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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 3, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 3, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian group of the Inter–Parliamentary Union, which represented Canada at the special session of the Inter–Parliamentary Council on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, held in New York on August 30 and September 1, 1995.

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[*English*]

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition from the constituents of Hamilton—Wentworth. They call on Parliament to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and to adopt all the necessary measures to recognize the full equality of same sex relationships in federal law.

• (1010)

INCOME TAX

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition that has been circulating all across Canada. This petition has been signed by a number of Canadians in my own riding of Mississauga South.

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 that 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 on Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families that decide to provide care in the home to preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill and the aged.

THE SENATE

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Madam Speaker, I stand pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present two petitions.

The first is on behalf of constituents from Regina—Lumsden and other parts of Saskatchewan who are unhappy with the fact that the Senate is unelected and unaccountable, and is nothing but a home for recipients of Liberal and Tory patronage which cost Canadians $54 million a year.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to undertake a constitutional amendment to abolish the Senate. I am happy to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

BOVINE SOMATOTROPIN

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Madam Speaker, the second petition is from a number of constituents from Regina—Lumsden as well as from citizens in other parts of Saskatchewan like Fort Qu'Appelle and Saskatoon.

The petitioners are opposed to the approval of the synthetic bovine growth hormone known as BGH or BST, a drug injected into cows to increase milk production. They call on Parliament to take steps to keep BGH out of Canada through legislating a moratorium or stoppage on BGH use and sale until the year 2000

and examining the outstanding health and economic questions through independent and transparent review.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry, that was pretty close to debate.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, having consulted with the Bloc whip and the chief government whip, I think you will find there is unanimous consent for me to move:

That Private Members' Business will be dispensed with today, Tuesday, October 3 and that at 5.30 p.m. the time be called 6.30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The House has heard the member's motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would request that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CULTURAL PROPERTY EXPORT AND IMPORT ACT

The House resumed from October 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C–93, an act to amend the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the other day I had the opportunity to speak on a Reform amendment to this bill. I must admit my remarks were somewhat hurried and I was unable to review certain material before I was able to make those remarks.

Today, having had ample opportunity to reflect on the excellent material available in support of the bill put out by the office of the minister and the department, I want to again praise the minister for introducing Bill C–93. It is a very good bill. It has been earnestly sought after by members of the cultural community who appreciate the very significant donations made to galleries, museums, archives and libraries by donors who own valuable cultural treasures.

The department estimates that $60 million a year is donated to Canadian institutions. These very significant gifts are of possible tax benefit to the donor who may claim a deduction in respect to the value of the gift. I note the deduction that can be claimed in each case is only half the value. It is not the full value. It is substantially less than that. The part which is eligible as a tax credit therefore is much more modest than has been suggested in some of the remarks made by hon. members opposite.

• (1015)

Donors, museums, galleries and professional associations have lobbied for the right to appeal the determination made by the review board which currently makes determinations of value, and this bill gives that right. It is only fair, it is only just and I think the bill deserves the support of all hon. members, particularly when we look at the substantial value of the gifts made to these institutions. Without these kinds of gifts many of these institutions would not be able to acquire the very substantial works of art they now receive.

I submit this is a fair and reasonable way of proceeding and I urge all hon. members to support the bill in light of the facts and figures I have been able to bring to the attention of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the division on the motion now before the House stands deferred until five o'clock today, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to reintroduce my motion which I understand now has the unanimous consent of the House. I move:

That Private Members' Business be dispensed with today, Tuesday, October 3, and that furthermore when the time of 5.30 p.m. comes that it be deemed to be 6.30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

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OCEANS ACT

The House resumed from October 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C–98, an act respecting the oceans of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is the first time I have spoken from the left side of my chair instead of the right side and perhaps my left leaning ideology may come out a little stronger in this speech than it has in the last speeches I have made in the Chamber.

● (1020)

I hope the bill finds a very broad degree of support by members on all sides of the House. It clearly establishes the framework of a piece of legislation, a commitment given by the government as espoused by no less than the Prime Minister to get a focus in government on the development and management of oceans and ocean policy.

The bill has been a long time in coming and has been awaited with much anticipation by many individuals and organizations dealing with the marine environment. The Canadian Wildlife Fund and many other organizations have pushed for many years for the government to come in with a piece of legislation that would consolidate the administration of all governmental activities related to oceans as well as ensure the number one prerogative and prerequisite of this policy be conservation.

If measures taken by governments respecting management of oceans and oceans policy did not pass the fundamental test of being environmentally sound, they would not be passed.

The bill affirms the commitment of the government to a new approach to oceans management. The preamble clearly outlines the government's commitment to manage the oceans in a sustainable, environmental and ecologically sound fashion.

The bill consolidates and gives impact and full effect to the laws of Canada, not just marine laws but environmental laws in our 200–mile limit. It goes through a whole bunch of definitions of the contiguous zone, the coastal zone, the 200–mile economic zone and all of those things.

In essence it puts in a single piece of legislation the regulatory legislative framework for us to act in the best interests of those who rely on our marine resource for a living. It directs government as to how it should deal with the marine environment.

Part II of the act tries to consolidate a lot of governmental activity with respect to the oceans. I have been critical about the way the government has handled the oceans generally. I have been critical for fairly good reason.

Over the years governments have come to see the ocean as a place to exploit a resource called fish. We can see this very clearly by the difficulties we have on both coasts, more poignantly perhaps on the east coast with the collapse of the ground fishery and over 100,000 people without employment. Coastal communities are dying and a way of life unique to that part of Canada is perhaps facing extinction.

It is all because governments have not been able to deal comprehensively in policy with that ocean resource. Current legislation almost ignores that there is an interrelationship between various policy arms of the government with respect to the health of the ocean resource.

It also ignores that there is an ecology within the ocean that deals with living and non–living organisms. In the last number of years Canada has worked aggressively at the United Nations. It has been one of the states that has promoted to a great extent and has perhaps been the lead nation on some of the major conservation efforts with the United Nations law of the sea.

Canada has talked a lot about the need for some international regimes to deal with oceans, to deal with those fringe areas, straddling stocks, highly migratory stocks. However, there are other issues in the law of the sea convention that Canada had some difficulty with, deep ocean bed mining, for example.

How do we reconcile ourselves as a state to that? Whose resource is this to manage? When we get on to the continental shelf there are laws dealing with our proprietary right and our management responsibilities in the water column. Perhaps they are less clear about which level of government has jurisdiction or whether the Canadian government has any legal jurisdiction for the sea bed for minerals or deep ocean mining.

There has been much debate in the last year with the Americans about sedentary species when dealing with the continental shelf. Who has management rights of those species? Who has the right of first exploitation and who has the responsibility to manage? The act seeks to consolidate in a fairly substantial way all the various issues, programs and legislation.

• (1025)

I am pleased with the direction the bill has taken. I am pleased that it gives primary responsibility for co–ordination of the application of these pieces of legislation and regulations to the minister of fisheries. However, being from Missouri, I am yet to be convinced the bill goes as far as it should to ensure a sharp edge to the sword in the management and policy development dealing with our marine resources.

I am a bit confused that in the bill we give the minister of fisheries primary responsibility for co–ordination. I would rather see a direct line of accountability for the administration of some of the acts which still fall under the purview of other departments and other ministers.

I think back to the dispute we had not long ago when two ministers worked very well together in dealing with the turbot dispute with the European Union, more particularly and poignantly with the Spanish fleet decimating a straddling stock. We almost saw another stock going into the record book as being extinct as a commercial and viable stock on our east coast.

We had the good fortune at that time to have the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans working together on a co–ordinated and combined approach to resolve and put together the Canadian position, making sure the Canadian position was put to the international community very strongly and firmly and that it was accepted by the international community. As a result of that close working relationship, sharing the same goals, we were able to save a species and defuse a difficult international situation that had arisen with respect to the turbot allocation on the east coast.

I am extremely pleased the bill is going to committee. As chairman of the committee, I want the committee to look at whether there are some pieces of legislation currently outside the direct jurisdiction of the minister, although the minister may have the responsibility for co–ordination, where we possibly can make a case that those pieces of legislation and programs should be more properly moved over to the minister of fisheries.

When we talk about downsizing and government and operational review we must look at what makes sense. The policy as stated in the preamble of the bill is one I heartily support and I hope it will be supported by all members of the House.

Part III of the bill talks about the minister of fisheries having primary responsibility for ocean research. It is an absolute given. There is more than fish in our oceans. There is more benefit than exploiting the stocks in our oceans. Ocean science in itself is a generator of wealth and employment which can be exported on our east and west coasts and in the labs of central Canada.

I want to make sure that when the bill is passed the minister of fisheries, as stated in part III, has the tools at his disposal to ensure there is proper direction and proper resources applied to the whole area of marine and ocean science.

In my riding of Dartmouth I am lucky to have the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, a world class centre for oceans research. In excess of 12,000 people produce good products. There is partnering by the scientific community employed by the government and the scientific community in the Halifax—Dartmouth area. Some of that technology is being exported around the world.

In that facility the geological survey is doing incredible work. The work of the labs on the east and west coasts is leading science around the world. People from educational and academic institutions and other governments around the world come to see how we do our research in Canada.

I get concerned, however, that lab is not under the direction of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is under the direction of the Minister of Natural Resources. It is not the primary objective or job of that department to ensure that deep ocean science has a pre–eminent position in terms of allocation of departmental resources.

• (1030)

At the same time, we have provisions dealing with deep ocean dumping, which seems to me should more likely be over with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Currently, although there would be a requirement in this act to see the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans as the lead, it does not hand that particular responsibility over to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

We have a chance through committee to show two things. One is that the committee can work. I have an incredibly good committee, and I am very proud as chairman to say that most of the work we do is non–partisan. Sometimes we fall prey to the fact that we are practitioners of the political profession and sometimes we become partisan.

As a chair of a committee I want to let everybody in this place know that I believe there is a proper role for a committee to play with respect to examining legislation. I am hoping that when this bill passes second reading and gets to the committee we in the committee will do a fairly exhaustive review of this bill and will be able to come back with a bill that is true to the principles

and if necessary strengthens the hand of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Madam Speaker, we have talked in the House about Bill C–98 and the problems we have with it. The problem is that along with the consolidation of government regulations this bill also opens the door for the government to increase what it euphemistically calls access fees, but which we all know is a tax on fishermen. We know that the plans are to raise taxes 400 per cent on a segment of our society that can least afford it.

The minister had a choice. The minister knew his budget was going to be cut and he had a choice. He could cut spending, he could deal with the bloated bureaucracy here in Ottawa and in other parts of Canada where they have these ivory towers, or he could raise access fees or taxes on fishermen. He chose to go after the fishermen. As I said earlier, these are people in our country who can least afford to pay a massive increase at this point in time.

Let us talk about access for a minute. I think that is an interesting subject, given this government is supporting an aboriginal fishing strategy on both coasts that allows special access to a resource based on race. The aboriginal fishing strategy, this government policy, sets people apart. It treats them differently, gives them different rules to live by and creates a gulf between people. It creates a mentality of us versus them. It creates divisions in our society that we do not need and we have not seen before but which are growing as a result of government policies such as this.

Not only does this set people apart by race, not only does it give different treatment to Canadians on the basis of their racial origin but it is profoundly anti–democratic at its very roots. The cornerstone of democracy is that all people within a democracy can expect equal treatment before the eyes of the law. They can expect to be treated the same as all other citizens in the democracy, in the country. This is no longer the case in Canada. We now treat people differently.

I suggest this is playing to a deeply rooted sense of tribalism. I suggest that both of these cannot co–exist within a democracy, this idea of tribalism where you have people who suggest they have special rights and should be treated differently, on whatever basis, whether it is racial origin or whether it is sexual preference, it does not matter, you name it. It is the cornerstone of democracy that we do not treat people differently, that everybody gets the same treatment in the eyes of the law. That is not happening here.

● (1035)

The fishermen on the west coast and east coast who are being asked to pay a massive increase for access to the resource look across the way and see their neighbours and fellow Canadians getting access to the same resource on a completely different basis. It is fundamentally unacceptable, I would suggest that in a democracy we proceed with that kind of policy.

We will hear members opposite say ''the courts made us do it''. I suggest very strongly that there is no basis in law, no basis in our Constitution. There is not one legal case that has said the aboriginal people of Canada should have special access to any resources on a commercial basis. It is completely unsupported. But these members opposite, other members before them and other fisheries ministers have said that the Sparrow decision is what has created this aboriginal fishing strategy. It is faulty and not supported. I would suggest that government following this policy is just creating divisions in our society that we do not need.

I would ask how the minister and this government can, under Bill C–98, contemplate and suggest that they are going to raise access fees to ordinary Canadian fishermen who remain in the commercial sector by some 400 per cent while at the same time they support and maintain an aboriginal fishing strategy that provides access to the resource on a completely different basis.

I suggest that what the government is doing here is not supported in the industry. It certainly is not supported from the point of view of the Atlantic Canadian fishermen I have had the opportunity to meet in recent weeks. I believe there are many members on the opposite benches who are going to have a difficult time going back to their constituents to explain why they are supporting this bill in its present form because their constituents do not support it. Their constituents are very unhappy with what the government is proposing.

In closing, I would like to say that the Reform Party is opposed to Bill C–98. We are opposed because we see the minister increasing taxes on fishermen rather than cutting his own budget and his own spending. We know there are significant cuts that can be made within DFO at the top, which would probably increase the efficiency of the organization by 400 per cent. This would get the whole fishery on a more economically sustainable basis. It is unthinkable that we continue to pump the kind of money into DFO that we do based on the value of the fishery.

I know the members opposite, particularly the member for Dartmouth and the member for South West Nova, are going to have difficulties in their ridings when they go back and try to explain to their constituents and the fishermen who live in their communities why they are supporting this legislation.

I am here today on behalf of the Reform Party to say we are not supporting this legislation. We will not support these kinds of massive tax increases wherever we find them. This bill is fundamentally flawed because of this very important move by the government to increase those fees.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C–98, an act respecting the oceans of Canada. I welcome the opportunity to chat for a few minutes about why I support the bill before us.

I think it is clear to everyone at this point that there is a great need to move away from what the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology called the haphazard, ad hoc and short term measures currently employed in the management of our ocean resources. The patchwork quilt strategy is ineffective and inefficient. The national advisory board called for Canada to develop a proactive oceans policy that allows for us to plan for the future instead of just responding to crises as they arise.

• (1040)

Our ocean resources are far too important in this country. We need a management process that works better and serves the interests of all of us in the long term. We cannot afford to continue to make decisions on the management of our fisheries or the management of our other marine resources in isolation from those having to do with shipping or those having to do with environmental protection, and vice versa. Decisions on one have an impact on all others.

We need to bring all these elements together under one roof. This legislation will accomplish that by asserting our national jurisdiction over a 12–mile contiguous zone in which all our national laws regarding fiscal, immigration, customs and environmental matters will apply while at the same time creating an exclusive economic zone to assert our right to protect and manage all our resources out to a 200–mile limit, including all fish and also including all other resources.

This bill will also extend our authority out over the continental shelf. Bill C–29, passed by the House last year, established our right to protect and manage the so–called straddling stocks of fish that move in and out of the current 200–mile limit. This legislation will reinforce that measure by exerting our authority over the continental shelf itself and the resources found on the shelf.

Canada has always been a world leader in matters to do with the wise management of our ocean resources. We were one of the primary movers urging the UN to focus on the importance of this issue. Successive governments have made the case to our international partners that ocean states can and should have the right to control and protect their coastal waters. We have 250,000 kilometres of coastline, more than anyone else in the world. As such, it has always been in our national interest to seek recognition of our rights in the waters immediately off our shores.

The second thing this legislation does is to put overall responsibility for the creation of oceans management strategy in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We can proceed in a more organized and cost efficient manner to deliver oceans programs in a more coherent manner. The goal is sustainable development of these vast stretches of our waters. We want to exploit the oceans for ourselves, but we also want to make sure that in doing so we do not damage them for future generations of Canadians or for current and future generations of people in other countries.

Eight years ago the concept of sustainable development was first introduced in a report of the World Commission on Environment and Development chaired by the current Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland. The principles of the Brundtland report are supported in theory at least by almost every nation in the world.

The previous government agreed with the principles in the Brundtland report and in fact made a commitment to bring in a Canada oceans act. However, no such legislation was ever introduced by that government. I congratulate this government for doing so.

Under the terms of this legislation we have before us, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will be responsible for the development and enforcement of a new oceans management strategy. It is going to be done with a different approach from that used in the past. It is the government's stated intention to work in partnership with oceans industries and the people in them, the various resource extraction industries and the people involved there, with environmental groups and indeed with anyone who has an interest to come up with the best plan possible.

An example given of this kind of partnership is the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council which brings together industry, educators and governments to advise on conservation in the Atlantic. The council has played an instrumental role in helping the government move to the fishery of the future. The government wants to expand this kind of partnership because it believes that these kinds of partnership approaches will bring the best results. That includes using the best scientific information from as many sources as possible.

It is not going to be a matter of the federal government determining everything itself. It is going to work with other levels of government, the private sector, educators, scientists, environmental groups and all interested parties to make sure that Canada remains on the cutting edge of research and knowledge in this critical area and more important, that Canada uses that knowledge to make the right decisions about how best to manage our ocean resources.

Hon. colleagues will also know that the government has already moved to integrate the coast guard into the department of fisheries. I think this move makes a lot of sense. Bringing together these two fleets of ships and aircraft will save the government money. This is always good news for taxpayers. It is very welcome news for my constituents in the riding of Erie. More than that, it also gives them the opportunity to use all their vessels and aircraft for both purposes, that is fisheries and resource management as well as the traditional coast guard

duties of search and rescue, ice breaking service, marine weather warnings, patrolling our coastal waters and so on.

• (1045)

In addition, the regional offices of both will be consolidated into an enlarged and improved service which means further savings and a much better co–ordination of all activities that have to do with our ocean waters.

Provision is also made in the act to allow the minister of fisheries to carry out scientific research in support of the ocean management strategy. It gives the minister the legal right to produce charts, reports and scientific data and to provide that information to those groups, organizations and individuals who have an interest in these issues. Also included is a new authority to provide guidelines under which foreign vessels can conduct scientific research in Canadian waters.

For the first time the act will give government, following discussions and advice from scientists and other interested parties, a new authority to create protected marine areas, to safeguard ocean biodiversity and to safeguard endangered species.

We all know that our oceans, particularly in our coastal communities, face a great deal of environmental stress as well as the depletion of the ocean resources through the destruction of habitats essential to the survival and growth of certain species. We need to protect these areas from further destruction. I welcome the inclusion of this provision in the act and encourage the minister to use it when scientific evidence demonstrates that it is necessary.

The point has been made by others that passing the legislation by itself does not guarantee that our oceans will be safe from all environmental damage or resource depletion for all time. If it were that simple, I am sure we would have passed a law against the common cold many years ago.

The bill puts a framework in place that will help us reach those goals. It also makes clear that we have to promote our own strategy with all the countries in the world that share oceans with us. In other words we have to make it clear that each of us is responsible for protecting them.

I urge the government and the minister to continue to make Canada's voice heard on issues such as ocean dumping, conservation of straddling stocks, the proper management of our coastal zones, circumpolar management and all other issues that have an impact on the oceans of the world.

The legislation gives us as a nation the opportunity to lead by example, to demonstrate to the world that Canadians care deeply about their ocean resources, that we want to preserve and protect them and that we are willing to put our money where our mouth is by taking long term action to do so. The oceans act signals a renewal of Canada's leadership in ocean management. I am proud of this initiative asserting Canada's role as a world leader.

Before I conclude I should like to address one point raised by the previous Reform speaker on cost recovery. The oceans act authorizes the minister to fix fees, to recover the cost of services and activities provided for under the act, for example ice breaking, traffic management and hydrographic charts. Access fees for commercial fishermen are established under section 8 of the fisheries act, not under the oceans act. The two pieces of legislation are entirely distinct.

I hope every member of the House will consider the legislation as a very positive step in the right direction and give it their support. I certainly do.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on Bill C–98, the oceans act, an act to ratify the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

I will mention what I agree with and what I disagree with. I will give some constructive suggestions to make our oceans better, to improve our resource management and to ensure we have safe, clean oceans with viable populations of flora and fauna within those oceans for now and forever more.

Unfortunately we will create another level of bureaucracy with this act. There are aspects of it that actually improve, streamline and make the system more efficient, for example with the amalgamation of the coast guard. We completely agree with that. However we have created in the oceans management strategy a whole new level of bureaucracy to monitor people monitoring other people when in effect we should just be acting.

• (1050)

Unfortunately we continually study, report and analyse aspects not only within this ministry but within many others when the actual facts are already there, waiting to be dealt with. Sadly with this bill we see the same situation. Historically we can see the consequences of continuing to act, continuing to report and continuing to study.

We have seen the decimation of our oceans and the fish populations within them. The disaster on the east coast has been a profound tragedy for all people living in the maritimes. On the west coast unfortunately the fish stocks are facing an impending disaster. For years the west coast fisheries of many species have been decimated. The reason is not El Niño, not mackerel, not warm water, although they can have a contributing effect. The primary reason for the decimation of fish stocks on the west coast is poaching, poaching and poaching. That is the cold, hard reality of what has happened on the west coast. It also happened on the east coast before.

