Liberal tradition of social investment and sound economic policy. Preventive environmental care is the foundation of the Liberal approach to sustainable development.

We also said:

It is past time for the federal government across all departments to act on this understanding by adopting economic and environmental agendas that converge.

Since assuming office we have tried to be guided by this belief. Our approach has been to integrate economic, social, environmental and foreign policies.

I believe we are serious about promoting sustainable development. We are serious about the greening of government. We are serious about getting the federal government's act together on environmental issues. We want to be held accountable for our environmental actions and our environmental planning.

Government Orders

We are serious about these things because Canadians want a healthy country in which we and our children can work to achieve our aspirations.

[Translation]

One vital aspect of our approach is to ensure that the environment and sustainable development form an integral part of the decision-making process in all federal government departments.

We are therefore talking about decisions on new policy, new programs and new regulations or legislation and on existing texts. We are also talking about decisions concerning departmental management of buildings, facilities and operations.

Proposals for amendments to the Auditor General Act now before the House will result in much of the integration we are aiming for. They form a key part of the government's response last fall to the initial report by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, entitled the "commissioner of environment and sustainable development".

• (1220)

Under the enlightened leadership of the hon. member for Davenport and with the support of all the members, the report gave careful consideration to the government's commitment in the red book to establishing an environmental function equivalent to that of the auditor general. The committee felt that, while it is vital to audit existing government documents, it is even more important to ensure that environmental considerations are a fundamental consideration in all departmental planning.

The committee called for greater environmental auditing of government policies, programs and legislation. It felt that the government must report to Parliament and to the public on the progress it makes in achieving its objectives.

[English]

The committee advocated the idea that the government go beyond simply an environmental auditor and instead establish a commissioner of environment and sustainable development. In these proposed amendments to the Auditor General Act the government will establish a commissioner and I hope meet the objectives of the committee's report.

The amendments do contain one departure from the committee's report and that is to create the commissioner of environment and sustainable development not as a separate position but within the existing framework of the office of the auditor general as recommended in the minority report. This is not in any way to be seen as a retreat from our red book pledge. Indeed I believe it will prove to be an effective way of achieving our promise.

The office of the auditor general has clout. When the auditor general speaks, departments of government listen. It is indepen-

Government Orders

dent from government, it is well respected and it has the expertise, as we saw recently in its initial assessments of environmental auditing of the government.

For all these reasons I believe it can greatly enhance the government's auditing of its environmental performance. There is another advantage to this innovation. Within the work of the auditor general, issues of environment and sustainable development must be directly integrated into economic considerations. This kind of integration is what sustainable development must be about. It is not a separate vertical approach but rather a horizontal approach which must de facto involve every department of government.

What then is the substance of these amendments to the Auditor General Act that I am proposing today?

[*Translation*]

First, as I mentioned, these amendments establish the role of the commissioner of the environment and of the office of sustainable development within the office of the auditor general, as the official opposition has proposed. The commissioner would report directly to the auditor general and would work with him to evaluate the government's implementation of sustainable development policies and practices. The commissioner and the auditor general would also work together in reporting to the House of Commons on the government's practices in matters of ecology and sustainable development.

[*English*]

No matter who the auditor general is, the amendments bind the office of the auditor general and the commissioner for sustainable development to encourage consideration of environment and sustainable development in all official duties. They do that by explicitly incorporating sustainable development and environment into the Auditor General Act. They do it by requiring the auditor general to take environmental effect into account when preparing all reports to the House of Commons.

For the first time an independent commissioner has a mandate and responsibility to follow up and report on what the government is doing or failing to do in meeting its environmental commitments. I must say entre parenthèses that one of the first departments the office of the commissioner will be looking at is my department, the Department of the Environment. We welcome the opportunity of independent public review because we believe it will accelerate the integration of the two key objectives of sustainable development and their integration into the economy.

We know that the blaze of publicity that attends each auditor general's report of financial failings has caused governments in the past to move and to take a different path. We can expect an impact at least as great for reports of environmental shortcom-

ings and that publicity or the urge to avoid it should be a powerful spur to government action, a spur in more ways than one.

• (1225)

At times this may make things uncomfortable for us in government. It may make things uncomfortable for us as ministers and as members of the government but we are prepared and welcome that discomfort if the end is better government for Canadians. Better integration of sustainable development is a key factor in making decisions.

Imagine if we had taken into account sustainable development many years ago when we were making decisions about how to allocate quota of the cod stock. Look at the price we pay today for the thousands of fishermen who do not have fish to catch simply because we did not develop sustainable fisheries, not only domestically but internationally.

I had the privilege recently of participating in an environmental trade mission to the Far East. In discussions several governments were very interested in the concept of the commissioner for sustainable development. They understand, as we understand, the times when a department of the environment is the only department responsible for sustainable development are gone. We need integration through the highest levels of government. I believe the influence of the office of the auditor general and the new commissioner for sustainable development and the environment will be able to deliver that cross-cutting analysis of all government policy.

[*Translation*]

The scope of the amendments goes beyond a mere institutionalizing of procedures for monitoring and reporting on government activities.

More directly, these amendments require all federal departments to take environmental action. They go further than the red book's commitment in that they vigorously promote sustainable development through government activities.

Under the Act as amended, each department has two years to prepare a strategy for sustainable development, to be presented in the House of Commons by the minister responsible. The strategy must be results oriented. It should include the department's objectives and a plan of action to attain those objectives.

[*English*]

In effect this legislation will make every minister a minister for sustainable development. For example, the industry minister will be responsible for the portfolio and also for ensuring the Department of Industry operates in an environmentally sound way. The same is true for the foreign affairs minister, the transport minister and all of our colleagues.

Government Orders

This is a step forward in making sustainable development more than a concept. The departmental strategies will assist the auditor general and the commissioner in not only monitoring government for preparation of their reports to Parliament but they will also serve as benchmarks by which the commissioner and the auditor general can assess each government department's performance in making that shift to sustainable development.

By the way, the auditor general and the stakeholders have already indicated the need for such benchmarks. We need to show where progress is being made and if not, why not. This is not a one shot affair to be undertaken with fanfare and then quickly forgotten. Every three years each department must update its sustainable development strategy and its minister must table the update in Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Thanks to these amendments, Canadians will be able to play their part by ensuring that the government is responsive to expectations with respect to the environment. The Auditor General will have the authority to receive petitions from the public about environmental matters and forward them to the appropriate minister.

The number and purpose of petitions received by ministers and the status of these files will be monitored, and the commissioner will report on the results obtained to the House of Commons.

[*English*]

The amendments also require the commissioner to report every year to the House of Commons on behalf of the auditor general. These reports can focus on anything related to sustainable development, whatever the commissioner feels important enough to bring to the attention of the House. In particular, the commissioner's annual report will show how far governments and departments have gone in meeting the objectives and expectations they have established in their strategies.

However, the annual report will not be the only report to the House of Commons on our environmental performance.

• (1230)

These amendments will ensure that environmental observations continue to be included in the auditor general's report as well. That is important because the auditor general's reports are more general in scope and they will include considerations of effectiveness and the environment. One of the commissioner's duties will be to assist the auditor general in preparing aspects of those reports referring to the environment and sustainable development.

We are wasting no time in moving on our obligations under the Auditor General Act because we are committed to thinking green and ensuring that green government is a central component of the decisions we make as a society. Our action plan accelerating the shift to green practices in government can be reflected in the work of Environment Canada. That plan has five points: green procurement policies that emphasize reduction, reuse, and purchase of environmentally sound products; managing the department's car fleets to reduce emissions by 30 per cent within the next five years; making zero waste a target in our offices; improving energy efficiency and conserving water specifically by auditing the use of water in all Environment Canada buildings.

[*Translation*]

We have already had some major successes. At Environment Canada headquarters in Quebec City, in Sainte-Foy for instance, water consumption dropped by 9.6 million litres annually following implementation of effective ways to save water. This is a good indication of the economic potential of sustainable development.

[*English*]

In Hamilton—Wentworth at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters, which is in the city of Burlington, energy efficiency improvements are lowering carbon dioxide emissions by 5,900 tonnes. That is the equivalent per year to the emissions from 1,500 cars. That means we are saving enough energy to heat 525 homes a year.

Another example is the new guidebook entitled "A Guide to Green Government", which is signed by the Prime Minister and all cabinet ministers, to help federal departments make sustainable development their business. It will serve as ground breaking information for the commissioner when she or he reports on the success departments are having in integrating sustainable development practices. They already have "A Guide to Green Government" signed by the Prime Minister of Canada because he believes that sustainable development is a responsibility we all share. It is a responsibility shared by Canadians.

When governments prepare our strategies we must act in an open and transparent way. We must include groups with expertise, like the national round table on the environment and the economy.

[*Translation*]

Another example illustrates the fact that we take our responsibilities seriously. The Minister of Finance and I received a report from a multiparty task force that was asked to identify obstacles to sound environmental practices as well as effective ways to use economic instruments.

In the last budget, the government followed the short-term recommendations of the task force, and we hope it will do more

Government Orders

in the long term. The response will establish how the government intends to go about using these economic instruments and to develop government policies that are environmentally sound.

[English]

A final example of our commitment is the proclamation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act last January. I believe the legislation will ensure that environment is formally integrated into the project planning process of government. Through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency we are already working hard to make sure that environmental assessments of new government policies and programs are done well.

These are important measures to establish a framework.

[Translation]

For years, governments have been talking about sustainable development. We have stated our commitment to this principle, but it has not been easy to ensure compliance.

That is why environmental groups have been asking for a governmental monitoring function and for independent reporting that would focus on the government's environmental activities. They saw this as a way to force governments to keep their word. And just as persistently, our predecessors in government have steadfastly refused to take this route.

[English]

We are convinced that these initiatives will have far reaching effects within government and within society. I hope and believe they will move government and the country forward on the path from talking about sustainability to actually delivering in terms of government policies and programs. That is something Canadians can be grateful for today.

• (1235)

I want to particularly thank the parliamentary committee under the chairmanship of the hon. member for Davenport and also the members of the opposition who brought constructive suggestions to the table. I think all Canadians understand that whatever one's political stripe, when it comes to the environment we should be working on behalf of the whole country. Certainly we saw that co-operation in the work of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. If we can carry on like that in government, we will be doing okay.

[Translation]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, here we are back in the House after an exceptional summer during which many things happened.

First of all, in Quebec, under the Parti Québécois government—in partnership with our party, the Bloc Québécois, and the ADQ, the Action démocratique du Québec, with the support of many partners from all sectors of society, and in accordance

with the strong wishes of a majority of Quebecers—all of us in Quebec are moving toward the referendum, which, I am increasingly convinced, will give us a country, Quebec, in a few weeks. This is what happened in Quebec over the summer. Winds of change have been blowing and are getting stronger every day.

The Prime Minister of Canada, who says he is distinct—and I fully concur with him—mentioned that the coming referendum debate would be fun. With the winds of change getting stronger, the fun expected by our distinct federalist Prime Minister will become serious and I am sure that he will not find it so funny on October 30.

Other events have commanded my attention this past summer. As a result of a labour dispute, workers at Ogilvie Mills in Montreal have been on strike for more than a year. This is the only labour dispute in Quebec that is specifically due to the use of scabs, which is allowed by the Canada Labour Code. Yet, the Minister of Labour, our national aunt, a first class switch-hitter and former critic of the federal government, promised several times that she would resolve this intolerable situation. The leader of the No side in Quebec continues to say no to these Quebec workers.

Another major issue that is of particular concern to me is the raising of the *Irving Whale*. I would first like to draw a parallel between this issue and the bill before us today, in the hope that creating the position of Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development will help us avoid a similar mess. Let us hope that the federal commissioner can get involved in such federal matters in order to alert decision makers and, if necessary, stop or reverse decisions like the one to raise the *Irving Whale*.

This salvage operation, which was scheduled for the month of August, could be described as a total fiasco. In fact, not only the operation itself but the whole matter is a dismal failure. Everything, from the decision making to the environmental assessment, the awarding of the contract and the job itself, was done in an incompetent and irresponsible fashion. The first one to blame for this fiasco is the Minister of the Environment who, for reasons I would describe as very partisan, took serious decisions without proper thought. The minister's partisanship on this issue is obvious. Just think back to the announcement she made in this House, saying something like: "Twenty-five years have passed since the barge sank, and nothing has been done. But I, just 90 days after coming into office, made the right decision".

We now have proof that the minister's decision was in fact a botched job. The barge is still lying on the bottom of the Gulf, more than \$12 million was spent—taxpayers' money of course, the procedure selected is increasingly questioned, and a Federal Court judge even requested that she redo her homework as far as environmental assessments regarding PCBs are concerned.

Her botched and dicey decision could have caused irreparable damage to the environment. This partisan political game she has played is inexcusable.

• (1240)

This threat that hung over the Gulf of St. Lawrence throughout the month of August was a matter of continual concern for those directly involved.

Speaking of those directly involved, the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine has been conspicuously reserved over the summer with his dear constituents who, all summer long, were completely shattered by this decision to lift the ship in that manner.

The media actually covered the operations, that they questioned on many occasions. The work was conducted haphazardly and without any degree of certainty. In a nutshell, it smacked of amateurism, and that had many people worried.

I certainly hope that the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, whose position Bill C-83 seeks to establish, will have a say in this kind of decisions, which directly threatens the environment. The commissioner will be in a position to monitor the whole decision making process.

In the case of the *Irving Whale*, the process followed was seriously flawed, thus preventing an appropriate decision, that is the best possible one. Indeed, the process followed regarding the *Irving Whale* was flawed in several ways.

At the end of 1992, two studies commissioned by the Coast Guard and by the Department of the Environment recommended pumping the cargo out of the sunken wreck. Marex and CEF both concluded that was the safest technique.

However, the government ignored the recommendations made in studies which it commissioned. Instead, the Minister of the Environment relied on a third study commissioned by an independent organization, the Ship-source Oil Pollution Fund, which recommended lifting the barge without emptying it and moving it to a safe place before pumping the oil out.

It should be noted that this study conducted by London's Murray Fenton firm used the two above-mentioned studies as its main references. How could this third firm go against the findings of the other two if it used their studies as its basic reference? At that stage, the process was very twisted to say the least. All this does not seem very logical.

What we can figure out however is the logic relating to the costs of the operation. In spite of the reassuring words of the minister, it is clear that the costs of the operation unduly influenced the decision making process. Indeed, the government chose the least expensive solution. Bloc Quebecois members and environmental groups have always said that the government should first pump the oil out of the barge.

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Public hearings and consultations were held following the minister's decision, but the whole process was obviously a sham. Surely, the commissioner of the environment will be able to take a close look at such decisions.

Then we found out that PCBs were present in the wreck. The government says "What a surprise—we did not know." Yet page 3 of chapter I of the Marex report submitted to the government in December 1992 states that the capacity of the heaters "was transmitted to the cargo via a heating fluid (Monsanto MGS 295S) and heating coils in each tank". Thus the presence of PCBs was already mentioned in the 1992 documents.

So, in June 1995, another environmental assessment and consultations were carried out, this time not only fabricated but hastily fabricated at that. The outcome: a federal court judge issues a stop order and makes the Minister of the Environment do her homework all over again, this time conforming to her own department's statutes and regulations. That is something else, Mr. Speaker. What a blow to the pride of our Minister of the Environment, who had boasted only a few months earlier that she had settled the whole thing.

So the work was stopped by an injunction, work that had been delayed continuously and had already used up its budget. They say that it would cost between \$150 000 and \$180 000 a day to go on with the project.

• (1245)

And while all this flagrant bungling was going on, those in charge of the Coast Guard and Environment Canada were telling us "No problem. This is a well-oiled operation". Never were words so well chosen, for the whole danger of this controversial operation lay in its "well-oiled" nature.

We are continuing to follow this issue very closely and are anxious to see what the minister's next steps will be. I have drawn a parallel between this issue and Bill C-83, an act to amend the Auditor General Act, since the purpose of that bill is to create a position of commissioner of the environment responsible for overseeing situations like that of the *Irving Whale*.

It gives me pleasure to take the floor, because this bill arises from the dissenting opinion expressed by the Bloc Quebecois in the May 1995 report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

As a result of the committee's work on this subject, the Bloc members proposed three essential criteria in the creation of the position of environmental auditor. They are as follows. First, it is the government's responsibility to establish the policies and the auditor's to examine them. Second, we must avoid creating more organizations with similar mandates. Third, economic and environmental elements must be intrinsically linked.

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These criteria gave rise to our party's proposal that the mandate of the auditor general of the environment be given to the office of the auditor general along with the resources it requires to effectively carry out its role.

That is what we proposed at the time. Our proposal was influenced in large measure by the testimony given by the auditor general, Denis Desautels. In testifying before the committee, Mr. Desautels indicated that his office performed the audit duties that would constitute the prime responsibilities of an auditor general of the environment. In other words, the auditor general indicated that he was already involved in environment issues and that he spent \$4.5 million on them annually.

He also felt that his office could take on full responsibility for examining environmental and sustainable development matters with an additional appropriation of \$4.5 million—making a total of \$9 million. The route proposed by the auditor general struck us as the most sensible, simple and effective one to take. The Bloc Quebecois therefore proposed this route, and with Bill C-83 the government confirmed that we were right.

Most committee members were in favour of increasing structures. The Liberal and Reform members advocated, at one and the same time, a new body to be known as the office of the commissioner for the environment and sustainable development and the retention of the auditor general's duties in this area. Liberals and Reformers recommended an office of the environment and of sustainable development, with a budget of \$5 million and staff of 30 professional and 15 support employees.

Also as mentioned in recommendation No. 17 of the report, they wanted to congratulate the auditor general on his initiatives on the environment and urge him to keep up the good work. The committee also recommended amending the Auditor General Act so he would have the appropriate instruments to do his job.

Liberal and Reform Party members on the committee were in favour of a new, specific structure, while maintaining and enhancing another structure with the same responsibilities. This would have been inconsistent, inefficient and very costly. Fortunately, the Bloc made its own proposals, and the Liberal minister listened to us, instead of acting on the recommendations of her own members which would have created duplication and overlap within the federal government.

I am glad that the Bloc and the auditor general opted for a common sense approach in this matter.

I think the Liberal and Reform Party members on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development do not have a clue what common sense means and what the environmental facts are, and I am referring to problems out there that must be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Another instance of this lack of realism on the part of Liberal and Reform members on the committee could be seen in the report on the quinquennial review of the CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

● (1250)

Liberal and Reform Party members were convinced that it was absolutely necessary to further centralize authority in Ottawa in order to protect the environment. In this report, members opposite and next to us raised several considerations to justify increased centralization of authority in environmental matters. They referred to the growing globalization of environmental problems, the issue of national interest, the increasing importance of international trade and an ecosystem based approach as so many reasons for suggesting that the federal government expand its role and take full responsibility for environmental protection.

With these proposals the committee, in its report on the CEPA—by the way, the Bloc did not agree with the report—ignored the fact that the provinces already had most of the responsibility in this area. The committee, minus the Bloc, takes its cues from the government. They speak the same language, the language of centralization. The federal government wants more power, steadily encroaching on areas that, either directly or indirectly, come under provincial jurisdiction.

This encroachment by the federal government obviously leads to legislative and regulatory duplication which has the effect of setting back and undermining environmental protection. This duplication also causes some reluctance and apprehension among developers who no longer know where they stand. It is not very good for the economy. And this while members opposite keep talking about the economy and creating jobs.

With its increasing propensity for minding the business of the provinces the government is hardly stimulating the economy. In fact, it makes things increasingly difficult for its beloved economy. This is very disturbing. And it is very disturbing for an economy that is supposed to produce all those jobs promised by the Liberals and for the environment, which is in dire need of being protected and renewed.

Is there a way out of this extreme centralist approach? No, not unless we take matters into our own hands as we are about to do in Quebec on October 30. Federalism as such is centralizing, and I would say very much so. This excessive centralization and the manifold duplications it generates means established businesses have to work harder in order to be heard by both levels of government, face double the paper work and are obliged to meet the requirements of two levels of government.

One convincing example of the federal government's duplication involves the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which came in effect last January. Environmental assessment had been, until then, essentially a matter of provincial jurisdiction, had it not? The federal government's unilateral action turned the rules of the game completely around. We in Quebec have been doing environmental assessments for more than 15 years. We have developed an expertise and have established a reputation. With its legislation, the federal government wrecked everything. Worse yet, the federal government did not incorporate any of the amendments proposed by Quebec or any of the other provinces.

The repercussions of this affront to Quebec and the other provinces on the CCME, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, were significant. While the federal minister was inviting her provincial counterparts to discuss harmonization, the events of January 1995 cooled things off considerably.

According to some sources, the climate between the minister and her counterparts remains unsettled. The federal minister would appear to be acting in a somewhat cavalier fashion by showing little concern for the provinces or for the environment. But what do you expect, Mr. Speaker, the minister is much more a political creature than an environmentalist. She is also much more of a federalist at all cost, a vehement centralist, than a decentralist.

Her partisan instincts lead her to unacceptable behaviour that raises a lot of concerns about the environment. She will certainly not effectively manage the environment by treading on the backs of the provinces—quite the contrary. The provinces, and Quebec in particular, have a considerable lead in this area. The minister should respect this and stop meddling in areas of jurisdiction already occupied, and well occupied at that, by the provinces.

• (1255)

If the new Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development looks carefully at the federal government's intrusion into areas of provincial jurisdiction, I am sure that he will focus on how overlap and duplication is detrimental to sound management of the environment.

To get back to this bill, the minister proposes to amend the role of the auditor general by giving him the specific mandate to look into matters related to the environment and sustainable development. As I said earlier and as he himself pointed out during hearings, the auditor general has already opened the door by setting aside \$4.5 million a year for this purpose.

The bill provides for the appointment by the auditor general of a senior officer to be called the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, who will perform this specific task.

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One of the commissioner's duties will be to submit an annual report to the House of Commons on behalf of the auditor general. This report will deal mainly with two things: first, the extent to which departments have met the objectives and implemented their plans concerning the environment and sustainable development; and second, a record of the petitions received and their status.

What is new in this bill is that it requires the new commissioner to do two things: one, to ensure that category I departments table a sustainable development strategy within two years after this bill comes into force; two, to open a door by allowing citizens wishing to be heard to file petitions calling for action on the environment and sustainable development.

These two initiatives seem worthwhile in principle. In reality, however, one may wonder how much actual impact they will have.

Let us have a closer look at this new opportunity for people to file petitions with the commissioner.

This is a very simple procedure. The petition must be filed within the specified deadline; certified copies must be sent to those directly concerned; finally, the department responsible must provide a response. The procedure will be implemented without problems.

What I question though is the effectiveness of such petitions. Is this bill merely and stupidly putting in place a mechanism by which petitions can be tabled or will it really enable the people to have an say and to effect change?

In light of what is achieved through the petitions we table in this House, allow me to doubt their ability to effect any changes. The government's will to respond by taking swift action is seriously lacking. Petitions are given only trivial answers, based on facts, statistics or results and in no way sway the government or compel it to do anything. Petitions are not taken seriously by the government.

What will become of petitions to the commissioner of the environment? They will have the same fate as the rest of the petitions tabled in this place, since they will be answered by the same departments. There is no doubt that the government should be forced to pay greater attention to this means of applying pressure that the taxpayers have. Greater merit should be recognized to petitions.

I can remember the petition I tabled in this House regarding the *Irving Whale*. On September 23, 1994, petitioners from the Magdalen Islands asked that leaks be stopped and that further public, and particularly more transparent, hearings be held on this issue. To no avail. The barge continued to leak and is still leaking as we speak, but no further hearings were held.

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The Minister of Transport's answer was flat and did not take into account the concerns expressed by the people. Petitions are useless since governments pay little attention to such demands.

This is highly regrettable and it aggrieves the people. On the other hand, while not signing any petitions, lobbies are paid much more attention to by ministers. The Liberals opposite are particularly lax in that area. Recent decisions clearly show that lobbyist and minister go hand in hand, while petitions amount to nothing.

This concludes my remarks on the petition aspect of the bill. Let us now turn to the other key element, namely the development and tabling of sustainable development strategies by the departments.

I immediately wonder about the two year time limit for tabling these strategies. What will the commissioner do during those two years, since his job is to make inquiries and monitor the implementation of departmental action plans and report annually on the extent to which objectives were met? What is the commissioner going to do for two years? This measure means that, to all intents of purposes, he or she will have nothing to audit for three years, assuming that the initial report will be on the first year the strategies are implemented.

• (1300)

Let us now examine these sustainable development strategies. First of all, it needs to be pointed out that they replace the green plan, that famous green plan which held such promise, but has passed on after years of neglect by the government.

We in the Bloc see this new federal government approach as another serious threat of encroachment and intrusion into provincial areas of jurisdiction. This concept of sustainable development which the federal departments are to develop concretely into plans raises some legitimate concerns. Does not sustainable development concern resources, an area of provincial jurisdiction?

Recent federal government actions, including the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, as well as the Liberals' ultra-centralist intent in the report on the CEPA, are clear evidence to us of this tendency to interfere.

The federal government, under the guise of ecologizing the operations of each department, is actually implementing an overall result-oriented sustainable development strategy. On first view, one might believe this to be an initiative with exclusively federal effects, but when the description and orientations of this initiative are examined, it can be seen that it will be able to influence all of the provincial governments directly.

This initiative goes much further. By introducing sustainable development, each department has an opportunity to take responsibility for certain areas under federal jurisdiction. To achieve the desired results, the federal government has identi-

fied certain objectives for sustainable development which it intends to promote. For instance, it wants to ensure that the development of renewable and non-renewable resources, many of which, I may remind you, are exclusively under provincial jurisdiction, is sustainable.

Even if the provinces play a major role in achieving these objectives, the federal government has clearly indicated that it will emphasize communications and consultations with individuals and the private sector. It has only hinted at the possibility of joint management agreements with the provinces and aboriginal communities.

This approach, including implementation of the concept of sustainable development and an emphasis on relations with individuals and the private sector, may be seen as a threat to the provinces. A very subtle threat, which nevertheless reveals the cavalier approach of a federal government that uses this diversion to satisfy its hunger for centralism. In fact, the federal government increasingly resorts to this kind of strategy to get around the provinces and encroach on a number of areas.

As far as the environment is concerned, this approach is both unfortunate and dangerous. The federal government's record is not outstanding in this respect, and centralism does not tend to produce quick results where they are needed. We must not forget that the environment is out there, not in the offices of Ottawa's bureaucrats.

We think that before making any claims that they can do a better job, federal departments should start by complying with provincial legislation. The environment is one area where the provinces played a very active role well before the federal government did so. In fact, the Constitution confers on them a role that is more important than that of the federal government which, over the years, has used and abused its spending power in provincial jurisdictions. Ever since the federal government broke this delicate balance in the middle of the eighties, the result has been overlapping jurisdictions, conflicting objectives and costly duplication.

Fortunately, in Quebec, on October 30, Quebecers will decide to make their own country. Our environment will no longer be at the mercy of the federal government and will be able to breathe easier.

[English]

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, before I get into talking about the bill I would like to make a few comments about the previous speaker, my colleague from the Bloc.

I find it most interesting that the Bloc would want the federal government to bow out of environment on the federal arena. However it is quite prepared to accept Canadian tax dollars to raise the *Irving Whale*. This is part of the double message, the double standard. I expect it is some of the nonsense that we will

have to put up with over the next six weeks from Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

• (1305)

A similar issue is pensions. Bloc members want out of the country but they sure do not want out of the pension plan. They are quite prepared to accept it.

To get back to the bill we are talking about today, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the bill to amend the Auditor General Act. I want to make clear from the outset that the Reform Party supports efforts that balance economic and environmental considerations to maintain a clean and healthy environment for future generations.

We are into the third session of the 35th Parliament. Yet to date the government has been visibly lacking in its environmental initiatives. A recent study by the National Centre for Economic Alternatives ranks Canada as the second worst in deterioration of land, air and water. We have seen little action from the minister to address this situation. We have heard plenty of rhetoric but have seen very little action to address key environmental concerns.

Bill C-83 is one of the very few initiatives the Minister of the Environment has announced and it is far from revolutionary. Bill C-83 amends the Auditor General Act to create the position of commissioner of the environment.

The commissioner of the environment was one of the initial undertakings of the standing committee. This bill comes to the House after a lengthy process of consultation with witnesses before being sent to the minister. During committee I listened with members on both sides of the House to witnesses who came forward with recommendations on what role and which responsibilities the new position of an environmental auditor general should take.

At the end of the hearings the recommendations were consolidated and I worked with members of the committee to sort out and weigh the various recommendations. We put together a standing committee report of recommendations which was then forwarded to the Minister of the Environment last year.

It was a long process of deliberation. I commend the many members and witnesses who contributed to the process. I am also pleased to say that for the most part the members of the standing committee on the environment were able to put aside partisan politics to work for a common goal: to establish the role of a commissioner of the environment.

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It is unfortunate, however, when so much time, effort and expense goes into these studies and committee reports that the end result is barely acknowledged by the minister in the resultant legislation.

Representatives are flown in from all over the country at taxpayers' expense to present their concerns to the committee. One of the roles of standing committees is to listen to and consult with people on government initiatives and bills before the House, a role which has been widely abused by this and previous governments. It is unfortunate that the process of consultation under this government is somewhat meaningless.

Despite any decisions made by the parliamentary committee or any feedback from Canadians while the government is on the road supposedly consulting with people, the bottom line remains that decisions are still made behind closed doors at the whim of the cabinet. It is particularly disappointing to note that very little of Bill C-83 reflects what was contained in the recommendations of the parliamentary committee presented to the environment minister last year.

Why have a lengthy consultation process when the minister is going to ignore the results?

If the bill is representative of the minister's initiatives on the environment it speaks volumes. Members on both sides of the House proposed a number of excellent recommendations regarding the commissioner of the environment, most of which the minister chose to ignore in the bill.

When the Canadian public has had the opportunity to examine the bill they will conclude that it accomplishes particularly little to protect the environment. It is little wonder Canadians have criticized the minister for coming up short on her accomplishments. Clearly this legislation is not the answer to environmental concerns.

• (1310)

Canadians are waiting for the government to take charge and pass reasoned, meaningful legislation, not bills like this one which is completely lacking in substance and will do very little to change the status quo on environment.

It should be noted that the commissioner of the environment was not only a committee recommendation but also a Liberal red book election promise which the minister again fails to deliver.

The environment committee made several recommendations for the office of the commissioner of the environment, 17 in total. The Reform Party supported the initiative. Yet few of the committee recommendations have been followed through in the bill which barely resembles the intent of the parliamentary submission presented to the environment minister.

For example, the standing committee recommended that the office of the commissioner of the environment and sustainable

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development be established by new and separate legislation. However the bill is an amendment to the Auditor General Act. The bill is neither a new nor a separate piece of legislation.

The government promised in its red book that it would appoint an environmental auditor. The bill does not do that. It creates in legislation the position of a clerk who reports to the auditor general, a clerk with a limited role and with very few powers, not anything remotely close to an independent environmental auditor.

The standing committee on the environment recommended that the government establish a new office designated the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. The legislation does not establish a new office.

The commissioner of the environment is clearly not an independent environmental auditor general but a clerk reporting to the auditor general who will assist with environmental issues. It is not independent. It is not powerful. It is a clerk.

I am sure the auditor general already has several assistants to help him with environmental issues. I question the need to entrench the position in legislation, especially given the limited mandate spelled out in the legislation. The government has severely reduced the scope and extent of the position by establishing the commissioner of the environment within the offices of the auditor general in a position.

I can question how much if any the new position will actually change the status quo. The auditor general already responds to environmental issues. Now he has his new clerk entrenched in legislation to help him with the issues. This does not change anything.

The red book promised the environmental auditor general would report directly to Parliament. This was also recommended by the standing committee. Again the government has reneged on its promise. The bill comes up short of fulfilling this promise. Bill C-83 proposes the new assistant to the auditor general will report to the auditor general, not to Parliament as promised. When the commissioner reports to Parliament it is through the auditor general, not as an independent body.

The committee also recommended that the commissioner submit an annual report to Parliament. The bill proposes that the commissioner's annual report to Parliament will be on behalf of the auditor general who does the same thing. Appointing an assistant to speak for the auditor general hardly changes the status quo.

Another recommendation from the standing committee on the environment which the minister has ignored is that all reports produced by the commissioner be referred automatically to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development or to one or more parliamentary committees if the subject matter of the report makes it appropriate or necessary. Again

there is nothing in the bill to support the committee recommendations.

Within the duties of the commissioner of the environment the only reports the commissioner will be making to Parliament on behalf of the auditor general will be related to the status of environmental petitions brought to the attention of government and the status of departmental sustainable strategies. The bill does not empower the commissioner of the environment to report on much more than these two items.

In addition, the role of reporting on departmental sustainable development strategies is not a new initiative of the government. It was tried before when the last government attempted to establish an office that would report on the status of departmental sustainable development strategies. This office was called the office of environmental stewardship. Its mandate was to carry out environmental audits of federal departments and agencies in co-operation with the office of the comptroller general. The details and funding arrangements were all laid out in the green plan. This April we learned that the plug had been pulled on the green plan. It appears that this same office created by the last government has been dismissed by this government and reintroduced as a new initiative. The games they play in the tired politics of the old line parties.

• (1315)

The committee also recommended that the commissioner be granted in legislation adequate access to information powers commensurate with his or her mandate. Given that the mandate for the commissioner is so weak clearly explains why the bill contains no such recommendations.

The minister also completely ignored the committee recommendation for the commissioner to have the discretionary powers to appoint individuals to one or more advisory committees to assist the office in the performance of its duties. This committee recommendation has been completely ignored.

The committee also recommended that legislation to appoint the commissioner should be with the approval of Parliament. Instead the bill allows the auditor general to appoint the commissioner in accordance with the Public Service Employment Act. Actually, this is one recommendation of the minister which merits serious consideration because in this instance it may eliminate the potential for a patronage appointment, an area where this government has been so free. By allowing the auditor general to appoint a commissioner of the environment the position will be more at arm's length from the government.

There is nothing in the bill that outlines the term or length of office for the commissioner. The standing committee recommended that the position be held for a term of five years which may be reviewed only once, in other words a 10 year maximum. The position would have a specified length of term. By allowing the position to be renewed only once would prevent a monopoly

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of the position and would allow fresh new ideas to be injected into the position on a regular basis.

There is nothing in the bill which addresses the recommendation that the commissioner be paid a salary equivalent to that of a judge of the supreme court. However, the salary of course is based on the role and mandate of an independent, effective position. Given the measly powers and responsibilities of the position, such a salary clearly is not warranted.

There is nothing in the bill that subjects the commissioner's office to a parliamentary review. The committee recommended that the office be subject to a review every five years by Parliament. This would allow members of Parliament to evaluate the effectiveness and usefulness of the position. It is clearly evident that the minister has failed to carry through on this recommendation in her bill. Such a clause could be contained in the bill to ensure accountability. If the role is not effective or necessary after five years a new government may wish to review and reconsider the position. I suggest the government consider this.

The red book also promised that the environmental auditor general would have "powers of investigation similar to the powers of the auditor general". Yet in this bill the responsibility for reporting on environmental issues remains with the auditor general, not with a new body. The only powers of investigation that the new commissioner on the environment will have in the proposed legislation will be those designated by his boss.

The government is backtracking on another red book promise. Obviously, as assistant to the auditor general the commissioner of the environment does not have the same powers as his boss to whom he reports. Whether issues are reported through the auditor general or the auditor general's assistant, the commissioner of the environment, it is still up to the auditor general to decide whether action will be taken.

The government is not bound to any of the recommendations of the auditor general nor is it required to make a formal response to the auditor general's report. As a result—and we are well aware of this—many recommendations in the auditor general's reports have been ignored for years by governments which would rather not recognize the problems or act on the solutions.

The Liberal red book criticized the Conservatives for their lack of action in the area of environmental assessment, yet this government refuses to conduct a full environmental assessment of critical environmental hot spots such as the Sydney tar ponds in Nova Scotia. It appears the gap between rhetoric and action is as evident with the Liberals as it was with the Conservatives.

• (1320)

The Minister of the Environment has complained that she cannot perform her job without public pressure. Why then does the minister not create a real position for the commissioner of the environment with powers to put some pressure on her department which she is having so much difficulty handling?

The standing committee proposed to create a separate, independent office of the commissioner of the environment that would have real powers and would be responsible to report directly to the House. The legislation fails to meet the fundamental goals of the standing committee and of the Liberal red book of election promises.

It is high time the government came clean on its election promises. The changes proposed in Bill C-83 to amend the Auditor General Act are simply cosmetic. It is all just a big show from the Liberals in an attempt to fool the public into thinking they are actually doing something when clearly they are not. The bill is nothing but fluff. It accomplishes little.

The government made a number of promises to Canadians. It is becoming very apparent that it cannot or has no intention of keeping promises such as establishing this position. It is time the government came clean on its agenda. If government is going to encourage others to clean up their act, it is time it started putting its own house in order.

From the failure of the government to establish a real environmental auditor general, or a real ethics commissioner for that matter, to the failure of individual members across the way to resist the draw of the pension trough, the picture is clear: the government has no intention of keeping many of its promises to the people of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We will now move to the next stage of debate where members will be entitled to a maximum of 20 minutes in their interventions subject to a 10-minute question or comment period.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to begin with, I would comment very briefly on a remark by the hon. member for Laurentides, who, when speaking on behalf of the official opposition, accused the minister of partisan politics. I could not help noting the irony of her remark in a debate on an environment bill when she talked about the Quebec referendum and the Ogilvie mills, of her lengthy remarks concerning the *Irving Whale* and of course of the usual litany on centralizing federalism with all its sins and evils.

Even more ironically, while accusing the minister of partisan politics, she herself admitted that the minister chose the option put forward by the Bloc Québécois as the official minority, rather than the option put forward by the Liberal majority.

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I believe that Canadians, including Quebecers, want to set aside this sort of unproductive debate. Everyone agrees that environmental concerns transcend political referendum disputes and so-called centralizing federalism. For this reason, I am going to avoid talking about this sort of thing and keep to the subject of Bill C-83.

In 1987, I had the honour of being a member of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations when Prime Minister Brundtland submitted her famous report on the environment and the economy, known today as the Brundtland report. She was followed at the podium by the president of the Maldives Islands, Mr. Abdul Gayoom, who remains the president today.

The Maldives are an archipelago of some 100 islands south of India in the Indian Ocean. Describing his country in the words of the great Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl as jewels on a cushion of blue—the Indian Ocean—he said that his country and its magnificent islands were not hit by storms and adverse weather conditions until the 1980s. They were inundated by enormous waves in 1984 and 1985 and then again in 1986 and 1987—for the first time in their history. These waves became increasingly violent, bringing about distress, destruction and casualties. Everybody there was asking the representatives of industrialized countries: “Do we, innocent people of the Maldives, have to pay the price for the destruction you caused, for the harm you did to the environment, for the greenhouse effect, for all the environmental problems for which we are totally blameless and for the consequences of your actions?”

• (1325)

I submit this is a fundamental problem and that, as a rich country with unparalleled natural resources, we must set an example for the world, especially for the developing countries which have to endure the consequences of the actions taken by industrialized countries. We must show the world that sustainable development is more than just words.

[*English*]

We have to start practising what we preach on the international scene. Sustainable development must never be just a catchword. It must never be that kind of convenient buzz word that makes us escape from the realities of having to integrate economy and environment in a realistic and true fashion.

If the federal government does not practise sustainable development in all its day to day doings in its act of governing the country then how can it expect its citizens to do the same? How can it expect municipalities and provincial governments to practise sustainable development if it does not show the example itself?

This is why in 1993 in the red book the Liberal Party of Canada devoted a total chapter on sustainable development. One of the key parts of that chapter was to install a commissioner of the environment. In the red book the idea was such that it be linked to the office of the auditor general of the environment.

I am very pleased this is becoming a reality with Bill C-83. We will become the second country in the world to install a commissioner of environment and sustainable development after the leading example of New Zealand several years ago.

This new office will have significant powers. Beyond the significant powers of the office, the very existence of the office of a commissioner of environment and sustainable development sends a powerful signal not only within the government itself but beyond the government into the reaches of Canadian society. They now know there will be somebody there, a monitor, an ombudsman, who will devote his or her duties to the environment and sustainable development in making sure the government itself practises what it preaches.

[*Translation*]

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development held hearings for several months on that topic. Our colleague from Davenport really deserves to be congratulated for his sensible and really inspiring leadership. In fact, our committee had recommended that an independent commissioner of the environment and sustainable development be designated, a position similar to that of the Commissioner of Official Languages, but the government went with the suggestion made by the official opposition, to set up a commissioner of the environment and sustainable development within the office of the auditor general.

Despite the fact that the government did not choose the option recommended by the committee, I think—even though I was a member of the committee—that it is a major step forward. Today, with Bill C-83, we are creating this position of commissioner, which becomes irreversible. With the appointment of the commissioner, two years from now each government department will be required by law to table in the House a sustainable development strategy.

• (1330)

These strategies will have to be updated every three years and the revised strategies will also have to be tabled before Parliament. So, Parliament will be accountable to the Canadian people for all these sustainable development strategies in the future.

[*English*]

It is a tremendous departure for the Canadian public that in the future every ministry of government will have not only to produce a strategy of sustainable development but also be responsible to the commissioner for its being monitored, its

being followed up very closely to ensure that it really responds to the reality of truly integrating economy and environment in our governance.

Further, the public can now intervene with the commissioner. The public can send petitions to the commissioner if it does not agree with government policy or government programs relating to environment and sustainable development. The commissioner will transmit the petitions to the ministers and the ministers will be bound by this bill, Bill C-83, to respond to the commissioner within a reasonable delay so that the public at large will feel very truly that in the commissioner for environment and sustainable development it has an ally, an ombudsman, someone it can turn to at all times and in complete open freedom.

[*Translation*]

The commissioner will have to table before the House an annual report to Parliament. This annual report will give the status of each department regarding its sustainable development strategy.

[*English*]

Furthermore, the report of the commissioner will have to give details of all the petitions he has received from the Canadian public, what action has been taken, and what response the ministers have given in regard to these petitions.

The key issue here is if this commissioner of environment and sustainable development will be truly independent and have the necessary powers, autonomy, independence to ensure that he or she is listened to and that the public feels that through this office it has a voice and a say.

The best answer to this is that we will now have to amend the law of the auditor general. I think all Canadians are fully satisfied to date about the independence, the autonomy, the openness of the auditor general to freely criticize government when he or she feels that criticism is deserved and that criticism is carried far and wide into the land and the government pays heed. I am convinced that it will be the case with the commissioner for environment and sustainable development and that the commissioner will have the full independence and autonomy that he or she deserves on behalf of the Canadian public.

We have just undergone work on behalf of the committee on the environment and sustainable development under the leadership of the member for Davenport on a massive review of the mainstay of Canadian environmental legislation at the federal level, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. This review has touched on the various aspects of what must guide the environmental cause in the future: the fact that we cannot govern ourselves now in little compartments, that ecosystems mean that everything is connected with everything else and we human beings are connected with the ecosystems, that without this interconnection, this interdependence of all the elements that form the ecosystems and bioregions, economic develop-

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ment or profit is impossible. You cannot plant trees in a desert. You cannot use water if the stream has dried up.

• (1335)

We who are blessed with natural resources beyond compare have a duty to guide ourselves in the future so that instead of short term we look to what our aboriginal brothers and sisters say: seven generations ahead. We really truly believe, as they do, that a healthy mother earth provides a healthy quality of life but a sick mother earth makes us sick as well.

I believe that the CEPA review, having put out all these new ideas into the realm of the Canadian public today, will see in the office of the commissioner of environment and sustainable development a tremendous opportunity for these ideas gaining ground in actual governance inside the federal system.

I believe the time has come for us to realize that we cannot be the society of waste we have been. We cannot continue to be the society of overuse of energy. We must live differently. We must find new ways of production. We cannot toxify and harm our natural resources forever without suffering the consequences. This is why this bill is so important to all of us today.

I was listening to the official opposition with all its litany of partisan politics about the referendum. I have always believed and my experience has shown me, as a politician in Quebec and also at the federal level, that the environment is the greatest binding thread among people because it knows no colour, it knows no race, no creed, no physical boundary. The environment is all of us. It is life itself. It is whatever sustains life and living. It is a tremendous binding force for good.

I think at this time especially we should reflect on the tremendous binding force the environment can be among Canadians. If we really truly believe in the environmental cause, in quality of life, in the seven generations, then we will back Bill C-83 with great conviction. I am convinced that it will change the way we govern ourselves. It will lead to change in the way we act and live as citizens so that we will look to our natural resources to be there not only when we ourselves grow old but for the generations to come.

It is with great conviction that I will vote for Bill C-83.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to be here today to take part in the debate and listen to the hon. parliamentary secretary respond to the bill before us.

The parliamentary secretary make a couple of important notations in his remarks to the House. He talked about sustainable development being more than just words. Obviously all of us agree with that. The whole activity of working toward sustainability must be more than just words. It must be seen to be happening, not just heard to be happening. Governments often are not trusted because they say things that cannot be seen.

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The committee did a tremendous amount of work on this, as the parliamentary secretary has already indicated. In his remarks he referred to Canada now being only the second country in the world to install a commissioner of the environment. He pointed out that New Zealand was the first country to have a commissioner.

• (1340)

The point I wish to address my question to is the concept of sustainable development being more than words. The New Zealand model for a commissioner is much different from the model being put forward in Bill C-83. Helen Hughes, the commissioner of the environment for New Zealand, appeared before the parliamentary committee and said at the time that she would find it very difficult to operate without being able to look at government policy. The commissioner of the environment in New Zealand has the ability to look at government policy, has the ability to look ahead.

Bill C-83 simply gives the commissioner of the environment within the auditor general's department the ability to look at what government has done and tell us whether we have made a mistake, not to tell us where we have to go and how to get there, not to look at the future, the seven generations the member spoke about.

I wonder if the minister could tell us how he can talk about New Zealand as a model to look up to and then indicate his support for Bill C-83, which does not come close to the New Zealand model.

Mr. Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question and also for the very significant contribution he made to our committee when we studied this question. All of us on the committee were truly grateful for his presence and his contribution.

I concede that we did not go as far as our report suggested. Sometimes politics is the art of the feasible. However, I think it is a significant start toward the New Zealand model.

The commissioner will have the task of ensuring that every ministry of the government will have to table before the House within two years strategies for sustainable development. Strategies for sustainable development as such obviously will touch on policy and programs because sustainable development is effectively how we integrate the economy to the environment within a framework.

As the Minister of the Environment stated, environment will not be carried just by the Minister of the Environment in the traditional sense; every ministry will become a sustainable development ministry. Furthermore, by law it will have to produce to Parliament within two years a strategy of sustainable development.

This is looking forward and not backward. Obviously the strategies will look to the future. If at the time the strategies are tabled in Parliament Canadians or parliamentarians are not satisfied, the commissioner will be subject to petitions on every aspect of these strategies. He will have the power to report once a year to Parliament on the status of these strategies, which will have to be updated every three years through Parliament.

Therefore, I do believe it is a significant step forward. It may not go as far as the New Zealand model, considering that New Zealand is a country of three million people and we are a country 10 times larger and far more complex. At the same time, I am convinced that it is a significant step forward.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the parliamentary secretary.

As he heard earlier, the hon. member for Laurentides spoke at length about an assumption of hers. She stated that the federal government is using the environment as a means of concentrating power in a big way in its own hands. I would like that the parliamentary secretary tell us what he thinks about the point made by the hon. member for Laurentides.

• (1345)

Mr. Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. As an environmentalist of many years, as someone who has spent most of his political life standing up for the environment, I must say that wherever I go in Canada, whether it be in British Columbia, in Newfoundland or especially in Quebec where I laboured for most of my political career, including three years as Minister of the Environment, whenever I talk to environmentalists or environmental groups, I realize that they do not make any distinction between the federal government and the provincial government, when the environment is at stake.

All they want is for things to work out. All they want is a collective approach where everyone can work together.

I know there has been duplication and overlap at times. It is unavoidable in a government system like ours. But at the same time, given all the positive work that has been done for the environment these last few years, and the very fact that the Council of Ministers of Environment has become a worthwhile body which meets regularly, I think it would be a total exaggeration to say that the federal government is using the environment to infringe upon provincial areas of jurisdiction. In fact, I think we should put this issue aside and find ways to turn the environment into a major cause that could rally all of us, because for the sake of the environment, we must all work together. Otherwise, we are doomed to failure.

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[English]

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, to follow up on my previous comments and questions, again I thank the parliamentary secretary for his kind words about my work on the committee. I did enjoy the work on the committee.

I have congratulated the committee on its work since the report was brought forward. The committee certainly did a tremendous amount of work. I congratulate the chairperson and the parliamentary secretary for their activity with regard to the committee as well. I wish the government had listened to the committee's recommendations because obviously we would be in a better position today with regard to this bill.

My question has to do with the departmental strategies the parliamentary secretary talked about. The bill asks the auditor general for the environment to look at departmental strategies. The bill gives the departmental officials two years to write those strategies and then exempts them from redoing it again for another three years. Does the parliamentary secretary know the purpose of the auditor general for the first two years while the departmental people are writing these strategies we are all supposed to be so excited about?

Mr. Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an important point which has also been raised by the official opposition. Obviously during the first two years the commissioner will have to set up the office and will have to organize the whole work of the auditor general's department relating to the environment.

Today the auditor general carries out a significant amount of work on the question of environment and sustainable development. The commissioner will take over this work and will assist the auditor general in carrying out this work further.

Also, the bill provides a very important function which cannot be lessened or minimized which is the power of Canadians to be able to submit petitions to the commissioner about government performance in sustainable development. These petitions from Canadians will certainly go forward and the commissioner will have to deal with them.

The two years are a very wise investment in time. At least the office will be well prepared to deal with infractions that will ensue and will also help the auditor general with his important work on environment and sustainable development.

• (1350)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétiën (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the legislation we are discussing this morning, that is Bill C-83, is to amend the Auditor General Act so as, first, to ensure that environmental considerations in the context of sustainable development are taken into account in the auditor general's reports to the House of Commons. Second, it provides for the appointment of a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. Third, it imposes requirements for responding to petitions received by the auditor general about

federal environmental matters in the context of sustainable development.

So that it be clear for all constituents, a petition does not necessarily have to be signed by hundreds of people. A complaint made by only one person will be processed normally as if it were endorsed by one or two thousand people.

Four, it requires monitoring and reporting to the House of Commons on petitions and the extent to which departments have met the objectives, and implemented the plans set out in their sustainable development strategies. Fifth and finally, to require each department to establish and table in the House a strategy for sustainable development.

By tabling the bill in this House, the Liberal government across the way will be able to claim that it is respecting one of its campaign commitments as set out in the red book. In this connection, the red book stated—if I may, I shall repeat the exact quote that the Minister of the Environment gave a few minutes ago—that a Liberal government will “appoint an Environmental Auditor General, reporting directly to Parliament, with powers of investigations similar to the powers of the Auditor General. This office would report annually to the public on how successfully federal programs and spending are supporting the shift to sustainable development. The report would also evaluate the implementation and enforcement of federal environmental laws. Individuals could petition the Environmental Auditor General to conduct special investigations when they see environmental policies or laws being ignored or violated”. End of quote from the famous red book which, incidentally, has become very rare and therefore worth its weight in gold.

The red book is now being kept hidden away under the counter, and it is very difficult for anyone outside the Liberal Party to get a copy.

It was, however, at the suggestion of members of the opposition that the government decided to modify the Auditor General Act to integrate the position of Environmental Auditor General. Let us indicate right at the outset that the Deputy Prime Minister would have liked this position of Environmental Auditor General to report to her department, no doubt out of a desire to build up her influence within her government or her party, or maybe both. But that is another story we can get to later in more detail.

Here I would like to make a parenthetical remark. A few minutes, a few seconds ago, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of the Environment stated in his response to one of my colleagues that the environmentalists and ecologists wanted things to work out.

• (1355)

He says he is convinced that there is some overlap and duplication in terms of public servants, services and money, but what people, and particularly ecologists, really want is for the operation to work. I am almost tempted to tell the parliamentary

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secretary to the Minister of the Environment that we too hope it will work. I remind him that it was 25 years just a few days ago that the *Irving Whale*, a barge full of oil, sank off the Magdalen Islands and PEI. At the end of June, we learned that there was not only bunker crude oil but also PCB-contaminated oil in the wreck.

That oil is leaking, slowly but surely, in the Atlantic ocean. If the hon. member is so intent on making it work, then he should take action. He awarded a contract in the spring and the operation was supposed to go smoothly. Yet, the barge is still at the bottom of the ocean and hundreds of litres of bunker crude oil are leaking from it. Again, if the hon. member really wants the operation to work, he should take measures not only to pump the bunker crude oil out, but also to get the *Irving Whale* out of there.

With leave, I will carry on after question period, but for now I will conclude by reminding the hon. member of the St. Lawrence action plan, phases I and II. The government took \$6.5 million allocated to phase II and invested that money in Miramichi, several hundreds of kilometres away from the St. Lawrence River. This is the vision of the federal environment department.

Indeed, a good part of the money allocated to clean the St. Lawrence River, that is \$6.5 million out of \$20 million, was spent in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

Such examples must be brought to light daily in the House of Commons. I will get back to the green plan after question period.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

1999 WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on August 17, St. Catharines stood before the world's international rowing body representing Canada's bid for the 1999 World Rowing Championships.