Unfortunately the ministry has been unwilling and unable to deal with it. It is not because DFO officers did not want to enforce the law but because middle management bureaucracy meddled in the ability of the DFO officers to enforce the laws which protect the environment and species for generations to come. These individuals are hiding behind their ethnic origins and using the aboriginal fishing strategy to poach and pillage our fish stock. Those are the facts.

The colour or race of persons do not matter. If they are poachers, they are poachers and they should be dealt with in the same way as other people. This ministry has been unwilling and unable to do that. We see aboriginal people poaching up and down the Fraser River. DFO officers are unwilling to enforce the law because they are afraid of being shot. On Vancouver Island Vietnamese people have been decimating the shellfish stocks in full view of other people and the DFO officers have been unable to deal with it. They have been told by the bureaucratic masters above them that they should leave well enough alone.

There are too many nets in the water. Seiners are going out into the straits of Juan de Fuca and are vacuuming the oceans. The DFO must take a leadership role to decrease the number of nets.

The aboriginal fishing strategy is a disaster. Furthermore it is illegal. Court cases in the B.C. Supreme Court have determined that it is illegal. The Sparrow case my hon. friend mentioned proved there was no legal jurisdiction for the AFS.

We should have one commercial fishing strategy for all people. It does not serve the law–abiding aboriginal people who care about and fish the resource. Nor does it serve anybody else to allow people within their community to hide behind the AFS and poach fish. The ministry has put people who are some of the biggest poachers in British Columbia in charge of the aboriginal fishing strategy. The aboriginal people know that and they are quite angry at the DFO for doing it.

As I said before, there is widespread poaching of shellfish. Widespread poaching of abalone was stopped in 1989, but everyone who lives on Vancouver Island knows that abalone is being poached.

Companies continue to dump their garbage into the oceans on the west coast and on the east coast. The ministry has been unable and unwilling to deal with it. It should be working closely with the Ministry of the Environment to develop a system to identify the people who are polluting our oceans, to enforce the law and to penalize them. Furthermore, so that it does not cost taxpayers money, the government should levy the costs for cleaning up the dumping and the pollution on the shoulders of the groups or companies that are doing it. It should not cost the taxpayer any money whatsoever to do that. The full cost and beyond should be borne by the polluters themselves.

• (1055)

I also encourage the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans to work closely with the Ministry of the Environment and various universities across the country that are doing very interesting research in the oceans. They are also developing systems with strong commercial properties that can be sold internationally.

We as a country can be a leader in areas such as aquaculture, resource management, fisheries and oceans management. All we need to do is have the courage to identify these sectors, promote them and capitalize on them for our economy and our country. We have been far too lame and non–aggressive in this area.

I suggest that we do the following. We should give DFO officers more autonomy and stop letting them be hamstrung by middle management. I strongly encourage the minister to look at what is happening in middle management. Some of them are telling him what he wants to hear, not what is actually occurring.

When the minister went to the west coast he did a very good thing by sitting down with the DFO officers and speaking with them in a forthcoming fashion. I think he found that productive. I know they did. I strongly encourage him to continue the practice.

The sad byproduct of that meeting unfortunately is that some of the DFO officers have been penalized for being forthcoming and as a result have been removed from their positions at great cost to the ministry and at great cost to the fisheries. This is completely unfair.

We must make enforcement a priority. We must allow DFO officers to continue to do their job. We must allow them to enforce the law as it is written and arrest and penalize anybody who poaches regardless of whom they happen to be.

I put forth to the minister about a month and a half ago a new idea by which we can improve our fish stocks and generate funds for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. It involved using salmon hatcheries.

A recent study indicated that salmon hatcheries, many of which are inefficient, do not need to exist. I gave the minister a way for the department to pay for the hatcheries and to earn revenues from them. They would become self–sustaining and would not be a lodestone around the taxpayer's neck.

I hope he pays careful attention to it. A model of it will be on the Sooke River in my riding of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. It is a well thought out plan and will make the hatchery self–sustaining in the future.

The hon. minister should look at new ways to manage our oceans and new ways to increase our jurisdiction beyond the 200–mile zone. The reality is that we cannot even manage our oceans in the 2–mile zone, let alone the 200–mile zone. We have to show more courage in this way. I am hoping with the amalgamation of the coast guard we can use the coast guard more effectively to arrest individuals who are poaching.

I warn once again that a lot of people are coming over from the United States of America to poach in B.C. waters because their waters are completely closed to fishing. The DFO has been completely unable to do anything about that.

The officers should also be given the ability to work overtime and the ability to do night patrols and weekend patrols when a lot of poaching occurs.

There are ways in which to generate money from something like this, so it will not cost the ministry more money. I strongly encourage the minister to look at these matters. My colleagues and I would be more than happy to help him in the endeavour to have one fishery for generations to come.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on Bill C–98 respecting the oceans act. It implements many of the key recommendations in last year's report called ''Opportunities from our Oceans'' by the committee on oceans and coasts of the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology.

As government members opposite have already noted, this piece of legislation does three things to implement a strategy to better manage the environment and resources of Canada's oceans. First, the act establishes Canadian sovereignty over the ocean areas and resources of a 24–nautical mile contiguous zone and a 200–mile exclusive economic zone, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which Canada signed in 1982 but never ratified. Second, the act develops and implements a national oceans strategy based on the sustainable development and integrated management of oceans and coastal activities and resources; this would include establishing protected marine areas. Finally, the act provides for the powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Minister of Fisheries to manage Canada's oceans.

• (1100)

This is an important bill which could move us forward toward managing both our natural resources and our fishery in a manner that is more sustainable for future generations. The idea of an oceans act is certainly overdue. I am supportive of the bill in general and pleased that Canada will finally implement one of the key provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

There are areas where the act could be improved. I wish to focus my remarks today on some of those improvements and on the fact that other legislation the government has on the Order Paper may limit the effectiveness of Bill C–98.

Clause 35 of the bill allows for the minister to establish protected marine areas. However, the bill states that these areas are only for the conservation and protection of fishery resources and their habitat. These protected areas should not be limited just to the fishery. The act should also be broader so that the protected marine areas protect other endangered species and different habitats and ecosystems, not just the fishery. This would recognize the importance of biodiversity in the complex ocean environment. There should also be no take zones within these areas.

The environment minister's proposed endangered species legislation will only protect 4 per cent of Canada's total land base. A broadening of the protected marine areas therefore would signal that even if the government does not intend to protect endangered species in most of the country, at least it will protect them in our oceans.

This shows that when we look at what the government is doing to protect the environment, it is important not to look at this legislation in isolation from other government statements and initiatives on the environment.

Last week I listened to government members opposite talk about how wonderful things in this bill would lead us toward sustainable development and how the bill's regulation would extend our jurisdiction to manage and protect ocean resources and our environment. They seem to be blissfully unaware that just last week the Minister for International Trade, a minister in their own government, said that Canada will have to cede its sovereignty and environmental standards to achieve freer world trade and that the environment will increasingly be subject to harmonization under international trade agreements. So which is it? Will Bill C–98 be used to protect and sustain our oceans, or will the environment of our oceans be sacrificed on the altar of free trade?

As they talked about sustainable development and environmental regulations, the Liberal members also seemed to be unaware that their government has introduced two pieces of legislation, Bill C–62 and Bill C–83. Those bills could effectively gut the regulations in this bill and therefore prevent us from knowing if the government's oceans management strategy will ever lead us to sustainability.

Just to remind members opposite, Bill C–62 is the regulatory efficiency act and it does two things. It allows the government to sign compliance agreements with business, waiving the terms of compliance with designated regulations. It also allows desig-

nated regulations to be administered by any government, Canadian or foreign, or by any other person.

The proposed oceans act states that existing Canadian laws will apply to the exclusive economic zone. This would include the two most important federal environmental protection laws on the books, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Since these laws are effected mainly through their regulations, how can Canada exercise environmental jurisdiction over its oceans if Bill C–62 effectively guts the regulations of CEAA and CEPA and gives the power of environmental regulation to private corporations or indeed foreign governments?

There are also parts of Bill C–98 that simply will not work without the regulations. I refer specifically to clause 16, which establishes the fishing zones of Canada; to clause 25, which establishes the outer limit of the exclusive economic zones and makes regulations concerning a marine structure and the application of federal and provincial laws and to clause 35, which establishes protected marine areas.

• (1105)

It is technically possible that compliance agreements under Bill C–62 would replace some of these regulations. In short, Bill C–62 allows the possibility that the federal power in Bill C–98 could be administered by other authorities including other provincial and national governments.

As my final point I would like to mention that Bill C–83, which establishes a commissioner of the environment and sustainability within the Office of the Auditor General, could also limit how effective Bill C–98 will be.

I spoke at length about this bill two weeks ago and how the environment committee recommended that the environmental auditor be given the mandate to evaluate whether government policy was leading us toward sustainability. Government members opposite did not lift a finger to defend the committee's report. You may remember that the government completely ignored the important recommendations of the committee's report; 11 out of 17 of those recommendations were completely ignored.

Now clause 30 in Bill C–98 bases the national oceans management strategy on two principles, sustainable development and the integrated management activities in Canada's sovereign waters. How are we going to know if the management strategy developed under Bill C–98 is sustainable, effective, or even desirable if the new environmental commissioner cannot look at policy established by the government?

The powers of the minister under the oceans management strategy in clauses 32, 33, and part III of this bill illustrate the clear need for an independent environmental auditor who can act as a watchdog and examine whether policies and actions are meeting environmentally sustainable goals.

In conclusion, although I welcome the intent and objectives contained in Bill C–98, its passage is not enough to protect the resources and marine environment off our coasts. If the government were really serious about protecting our natural environment, about ensuring sustainable development strategies, about preserving and enhancing environmental protection regulations, about pollution prevention and about protecting biodiversity and endangered species, it would do a number of things in addition to passing Bill C–98.

The government would amend Bill C–83 so that the environmental commissioner could evaluate policy. It would immediately withdraw Bill C–62 from the Order Paper so that environmental legislation already on the books in this country is not gutted. It would bring in real effective endangered species legislation protecting habitats and it would implement the excellent recommendation in the environment committee's latest report, a review of CEPA entitled: ''It's About Our Health! Towards Pollution Prevention''. May this latest report of the committee fare better in the hands of the government than the last one.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Call in the members.

[*Translation*]

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(*a*), the recorded division on the question now before the House stands deferred until 5 p.m., this day, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

● (1110)

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–64, an act respecting employment equity, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): There are 17 motions in amendment in the Notice Paper concerning the report stage of Bill C–64, an act respecting employment equity.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 2 and 12 are the same as the amendments presented and negatived in committee. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 76(5), they have not been selected.

Motion No. 3 cannot be considered today pursuant to Standing Order 76(2).

Motions Nos. 1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17 will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 1 applies to all the others.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 4 will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 5 will be debated and voted on separately.

[*Translation*]

Motion No. 7 will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 11 will be debated and voted on separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 13 and 14 will be grouped for debate and voted on as follows: an affirmative vote on Motion No. 13 obviates the necessity for the question being put on Motion No. 14. However, a negative vote on Motion No. 13 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 14.

[*English*]

I shall now propose the motions in Group No. 1 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

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

Motion No. 1

That Bill C–64, in Clause 3, be amended by deleting lines 33 to 44, on page 2 and lines 1 to 6, on page 3.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C–64 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C–64 be amended by deleting Clause 18.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C–64 be amended by deleting Clause 19.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C–64 be amended by deleting Clause 20.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C–64 be amended by deleting Clause 38.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C–64 be amended by deleting Clause 39.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C–64 be amended by deleting Clause 40.

He said: Madam Speaker, for the benefit of members present who may not be entirely familiar with this bill and for the benefit of those thousands of Canadians earnestly watching this on television wondering what on earth this is all about, we are talking about the affirmative action bill of this Parliament. It is officially entitled employment equity.

What this bill purports to do is primarily to the public service, but any private companies of 100 employees or more doing business with the federal government are going to be going through substantially more hoops than they have in the past in meeting quotas for employment.

The amendments the Speaker has mentioned all have to do with three separate and distinct criteria. They are to remove the effects of this bill from application to the private sector.

● (1115)

If it is the Liberal government's intent to foist employment equity or affirmative action on the operations of the Government of Canada there is little the opposition can do because the government is going to do what it wants to do. However this should be carefully considered as it applies to the private sector. Private sector employers have enough trouble these days without adding one more hurdle for them to overcome.

I would also point out that the private sector by and large is light years ahead of the government in its relationship with minority groups. Much of what is done by the private sector is done in enlightened self–interest. There is nothing wrong with enlightened self–interest. A company will hire from those available the very best people it can get. They should not be acquired by a quota system, no matter how that quota system is comfortably or carefully disguised as employment equity. It is still affirmative action. It is still reverse discrimination. It still purports to set out that people are able to get jobs, advancement or opportunities based on human characteristics rather than merit.

The other amendments I have proposed that we will be discussing, which we would ask the government to consider carefully, are that the sole criteria for advancement or employment be merit. It should be understood that although there are items in the bill that purport to say that merit has not been taken out, we think it would be improved if we were to explicitly say that yes, the Government of Canada understands, appreciates and affirms that merit will be the sole criteria on which people will be hired, on which people will be promoted and any distinction within the employment will be based solely on merit.

The Speaker mentioned quite a number of amendments. Most of those amendments are consequential amendments that have to do with making sure that if there is an amendment, for example, to clause 3(2)(i) that those amendments follow through. Most of them really do not have any consequence. We are talking about just three major philosophical ideas in all of these amendments.

The third is that there is quite a convoluted procedure whereby people must identify themselves to the responsible officer to make sure that the employment equity or affirmative action targets or quotas are met. The person from the government comes in and says: ''Hi, I am from the government. I am here to help you'', snicker, snicker. The person comes in and says: ''I am from the government, I am your employment equity or affirmative action officer and I am checking to see if you are in compliance''.

Suppose this person goes into a room and everybody working in the room is black. There are 20 people working in the room. The person from the government looks at a piece of paper and notes that everyone has identified themselves as Canadians. They have not said that they are black; they have not said that they are yellow, white or green or whatever colour they might be. They have said: ''We are Canadians''. Technically they would not be in compliance.

This gives the compliance officer the chance to use some common sense and say: ''Wait a minute, these people are definitely in compliance with the spirit of the law, if not with the letter of the law''. It gives the compliance officer a little bit of flexibility.

These are the three major thrusts of the amendments we would ask the House to carefully consider before automatically saying: ''We are not going to consider any of these amendments''.

That concludes my short remarks on Bill C–64 at this time. We will have a lot more to say on this subject when it is debated at third reading.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am often shocked by the simple analysis of how our society works and sometimes does not work for the people.

• (1120)

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you for this chance to demonstrate the merits of the Liberal approach to employment equity and to expose the destructive nature of the proposed amendment.

The effect of Motion No. 1 would be to exclude the private sector altogether from the act. This would be tantamount to repealing the existing Employment Equity Act. It is not acceptable to the government.

The motion begs a very important question because it speaks to the type of work that members of Parliament do in committees and whether they are or are not listening to what people have to say.

Did hon. members opposite hear what the business community had to say about employment equity during the hearings of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development? Perhaps I can use this occasion to refresh their memories. The strongest proponents of the legislation were also those organizations representing some of Canada's largest employers, including the Canadian Bankers Association, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters and Canadian National.

Banks alone employ nearly one–third of all federally regulated private sector employees. W.J. Lomax of the Canadian Bankers Association, like many others who testified, stated at the hearings that employment equity ''has stimulated fundamental reviews and enhancements in the bank's human resources policies and practices which have benefited everyone. It has helped us lay the foundation for managing an increasingly diverse workforce, something every employer of choice in the 1990s wants to do well''.

The friends of business are speaking out against business. I have heard hon. members across the way offer their curious understanding of life in the Canadian workplace and employment equity. Here we have a party that tells the world that it is in favour of equality. It claims it is in favour of hiring on merit. It tells us to seed opportunity for all and yet attacks a piece of legislation that has helped employers clear away impediments for all Canadians.

I am going to take this opportunity to dispel some of the myths the Reform Party has been stating. The first speaker on its behalf said certain things that are not quite accurate. What does the bill not do? The bill specifically states that it does not require employers to hire unqualified people. That is what the bill says.

It also says that it does not require the federal public service to set aside merit principles. That is what this bill says. It exempts employers with less than 100 employees. The hon. member should listen to this: It does not create a rigid quota system and it makes clear this program must never cause undue hardship on an employer.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): That's Liberal arrogance.

Mr. Grubel: Very Orwellian.

Mr. Bevilacqua: Madam Speaker, I hear some heckling on the other side. Obviously the Reform Party has a great deal of difficulty dealing with the facts when they are presented as clearly and concisely as they have been this morning.

Canadians understand. The Reform Party couches its intentions in elegant language but the people of Canada, the visible minorities, the average Canadian, young people understand what the Reform Party is all about. Its members may think they are pulling the wool over people's eyes. However, the fact is that everyone is waking up to the reality and the type of meanspirited outlook the Reform Party day in and day out demonstrates in the House.

Madam Speaker, let me continue to enlighten the members opposite on the key issues of why employment equity builds a fairer and more just society for everyone. The Reform Party's position implies that people from designated groups choose greater unemployment, they choose lower wages, they look for more uncertainty as employees. They invite it. That is what visible minorities, aboriginal Canadians and women want. They want to make less than everybody else. That is what the Reform Party would like Canadians to believe.

• (1125)

Canadians are more reasonable. They understand that employment equity is not about favouring one group. It is the realization that in our society there is something called systemic discrimination, that people sometimes have to overcome insurmountable barriers to find work and move ahead.

The thoughts I have expressed today arise from rational discussion in every single part of the country. When people look at the statistics and at the fact that women make less than men in comparable positions and that aboriginals are being shut out of employment opportunities, they tell the government that employment equity makes sense.

Mr. Grubel: Indian affairs is doing it.

Mr. Bevilacqua: I am somewhat surprised that the Reform Party would stoop this low—

Mr. Grubel: Equal opportunity.

Mr. Bevilacqua: —and not allow Canadians from the designated groups their right to a job and to prosper like every other Canadian.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): I wonder why Ontario cancelled?

Mr. Grubel: It is because we do not like racism.

Mr. Bevilacqua: Madam Speaker, I am one member who is going to expose the Reform Party for exactly what it is—

Mr. Grubel: You are racist.

Mr. Bevilacqua: —a backward party.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I would ask the hon. member to withdraw his comments, please.

Mr. Grubel: Madam Speaker, I am sorry. I was carried away in the heat of debate. I withdraw the remark. Is the hon. member going to identify the groups on the basis of colour?

Mr. Bevilacqua: Madam Speaker, this type of behaviour in the House which has become synonymous with Reform Party members is quite shocking. In my six or seven years as a member of Parliament—

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): I guess we do not like social engineering, do we?

Mr. Bevilacqua: —nobody has ever used that term to describe me. While I accept the apology, I think Canadians will understand that the term used by the hon. member was unparliamentary and unbecoming of a parliamentarian.

Mr. Grubel: Are you going to identify the minorities on the basis of their colour?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Madam Speaker, as this is the first time I have an opportunity to rise in this House, I wish to welcome you back. You can, of course, appreciate that we have no intention of supporting the motions and amendments put forward by the Reform Party, and certainly not those aimed at exempting the private sector from the application of the Employment Equity Act.

With your permission, I would like to say that if we find ourselves with such amendments, it is undoubtedly because the Reform Party does not understand what employment equity is. What is being proposed through this bill and through various amendments is something that has been requested by a number of Canadians, especially those who submitted briefs to the Abella Commission and asked us to ensure not only that the Employment Equity Act has a greater impact on the private sector but also that it applies to the public service in general, which is what Bill C–64 will achieve.

• (1130)

We found it difficult to understand the position put forward by the Reform Party. How can they say on the one hand that the new jobs in Canada are created by the private sector, especially by small business, and claim on the other hand that the private sector should be exempted from employment equity?

Tabling a motion like the one put forward by our friends from the Reform Party is to consciously deny that greater equality in Canada and Quebec can be achieved through the private sector.

I would be tempted to say that it takes a whole lot of nerve to rise in this place and make this kind of remark.

What is most disturbing about such a position is the line we were given—and will keep hearing throughout the debate today I guess—about white people—those the Reform calls the silent majority—being discriminated against.

It will come as no surprise to you, Madam Speaker, to learn that the committee met with officials of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, who told us that 55 per cent of available jobs were held by people with the traditional white, able–bodied and non native profile, while only 45 per cent of the workforce actually fits this description. This results in a situation where individuals who belong to what the Reform Party calls the silent majority are holding 55 per cent of the jobs, when in fact they represent 45 per cent of the workforce. And they would have us believe that there is reverse discrimination?