Canada won the right to host the biggest world rowing event in 1999. The federal government played a leading role in the success of the bid. The community, local fundraisers and other levels of government will also assist in ensuring this project is a success.

The 1999 World Rowing Championships will bring millions of dollars and hundreds of jobs to Canada. The event will bring the athletes, coaches and media of some 40 countries. It will be the final event in a summer long rowing festival in Canada including the Pan American Games in Winnipeg, the Canada Cup in Montreal, the Commonwealth Regatta in London, the Regatta of the Americas in Welland and the Royal Canadian Henley and the World's in St. Catharines.

I thank all my colleagues for the wonderful support they have given in putting this bid forward. Canada's reputation in rowing is known and respected around the world.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, through my participation in the NGO Forum and in the World Conference on Women, I consider it a privilege to have witnessed the dynamism and proud determination of women everywhere to improve their living conditions. The Secretary of State for the Status of Women who headed the Canadian delegation made a commitment on behalf of her government to promote the equality of women via the plan for gender equality.

On the strength of those promises, I invite the Canadian government to translate words into actions and to immediately adopt measures to create employment, daycare services, social justice and measures to ensure employment equity as well, bearing in mind those areas that are under provincial jurisdiction.

One thing is certain; with sovereignty, Quebec would finally hold all of the powers necessary to continue to act in the best interests of women.

* * *

[English]

REFORM PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as Parliament returns for its fall session, the country faces a number of important challenges: health care reform, tax reform, pension reform, UI reform. Yet none of these issues are on the government's fall agenda. Why? Because the government has been hijacked by the Quebec referendum.

We in the Reform Party refuse to be silenced by the separatists. We will be the national opposition party, offering solutions to the real problems that face the country.

Our medicare-plus proposal will give provincial governments the funding and flexibility they need. Our flat tax proposal will revolutionize the tax system of the country. Our super RRSP proposal will personalize retirement planning.

The message is clear. If neither the Liberals nor the Bloc will speak on behalf of all Canadians, the Reform Party will. We have the people, we have the plan and we have the will to confront the tough issues.

* * *

PORTS CANADA

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport with his new marine strategy is considering a recommendation concerning the policing of Canada's ports.

A recommendation that local ports simply use municipal police forces or private security firms is just not adequate. The Canadian Association of Police Chiefs has expressed its concerns and has stated that Ports Canada police officers are specialists in their field, they are trained and knowledgeable in national and international crimes such as drug trafficking, illegal immigration and terrorist activities.

Chief Sherwood of the Saint John Police Department has said that he does not want the extra responsibility nor does he have the manpower or the expertise.

I ask, for the safety and security of our country, that the recommendation concerning port policing not be endorsed by the government and that the port policing continue to be funded and operated under federal jurisdiction.

* * *

HANTS COUNTY YOUTH FOR YOUTH

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize the efforts of the Hants County Youth for Youth, a group working in my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants.

Under the Youth Service Canada program, this dynamic group is working to meet local community needs by focusing on a youth newsletter, a project in tourism and to establish a youth centre, which will officially open September 30.

In return, these participants are gaining valuable experience in communication, personal development, entrepreneurial skills and community development. I am proud of the efforts of these young people.

I want also to thank the Hants West District School Board and their partners, the Windsor Plains Recreation and Social Development Committee and the Hants Shore Community Health Centre for making this program a success.

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I would ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating everyone involved in the Hants County Youth for Youth program.

* * *

[Translation]

NEW BRUNSWICK

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a week ago, Frank McKenna led the Liberals to a third victory in a row, forming a majority government.

New Brunswickers gave the McKenna government the mandate to carry on with its action plan based on job creation, a plan showing that New Brunswick is always at the forefront.

[English]

I would like to congratulate all the elected MLAs, especially those from my riding: Jean-Paul Savoie, Restigouche West; Edmond Blanchard, Campbellton; Carolle de Ste. Croix, Dalhousie Restigouche East; Albert Doucet, Nigadoo—Chaleur and Alban Landry, Nepisiguit who all won their seats, keeping Restigouche—Chaleur Liberal red.

I am also proud to say that the Confederation of Regions Party, an anti-bilingual and regionally based party, was wiped off the electoral map. Let this be a warning to the regional parties in the House: Canadians have had their fill of one issue and regionally based parties.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and compliment the newly named Business Development Bank of Canada for creating a new micro business loan for small business.

This program is aimed at helping both existing and new small businesses with amounts up to \$25,000. It will help ensure that the entrepreneurial spirit in Canada is encouraged and that ideas that will lead to new businesses and new employment will not be starved for lack of capital.

• (1405)

An important component of this program is training. All participants will be required to demonstrate their ability to handle the financial aspects of operating a small business.

This is an example of the bank's new role as a complementary lender. It is an example of the government's commitment to small business and it is an example of how government can create an environment in which the private sector can create jobs. I applaud this initiative.

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[*Translation*]

CREATING A QUEBEC–CANADA PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Jean–Paul Marchand (Québec–Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last weekend a CROP poll reminded us once again that 50 per cent of Canadians are open to a partnership with Quebec after a yes vote.

Beyond the unyielding stance of politicians who do not want to have anything to do with any kind of association with a sovereign Quebec, the people show plain common sense, realism and pragmatism. As a matter of fact, half of the respondents agree that the rest of Canada should maintain an economic and political association with a sovereign Quebec.

This should be no surprise for government members. Even before the federalist scare campaign, the majority of Canadians outside Quebec said they were in favour of maintaining an economic association. As we can see, they have not changed their mind. The Canadian people knows where its true economic interests lie.

* * *

[*English*]

EXPO 2005

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the city of Calgary. After many months of hard work and patience, Calgary has won the competition to host Expo 2005.

The bid committee for Ottawa–Hull deserves tremendous credit and congratulations for all the work it did on its bid. The healthy, high quality competition only serves to raise the performance of Calgary as it moves on to compete internationally to bring Expo 2005 to Canada.

On behalf of Canada, Calgary will make its submission au Bureau des Expositions Internationales, a winning bid that will make all Canadians proud.

[*Translation*]

I would like to congratulate again all participants in the competition to host Expo. Calgary, Alberta and the federal government must now work together to win the international competition for Calgary to be a good hostess to Expo 2005. Once Canada has won the right to host Expo 2005, I would like to invite everybody to celebrate with us in Calgary.

* * *

[*English*]

FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Fourth World Conference for Women has ended in China amid conflicting claims of great success and monumental failure.

As Canadians we have much of which to be proud. We have a reputation world wide as a country which supports diversity and equality. Canada's contribution to the United Nations' discussions and Canada's non-governmental organizations played a large role in promoting human rights and social and economic justice for women on all continents.

However there are those who choose to present the results of the conference as anti-family and to make outrageous claims about the intent of the platform of action. I challenge those who choose to manipulate the facts to Canadians to answer why it is anti-family to condemn female genital mutilation of the girl child and neglect of girl children; why it is anti-family to condemn rape as a war crime; why it is anti-family to take measures to combat the feminization of poverty; and why a platform of action which recognizes the family as a basic unit of society that should be strengthened is anti-family.

I now call on the government to put some force behind its words and to have an action plan for implementation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Leader of the Opposition showed us how much he scorns democracy. According to him, a yes vote would clearly reflect the opinion of Quebecers while a no vote would only give separatists the excuse to impose referendum after referendum to Quebecers, until sovereignty finally wins.

The words of the Bloc leader reveal a paternalistic attitude and are an insult to the intelligence of Quebecers. People of Quebec are often victims of such partiality because whatever separatists cannot obtain with truth, they will try to obtain through cheating and deception. In spite of all the PQ and BQ schemes—

The Speaker: My colleagues, we should not use such hard words. Words like cheating seem too harsh to me. I would ask you not to use words of that nature please.

* * *

• (1410)

ANTIDRUG VIDEOS

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, young people in the Matane region just discovered another aspect of the intolerance of separatists. Last June, students at the Matane secondary comprehensive school joined forces with the local community service centre of that municipality to produce a video against drugs. Since the beginning of the school year, that video has been shown on the Radio–Québec channel in eastern Quebec.

The director of the yes committee in Matane, a separatist, protested against that video which underlines the courage of young people who say no to drugs. There, I have said the n word, no to drugs. The separatists put so much pressure on the LCSC that it decided to withdraw that publicity from the air until the end of the referendum campaign.

Obsession and paranoia have prevailed over the initiative of a group of young students who had decided to do something worthwhile for their community. No to drugs was for their future, that of our youth. No to separation is also for their future.

* * *

DEMILITARIZATION

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in exchange for a pseudo-commitment on the part of France to recognize an independent Quebec, the leader of the PQ and his faithful lieutenant, the leader of the Bloc Québécois, have refused to condemn France for resuming nuclear testing.

Until recently, the PQ had always advocated peace and demilitarization. The PQ's political program published since 1970 states that Quebec will have to gain recognition within the international community as a pacifist people by favouring disarmament over war as a way to settle international disputes and by opposing the testing and use of nuclear and bacteriological weapons.

René Lévesque, the founder and former leader of the Parti Québécois, would be ashamed to see his so-called heirs make this kind of shady deal.

* * *

MILITARY SPENDING

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, by awarding to GM, in Ontario, the \$2 billion armoured vehicle acquisition contract, the federal government is once again making it clear that Quebec does not get its fair share of defence contracts.

In addition, with total disregard for correct procedure, Chatham, New Brunswick, was awarded the contract to refurbish old tanks as compensation for the closure of the base.

On the other hand, in Saint-Jean, base operations were reduced and the college was shut down. Why was Oerlikon not even considered as a potential supplier of turrets for the new armoured vehicles? Talk about a double standard!

It is clear now why the Minister of Defence stated, referring to Quebec, that they could not afford the luxury of being totally fair. That is what Canadian federalism is all about: while jobs are created and R and D funds are invested in Ontario, Quebec is left with measly maintenance contracts.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I call attention to the need for appropriate sentencing in order to prevent habitual offenders from victimizing communities.

The tragic death of Melissa Deley in my riding of Surrey North so horrified my constituents that they were moved to march spontaneously in the streets of Surrey. The police were vigilant and swift in their pursuit and capture of the man accused of ending this innocent child's life.

However, my constituents were horrified to learn that previous to this, the accused stood before a judge and a crown attorney pleaded with the judge to incarcerate this man because of his record. He had attacked a guard while he was in custody. Instead the accused was released by the judge with a \$500 fine.

Melissa's parents and my constituents refuse to believe this is the way our justice system should operate. They refuse to believe the crown is powerless to protect law-abiding citizens from habitual criminals. Surrey North wants criminal justice reforms that work and it wants them now.

* * *

[Translation]

ROBERT CHARLEBOIS

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the PQ and the Bloc Québécois would have us believe, not all Quebec artists are sold on separation. In an interview carried by almost every major newspaper in Quebec, singer-brewer Robert Charlebois expressed very little enthusiasm over the prospect of Quebec separating.

His fear is that it will divide Quebecers, the end result being a royal mess, with bitterness and jealousy on both sides, since the whole process was based on hate and frustration; nothing great is to be expected.

• (1415)

Like most Quebecers, Robert Charlebois would rather have governments focussing on job creation and the economy instead of wasting time on futile quarrelling.

Robert Charlebois believes, and our government shares his view on this, that the real solution for Quebec is an economic solution. His way of helping Quebec, he says, is by providing employment.

*Oral Questions***QUEBEC REFERENDUM**

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, we heard the news that the Bloc Québécois will not accept as final a no vote in the referendum. The Leader of the Opposition said it in so many words: "It is a non ending issue as long as it would not be resolved by a yes".

Please allow an English speaking Quebecer to teach some French to Mr. Bouchard. The Robert dictionary says—

[*English*]

The Speaker: I would ask hon. members to refer to each other by the names of their ridings. I will permit the member to continue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Discepola: Please allow me to suggest that the Leader of the Opposition check in the Robert dictionary, which says that no is a negative adverb expressing a negative answer or refusal. It certainly does not mean "maybe", "some other time" or "next time".

Will we ever be done with the "indépendantistes"? They generate this economic instability and they are really costing us.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last year, Quebecers elected a sovereignist government with a mandate to hold a referendum as soon as possible on Quebec's accession to sovereignty.

Acting on its electoral promise, the government presided by Jacques Parizeau triggered the referendum mechanism in the National Assembly.

Recently, the Minister of Labour and federal minister responsible for the Quebec referendum was called to order by the Prime Minister for having said, and I quote: "We have always said that Quebecers had the right to express themselves on the future of Quebec, either within or outside Canada. We live in a democratic country, so we will respect the vote—".

My question is directed to the Prime Minister: What was so wrong about the minister's statement, which reflected the most elementary principles of democracy, that would justify the humiliating retraction he inflicted on her?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers will be able to express their opinion on October 30 in a referendum.

As far as I am concerned, the country has other problems to deal with as well, and I will not spend my time answering hypothetical questions from the Leader of the Opposition who says that if it is yes, it is yes, and if it is no, it is not the right answer.

So I do not need any lessons from him.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): I will be able to answer the Leader of the Opposition if he tells me if it is supposed to be a play-off, two out of three, three out of five or four out of seven.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think someone put on the wrong record, because the question was about whether the Prime Minister could tell us why he called his minister to order.

I would like to ask him whether we are to understand that taking the same line he took with his minister, he also intends to call to order the chairman of the No Committee, Daniel Johnson, who last Tuesday in Quebec City recognized the right of Quebecers to decide on their future and promised to respect their decision.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have always said they had the right to have a referendum in Quebec. Quebecers can be consulted and can explain their point of view.

• (1420)

However, we on this side of the House are convinced that Quebecers, if they are asked an honest question about the separation of Quebec from Canada, not a trick question, no clever twists and turns but an honest question: Do you want to separate from Canada? If the leader of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Parizeau, was truly intellectually honest, he would have asked Quebecers: Do you want to separate? And Quebecers would have answered: No, never.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with respect, I deplore the fact that at the very beginning of this fundamental debate, we are hearing applause for a prime minister who has just impugned the intellectual honesty of Mr. Jacques Parizeau, who certainly does not need lessons from this prime minister.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Bouchard: If I understood the Prime Minister's answer correctly, he sees the outcome of this referendum merely as a point of view to be expressed by the people of Quebec. I think we should consider this from the legal point of view, and I may remind the Prime Minister that the National Assembly and the

Oral Questions

Quebec Government based their referendum strategy on the right of peoples to determine their own future in a peaceful and democratic manner. I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he recognizes the right of Quebecers to do so.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to ask me about the legal aspect, he already has an answer from the Quebec courts, and I am not going to get involved in that, but I can answer his question. When the Leader of the Opposition says that the right to self-determination does not apply to aboriginal people in Quebec, he is contradicting himself. So if he wants to have that kind of debate, we can have one.

As far as I am concerned, I simply want to say that I am surprised at the attitude taken by the opposition, which is hiding things from the people. They did not want to ask an honest question. The Leader of the Opposition told the Americans: "I am a separatist" and when he is in Quebec, he is afraid to say he is a separatist. As for what is happening in Quebec right now, when his own economist, Mr. Mathews, prepared honest studies, the leader of the government, the leader of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Parizeau, said he was incompetent. Does the Leader of the Opposition agree with Mr. Parizeau that his own economist is not competent?

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it will be noted that the Prime Minister is carefully trying to avoid answering questions on the recognition of the right of Quebecers to make decisions on their own future. He is also creating confusion by censuring his minister responsible for the referendum in Quebec because she made the terrible mistake of saying frankly that the government should respect the wishes democratically expressed by Quebecers.

My question to the Prime Minister is very clear and simple, and I want an answer. Given the important consequences for all the people in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, can the Prime Minister tell us clearly whether or not he will respect the choice expressed by Quebecers in the upcoming referendum?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like the opposition to tell the government that they will respect a no vote. We won the referendum in 1980 but they did not respect the wishes of Quebecers.

They are doing the same thing again today. The Leader of the Opposition says that he does not want the no side to win and that he would not regard a no vote as final. When will he stop playing with the future of the people, who want their governments to deal with the real problems, look after their interests, create jobs and provide sound public administration. That is what the people want and what the opposition refuses to do.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1425)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, they have very short memories. Quebec sovereignists have always respected the results of the 1980 referendum, as shown by the fact that, 15 years later, we are still in Canada discussing the Constitution because two things have occurred since the referendum. The situation has changed, Mr. Speaker. He unilaterally repatriated the Constitution—

Some hon. members: Yes. Yes.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: —and he killed the Meech Lake accord. He is the one who is creating problems.

Some hon. members: Yes. Yes.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, to the man who said in 1980 that no meant yes and that yes meant no, I ask the following question, and we would like an answer.

Does the Prime Minister of Canada realize that by refusing to admit that he will respect the results of the democratic referendum to be held in Quebec, he is contradicting the chairman of the No committee and his boss in this case, Daniel Johnson from Quebec, as well as his minister responsible for constitutional matters and the referendum in Quebec? Does he realize that his irresponsibility is creating uncertainty and that he is duty-bound to give real answers?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how can Quebec separatists talk to me about the Meech Lake accord when they were against it? They were against it, and so too was Parizeau.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): And you stabbed in the back.—Yes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Although the Leader of the Opposition was not present at the end of the Meech Lake debate, he claims that it was a humiliation for Quebecers. They claim in their propaganda that the rejection of the Charlottetown accord in a referendum was a humiliation for Quebecers. Yet, they all voted against it. They helped humiliate Quebecers by voting against the accord.

I reiterate to the opposition that only 3 per cent of Quebecers see the Constitution and the referendum as priorities. The remaining Quebecers want their parliamentarians to deal with the real problems such as job creation, social justice and Canada's place in the world. They want us to deal with the real problems and, on October 30, Quebecers will say clearly to the separatists that they want to remain in the best country in the world, Canada.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want this Quebec referendum to be decisive and conclusive. They do not want any confusion or ambiguity concerning the meaning of the vote, before or after.

Yet the Leader of the Opposition clouds the issue when he says that he is prepared to accept a yes vote as binding and conclusive but not a no vote, and the Prime Minister does not help things when he implies that he is prepared to accept a no vote as binding and conclusive but waffles on the meaning of a yes vote.

For the benefit of all Canadians including Quebecers who want clarity and certainty in interpreting the Quebec referendum, will the Prime Minister make clear that a yes vote means Quebec is on its way out, that a no vote means Quebec is in the federation for the long haul, and that 50 per cent plus one is the dividing line between those two positions?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we had a clear question. They are asking the people of Canada: Do you want sovereignty? At the same time they say they want to stay in Canada.

Last week *The Economist* had the title “They want a divorce today and they want to be lovers tomorrow”. It is not a very clear question. I have been asking them for a long time in this House of Commons to give us a real question, an honest, clear question on separation. They have clouded the issue talking about divorce and remarriage at the same time. They want me on behalf of all Canadians to say that with a clouded question like that with one vote I will help them to destroy Canada. You might, I will not, Mr. Manning.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would ask all hon. members to please direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple supplementary in response to the Prime Minister’s reply. If the question asked in the Quebec referendum is not clear and is ambiguous, is he prepared to ensure a clear question is put to Quebecers?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there will be a clear answer by Quebecers on the 30th of October. They will say they will stay in Canada so the question is purely hypothetical.

The Speaker: Colleagues, the questions today have bordered on the hypothetical. I would ask all hon. members in phrasing the questions to please pay strict attention to the fact that they be questions which deal with policy matters of the government as opposed to hypothetical questions. I would ask you to do that.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I find the Prime Minister’s answer adding to the ambiguity which as I said at the beginning Canadians do not want. He just said that the question was unclear and therefore the answer would be ambiguous. Then he said that the response to that question would be a clear answer.

The majority of the members of this House believe that a yes vote in the referendum means the separation of Quebec and an end to its participation in the Canadian union. The separatist members can talk about a new marriage or partnership but it will be a partnership without a partner, a marriage without a spouse and Quebec will find itself at home alone.

Will the Prime Minister therefore state unequivocally that a 50 per cent plus one yes in the referendum will mean, sadly, an end to Quebec’s position in Canada and not a new and better union?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very often when the PQ and the Bloc Québécois say that they will all have an economic and political union, that they will have a passport, citizenship, that they will have the same currency and so on, they are not being very frank with the people of Quebec. That would be decided by the rest of Canada if it were to be the case.

• (1435)

But why waste our time? We have so many other problems facing this nation. Six weeks from today the people of Quebec, the people who were here, who opened up this country, when the francophones of this land left the Saint-Maurice valley to open the prairies, do we think these people will want to let go of the best country in the world? They will not.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, you should have the rules of the House respected. Hypothetical questions are not permitted in this situation.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In his autobiography, *Dans la fosse aux lions*, published in 1985, our current Prime Minister, undertook to abide by the decision made by Quebecers, saying that his party was betting on democracy. That they would convince that they should remain in Canada and would win. If they lost, they would respect Quebecers’ wish and accept separation.

Oral Questions

How does the Prime Minister explain his about-face in refusing to accept the outcome of the Quebec referendum?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually made this statement in the riding of the Leader of the Opposition, in Alma. At the time, when they asked me, I said there would be a referendum and we would win. And we had a referendum. All this took place before the first referendum. Since then, the Leader of the Opposition and the separatists have been saying that they will never take no for an answer. So they have never said they would accept a no vote as valid.

The Leader of the Opposition has again said recently himself that there will be referendum after referendum—except Quebecers have heard enough talk about the constitution and do not want to hear any more about it. They want to hear about the real problems concerning Quebecers: job creation, income security, peace for seniors. This is exactly what this government wants to do—look after the country's real problems—while they are busy playing with hypothetical questions. However, they will be making no more speeches after October 30.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question was not about hypothetical remarks, but about remarks the Prime Minister took the time to write. I imagine it was he who wrote his book. It was before 1985, well before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, well before Meech and all that. I am asking the Prime Minister how he can justify changing his mind on such a basic question, when he stated before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, in 1990-1991 I would remind you, and I quote: "I am a democrat, and I said so in 1980. Had we not recognized that Quebec could decide to separate, we would have acted differently".

Why is he not saying the same thing today? Are the years eroding logic?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I made that statement before the other referendum. We had a referendum, but Canada won. So the problem was settled.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): I wrote that before, in 1986, and I said at the time that we were going to respect the referendum that was held and we won. Now the opposition keeps saying that there will be no end, that there will be a referendum so long as it fails to win. I have to say that it is very important to respect democracy and that, at the moment, the question put by the Parti Québécois, by the leader of the Leader of the Opposition, is ambiguous; it will create an ambiguous situation, and Quebecers do not want an ambiguous situation. They decided to remain in Canada, and Canada will be the winner on October 30.

• (1440)

[English]

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I am extremely disturbed and I think Canadians will be disturbed at the answers the Prime Minister gave to the leader of the Reform Party.

We have the separatists in Quebec telling Quebecers that they can vote yes and have this imaginary union. Now we have the Prime Minister saying that a no vote counts and a yes vote may not count. I ask the Prime Minister to reconsider that position carefully. Is he not really telling Quebecers that it is easy and without risk to vote yes when that is not the case?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the real question is the member is asking me. I am always telling Quebecers that they have a chance to vote again on this.

For months and months I have asked the Government of Quebec to ask a clear question. It is asking an ambiguous question. Reading any comment on that from abroad they all say it is terribly confusing. They say we will get divorced and then remarry.

The member is asking me to say yes to the question without any analysis. Even then they say to Quebecers that separation will not come the day after. Therefore, do not tell me to tell them that it will be over on October 31. This country will be together on October 31 of this year and on October 31 of next year. As long as I am alive it will be part of Canada. Therefore, I do not want to spend my time talking about separation.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this country is not going to stay together just on the basis of one man's interpretation of a referendum question. It will stay together because the Prime Minister and others are successful in convincing Quebecers to vote no.

I again ask the Prime Minister why he does not simply do what the Leader of the Opposition is unwilling to do and tell Quebecers that their vote counts, yes or no, and that democracy is on the side of the federalists?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one that I know of has talked more about Canada and Quebec. I know they will vote for Canada even with this ambiguous question. Therefore, I do not want to spend my time replying to these hypothetical questions. We will campaign in Quebec and Quebecers will know that it is in their best interests to remain in Canada.

I do not understand why the Reform Party is trying to score political points when it is time for all Canadians to be on the same side in convincing Quebecers to stay in Canada.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, strangely enough, the Prime Minister did say—although it is not so clear today and I am not too sure any more—that he acknowledged the legitimacy of the referendum process under way in Quebec. Unlike the Minister of Labour and the chairman of the No committee, Daniel Johnson, however, he still refuses to recognize the eventual results of this referendum process through which Quebecers will decide their political future.

How can one logically reconcile acknowledging the legitimacy of a democratic public consultation process, take part in it and at the same time refuse to recognize its eventual results?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said several times already, we have asked for a clear question and none was forthcoming. They do not even have the courage to tell Quebecers that they are separatists. They looked for and coined a word to describe themselves, which is not even in the French language. They call themselves “souverainistes”. It is nowhere to be found in the dictionary.

They do not have the courage to let Quebecers know that they want to separate. They are trying to disguise their option and they want me to play their game, when I only want them to ask the people, I challenge them to ask them this question because the debate is not over in Quebec: Do you want to separate from the rest of Canada? Period. Then I would be the first one to admit that they were honest enough to put an absolutely unequivocal question to Quebecers.

• (1445)

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, are we to understand from all the answers given by the Prime Minister that, as far as he is concerned, the Quebec referendum will only be valid if the results are what he is hoping for? Is that his idea of democracy?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the Leader of the Opposition who says that a no vote does not mean no, but that a yes vote means yes. They are the ones who say that. They refuse to respect the people's wishes. They say they will go on and on.

Quebecers have heard as much as they can take about referendums and constitutional issues. They want politicians to deal with job creation, provide sound public administration and give them an honest and competent government. That is exactly what they lack in Quebec and that is why they will be voting for Canada on October 30.

[English]

CAMP IPPERWASH

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian agenda includes a lot more than the Quebec referendum.

Documented lawlessness was occurring at Camp Ipperwash since the native occupation on July 29. The local community is feeling betrayed by the total absence of military policing. This absence culminated tragically and unnecessarily in the death of Dudley George at the adjacent Ipperwash Provincial Park.

Why did the Department of National Defence allow the 2,000-acre military camp to go totally unpoliced after a 16-year old crashed the bus into the camp buildings area?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the band occupied part of Ipperwash in the fall of 1993.

In the budget of 1994 the government took the decision that Camp Ipperwash would close. It was surplus to our needs. We then entered into dialogue with the chief of the Kettle Point Band, Mr. Bressette, to talk about transferring ownership as part of the original agreement. Those discussions were rather long and involved questions of compensation about environmental clean up, all of which the government was committed to do.

When the rest of the renegade group, which does not accept the main band and the chief, occupied the camp some time ago—I guess it was in the month of July—the commander on the spot took the correct action. Rather than have confrontation where there would be loss of life, and given the fact that the camp was not being used by the military, the military agreed to withdraw temporarily, pending negotiations.

Those negotiations have borne fruit with the discussions that were held last week by the minister of Indian affairs. Everyone should congratulate him on the job he did in bringing a resolution to this subject.

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister was begged by the town, by the province, by the Reform Party, and the chief and council of the band to militarily police the camp and instead left a policing vacuum over lands under his jurisdiction.

The minister swore an oath as a cabinet minister and privy councillor to uphold the laws of Canada. When is the minister going to do that?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rather than listen to the inflammatory remarks of the hon. member, what we have seen in the recent events is that only with dialogue and negotiation with Canada's First Nations can we resolve these disputes.

There was division within the aboriginal community on the question of entitlement to that piece of land the federal government wants to give back.

After the negotiations conducted by my colleague, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, this now appears to be on the way to a satisfactory resolution.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Labour responsible for the Quebec referendum made the following comment: We always said that Quebecers have the right to express their views on Quebec's future, whether that future is in or out of Canada. We live in a democratic country; consequently, we will respect their wish.

My question is for the Minister of Labour. Does the minister responsible for the Quebec referendum still stand by her statement to the effect that she will recognize the result of the referendum vote?

• (1450)

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said, and I am proud to say it again in the House of Commons, that Canada is a democratic country and this is why I hold it so dear, as a Quebecer as well. Let us never forget that.

We have always said that Quebecers have the right to express themselves in a clear and democratic way regarding their future. Where is the clear question? Where is the clear question from our colleagues? Why are they hiding what is really at stake with this referendum? What are they hiding?

They are hiding studies. What else are they hiding? Why do they not want to tell the truth to Quebecers? The answer will be clear on October 30.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's reprimand was heard clearly. The fact is that when the minister said she would respect the wish of Quebecers, she knew what the question was.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Tremblay: So, will the minister recognize that, rather than treading on her own principles, she should have had the courage to resign to stand for her beliefs, express her attachment to Canada and preserve her own credibility?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I was just told. I do not need any advice on democracy. I was just told, as Yves Duhaime once said: Is she a true Quebecer, since she was elected by the people of Saint-Henri—Westmount? Since English speaking people voted for me? Mr. Speaker, this is what was just said.

You can see the kind of moral standards and ethics we are dealing with. Do we have the courage to tell the truth to Quebecers? They can decide for themselves. If you ask them "Do you want to separate from Canada?", the answer will be no.

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[English]

WORLD BANK REPORT

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday the World Bank made public its report on the wealth of countries. We are all thrilled to see that Canada ranks as the second richest country in the world. I ask the minister to tell us what this means for Canada and for Canadians.

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I am glad to share with my colleagues the decisions of the World Bank and the new studies they have done and the new methods they have used. It not only measures the industrial output but the national wealth and the human resources of a country.

I am proud to say that Canada now ranks number two in wealth, complementing the recent statement by the United Nations that said we were number one in the world.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, another issue of importance on the Canadian agenda is health care, even in Quebec.

The Liberals made a promise in the red book to have a national forum on health care chaired by the Prime Minister. Could we have a progress report, please?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the forum is doing its work. It has released a number of papers. It recently released one in Toronto on the issue of private and public funding. It will commence a series of public hearings some time this fall. Stay tuned, there will be more coming.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the national forum on health is an abject failure, but there is a meeting going on right now that might bear some fruit. The provincial health ministers are meeting in B.C. Is the government going to listen to constructive suggestions coming from that meeting?

Oral Questions

● (1455)

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the first things I would like to state in the House is that medicare works. The Canada Health Act enables medicare to work.

I am going to Victoria. I am leaving as soon as question period is over. I am going there to work with the provinces. I will work with them in any way I possibly can, but I will not allow the creation of a two tier system.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. After publicly expressing her vision of democracy by stating that the government would respect the Quebec referendum results, the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for the referendum in Quebec, was put in her place by the Prime Minister a few minutes later.

Since she can no longer express her convictions in public, can the Minister of Labour at least undertake to plead privately with the Prime Minister to convince him to recognize the results of the Quebec referendum?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, Quebecers have the right to express clearly and democratically what they want their future to be, and we will respect this right. That is why we are sure that, faced with a clear question, Quebecers will say no to Quebec's separation from the rest of Canada.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister admit that, by doing an about-face and saying she no longer recognizes the obligation to respect the results of the referendum, she is renouncing the loyalty she owes to Quebecers?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, who can claim to be real Quebecers? After reading the bill's preamble, which says that we will lose our identity as Quebecers if we stay in Canada, I wonder who they think they are. I myself am a proud Quebecer and I will vote no.

* * *

[English]

BOSNIA

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today we have heard a great deal about the October 30 Quebec deadline, but the government has an important September 30 deadline on the

future of the Bosnia peacekeeping mission. Given the massive ongoing fighting that is occurring in Bosnia and the fact that this afternoon Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced that the peacekeepers should leave Bosnia, will the Minister of Foreign Affairs do the right thing and immediately announce that our troops will be withdrawn from Bosnia?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian soldiers are doing the right thing every day in that part of the world. They are there serving in a very difficult environment in order to protect civilians and help people to be fed and protected. Canada and Canadians should be very proud of what our soldiers are doing there.

We are committed to the end of the mandate. It is quite clear that Canada will respect the mandate it has received from parliamentarians and that the Canadians will stay to the end of the mandate. We will have a chance to discuss with our colleagues and other countries who are contributing troops in that part of the world what is the best thing to do in order to enhance the peace process that is taking place.

We hope that Mr. Holbrooke, on behalf of the contact group, will conclude his negotiations with the parties in order to install peace for all the parties in the region.

● (1500)

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, our troops have been hunkered down for months now. They are not delivering on their mandate, as Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today.

As the minister said, they are there for peacekeeping only. That is the only function they should be there for but there is no peace to keep. Again I ask the minister, why are you breaking faith with our troops, abandoning them—

The Speaker: Earlier in question period I mentioned that you should please address your questions through the Chair. I would ask you to do so please.

I am going to permit the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to answer.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say through you to the hon. member that I do not know where he is getting his information.

The soldiers who are there now, those who have served there and those who have come back from Croatia have all indicated their pride in participating in such a UN peacekeeping operation, although it is a very difficult one.

The Canadian troops are part of a UN peacekeeping mission. If the secretary-general decides to terminate the mandate I am sure it will be done through proper consultations and we will obviously respond to the decisions of the United Nations.

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Despite what the hon. member is saying, there is still a task to be performed and Canadians will be performing it to the end.

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NUCLEAR TESTS

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Ottawa this summer 230 parliamentarians from 48 countries, members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, by resolution urged the French government not to hold nuclear tests.

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In addition to the representations he made on September 6 to the French government, is he now prepared to call for a boycott of goods made in France?

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada deplored the decisions of France and China to continue nuclear testing. However, Canada mentioned that it wanted the recently unanimously approved UN resolution to end nuclear testing by 1996 be complied with by all parties that already have a nuclear strike force. We expressed our satisfaction to the Americans as well as to the French who said they intended to comply with the 1996 deadline.

Under the circumstances, I do not think that we can blame French authorities for announcing that they will comply with the 1996 objective.

[*English*]

The Speaker: This brings question period to a conclusion.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Ung Huot, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I also draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of my brother Speaker from Alberta, the Hon. Stanley Schumacher.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1505)

RIGHT HON. JOHN DIEFENBAKER

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to mark the anniversary of the birth of John Diefenbaker 100 years ago today.

John Diefenbaker was a predecessor in the office of Prime Minister. I know I speak for everyone in the House when I salute him on this historic day. I am also one of the lucky few in this House today who had the opportunity to know John Diefenbaker, to see him in action and to serve with him in Parliament.

John Diefenbaker was one of those rare public figures who was larger than life and who remains larger than life. He helped define an entire era in our history. Like all Prime Ministers he left a mark on his country through his accomplishments in office, but like only a very few Prime Ministers he left a mark on our national psyche just by being the way he was. His style, his voice, his very presence have all become part of our identity, part of our mythology.

Dief loved politics. He was a career politician and he was proud of it. He considered politics and public service an honourable calling, the calling of a lifetime, and he gave it everything he had. You could love him or hate him—most Canadians fell into one of those two categories—but you could never for one second question the sincerity and the personal integrity of John Diefenbaker. You could disagree with him on an issue—which I often did on a lot of things from the Canadian flag to bilingualism—but you could never doubt his deep patriotism and love of Canada.

Of course, Dief was a populist. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment was bringing the firebrand populism of the prairies into his House of Commons and into the Government of Canada. He never forgot who he was or where he came from. His connection to Main Street in Prince Albert connected him with the Main Street of every town and city in Canada and with the Canadians who lived and worked on those main streets. He was their champion. He stood up for them. He railed against the establishment, against Bay Street, against the Grits, against the socialists and of course very often against his own party. He never fudged. He never wavered. He took a side on an issue and he stood firm.

Like all populists he loved the heat of the battle, the competition, the excitement. He loved campaigning. He was truly a great campaigner, whirling into town, diving into crowds, shooting at his opponents the Grits and the socialists with his arsenal of drama and humour. Dief used to say, “I don’t campaign, I just visit with the people”. Nobody ever connected better with the people than John Diefenbaker.

[*Translation*]

Above all, he felt at home in the House of Commons. He liked this place and I might add that, for a young 29-year old from Shawinigan, Mr. Diefenbaker’s flights of oratory in this House were quite impressive. I used to sit in the last row—my seat was

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at the back over there—and listen to him, because this was quite a show as we say. His imposing presence, penetrating stare, theatrics and thunderous voice are all as clear in my mind as they were 32 years ago when I first came to this place. For me—as for millions of Canadians—John Diefenbaker will forever epitomize the essence of this place.

• (1510)

[*English*]

Patriot, populist, parliamentarian, unhyphenated Canadian: John Diefenbaker was all of those things. He left our country a far richer, more interesting place than when he entered it 100 years ago today.

During his life, he touched the lives of millions of Canadians. His legacy will continue to inspire Canadians, be debated among Canadians, always people taking different sides because that is the way Dief loved it. It will last for a long time because John Diefenbaker was a great Canadian.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the Prime Minister, I could not help but note the irony of his remarks and his experience in having the privilege of sitting in this House with the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker.

He draws his comments from his own personal memory, in contrast to myself who was not yet born when Mr. Diefenbaker became Prime Minister of Canada in 1957 with a minority government.

I draw my remarks today from the collective memory of Canadians who will look back on this great man, sometimes with questions but most of the time with great admiration.

It is important to note that John G. Diefenbaker did not get elected the first time he ran. He ran for office many times before being successful.

At the outset of his life, he knew that the path he would walk would be his own and he remained true to that destiny. He became Canada's first western Prime Minister, the first Prime Minister who was neither of British nor French descent.

He brought a unique and rare style of politics to Ottawa. He took the populist firebrand politics of western Canada and made it mainstream. He came to this place with very deep convictions of what Canada represented. Most of all, he had very deep convictions in regard to our rights and our responsibilities.

In this regard, he meets one of the lasting tests of history. He has left behind a legacy that is still with us today: Canada's first Bill of Rights was the work of John Diefenbaker.

He also brought to national politics a vision of northern Canada. He was the first national leader to understand what it meant for Canadians to embrace this great, massive land, what it represented in our minds and in our imaginations in its limitless potential that he went on to describe as being something that extended from "sea to sea to the northern sea".

John Diefenbaker's passion for Canadians and Canada helped to attract people from across the country to politics. I still meet people today who say to me that I am a Diefenbaker Tory. I am sure that colleagues in the House have from time to time met those same people.

I want to quote today one of those Canadians who was influenced by John Diefenbaker, the Right Hon. Joe Clark. He said following Mr. Diefenbaker's funeral in 1979: "In a very real sense, John Diefenbaker's life was Canada. Over eight decades he spanned our history from the ox cart on the prairies to the satellite in space. He shaped much of that history, all of it shaped him".

What we may begin to appreciate today, 16 years after his death, is his impact on the way which we view ourselves as Canadians.

• (1515)

John Diefenbaker helped form Canada into a country where it is possible for a man from Ontario but raised, educated and formed in the prairies to be embraced by all Canadians. He illustrated what one man can do in a country like Canada.

There is no doubt that John Diefenbaker helped shape this country into a better, broader and prouder nation than the one before.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Diefenbaker had qualities and faults, but we have to give him credit for supporting, when he was Canada's Prime Minister, efforts to reach Canadians in order to promote individual freedoms. At the time, he was criticized for not supporting the Official Languages Act, but let us not forget that it is thanks to him if bilingualism was introduced in several Canadian institutions.

And while he did not agree with some specific initiatives, he was always convinced of the importance of protecting individual rights.

[*English*]

There is no doubt that John Diefenbaker helped shape Canada, as I said, into a better place. As leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada in 1995, I am very proud to be associated with him.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, John Diefenbaker was a passionate man. Passionate about his vision of his country, passionate in his attachment to his roots, firmly anchored in the dense and fertile soil of the Prairies.

Throughout the career of this resolute man, one would be hard-pressed to find examples of half-measures, grey areas, sidestepping and gobbledygook. He belonged to a generation that spoke and acted unequivocally. After returning from the Great War injured and with the rank of lieutenant, he suffered, a few years later, several defeats at the municipal, provincial and federal levels, which helped him acquire his legendary deter-

mination, before coming to this House to which he was re-elected 12 times.

Cut and dried as he was, it is not surprising that opinions about him are equally passionate on both sides. His career as a people's lawyer and the rejection he was subjected to made him sensitive to the plight of the disadvantaged and the workers. For example, he opened the door to the adoption of the federal health insurance policy.

He showed the same generosity in the promulgation of the Canadian Bill of Rights. In 1961, he condemned apartheid. But francophones will also remember him as a fierce opponent of bilingualism. And who can forget his fight against the adoption of a Canadian flag?

His attachment to England was coupled with an embarrassing coolness toward our American neighbours. But above all, he constantly refused to recognize Quebecers as a founding people, even denying Quebec's distinct character. Unfortunately, we know that his ideas gained widespread acceptance and that, 32 years after his government was defeated, the present government still refuses to recognize Quebec as a nation.

Quebecers now have the ball in their court and they have to express their political will. But, no matter what people may say, nobody can accuse John Diefenbaker of backing away from a fight. He talked about the country, the language and the people that he loved so dearly.

In the upcoming debate, he would not, of course, share the opinion of Quebec sovereignists. He would certainly be a fierce adversary, but I think he would understand that others, like him, feel the need to protect their identity, their language and the right to exercise their choice as a people.

[English]

Yes, he was a great fighter. I cannot help thinking that he would enjoy very much to be living now. He certainly would have been very much involved with the debate since its beginning. I think he would certainly fight for Canada as he thought Canada was, but he would understand that many Quebecers would fight for Quebec, for what they think Quebec is.

• (1520)

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join with other members in paying tribute today to the memory of John Diefenbaker on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

John Diefenbaker has been described today by the Prime Minister and others as a prairie populist, as a man with his roots

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in the common people who sought to give expression to their hopes, fears and dreams through the medium of politics and public policy.

As a student I once attended a huge rally which he addressed in Edmonton's Jubilee Auditorium. The place was packed and there was no place left to sit except at the press tables on the platform behind where he was speaking. I took out a notebook and disguised myself as a scribe and ended up sitting about 20 feet behind him while he addressed about 5,000 people packed into a building that would hold about 3,500.

As was his custom he had a large sheaf of papers on the podium. For the first 10 minutes he simply flipped through the pages touching lightly on a subject, assessing the feedback from the audience, moving lightly to another subject, touching lightly on it and assessing the feedback from it and so forth, until he had a fix on the concerns and the hopes of that audience.

These he returned to with a vengeance, speaking directly to their concerns and hopes with an accuracy and a vigour that defied imagination. He had a peculiar ability to read an audience very quickly and to relate quickly and forcibly to the hopes and fears of his fellow Canadians.

As a prairie populist John Diefenbaker was one of a select list of characters that cuts across party lines, including F. W. G. Haultain, the last great premier of the Northwest Territories; John Bracken and Henry Wisewood of the Progressives; William Aberhart, J. S. Woodsworth and Tommy Douglas. What set John Diefenbaker apart was that he was the only prairie populist in this century to become the Prime Minister of Canada.

Like all of us he had weaknesses as well as strengths. He had detractors as well as admirers and supporters. However there was one point on which he could not be faulted and that was on his love and commitment to Canada, "one Canada" to use his favourite phrase.

On behalf of my Reform colleagues, the people of Saskatchewan and the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who either loved him or hated him but were never indifferent to him, I pay tribute to John Diefenbaker and his commitment to one Canada, on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, September 18, 1995, is the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker.

Mr. Diefenbaker represented the city of Prince Albert and area in the House of Commons from 1953 until 1979 and was elected to this honourable House 13 times. He became Canada's 13th Prime Minister on June 21, 1957 and served our nation in that capacity until April 21, 1963.

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On this the 100th anniversary of his birth I wish to recognize John Diefenbaker's great contribution to the citizens of Prince Albert. We remember that contribution in our community. We have the Diefenbaker Bridge, the John George Diefenbaker School, Diefenbaker House and a statue of John Diefenbaker in Memorial Square. In addition we have Prime Ministers' Park. We will not quickly forget the legacy of John Diefenbaker in our community.

I also express our gratitude to the lasting and profound legacy he left to our entire nation, including the very important Canadian bill of rights. Mr. Diefenbaker believed, as do the vast majority of Canadians, in the economic and cultural benefits expressed in a phrase that he was very fond of and used often: "The economic and cultural benefits of one Canada, united now and forever".

• (1525)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to join my colleagues from other parties in the House today in marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Prime Minister John George Diefenbaker.

When John George Diefenbaker was elected Prime Minister of Canada I was six years old. Mr. Diefenbaker was 62 years old and had already been in Parliament for 17 years. Yet I had the honour, however briefly, of being a colleague of his when I like him was elected to the 31st Parliament of Canada on May 22, 1979.

I remember walking into the parliamentary dining room and seeing Dief in the alcove to the left where Prime Ministers like to eat and feeling like I was now in authentic parliamentary company.

It should be repeated of John Diefenbaker often that not unlike other parliamentary legends, some of whom are still with us today such as Mr. Knowles, he loved Parliament and all that it stood for. He understood Parliament. He knew it to be a place where different ideas and different idealists clash with each other and have it out with each other. The sanitized corporate boardroom view of Parliament which we see encouraged in some quarters today was not for John Diefenbaker.

While we are talking about corporate boardrooms it is also appropriate to note that in my judgment John Diefenbaker was probably one of the last Prime Ministers of the country who served for any length of time, who was not at home in the company of the Canadian corporate elite. His politics though not socialist were populist and he was certainly more at home on Main Street than on Bay Street. That is why he was able, much

to the distress of my party on occasion, to win ridings that otherwise should have been NDP.

He was progressive for his time and for his party on human rights issues, on the equality of women, on social programs, on aboriginal issues, on South Africa and on other such issues. One recalls with fondness his opposition to capital punishment, for instance. Most of all, though I concur with many of the critical analyses offered of his prime ministership, I remember Mr. Diefenbaker as a Canadian, an unhyphenated Canadian, who had a vision of Canada that far exceeded the banal images of the marketplace so commonplace in our way of speaking today.

It was a vision of an independent Canada, a Canada that did not take its orders or its agenda from Washington, a Canada that determined its own way in the world and its own way of doing things. It was this independence that George Grant lamented the loss of when he wrote a "Lament for a Nation" after the fall of the Diefenbaker government and the acceptance of nuclear weapons by the government that followed.

John Diefenbaker struck a chord in the hearts of many Canadians. It was not long after the election of 1979—three months actually—that his funeral train wound its way across the Canadian landscape. It was the last trip on the hustings for a man who loved politics, who loved Canada, who loved political life and who always said that next to the ministry he regarded politics as the highest calling.

Finally, on a personal note, my exposure to John Diefenbaker came long before my election to Parliament or the few occasions on which I had an opportunity to discuss issues with him as a young person interested in politics, because I did have that opportunity. Some members may also know that I play the pipes. As a piper I had the task of piping him into the hall at a number of events in Winnipeg over the years. I remember one in particular at the Rossmere Curling Club when I could barely make it through the crowd to the front for the crush of people reaching out to shake hands with their Chief.

Dief was fond of the phrase "in my day and generation". I am grateful that in my day and generation, however briefly, I had the opportunity to see that great Canadian in action. We should all hope when our day and generation are judged we will be able to say, however differently and however varied our ways of doing so might be, that we too served Canada with the loyalty and the love of this great country that John Diefenbaker demonstrated. May it always be said of us, as he said of himself, that though we might be on the wrong side from time to time, may we never find ourselves on the side of wrong.

• (1530)

The Speaker: I did not say at the beginning that the tributes were of course to John George Diefenbaker.

The tributes now are for Jean-Luc Pepin.

*Tributes**[Translation]***THE LATE JEAN-LUC PEPIN**

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, like all Canadians, I was deeply saddened to hear that Jean-Luc Pepin, who was one of my colleagues here in the House of Commons, had passed away.

He was elected in 1963, at the same time as I was, to represent a riding close to mine, near Drummondville on the other shore of the Saint Lawrence, and we began our career together. We even went back to university together. At that time, we were expected to be in the House in the evening. We both took courses in administrative law, so that we would be able to come to the House if there was a vote. We became good friends. We both had the privilege of studying, if I can use the term, under Mitchell Sharp. Mr. Pepin had been appointed parliamentary secretary to Mr. Sharp when he was at Trade and Commerce; I became Mr. Sharp's parliamentary secretary when he moved to Finance.

Jean-Luc Pepin was an intellectual who was actively involved in public life. One could not have wished for a nicer guy. He was kind to everyone, but at the same time he was extremely hard working. Any issue he was given would be examined in depth, so much so that he sometimes almost made himself ill through his thoroughness. I have rarely seen colleagues read through all the documents that had been prepared for them, but Jean-Luc Pepin certainly did.

Jean-Luc Pepin also had a broad vision of Canada. He always searched for solutions to our problems, and his participation in our very animated discussions, both in caucus and here in the House of Commons, was always followed with great interest. He was always well informed and constantly sought out new solutions.

[English]

He was a very good minister. He started as Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. He was the first among the ministers to visit China right after we recognized China 25 years ago. He led the first businessmen's mission to Latin America. When today as Prime Minister I am involved in visiting the same area, I cannot help but think about the vision and wisdom of Jean-Luc Pepin in doing his work as Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

I remember he unfortunately lost an election in 1968, and he came back. It was a very amusing moment, because after—

[Translation]

When he lost the election, everyone deplored his loss and lamented the fact that Jean-Luc Pepin would no longer sit in this House. But suddenly, after a recount, he was back. He showed us all the glowing editorials that he had received and just as he was

about to use them in the House in powerful speeches, he was ousted again following a judicial recount. He was absent from this House.

He served in numerous positions. He was a member of the Pepin-Robarts Commission and submitted a very important report which was widely discussed but which was not fully implemented. However, a good loser, he always accepted the decisions that were made, offering new solutions and never giving up. He chaired the commission on price and wage controls, something that was not easy to do at the time. He did so very tactfully and competently. Of necessity we became friends because when you are not from the big city of Montreal, when you come from the country, you tend to join ranks. He was a very good friend but first and foremost, he was an outstanding member of Parliament, an outstanding minister and a great Canadian. With his passing last week, our country has lost a great public servant.

● (1535)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my political party, I would like to pay tribute today to Mr. Jean-Luc Pepin, who passed away a few days ago.

Born in Drummondville in 1924, Mr. Pepin had a brilliant career both as an academic and a politician. He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1963 to represent the Drummond—Arthabaska riding.

In 1968, under the Trudeau government, he became the first Quebecer ever to be put in charge of an important economic portfolio when he was appointed Minister of Industry. During his career as a member of Parliament and a federal minister, he was at the centre of several major reviews and often had to meet tough challenges, including implementation of the metric system, transport deregulation and the development of a more open relationship between Canada and the People's Republic of China.

It is particularly important to mention the contribution of Jean-Luc Pepin as co-chairman of the Pepin-Robarts Commission, a working group set up to examine the constitutional and political problems facing Canada. Despite the extremely centralizing vision of the Trudeau government, this Quebecer had the fortitude to defend with conviction the concept of asymmetrical federalism. As we know, according to this concept, the province of Quebec would have been able to display its specificity and to have, as indicated in the commission's report, all the powers needed to preserve and develop its distinctiveness.

The rest is history, as we say. Pierre Trudeau and the current prime minister turned down the report before forever entrenching in the 1982 Constitution the principle of equality for all provinces.

Tributes

We will remember Mr. Pepin for his exceptional contribution to the political debate which is still going on today. We will remember how this Quebecer tried without success to ensure that the right of Quebec to develop as a distinct entity was recognized.

On behalf of my colleagues in this House and on my own behalf, I would like to extend to his family and friends our deepest sympathy.

[English]

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join with other members of the House in paying tribute to the memory of Jean-Luc Pepin and his contributions to the public life of this country over the years.

On behalf of my Reform colleagues I would also like to extend our deepest sympathies to the Pepin family on their loss and indeed our country's loss.

The media and other speakers today have made reference to the long list of achievements and contributions to our national life associated with Jean-Luc Pepin. These include his contributions to academic life, particularly at the University of Ottawa, his contributions as a senior minister of the crown, including his proposals as Minister of Transport for reforming the Crow's Nest freight rate, and his contributions as co-chairman of the task force on Canadian unity. Of course on the subject of national unity, if some of those proposals had been brought forward and acted upon more vigorously we wonder where we would all be today.

What we find most memorable about the contributions of Jean-Luc Pepin is that in his case we not only remember what he did and proposed but we remember even more vividly and fondly the manner and the spirit in which he did it: his humour, his enthusiasm, and his positive outlook. I can remember being a young woman in Canada in my high school and university days and seeing a picture on television of some mysterious man that was so far away in eastern Canada. I remember that glint in his eye when he was being interviewed. It is a wonderful memory I carry of him.

In a country where too often the spirit of pessimism prevails, the cheerfulness and optimism of a man like Jean-Luc Pepin should not only be remembered but imitated. In so doing we would be paying fine and fitting tribute to a man and his memory. May all of us in this House remember the remarkable role model he has been to us in Canada.

We wish his family well and we sympathize with them.

[Translation]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to pay tribute to the late hon. Jean-Luc Pepin.

Jean-Luc Pepin passed away a few days ago. This great Canadian, always gracious and charming, gave a good name to political life.