The truth of the matter is that, deep down, the Reform Party does not believe in employment equity. It does not believe that, on the job market as we know it today, certain people find it particularly difficult to find a place for themselves, and these are women, people with disabilities, native people and members of a visible minority. I think that the Reform Party should have the courage to say that it does not believe these people are subject to any particular form of discrimination and that it does not believe that it is our duty to ensure the four classes of persons referred to in this bill can find a place not available to them at present.

When we look at statistics, there is cause for rejoicing but also cause for concern. On the bright side—and I am sure this will please the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health—women's labour force attachment did increase. You can see for yourself, statistics all say the same thing.

This is also true, to a lesser extent, of people with disabilities, who probably account for 7 or 8 per cent of the workforce, while making up 15 per cent of the overall population.

If you look at the situation of aboriginal peoples and members of visible minorities, you see that very little progress has been made since 1986 when the act was first implemented. There are still enormous problems which, it must be recognized, are often related to culture. However, the fact remains that there are groups which are significantly under–represented in the workforce, particularly aboriginal and disabled people, as well as members of visible minorities.

We know, of course, what the Reform Party thinks of aboriginal peoples, and we will get back to that issue later on during the debate.

The Bloc supports this bill and is particularly pleased that it also applies to the public service. Indeed, it was somewhat of a paradox to ask private sector employers to make efforts and produce annual reports, to meet objectives and related deadlines, without asking the public service to meet the same objectives and expectations. That approach was rather questionable. So, we are pleased to see that the government will impose the same employment equity objective on 300 crown corporations and on all the departments through Treasury Board.

• (1135)

We are not saying the bill cannot be improved; in fact, we will discuss that issue when we look at the motions proposed by the Bloc. We have a number of concerns, particularly as regards the establishment of employment equity review tribunals.

We were hoping the bill would include provisions providing for the establishment of an employment equity review tribunal on the basis of the actual representation of the designated groups. As regards this issue, it must be said that the government was particularly narrow-minded and stubborn in its approach, from the very beginning.

Members have an opportunity to participate in the debate today and I hope that Reform members will display the dignity and open mindedness that should guide every parliamentarian.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to address Motions Nos. 8, 9 and 10.

It is interesting that in speaking for the first time on this bill at report stage I have just come from a meeting of the human rights committee. The committee is reviewing the process of the national strategy for the integration of persons with disabilities.

One of the key statistics presented at that meeting was that over 70 per cent of people with disabilities are not even in the labour force, that employment is a major factor in keeping close to 50 per cent of persons with disabilities below $10,000 in incomes in a year. These are people who happen to have a disability. It does not mean they have no ability.

Employment equity goes to the very heart of why people in our country with substantial ability have not had an equal opportunity to participate in the labour force, in the economy and to be considered full, equal citizens in the matter of employment.

One only needs to look at the recent edition of *Canadian Social Trends* at an article on the employment of people with disabilities. More than half of young people with disabilities were unemployed.

If we look at any of the designated groups, we know that as a society we have not been colour blind. We have not been blind to disabilities. We have not been blind to race and ethnic origins. We have not been blind to gender when it comes to employment.

Bill C–64 is about getting rid of all blinders that have somehow made us incapable of seeing the abilities of these people to contribute through employment, to earn and to be self–sufficient through employment.

Let me speak to Motions Nos. 8, 9 and 10. They go to the heart of how we as a society monitor and how employers monitor how well they are doing in taking their blinders off when it comes to employment, promotion and training opportunities and being fully equal opportunity employers.

I have great concern over these motions. I do not understand how members of the House and the public should no longer receive an annual report from the minister consolidating information that employers have already collected as required by the Employment Equity Act. It is not only the reception of that information by the minister, it is the public awareness of that information and the awareness of that information by Parliament that allows us to make good public policies.

The impact of the amendments in Motions Nos. 8, 9 and 10 would be extremely damaging to Bill C–64. If implemented they would remove the most effective tools we have to monitor employment equity performance of individual private sector employers. More to the point, they would eliminate the means for Parliament to chart progress in achieving workplace equality and to ensure accountability.

• (1140)

The annual reporting requirement is as much about motivation as it is monitoring. We heard from numerous witnesses before the human rights committee about their experience over the last seven years with the Employment Equity Act. They said the Employment Equity Act had led them to take a look at their hiring practices, to improve their hiring practices and to eliminate discriminatory practices of which they had not been aware. Many of them said to us it had substantially improved their human resources management and the quality of their workforce.

The reporting which the Reform Party seeks to eliminate allows employers the chance to see how they measure up against other employers. The information forms part of the criteria for targeting the advice and assistance to employers that human resources development will offer in strengthening those employers' employment equity programs. Far from being heavy handed, the reports are an invaluable instrument to help government work more co–operatively, effectively and constructively with the private sector.

Furthermore, the annual reports improve the functioning of our labour market by providing detailed information to organizations whose purpose is to place members of designated groups and other Canadians and improve their opportunity to participate in the workforce. These organizations use the information to assist their clients in targeting their job search and training programs.

Equally critical, they have been of paramount importance in enabling legislators to assess the appropriateness of provisions of the act and the practical operation of employment equity legislation in the real working world. Many of the changes the bill before us makes to the Employment Equity Act, which has been in place since 1987, are the result of the experience over those seven to eight years and of the information received not only by the minister but by Parliament and by the public as to how the previous legislation was working.

The yearly reports are our window into the workplace providing data for research and evaluation of employment equity principles and methods. The insights we gain from this annual procedure are as useful to us as they are to Canadian employers, to labour and to members of designated groups. The major change in the bill is to include the Public Service of Canada. I hesitate to say that most segments of the private sector are doing better than the Government of Canada in their employment of people who have traditionally been disadvantaged in their employment advancement and training. We as a government have a great deal to learn from the private sector and we learn it largely through reports from the private sector.

They serve another useful function. The minister's annual employment equity report is a major tool for public education on the principles and progress of employment equity in Canada, a major tool for keeping us accountable for our progress in allowing all Canadians to participate fully in all segments of society.

Annual reports on measures taken and results achieved have been crucial as monitoring and motivational, dare I say self–motivational, measures in the private sector since 1986. They have recorded the steady progress the private sector has made in achieving a more equitable and representative Canadian workforce.

They have however also focused our attention on areas of weakness, reinforcing the need for the new employment equity legislation we have before us today. Anyone who questions the need for these provisions in Bill C–64 need look no further than the latest statistics. Annual reports indicate that despite significant progress for some individuals in the designated groups much more remains to be done. I referred to some of those statistics this morning. I expect fully to refer to more for the other designated groups as this debate proceeds.

● (1145)

The reports show that even for those members of the designated groups that were employed, most did not see the same wage gains and promotion opportunities of other Canadians. Women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities continue to find themselves on the bottom rung of the economic and social ladder.

Until we see parity in the workplace there will be an ongoing need for reporting to measure progress and to further progress. I therefore urge the House to reject the amendments put forward. Perhaps we sometimes do not like what we see when we report on ourselves but it is important that we look in the mirror and improve the situation.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on Motions Nos. 8, 9 and 10 of Bill C–64 which deals with the employment equity issue.

I would like to say at the outset that the impassioned speech by the deputy whip illustrates many of the concerns we in this party have. We want to ensure that all people in this country have equal opportunity to become the best they can become for themselves and also their families.

We are particularly concerned in the Reform Party about those individuals who are on the lower socioeconomic strata within our society, to identify why they are there and to give those people the tools and the opportunities that will enable them to stand on their own two feet and become economically self–sustaining so that they and their families can enjoy happier, more fruitful and productive lives.

Employment equity does not do this. It is in fact highly discriminatory. It says to a group of people who are identified by the government that they cannot compete because of the colour of their skin, because of their gender, because of their religious background or wherever they came from. That is what it says. It is a government designation. It is also insulting.

As a person who is made up of many different ethnic groups, and I am speaking for other people who are also from different ethnic groups, it is insulting to be told you are going to be hired on the basis of the colour of your skin. What does it say to that person? It says you cannot compete on the basis of merit, on the basis of your skills, on the basis of your qualities; therefore we in the government are going to do it for you. That, I submit to anybody, regardless of where they come from, is an insult.

Employment equity is social engineering at its worst. It is the government meddling in areas it ought not to meddle in. As I said before, it is insulting to all minority groups.

We know that governments cannot legislate on how people think. They must legislate against the expression of people's prejudices. We cannot legislate against what people think. We cannot legislate to the prejudices they hold within their heart. However, governments must legislate against the expression of those prejudices. That is the role of government: to ensure that those prejudices are not in the realm of employment, are not in the realm of living in a peaceful society within the beautiful country we have.

The role of government, instead of employment equity which is really employment inequity, is in effect providing a level playing field for all people. The deputy whip just mentioned that the people in the lower socioeconomic groups are finding it extraordinarily difficult to get on their own two feet. That is absolutely true. So how do we address the problem? We ensure that prejudices are not being expressed in the workforce. We also ensure that those individuals have the opportunities to become the best they can become. Give them the skills training or provide them with the opportunities for skills training. Provide them with the opportunities for education. Provide them with the abilities to get a job. Provide them and everybody else with a strong economy.

● (1150)

We must also as a government and as a country enforce anti–discriminatory laws. Those must be enforced strongly, and where discrimination occurs it must be quashed. That is the role of government.

People do not realize that employment equity is highly destructive to the soul of a country. Nobody takes into consideration those people who are being jumped over for a promotion because of the colour of their skin. You cannot say to somebody from a minority group that they are going to get a job over somebody else who is a Caucasian, for example. Nobody takes into consideration what that does to the Caucasian person. It is discriminatory to that person or whoever might be in their seat.

The only objective measure in getting a job is merit and merit alone. Anything else is discrimination. The social engineering this government wants to do is discriminatory in the highest extent. When I spoke about what it does to Canadian society, the government may not have been aware of how divisive this policy is. I have received many letters in my riding. I do not know who they are from but many individuals have said ''God bless you for saying that employment equity is divisive''.

What employment equity is doing is saying to people who are being jumped over for jobs and promotions that they are not getting them because of characteristics that have absolutely

nothing to do with merit. The characteristics that governments would apply to employment equity to ensure that subgroupings of people will get jobs have nothing to do with merit. Colour, gender, religious affiliation have nothing to do with merit and everything to do with discrimination. It is by its very nature discriminatory.

I hope we will not follow through with this. I hope the government supports these motions and helps to develop more sense and sensibility over an issue that is very sensitive.

I would reiterate that we in this party are very sensitive to the individuals who are the most dispossessed in our society. We want to create a stronger economy so they can fulfil their potential. We want to ensure that people will get the proper education. We want to ensure they get the skills necessary to stand on their own feet. We want to ensure they and their children are going to live in a safe environment.

I hope the government will join with us in ultimately putting aside and eliminating employment equity, which says to people and to companies that we need a certain number of quotas of these groupings of individuals because the law says it must be so, rather than advancing those people on the basis of merit. It also is highly destructive to an economy. If you advance people on the basis of characteristics other than merit, you actually weaken the economy ultimately.

Employment equity is prejudicial. It is discriminatory. I hope this government throws it away, as has been done in other parts of the world, such as in California and in Ontario.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to debate Motions 15, 16 and 17 put forth by the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest with respect to Bill C–64.

When we consider the number of amendments the members of the Reform Party have presented to the House on this bill, it is clear that their attempt is to weaken the effectiveness of the Employment Equity Act.

[*Translation*]

Canadians often wonder whether there are differences between political ideologies. I would encourage them to listen to this debate because they will see that there are enormous differences. My colleague has just made the claim that this program is divisive. It can be divisive, yes, particularly when it is claimed that this was its intended purpose, when the reasons such a program was created are ignored.

● (1155)

[*English*]

It is regrettable that the employment equity legislation is not looked upon by my colleagues from the Reform Party as it is intended to be. They do not see that it will make this nation a fairer one in the way in which we treat Canadians. The unfairness and the divisiveness occurs when people suggest that is what it does. This legislation is something we should be proud of, not something we should be running away from.

With regard to Motions Nos. 15, 16 and 17, the hon. member is calling upon the government to eliminate provisions that are integral to administering the act's monetary penalty system. To do so would automatically eliminate the benefits inherent in such a system. It would be like telling the referees at a hockey game that they can call penalties but they cannot put anyone in the penalty box. Without these provisions it would be impossible to ensure that those private sector employees subject to the act fulfill their obligations with regard to reporting requirements. It should be noted that the monetary penalty system only applies in cases of non–compliance with the reporting requirements in the act.

Motion No. 15 calls for the deletion of clause 38. Clause 38 gives employers the option of either paying the assessed penalty or asking for an independent third party review, namely by an employment equity tribunal. Clause 38 provides employers with access to an open and fair appeal.

Motion No. 16 calls for the deletion of clause 39. This clause combines the appeal and review mechanisms. An employer can apply for the tribunal to review the assessed penalty or the commission can take further action if an employer has neither paid the assessment on time nor asked for a review.

Motion No. 17 calls for the deletion of clause 40. This clause is necessary to enable the commission to take a negligent employer to federal court to collect an unpaid assessment. If we remove the ability to take this action it will mean removing the possibility of applying a just penalty to employers who are in contravention.

[*Translation*]

I would like to stress once again that the system of monetary penalties applies only in cases of non–compliance with the reporting requirements. Only then. To date the only mechanism available to us for ensuring compliance with the reporting requirement has been recourse to criminal proceedings, an unwieldy process.

This system costs less and is less unwieldy and easier on everyone concerned. For the reporting requirement to make any sense the statute must include an enforcement mechanism. It is totally illogical to set out monetary penalties without any means of implementing those penalties.

If the government were to adopt the proposed amendments under those circumstances, the reporting requirement would be unenforceable. This is why I cannot support the hon. member's motions.

I would ask my colleagues in the Reform Party to look at the government's intentions and motivation not just with open minds but with open eyes as well. The intent is not to divide but to ensure representation for the under–represented, to ensure that they are taken into account. We are all aware that in the present system those who are not as strong as others are not always treated in a fair and equitable manner.

[*English*]

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to debate the motions before us.

• (1200)

By way of introduction I call on the attention particularly of the Reform Party, which participated in the committee on human rights and the status of disabled persons, the committee I had the privilege to chair and the committee that looked into this issue. The members of the Reform Party on that committee have to admit as a matter of truth that the vast majority of witnesses who appeared before our committee were truly in support of the Employment Equity Act.

In other words, we strengthened what exists to include a wider coverage of the public sector and we instituted an enforcement mechanism.

We have called our report ''Employment Equity: A Commitment to Merit'' to give a very clear message. I submit the Reform Party has to be reminded that the cross–section of witnesses regardless of their position on legislated employment equity all agreed on at least four points, all of which we agree with. The skills and abilities to perform a job are essential. Fairness in employment practices is a necessity. Elimination of employment barriers helps ensure applicants can compete on an equal footing. In principle employment equity and therefore a realization of diversity is crucial.

However we believe Canada, a country committed to social justice, must have these sentiments in policy. What better way to show that than to put these sentiments, that commitment, into a piece of law? That is the ultimate sense of a commitment to fairness and equality. We have succeeded in having a committee which included the participation of members of the Reform Party.

If I honestly believed the motions we are now debating would clearly improve and strengthen this act I would support them but I think we can see these are only attempts to emasculate this piece of legislation. I feel they are trying to mislead Canadians. No one is being discriminated against in this employment equity law. We would only ensure that discrimination does not happen. In other words, we have the force of law. If only employers would comply with the principle of equity, and the vast majority do, then there would be nothing to fear.

Here we have enshrined in our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms equality for all. However, even the charter in a subsection of section 15 ensures we must have the ability as the Government of Canada to adopt policies and programs and to pass legislation that give teeth to the principle of equality for these disadvantaged groups: women, people with disabilities, people of First Nations and people designated as visible minorities.

I am really disheartened the members opposite could not see that we must have a centrepiece for our social equity, this piece of legislation on employment equity. This is really looked on as a hallmark by the people of the world, making Canada a unique nation where we exalt the importance of excellence in human endeavour while at the same time being committed to disallowing a retreat from that. This is not about reverse discrimination. This is not about redressing the injustices of the past. This is ensuring once and for all the injustices of the past do not recur.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motions put forward by the Reform Party on Bill C–64. This bill concerns me very much. The government certainly has Canadians' best interests at heart in this bill. It is attempting to redress problems in the workplace.

• (1205)

However, I find myself giving some qualified support to Motions Nos. 8, 9 and 10 and Motions Nos. 15 to 17. These motions would eliminate clauses 18, 19 and 20 from the bill which are basically targeted toward private sector employers.

I have great respect for colleagues on all sides of the House who have spoken on this subject because it is a subject we all feel very deeply about. I have serious reservations about implementing an employment equity program first for government employees and then extending it by whatever means to private sector employees.

The problems with clauses 18, 19 and 20 are they require very elaborate reporting from private sector employers about their equity programs and as addressed in Motions Nos. 15 to 17, provide penalties if they do not comply.

Private sector employers are required to give salary ranges of their employees who are in the designated group, the degree of representation of these designated persons, and it goes on about various subdivisions in order to give the government an opportunity to establish whether private sector employers are fulfilling the intentions of the act in their employment practices.

While the act unequivocally says decision by merit will be the underlying principle, unfortunately the way it is phrased it gives discretion to bureaucrats to determine whether an employer is fulfilling the obligations as described in clauses 18, 19 and 20. This sets us on a dangerous course for our social liberties as a country. However well intended we are, this does create the

opportunity for bureaucracies to determine what private employers are doing.

I hate to use the extreme case, but we would have a situation akin to big brother. Any bureaucrat may interpret the legislation. No matter how well phrased, there is an opportunity for interpretation. Unfortunately there could be a degree of political correctness, although I hate to use that term as well. There could be a mindset in the bureaucracy of a less generous interpretation of how private sector employers are treating visible minorities, women, the disabled and other designated groups.

This becomes very crucial when penalty is added. This is covered by Motions Nos. 15 to 17. Clause 36 of the act provides for a penalty of up to $10,000 for a first violation and $50,000 for a repeated or for continued violations. These violations involve failure to report or failure to fully meet the criteria in other legislation.

I have great difficulty with that because when we apply penalties the misdemeanour should be very clear. It should never be open to interpretation. It is my fear that as the bill is written it does put an unfortunate and undue obligation on private sector employers.

I recently came from the private sector and I can assure members that while the public sector may be behind in its treatment and hiring of designated groups, most private sector employers I know hire on merit and certainly try to represent all groups that come forward, and not in a discriminatory fashion.

• (1210)

It is very dangerous to think we can legislate away discrimination.

Hon. Ethel Blondin–Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find myself increasingly frustrated by the many roadblocks the Reform Party is attempting to erect to circumvent this important piece of legislation. This piece of legislation is good for Canada and for all Canadians. As parliamentarians we have an opportunity to do the right thing and this legislation will do that.

For all who believe in the principles of democracy and the noble ideals of this institution, the Employment Equity Act is a welcome reminder of the values we hold dear as a nation. It is an affirmation that Canadians are just and honourable people who passionately believe in fairness and dignity for all.

To those of us who are members of the designated groups, employment equity is about human decency and democracy. It is not about inequity. It is not about getting more than your fair share. It is about equity. It is the freedom to exercise our constitutionally guaranteed rights to participate in the political process and to make contributions to the economic and cultural fabric of Canada.

My expertise on this matter lies in my life and professional work experience and growing up in a northern aboriginal community where the chances were far greater that I would walk the halls of a penitentiary than the corridors of Parliament. That is why the Reform Party's damaging amendments disturb me so deeply. They would seriously weaken the intent and impact of the legislation.

Of all the ill conceived amendments proposed by my hon. colleague, none concerns me more than Motion No. 6. If adopted this amendment would diminish Bill C–64 by deleting the aboriginal employers exemption in clause 7. It would remove the provision that allows an employer engaged primarily in promoting and serving the interests of aboriginal peoples to give preference in employment to aboriginal peoples unless that preference constitutes a discriminatory practice under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

In practical terms this means the act would not allow municipal bands on Indian reserves to give preference to the hiring of aboriginal peoples, perhaps the most disadvantaged of the groups the legislation is attempting to assist.

It is a well known fact that many non–aboriginal peoples work in and around large populated areas of aboriginal people. That has been historically so and still is in some cases. It should be the intent of all parliamentarians to change that and make accessible employment opportunities and training in other labour market related areas available for aboriginal peoples. There is nothing wrong with that.

Indian band councils that employ more than 100 workers are subject to the Employment Equity Act. I want to be clear that this provision does not relieve aboriginal employers of the obligation to hire aboriginal women and/or persons with disabilities.

I remind the House that aboriginal peoples of Canada have a unique constitutional status affirmed in section 35. These agreements are done through the British parliamentary system as we have it here. These agreements are recognized nationally and internationally. This status demands special consideration for measures aimed at enhancing their cultural, economic and political autonomy. It rejects no one.

Historically, as I have stated, many aboriginal communities and populations have been served by non–aboriginal people, and well in many cases. There have been problems but that is not the issue. The issue is fairness.

Perhaps most important, this motion goes against the very grain of the Liberal commitment to self–government. We are determined to give greater autonomy to aboriginal communities and to put the running of aboriginal affairs in aboriginal peoples' hands. Why not? We have struggled with it as governments for 125 years. There are many problems. The aboriginal people should have the opportunity to serve themselves and to

serve themselves well. They should at least have the opportunity to make their own decisions.

• (1215)

Clause 7 of Bill C–64 supports the aspirations of aboriginal communities for economic self–sufficiency and self–determination. It simply confirms that aboriginal organizations may hire only aboriginals, provided such a hiring is justified under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

I must confess that I am very surprised that the Reform Party would take the position it has on Motion No. 6. One can only assume it is based on a profound lack of awareness of the plight of aboriginal peoples in the country. It is no secret that members on the opposite side of the Chamber are not in favour of employment equity. We know that. However, from my reading of their minority report, it appears that they still believe the Canadian Human Rights Commission has an important role to play.

There is a certain irony in the Reform's proposition. First is the fact that the commission's chair, Max Yalden, expressed his support for clause 7 when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. In response to a specific question about the exemption he said:

> I think that aboriginal groups are a particularly disadvantaged group, a special group. The idea that native groups would, in their very special and particular situation, have a preferential hiring policy is not unreasonable.

There is another technical reason why clause 7 cannot be removed from the act. It is to ensure consistency with the Canadian Human Rights Act. I can only conclude, as did the commissioners in the Canadian Human Rights Commission annual report last year, that occasionally the tone of the opposition to employment equity seems more than a little shrill.

Thus far I have outlined the logical and legal arguments to reject the Reform Party's proposal. Far more potent are the facts of everyday life for the aboriginal peoples of the country. Discrimination is not an abstract, philosophical concept for disadvantaged Canadians. Abuse of power by a privileged few is the daily reality for members of the designated groups, particularly if they are aboriginal.

I challenge the hon. member to test the merits of his motion on members of aboriginal communities, especially those who are unemployed. Unemployment is very high. On some reserves where there are few employment opportunities the unemployment rate can rise as high as 95 per cent.

Tragically, aboriginal peoples account for the most disturbing rate of suicide. It is five times the national average. Let us think of the communities of Pangnirtung, the Whitedog reserve and Shamattawa, some communities in which we have seen many young people commit suicide. Not only do my people have the highest rates of suicide in the country but they are the highest in the world.

At the other end of the scale aboriginal people have the lowest incomes in Canada. Almost one–half of all aboriginal adults have incomes of less than $10,000. Not coincidentally they face far more crowded housing conditions. Twenty–nine per cent of non–reserve aboriginals live in housing with more than one person per room, compared with just 2 per cent of the general population. The rate is 31 per cent for Inuit people.

There is a corresponding high welfare dependency rate as well. It is 43 per cent on reserves, or almost five times the national population, and over 50 per cent among the off reserve population.

I am sure the Reform Party knows we share its view that it is better for people to be working. It is better for aboriginal people to become independent and self–sustaining than to be on welfare. It is better that we make these opportunities available than to slam doors in their faces so that progress cannot be made where help is needed.

• (1220)

Young aboriginal people are the most likely to drop out of school, to become teenage parents and to abuse substances such as alcohol, drugs and even solvents. With only 3 per cent of aboriginal teens completing high school, they have the highest illiteracy rates and lowest incomes in the country. Not surprisingly, more graduate from juvenile courts than from colleges or universities.

I would never deny the successes. We have made some progress. I am willing to stand here and admit there has been progress. However it is not enough, not at this point.

We have many graduates coming out of universities and colleges. For those who manage to rise above the daunting disadvantages, the thousands of aboriginal men and women who acquire university degrees and professional skills each year, employment opportunities still do not match their availability. The unemployment rate of aboriginal peoples with university degrees is nearly double that of white males with university educations.

That is a fact. That is the truth. It is undeniable. Those highly skilled and highly trained individuals are desperately needed in their communities. That is why the act exempts aboriginal organizations from provisions which might prohibit them from hiring these invaluable employees.

In conclusion, it is a lamentable commentary on Canadian society that the odds are stacked against far too many aboriginal people. With Bill C–64 we can start to turn the statistics around. Centuries of inappropriate and damaging policies developed and administered predominantly by non–aboriginals have taught us that it is time to let the Indian, Inuit and Metis people take control of their own destiny.

That is why we need clause 7 in Bill C–64. The focus of federal policies is on seizing opportunities. The agents of change are individuals because we are convinced that with the right support individuals can help themselves. That philosophy is at the heart of the aboriginal employers' exemption clause. A majority of Canadians recognize—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. It is with the greatest of reluctance that I interrupt the minister, but at this stage of debate the allocation is for 10 minutes. I would seek the guidance of the House.

Mr. Keyes: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Could we have the consent of the House for the minister to wrap up her remarks on this matter in a couple of minutes?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It might be helpful if the minister could give the Chair some indication of how much longer she would need to conclude her remarks. If it is less than a minute, is there unanimous consent for the minister to conclude her remarks?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Blondin–Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to all members of the House for allowing me to complete my remarks.

A majority of Canadians recognize the terrible plight of aboriginal peoples and realize that for constitutional, social and moral reasons special efforts are necessary to reverse their misfortune.

I am proud that I count myself among them. I urge all like minded members of the House to defeat the draconian motion to ensure that we remain the majority and do the right thing by leaving the doors of opportunity open for aboriginal peoples.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This morning the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan proposed, in relation to Private Members' Business today, that private members' hour not be proceeded with, with the intention of having his motion that was to be debated this afternoon dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence.

I understand there is some misunderstanding concerning what he meant this morning. I think Your Honour would find that it was clear to all, except perhaps the Table and the Chair, the intention as discussed this morning was that the item would drop to the bottom of the order of precedence and we would proceed with private members' hour tomorrow in the usual way.

I simply rise to clarify that point and if consent of the House is required, to seek it.

• (1225)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his clarification. We all understood that the point raised by the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan with regard to the Private Members' Business listed for later this day was that it be dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence. I would seek the agreement of the House. Is that correct?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): And so ordered.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the amendment of my colleague from Edmonton Southwest to delete application of the bill in the private sector and to speak not only in favour of the amendment but against the employment equity notion and concept completely.

One of the things that frustrated me this morning in listening to the debate was that very few government members are looking at the issues and countering the points of view presented against employment equity. Rather they have chosen to be meanspirited. They have chosen to Reform bash and make this a party issue. I take exception to that. I take exception to the member for York North who rose in his place earlier today and called the Reform Party meanspirited.

I come from the private sector. I have run businesses for 25 years. I have hired and fired many people, male and female, and have had people work for me of various colours and of various ethnic backgrounds. I think I am a tough taskmaster but I am not meanspirited. I am an employer with a heart and with compassion. I believe in paying people a good day's wage for a good day's work.

I am against the government–union philosophy that once people get a job in government they cannot be let go and have a right to work. That is not correct. It is not available in the private sector. Also it is unacceptable in the private sector to have government intrude into our lives with more and more regulations.

Employment equity does that very thing. It tries to get into the lives of corporations and tries to dictate to them whom they have to hire and why they have to hire them. It is doing nothing more than social and economic engineering which this party stands against.

It is not meanspirited to be against employment equity. It is not meanspirited to point out to the member for York North that we believe the best person available for the job should be hired for the job. If those best people are 10 black people, then they should be hired. If it is 10 white people, then they should be hired. If it is 10 native Indians, then they should be hired.

If the government tells the employer that he has to hire based on a quota because the demographics of the census it has taken say that Canada is made up of certain colours and certain percentages of people that his business has to hire on that basis, then it is basically forcing corporations in a lot of cases to hire people who are not as qualified.

Mr. Keyes: Nonsense.

Mr. Silye: I hear the member opposite say: ''Nonsense''. My argument is that whether people are male, female, black, white, yellow, red or green as the member for Edmonton Southwest said, it does not matter. They should apply for the job. If they have the training and the qualifications they will get hired.

The employer should be free to hire. Is that not freedom? Is that not freedom of choice? Is that not in the charter of rights? What rights do employers have?

We are trying to make a better system for the country. We are trying to encourage people. It is equal opportunity that is important. It is on equal opportunity that certain members of the government are missing the point. They fail to see that we are looking for introducing and encouraging businesses to hire the best person for the job but to give the black, the white, the Indian, the yellow or whatever race, equal opportunity to be interviewed for the job. That is the kind of legislation we need to protect people. Those are the kinds of regulations that perhaps we could introduce into our system to make sure that everybody has an equal opportunity. If they do not, then they are discriminated against and then we should do something about it.

• (1230)

Employers cannot be legislated to hire certain types of people because of quotas. That is not meanspirited. That is right spirited. That is trying to put the heart and the mind in the right place to do the right thing for the right people, both employers and employees.

The government is interfering once again in corporate Canada by bringing in regulations and red tape it has no business doing. Government is better off doing other things, such as balancing the budget and getting us out of debt. That is the problem. Government wants to add to it at 3 per cent of GDP per year. The deficit is not the problem, the debt is. Legislation such as this is going to make it more difficult and more inefficient for corporations to operate and function.

In my years as an employer in the private sector, I have interviewed and hired a lot of people who are disadvantaged. I have hired people who were mentally handicapped. They did a good job in delivering internal documentation. Our encouraging them, working with them and seeing them grow in spirit, heart and mind was an encouragement and a boost for all of us. I did not need legislation to do that. Nobody ordered me to hire this gentleman.

In a company I still own, there is currently an individual who is physically handicapped. He is short and one leg is shorter than the other. He is just one heck of a good draftsman. He is a great spirit around the office and fun to have. I have hired males, females, francophones. I have hired a Czechoslovakian who can barely speak English. Nobody ordered me to do this.

I am saying this as a representative of the private sector, which I believe I am. I am about the average of the private sector. Certainly there are some people in the private sector who would take advantage of the rules but I would say the majority of people, which I represent, do not need legislation like this to tell them whom to hire and why to hire them. They are going to look for competent people, people who are going to fit into the mould of their corporations and their companies.

To have this arbitrary law that says that you must now, Mr. Silye, interview people of this nature and this type because of the census is wrong. It says this is the only classification you can look for, when perhaps the very types of people I am being ordered to hire do not have the training or the background to do that particular job.

Let us stick to the issues. Let us not bash the Liberal Party, the Reform Party. Let us talk about the merits and the demerits, the pluses and the minuses of employment equity. That is a debate. That is what the people are here to hear. That is what Canadians want to know about. Is it a good thing or is it a bad thing?

I stand today in my place to say I think it is a bad thing. If other hon. members feel it is a good thing, let them say why they think it is good. Let me say why I think it is bad. Let us not get into Reform bashing and the meanspirited kind of crap that is going on which leads to unparliamentary language. Let us just stick to the issue.

One of the biggest weaknesses of the government's argument and that of the individuals who represent employment equity is that in the name of introducing equity and equality they are, and I hope they can see this, introducing a form of inequality, a form of inequity that discriminates reversely against the very discrimination they claim they are trying to avoid.

It is the same with the Income Tax Act which is convoluted, complicated and confusing. In the name of clarification, in the name of fairness, in the name of equity the government has introduced 1,000 plus pages of rulings and amendments to clarify the Income Tax Act. By adding another 1,000 pages is that clarifying it or is that confusing it even more? It is making it worse and worse and worse. It is the same kind of thing that is going on with this bill. By preaching and supporting employment equity the Liberals are introducing more legislation, more rules that make it more confusing, more convoluted, more complicated. It is a detriment to business. It is a detriment to the hard working citizens of the country who want to move forward and get on with the job of stimulating the economy. At every turn another government law comes in with more red tape, more

regulations, more rules to follow, more auditors. Now we are going to have people auditors.

• (1235)

It is bad enough that Revenue Canada is checking our books every frigging month. It is bad enough that Revenue Canada is interpreting the rules for the government because we need money.

Let me remind all those people at Revenue Canada it is not the deficit that is the problem. Let me remind the Government of Canada it is not the deficit that is the problem. The debt is the problem and the government is adding to it. High taxes are the problem and the government is adding to that. It is bad regulations, lousy rules like this, terrible laws like this which are the problem. The government is not listening. It is continually adding to the problem.

I understand it is in the hearts of Liberals. I know they believe what they are saying comes from the heart and they feel it is helping Canadians. I believe when they say they are trying to eliminate discrimination that they are honest and sincere about it. But I am saying that in so doing they are not really eliminating discrimination, they are introducing a new form of discrimination. That is what is wrong. That is what I ask the government to reconsider.

This amendment deals with the private sector. I hope members opposite will agree it has been a good employer, has promoted the economy. Eighty–five per cent of revenue generated in tax dollars comes from the private sector. At least leave it alone.

If the government really believes in the legislation, then just apply it to the government sector. It can do what it wants with the bureaucracy. That is their baby. Do it, try it and see the inequities that will be introduced. But please support the amendment because it leaves one sector of the economy that can function viably well and will not in any way deter or detract from the intent of the bill. I know how the private sector thinks, acts and deals. It usually hires the best person regardless of race, colour, creed or whatever.

If the government is intent on introducing employment equity, go ahead and do it in the public sector. Go ahead and do it with the bureaucrats and watch the uprising that will occur. I know a lot of people in the bureaucracy are not happy with the form of affirmative action that is taking place right now.

I am asking the government to reconsider its opposition to the amendment and do something constructive. It can have it both ways. By accepting this amendment it can go ahead with the bill, if it is just applied to the public sector and leave the private sector alone. Then we will see which will end up being right.

I believe the bill is an intrusion into our lives. It is an intrusion which the government does not need to make. It is an intrusion it would be better off to avoid and leave alone. I believe that employers can be trusted. I know that for the most part private sector employers, the vast majority, can be trusted.

Mr. Speaker, I know you have a great interest in hockey. Does it discriminate against players from all over the world? No. It sought to change the rules, to bring in the best hockey players in the world. We have a National Hockey League that has every nationality playing on it. Was there employment equity introduced in that profession? No. We do not need employment equity. I stand against employment equity. I stand for this amendment and for equal opportunity for all.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the summer I spent my time in my riding of Windsor—St. Clair which is the centre of my universe.

I returned to this session of Parliament with a renewed commitment to employment equity. I am convinced more than ever that Bill C–64 is the right thing for Canada right now. I am concerned though, after meeting with my constituents over the summer recess, that there is a great deal of misunderstanding about both the intent and the implications of our improved employment equity legislation.

Distortions have resulted from a misinterpretation and frankly, a misrepresentation of the facts by a few. I have discovered that once these misconceptions are straightened out and the legislation fully understood, it gains widespread support. It seems to be essential that these misconceptions be corrected on the floor of the House.

I specifically want to address several of the arguments raised in the Reform Party's minority report. I am particularly concerned about the attitude that report reflects, the ''I'm all right, I have got mine, Jack'' attitude. I have mine so everyone else can go to hell. That is the tone of the Reform Party's minority report. The idea in it is that I got ahead and so everyone else should just try to get there on their own. I do not owe it to anybody to help them or to assist them or to do anything.

• (1240)

It is disingenuous for a woman to suggest that because she is successful, got there on her own, she owes nothing to her sisters who came before her. It is disingenuous for any of us to suggest that anyone can get to this job, can become an accountant, can become a banker or can become a painter. It is disingenuous, false and deludes the Canadian public.

The idea that as Canadians we should not acknowledge and address systemic inequities and that in promoting that view it is okay to promulgate misinformation and to promote misconceptions is anathema to the government.

The first assumption I would like to address is the assumption that women, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities and aboriginal people are somehow enjoying special privileges that compensate for their disadvantage and that are way ahead of the general population. Informed individuals know that nothing could be further from the truth.

The 1995 United Nations human development report concluded that it is still an unequal world. Canada in practice is still in many respects an unequal country. Canadian employers agree with this.

A witness representing the Manitoba telephone system told members of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons the following:

> There is very little evidence in the workforce to suggest that in the absence of affirmative measures or some intervention equality will indeed occur. We live in a society that prefers some values, some characteristics over others. The kind of legislation that employment equity represents is an appropriate intervention in the flow of business decision making.

That was stated by the private sector.

There was also the suggestion that the current Employment Equity Act has been so effective that it has eliminated employment problems for members of the designated groups. The facts speak for themselves.

The 1984 annual report on the Employment Equity Act, a copy of which all members of Parliament received, concluded that a number of Canadian companies covered by the legislation have yet to completely satisfy its intent. Of the 343 employers in the report, four employers had no female employees; 74 did not employ a single aboriginal person; 65 did not have persons with disabilities on staff; 28 employed no members of visible minority groups. This was the situation nearly eight years after the current act was proclaimed into force in August 1986.

Like other government members here today, I certainly applaud the progress that has been made over the years but I think all members will agree that we have some distance to go.

Let us look at the suggestion that the market automatically solves inequities without government intervention, a suggestion that was heard from the last speaker. That theory was clearly addressed in the recently released United Nations report, the most exhaustive examination of the issue of inequality for women in our time. It was prepared by an international team of eminent consultants and stated:

> The free workings of economic and political processes are unlikely to deliver equality of opportunity because of the prevailing inequities in power structures. When such structural barriers exist, government intervention is necessary, both through comprehensive policy reforms and through a series of affirmative actions.

I remind the House that Canada is the number one nation in the world in its human development index ranking according to the UN. However, when we look at it closer and consider women's economic positions in our society, our country drops from number one to number nine.

To add insult to injury, there are some who use women, members of visible minority groups, aboriginals and persons with disabilities as scapegoats as if we were somehow to blame for the stresses resulting from our rapidly changing economy.

We are in the midst of one of the most momentous transitions in human history. In the span of this century we have shifted through the agricultural and industrial eras and are hurtling fast forward to the information age and the knowledge economy. If the general population finds itself a victim in this vortex, imagine how much greater the impact is on Canadians who are members of minority groups, on women, on persons with disabilities.

• (1245)

It is not fair to suggest, as the Reform minority report does, that statistical data are skewed to make the case for employment equity. Canada's statistics and its statistical analyses are the best in world, so much so that our data is sought after by governments and by academics everywhere. It is true that no statistics are perfect, including those for gross domestic product, unemployment, or demographics. But does the Reform Party seriously suggest that we should abandon the pursuit of social justice and abandon the pursuit of economic growth just because there are numerous ways to read the numbers?

Incredibly, the Reform Party report also asserts that employment equity somehow hurts designated groups. It suggests that designation ''carries with it a presumption of racial and gender inferiority''. I would like to hear the Reform Party stand before Women in Trades and Technology, who organized a letter writing campaign in support of Bill C–64, and say that. Letters to the human resources minister urged the government to go further. Many letters stated that much work needs to be done to urge, coerce, educate, and assist employers and unions to increase and enhance women's opportunities to train and work in their industries.

These women are asking the government to modify policy and program interventions to support and encourage true equality in the workplace. They are not alone. In case somebody thinks they are alone, let me remind the Reform Party and this House that women are 52 per cent of the population.

The vast majority of witnesses before the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons fully endorsed the direction of our new legislation. They recognize that treating people differently in order to achieve equality has nothing to do with inferiority. It has everything to do with ensuring each and every job applicant has an equal chance to prove his or her abilities.

Recently I saw a cartoon that showed a monkey, a seal, an elephant and a dog being told by a circus job interviewer: ''For a just selection, everyone has to take the same examination. Now please, I would like each of you to climb that tree''. The idea that there is some ideal to which we all must conform is ridiculous. It is also discriminatory, and Canadians will not put up with it. If this legislation does nothing else, it will finally put some of these outdated and damaging beliefs to rest. It will ensure that yet another generation does not adopt the hardened attitudes held by their elders and perpetuate systemic and overt discrimination.

Employment equity is a guarantee that every little girl and every little boy will grow up in this country secure in the knowledge that each can pursue his or her dreams, that they will some day work in a world that is fair, that is equal, that is free of racial slurs and unwanted pats on the backside, where doors are always open instead of being inaccessible. They will be assured of being citizens of a Canada where they can have a fighting chance of achieving their personal career goals.

Is that intrusive? Is it really so much to ask? Today's working Canadians and tomorrow's future parents, taxpayers, and employees expect no less. The hon. members of this House must not let them down.

I am convinced that Bill C–64 is the next logical step in our nation's progress. I am anxious to get on with the job.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to speak to report stage of Bill C–64, in particular the motions being given today by the third party, the Reform Party.

Some of what I have heard here in the House troubles me a great deal, which is why I thought it only appropriate that I rise and try to put down some of the myths that are being put forward by the third party through these motions. I was likewise distressed with a colleague of mine, the member for Hamilton—Wentworth.

• (1250)

We heard, and I will quote as closely as I can, the member for Hamilton—Wentworth say that the bureaucracy should not be intervening in the matters of private enterprise. We heard that the government is being intrusive, according to the member for Calgary Centre, and I will try to quote him as closely as I can: ''I have chosen as a member myself to be meanspirited, but the government is trying to get into the face and get into the lives of private enterprise''. Those are pretty meanspirited remarks coming from the member for Calgary Centre.