I first met Mr. Pepin as a student at Ottawa University where he taught political science.

Jean-Luc Pepin was first elected to the House of Commons in 1963 as member for Drummond—Arthabaska where he served until 1972.

• (1540)

A man of ideas which he expressed with the greatest of ease, he loved to serve his country. He was a firm believer in Canadian unity. He will probably be remembered for his significant contributions to Canadian life, especially his contributions to the Task Force on Canadian Unity known as the Pepin-Robarts Commission.

In 1979, he was reelected, but this time as member for Ottawa—Carleton which he represented until 1984. For the most part, this riding later became the new riding of Carleton—Gloucester, as a result of the 1988 readjustment of electoral boundaries.

It is for me a great honour to have been elected in the same riding as the hon. Jean-Luc Pepin who served it so well in the House of Commons as a minister and where he lived until his death.

I salute a man who defended both our official languages and promoted bilingualism across Canada. I salute a man who promoted Canadian unity with integrity, compassion, elegance and charm.

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus, I join with others in the House of Commons in expressing condolences to the family of Jean-Luc Pepin and say a few words about him by way of recollection on the basis of my own experience in this House between 1979 and 1984.

One should be honest and say that what I remember of Jean-Luc Pepin is fighting him on all fronts with respect to the Crow rate and VIA Rail cuts. He had the misfortune, I would suggest, of being assigned these tasks by the then Liberal government.

I suspected at the time that he was not always completely happy in the role he was assigned, especially when it came to the VIA Rail cuts, because I know that his father worked for CN and he had a railway background. He sometimes looked a bit uncomfortable, but he handled everything. He handled those issues as he handled everything, with a great deal of grace, a great deal of generosity, a great deal of humour, and with a kind of philosophical touch that one does not see all that often here in the House of Commons.

The thing I remember most about him was the sort of intellectual delight he took in argumentation and debate. He was

one of the few members of Parliament I can remember who sprinkled his debates on the Crow rate and other more seemingly practical issues with quotations or allusions to Sarte and Camus and Nietzsche and various other philosophers whose works he was obviously familiar with.

I remember him as a great parliamentarian, a great Canadian, someone committed, as so many have said, to Canadian unity. It is unfortunate that at this very critical time in our history we will not have the voice of Jean-Luc Pepin being able to contribute to the debate that is upon us about Canada's future.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, as I heard members pay homage to Mr. Diefenbaker and Mr. Pepin today, I could not help thinking that these two men, although coming from different parts of the country and having had very different, maybe totally opposite experiences, if they were with us today would both speak with equal fervour about Canada, each with his own point of view, as some others members in this House would.

Who knows, maybe it is a coincidence that we should be paying homage to both these men on the same day. As it has been said, Mr. Pepin was an intellectual but he was also a very sensitive man. He had an exceptional political career; that proves it is not always necessary to be aggressive to succeed in politics and it is not true that the political environment is always a very harsh one. On the contrary. Jean-Luc Pepin has always acted with a lot of tact and respect for others. It characterized his political career.

• (1545)

I am happy to stress that fact today for the benefit of all those who wonder if political men and women are people who still believe in the values Mr. Pepin cherished.

As my colleague just mentioned, Mr. Pepin was entrusted with very difficult departments and very complex issues. I am thinking, among other things, about the rail subsidies and the Crows Nest rate, two issues that were never easy to deal with, needless to say. He always took on the responsibilities with an exemplary sense of duty. He did the same thing when he co-chaired the Pepin-Robarts Commission. Colleagues from our party who had the pleasure and privilege of working with Mr. Pepin remember him as an absolutely exceptional man.

[English]

Jean-Luc Pepin and John Diefenbaker whom we have honoured today are two Canadians who, even though they came from two very different backgrounds, if they were with us in this House today would agree wholeheartedly on one thing and that is about Canada and its future.

Tributes

On behalf of the party I represent and the men and women who knew him in this House I want to pay a special tribute to him. I extend our condolences to his family. I know he will be missed.

[Translation]

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 5, the right honourable Jean-Luc Pepin, one of the most significant figures on the Canadian political scene since the 1960s, died on the eve of his 71th birthday. The death of this former member of Parliament and minister caught us by surprise. All those who knew him were also caught by surprise, but we also witnessed his numerous achievements and his departure can only fill us with sadness and nostalgia.

It was largely thanks to this great Canadian that our country adopted the metric system. It was mentioned earlier that it was also largely thanks to him that the Canadian government became more open to the People's Republic of China well before other countries did. The same goes for his work in the Department of Transport, with the elimination of the Crow rate and with Via Rail.

We will also long remember him for the Anti-Inflation Board and for the Pepin-Robarts Commission, whose findings still remain relevant today in any discussion concerning relations between the federal and the provinces. I wish I could avoid being partisan, because Mr. Pepin always avoided excessive partisanship. But after listening to some remarks, I cannot help but mention that, during a dinner that was held about ten days before his death, we had the opportunity to discuss the political issue of the day, the referendum, and I wish to note that, even though he was almost 71 years old, Mr. Pepin clearly said to me at the time that, if necessary, he would willingly agree to campaign for Canada.

I wish to thank him as a personal friend, as one of his students—because I was one—as his assistant, as an admirer and now as the member for Ottawa—Vanier. I would like to extend my condolences to the Pepin family as well as those who were close to this great political man.

[English]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first met the late Jean-Luc Pepin in 1979 when I was elected to this House. That was the year the Conservatives won the election against the Liberals.

Every time there is a change of government there is also a change of caucus rooms because each party has a different size caucus. Jean-Luc Pepin was advising me as a newly elected member on what and what not to do. He always gave 100 per cent of his time. He was so intent on talking to me that, when we arrived at the caucus room, the camera lights all flashed and I did not know what was happening. What happened is that he was so engrossed in advising me that we walked into the wrong caucus room. That is a bit of the humorous side of Jean-Luc Pepin. It shows how helpful he was to new members and when

Tributes

he spoke to us he gave 100 per cent. When he listened he gave 100 per cent.

• (1550)

The Prime Minister mentioned about his term when he was parliamentary secretary to the Hon. Mitchell Sharp. I happened to be his parliamentary secretary in 1982–83 when he was Minister of Transport. Yes, I along with the late Jean–Luc Pepin faced the VIA Rail debates here and placards over our heads about the Crow bill, et cetera. He made the tough decisions. One thing about him is he listened to all sides before he made a decision. I think that is why he was so popular.

His immediate family and extended family can take great pride in the fact that he was a great Canadian. But we have not lost him; he will always be with us.

* * *

THE LATE DR. CHARLES WILLOUGHBY

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my sad duty today to rise in tribute to Dr. Charles Willoughby who was a former member of this House.

Dr. Willoughby lived a long and very distinguished life practising medicine in the interior of British Columbia for many decades and serving as MP for Kamloops from 1963 through to 1965 when Davey Fulton was serving in provincial politics. He was said by one of his successors in the riding, now Senator Len Marchand, to have been regarded as one of the finest gentlemen of his community.

There are few Canadians who have been privileged to witness the unfolding of Canadian history as much as Dr. Willoughby who was born in rural Ontario 101 years ago when David Thompson was Prime Minister. He served in this House in the days of Prime Minister Pearson and Prime Minister Diefenbaker and indeed lived to see a fellow member of the class of 1963, the member from Shawinigan in turn become Prime Minister in 1993.

Dr. Willoughby wrote two books, one when he was 99 years old. One is called *From Leeches to Lasers* and is about the development of medicine. The other is titled *Shuswap Memories*, his warm, vivid and sympathetic recollections of his years in the Shuswap country in the early decades of this century.

Dr. Willoughby had four children, 20 grandchildren and 33 great grandchildren. I know everyone in this House offers their condolences to his family and friends at this sad time.

While it is sad to say goodbye to such a distinguished British Columbian and Canadian, I am sure that all of us also hope to enjoy as long and as rich a life as that of Dr. Charles Willoughby.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to Dr. Willoughby and, on behalf of all the members of the Bloc Québécois, offer my condolences to members of his family and his friends.

Dr. Willoughby was a member of this House in 1963; you will understand that at that time I was only 21 years old and did not have the opportunity to know him. However, from the notes I have in front of me, I gather that he was 69 when he was elected for the first time to this House. I understand that Dr. Willoughby first made a career in medicine, devoting himself to his fellow men, and then at an age when most people take a well deserved retirement, he decided to devote a few more years of his life to the service of his fellow citizens of Kamloops.

This is indeed remarkable, and it must be said that since he died this year at the age of 101, public life obviously rejuvenates and gives a taste for life. On behalf of all the Bloc Québécois members, I reiterate our deepest condolences to his large family, to his children and grand-children and to all his friends.

[*English*]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the memory of Dr. Charles James McNeil Willoughby who passed away September 5 of this year in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Dr. Willoughby's life was a life of service to others. It is clear from his history that he with the support of his wife Marjorie recognized the full responsibility that comes with citizenship and actively sought to make his community a better place, a selfless characteristic we would all do well to emulate today.

• (1555)

From all accounts he was committed to Kamloops and her people as a physician and surgeon with the Burris clinic for 40 years, as a member of the Kamloops school board, as chairman of the United Appeal, and as the member of Parliament for Kamloops during the 26th Parliament. That commitment has now become his legacy, a legacy which has influenced many including his children, Marjorie, Lorene, Ann and John, his 20 grandchildren and his 33 great grandchildren.

During these times when outside forces pull against our families and our communities, people like Dr. Willoughby provide a strong and quiet leadership that inspires us to draw together.

To his three surviving children, Marjorie, Lorene and Ann, and to his daughter-in-law Berte, I send on behalf of my colleagues our deepest condolences. I hope they will find comfort in the knowledge that their father will be remembered as a courageous man who embraced the responsibility of making this place a better one.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all of us who knew him were sad to hear recently of the passing of Dr. Charles Willoughby.

Dr. Willoughby was one of those rare individuals who certainly left a lasting impression with those who met him. I had the honour of knowing Charles Willoughby for more than 30 years, first when he was member of Parliament for Kamloops. He was one of those individuals who was admired by all. Even his political foes could not find a negative statement to make about him ever. He was loved by all who came in contact with him. He was a gentleman in the true sense of the word.

As others have indicated, he was a very dedicated family man. He was an admired doctor for decades. Again he was one of those rare individuals in that every patient who came in contact with him loved him and admired him. He was certainly a respected author. He was a distinguished parliamentarian. He was a proud citizen not only of the city of Kamloops but of the world.

Over the years I would encounter Dr. Willoughby at public functions and on the streets of Kamloops. He always had words of advice and suggestions and was always aware of the issues of the day. His family said that even beyond his 100th year when the evening news came on all became quiet to allow Charles Willoughby to be updated as to the events of the day.

He was a wonderful individual. The people of Kamloops loved him to the end. Our hearts and our thoughts go to his family today.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the hon. Dr. Charles James McNeil Willoughby.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada lost a great colleague this year and the people of Canada lost a great Canadian with the passing of Dr. Willoughby at the age of 101.

Before being elected to the House in 1963 as the member for Kamloops, British Columbia, Dr. Willoughby was a local icon who was very well known. He helped found and establish the very successful Burris Medical Clinic, a clinic which is still functioning and thriving today.

As was mentioned by the minister from British Columbia, Dr. Willoughby wrote a very insightful book, *From Leeches to Lasers* which detailed the medical advances during his life. The title accurately illustrates what technological and medical changes Dr. Willoughby saw during his lifetime.

Dr. Willoughby was renowned for being a staunch federalist whose love for his country was second to none. Even after his term as a parliamentarian Dr. Willoughby kept abreast of national events and is rumoured to have stopped to watch the evening national news every day regardless of what he had been doing.

Routine Proceedings

Dr. Willoughby's then Dominion of Canada lapel pin was his trademark. It is with great pride that I recognize his contribution to Canadian politics. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family of this wonderful great man.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1600)

[English]

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Privacy Commissioner for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1995, pursuant to subsection 41 of the Privacy Act.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this document is referred permanently to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal affairs.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

APPOINTMENT TO BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: My colleagues, I have the honour to inform the House that Mr. Bob Ringma, member for the electoral district of Nanaimo—Cowichan, has been appointed as member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of Mr. Jim Silye, member for the electoral district of Calgary Centre, for the purposes and under the provisions of chapter 42 of the first supplement of the Revised Statutes of Canada 1985, entitled an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act.

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 32(2) and pursuant to subsections 198.1(2) and subsection 333.2 of the Canada Elections Act, I have the honour to table in both official languages copies of the Northwest Territories election fees tariff.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 254 petitions.

*Routine Proceedings***INTER-PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation to the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Canada–France Inter-Parliamentary Association, held in Paris on May 23 and 24, 1995.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Health, entitled "Towards Holistic Wellness: the Aboriginal Peoples".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report within 150 days.

Your committee decided to undertake a study on the health of aboriginal peoples following a request by one of the national aboriginal organizations.

[Translation]

The committee concentrated on the mental health of aboriginal peoples. It received written and oral evidence from numerous representatives of Indian, Metis and Inuit communities.

[English]

Following consideration of the evidence heard over the past year, your committee takes the position that all levels of government and representatives of aboriginal peoples must work jointly with communities to develop a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan for wellness.

[Translation]

Therefore the committee asks that the federal Minister of Health propose to the meeting of health ministers the immediate establishment of a consultative mechanism to allow development of a national action plan to improve the well-being of aboriginal peoples and that she present every year a status report on the plan to Parliament.

[English]

On behalf of the committee I want to thank all the witnesses who appeared before it, as well as the many community representatives who so warmly welcomed us during our visits across the country.

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 84th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs dealing with the list of members of committees.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move adoption of this report later today.

* * *

● (1605)

[English]

MOTIONS

MOTION M-377

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to withdraw my private member's motion, M-377. This issue has already been dealt with by the House of Commons.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion withdrawn.)

MOTION M-418

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also respectfully ask for the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw my private member's motion M-418 from the Order Paper.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion withdrawn.)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would move that we dispense with reading the 84th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which I presented to the House a few moments ago. I believe you would find unanimous consent that the following motion be put to the House and adopted immediately without debate:

That the 84th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I have another consent motion to put to the House.

I move:

That notwithstanding Standing Order 106(1), the several standing committees may meet for the purpose of electing a chair commencing at 9 a.m. tomorrow, September 19, 1995.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

PETITIONS

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition that has been circulating all across Canada. This particular petition has been signed by a number of Canadians from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession, which has not been recognized for its value to our society. They also state that the Income Tax Act discriminates against families who make the choice to provide care in the home to preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill and the aged.

The petitioners therefore pray and call upon Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families who decide to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition. This petition not only bears the signatures of constituents from my riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt but also signators from across this country, including places such as Bath, Ontario, Seeleys Bay, Lansdowne, Ontario, and also Victoria, British Columbia.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the House that the Bloc Quebecois has publicly dedicated itself to a disloyal objective, that being the secession of the province of Quebec from the Canadian federation. Therefore, the petitioners call on Parliament to preserve unity, parliamentary tradition, and to protect the rights of all people of Canada by prevailing upon the Speaker of the House of Commons to recognize the Reform Party of Canada as the official opposition during the remainder of the 35th Parliament of Canada.

It is not only my duty but my privilege to present this petition on behalf of Canadians.

• (1610)

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition today on behalf of constituents who live in the area of Crossfield, Alberta.

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This petition calls for a loyal opposition in the House of Commons. The petitioners call on Parliament to preserve Canadian unity, parliamentary tradition, and to protect the rights of all the people of Canada by prevailing upon the Speaker of the House of Commons to recognize the Reform Party of Canada as the official opposition during the remainder of the 35th Parliament.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present two petitions today.

The first group of petitioners is extremely concerned about including the phrase sexual orientation in federal legislation. They believe this sets a very dangerous precedent for society.

The second group of petitioners requests that the Government of Canada not amend the human rights act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners fear that such an inclusion could lead to homosexuals receiving the same benefits and societal privileges as married couples.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 172, 184, 189, 194, 202, 203, 206, 207, 211, 212, 213, 217, 219, and 220.

[Text]

Question No. 172—**Mr. Strahl:**

With regard to the special retirement allowance for deputy ministers approved by Treasury Board on July 14, 1988, (a) how many individuals are currently benefitting from this allowance and (i) how much pension is each individual receiving from the federal government per annum, using figures broken down by the amount of the allowance and the amount of the remainder of their pension, (ii) what is the list of their names, (iii) what was the last employment position they held before receiving the allowance, (b) how many individuals will be eligible to receive the special retirement allowance after the current fiscal year and (i) what is the list of their names, (ii) what is their employment position, (iii) how much will they be eligible to receive, using figures broken down by the amount of the allowance and the amount of the remainder of their pension, and since July 14, 1988, (c) how many deputy ministers have been recruited directly from the private sector, including crown corporations and what positions were they recruited from?

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.): Twenty individuals are benefitting from the allowance. The amount of the pension received by each individual cannot be released since it is considered personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act. For the same reasons, the names of individuals in receipt of a pension from the federal government cannot be released, nor the amounts.

It is not possible to determine how many people will be eligible to receive the special retirement allowance at a future date for example, after the current fiscal year. Deputy ministers serve at pleasure and they must retire to become eligible; the decision to retire is not always communicated ahead of time.

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Furthermore, eligibility for pension varies in accordance with age and service at the date of retirement.

Since 1988 the number of deputy minister positions has been reduced by 19 per cent and one individual has been recruited directly from the private sector to a deputy minister position; he was the CEO at a consulting firm. Four other individuals appointed deputy ministers since July 1988 had recent experience outside the federal public service.

Question No. 184—Mr. Caccia:

What is the amount, if any, of direct and indirect federal subsidies received by MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. since 1950?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): I am informed as follows:

Human Resources Development Canada (Since 1985*)

Canadian Job Strategy Program—\$1,667,036.00

Industry Canada (Since 1980*)

Industry & Labour Adjustment Program—\$1,300,000.00

Industrial & Regional Development Program—953,000.00
Sector Campaign—Forest Products R&D/Innovation—3,829,303.00

Advanced Manufacturing Technology Application Program—15,000.00

National Research Council (Since 1966*)

Industrial Research Assistance Program—\$4,268,000.00

Natural Resources Canada (Since 1989*)

Forestry Program—\$638,010.00

Western Economic Diversification Canada (Since 1984*)

Western Diversification Program—\$3,449,461.00

Industrial and Regional Development Program—866,561.00
(Former Department of Regional Industrial Expansion)

Enterprise Development Program—3,863,263.85
(Former Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce)

Regional Development Incentives Program—2,401,708.40
(Former Department of Regional Economic Expansion)

Date from which records are still available from the financial system.

Question No. 189—Mr. White (North Vancouver):

With regard to the rate of recidivism for persons convicted of first degree murder, second degree murder or manslaughter over the past 30 years, what has the government determined to be the number of those persons so convicted who, (a) reoffend, are formally charged and subsequently sentenced on a charge of first degree murder or, (b) reoffend, are formally charged and subsequently sentenced on a charge of second degree murder or, (c) reoffend, are formally charged and subsequently sentenced on a charge of manslaughter?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): In so far as the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada and its agency are concerned, the answer is as follows regarding the National Parole Board:

Prior to July 1976, murder was separated into capital and non-capital murder. The category of non-capital murder was established on January 4, 1968. Prior to that date all murder was capital murder. The categories of first and second degree murder were created on July 26, 1976 when capital punishment was abolished.

A review of statistical studies which examined the outcome of released murder and manslaughter offenders indicated that 19 offenders previously convicted of a homicide offence, manslaughter or murder, were convicted and reincarcerated for a second homicide between 1920 and 1990. This research revealed that six offenders were convicted of a second murder. Thirteen offenders originally convicted of manslaughter were reincarcerated for another homicide offence, five for murder offences and eight for a second manslaughter offence. The following is a summary of the findings of these studies.

On follow up of offenders previously convicted of murder, the National Parole Board 1990 followed murder offenders released between January 1, 1975 and March 31, 1990 to July 31, 1990¹. This study indicated that five persons originally convicted of a homicide offence were reincarcerated for a second homicide offence.

There were 752 releases of murder offenders. Of these, 75 or 10 per cent had been convicted of capital murder, 513 or 68.2 per cent of non-capital murder, five or 0.7 per cent of first degree and 159 or 21.1 per cent of second degree murder.

Five—0.7 per cent of 752 releases—released murder offenders were reincarcerated for a second murder while on full parole. All five had originally been convicted of non-capital murder. Of the five, three were subsequently convicted of first degree and two of second degree murder.

Statistic Canada 1976 reported on a study which followed a sample of 232 murder offenders released on parole between 1920 and July 1975.

One murder offender—0.4 per cent of a total of 232—was convicted of a second murder.

On follow up of offenders previously convicted of manslaughter the National Parole Board's 1990 follow up study to July 31, 1990 of manslaughter offenders released between January 1, 1975 and March 31, 1990 revealed that 11 persons originally convicted of manslaughter were returned to custody for a second homicide offence.

There were 2,950 releases of offenders convicted of manslaughter. Of these, 1,407 were released on full parole and 1,543 on statutory release².

Five—0.4 per cent of a total of 1,407 releases of—those released on full parole were convicted of a second homicide offence: one for second degree murder and four for manslaughter.

Six—0.4 per cent of a total of 1,543—offenders released on statutory release were convicted of a second homicide offence: two for first degree murder, two for second degree murder and two for manslaughter.

Statistics Canada 1976 reported on research that examined manslaughter offenders who were involved in a second homicide offence between 1961 and 1974.

Two offenders originally convicted of manslaughter and released on parole were subsequently reincarcerated for a second manslaughter offence between 1961–1974.

Bibliography: National Parole Board 1990 *Follow-up of Manslaughter and Murder Offenders On Conditional Release* between January 1, 1975 and March 31, 1990 as of July 31, 1990, unpublished; Statistics Canada June 1976 *Homicide in Canada: A Statistical Synopsis*, Ottawa: The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Catalogue 85–505E.

¹ The length of the follow up period will vary from 15 years, for those released in 1975, to a few months for those who left prison in 1990.

² prior to 1992 statutory release was called mandatory supervision.

Question No. 194—Mr. Mayfield:

Since the end of the private contract for operating the Loran C Station at Riske Creek, B.C. and the takeover by the Canadian Coast Guard in November 1994, (a) how many public service personnel have been relocated to Riske Creek, and what are their rank and where were they transferred from, (b) are any new personnel to be deployed or hired at Riske Creek after April 1, 1995, (c) how many of the existing staff have been released, (d) what new furniture and equipment have been provided for the station since September 1994, and at what cost, (e) do any personnel commute to Riske Creek from Vancouver and if so, how frequently do they commute and at what cost, (f) how many hours of overtime by staff members have been incurred and at what dollar cost, (g) how much money, broken down by expenditure, has been budgeted for the total operation for the year 1995/96 for the station, (h) what was the cost of operating the station since the November 1994 takeover, up to and including March 31, 1995?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Two public service personnel have been relocated from Vancouver area to Williams Lake. They are one EL–06 and EL–07, EL–Electronics. There are plans to hire one part time clerical staff for Riske Creek after April 1, 1995. No staff has been released at Riske Creek Loran C station. Modular office furniture has been purchased at a cost of \$11,406.23 in lieu of building renovations. No personnel commute from Vancouver to Riske Creek at government expense. Overtime for period November 1994 to end of April 1995 was 167.5 hours at a cost of \$11,959.57.

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The following is the 1995/96 budget for the station:

Salary—452.3K
Overtime—57.2K
Other personnel 7.3K
Travel—4.3K
Fuel—7.3K
Other costs—157.1K
Total—685.5K

This budget is in accordance with the cost figures utilized in the cost benefit study which determined that it was more cost effective to operate the Loran C station at Williams Lake with the Canadian Coast Guard, CCG personnel than using a contractor. The 685.5K budget is made up of the two following main elements:

Personnel costs—516.8K
Other costs—168.7K

Personnel costs, 516.8K are those to be compared to the contract cost, 680K, and are within the cost benefit analysis range costs of 514K to 574K. The other costs, 168.7K, are related to the maintenance and repair of the equipment and had also to be paid by CCG when the station was operated by a contractor. The cost of operating the station from the November 1994 takeover to March 31, 1995 was \$253,287.00.

Question No. 202—Mr. Gilmour:

What are the individual and total costs incurred by the deputy minister of the environment regarding office renovations, furniture, vehicles and sundries from October 20, 1994, to the present?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and minister of the Environment, Lib.): The following lists the individual and total costs incurred by the deputy minister of the environment regarding office renovations, furniture, vehicles and sundries from October 20, 1994 to the present.

Type of expense	Amount	
Furniture	0	
Renovations	\$525.00	
Sundries	\$4,466.17	
Vehicles	\$21,046.00	
Total expenses	\$26,037.17	
Renovations		
Date of expenditure	Details	Amount
January 25, 1995	Refinish presentation board	\$275.00
February 21, 1995	Installation of presentation board	\$100.00
February 21, 1995	Installation of screen in boardroom	\$150.00
Total expenses—Renovations		\$525.00

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Sundries

Date of expenditure	Details	Amount
October 20, 1994	Removal of car phone	\$49.95
January 6, 1995	Purchase of glass for credenza	\$70.00
January 6, 1995	Printing of business cards	\$129.00
January 25, 1995	Purchase of cellular phone	\$403.00
February 21, 1995	Car plate renewal	\$66.00
February 21, 1995	Electronic organizer	\$131.95
February 21, 1995	One year subscription—Globe and Mail	\$213.20
February 21, 1995	Rental of video equipment	\$113.00
February 27, 1995	Cable services	\$28.07
February 27, 1995	Meeting room rental	\$310.00
March 23, 1995	Purchase of easel	\$48.00
March 23, 1995	Purchase of computer equipment	\$1,429.00
March 27, 1995	Meeting room rental	\$250.00
April 4, 1995	Purchase of computer equipment	\$590.00
May 10, 1995	Fees for Apex Symposium	\$635.00
Total expenses—Sundries		\$4,466.17

Vehicle

Date of expenditure	Details	Amount
January 25, 1995	Purchase of new vehicle to replace 5-year old car.	\$21,046.00
Total expenses—Vehicle		\$21,046.00

Question No. 203—**Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge):**

Given the economic projections laid out in the February 1995 budget, (a) what will the federal debt be in five years and (b) what will be the corresponding interest payments per year (based on an interest rate of 8 per cent)?

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): The February 1995 budget presented economic and fiscal projections for 1995–96 and 1996–97. The government has stated it will not be doing medium term projections because of the uncertainties involved. Instead, it is committed to put out two year rolling deficit targets and taking whatever actions are required in order to ensure those

targets are met. By doing so the federal government will be moving on a firm path toward the government's ultimate goal of balancing the budget.

Interest costs projections for 1995–96 and 1996–97 were presented in the budget. Interest costs are projected at \$49.5 billion for 1995–96 and \$50.7 billion for 1996–97.

Question No. 206—**Mr. Gilmour:**

What was the total dollar amount direct and indirect, and source of government funding included in the 1995–96 estimates to the western Canada wilderness committee?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): From April 1, 1995 to the date of the question, the following departments and agencies have not provided any source of funding to the western Canada wilderness committee: Canadian International Development Agency, Department of Canadian Heritage, Environment Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, National Capital Commission, Natural Resources Canada.

Other departments and agencies have not been requested to provide an answer to this question as they had not provided funding to western Canada wilderness committee in previous years.

Question No. 207—**Mr. Gilmour:**

What are the sources and amounts of government funding per annum from 1990 to the present, including the 1995–96 estimates, to Native Trappers School of B.C. Canada and to Fritz Dueck and/or Sigi Dueck of British Columbia?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): The government has no record of financial assistance having been awarded to the Native Trappers School of B.C. Canada and to Fritz Dueck and/or Sigi Dueck of British Columbia.

Question No. 211—**Mr. Calder:**

Concerning Lyme disease in Canada, (a) how can some areas of Canada be reported as non-endemic when a thorough examination of vectors/hosts for the Lyme disease bacteria has not been conducted, (b) why has Lyme disease not been made a national reportable disease, (c) what is the total number and location of Lyme disease incidences in Canada, (d) what information is provided to health care providers to identify Lyme disease, (e) why are there no protocols to force health care officials to report cases of Lyme disease, and (f) why doesn't the government provide information for people to protect themselves against the disease?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): The following information is based on current information on the relevant tick vectors in Canada. The most significant of these ticks from a human health perspective are *Ixodes scapularis* and *Ixodes pacificus*. Although *I. scapularis* have been identified in different regions of Canada, the only place in Canada where this tick species has been shown to be endemic at present is Long Point in southern Ontario which is an identified Lyme disease endemic area. Similarly, the important tick vector *I. pacificus* is endemic in parts of British Columbia and these have been identified as Lyme endemic areas. If reports of the Lyme disease bacterium in other ticks species can be substantiated these endemic areas will be expanded.

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A disease is made nationally “notifiable” on the recommendation of the advisory committee on epidemiology, ACE. In 1988 a subcommittee of ACE recommended 12 criteria to determine the importance of a disease for making it nationally notifiable. On the basis of these criteria a number of diseases were scored high enough to be included in the list of nationally notifiable diseases; however, Lyme disease was not included in this group. The methods, criteria and list of diseases were published in the Canada Communicable Disease Report in 1991, 20 April; vol 17-16.

The process used by ACE recognised that “notification” was not always the most appropriate method for studying the epidemiology of a particular disease and that other approaches such as the use of sentinel reporting sites or laboratory based reporting might provide more meaningful information in some circumstances.

For question (c):

Alberta—3
 New Brunswick—9
 Quebec—1
 Ontario—210
 Manitoba—17
 Saskatchewan—1
 British Columbia—14

The Canadian consensus conference of Lyme disease published in two venues—the Canada Communicable Disease Report and the Canadian Journal of Infectious Disease—initially provided guidelines. Updated information when available has been published in the Canada Communicable Disease Report.

The legal mechanism to ensure reporting of a specific disease is to make it “reportable” and the legal mechanisms for doing this reside at the provincial government level. For a disease to be nationally notifiable requires each jurisdiction to legislate separately for the disease to be “reportable” within that jurisdiction.

Information is made available to the public from health units in the known endemic provinces of British Columbia and Ontario. The Ontario fact sheet is currently being updated.

Question No. 212—Mr. Calder:

Concerning the Consensus conference on Lyme disease (1991), why has the statement not been updated with regard to (a) identification of endemic areas for Lyme disease in Canada, (b) identification of symptoms, and (c) methods of diagnosis by newer, more effective antibiotics?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): The consensus statement is the joint summary of opinion of all participants and as such stands on its own. Consensus conferences do not often have further updates to them and there has been no update to the Lyme disease conference. However there has been some addition information published in the Canada Communicable Disease Report on the identification of British Columbia as an endemic area for Lyme disease in Canada.

In addition isolation of the Lyme disease bacterium from ticks collected near Thunder Bay, Ontario and Alberta has been reported in the Canada Communicable Disease Report and isolation of the Lyme disease bacterium from ticks in Prince Edward Island has been reported in an international journal as well as at an international borreliosis conference in Vancouver organized by the Vancouver, B.C. Lyme Borreliosis Society.

These latter reports do not provide evidence that Lyme disease is endemic in Alberta, Northern Ontario or Prince Edward Island since the currently recognized relevant tick vectors have not been shown to be endemic in these regions but they serve to show that there may be a low level of risk for humans to contract Lyme disease in these areas.

There has been no update on the topic of symptoms but the consensus conference statements are still basically applicable. As noted in the consensus conference statement, Lyme disease is an illness with dermatological, neurological, cardiac and/or rheumatological features. There may be localized manifestations of Lyme disease which relate to the erythema migrans rash, an expanding, erythematous skin lesion commonly seen at the site of the tick bite of many patients. In addition disseminated Lyme disease may include neurological forms of disease such as Bell’s palsy, cardiac manifestations and arthritic involvement characterized by recurrent, brief attacks of large joint swelling in one or a few joints.

Recommendations for the treatment of Lyme disease do change with time but the basic recommendations for treatment involve the use of various beta-lactam—penicillin family—and tetracycline antibiotics. Treatment regimes will vary depending on factors such as the stage of Lyme disease, the age of the patient, and the specific clinical manifestations of the patient. The topics of methods of diagnosis and antibiotic treatment have been further addressed by the Canadian Paediatric Society which published a position paper in the Canadian Medical Association Journal Volume 147 pages 169-172, 1992.

Question No. 213—Mr. Calder:

How much money has the Government of Canada spent on Lyme disease research since 1985 and what are the titles of the resulting studies?

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Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Since 1985 Health Canada, through the national health research development program, NHRDP, has granted funding of \$209,544 for one study on Lyme disease.

The study was done by Dr. Ian Barker of the University of Guelph, and was entitled "Factors Influencing the Distribution of Lyme Disease". The funding per year was as follows:

1989/90—\$22,068
 1990/91—\$46,610
 1991/92—\$42,914
 1992/93—\$63,152
 1993/94—\$24,800
 1994/95—\$1,000
 1995/96—\$9,000

Question No. 217—Mr. Simmons:

What action will the government take in reference to the claim made by the Auditor General in his May 1995 report to Parliament that, with respect to the Drugs Directorate and Medical Devices Bureau, (a) "key issues identified in past studies still remain outstanding", and (b) "many of the changes recommended—are still not fully implemented", and what specific measures are being developed to deal with high risk products and devices?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Regarding drugs, there have been a number of studies over the last ten years with many recommendations and many of them contradictory. Consequently, two years ago the drugs directorate developed a major re-engineering initiative called drugs directorate renewal and has been pursuing an intensive process in which all aspects of its operations have been reviewed and streamlined within an environment of scarce resources. Over that period of time the directorate has consulted fully with all stakeholders. The drugs directorate has made many changes to its programs and policies with the aim of streamlining operations and fixing "known" problems. While the auditor's report recognizes the strengths of this renewal exercise, it does not adequately recognize the progress made in several areas.

The drugs directorate regulates a wide range of drugs, including radiopharmaceuticals, biologics and narcotics. These products represent different risks and the drugs directorate systems are designed according to these risks. Specifically in the area of high risk drugs, the drugs directorate has significantly improved its review performance without jeopardizing the well-being of Canadians. Approval times for submissions received and approved since January 1993, when a new policy was implemented, show substantial decreases in time taken.

The government was and is continuing to take action with respect to the key issues identified in past studies and on specific measures to deal with high risk medical devices.

As part of the review of federal regulatory program, the Minister of National Health and Welfare established in 1992 a medical devices review committee, known as the Hearn committee, to review the existing infrastructure and make recom-

mendations on the regulation of medical devices in the future. The committee's report, "Direction for Change", was released in August 1992. The report identified the key issues as well as made recommendations with respect to regulation of medical devices. The minister accepted the committee's recommendations in principle. Subsequently the health protection branch, HPB, developed a strategic implementation plan entitled "Development Plan for Improved Medical Devices Program" which was endorsed by the Hearn committee in April 1993.

In accordance with the recommendations of the development plan, the following key issues have been addressed or are in process.

Regarding re-engineering of the medical devices program, a separate "medical devices bureau" was established in September 1993. To improve the level of service to its clients, the medical devices program was further consolidated by functionally linking medical device staff in the five HPB regional offices to the bureau. Key management and staff positions have been filled within the bureau. An improvement in service has been achieved by developing and implementing internal standards operating procedures. The backlog of submissions awaiting review has been eliminated.

Regarding risk based approach to manage medical devices in the Canadian market place, with the help of an advisory committee comprising medical devices stakeholders, a risk based classification system, RBCS, for medical devices has been developed. The intent of the risk based classification system is to ensure that a device is given an appropriate level of scrutiny based on the risk it presents to its user.

A set of proposed regulations based on the risk based classification of devices has been developed and released to the program's clients for their input.

Regarding cost recovery initiative the cost recovery initiative received approval from the Treasury Board on May 18, 1995. The program will charge a range of fees commensurate with level of the services provided to the medical device industry. The proposed fee schedule has been published in Canada Gazette I, June 10, 1995.

Regarding improved communications with clients of the medical devices program, managers of the program now meet with representatives of medical device industry regularly to discuss matters of common interest.

Consultation sessions are being held with the program clients to obtain their input in developing new regulatory requirements and in implementing cost recovery.

In addition to the existing publications, information letters, medical devices alerts, dear doctor letters, it is your health, a newsletter entitled "Medical Devices Bulletin" has been introduced to enhance external communications. The first issue was published in June 1995.

A medical devices bulletin board service has been established to provide program related information to medical device clients electronically.

A communication plan for the program is being developed with the help of a consultant.

A new computer system has been installed to operate the program's various databases. Program clients have access to these databases.

Regarding international harmonization the risk based classification system and proposed regulations were developed keeping international harmonization in mind.

Mutual recognition agreements are under consideration. Canada is negotiating with the European Union, EU, to ease market access for Canadian products into Europe and vice versa. The proposed agreement would enable Canadian manufacturers to meet EU regulatory requirements in Canada in a cost effective manner and simplify the process for Canadian exporters to get needed EU approval based on mutual recognition of testing and certification procedure.

Similar negotiations are being initiated with the United States of America.

Question No. 219—Mr. Simmons:

With respect to the family violence initiative, (a) why did Health Canada choose not to renew the initiative in March 1995, (b) what will happen to the community projects which were largely funded through grants under the initiative, (c) what specific areas were deemed priorities following the federal-provincial consultation on ways of combating family violence, and (d) is Health Canada planning to develop a new policy on family violence in 1995-1996?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Activities to reduce family violence have been extended for 1995-96 with resources of up to \$30.28 million government wide. During the year the government will ensure that action is effective, focused and integrated into a broad federal strategy to reduce all types of violence, including family violence.

About 74 per cent of the resources for 1995-96 will be used to support shelter housing, services for on-reserve First Nations and Inuit communities, and community action projects. As well, the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence will continue serving as a national resource centre for communities across the country.

Twelve million, three hundred thousand dollars of the \$30.28 million is being allocated to First Nations and Inuit communities. The funding will be used to help First Nations and Inuit communities continue prevention, intervention and treatment, research, evaluation and professional training to reduce family violence.

Provincial/territorial governments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders have acknowledged that feder-

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al leadership is needed to co-ordinate a national, cross sectoral response to family violence. The federal government will continue to play a leadership role on family violence within the resources allocated for the year, through co-ordinated, strategic activities. One of the federal government's objectives is to determine how best to integrate family violence work into a broader strategy to reduce all violence in Canadian society. The federal government, primarily through the justice department, will lead this activity. In addition, the federal government will continue to work with other levels of government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to build on the work to date on family violence.

During 1995-96 the federal government will support shelters for battered women and children, community based action, services for First Nations on-reserve and Inuit peoples, criminal justice reform, training of RCMP members, treatment programs for federal offenders, and the activities of the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.

Also during 1995-96 the government will review its family violence activities to ensure they are effective, focused and integrated into a broad, federal strategy to reduce all types of violence, including family violence.

Question No. 220—Mr. Cummins:

With regard to the turbot fishery off Canada's east coast and NAFO allocations or quotas, (a) what percentage of this year's total allowable catch (TAC) is to be caught by Canadian vessels, (b) what percentage of the Canadian allocation or quota is to be caught by Canadian vessels, (c) what percentage of the TAC is to be caught by Russian vessels, (d) what percentage of the Canadian allocation or quota (northern zone) is to be caught by Russian vessels, (e) what percentage of the TAC (northern zone) is to be caught by French vessels, (f) what percentage of the TAC (southern zone or nose and tail of the Grand Banks) is to be caught by French vessels; other European Union vessels; Japanese; Russian; Korean; or flagged vessels of other NAFO states, (g) is the French catch as provided for in the recent Canada-France agreement counted as part of the EU or Canadian allocation—if Canadian, why is it treated as part of the Canadian allocation as opposed to the EU allocation?

Hon Brian Tobin (Minister Fisheries and Oceans, Lib): (a) 37 per cent of the 1995 total allowable catch of Greenland halibut in subareas 2+3 is allocated to Canada; (b) 99.33 per cent of the Canadian allocation is to be fished by Canadian vessels, (see e); (c) 11.85 per cent of the TAC is to be fished by Russian vessels; (d) 0 per cent of the Canadian allocation or quota in the northern zone 2+3K is to be fished by Russian vessels; (e) 3.5 per cent of the subarea 2 part of the northern zone, 2+3K, 210t in 1995, is allocated to France; (f) 0 per cent of the TAC of the southern zone, 3LMNO, is allocated to France, 50 per cent to the European Union, 13 per cent to Japan, 16 per cent to Russia, no part of the TAC has been specifically allocated to Korea, 7.5 per cent allocated to other NAFO members including Korea; (g) the French catch is counted as part of the Canadian allocation as it is provided for under the Canada-France fisheries agreement.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if questions Nos. 145, 199, 200 and 221 could be made orders for return, those returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that questions Nos. 145, 199, 200 and 221 be deemed to have been made orders for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 145—**Mr. Shepherd:**

Regarding the proposed registration of firearms, would the government, (a) provide a detailed and comprehensive accounting showing the projected cost of the administration of such a system, with all costs both incidental and specific to be taken into account, (b) allocate these cost projections between those costs to be absorbed or recovered from legal gun owners and those to be borne by the general public, (c) provide all statistical assumptions taken into consideration in arriving at these projections and (d) in the case of the general public's allocation, show this cost on a per taxpayer basis?

(Return tabled.)

Question No. 199—**Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast):**

For the period from October 1993 to the present, what are the detailed breakdowns of funding from the Cultural Initiatives Programs in the Department of Canadian Heritage, exactly what was each project, what individual or organization received it, if it was specifically in a riding which riding was it in, exactly how much was each allocation of funds, what was the date of application for the funding and what was the date of approval?

(Return tabled.)

Question No. 200—**Mr. Hanger:**

How many minister's permits were issued by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in 1994?

(Return tabled.)

Question No. 221—**Mr. Cummins:**

With regard to fishing activity within the 200 mile exclusive economic zone, (a) what NAFO nations will Canada allow inside the 200 mile exclusive economic zone on the east coast in 1995-96 to catch national allocations, and for which species of fish, (b) what nations will Canada be allowing to fish inside the 200 mile exclusive economic zone on the west coast, and for what species, (c) to the government's knowledge, what other nations allow foreign countries to fish inside their 200 mile exclusive economic zone?

(Return tabled.)

[Translation]

Mr. Milliken: I suggest that the other questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

QUEBEC REFERENDUM

The Speaker: I have a request for an emergency debate. The hon. member for Roberval has today, prior to this afternoon's sitting, sent me a letter describing the matter he wishes to discuss today.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with our Standing Orders, my comments will strictly concern the contents of my letter. Under Standing Order 52, I request leave for an emergency debate on the federal government's recognition of the legitimate right of the people of Quebec to decide, in the forthcoming referendum, on their political future.

This request is particularly timely, considering the ambiguity that remains after today's Question Period. On September 12, 1995, the Minister of Labour made contradictory statements about the federal government's recognition of the referendum results.

The Prime Minister of Canada, on the other hand, did not clearly express the position of the federal government in this respect nor did he clarify satisfactorily what was said by the minister. A very substantial doubt remains, and the people of Quebec and Canada need to know the real position of the federal government regarding the results of the referendum exercise in Quebec. Disturbing comments made by the Prime Minister during Question Period lead us to conclude that his position would be not to accept the results of the referendum in Quebec.

Considering the importance of what is at stake, you will understand, since it is impossible to consider, on short notice, another occasion on which the matter could be put before the House, I think it is in the public interest that parliamentarians should have a chance to discuss this fundamental question and express their views to the government as soon as possible. I wish to stress the urgent nature of this debate.

In concluding, I simply wish to say I did some quick research and found that in 1977, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau moved a motion for debate on Canadian unity. The motion was accepted, and the debate was a very important one. After the speech from the Throne in April 1980, there were seven days of debate on the issue of national unity, and I found that the people who took part in these discussions stressed their importance at the time.

In this perspective and considering what is now happening in Quebec, I think it would be important for the House of Commons to obtain approval for an emergency debate. Thank you.

• (1615)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: First of all, I wish to thank the hon. member for this letter. I paid close attention to what he said today. As one might expect, it goes exactly along the lines of the letter.

[*English*]

In my opinion all of the criteria are not met at this point to have an urgent debate on this. My ruling would be that at this time it is not necessary for an urgent debate on this particular matter.

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[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-83, an act to amend the Auditor General Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Frontenac had the floor before question period. He has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétiens (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I can see that your memory is excellent. Not only did you recognize me, but you were also able to tell me that I had 11 minutes remaining. I shall take up at the very word were I left off.

Let us now ask ourselves the question: Does the Office of the Auditor General have the tools required to take on these new tasks? It is well known that producing the auditor general's report every year requires a lot of work. It is therefore reasonable to wonder whether the auditor general will have enough time, and enough resources particularly, to prepare, on top of it all, a specific report on the impact of the many contradictions contained in the remarks made by the Minister of the Environment.

The answer to this question however was provided by the auditor general himself in his testimony before the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. At that time, Mr. Desautels told the committee that, depending on the scope of the mandate given to the function contemplated, his office could carry out the related responsibilities.

He also indicated that his office was already spending \$4.5 million per year, or 7.5 percent of its total budget, on auditing programs that have a direct impact on the environment. He figures that his office could fulfil its parliamentary obligations with an additional \$4.5 million, which would bring to \$9 million the total budget allocated to the environment alone.

Officially, no amount has yet been set aside for this purpose. Unofficially, however, the auditor general has received the amounts he had requested in order to assume these new responsibilities. This fact and the comments made by the minister

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during an interview she gave last October suggest that she had to do some arm-twisting.

In fact, the minister's comments suggest that she understands the validity of the Bloc's argument that this mandate should be given to the Office of the Auditor General since, in a press release dated April 25, she describes this office as independent, influential and highly respected.

• (1620)

The bill provides not only that the Commissioner of the Environment will report directly to the auditor general but also that his first duty will be to help him fulfil his mandate with regard to the environment and sustainable development. For example, the commissioner will examine how effective departmental action plans are in meeting the objectives set out in the departments' sustainable development strategies.

Second, he will have to follow up on all petitions received from Canadian residents and dealing with the environment and sustainable development in accordance with the bill's provisions.

Third, the commissioner will make any examinations and inquiries that he considers necessary in order to monitor the extent to which departments have met the objectives set out in their sustainable development strategies.

Fourth, the commissioner will, on behalf of the auditor general, report annually to the House of Commons, including on the extent to which departments have implemented the plans set out in their sustainable development strategies, as well as on anything that he considers should be brought to the attention of that House in relation to other environmental issues.

The official opposition does not intend, at least for the time being, to challenge the mandate that the minister wants to give to the commissioner of the environment. However, we deplore the fact that, ultimately, the commissioner will merely have the power to make suggestions.

He will of course review environmental issues, look at citizens' concerns and follow up on these with the concerned departments, as well as conduct various studies and inquiries for the purpose of his report, as Mr. Desautels already does. But given the way this government has always treated the auditor general's recommendations, it can be assumed that the commissioner of the environment's report will be treated exactly the same way and will be left to gather dust on a shelf like so many other such documents.

A few minutes ago, I listened with great interest to the tribute paid to the late Jean-Luc Pepin, who represented the riding of Drummond, just a few kilometres from my riding. Jean-Luc Pepin, who strongly believed in the duality of Canada's nations, prepared a famous report, the Pepin-Robarts report. As you know, Mr. Speaker, that report is still sitting on a shelf, buried under six inches of dust. The report tabled each year by the auditor general, Mr. Desautels, tells us about a few administrative horrors from this government, which triggers a big show lasting two or three weeks. It was the same when the Conservatives were in office. We talk about a lot about the report during

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the first week, a little less in the second week, and a great deal less in the third week. Then the report is tossed onto a shelf.

Therefore, if we are going to spend nine million dollars a year to produce yet another report which will just collect dust, the official opposition will be quick to withdraw its support for this amendment to the Auditor General Act.

A report should shake us up, stir us to action. I remember that, as agriculture critic, I noticed in the last report that hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on sunflower seeds to feed small birds.

• (1625)

We spent almost a million dollars on a totally unwarranted expenditure, that was a waste, pure and simple. While some people in our society go hungry, we spend several hundred thousand dollars to buy sunflower seeds to feed birds.

Worse, my political assistant in my riding told me this morning that he had received two calls about some headline in today's newspapers which stated that Canada is the second richest country in the world and that each of its citizens is worth a billion dollars. That is right: one billion, not one million. My riding office got a phone call from one of my constituents who says he is ready to sell his share at a reduced price. It is a bargain, at a thousand to one or even a million to one. If you want to make a good deal with my constituent, he is willing to sell for a good price. If you ran an ad in the *Courrier Frontenac*, in my riding, I am sure quite a few would be ready to sell.

In a more serious mode, reports by the new commissioner of the environment and sustainable development should not be left to gather dust on a shelf, with no action taken, because it would be simply wasting \$9 million annually.

Like my colleague from Charlevoix just said, we are now closing down employment centres that are 85 per cent paid for by the UI fund, that is by the workers themselves. Considering that the fund is supposed to have a \$6 billion surplus, not a deficit, this year, it is a disgrace that we should eliminate services that pay for themselves.

It is really frustrating that workers should have to fight to keep their local employment centres that are functional and responsive.

In the last minute remaining, I would like to remind you about an oil barge that is still sitting on the bottom of the sea, halfway between the Magdalen Islands and Prince Edward Island. Last week was the 25th anniversary of the sinking of that barge, obviously an accident. Need I ask which party was the ruling party in Canada in 1970? I remember which party replaced in 1984 the one that was in power in 1970, and the one that has now been in power for two years already under the Right Hon. Prime Minister and member for Saint-Maurice.

However, this situation has been going on for 25 years. We do not need an auditor for the environment and sustainable development to know that this barge is down there, that it has rusted out and is now leaking hundreds of gallons of bunker C oil and oil contaminated with PCBs.

Mr. Asselin: The Prime Minister says that everything is hunky-dory.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Everything is hunky-dory, indeed. So we have an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen. I ask you to do something, Mr. Speaker, and tell this Minister and this government to wake up.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your kind attention.

[English]

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): It is important, Mr. Speaker, to very briefly indicate that if this bill is before the House in this form it is thanks to the efforts of the Minister of the Environment who certainly had to overcome a number of obstacles in ensuring that this measure would be advanced as legislation. Even if it does not fulfil all of the recommendations that the committee put forward it still represents a remarkable step forward.

• (1630)

I listened to the intervention of the hon. member for Charlevoix and his remarks about the *Irving Whale* which were also made by other members in the course of the discussion today. One thing is certain. Had we had in place a commissioner on sustainable development monitoring and reporting, that kind of role would have permitted the catching much earlier of the shortcomings of the Department of Transport and other affected departments. It would have, if not prevented, at least rectified the matter much sooner. Therefore it is only fair to conclude that we are moving in the right direction with this measure.

I must say the member for Comox—Alberni put forward in a very straightforward manner the criticism that one would actually expect from the official opposition. He did that in his usual frank style, which I fully respect. Of all of the points he made perhaps there was only one in which he was slightly off the mark, namely by saying that the proposals in the bill before us today did not fulfil or reflect the promise made in the Liberal Party's red book.

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As far as I can recall, the bill before us reflects that promise very well. It is not proposing a clerk, as the member for Comox—Alberni repeatedly said. It is proposing the creation of a position of a commissioner, which is quite different from that of a clerk.

Also it needs to be stressed that the commissioner and the bill create a completely new role in the Department of the Auditor General, because the act itself under which the auditor general is operating is being amended. Once the legislation goes through it will read: “an act respecting the Office of the Auditor General of Canada”, as it does now, but will have added to it: “and sustainable development monitoring and reporting”.

This is not a minor step. It is a remarkable one. It inserts in the mandate of the auditor general the importance of monitoring sustainable development strategy and implementing the meaning, significance and the interpretation of sustainable development. That is no minor feat.

It is sad that the member for Laurentides indulged in referendum matters and in the bashing of the Prime Minister in a manner that somehow serves another agenda than that of the bill before us. It is unfair and unreal to claim that the environment is being used by the federal government as a pawn to intervene or interfere in provincial jurisdiction.

For heaven's sake, as other reports from departments have done, the bill ensures that the measure being proposed is clearly and specifically restricted to the jurisdiction of the federal government. Therefore it is rather absurd to claim that the federal government is attempting, as the member for Laurentides said, to centralize, to impose massive centralization or to give more power to itself. The bill certainly does not do that.

Moving on to the substance of the measure and having listened to the minister, it seems clear that her reference to benchmarks—and she dwelt on the subject at some length—is a very important one. In analysing this measure in committee and in passing it the reference was made that we would have to be extremely careful in examining how the commissioner would operate. By benchmarks I understand her to mean yardsticks, namely a way of measuring sustainability.

• (1635)

The question is: How will sustainability be measured and against what? Will it be measured against the sustainable objectives of the department, or will it be measured against the sustainable development principles that are to be established by way of a regulatory process emanating from the law itself?

I hope that the yardstick against which the commissioner will be auditing will be very firm, very significant; will be one on which the entire federal jurisdiction will be able to agree; and will provide the necessary motivation and goals to move toward sustainable development. I suppose this is what the minister had in mind when speaking about benchmarks this morning. The yardsticks will have to be established in a manner that transcend those of internal regulations.