It is the job of government to ensure that things are done as properly as they can be, as we work as a team for Canada and what is in the best interests of the people of this great land. For example, when we talk about getting in the face of private enterprise, as the member for Calgary Centre has mentioned, yes, the government in matters of transportation got into the face of the transportation sector when it came to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway system.

Would we have a national airline if the government did not intervene? Would we have a national system of airports if the government did not intervene? Would we have a Trans–Canada Highway if the government did not intervene? Would there be a stretch of road of Trans–Canada Highway between Sault Ste. Marie and Winnipeg? Of course not. Why would we build that chunk of road? Who would use that chunk of road? Very few people would use that chunk of road. Naturally private enterprises would say they are not going to build that chunk of road, it does not make any sense.

The government is here to provide the vision in order to make things happen that we know are going to be in the best interests of Canadians, not tomorrow, maybe not next week, but in the long term in the best interests of Canadians.

I will try to explain why I believe the third party amendments, the motions, and the remarks of my colleague from Hamilton—Wentworth are quite frankly outrageous and misdirected and are totally lacking in fact.

The first myth I want to touch on is that employment equity is about hiring the unqualified. We heard the hon. member for Calgary Centre take us down that road. The simple fact is that Bill C–64 does not oblige an employer to hire an unqualified person. It does not do that. Why carry the myth? It is quite explicit in fact on that point.

Let me quote Mona Katawne of the Manitoba Telephone System who testified before the standing committee on the issue. She stated: ''There is no evidence that hiring from among the designated group members is a lowering of qualifications. In fact the evidence is to the contrary. There are people from the designated groups who are both available to work and qualified to work.''

The fact is that our economy has surpluses of qualified people from all designated groups for many of the jobs that are out there. However, this myth persists because of misinformation, because there is a lack of looking at the facts.

A perfect example is the Gallup poll which appeared in the December 23, 1993, Toronto *Star,* just after we were elected to this place. The headline blared that 74 per cent opposed job equity programs. Let us take a look at the actual question that was asked: Do you believe government should actively attempt to hire more women and minority group members for management positions, or should government take no action whatsoever and hire new employees based solely on their qualifications? The question unfairly focused on people to choose between actively attempting to hire more women and minority group members and hiring based on qualifications. It is amazing, quite frankly, that only 74 per cent chose qualifications.

Employment equity means broadening access to all qualified people. It means giving people the chance to become better qualified.

The second myth I want to touch on is that employment equity is about redressing the wrongs of the past. When this issue has come up with constituents, I have heard people ask why today's young white males have to pay for the sins of their fathers and grandfathers. I trust that I am not the only member of Parliament who has heard that remark. The short answer is they should not. Employment equity is about today's reality, today's problems, not yesterday's.

• (1255)

The simple fact is that in 1993 white men without disabilities made up nearly 55 per cent of all workers newly hired, even though they only made up 45 per cent of the labour market. On virtually any scale people in the designated groups fare poorly in today's labour market. The issue is not what happened in 1955 or in 1925 but what is happening in 1995. There are still barriers to full participation by members of the designated groups. The goal is to end those barriers, not to create a new discrimination against someone else.

Let us look at one specific group that fares especially poorly in our labour market: people with disabilities. Only about 60 per cent of adults with disabilities are in the labour market at all. They have unemployment rates that are almost double the national average. That costs us all.

The Canadian Association for Community Living did a study that looked at people with mental handicaps. They calculated the loss to our economy from the large scale segregation of these people from our economy in terms of lost tax revenue due to unemployment, social assistance costs and lost consumption. They found that the cost to Canada's employment of keeping these people out of society is $4.6 billion a year. That is today's problem, not yesterday's problem.

The final myth I want to touch on is the issue of goals and quotas. We have said it before and I will say it again: the bill expressly prohibits the imposition of quotas. The goal setting that Bill C–64 calls for is driven by flexible targets based on real business assessments of what is doable. Those goals are tools that measure success in breaking down the barriers. In fact, business witnesses who appeared before the standing committee agreed. They have no problem with this approach.

If the hon. member for Calgary Centre had heard what went on at the standing committee he too would realize that. Do not get me wrong. The hon. member for Calgary Centre may be the jewel in the crown when it comes to employing people. He may have it right. But there are a lot of employers out there who have it wrong and the hon. member has to come to terms with that.

Bill C–64 is not designated to create a numbers mentality. Employers who adopt that mentality and attempt to short circuit the process do no one any benefit. The intent is to create a climate that encourages employers to build a better, fairer workplace through rethinking how their current processes work in practice and developing better ones.

It would be easy for the government to do as the Reform Party suggests: to step back and do nothing to address the very real barriers in our labour market today. But it will not. The costs to our economy and our society are simply too high. Millions of Canadians are not prepared to accept a system that says do not do anything and let private enterprise take care of itself. They are not prepared to accept the notion that the response to the very real economic uncertainty faced by many workers is to set group against group.

Canadians are not asking for special privileges here. Most witnesses representing designated groups made that very clear. They are asking for strong efforts to push companies to end barriers to full participation. In doing so it does not help to have the ill–informed comments made by members of the third party on this issue. They have chosen to see the world as a zero sum game where any gain by a person who is in a designated group must be at the expense of someone else. They have chosen to fan the flames of intolerance rather than trying to find the solutions that address the very real needs of more than half of Canada's workforce. It means we define merit in terms that are clear, relevant and legitimate, in terms that demonstrate we recognize diversity and the different conditions under which people live and work.

• (1300)

Bill C–64 is about creating that kind of plan in workplaces right across the federally regulated sector based on overcoming myths through action. Who said there are none so blind as those who will not see?

I appeal to the third party to overcome these myths I have addressed. I appeal to the Reform Party to withdraw its motions. It would be the right thing to do.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just found out there is a positive aspect of being moved one more seat to the left. I am a little closer to the Speaker's plane of view. I appreciate being recognized in this very important debate.

This is one of the issues that really galvanizes what our party stands for. It also makes strikingly clear what lies at the heart of the Reform Party. I have very strong views when it comes to employment equity, affirmative action and government striking the fundamental policy framework that we expect our bureaucrats, our departments, our crown agencies and those businesses within the federal realm of regulation in setting the parameters of the type of behaviour we expect them to follow.

This is not the first time employment equity has been debated in the House. In the last Parliament on a number of occasions, be they private members' bills or motions put forward on days to eliminate racial discrimination, members put on record what they believed about employment equity.

In the last Parliament we may have differed substantially on our economic approaches and policies and on our social policies but there was almost a unanimity of agreement with the New Democratic Party and with the Conservative Party when it was in government about a couple of fundamental facts about Canadian society.

One was that systemic discrimination unfortunately does exist. It exists in the federal workplace. It exists in the provincial workplace and it exists in the private sector. Anybody who would get up in the Chamber and indicate they believe there is no such thing as systemic discrimination clearly is from another planet or has been living with their head in the sand for longer than I have been on this earth.

Systemic discrimination is as real as the air we breathe and is as alive today as the people who sit in these chairs. More than once I have talked from the perspective of an MP who represents the largest indigenous black community in Canada, in Preston, North Preston, East Preston, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon. Those communities have been established in Nova Scotia a lot longer than the community I was born in, New Waterford. Most people in Nova Scotia see New Waterford as more of a Nova Scotian community than the Prestons which were founded by blacks from other parts of the globe over hundreds of years.

Preston community is six kilometres outside the boundaries of my city. My city has an unemployment rate of anywhere from 7.5 to 8.5 per cent. In the almost entirely black community, a ghettoized situation from 250 years ago, there are unemployment rates upward of 80 per cent in the winter.

One of the first things I did in 1988 after I was elected to represent the good people of the riding of Dartmouth was go to the Speaker of the day. I asked the Speaker, Mr. Fraser, whether it was possible to use some of my budget to get a survey done. Our budgets were more restrictive.

• (1305)

I explained what I wanted to do. I had gone to the bureaucrats. They are good people, not racists, not bigots. I asked them what information they had with respect to unemployment levels in the black community. They said they did not have any. Why not? How can there be federal programs such as skills training, job development and re–entry programs that are supposed to help those groups most dislocated from labour if there are no statistics about the degree of the problem in a particular community?

Bureaucracies knew there were problems but did not want to quantify them. We spent $15,000 out of my budget and we quantified. There were no startling revelations except that finally somebody white in a position of authority said that the facts are the facts and they are indisputable. It was only then that bureaucracies felt comfortable trying to address the problems of barriers to entry and participation by visible minorities in my area.

I am saddened to say that seven years later I am worn down from my efforts of trying to battle systemic discrimination. Daily it becomes more systemic and rooted in the way bureaucracies operate.

The bill does not seek to tell employers they have to hire a black person or a native Canadian or a Cape Bretoner, which I am, if they are not qualified. It sets down a framework and sets out a policy objective that says: ''If everybody in your organization looks like me, speaks like me and acts like me, they are more likely to hire somebody who looks like me, acts like me and speaks like me''. That is not individual racism; it is the way life is in most organizations.

The bill seeks to build on the previous employment equity legislation passed in 1986 and say we have come a long way but we have a mighty long way to go yet. We cannot succumb to the insane attitudes of some on the loony right of the political spectrum and say, as the member from Windsor said: ''I am all right Jack. What is your problem?''

I will tell the House what some of the problems are. A good businessman came to my office a week and a half ago. He operates without a line of credit at the bank and employs 17 to 20 people in the winter. He finances his operation through a finance company at 28.8 per cent interest. He cannot access capital through the regular sources. He has been shying away from the sheriff for 20 years. He is a black businessman. There are barriers to his access to capital from banks.

Seven years ago when we did the study the banks were angry because I fingered the banks and said there was systemic discrimination in their lending practices. They wailed. The facts coming to my office told me it was that way. How could an individual that resilient, who could operate from a line of credit from a finance company and who had no cash flow to work with stay in business? That was the best entrepreneur I ever saw.

Just think what would have happened if he was a white entrepreneur who had access to capital from the banks. Banks such as the Royal Bank have recognized that when we talk about systemic discrimination we are not pointing a finger at individu-

als; we are stating facts based on statistics and we must work aggressively within a policy framework to deal with it.

This bill simply sets out the framework. It says the government is still very much concerned that its crown agencies and corporations may not be working as hard as they should to ensure there are no barriers to participation in the federal public service, crown corporations and the private sector which is federally regulated, to ensure the people who do the hiring, the people in power, recognize they may have to work a little harder. If we deal on the other side of it with the people in the labour market, maybe the young black who wants to be an entrepreneur does not understand he could be welcomed as a client of the bank. He also has his own barriers to participation in the equity market or the labour market.

• (1310)

Sometimes that extra effort is made to say: ''We will hire 12 people and we have to make sure we do not send it just to the community college''. The community college in my area does not have the proper participation of minority groups. It is not proportional. If employers say they have made a commitment to hire qualified individuals, and it is all about the merit principle, they must recognize that by past practices there may be some groups in society that do not feel they are wanted at the door and do not make the application.

Employers, because they have set it out as their policy to encourage qualified members of minority groups to participate, must make sure that instead of going just to the community college they also go to the Dartmouth East Black Learners Centre and say: ''We need people with these skills. Are there some people you can send for us to look at?''

That is what this bill is about. It is about setting a direction. It is about setting a goal. It is about a process whereby we remind ourselves that systemic discrimination does exist and that we can do something about it to ensure individuals are not discriminated against based on colour, language, gender, sexual orientation or any of those other things that really should not make a difference.

I hope some of the misinformation from the Reform Party's minority report is put to the test. This is not about special treatment. This is about equal treatment and equal access. The bill does not solve the problem but it is another small step in the right direction toward allowing everyone regardless of colour, race or language to develop to the fullness of their potential. Governments are setting the tone and the direction to remove the obstacles to that full participation.

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fourth United Nations world conference on women concluded recently. I was there as a delegate. I learned that many developed and developing countries look to Canada for leadership in issues of justice, equality and human rights.

I want to place Bill C–64 in that same international context. I want to look at our international obligations and how Bill C–64 will help us meet them. I want to consider some relevant international experiences with employment equity. I want to show the bill puts teeth in our commitment to equality and shows a leadership badly needed around the world.

First I will discuss recent landmarks in understanding this issue. On August 17 the United Nations development program released its sixth human development report. Apart from the overall assessment, the report focuses on the situation facing women around the world.

I am certain every member of the House took pride when once again Canada earned the highest ranking on the human development index. It is the third year running. It told the world what Canadians already know, that this country offers a quality of life that is second to none.

I know each one of us also saw that we placed ninth on the gender related development index. Our track record on the place of women in society is not so good. Why that low? One of the factors is the economic gap between men and women. Money talks, and in Canada right now that means men shout while women whisper. Some in the House say there are very good reasons for this gap. They say we should just stand aside while the market works its mysterious forces. This is not what the authors of the United Nations human development report say. They point out that trickle down theories and laissez–faire approaches do not work particularly well to raise the economic status of women:

> The free workings of economic and political processes are unlikely to deliver equality of opportunity because of prevailing inequities in power structures. When such structural barriers exist, government intervention is necessary both through comprehensive policy reforms and through a series of affirmative actions.

The government understands the need for real action. This bill addresses that need by making markets work better. It will help women enter occupations that traditionally have excluded them. It will help women make their way from lower wage occupational ghettos.

• (1315)

In 1993 in British Columbia women in full time occupations earned 67 per cent less than men. In 1993 in British Columbia women who had post–secondary education earned less than men with a grade 10 education. In 1993 in British Columbia, 99 per

cent of secretaries and stenographers were women, but they still earned 79 per cent less than male stenographers and secretaries.

We need this bill to remove the glass ceiling that still restricts women in many workplaces. It will do the same for aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

Bill C–64 is consistent with our international obligations. For many years Canada has been a signatory to international agreements on discrimination, human rights, women's rights and labour force issues. Let me touch on a few of these.

The United Nations has a number of conventions that cover equality issues. The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women commits us to pursue the equality of the sexes. Article 24 reads:

> States Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

This includes modifying, and I quote again from the United Nations:

> —the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

Bill C–64 begins to take those steps.

A similar commitment exists as a result of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Article 7 touches on that. It says that states parties to the covenant recognize the right to ''equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no consideration other than those of seniority and competence''.

Thirty–eight per cent of Canadian persons with disabilities find it difficult to achieve promotion in the workplace.

This bill is about finding and removing the barriers that prevent designated members from realizing their legitimate aspirations in the workplace of this country. Equal opportunity means removing barriers so people can get to the starting gate equally.

There are many conventions I can talk about: the international covenant on civil and political rights; the international covenant on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination; and a number of international labour organization conventions.

Article 2 of the international labour convention says:

> Members must undertake to declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote equality of opportunity in respect of employment and occupation.

It says that each member must undertake to enact such legislation as may be calculated to secure acceptance and observance of the policy. This is what we are doing here with this bill.

Canada must take its international commitments seriously. We negotiate, we sign, we lead, we ratify these agreements with the intention of living up to them, or else why do we do it? It is certainly true with conventions on human rights and workplace issues.

We can and we do point with pride to Bill C–64 and the existing Employment Equity Act, because as a predecessor it is an example of how this government wants to work to make equality of opportunity a real goal, not just something airy–fairy that we just talk about.

Canada is not alone in this process. Other countries have signed these conventions and many are dealing with the same issues we are dealing with here today.

For example, Australia is a country with which we have much in common. We are both senior members of the Commonwealth. We share similar constitutional and legal traditions. We both have significant aboriginal and visible minority populations. Persons with disabilities have become prominent advocates for their own cause. Women are taking a lead in society. Like Canada, Australia has an employment equity act too. Like us, they recognize an obligation to break down barriers and they are doing so.

Let us look at The Netherlands. The celebration of the 50th anniversary of its liberation by Canadian soldiers has reminded us of our close ties with The Netherlands. When the Dutch government looked for a legislated approach to promote the full integration of their immigrants into the labour force, where do you think they turned? Which country do you think provided a model of effective and appropriate legislation? Canada.

Examples such as that show why Canada can attend international conferences with real pride. Regardless of the issue we can point to initiatives we have taken at home, co–operation with other countries and a commitment to results. This is true on workplace issues as well as human rights issues. We have much to do in Canada, however. This country has consistently tried to do more than meet a minimum standard. We have been motivated by the caring and tolerance of our society to do better.

• (1320)

We realize that equality of opportunity means much more than the absence of formal discrimination. It means building a climate that encourages everyone to participate in our society and our economy. That is becoming a lesson to the world. Many

countries are coming to grips with equality issues. We are leaders. They look to us for leadership.

Canada has a distinguished history in human rights in the rest of the world. Countries that are looking for effective ways to improve human rights within their own borders are also looking to Canada. Countries that want to recognize their growing multicultural nature are looking to Canada. I saw over and over in Beijing how everyone turned to Canada for leadership. Everyone felt that Canada is the country in the world they all want to aspire to become.

The Canadian approach to employment equity is a real contribution to the international community. It starts with the idea that all Canadians share a commitment to opportunity and a willingness to find solutions. It speaks to the finest qualities in our national spirit. Passing this bill will send an important message to a world that needs more of this spirit and looks to Canada to lead the way.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s Judge Abella coined the phrase employment equity because she rejected the term affirmative action. Employment equity is a Canadian concept.

There are a lot of myths surrounding the issue of employment equity, as some of my colleagues have already pointed out. The recent publicity surrounding the affirmative action policies in the United States and employment equity in the recent election has led some people to some inaccurate conclusions. They get the impression from the media that suddenly Americans, including the U.S. Supreme Court, are turning against affirmative action en masse. A vocal few seem ready to jump on the bandwagon, asking: ''If the Americans are not going to keep it, why should we?''

Before everyone falls for the myth that fairness in the workplace has fallen into disfavour all across North America, let me quickly review the facts. The real story is that programs that affirm employment equity are alive and well on both sides of the border. The most compelling argument for employment equity is that people actually want it.

Let us look at the situation in Ontario, where roughly two–thirds of businesses responding to a poll just after the recent election reported they are in favour of reforming or keeping that province's employment equity law as it is. Only 8 per cent said they would cease implementing employment equity initiatives if the law is repealed, with 69 per cent saying that it would not have any impact on their company's equity plans. That sentiment is reflected in comments by the director of human resources policy for the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. Ian Howcroft was reported as saying that many of their members have already started employment equity initiatives and that he believes most of them will continue.

Many members of the private sector are strong proponents of employment equity. They recognize the benefits to their corporation, benefits in terms of improving quality of working life in their organization and in real financial benefits. Unlike the members of the Reform Party, these corporations are moving their companies into the 21st century. The Reform Party members think we should still live in the 1950s world of Ozzie and Harriet.

Mr. Milliken: 1850s.

Mrs. Kraft Sloan: Part of the misunderstanding of the bill arises from the myths created in the recent Ontario election. Employment equity is not about quotas. Moreover, this bill specifically states that employers are not required to hire unqualified members or create new positions to satisfy the legislation's requirements.

The federal legislation takes a human resource planning approach to employment equity, relying on consultation and negotiation to achieve workplace goals. I know about this approach firsthand, as I worked as a consultant to the Ontario universities in developing training materials for employment equity.

Another prevalent and incorrect assumption is that the federal employment equity is a carbon copy of American affirmative action policy and furthermore that Americans are now rejecting it out of hand. Neither belief is true. Let us start with the most controversial features of the U.S. affirmative action program, set asides. Set asides require that a specific percentage of government contract funds go to minority contractors. These are mandatory preferences dictated by law. Polls show that although most Americans favour affirmative action, they are opposed to this kind of preferential treatment. I want to set the record straight on this point. There is absolutely no equivalent to set asides in the Canadian approach to employment equity. They simply do not exist and have never existed.

• (1325)

Let us look at the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on affirmative action. Some people have a vague notion that this decision somehow struck down federal affirmative action programs, but let us look again. First, this decision was about set asides, which do not exist in Canada. Moreover, the Supreme Court decision did not strike down any federal laws or dismantle contracting policies, nor did it decide they were unconstitutional. The court simply requires federal affirmative action programs to meet the same standards of review already in place for state and municipal affirmative action programs, namely that the program serve a compelling interest and that it be narrowly tailored to achieve that purpose.

The bottom line is that no program was struck down by this decision. On the contrary, seven out of the nine justices confirmed that sometimes affirmative action is indeed required to counter the effects of systemic discrimination.

President Clinton pointed out that leading economists and distinguished American business leaders report their companies are stronger and their profits larger because of the advantages of workforce diversity. They insist that regardless of legislation they will pursue affirmative action because it is the key to future economic success in the global marketplace. Indeed, as I stated earlier, it is the Canadian corporations and the private sector that are very strong proponents of employment equity. The Reform Party purports to be a party for business special interest groups, so why can it not listen to the leaders in the private sector?

Seeking solutions to employment inequality is precisely what Bill C–64 is about. The objective of our legislation is to ensure equality and justice for all. Canadians have an unwavering faith in values of fairness and equity. We believe heart and soul that there should be no discrepancy between our words and our deeds. We are determined that our constitutionally guaranteed rights should be a daily fact of life for every child, woman and man in this country. Equality and equity is the very foundation of our nation.

It is in fact because of our employment equity legislation that we are on the leading edge in preparing this country for the unparalleled demands of the 21st century global economy. While we still have more to do in ensuring that all Canadians achieve their potential, our experience with employment equity has made us a world leader in the field, acting as a role model for other nations designing equity legislation. That is not rhetoric, but a reality of which every Canadian can be proud.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was not really going to participate in this debate today in light of the excellent interventions by a number of my colleagues. Then the hon. member for Calgary Centre got into the act and started spouting the most unbelievable nonsense, so I felt it was necessary to correct some of the statements he made. Really, I was shocked. He worked himself into a real lather in the course of his speech about the evils of employment equity, which I thought most Canadians accepted.

I have some quotes which I think are going to leave him speechless. He will wish he had not spoken. He pretended he was speaking on behalf of the entire private sector in Canada in speaking to this set of amendments moved by his colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest.

I am surprised that a relatively enlightened member of the Reform Party would propose the amendments the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest has proposed. One suspects that his leader told him this was caucus policy and since he is the critic he had better propose the amendments, so he did. I am sure in his heart of hearts he wishes he did not have to put forward such ridiculous amendments. What he is really doing is gutting this bill. He is taking out all references in the bill to the private sector.

The private sector has lived with this legislation now for many years and has functioned with it. I have spoken with constituents of mine who are bound by this legislation, not because it is binding on them specifically but because if they wish to contract with the federal government they are required to comply with it. They have been in compliance for some years, with some initial discomfort but not significant. They have found that their workplace has improved as a result of their compliance with this legislation. That has been the experience of most of the private sector employers affected by this legislation who have found that compliance is not all that difficult. Not only is it not difficult, it results in a better working environment in the places where it has been applied.

• (1330)

The hon. member for Edmonton Southwest must know this experience. He is a man of affairs; he has travelled around and has some businesses in the country. He must know the hon. member for Calgary Centre was talking through his hat this morning when he spouted the nonsense about the act being a bad thing for the private sector in Canada and one that stops job creation in the country. Quite frankly that is absolute rubbish.

Mr. McClelland: He said that it was not necessary.

Mr. Milliken: I hear the hon. member. That may be so because so many have complied with the rules already. Why not leave the rules in place? If everyone is complying and the rules are in place, fine, it does not do any harm to have them there. Yet the hon. member for Calgary Centre spouted absolute rubbish. He suggested that we did not need the bill at all and that we should scrap it. That is what these amendments do and I am not in favour of the amendments.

City police forces, national chartered banks, multinational computer companies and more and more Canadian employers are enjoying the benefits of workplace inclusiveness and fairness, with good reason. Margaret Wente wrote in the *Globe and Mail* that employment equity programs were ''spreading, not shrinking. Their biggest boosters are powerful, middle aged white men—.They need diversity in their work forces, not to remedy past injustices but to be more successful''.

The business argument for employment equity is straightforward. As our population becomes more racially diverse, it is essential that a company's workforce reflects the market it wants to sell to. This is increasingly true in the international marketplace. Business organizations ranging from B.C. Hydro to North American Life Assurance and the Bank of Montreal realize this reality and fully endorse equal opportunity employment. Many of those employers appeared before the committee. The hon. member for Winnipeg North who is chair of the committee heard those witnesses. He has spoken about it and

will continue to speak about it in the course of the discussion on the bill.

They and other progressive employers have instituted employment equity programs in their workplaces not out of benevolence but out of good business sense. They have discovered that the best argument for employment equity is the bottom line.

Black & McDonald, the Toronto based mechanical and electrical services contractor, is an example in point. Many of the people hired as maintenance mechanics and building supervisors over the past few years were recent immigrants due as much to a skill shortage in Canada as to the firm's employment equity efforts. The company reports that the performance of this division has improved dramatically, which it credits to its highly skilled, hard working visible minority employees and the market potential they represent. More and more satisfied customers have resulted in more and more contracts for Black & McDonald.

A recent Conference Board of Canada study found that half the employers surveyed capitalized on Canada's ethnocultural diversity to expand their market share. That trend will only increase. By 2001 visible minorities should form 48 per cent of the consumer market in Toronto, 20 per cent in Montreal, and 39 per cent in Vancouver. Firms that fail to act quickly will be left behind in a country experiencing huge population growth among designated groups.

Upwards of three–quarters of new entrants into the workforce by the turn of the next century, which is only five years from now, will be members of the designated groups. At a time when human capital far outweighs location or physical resources, it is imperative that employers maximize their people potential in the workplace.

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce chairman Al Flood put it very well when he said:

> The issue of underemployed intellectual capital is a major one for Canadian business in a competitive global society. A business in a complex, changing world needs more than one point of view. Those diverse views will only flourish in an environment uncontaminated by notions of ability based on gender, race, religion and so on.

The key word in that quote is ability because employment equity is really about assuring equal opportunities to individuals qualified to do the job. We are not talking, as the previous speaker said, about quotas. We are talking about ability, about assuring equal opportunities to qualified individuals. It is no coincidence then that half of all CIBC managers are women. Canada's banks have one of the best records in the economy for building diversity into their workforce. Yet never do we hear that such progress comes at someone else's expense.

• (1335)

While I am on the subject of someone else's expense I quote again from the little green book of the Reform. I have a quote here from the hon. member for Beaver River that will be instructive. Perhaps it explains in part the silly amendments of the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest. She said: ''Women are just trying to lift themselves up to the detriment and expense of men''. This is what the hon. member for Beaver River says. I presume she believes this nonsense. I suspect what happened is that she has been sitting there listening to her seatmate, the hon. member for Calgary Southwest, telling her that is what happens.

When the hon. member for Halifax or the hon. member for Nepean start speaking to me about lifting themselves up or changing their roles, I do not feel it is at my expense. I have never felt that it was at my expense. I am sure my male colleagues on this side of the House would share that view.

Our female colleagues are not getting additional rights at our expense. If they get any additional rights we are all improved by them. There is not a finite supply of rights. Rights are created because individuals are there. Because individuals get rights does not mean the rights of someone else are necessarily diminished. Some may feel that way, but I suggest it is not true that they are necessarily diminished. The extension of the rights granted by this legislation have benefited all our society enormously.

I do not know when the hon. member for Beaver River made this quote. Unfortunately the little green book, or ''The Gospel According to Preston Manning and the Reform Party'' as its other title reads, does not tell us when the quotation was made. Nevertheless the words are written down and I am sure the hon. member for Beaver River could not explain them away.

Another very short quote from her is: ''I am basically a Tory''. I do not know why she is in the Reform Party if she is basically a Tory. She should help the hon. member for Saint John. Then we have a famous quote of her leader, the hon. member for Calgary Southwest: ''Deborah Grey is the prairie Margaret Thatcher''. What a fire that is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I know the member is a very experienced member, but from time to time the Chair must remind members of certain rules of the House.

Although he might be quoting from a text, those words are still attributed to whoever has the floor in the House. I would encourage the member to refer to member's ridings as the tradition and the rules of the House call for and not by proper names.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I was being very careful only to use the proper name when it was in the quote. I was being very careful not to use it in any other sense. That is why I said the hon. member for Calgary Southwest used the words: ''Deborah Grey

is the prairie Margaret Thatcher''. I do not think he said at the time that the hon. member for Beaver River was the prairie Margaret Thatcher. That is all I was doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): On that point, I am of the understanding at this time that when any member in the House reads a quote it is just as attributable to that person as if he or she were saying it.

If I have erred I will gladly come back to the House and make that correction before all my peers, my colleagues here. However I am of the understanding at this time that any quote is attributed as if the person himself or herself is saying it. I will come back to the House if necessary.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, that is fine. I accept the admonition. I have finished my quotes in any event.

Those with the most experience with employment equity are usually its staunchest defenders. With nearly two decades of equity programs in the workplace Sun Life Assurance vice–president Lucy Greene says: ''It is just part of our thinking. It is good business sense. Everybody should be doing it''.

Few would agree more than Troy Peck, a 25–year old administrative assistant with the planning department of the city of Vancouver. His employer adopted employment equity in 1976 when Troy was still a little boy with a spinal tumour whose future employment prospects did not look promising. Thanks to employment equity this qualified young man who uses a wheelchair found his job on the basis of merit. Troy told the Vancouver *Province* this past summer:

> Employment equity gives you the chance not to be automatically dismissed as an applicant because of your disability. It gives you the chance to show you are skilled and able to perform.

• (1340)

That is all any member of the designated groups is asking of the House. They just want an opportunity to prove that talent comes in all kinds of packages. They ask us to remember that what is important is not the package but the gift inside it. Our gift to future generations in the country must be the assurance that we will give every last young woman and man that chance. With Bill C–64 unamended we can do exactly that.

I urge hon. members of the Reform Party to withdraw these amendments and proceed with the bill as it stands.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise in the House to speak in support of Bill C–64, the Employment Equity Act.

The fourth United Nations world conference of women concluded recently. An event like that has many benefits for Canada. One is that it gives us an international context to assess how well Canada has done and how far we have to go.

During my remarks today I want to place Bill C–64 in that same international context and to look at our international obligations and how Bill C–64 will help us to meet them. I want to consider some relevant international experiences with employment equity. I want to show that the bill puts teeth in our commitment to equality and shows the kind of leadership that is badly needed around the world.

Let me begin by discussing a recent landmark in understanding the issue. On August 17 the United Nations development program released its sixth human development report. In addition to its overall assessment the report focuses on the situation facing women around the world.

I am certain that every member of the House took pride when once again Canada earned the highest ranking on the human development index. It told the world what Canadians already knew so well, that this country offers a quality of life that is second to none.

However I am certain each of us knows that Canada placed ninth on the gender related development index. Our track record on the place of women in society is not good enough. One might ask why it is that low. One factor is the economic gap between women and men. Money talks and in Canada right now that means men shout while women whisper.

Some in the House say there are very good reasons for this gap. They say we should just stand aside while the market works in its mysterious way. That is not what the authors of the United Nations human development report says. They point out that trickle down theories and laissez–faire approaches do not work particularly well to raise the economic status of women. I quote:

> The free workings of economic and political processes are unlikely to deliver equality of opportunity because of prevailing inequities in power structures. When such structural barriers exist, government intervention is necessary, both through comprehensive policy reforms and through a series of affirmative actions.

The government understands the need for real action. The bill will help address that need by making markets work better. It will help women enter occupations that traditionally have excluded them. It will help women make their way from lower wage occupational ghettos. It will help organizations remove the glass ceiling that restricts women in many workplaces. It will do the same for aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

Bill C–64 is consistent with our international obligations. For many years Canada has been a signatory to international agreements on discrimination, human rights, women's rights and labour force issues. Let me touch on a few of them.

The UN has a number of conventions that cover equality issues. The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women commits us to pursue the equality of the sexes. Article 24 reads:

> State parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving full realization of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

This includes modifying:

> —the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

● (1345)

To do that means taking real steps such as an active program of the type we have introduced in Bill C–64.

A similar commitment exists as a result of the UN's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Article 7 touches on conditions of work. It reads that states that are party to the covenant recognize the right to:

> Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence.

This bill is about finding and removing the barriers that prevent designated group members from realizing their legitimate aspirations in the workplace, the barriers that still prevent people in designated groups from competing fairly for promotions they want.

There are other similar conventions that our country has signed and ratified over time. I will just name a few: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination; and a number of international labour organization conventions.

I would like to refer to the second article of ILO Convention No. 111 concerning discrimination in respect of employment and occupation which states:

> Members undertake to declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote equality of opportunity in respect of employment and occupation.

Article 3 of the same convention states:

> —each member undertakes to enact such legislation as may be calculated to secure acceptance and observance of those policy.

Canada takes its international commitments seriously. We negotiate, sign and ratify these agreements with the intention of living up to them fully. That is certainly true with conventions on human rights and workplace issues such as these.

We can and do point with pride to Bill C–64 and the existing Employment Equity Act as its predecessor as an example of the government at work to make the equality of opportunity we all want a real goal. Canada is not alone in this process. Other countries have signed these conventions and many are dealing with many of the same issues in society and the economy as we are.

For example, Australia is a country with which we have much in common. We are both senior members of the Commonwealth. We share similar constitutional and legal traditions. We both have significant aboriginal and visible minority populations. Persons with disabilities have become prominent advocates for their own cause. Women are taking on leading positions in society. Like Canada, Australia has an employment equity act. Like us, it recognizes an obligation to break down barriers and it is doing so.

Another interesting case is that of the Netherlands. The celebration of the 50th anniversary of its liberation by Canadian soldiers has reminded us of our close ties. It reminds us of the many Dutch people who have made new homes here over the years.

When the Dutch government looked for a legislated approach to promote the full integration of its immigrants into the labour force and therefore society, where did it turn? Which country provided a model of effective and appropriate legislation? The answer is Canada.

Examples such as that show why Canada can attend international conferences with real pride. Regardless of the issue, we can point to initiatives we have taken at home, co–operation with other countries and a commitment to results. Certainly that is true on workplace issues and on human rights issues.

While we have much to do, Canada has consistently tried to do more to meet some minimum standard. We have been motivated by the caring and tolerance of a society to do better. We realize that equality of opportunity means much more than the absence of formal discrimination. It means building a climate that encourages everyone to participate in our society and our economy.

That is becoming a lesson to the world. Many countries are coming to grips with equality issues. They know we are leaders. Canada has a distinguished history in human rights in the international community. Countries that are looking for effective ways to improve human rights within their own borders are looking to Canada. Countries that want to recognize their growing multicultural nature are looking to Canada.

The Canadian approach to employment equity is a real contribution to the international community. It starts with the idea that all Canadians share a commitment to opportunity and the willingness to find solutions. It speaks to the finest qualities in our national spirit.

Passing this bill will send an important message to a world that needs more of this spirit.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in offering my comments on Bill C–64 and the report of the standing committee, I want to go back to the fall of 1993.

[*Translation*]

At the time, Canada was in the middle of an election campaign, and the Liberal Party published a campaign program in which it formulated its commitments.

• (1350)

This campaign document explained the philosophy behind these commitments. At the beginning of the red book, our leader, the man Canadians chose as their Prime Minister, set the tone for a program I was proud to defend.

This is what he said, and I quote: ''The result is a Liberal plan for Canada firmly anchored in the principle that governing is about people, and that government must be judged by its effectiveness in promoting human dignity, justice, fairness, and opportunity. This is our approach, and this election is about presenting that choice to Canadians''.

[*English*]

Consider those words: ''Our platform was one of jobs and growth but it was not a narrow economic platform. It spoke to a vision of society in which growth reaches everyone. It spoke to a vision of society in which everyone has opportunities in practice, not just in theory''.

On this side of the House when we think about the kind of Canada that we are engaged in building, we see a united people building a great country. We see a Canada with opportunity for all. Our Canada would have a strong and sustainable economy. Our economic pie would grow bigger through the skill, commitment and innovation of Canadian workers. From the chief executive officer to the newest employee, everyone would help create the opportunities of tomorrow. The government would work with them to take on the challenges that markets alone cannot.

[*Translation*]

The workplace, always according to the Liberal vision, must reflect the diversity of the population. It must never raise barriers to prevent someone from doing a job of which he or she is proud and participating fully in the development of this country. The Canadian workplace should emulate the best of what can be found in the rest of the world.

[*English*]

That competitive economy would exist hand in hand with a tolerant and generous society. It would live with the golden rule that exists in all faiths that I have seen. Our culture, our race, our sex, none of these would be a barrier to friendship or to contribution. We would learn from each other and grow richer in the process.

In our vision of Canada people would resolve differences in a spirit of goodwill. They would know that a reasonable people can usually find common ground to work out agreements. Our Canada would be one that builds on our traditional core values of equality, justice and fair shares of the opportunities that build better lives and a better country. It would recognize, as the red book did, that we exist in this society together and not apart.

Canadians are far more than individuals driven by impersonal economic forces and narrow self–interest. We support and are supported by our families, our communities and our country. That has always been true. From the earliest days of human settlement here we have always worked best when we have worked together. It remains true to this day.

The Liberal vision of Canada mirrors the aspirations Canadians have for our country. We want to live together in progress and in peace. In a troubled world Canadians recognize just how much we have accomplished in reaching for this vision. Our ranking in the United Nations human development report is a tribute to that.

Still we know we have more to do. The situation of aboriginal people or our lower ranking on the equality of women in the UN report testify to what more we must do.

Employment equity is a basic part of making our vision real. It recognizes that equality of opportunity is a goal that we have not yet reached. It brings us closer to the ideal caring society that I believe we all want.

[*Translation*]

In other words, if the concept of employment equity did not exist, we would have to invent it. In fact, it is an essential step towards ensuring that all Canadians have equal opportunities, are aware of that fact and take full advantage of this equality.

[*English*]

Certainly there has been progress both in numbers and attitudes. For example, the Bank of Montreal's president and chief operating officer, Tony Comper, noted that representation had increased significantly in that bank between 1993 and 1994. However, what was every bit as important was the extent to which employees of that bank have bought into the equity process. They have come to understand that diversity is a business plus in our times.

• (1355)

The same is true at Union Gas in southwestern Ontario. A company with a traditional workforce of technical and office workers has built a very successful equity program. Why? Because the company has been committed to making it a success. It trains staff on issues that arise in a diverse workforce so they can understand the new expectations of customers, co–workers and the company. It builds bridges, not walls, between employees in the name of equity.

Let me quote the company's human resources manager, Maureen Ghettes: ''We often look at the cost of something and not the benefit. The cost of an employee who is not interested in working with a certain group or who does not take time to understand an accent is far greater''.

These business people are telling us that employment equity is both a strategic social investment and an economic investment. It is consistent with the kind of targeted action the government has adopted across its agenda. It is an action we need more of.

As the red book pointed out and as our experience tells us, people in the designated groups still have a long way to go. In the years since the original Employment Equity Act was passed progress has been slow for women, people with disabilities, aboriginal people and members of visible minority groups.

The standing committee heard from many groups with personal stories of barriers that have not given way despite years of trying. Representatives of the Filipino Technical and Professional Association of Manitoba describe the experiences of well–trained people whose credentials were simply dismissed on arriving in Canada. These people were not even given partial credit toward professional and technical designations despite their training and years of experience.

[*Translation*]

Spokespersons for the disabled described the professional ghettos to which persons with a mental deficiency are confined. They explained the problems encountered by even the best trained people who suffer from other disabilities. There may be various reasons why it is difficult for this group of workers to find a job.

[*English*]

All of these groups are telling us that they believe in Canada. They believe this country and its citizens have the generosity of spirit to see what needs to be done and to do it. They are asking for us to continue the great mission of diversity that has enriched this country from its beginnings.

The Speaker: It is almost two o'clock. The hon. member will have the floor when we come back to debate. It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

Mrs. Rose–Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 12 years now in the week leading up to Thanksgiving, Canadians have made a special effort to celebrate National Family Week.

This year, from October 2 to October 8, all Canadians will be encouraged to look inward and to contemplate the fundamental importance of our families and the relationships we have with the loved ones around us. This year's theme ''Families are Forever: Enjoy Family Times'' builds on the concept that families, like precious jewels, are forever and need to be enjoyed, treasured and celebrated.

The family unit is an essential building block of all societies. The ties that bind us to each other are reflections of the ties that keep the greater family, the global community, together. During this National Family Week and indeed all year long we should enjoy the time we spend with our family members and enjoy the memories of good family ties.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux–Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal Department of Industry has made a complete list of pressure tactics Ottawa could use to persuade the automotive industry to campaign for the No side.

To convince Hyundai, it is hinted that the government might want to recover the federal contribution for the construction of the plant in Bromont. To convince GM, there would be a reference to the $110 million loan approved by Ottawa for the Boisbriand plant. To convince other parties, there would be references to federal programs to help industry and facilitate access to the U.S. market.

It seems that the people they are counting on to do the job include Yves Landry of Chrysler Corporation, identified as the spokesperson for the automotive industry, and Maureen Darkes, the Canadian President of General Motors who is responsible for the Boisbriand plant. Leaders of the automotive industry should not give in to this federal blackmail.

[*English*]

NUCLEAR TESTING

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians are outraged by the continuing French nuclear tests in the South Pacific and are demanding our government take a stand. While other countries have strongly condemned the French behaviour, the Liberal government reaction has been pathetically weak.

Instead of recalling our ambassador from France for consultation as the Reform Party demanded, the government lamely expressed its regret and yesterday the Minister of Foreign Affairs told a member of the House that the nuclear tests were nothing to get excited about.

Instead of standing up to France, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has chosen the path of appeasement over principles, just like the leader of the Bloc Quebecois did on this same issue.

Unlike the government and the official opposition, the Reform Party does stand up for its principles and will continue to condemn the French nuclear testing because the people of Canada demand it.

* * *

NUCLEAR TESTING

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are extremely disappointed at the weak response our government has taken with the Government of France on nuclear weapons testing in the South Pacific.

Last week I had the opportunity to address the Council of Europe to convey the unhappiness of Canadians with France for undertaking these tests. Delegations from Canada, Australia, Japan and Mexico condemned France for its actions.