When the House passed Bill C-46 and Bill C-48 some 18 months ago, I remember the term sustainable development was included in the two pieces of legislations creating the new Departments of Industry and Energy Mines and Resources. I have been asking myself ever since how those departments implement the mandate of the minister to achieve sustainable development against the adoption of which yardsticks and against the background of what principles.

To be brief, it seems in essence the bill is about yardsticks of auditing which the committee will have to examine and the principles against which the yardsticks will be established.

We have a number of sources for principles. The Ontario round table produced six guiding principles to meet sustainable development: first, anticipation and prevention; second, full cost accounting; third, informed decision making; fourth, living off the interest; fifth, quality over quantity; and, sixth, respect for nature and the rights of future generations. These are six good yardsticks and I submit them for consideration.

There is also the question of looking at principles which deal with equity; integrated approaches to planning and decision making; integration of the economy with the environment, which is certainly a basic principle; and ensuring that the development of renewable resources and their harvesting remain sustainable.

There are questions of virtually eliminating persistent and accumulative toxic substances, of adopting a pollution prevention approach, of protecting the ozone layer, of reducing greenhouse gasses and of conserving biodiversity.

We are to examine quite a large collection of principles. I invite all members interested in this method to think about the necessity of principles and yardsticks and to provide the committee with the benefit of their advice and experience.

• (1640)

The question of the definition of sustainable development might have to be examined in committee because the Brundtland definition is so global and so over-arching that it needs to be filled in somehow.

A suggestion I have received is that the definition should be to the effect that sustainable development concerns the integration

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of environmental sustainability into the economic development and social development objectives of the federal government.

At the present time there is a cabinet directive whereby all ministers are to include environmental considerations in policy and program memoranda prepared for them for submission to cabinet. This is done, I understand very dutifully and precisely. Some departments do it better than others. It is against this practice, it seems to me, that we should examine the question and the importance of linking the environment with economic and social objectives and perhaps improving the quality of the comments included in memoranda by ministers to cabinet.

I suppose this will be one of the tasks the commissioner will have to face. The commissioner, also it seems to me, will have to be protected against the possible threat of decreasing resources made available to the auditor general. In other words, the role and the funding of the commissioner must be ensured so that they do not suffer in times of budget cuts. I am certain this matter will be taken into account fully.

The legislation envisages the requirement within two years of the establishment of the commissioner of plans on sustainable development that each department will be requested to submit to the commissioner. The commissioner would then review them, monitor them and report in the proposed manner. It would be desirable in this process if Environment Canada were to volunteer the best possible example and be among the first and well within the two-year limit in providing its plan so as to give the other departments the example that is required and perhaps the advice that some departments will require in this respect.

We will perhaps be wise to examine in committee the question of crown corporations that at the present time are not included in the bill and possibly the review or the monitoring and reporting on international agreements.

These matters touch upon the sustainability of our economy and of the global resources particularly when it comes to delicate issues like the integrity of the ozone layer and the trend in climate change which are now being widely observed by meteorologists and scientists.

One thing is clear. The bill certainly aims at integrating the environment into federal decision making. Once passed it will represent a good addition to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to which the minister referred earlier, to the task force on economic instruments and disincentives to sound environmental practices from which we hope to hear again, and to the more recently adopted document entitled "A Guide to Green Government".

• (1645)

We should be very clear what is meant by incorporating the environment and sustainable development into the Auditor General Act. If we mean balancing the economy with the environment, as some speakers have indicated in this debate, we

would be missing the boat badly. The two cannot be balanced. It would be a serious mistake because first of all we implicitly declare that the environment is disconnected from the economy, that the two are not interrelated. In balancing the two—and the gesture itself is very revealing—we indicate also that in certain economic times the economy would receive all the attention and precedence and the environment would suffer and would be given different treatment at a lower level, a secondary level, one might say.

I submit it would be a very serious mistake and give the wrong interpretation of sustainable development. We would be proceeding in the same manner that we did in the seventies when our agenda was limited to the protection of the environment whenever possible.

We are now in a different phase, in the phase of a sustainable development. It means instead of integration, there should be a very strong correlation of the economy with the environment. They are one. They are interconnected. There cannot be a healthy economy in the long term unless there is a healthy environment as its foundation.

It is for that reason that the interpretation and the definition of sustainable development in this bill and in government operations are so important. It is also for this reason that the question of principle becomes so crucial in the operations of departments when they do embrace—a step which we all welcome, as in the Department of Industry and in the Department of Natural Resources—the concept of sustainable development. However that embrace, that commitment has to be taken a step further and has to be fleshed out with a number of basic principles.

I enumerated a few of these principles earlier, some taken from the Ontario round table and some taken from the Guide to Green Government—I applaud them all—which were signed by each cabinet minister including the Prime Minister. Those principles have now received an imprimatur, so to say, that is of great significance. It confirms the commitment of the government to sustainable development and to the principles fleshed out in the guide.

In the time that is left to me I would like to indicate that in addition to promoting sustainable development the bill will also open the road to petitions from the public. The member for Laurentides this morning asked a number of interesting questions on the effectiveness of this procedure. We will be glad to explore the questions that she raised because they seem to be very valid. These questions will be forwarded to the minister who will then be required to respond to them.

The commissioner will monitor and annually report to the House on the government's performance. In order to be effective in this auditing capacity the definition, as I said, of sustainable development incorporating very clear principles against which the auditing will become possible is immeasurable and becomes of the greatest importance. We had cabinet endorsement in June

of this year of the basic principle of pollution prevention. I applaud cabinet for having done that.

• (1650)

We have adopted on a number of occasions, at home and abroad, a precautionary principle; that is, that we move and make decisions even when science is not 100 per cent in agreement, but sufficiently in agreement to warrant a certain policy action.

I mentioned earlier full cost accounting and equity. In a country like Canada it is of the utmost importance we ensure that in the fisheries and in the forests we do not erode the capital but limit our harvesting to the interest produced by such resources.

We have the delicate question of carbon dioxide emissions, which is part of the red book commitment. It is very difficult to implement. We had extensive discussions on this particular issue last spring in Berlin at the United Nations conference on climate change.

We are a fossil fuel producing country and, therefore, we rely on it for a number of reasons. However, we must ensure in the long term that we gradually but systematically reduce our dependence on fossil fuels in the interest of the global community, to ensure that the climate trend is put back on the right track.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Davenport is a humble individual and a great parliamentarian. In his opening remarks he gave credit to the Minister of the Environment for bringing this bill forward. However, members of the House, in particular members of the environment committee and members of the environmental organizations in the country will know that the hon. member for Davenport, as the chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development made the concept of environmental auditing the subject of the very first study of that committee in this Parliament. No sooner was the government elected than the hon. member for Davenport, as the chair of the committee, chose to make this the subject of study of that committee.

It was an exhaustive study. Many witnesses were called. Members of the committee sat and studied for hours, days and weeks to come up with a very superb report. That report had few flaws in it. It was a report which many throughout Canada accepted as the very least that we could accept. The committee report could have gone one step further than it did and proposed an ombudsperson role, an investigative role which went beyond that of simply auditing and promoting the environment and sustainable development.

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When the report was released the foreword of the report was written by the hon. member for Davenport as the chair of the committee. The chair writes in the foreword of the report that as a result of its deliberation the committee has concluded that the most appropriate way to implement the government's proposed functions is through the creation of a commissioner of sustainable development in conjunction with an expanded role for the office of the auditor general. The committee believes the creation of a commissioner of the environment and sustainable development is a priority, one which appropriately answers the request of the government and which will provide the necessary momentum for the shift toward sustainability.

• (1655)

The member for Davenport and the committee concluded that what was necessary as a minimum to meet the needs of the government's commitment to the people of Canada and the long term needs of the environment was a commissioner of the environment along with an expanded office of the auditor general. What we get in response from the Minister of the Environment is simply an expansion of the office of the auditor general. The whole proactive role of a commissioner of sustainable development as promoted by the committee does not exist.

The member for Davenport as the chairperson of the committee spoke very well about what is yet needed in this bill. He outlined a number of things that were yet needed. I applaud him for that step. I asked him how he can rationalize his comments about the need for a proactive commissioner of the environment and his support for Bill C-83 which certainly does not do that.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, as usual the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake has quickly identified the Achilles' heel.

I can only indicate to him, drawing from my own experience, that when one goes to cabinet with a proposal one does not always get everything one wants. That applies also to committees. We did our best. We produced a report that we knew at the time was aiming a bit higher than the commitment made in our red book.

As they say in political jargon: "You win some and you lose some". Because of this I started my remarks pointing at the fact that the Auditor General Act will now be changed in its title. It will also be changed to include a new mandate. While it is not all we would have liked, as the parliamentary secretary said earlier, it represents a solid step in the right direction. It is my hope that once the commissioner has proven his or her merits within the governmental organization and has proven through monitoring and reporting this is an extremely valuable role, the commissioner will be given the additional role of indicating, beyond reporting and monitoring, what the shortcomings are of a given policy, which is a very delicate step as we know.

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In committee I remember very clearly the auditor general warning us about giving this additional responsibility to the commissioner. I suppose it is good to start with what we have now even if it does not meet all of our expectations. We can build on the foundation through experience in the years ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for questions and comments.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on Bill C-83, an act to amend the Auditor General Act to create a commissioner of environment and sustainable development in the auditor general's office.

I completely agree with the intent and purpose of the bill to audit and to examine groups, individuals and ministries with respect to the environmental sector. However, I must ask the question why.

Why are we creating another aspect of bureaucracy to do that which the auditor general and the Minister of the Environment should by all rights do within the framework of their job descriptions.

• (1700)

Is it not the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment to actually monitor these things? We are creating another level of bureaucracy at a cost of over \$5 million to the Canadian taxpayer. Why are we doing this?

The bill is a metaphor for government. When we have a problem, and most hardworking members of Parliament will agree, we study it, we observe it, we report on it but do we act? Rarely. If we do, it is usually nibbling around the edges. We have what I call studyitis. Instead of acting on a problem, instead of addressing a problem, instead of getting the best solutions the country has to offer for a problem and implementing those, if only on a pilot project, we study it, we observe it and we report on it. That is what we are doing here.

The purpose of that is to give the illusion we are actually doing something. When we are engaging in these studies and reports we give the illusion we are actually addressing a problem. In reality we are putting off the actual decision making processes for another time. It has been one of the most frustrating aspects of being in the House. I know that frustration is shared by many of my colleagues. That to a large extent is what the bill represents. We are creating something new to do what should already be done by existing structures within the government.

Therefore we expose this aspect of bureaucratic expansionism at the expense of the taxpayers' pockets and should put the responsibility of these activities squarely back on the ministry's door and also back on the auditor general.

Apart from that I have some constructive suggestions the ministry can devote its time to. Instead of spending another \$5 million of the taxpayer's money to do something that should already be done, let us look at some constructive ways the ministry can apply what it already has to some very pressing environmental problems that exist within our midst.

There are at least 48 identified high risk areas that are contaminated within the country. As of March 1995, 11 were deemed necessary for remediation. The moneys were put forth to remediate these areas. At the end of 1996 only 13 further sites will be marked for remediation.

That leaves a total of 24 sites of high risk to our country, particularly to the people who live around them, and to the environment. I cannot emphasize strongly enough these are high risk sites that demand attention for the people who live in the area and for the surrounding environment now—not next year, not five years from now but now. This would be a good thing for the ministry to look at.

Furthermore there is absolutely no plan whatsoever to deal with these 24 remaining sites. Where is the money coming from? When will they be dealt with? I challenge the ministry to look at this now.

To give members an example of how we are trying to offset the decision making process, in March 1989, \$250 million was set aside to clean up contaminated sites. As of March 1995, how many were dealt with? Absolutely none. Furthermore there was no plan whatsoever to put this money to good use to clean up contaminated sites. It has only taken six years to get to the same state of affairs we were in six years ago.

No plans exist to identify contaminated sites in Canada. We cannot address pressing environmental issues, areas that are contaminated, unless we identify those sites first. We have not even done that. That is the first step in addressing severely contaminated sites.

For those sites that are identified, there is absolutely no idea how much it will cost to address the clean up of these sites.

The federal PCB destruction program ended in March 1995. There is no plan now to deal with sites contaminated with PCBs and there are sites right now that pose a significant risk to Canadians living in their vicinity.

• (1705)

Canada is a major producer of waste. We produce over 30 million tonnes of waste a year or more than a tonne per person. We recycle about 10 per cent of that. That is not bad but it is not nearly what we could be doing. It is interesting to look at some European countries that have done a remarkable job in expanding their recycling programs to become more inclusive and to involve a larger segment of their population so their waste levels at landfills and land sites are greatly reduced.

The ministry should also, instead of reinventing the wheel, look at countries that are doing a good job and see where we can be more aggressive with our recycling.

Current landfill sites are filling up and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find sites for our waste products. Landfill sites we have are leaking contaminants to surrounding areas, a significant hazard again to those people and to the flora and fauna in the vicinity.

It is interesting also to look at the costs. We want to spend \$5 million for the auditor general to do a job that should already be done. The costs for a clean up in Canada are in the order of \$4.5 billion per year, and it is expanding every year.

Given the current fiscal restraints of the government and successive governments in the future, we ought to pay careful heed as to how we will be dealing with the wastes we are producing now and will be in the future. It will be a common, current and pervasive problem for all of us in this country.

I speak from personal experience in my riding when I say the ministry has shown a deplorable inability to identify, prosecute and penalize individuals and industries that are right now contaminating our environment.

If we are to deal with this problem we have to start immediately to stop the wilful neglect to the environment and the wilful dumping of hazardous wastes occurring as we speak. It is very important the ministry do this. I do not know why it is not taking a more aggressive stance with industries and individuals who continue to do this. Time and time again local communities have complained at length to the ministry. It is not being able to investigate these individuals and it is not prosecuting them as they, day in and day out, dump waste into our waterways and on to our land.

The ministry also needs to be more aggressive in recovering costs where the polluter has been identified. It has not been nearly as forthcoming as it should be in trying to recoup this money. It could be very important not only to save money for the Canadian taxpayer but also give a very clear and distinct message to polluters that it is unacceptable for them to engage in this behaviour and if they do they will be penalized and forced to engage in the full cost recovery of cleaning up the sites they have polluted.

I suggest the ministry look at the environment and sustainable growth in a global context. It is essential to understand that the amount of destruction we see to our environment is intimately and directly associated with human activity both in numbers of people and in the behaviour of those people.

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Right now there are over 5.5 billion people on this planet. By the year 2000 we will have 7 billion. By the year 2020 or 2030 we will have 10 billion to 11 billion people. The doubling time for our population has gone from thousands of years to the order of 25 to 30 years. It has dropped down a decade.

If we reflect on that for a minute we will see how important this issue is; our burgeoning population and the effect that will have on our dwindling resources. We simply cannot speak about sustainable development without addressing the problem of rampant population growth and human activity and the affect that has on our environment.

• (1710)

It is also interesting to see that the gap is actually widening between population and the ability to provide the basic necessities for that population. When populations are unable to provide for their basic necessities we have a population under stress. When we have a population under stress it leads to conflict, population migration and a destruction of the local environment where those conflicts take place. If we want to speak self-centredly, it impacts on our defence budgets, our foreign aid and development budgets and it potentially costs Canadian lives. It also impacts on the resources we use here for our social programs and services to provide for refugees who have come to our country from areas of conflict to seek refuge and succour.

I hope the ministry will look at this in the context of other ministries and also in international venues because nobody is speaking about this. If we start to speak about the subject we get accused of being neo-Malthusian. What a lot of rubbish that is. We have to be blind not to see that with a population expanding geometrically and the ability for our resources which are flattening out and in effect declining this gap which is widening will have a huge impact not only on countries half a world away but on our own. For the sake of us, our children and our grandchildren it is not only important but our responsibility to address these problems.

Our environment is our world. What we do to our world and to our environment we do to ourselves. I hope the ministry will take it upon itself that rather than repeating what should already be done, rather than creating new bureaucracies and creating more opportunities to study and report on a problem, to develop some good solutions to these problems.

Let us work with the people within our country and with our neighbours in other countries. Our environment is shared with all of our neighbours within our country and outside of our borders. What happens outside and within our borders is our business.

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I believe we as a country can take a leadership role in addressing some of the large and pressing problems with our environment.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the last federal election the Liberal government said environmental and economic agendas must converge. That means all federal departments must act on this understanding.

In our red book we stated:

Sustainable development—integrating economic with environmental goals—fits in the Liberal tradition of social investment as sound economic policy. Preventive environmental care is the foundation of the Liberal approach to sustainable development.

To make this happen we promised Canadians one of the things we would do is appoint an environmental auditor general who would report directly to Parliament and have powers of investigation similar to those of the auditor general. I firmly believe Bill C-83 delivers on that commitment and more.

The House owes congratulations to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment for the leadership she has shown on this very important matter.

[*Translation*]

The environment and sustainable development must automatically be part of all the decisions made by the federal government. They must not be the result of thinking after the fact or be taken into account after the real decisions have been made; on the contrary, they must be an integral part of all government decision making.

• (1715)

[*English*]

We need to do what we can to make sure that the environmental and sustainable development considerations are integral factors in the decision making of all federal government departments. That means decisions on new policies, programs, regulations and laws as well as the existing ones. It also means decisions on how departments manage their buildings, facilities and operations.

Canadians deserve to live in a country that is prosperous and healthy and they demand that their national government take a leadership role in making this happen. Bill C-83 is a response to that demand. It shows Canadians that the government is serious about getting its act together on environmental issues. It shows Canadians that we are willing to change the way government does business and that we are not afraid to be held publicly accountable for what we do and what we do not do.

By getting our house in order the federal government can promote the shift to sustainable development throughout Canadian society. This is what Bill C-83 is all about.

I have been delighted to serve on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. One of the first big jobs we tackled was to try and find the best way for the government to meet its environmental auditor general commitment.

[*Translation*]

Last spring, the committee held wide-ranging hearings and submitted its report to the House in May.

[*English*]

I am very proud of our work and our report. We had real input into how the red book commitment would be delivered and we had real input in the bill currently before the House.

Under the skilled leadership of my colleague, the hon. member for Davenport, we wrote a report that called for enhanced environmental auditing of the government's policies, programs and laws. We wrote a report that says the government must be held accountable to Parliament and to the public for demonstrating progress in meeting objectives.

We wrote a report that advocates going beyond the concept of simply creating an environmental auditor general and instead establishing an independent and influential commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

It became clear to committee members very early on in our work that much of what would be the audit responsibilities of the commissioner are in fact already carried out by the auditor general. We also recommended in our report that the auditor general continue to evolve this work and that the Auditor General Act be amended to meet new requirements in performing such a role.

Bill C-83 does this. It establishes a commissioner of the environment and sustainable development and it does it right in the Office of the Auditor General. This is not, I repeat, not a retreat from our red book pledge. Instead, it is a better more effective way to carry out our pledge to Canadians.

The Office of the Auditor General has clout. It is independent from government. It is well respected. It has solid expertise that can be put to use at once. For all these reasons the Office of the Auditor General can greatly enhance the auditing of the government's environmental performance as well as the effectiveness of the commissioner.

Bill C-83 also augments the role of the auditor general. It gives him or her the clear legal mandate to include environmental effects along with the conventional considerations for the economy and efficiency when reporting to the House of Com-

mons. This ensures that issues of environment and sustainable development are integrated directly into government thinking and planning. This kind of integration is what sustainable development is all about.

• (1720)

However this is far from being the government's first initiative to foster sustainable development. Let me name just a few: the proclamation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act; actions to green government operations; the task force on economic instruments and disincentives to sound environmental practices; and the initial follow-up to the task force in the last federal budget.

Bill C-83 is just the most recent course of action to make the shift to sustainable development. This bill will promote sustainable development across all federal departments by requiring ministers to table in the House sustainable development strategies. The strategies must include their departments' objectives and plans of action to further sustainable development. All departments will be required to update their strategies every three years with ministers tabling the updates in the House.

The commissioner will be keeping a close eye on this. He or she will be completely independent and will report directly to the auditor general on all of his or her environmental and sustainable development related duties. The commissioner will also assist the auditor general in addressing the environmental and sustainable development aspects of his general auditing work.

One of the commissioner's most important duties will be to monitor and report annually to the House on the government's progress toward sustainable development. That means reviewing each department's sustainable development strategy. That means monitoring their action plans and reporting on their success. It also means reporting on anything related to environmental aspects of sustainable development that merits attention.

The amendments are indeed historic and unprecedented and have far reaching implications for the way the federal government does its business. They ensure that no matter who the auditor general happens to be, environment and sustainable development will have a high profile in the work of that office. They force this government and all governments that follow to promote sustainable development practices within all federal departments and across all major economic sectors of our country. They will hold the government fully and completely accountable to the public for its performance in making the shift to sustainable development.

Today I am proud to be a parliamentarian and I am proud to be a member of this government. We have taken a red book

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commitment and engaged Canadians in fulfilling it and indeed in going beyond it. We have taken a major step forward.

No, as has been pointed out by other colleagues in the House, the committee did not achieve everything it hoped to achieve. That has been very candidly stated earlier by my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, and most recently by my colleague, the chair of the committee. However we have made a major step forward. We have taken a radical departure in the way government does business. We have taken a leadership role.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like the member who just spoke to clarify two things.

The first has to do with accountability. As you know, Madam Speaker, from reading the bill the legislation calls for petitions from the general public, in other words those matters in which the public wants to hold the government accountable. Petitions from the general public that go to the new commissioner are simply handed over by the commissioner to the relevant government department for a response. That response is what holds the government accountable to the citizens of Canada; no investigation, no specific examination of the complaint, simply turning over the complaint to the department.

• (1725)

In other words, on a matter which happened recently a citizen was concerned about the PCBs on the *Irving Whale*. Instead of that matter going to court and the court telling the government it fell short on this issue, the department simply said it was no problem, the environmental impact assessment was sufficient and the *Whale* would be raised. The courts came back and said that those nice words were not good enough, that the PCBs were not a part of the environmental assessment study and until they were the *Whale* could not be raised.

Nice words of the department do not demonstrate accountability to the public. I would like the member to further clarify his statement in light of that comment.

The other statement has to do with the clout of the auditor general. The member indicates that he supports the legislation because the auditor general has clout. I think I quote him correctly.

In appearing before the committee, the auditor general acknowledged that the clout he has is embarrassment. The clout he has is by reporting. The public reads the report and the government is embarrassed. The government is embarrassed enough already on environmental issues. How is it that the clout an environmental commissioner would have would be any different from the embarrassment the government feels today?

Mr. O'Brien: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the very good questions from my colleague opposite.

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First of all it is very interesting to me that the hon. member raises the issue of PCBs. PCBs have been a major concern in my own municipality for some 10 years now, particularly in my own riding of London—Middlesex. Let me say that when as the new member of Parliament for the riding of London—Middlesex I brought this concern to the attention of the Minister of the Environment and the Deputy Prime Minister she was very quick to respond in putting an end to a long process initiated by the previous Tory government to try to find a site for the destruction of these PCBs.

This thing had dragged on for years. There was never a conclusion to it. They were spending lots of taxpayers' money. They had not come up with a proposed site and were planning really to force a decision on one of two or three communities unhappily in the riding of London—Middlesex. None of those communities was very excited about it.

When I brought that to the attention of the minister, she took very quick action. She indicated there would be no need for such a facility in the city of London, that we had better options to enable us to eliminate PCBs without creating additional expensive facilities. I was very impressed with the response on that.

On the member's comment about petitions from the public about pollution problems be they PCBs or whatever, what the member may have overlooked in my comments is the fact that ministers will have to table in the House plans for how they will deal with environmental issues within their ministry. There will be regular ongoing reviews of these plans. As the member who is more senior in this House than I well knows, that will give members in this Chamber many opportunities to take a shot at any issue they want to address themselves to in speaking for their constituents.

In his first question the member referred to the courts. Fortunately in a democratic system like we have in this country I would submit that the courts will always be the last recourse in many cases. If the courts see fit to overrule government on environmental issues, then so be it. That is an important right we want to cherish.

On the member's second question, he quoted me correctly about saying that the auditor general has clout. I can tell my colleague that the first standing committee I was honoured to serve on in the House was the public accounts committee. The current auditor general, Mr. Desautels, in my view has tremendous clout. When he comes to that committee on any subject—and he is the star witness as we all know—he is listened to very attentively by all members of the House sitting on the committee.

• (1730)

I agree with Mr. Desautels that embarrassment is a major weapon in his arsenal. He told us time and again—and I

personally questioned him on it—that it was not his job to indicate new policy directions for any government but it was his job to indicate where governments fell short and where they might have been able to do better.

If governments and ministers do not live up to the plans they have tabled and when reviews of the plans indicate shortcomings, I would hope the auditor general would be at the appropriate committee to embarrass the government of the day. I would welcome it, as would all Canadians.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada has recently been declared the second wealthiest nation on earth. This is in large part due to our natural heritage.

Canadians from coast to coast are privileged people who live in a great nation. We are a country of richly diverse temperate rain forests, prairie grasslands that expand wide on open horizons, great inland waterways, beaches full of the scent of ocean life, and fragile Arctic flowers that hang tenuously on to life season after season.

Fresh potable water, clean air and arable soil are resources that cannot be fully valued. Once they are gone they cannot be replaced. More and more world conflict will arise from fighting over scarce natural resources. Human health is clearly linked to a healthy natural environment.

In the spring of 1994 I had the honour of accompanying the Minister of the Environment to attend a G-7 ministers of the environment conference in Florence, Italy. At that conference they made it very clear to the Canadian delegation that the world was anxiously watching Canada. Canada, they told us, was one of the last countries of the world to contain large tracts of pristine wilderness.

The delegates very eloquently told us how they learned too late about their mistakes. Vast tracts of forested land had been denuded, arable soil had been turned into desert, fresh waterways polluted and air made unbreathable.

Paul Hawken, in his book "The Ecology of Commerce", paints a very bleak future for this planet. We currently use 40 per cent of the earth's biotic capacity to produce. In 40 years the earth's population will double. If we continue to use the earth's resources at the same rate with no change, in 40 years when the earth's population doubles we will use 80 per cent of the earth's biotic capacity to produce.

Major ecosystem failure occurs at 60 per cent to 70 per cent. We have already experienced a major ecosystem failure on the east coast in the fisheries. The long debate over the ecological implications of our behaviour is over. We can see before our eyes what is happening. We feel the effects on our health. Our communities and industries know firsthand about the devastation of an ecological crisis.

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Canadians, from what polls indicate, are very concerned about their economic well-being and the economic health of the country, but underlying all these concerns the environment is still an issue they have a strong attachment to.