Today I am calling on Canadians to boycott products from France such as wines, perfumes, bottled water, cheeses and clothing until the French stop testing nuclear devices. A boycott will pressure French business to lobby French President Chirac to end testing sooner.

The government and Canadians must take a firmer stand on this issue. It is incredible that on the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki France should resume nuclear testing. It is equally incredible that the Liberal government has been silent on this issue which impacts negatively on world peace and on our environment.

S. O. 31

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

Mr. Gary Pillitteri (Niagara Falls, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Parks Association through its Communities in Bloom program has announced that Niagara–on–the–Lake, a town which I am proud to represent federally, has been named prettiest small town in Ontario.

Competing in the category for communities with a population of between 5,000 and 30,000, Niagara–on–the–Lake prevailed over places such as Coburg, Collingwood, Dryden and Elliot Lake.

What struck the judges was the originality of the town's landscaping. For this, much of the credit is due to the town's parks and recreation department and to its residents.

Now Niagara–on–the–Lake will be concentrating its efforts on achieving the national title, due to be announced in Ottawa next fall. This is calling for the active participation of the town's residents, who I am sure will rise to the challenge.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all of us have a role to play in protecting our environment. The federal government is in a position to create policy which will protect the Canadian environment and the environment of our neighbours.

This past July the Minister of the Environment introduced measures to protect the environment of lakes, rivers and wetlands across North America by banning lead shot under the authority of the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

Lead shot, which can be fatal when ingested by water fowl, is released into the Canadian environment by water fowl hunters at between 1,500 and 2,000 tonnes per year. This action taken by the minister will end the poisoning of our waters and will protect important species in our ecosystem. This measure will not only save our environment, it is one small step toward maintaining biodiversity and giving future generations an environment they can live with.

* * *

MINING

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's mining sector continues to provide jobs, investment and the impetus for new technological development. Canada's mining companies and mine workers are among the best in the world when it comes to efficient, cost effective and safe mining practices. Important for all Canadians, environmental concerns have become a high priority for Canada's mining industry.

Government red tape is a big problem. As a member of the government's rural caucus and especially as a northern Ontario

MP, I emphasize the importance of streamlining the regulatory process which faces the mining industry.

The current system creates unneeded duplication, slows the approval process and wastes both industry and government time and money.

I am pleased the government has recommended that the process be made to serve Canadians, not hinder them, and that we have agreed with industry, aboriginal and environmental groups and others about what needs to be done.

I ask my colleagues to support action which will lead to the streamlining of the regulatory process and I call on provincial governments to co–operate to ensure that both senior levels of government work together to make regulatory efficiency a priority.

* * *

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière–du–Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the 1995 federal budget announced the closing of the La Pocatière agri–food research centre, the only centre specializing in research in sheep farming, with sheep production in full expansion.

Neither Quebec nor the regional community was consulted about the closure, which was hidden away in the appendices to the budget. The comité de survie de la ferme expérimentale thought it had succeeded in extracting a moratorium, enabling it to revive agricultural research in the cradle of farming research in Quebec.

Unfortunately, despite the minister's promise, the department has begun to remove the centre's equipment, in spite of the community action. Data provided by the federal government reveal that Quebec receives less than 15 per cent of the federal department of agriculture's spending on research and development.

Does the agriculture minister believe, just like the defence minister, that he cannot afford the luxury of treating Quebec equitably? This is another good reason for Quebecers to vote yes.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in his February 1994 budget speech the Minister of Finance stated: ''Fiscal reality requires that the government review its policy on the funding of interest groups''.

In a letter to the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Natural Resources agreed that grants should be given only to those groups that provide important services to the Canadian public.

I give some of the results of this promise. Natural resources gave a grant of $35,000 to the United States Department of Energy, $5,000 to Sears, $70,000 to Superior Propane, $40,000 to the Saskatchewan Trucking Association and $5,000 to the Omineca Ski Club.

In total natural resources approved grants of $282 million. Canadians are fed up with the Liberals buying favours with taxpayers' money and this outrage must stop.

* * *

CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to add the federal riding of Elgin—Norfolk to the important debate on national unity. Recently I had the opportunity to meet with a constituent of mine, Mr. Tom Savage of Port Stanley, Ontario.

Mr. Savage, an artist, has created a national unity T–shirt. This shirt truly represents all of Canada: a large red maple leaf with a fleur de lys of Quebec and the sacred hoop of the First Nations.

In the wake of the crisis in both Ipperwash Beach and Gustafsen Lake and the constant debate on the Quebec referendum, Mr. Savage is one of many Canadians who feel Canada includes Quebec and aboriginals.

It is frightening to envision the possibility of Canada's breaking up and therefore I commend the work of Tom Savage and hope that more Canadians step forward to voice their concerns. There is no room for complacency. It is time for all Canadians who together form our cultural mosaic to embrace our differences and stand united. This will ensure a strong and prosperous future for all of Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the separatist leaders spent much of last week frightening seniors by claiming that, the day after a no vote in the referendum, their pensions would be cut.

The federal government is being financially responsible by reviewing all its programs to see how they may be made more efficient and less costly. The PQ government and its separatist allies, on the other hand, continue to promise the world ignoring the fact that an independent Quebec will face a deficit of between $7 billion and $15 billion in the first year.

Seniors, like the rest of the people in this country, prefer a government that states its intentions clearly over one that irresponsibly wastes money it does not have just to win its referendum. Seniors will say no on October 30 to the campaign of fear by the PQ and the Bloc.

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are some paradoxes in politics that cannot be ignored. Last Sunday, like thousands of other Quebecers, I saw the new Yes signs spring up in my riding.

Two of them in particular caught my attention. The first one showed a nice big flower as the promise of a healthy environment. The second one showed the peace sign which, in my opinion, speaks for itself.

While separatists were busy putting up their signs, a horrible drama was unfolding on the other side of the world as France set off its second nuclear explosion.

• (1410)

While the whole planet is mobilizing against these nuclear tests, Quebec separatists remain silent to avoid endangering the support France has promised them and continue to post their flower and peace signs.

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REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint–Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Senator Lise Bacon took offence at the treatment of Standard Life chief executive Claude Garcia by the Quebec government. Mr. Garcia became an instant celebrity at the start of the referendum campaign when he said: ''We must not only win, we must crush''. The Quebec government then remembered that Standard Life had been awarded important contracts without tenders and decided to issue a call for tenders, as should be done in any case.

Instead of taking offence, Mrs. Bacon should feel stifled as part of the No side, as Quebec businesspeople have been targeted by the Operation Unity centre and blackmailed by the federal government. Mrs. Bacon's principles are quite elastic. Why does she not in turn denounce the unacceptable practices used by her own side?

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday it was discovered that two of the most notorious, violent criminals in Calgary have been on parole for over a year after serving seven of their twenty–two and twenty–nine year sentences.

Since the parole board gave them a second chance, one of them is now back in custody for assaulting his girlfriend.

When the Reform Party asked for amendments to Bill C–45 which would make dangerous violent offenders like Jean–Luc Dipietro and Oresto Panacui serve the full term for their original sentence plus the full term for the offence they committed while on parole, the Liberal government said no way and voted the amendment down.

Jean–Luc Dipietro and Oresto Panacui did not deserve to be released. Their criminal records include attempted murder, kidnapping, escaping custody, robbery and family violence—prime candidates for parole according to the parole board and the government.

Bill C–45 was the government's opportunity to really get tough on criminals but it refused to do it. The people of this country deserve and demand better.

* * *

[*Translation*]

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette–Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the chairperson of the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec, Lorraine Pagé, just sent a letter to members of her union, asking them to support the Yes side and make a financial contribution to the sovereignist campaign.

This invitation by the CEQ to subsidize the Yes side comes less than one week after Bombardier was lambasted by Quebec's separatists, including union leaders, for asking its employees to support the No side.

It seems more and more obvious that an independent Quebec will be a Quebec split in half, in that the right to freedom of speech and freedom of association will only be granted to those who support separatism and the PQ government. Quebecers do not want that kind of a country and they will vote No.

* * *

YOUNG TRAINEES PROGRAM

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint–Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has long recognized the need to provide more help and support to young dropouts and unemployed. Through the federal program for young trainees, 12 young people from my riding of Saint–Denis are currently participating in a training program that will teach them the job of inspector of mechanical products.

Thanks to this initiative, these young people, whose future was said to be bleak, have an opportunity to fully develop their potential. Our government is proud to endorse this project, because it meets the real needs of young Quebecers and Canadians by helping the unemployed and the dropouts. Our young people need this kind of initiatives, not a separatist dream which, quite obviously, would be a dead end.

[*English*]

MAITLAND, NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincere congratulations to the citizens of the village of Maitland in my riding of Annapolis Valley—Hants.

At a ceremony last July Maitland was designated as Nova Scotia's first heritage conservation district. This past Saturday Maitland was again recognized, this time as the recipient of the Elaine Burke award, an honour which recognizes community achievement in active living and environmental citizenship.

The citizens of Maitland have shown both pride in their heritage and a desire to build on their rich history in a positive and healthy fashion. I believe this pride in community is representative of the attitudes of people throughout my riding and indeed the province of Nova Scotia.

• (1415)

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the village of Maitland on this well–deserved recognition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

INDUSTRY CANADA

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today it was reported in *La Presse* that a secret document was sent last March to the Privy Council's Operation Unity centre. It seems that Industry Canada made a list of Quebec companies, sector by sector, in anticipation of the referendum debate. Ottawa identifies the levers—that is the word they used—it intends to use to urge business people to campaign for the No side, referring to various federal subsidies and contracts, especially in the aerospace and defence sectors.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Does he approve of the fact that a federal department, at the request of Operation Unity, made a list of the heads of large corporations in Quebec for the obvious purpose of blackmailing them and enrolling them on the No side in the referendum campaign?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is entirely normal that government officials should be able to inform ministers and the government of economic activities in Quebec that receive assistance from the Canadian government. That is all part of the basic argument. The purpose is not to blackmail anyone at all, in fact quite the opposite. It is so we can tell people that they can get ahead in Canada and that many industries in Quebec need the central government, to access its funding programs as well as to find markets abroad.

I think it is perfectly normal that the Minister of Industry should know what is going on in the industrial sector in the province of Quebec at a time when a referendum is to be held, so that he can tell the Prime Minister, the ministers, members of Parliament and the public what the Canadian government is doing for Quebecers.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the government forgot to mention that these documents include analyses of the political positions of certain heads of corporations in connection with the current debate, hence the importance of the use of the term ''levers'' in connection with the way they will behave during the referendum debate.

Does the Prime Minister not think there is something indecent about the fact that, when making this list of Quebec businesses, his government referred not only to subsidies that had already been paid under federal contracts but also to future subsidies that are now being negotiated?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it only makes sense for a minister to want to know what is going on in his department. Members rise in the House every day to ask questions, and if a minister has the misfortune to say he does not know exactly what is going on in his department, he is accused of incompetence. I am not going to rise in the House now and tell my Minister of Industry that he is incompetent, when he is making sure that we have all the information relevant to the referendum debate in Quebec.

Quebecers ought to know that what we can offer them now is something concrete, but the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois are trying to make people believe in a hypothetical situation it will be impossible to realize. We are telling Quebecers in concrete terms what we are doing for them, and they are very glad to know about it.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what connection is there between a minister's jurisdiction and the political opinions of the business people with whom he has dealings? And why this excuse we are hearing today, that the minister has to know what is going on in his department, when he is much more concerned about the political views of the heads of Quebec companies? I think it is pretty obvious that this is an exercise in twisting the arms of business people in Quebec.

I ask the Prime Minister to admit that with this list, his government has a tool to blackmail Quebec business leaders who, as long as they are under the present federal system, will depend on contracts and subsidies from Ottawa.

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am of course glad to see the Leader of the Opposition has conceded that the No side will win and the Yes side will lose. If he felt confident, he would have said that all this did not matter and that on October 30 they would no longer have dealings with the Canadian government and businessmen would no longer have to deal with the Canadian government. I wonder why he is so scared; is it because he realizes he will lose?

However, I think it is rather surprising that the leader of the Bloc Quebecois should criticize us, when his leader, the leader of the Parti Quebecois, fired every single official representing the Quebec government abroad who did not swear an oath of allegiance to the cause of separation.

When we see the kind of threats they make against people who are now speaking out in favour of the No side, as in the case of the chief executive of an insurance company who has been told he may lose his contracts because he is a federalist, I think the Leader of the Opposition is hardly in a position to criticize us for trying to find out who receives subsidies and in what sector, so that members and people on the No side can go to the ridings and explain to people that the Canadian government provides a good service to all Quebecers.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were well aware of how strongly allergic the Prime Minister was to the competitive bidding process in the Power DirecTv case involving his son–in–law. It will be remembered that he appeared to be extremely allergic in that instance. But it is completely normal for the government of Quebec to use a competitive bidding process.

It is also important for Quebecers to know the true colours of the federal government right before making a decision. The Privy Council's Operation Unity centre has taken the trouble to collect information on Quebec companies, their directors, their past and future contracts and grants, so as to be able to pressure them to be on the No side of the referendum. We know that a number of federal government bodies and departments possess confidential information on a number of Canadians and Canadian organizations.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Can he tell us whether some of the information in the hands of other federal bodies or departments has been acquired by the Operation Unity centre to create other files to be used for the same purposes as the first?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the allegations of the hon. member for Roberval are unfounded. The document produced examines the industrial sectors in the province of Quebec, sector by sector. There are 20 or 21 in all. In each, we look at the economic situation and the effect of federal government funding.

It also looks at what effect separation would have on each of the industrial sectors in the province of Quebec, and in each case the conclusion is clear: separation would have harmful economic effects on the economic sectors of the province of Quebec.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister's conclusion and the conclusions of his document are not even the same. He has not read it. True, this document was requested by the Prime Minister.

When the minister states that these are unfounded allegations, I would like him to explain, to us and to all Quebecers, the following. While the Operation Unity centre was literally collecting secret information contained in Department of Industry documents for the purposes of bringing pressure to bear during the referendum, why would it have deprived itself of information held by other organizations and departments other than Industry on thousands of Quebecers and Quebec organizations? Why would it not have done so when it has collected similar information from Industry in such a shameful manner?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Roberval continues to make unfounded allegations which are not justified by the document. I shall send him copies of the report on the various industrial sectors in which the conclusion is that separation would be harmful for Quebec. He will then see that this is the case in the majority of sectors.

• (1425)

When he says these are unnecessary documents, that is totally ridiculous, and I do not hesitate to say so, because the conclusions of the report clearly indicate the effects of separation on major industrial sectors in Quebec, essential information for the referendum. It comes as no surprise to me that the opposition has not read it, because it does not fall in line with their conclusions, but it is unfortunately the truth. Separation would be extremely costly for most industrial sectors of Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Canadians learned that not only had officials at the Department of National Defence been falsifying documents but that former Airborne Commander Peter Kenward ordered videotape evidence destroyed.

Shortly after the destruction of the videotapes, Kenward was promoted to full colonel. The minister has already admitted that the chief of defence staff would not consider his reservations about this promotion and he did not interfere because he says that the promotion was a responsibility of the chief.

I want the minister to clarify his position. When did he learn that Colonel Kenward had ordered the destruction of evidence? Was it before or after the promotion?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former member of the armed forces, I am sure the hon. member will be aware that following passage of the 1952 National Defence Act an order in council was passed.

It is now found in Queen's Regulations and Orders 11.01(2). It states:

> The promotion of a member to any rank lower than that of brigadier–general requires the approval of the Chief of Defence Staff.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister knew that the evidence had been destroyed. Therefore he is ''complicit'' in concealing that fact from the Canadian people.

The minister knew of this cover–up. He knew of the promotion, yet he did nothing. How can he justify this gross error of judgment?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from time to time you caution hon. members about the language they use in the House. I would caution the hon. member. If he said this outside the House, it might be actionable.

Second, because of the reservations the chief of defence staff had about the promotion and its delay pending certain investigations, out of courtesy he brought it to my attention. When he brought it to my attention, I expressed reservations that the promotion should go ahead. I reminded the chief of the defence staff that it was his responsibility to deal with these promotions and that it was up to him to decide whether or not to proceed.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is not the prerogative of anyone within the military to impede an investigation and to destroy evidence.

Canadians are gravely concerned that the minister, who is ultimately responsible, has allowed tampering with evidence as an acceptable tool for office management at the senior levels of the national defence department.

These revelations undermine public confidence in the military and they destroy any shred of credibility still clinging to the minister. My question does not touch on the Somalia inquiry but goes right to the heart of the minister's mismanagement. Given that the minister acknowledges to the Canadian people that his department is out of control, will he do the honourable thing and resign?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I might ask the hon. member if he would refrain from bordering on abusing the privileges of the member of Parliament for Don Valley East and the Minister of National Defence. I believe that is what he has done in his question, when there is a close reading of the question.

I would like to tell him that the chief of defence staff will be making a public statement this afternoon and will deal with all these matters because they are under his purview.

I would like to ask the hon. member whether he expects the Minister of National Defence to have the governor in council rescind an order in council that was passed 43 years ago designed to prevent political interference in the promotion of officers of the armed forces. Does he want to turn the clock back?

* * *

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

INDUSTRY CANADA

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

With respect to the aerospace industry, it is clear from the secret document prepared by Industry Canada for the Operation Unity centre that the federal government intends to use the defence industry productivity program to put pressure on this industry in Quebec by withholding funds earmarked for the support of new projects in 1995.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that the federal government is currently negotiating with Bombardier to establish a financial support program to help Bombardier sell regional jets?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, these are unfounded allegations. Clearly, whenever subsidies are granted, the government always considers which industries could use them and for what purpose. The stated objectives are profitability and job creation, and these objectives are those set by the federal government for industrial development in Canada.

Is the opposition suggesting that we not look for ways to stimulate employment in Quebec? The burden of proof rests with opposition members. They are making allegations based on incorrect information and faulty analysis. Instead, they should share with us the burden of developing Quebec's economy as best we can.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the minister did not read the document.

Does the Prime Minister not find it odd that information on negotiations between Bombardier and the government can be found in an Operation Unity document designed to put pressure on Quebec businesses to make them vote No?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ever since I became a member of Cabinet and even a member of Parliament, the Canadian aerospace industry has always relied on federal assistance for its development.

I myself was Minister of Industry many years ago. When Canadair was shut down by the American company General Dynamics, the Canadian government took it over to put it back on its feet. It has now become Quebec's largest industry and biggest employer. The Canadian government wants to ensure that Canadair can go ahead with its aircraft development project.

The development of regional aircraft by Canadair has been a government concern for many years, and we are trying to help this industry. In fact, in the past twelve months, we had the opportunity to help it start producing this aircraft which I feel is destined to have a great future, thanks to the aeronautics policies put in place by the Canadian government, which does a great deal for workers in that sector of Quebec's economy. That is why they will want to remain in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

PENSIONS

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The minister will not tell us when he will release his long overdue reform of the Canada pension plan but perhaps he will share with us what he is planning to do.

Through access to information we have obtained a briefing note by a senior policy analyst in HRD. She states that the Canada pension plan is financially unsustainable. She recommends that the minister either cut seniors' pensions or raise taxes to pay for the shortfall.

Will the minister promise seniors that he will not cut their pensions? And, will he promise taxpayers that he will not raise their taxes? Yes or no.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will certainly take the hon. member's representation to my colleague, the Minister of Finance, which I know he will be thrilled to receive.

As far as the briefing note is concerned, it is very difficult to keep track of a variety of briefing notes. I repeat to the hon. member that we made it very clear in last year's budget we have a very strong commitment to maintaining the sustainability of the pension programs for seniors. We recognize, however, as a responsible government that in the future as the demographics of the country change there has to be new financing for the Canada pension plan. The Minister of Finance must meet with his colleagues, the other ministers of finance, later this year to discuss how that refinancing would take place.

• (1435)

That is the reason it is very important we engage in a serious review of how we can ensure the continued maintenance of a good, effective, sustainable pension program for Canadians.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the hon. member's response and would like to continue with a supplementary question.

Reform believes that pension reform can be done without cutting seniors' pensions and without raising payroll taxes. In his letter last week the chief actuary for finance recommended that the government either raise taxes or cut benefits in order to save the Canada pension plan.

Will the minister reject the advice of the chief actuary, refuse to cut seniors' pensions and refuse to raise payroll taxes?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be very interested in receiving a more complete and thorough presentation from the Reform Party on its proposals for the Canada pension plan.

When I looked at the proposals that came forward from the seminar or meeting the Reform Party held a couple of weeks ago in Halifax, I noticed that if we had followed its recommendations there would have been substantial reduced pension benefits for 800,000 disabled Canadians, 600,000 widows and 1.8 million pensioners.

I hope that is not the position of the hon. member.

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[*Translation*]

INDUSTRY CANADA

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In a secret document prepared by Industry Canada for the Operation Unity Centre, we learn that Bombardier asked Ottawa for funding, as part of the defence industry productivity program, which, as Industry Canada itself indicated, would be difficult to provide. The assistance sought concerned the joint Canadair–de Havilland global express airplane project.