In my one and a half years as vice-chair of the environment committee I have heard Canadians from all parts of the country, from all walks of life, both industry and environmental groups, First Nations people, scientists and lay persons, speak about their concerns regarding environmental degradation. I have heard senior representatives of large corporations talk with pride in their voices about environmental initiatives they are pursuing. We have heard from community groups, from band councils and from government agencies all outlining what they are trying to do to help Canadian society make the shift to sustainability.

• (1735)

However it is not enough. Not everyone in industry, in the private sector and in the public sector is doing all he or she can. Government must show leadership, first by taking the initiative to model environmentally sensitive behaviour and, second, by developing best practices that can be used by others in the shift toward sustainability.

The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development as outlined by Bill C-83 will go a long way in demonstrating leadership. First, it very clearly demonstrates to Canadians that the government is committed to sustainable approaches. Second, it will provide very good working examples of how we can make the move from theory to practice, from problem analysis to problem solving.

One key issue addressed at the G-7 ministers of the environment conference in Florence focused on the practice of sustainability. How is the shift made in practical terms and how do we undertake green or environmental accounting? Through building on the efforts already initiated by the auditor general in the field of green auditing, the government can help to build capacity in Canadian society.

Third, the government can show leadership in the shift toward sustainability by helping to co-ordinate and connect all efforts currently under way. Many undertakings are happening in various government departments that need to be documented and co-ordinated.

Originally the committee had recommended a stand alone office of the commissioner of the environment to assess government policy proactively before it is implemented. I would certainly prefer the forward looking approach of this model as opposed to the rearview approach of the office of the auditor

general. However this must be balanced by the added clout of the office of the auditor general that Bill C-83 provides and the ability of the new commissioner to integrate fully ecological considerations with all government auditing functions.

The government has fulfilled its red book commitment even though what is reflected in Bill C-83 is not exactly what the committee recommended because the committee recommendations differed from the red book.

I campaigned on the issue of a commissioner of the environment and sustainable development in the office of the auditor general. I was very excited about the progressive nature of this campaign promise. I am very pleased that Canada will join New Zealand as the second country in the world to have a commissioner of sustainable development.

In addition to amending the Auditor General Act to require the appointment of a commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, Bill C-83 sets out other things to support the shift toward sustainability. These include ensuring that environmental considerations in the context of sustainable development are taken into account in the auditor general's reports to the House of Commons, imposing requirements for responding to petitions received by the auditor general about federal environmental matters, and requiring that departments prepare and table sustainable development strategies in the House of Commons. All these will increase public accountability as the government exhibits leadership in the shift to sustainability.

We have the resources in the country, the human talent and expertise and the rich, diverse natural heritage of our land to meet the challenges that face us as a nation; but as people must be nurtured, supported and protected. So must the land, the air, the water and all that they contain.

I ask members of the House: Who ultimately owns these things? How can a document give full and absolute ownership to a forest or to a tract of land? Perhaps we should consider how the aboriginal peoples of the country view their relationship to the land. They do not individually own it. Rather they must care for the land. Anything that is done to the natural environment must be thought of in the way it will affect the seventh generation.

As individuals our time on earth is fleeting. We are like a mere speck on the beach of time. Yet, in a fluttering second we can destroy that beach and all the life that depends on it for survival.

• (1740)

It is time to challenge our unsustainable behaviours. It is time for the government to show leadership in the shift to a sustainable future in both the spirit and letter of the law.

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Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development spoke to the fact that the committee preferred a stand alone office of a commissioner of the environment. She mentioned that however unfortunately it was not done and that the red book commitment had been kept.

Could she elaborate on the keeping of that commitment and perhaps speculate at least and explain to the House why the committee's first option was not in fact brought to fruition?

Mrs. Kraft Sloan: Madam Speaker, as always people have different visions of where they might like to go. Certainly the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development had decided on a particular vision after interviewing a number of witnesses and through discussions with committee members. We thought perhaps a stand alone commissioner might be the way to go in this regard.

The red book commitment talked about a commissioner of sustainable development within the auditor general's office. The government in its wisdom decided to go with that particular position.

Part of the discussion we had as members of that committee looking at the particular issue was the tradeoff of a stand alone office or the clout within the auditor general's office. Given the kinds of financial constraints the government is operating under, I think we can utilize the expertise that has already been developed in the auditor general's office and move in that direction.

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague from York—Simcoe.

Could she perhaps elaborate on the aboriginal concept of the seven generations? What exactly does it mean?

Mrs. Kraft Sloan: Madam Speaker, my understanding—and I guess it is the best way to state it—is that whenever anything is done to the natural environment, when we decide to intervene in the course of a waterway, when we decide to make changes on the land or if we decide to cut a forest, we have to think of the implications of the action on the seventh generation down the road.

It is not just how it is going to affect us next month or in the next year. We have to think of the seven lifetimes of people who will follow us. When we are dealing with environmental issues they are very complex and often we do not properly extend the time horizon.

One of the reasons I am so supportive of the concept of sustainability is that it takes into consideration ecological aspects, economic aspects and social aspects. Something I firmly believe in is intergenerational equity. Our children inherit what we leave for them, their children and so on to the seventh generation.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to join the debate since I was a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and one of our first orders of business about a year ago was to examine the question of a commissioner for sustainable development.

• (1745)

As earlier speakers have said, we listened to a great number of witnesses. I think we were pleased with our report. Now it is time to say that we are pleased with what the Minister of the Environment has presented and with the steps the government is going to take.

An act to amend the Auditor General Act in order to establish a commissioner of sustainable development will put the government firmly on the path to meeting one of our red book commitments—

An hon. member: It would be the first.

Mr. Finlay: The first of many. I want to deal with this act in three main areas. The first has to do with the definition that appears in the act. This was only one of the definitions that were presented to the committee. We had a lot of discussion about this. I believe we have chosen wisely and I am glad that the definition that arises out of the Brundtland report is the one that is in this act.

Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As my honoured colleague, the member for Davenport, has already pointed out, this definition is crucial. This definition goes beyond balancing the economy and the environment. Up to a few years ago, when I asked this kind of question from an environmental point of view to members of the previous government I was told with a wry grin that there are jobs and then there is the environment. Our future is here, and it includes both jobs and the environment, both industry and the environment, all industries and the environment. That is a basic understanding I hope all in the House will acknowledge.

Many people have seen industry and environment as antithetical and opposite. This definition goes well beyond that. Again, it is another case where many of our educational institutions, many of our businesses and industries, and many of our organizations in this country are somewhat ahead of the government. They are now teaching courses in waste management, in integrated resource management. Our ministries of the environment and industry have also stimulated the Canadian environmental industry, which is one of the fastest growing areas of our economy.

Let us return for a moment to this definition. It says "development that meets the needs of the present". This does not say the wants of the present; it says the needs. That means we have to give it considerable thought. We have to reach some agreements and we have to do considerable research. The basic fact we have to understand is that we live on a finite planet. Our resources, our land, our air, our water, and our energy are all limited. Right now we have all the air, polluted or not, that we are going to

have. We have all the water, pure or not, fresh or not, we are going to have. And we have all the land, eroded or not, we are going to have.

Considering that the extent of arable land on the planet is very tiny compared to the expanse of the oceans, the mountains, the deserts, and other parts of this fair earth that we cannot use, this is a basic tenet of all of our actions and it must become ingrained in the decisions we make in the House.

• (1750)

It states “without compromising the ability of future generations”. Politicians are good compromisers. We have to be sometimes. However, compromise is not possible when we are dealing with some of the present problems of the environment. In order to achieve sustainable development we cannot compromise on the pressing need to improve our performance in protecting the environment, in establishing sustainable industrial processes, and in managing our waste. The “ability of future generations” requires us to look a little into the future. We need to recognize that some of the problems that appear before us now are not the only problems that future generations may face.

We know, as the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca pointed out, that the population of the earth is doubling now in decades, not centuries and not millennia. That is something we have to keep in mind, because future generations are going to have a much bigger problem than we have if we do not move toward helping to solve it. Our needs for energy will expand tremendously. Progressive climate change cannot be allowed to continue on and on, because the eventual result will be catastrophic.

The global transport of toxics through air and water, which already affects much of our Arctic area and the Inuit and others who live there, is going to continue unless we start to reduce it.

The time for compromise is gone. I think we have to get on with the job. Hopefully this bill will set us on the road to doing that as expeditiously as possible.

The last part of the definition states: “We must not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Since it is impossible for us definitively to know what those needs will be, it would be best if we erred on the side of caution and care, increased our respect for the environment and increased our efforts to become a conserving rather than a wasting and wasteful society.

Again, as my colleague for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca said, we create a lot of garbage. We are the best in the world at creating garbage. We are number one in garbage creation and waste. We would dearly like to become number one in the management of that and in getting rid of it.

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I would like to spend a moment on a fact that has been brought up by several other members. We talked about a commissioner of sustainable development. On the committee we wanted a separate office. We wanted a real proactive position. We find that we have in this act a commissioner, yes, within the auditor general’s department.

I think perhaps this is a place where our compromise was needed. Perhaps what we have in this act will in a number of ways accentuate the role of that commissioner. One of the things we heard in the committee from witness after witness was that the federal departments of this government were not particularly up to date or forward looking or in advance of those things that needed to be done to preserve the environment. In fact many industries and organizations told us that some of our departments did not obey the rules to nearly the same extent as the mining companies, the industries, and so on. We were shown quite clearly in the committee from the witnesses we saw and the trips we made, which were not many but were very effective, that this was so.

• (1755)

Hence, the bill puts the commissioner in there to see that government puts its own house in order by greening policies and operations across all departments. We talked about co-operation, and that is needed.

The commissioner will hold the government publicly accountable for its own environmental performance. The commissioner will promote sustainable development as an essential factor in making decisions at all levels of society and within all departments of government.

Our departments must lead. After all, the Government of Canada spends more of the people’s money than anyone else. It owns more of the land or is at least responsible for more of it. It employs more people. Hence it has to be in the forefront if we are going to meet the definition of sustainable development in this act.

The commissioner will have to monitor and report annually to Parliament. He or she must know what the departments are planning. He must assist them in their planning and he must respond to the public and petitions from the public on environmental matters.

Although under the old CEPA, Canadian Environmental Protection Act, there were only one or two requests from the public for some study or action to do with the environment, we would hope that the commissioner’s office will focus the public’s attention and provide a place where their concerns can be swiftly dealt with.

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A number of members have questioned making the commissioner part of the auditor general's office. My colleague from Simcoe Centre has pointed out that the committee's report asked for a separate office. However, I think the reasons provided by the Minister of the Environment are worth repeating. The auditor general already audits the environmental performance of federal departments, albeit after the fact. That is a function he fulfills.

The commissioner will strengthen the auditor general's environmental effectiveness and make sure that the environment has a higher profile in his audits. The commission will have some added credibility as part of an expert, respected and independent office that now operates at arm's length from the government. That was an important part of the commissioner's mandate.

Given the government's commitment to fiscal restraint and affordable services, it seems preferable to strengthen an existing organization rather than create a new separate office.

Finally, the commissioner will be funded from existing resources.

It has been a pleasure to speak with respect to the environment. I am committed to sustainable development and to the environment. I look forward to the first report from our commissioner, whoever that might be.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are talking about sustainable development, a very important issue. We must not pollute the waters where we swim nor the water we drink. Otherwise, we risk poisoning ourselves. We must not pollute the air we breathe if we want to avoid intoxication.

We should take measures to ensure that not only future generations, but our own will have the opportunity to really appreciate and fully enjoy nature, the world around us.

• (1800)

When we speak about an auditor for the environment, I think the idea is very interesting, but I cannot help having some reservations. I would like to share these with you. I am sure my colleague will then reply and allay my concerns.

You know, Madam Speaker, that we already have an auditor general who, year after year, each and every year, presents a very extensive report on the administrative failings of the federal government. God knows this report is not a small document. The auditor publishes an imposing series of volumes every year.

If we felt, when the report is tabled, that results were not only expected, but were in fact there, that they had been delivered, I would say to myself: auditing works, we have set up mecha-

nisms whereby the government is responsible to the public, and the government changes course as required.

But this is really not the case. I am thinking of the Commissioner of Official Languages. As the Vice-Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Official Languages, I repeatedly have occasion to regret the fact that, despite his good efforts, the Commissioner of Official Languages still failed to achieve the results he was hoping for and even that, recently, in February, his budget was cut. He is not alone. Many government agencies and departments are in the same situation, but that does not help him do his work.

So, of course, my honourable colleague says that the environmental auditor will be able to call attention to failures, but that is not enough. Knowing that things are going badly is a step in the right direction, but being unable to do anything or being unwilling to do something is a more serious matter.

Will we once again, and this is the heart of my question, be faced with a situation where, well aware of the corrective action to be taken, we must once more regret the fact that such action was not taken? Perhaps my honourable colleague can answer my concern?

[English]

Mr. Finlay: Madam Speaker, I say to my hon. friend that we must walk before we run. Rome was not built in a day. Everybody's budget has been decreased except two.

In last year's budget the only department that was not hit very hard was the environment ministry. For a very good reason this year it was the department of aboriginal affairs and northern development. More aboriginal people need more help.

I share my colleague's concern that we are not doing everything that needs to be done, or that can be done. That is exactly why we need the commissioner. The auditor general's function is to audit what has been done. The commissioner's function is to do something before it is done to see that the plans are going to work.

I have no magic wand. We cannot make everything work at once but we can at least try to get on with it if we all understand what the problem is and what the goal is.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's speech. I wonder if he could clarify a couple of areas for me.

He made the statement that Canada was the largest creator of garbage in the world. Maybe he could tell us where he got that information and how he developed the thesis that Canada of all places is the largest developer of garbage in the world. I am sure it is something that all Canadians would like to know more about. Could he tell us the scientific facts and how he arrived at that conclusion.

• (1805)

The second comment I was concerned about was in regard to global warming. I remember growing up in the seventies when environmentalists said that in five years if we were not careful the rivers would boil. I would like the member to share with us where he received this information. In his statement who is speaking for science in his comments?

I feel he has left out an important aspect. If he wants to make a statement about something, he should back it up with some facts.

Mr. Finlay: Madam Speaker, I want to correct one thing I said.

Canada is the greatest per capita user of energy in the modern world. My hon. friend has corrected me. We are second in the per capita production of waste. The U.S. is first in the production of waste, second in the per capita use of energy. These are not figures I made up in my head. They are well recognized all over the globe. They come out of the Brundtland commission study. There is not any great secret about it. It is one of those things we have to keep in mind when we look at other countries and worry about population.

We sometimes say we have our population under control. We are pretty well at a zero base population except we receive a lot of immigrants which is fine. However India and China are not zero base populations.

The fact is that one Canadian uses something between 20 to 100 times as much of this earth's resources as one Indian or one Central American or one African. It depends on which country we are talking about, how developed and how undeveloped.

Concerning global warming, someone said the rivers were going to boil in five years. That is science fiction. The fact that the breast milk of Inuit mothers has 20 times—far more—dioxins in it than the breast milk of mothers in Montreal is not science fiction. It is fact.

Just as we have deplored for some years the attitude of American presidents that acid rain was some figment of the scientist's imagination or that the accumulation of toxins in the St. Lawrence River was some figment of a naturalist's imagination, we find of course that it is not, that the beluga whales are diseased, that acid rain kills the lakes in northern Ontario and northern Quebec, Lapland and so on. We are not dealing with science fiction. We are dealing with facts.

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the amendments to the Auditor General Act. This is a very important bill and one of the best things we have done as a government so far.

It will create profound changes in the way government operates in this country. It will integrate the environmental

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agenda with the economic agenda. As well, one of the two or three most important challenges that we as a society and as a world face in the next 50 years is the environment.

We have been reminded in the last couple of weeks with different stories in the media of how much of a challenge this is. In fact it astonishes me to hear Reform Party members who seem to dismiss the idea of the environment as a major concern.

We have seen reports on global warming. A report last Monday, September 11 in the *Globe and Mail* indicated that global experts, the international intergovernmental panel which has been studying for years the issue of global warming, after years of saying they were not sure of this and years of denying it was a real problem, have finally come to the point where they are saying, yes, we accept that the level of global warming we are seeing has to be caused in part at least by human actions. It is human activity which is contributing to global warming. We cannot ignore it.

• (1810)

Even if we were not absolutely sure that our actions were contributing to global warming, to pollution and problems world wide, even if there was a 50 per cent chance there are some things we can do to stop it, are we not wise to be on the right side? I think we are.

We have also heard stories about the ozone layer. I heard about a week ago that the hole in the ozone layer over the Antarctic this summer is twice as large as the year before. The things that are happening to our world can have a major impact on us.

The idea of global warming to people in Canada sounds great because we live through some pretty cold winters, especially here in Ottawa. I can tell the House it is always milder and more pleasant in Nova Scotia. Winters throughout the country are very cold. Therefore, global warming sounds nice.

In today's Halifax *Daily News*, a Canadian Press story reported some things that have happened this year as a result of the very hot summer. In 1989 I heard that four out of five of the hottest summers on record occurred in the 1980s. I am sure that has changed because in some respects this summer was one of the worst on record in terms of heat.

There was record destruction by forest fires across North America. There were terrible floods in southern Alberta. Toronto recorded the most humid summer in 30 years. In rural Ontario there was one report of 500,000 chickens dying in one weekend due to heat. We saw hurricanes. We have seen hurricanes before. They are not unusual. In the southern U.S. and on the east coast we saw terrible damage from hurricanes. All of these things added together have to mean that something is happening.

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The summer of 1995 was the third hottest on record and maybe the muggiest. In Chicago more than 500 people died in a heat wave. In England it was the driest summer in 200 years. Those who say that we should not worry, that it is not getting hotter or that these are not really problems, should reconsider because these things have a great impact.

I mentioned the ozone layer. We have all become more aware over the last year since weather reports include UV readings of how much of a concern this must be. We know the impact of UV in terms of skin cancer. We should also be aware that if the ozone layer is depleted further and UV rays get through the atmosphere it can have a devastating effect. It is a gradual effect but more and more ozone depletion each year gradually stunts crop growth. If the ozone layer becomes thinner crops cannot grow. That is absolutely scary to the world. It seems to me that the environment must be a priority for the country and across the planet.

It makes sense that we are making it a priority to amend the Auditor General Act. In the red book the Liberals say:

Sustainable development, integrating economic with environmental goals, fits the Liberal tradition of social investment as sound economic policy. Preventive environmental care is the foundation of the Liberal approach to sustainable development;

The government is serious about promoting sustainable development. It is serious about being held accountable for its environmental actions and environmental planning. It really must be. Canadians want and deserve a prosperous, healthy country in which we and our children can work to achieve our aspirations.

• (1815)

[Translation]

This is also reflected in departmental decisions concerning the management of buildings, facilities and operations. The proposed amendments to the Auditor General Act before the House will permit, to a large extent, to achieve the kind of integration we are seeking. They are a key element of the government's response last fall to the first report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development entitled "The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development".

The committee was of the opinion that, even though it is critical to examine measures taken by the government, it is even more important to make sure that environmental considerations are a basic planning element in every department. The committee asked that the environmental audit of government policies, programs and legislation be stepped up.

The committee believed that the government must report to Parliament and to the public the progress made to meet these objectives.

[English]

The committee advocated the government go beyond the idea of just an environmental auditor and instead establish a commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. In these proposed amendments to the Auditor General Act the government will establish a commissioner. We will meet all of the objectives of the committee's report.

The amendments do contain at least one significant departure from the committee's report, which is to create the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development not as a separate position but within the existing framework of the auditor general's office. This is not in any way a retreat from our red book pledge. Instead it is a smarter, more effective way of carrying out the pledge.

The Office of the Auditor General has clout. It is independent of the government. It is well respected and it has expertise. For all these reasons it can greatly enhance the auditing of the government's environmental performance.

There is another advantage to this innovation. Within the work of the auditor general issues of environmental and sustainable development will be integrated directly with economic considerations. This kind of integration is what sustainable development is all about.

What then is the substance of these amendments to the Auditor General Act? These modifications establish the function of the commissioner for the environment and sustainable development inside the Office of the Auditor General.

We all know that every year when the report of the auditor general comes out there is a blaze of publicity. Everyone is aware of that. We can now expect an equal impact for reports of environmental failures or shortcomings of government. The fair publicity we know ministers will feel is going to be a powerful spur to action because it applies to every minister in every department. At times this may make things uncomfortable for those of us in government, especially the ministers. However, the government is prepared to accept that discomfort if the end result is better government for Canadians and a better environment for all of us.

The scope of these changes is more far reaching than a simple institutionalization of the control and reporting procedures on the conduct of the government relating to ecology and sustainable development.

[Translation]

More plainly put, these amendments challenge federal departments to take environmental action. In this sense, they go further than the red book commitment in vigorously promoting sustainable development.

Under the amended act, each department will have two years to develop its own sustainable development strategy which will

be tabled in the House of Commons by the minister in charge. The strategy must be geared to results and must set out the department's objectives and the action plan to meet them.

[English]

In effect, every minister will thus become a sustainable development minister. For example, the industry minister will be responsible for that portfolio and also for ensuring the Department of Industry operates in an environmentally sound way. The same is true of the foreign affairs minister, the transport minister and every other minister in cabinet.

● (1820)

This is a big step forward in moving sustainable development from concept to reality. The departmental strategies will assist the auditor general and the commissioner in not only monitoring the government and preparing their reports to Parliament but will also serve as benchmarks by which the commissioner and auditor general can assess each department's performance in making the shift to sustainable development.

This is not a one-shot affair to be undertaken with fanfare and then quickly forgotten. Every three years each department must update its sustainable development strategy and its minister must table that update in Parliament.

Thanks to these changes, Canadians can get a better idea of how government is responding to the environmental challenge we face.

The auditor general will be empowered to receive petitions from the public on environmental questions and then will pass those petitions to the minister responsible for the particular area, who must respond within a certain time.

I can see how that could have an impact in my riding. In my riding of Halifax West in the community of Five Island Lake there is a former salvage operation site where there is a big problem with PCBs and other heavy metals and toxins. The clean up of that is a big problem. Right now it is considered an orphan site because the small business which operated it for so long really does not have the wherewithal to enable us to go after it for the costs. It needs some kind of funding. I do not want to keep pursuing the federal government. This kind of thing would help to create pressure to see that it is made a priority.

That will be the overall impact of the bill. It will help to ensure that environmental issues become a higher priority hopefully across the country, hopefully across our society but certainly within government.

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[Translation]

The number and the focus of the petitions received by the ministers and the status of these matters will be monitored, and the commissioner will report to the House of Commons on the results obtained.

[English]

The amendments also require the commissioner to report annually to the House of Commons on behalf of the auditor general. These reports can focus on anything related to sustainable development, whatever the commissioner considers important enough to bring to the attention of the House. In particular, the commissioner's annual reports will indicate how far departments have gone in meeting the objectives and expectations they have set for themselves in their strategies.

The annual report of the commissioner will not be the only report to the House of Commons on the government's environmental performance. These amendments will ensure that environmental observations will continue to be included in the auditor general's reports as well. That is important because the auditor general's reports are more general in scope. They will include the considerations of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and the environment as well. Indeed, one of the commissioner's duties will be to assist the auditor general in preparing aspects of these reports referring to the environment and sustainable development.

[Translation]

The auditor general alone will be responsible for appointing the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. I am sure the auditor general will choose someone with excellent professional qualifications and strong personal commitment. This will guarantee that the commissioner will be sufficiently at arms' length.

A decision on the funding for this position will be made once these amendments have been adopted. But let me assure you that there will be sufficient funding to guarantee these amendments will be implemented effectively.

[English]

The government is wasting no time in moving to meet its obligations under the proposed amendments. The government is committed to ensuring the promotion of thinking green as a central component of decision making at all levels of government and I hope eventually at all levels of our society.

The Prime Minister and all ministers have signed a guidebook entitled "A Guide to Green Government". It will help all federal departments make sustainable development their business. That is good news. It will also serve as a curriculum for the commissioner when she or he reports on the success departments are having in integrating sustainable development practices into their own activities.

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Sustainable development is a shared responsibility requiring the co-operation and involvement of Canadians from all walks of life. In preparing sustainable development strategies departments must involve stakeholders. That is one of the requirements of this bill. Thinking green is a central component of decision making at all levels because of the bill.

• (1825)

Departments will be required to report annually on their progress and they must provide information on the number, type and status of environmental assessments they are conducting.

Another example of the government's commitment was the proclamation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act last January. This legislation will ensure the environment is formally integrated into the project planning process of the federal government.

Through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency the government is already working hard to make sure environmental assessments of new government policies and programs are done and done well. These are important measures that establish a framework for sustainability at the federal government level.

[Translation]

For years, governments have talked of sustainability and declared their support in this regard. It has always been difficult, however, to ensure these commitments are met.

This is why environmental groups have long demanded an independent control and reporting function focussing on environmental actions. They saw this as a way to force the government to keep its promise. And just as obstinately, our predecessors in government have resisted having to keep their word.

[English]

The Liberal government has a different approach. We are not afraid of openness, because that is what Canadians want. It might worry us to be criticized when there are shortcomings on the environment but it can only do us good in the long run. Therefore we are making sustainable development the priority it ought to be.

This is another important step along the path to sustainable development and a healthy future for all Canadians. I recommend quick passage of this bill.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech of the hon. member. He did

make one error. He said the Reform Party does not care about the environment, which is not true at all. We have a comprehensive blue book policy on the environment. It is just that we like to be logical. We do not like to hear all sorts of generalities quoted as if they were scientific facts.

We could well question our confidence in an intergovernmental expert panel which concludes that there is global warming after observing the disastrous results of government experts managing things like the fisheries. These governmental panels are quite good at destroying the environment while at the same time arguing they are protecting it.

The hon. member quoted from the *Globe and Mail* that the ozone layer was opening up a huge hole. However he forgot to mention that the *Globe and Mail* also mentioned that the scientist who had first discovered the ozone holes has now said he realizes it is part of a cycle and that it may not be a dangerous phenomena at all.

In addition he mentioned that we just had the hottest summer in 200 years but he did not mention what caused the hottest summer two hundred years ago. What does he think caused the hottest summer on record 200 years ago? It could not possibly have been the CFCs from refrigerators or the emissions from automobiles. I wonder if maybe the jury is still out on this whole thing.

Mr. Regan: Madam Speaker, my bet is Britain has only been keeping records of that sort in Britain for 200 years. Therefore it was the hottest in at least 200 years, maybe longer.

There are certainly changes in the environment. We know we have had an ice age. Temperatures go up and down over a long period of time. However when we see it happening much more rapidly it tells us something. We ought to wake up and realize it.

I have reasons for saying Reform Party members do not show the concern I would like them to show.

They may say in their blue book that they care about the environment, but what I hear in their speeches and in their comments is a lack of being convinced that the environment is a real problem. I think it is a big problem, and I wish they would share that view.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being 6.30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)

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