How does the Prime Minister justify a request for financial assistance of this magnitude being in a strategy file intended for use in pressuring business in the referendum debate?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think I am going to have to explain this whole thing all over again. The Department of Industry document sets out clearly the position of the various industrial sectors. It indicates the effect separation would have on these sectors. It also indicates, in some cases, the amount of the financial assistance sought by certain firms.

This is common practice, and one the government is familiar with. Many companies follow this practice each year; that is, they apply for funding. We have to respond to these applications for assistance each year, and it is usual for this type of information to appear in an Industry Canada document.

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the impression we are not talking about the same document and that the minister does not even have access to the document we are talking about. Are we to understand that one of the new criteria Ottawa has established for obtaining federal assistance under DIPP is a favourable recommendation from the Operation Unity Centre for services rendered?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly the answer is no. Government funding is provided, once again, according to the contribution a firm or an industry makes to the Quebec economy. It is provided on the basis of job creation. It almost always is public and is therefore subject to the government's public accounts.

This funding must be approved by the members of Parliament and the House and is therefore granted objectively. Once again, the opposition's allegations are unfounded.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the negotiations on the harmonization of environmental management in Canada have been placed totally on hold. With each day the environment minister's version of events gets even more outlandish. She insists that Alberta scuttled the deal, but Alberta says that the minister's fear of decentralization is to blame. What is more disturbing is that Alberta's environment minister was practically called a racist in the House.

• (1440)

Why has the minister put this deal on hold and when will she apologize to Alberta Minister Ty Lund for her inflammatory comments?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I merely repeated in the House what the minister said at the meeting in Haines Junction when he said that he would be very happy if Canada had environmental jurisdiction in Alberta in the area of parks, that we could have their parks and their Indians. That comment has not been refuted by the minister.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, what is more at issue here is the fact that these talks have been scuttled by the minister, regardless of reason. Whether it is the *Irving Whale* or whether it is the environmental harmonization agreement, the minister is always looking for new ways to pass the buck, and heaven help those who disagree with her. I am sure the Minister of Natural Resources certainly knows what I am talking about. She is in favour of the provinces and supports their attempts by her sympathies with harmonization.

My supplementary question is for the Minister of Natural Resources or the Deputy Prime Minister. What do they plan to do to get these talks back on track?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the claim of the hon. member that somehow I have misrepresented what Ty Lund said is absolutely false.

She got up on her first question and made a statement and I answered that statement. I said that Mr. Lund had not denied making the comment, which was heard by at least 10 people, to the effect that Canada's role in environment in Alberta should be restricted to national parks and their Indians.

I would suggest that the hon. member, rather than trying to find another red herring, should stand in the House and apologize for her claim that I misrepresented Ty Lund's remarks.

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[*Translation*]

INDUSTRY CANADA

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

A secret document prepared by Industry Canada for Operation Unity says that, without the federal defence contract for the manufacture of ammunition, SNC–Lavalin subsidiary SNC–IT will have to close its doors.

Will the Prime Minister admit that linking the survival of a business to the awarding of a federal contract in an effort to put pressure on its leader amounts to blackmail?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the opposition's allegations are very close to being unparliamentary. They do this because they have no arguments to support their views.

Speaking of documents, our document is available under the Access to Information Act. But what about the Le Hir studies, the hidden studies? When the Parti Quebecois and its little brother, the Bloc Quebecois, conduct studies that are inconsistent with their conclusions, what do they do? The same thing they did with the Georges Mathews and Bernier studies: they hide them.

In this case, the information is available. This information helps us determine whether our subsidies can create jobs in Quebec. We have the public interest at heart. But in their case, the question is whether hiding the studies that are inconsistent with their conclusions is in the interest of Quebecers who will vote on October 30.

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois–Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, could we have answers that come not from an armchair quarterback but from someone who is well briefed on the issue?

How can the Prime Minister let Operation Unity take 680 SNC–IT employees hostage by linking the awarding of a defence contract for the manufacture of ammunition to the referendum position of SNC bosses?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the allegation is totally false, and everyone knows that this industry is dependent on a Canadian government contract. That is the way it is. This industry has been in existence since the end of the second world war, since the war.

Of course, if the Canadian government does not buy ammunition from an ammunition producer, I wonder who will.

• (1445)

It is quite normal for us to know this. If, in analyzing Quebec industries, the minister realizes that a business is completely dependent on the Canadian defence budget, I think it is quite normal for him to know this so that we can find out exactly what role the Canadian government plays in Quebec. In this case, it is fundamental.

Without the Canadian government, without a defence department that buys ammunition from this industry, it would have to close its doors. But, since there is a Canadian government that has Quebecers' interests at heart, we continue to buy ammunition from this business.

[*English*]

LAND MINES

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The subject of banning land mines was recently discussed at an international conference in Vienna. In view of the fact that land mines that are now being discovered in Bosnia have a similar design and technology as those manufactured here in Canada, will the minister give the House his assurance that no land mines are now manufactured in Canada? More important, will he assure this House this technology has not been exported outside of our borders?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can give this assurance to the hon. member. Indeed, I have been informed that no such mines have been manufactured in Canada since 1992. In fact, none have been allowed to be exported since 1987.

I can give the member the assurance since I am the minister and am looking at all of these export permits that I have not authorized and I will not authorize any of these exports.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in 1981 Tejinderpal Singh and four accomplices attacked and hijacked an Indian airlines flight out of Delhi and forced it to land in Pakistan. Tried and convicted for air piracy in Pakistan, they received life sentences. After being paroled, Singh made his way to Canada where he lied about his background when he claimed refugee status. However, his true identity was uncovered and he was arrested but has since been released.

When in opposition the Liberals criticized the previous Tory government for its handling of the Muhammad Issa Muhammad case. I ask the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, will this Liberal government handle the Tejinderpal Singh case differently?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me first congratulate my hon. friend, who was recently appointed as the critic for citizenship and immigration. She will no doubt find it a very interesting portfolio. I know we will miss her predecessor very much.

One of the matters before the government is to try to deal with the subject matter in a fair and competent manner. This we will ensure not only in this particular case but throughout the program.

If members look at some of the things we have tried to do in the last year and a half with respect to the IRB, removals and trying to make the system much fairer and more competent, I think members will agree there have been improvements. How-

ever, that is not to suggest this department or any other one is going to speak from perfection.

I look forward to having her comments, her advice and her counsel along the way.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there are nine other terrorists who were convicted of hijacking Air India aeroplanes. All have been released from prison in Pakistan and all are intent on coming to Canada. Two other members of this group are presently in Canada.

With the new powers recently conveyed upon him, will the minister assure this House that these convicted hijackers will be removed from this country as expeditiously as possible?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will look to that new law to provide us with any vehicles and tools with which to deal with individuals who are undesirable and I might add, the same law this party fought us tooth and nail on.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OPERATION UNITY CENTRE

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In its letter entitled *Business and Unity*, the Privy Council urges the business community to campaign for the No side. We also know from a document submitted to the Minister of Labour that the Operation Unity Center's activities even include writing speeches for politicians and other persons whose names were unfortunately blanked out in the document.

• (1450)

Does the Prime Minister confirm the news that the Operation Unity Center is also the organization in charge of preparing speeches for certain members of the business community?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly, our referendum strategy calls upon all resources available to us in Quebec to try and convince Quebecers that it is in their interest to vote No.

Now, I also read in *La Presse* what is happening. The CEQ, a pro–sovereignty union, is sending letters to all its members asking them to send money and to vote Yes. What is the difference between that organization and a business that needs to create jobs in a province and make profits and that realizes that its economic viability is dependent upon Quebec being part of a larger entity, namely Canada? Why should people who think it is in their best interest to do so not fight for federalism, just as the CEQ has no qualms soliciting money from its members and asking them to vote Yes?

Clearly, what we are doing can be justified and is in the best interests of Quebecers.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the minister for finally admitting something before this House. That is a first.

I would also like him to know that Ms. Pagé writes her own speeches and that, when she writes to her members, she has been given a mandate by the rank and file to do so. Perhaps he is the one who wrote Mr. Garcia's speech. This remains to be confirmed in another question.

What does the Prime Minister call it when a government agency gathers information on business people, identifies ways of pressuring some of them and goes as far as telling them what to say?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it is quite normal to ask for other people's input when writing a speech. Information can be sought under the Access to Information Act. Any citizen can request information from government departments.

So, when a citizen contacts a department and says: ''I have a speech to make. Can you provide me with some information?'' and that information is available, it is in keeping with our government's policy of openness to provide as much information as possible to all citizens, and Quebecers in particular at this time when they are about to make a decision that will affect their future for many years to come. In order to make the right choice, they must be fully aware of what the Government of Canada does for Quebec's industries, greatly helping them to develop and break into new markets so that jobs can be created for Quebecers within Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

LAC BARRIERE RESERVE

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the investigator looking into allegations of sexual abuse at the Lac Barriere Reserve was expected to present his report by August 31. I have in my possession a work plan to confirm this fact.

Can the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell the House if the written report is complete or when it will be completed?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year there was an allegation raised in the House by one of the Reform members of sexual assault at Barriere Lake, which is an Algonquin reserve northwest of Montreal. As a result, a memorandum of agreement dated April 1995 was signed by Health Canada, the Province of Quebec Youth Protection Directorate, the band and DIAND was a fourth party but not a signatory.

A consultant came in from Winnipeg with a staff of five or six. Quebec allocated two or three people. Workshops were done, translations, healings. There were 14 to 19 recommendations. The question is whether the report will be made public. The answer is certainly. Certainly it will be made public. There will have to be some protection, as the hon. member knows, because youth are involved here. That was the full intent of the exercise.

• (1455)

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the reserve is near Maniwaki and this study has had $300,000 spent on it. That is my understanding.

The concern is that there be a written report made available to the band members and to the public. Could the minister please confirm that the written report will be made available, and will he tell us when?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is consumed with the second question. I believe I answered it in the first answer.

Some hon. members: When?

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox.

* * *

YOUTH

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here in Ontario the Harris government has slashed funds for job creation programs. Republicans in the U.S. have cut funding for their youth oriented Americorps.

Can the Secretary of State for Training and Youth tell Canadians specifically what action our government is taking to make sure our young people remain a priority of this government?

Hon. Ethel Blondin–Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our youth are the future of Canada and they remain a priority of this government. In fact, this government has increased funding by 7.9 per cent and has earmarked $236 million for youth initiatives this year.

An early sign of success is that we exceeded estimates this summer for employment. We helped over 220,000 young people find jobs. That includes 40,000 jobs directly created by federal initiatives.

In the United States it costs $22,000 U.S. per participant. In Canada we do it for half of that; it is $10,000 per participant. We are well on our way and we are very committed.

[*Translation*]

DEFENCE INDUSTRY CONVERSION

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In its red book, the government pledged to develop a defence industry conversion strategy. Two years later, we are still waiting for that strategy and for a review of the defence industry productivity program.

Are we to understand that the government did not follow through on its commitment because, instead of meeting the real needs of the industry, it is more concerned by the stand, on the referendum issue, taken by business leaders in that sector? This is shameful.

[*English*]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the whole question of conversion of various defence industries to peacetime purposes has been going on for some time.

The program the hon. member refers to is obviously a very important one in Quebec. Over the years a rather major defence industry has built up in that province and a lot of funds were invested in the defence sector.

The challenge that is facing the industries in Quebec is the same as that facing defence based industries anywhere else in Canada, which is to make that conversion. The Minister of Industry has indicated to my hon. friend on a number of occasions that we are always looking forward to opportunities to be able to assist industries in Quebec and elsewhere to make that conversion from defence production to civilian purposes.

* * *

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF CANADA

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, grants given to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada have risen sharply in recent years. In 1994–95 it was given $10,600, but suddenly this year it received $262,000, an increase of 2,300 per cent.

Given that the Treasury Board is responsible for overseeing millions of dollars worth of grants, can the minister explain the sudden increase in money given to the AUCC?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all grants are examined in the framework of providing funds that help in the education system in this case, or in whatever other areas, to help Canadians and to do it in the most efficient and effective manner. Each department takes on that responsibility. I am sure that was done in this case and was fully examined when these grants were made.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food.

The 1995 budget proposed a $1.6 billion ex gratia payment to offset the decline in farmland prices that would result from cutting the Crow benefit. Later the minister made three basic changes to that budget policy by deleting land seeded to forage crops, by deciding to include renters and by deciding that those renters would pay income tax on their payments.

• (1500)

What was the rationale for these changes and how are these decisions consistent with the original budget allocation?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the references the hon. member makes to later changes after the announcement in the budget are a bit misplaced. All of the items he referred to were covered in our budget documents and then covered very specifically in a series of consultations I conducted with farm leaders across western Canada in the months immediately following the budget.

We highlighted in the budget what the principal issues were but we wanted to leave a window for consultation with farm leaders and farm organizations to make sure we had the benefit of their best advice in program design. Virtually every design decision we have taken with respect to the $1.6 billion payment has been guided by the very valuable input and advice of the leadership of western farm organizations.

* * *

GREAT LAKES

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

My interest in Great Lakes pollution took a great leap forward when I discovered it was causing decreased sexuality in males. My question to the minister is simple. What is she doing to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem and future generations of Adams?

The Speaker: I am not sure that relates to the specific functions of the Minister of the Environment but I will permit her to answer.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to comment on the nefarious effects of Great Lakes pollution on male sexual reproduction. As a result of activities in the Great Lakes for the first time we did manage to spot another endangered species—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Copps: I mean an endangered species. The peregrine falcon was found nesting in a couple of buildings in Toronto and Hamilton.

We have also been specific in being able to delist Collingwood as one of the 17 hot spots in Canada of the 43 areas of concern. We have restored about 8 per cent of the beneficial uses and we have been able to work on improvements at 17 sewage treatment plants. Nine plants are moving to improve their phosphorous removal capability.

I understand the hon. member's interest specifically in male sexuality but I will tell him that with the clean–up of the Great Lakes I think we start with herring gull eggs on up.

The Speaker: This concludes question period.

I have been given written notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville. I am prepared to hear that now.

* * *

• (1505)

PRIVILEGE

MEMBER FOR MARKHAM—WHITCHURCH—STOUFFVILLE

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a point of privilege regarding the point of order raised yesterday by the hon. member for Elk Island.

Specifically the member was concerned that a lapel pin I was wearing in the House was inappropriate.

The pin in question was nothing more than an insignia encompassing the map of Canada, the Canadian flag and the provincial flag of Quebec. Additionally the words ''One Canada—uni et indivisible'' were on the pin.

Mr. Speaker, while I share your concern—

The Speaker: Let me understand. The hon. member for Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville is raising a point of privilege that arises out of a point of order. Is that correct?

Mr. Bhaduria: That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: In the rules of the House, as far as I understand them, we cannot raise a point of privilege out of a point of order. Unless the member can find another vehicle for raising his point of privilege I will move on to another matter.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C–64, an act respecting employment equity, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just before question period I had commented on a number of groups and associations that represent various minorities. They believe in the bill. To them and to the employers who took part in the process the bill combines our social and economic visions in a fair and reasonable way.

Bill C–64 is a project for our entire society. It is based on partnerships. It is based on reaching for our highest ideals and turning them into a daily reality for all Canadians regardless of heritage, gender or disability. It is based on our truest sense of self as a people. Business, unions and designated groups agree we have found a direction for equity that is consistent with the best features of Canadian life.

The Business Council of British Columbia said during a recent round of consultations: ''Employers alone cannot achieve employment equity. Employers want to be part of the solution in partnership with government, unions and employee representatives, educational institutions and designated group organizations''.

The council is right. I know when I leave this place I will be pleased to know I helped with a piece of legislation that strengthens our economy and our society. It is simply one more step toward the kind of Canada we should all want to leave to our children and our grandchildren.

[*Translation*]

In my introduction, I used a quote from the red book, and I will conclude by doing the same.

''We hope to ensure equal opportunities, so as to provide a decent standard of living to more Canadian families, as well as dignity and respect, in a country where social harmony prevails''.

Equal opportunities for all. This is the Liberal Party's objective for Canada. This objective is at the heart of our vision of what our country should be.

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to show how Canada is a leader when it comes to employment equity.

Bill C–64 is a made in Canada legislative measure which meets the specific needs of the workplace in our country.

I am proud to say that our government does not follow the American trend of criticizing employment equity. We should not be overly influenced by what goes on south of the border, since many problems which arise under American law do not occur in Canada.

Given our history, our constitution and our social context, we do not do things the way the Americans do. I should add that the progress made so far tells us that we often make the right decisions.

• (1510)

[*English*]

Let me offer this brief overview of the Employment Equity Act, an act that is unique in the world. It is distinctly Canadian.

Our legislation is firmly grounded in this country's Constitution. In Canada every individual has the right to equality before and under the law, and equal protection and benefit of the law.

As we have said in the red book, the Liberal Party plan for Canada, we want a country where we all see ourselves as contributors and participants, not liabilities and dependants. We are committed to a Canada characterized by integrity, compassion and competence.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes that special consideration and the accommodation of differences are necessary to realize true equality under the law. Different treatment is not a departure from equality. It is essential however to achieve it.

The Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Ovide Mercredi, explained it well when he told the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Status of Disabled Persons: ''I think sometimes people, white people in particular, forget that this is their society and it is not easy for others to get into it''.

This legislation is designed precisely to build bridges between potential and opportunity.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, employment equity is proactive and positive. It is intended to prevent discrimination. It is designed to eliminate obstacles to employment for disadvantaged Canadians, through intelligent management of human resources making it easier for the new labour force of the 21st century to enter the job market.

Our legislation encourages consultation between employers and workers to find solutions for problems arising at the workplace.

Our approach is based on conciliation rather than use of the courts, because this is the Canadian approach. The aim of the

federal government is to educate and help employers by creating employment opportunities enjoyed by all members of the labour force for members of designated groups.

[*English*]

Another central feature of our system is our firm belief in flexible targets businesses can reasonably achieve. In both our original Employment Equity Act and in the current bill to replace it we have purposely sought the views of employers, unions and members of the designated groups.

We have listened and learned, recognizing we must strike the right balance, ensuring the law will not solve one set of problems for employees by creating another problem for employers.

That is why Bill C–64 has been specifically designed to minimize the regulatory burden. It also makes programs more cost effective and enforcement measures much more efficient.

The bonus for Canadian companies is when everyone's best interests are served there is a direct improvement to the bottom line.

[*Translation*]

In fact, employment equity is not hard to sell. According to the Business Council of British Columbia in its testimony before the standing committee studying Bill C–64, the four designated groups make up 60 per cent of Canada's population. As employment equity programs are implemented, it went on to say, the labour force will better reflect the diversity of the Canadian people with all the social and economic advantages this comprises. Our experience with employment equity proves that, when a solution is practical for business and protects human dignity, everyone benefits.

● (1515)

Employment equity helps fill the gaps in our economic development and therefore it strengthens our economy as a whole.

[*English*]

The newspapers are full of stories about business executives extolling the virtues of employment equity. For example, Dan Branda, chief executive officer of Hewlett–Packard Canada told a *Globe and Mail* reporter that diversity:

> —is an absolute business imperative because it gives us the edge in attracting the best and the brightest people. It positions us as an employer of choice and will help us in competing in a market that is becoming increasing diverse and global.

The chief executive officer of the Canadian Occidental Petroleum, Bernard Isautier said:

> Diversity is a source of competitive advantage. Canada is a country with a respect for differences, for different cultures, for different opinions and respecting in general for the individual. That makes Canadians particularly well received when they deal with foreign countries. I think Canada should capitalize more on these capacities.

No one would agree more than the young woman who is able to pursue a career in the trades, the young aboriginal student who sees his post–secondary studies lead to full employment in industry, the Asian engineer who is able to use her skills to improve production processes to make a firm more competitive or the disabled adult who gains financial and social independence, enjoying the dignity and security that comes with a salary.

This legislation is a recommitment of the government to equality for all Canadians. With Bill C–64 we are continuing our tradition of international leadership in the area of employment equity, while choosing to lead rather than be led. In these changing times our responsibility is making the most of the opportunities that change represents. In the process we are creating a more united nation and building a more innovative economy.

Most of all, we are putting into practice the very values that make each of us so proud to be a Canadian: fairness, justice and equality for all.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), a recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17.

We are now going to Group No. 2, without Motion No. 3. Miss Grey, seconded by Mr. White moves that Bill C–64, in clause 4 be amended by replacing line 10, on page 4, with the following: ''(3) Members of''.

● (1520)

In view of the fact that the member whose motion this was to have been is not present in the House for whatever reason, we will now proceed to group three.

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

Motion No. 5

That Bill C–64, in Clause 6, be amended by replacing line 9, on page 6, with the following:

''(*b*) to hire or promote any but the best qualified persons;''.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this section of Bill C–64, the Employment Equity Act, otherwise known as affirmative action, goes right back to the start and I would merely add to earlier comments I made. I should put this in some context for members in the House who, unfortunately, were not here earlier today to hear my initial comments on the bill and for those many thousands of Canadians watching on television.

Bill C–64 is the Employment Equity Act brought forward by the Liberal government. Employment equity is a phrase coined by Judge Abella about 12 or 13 years ago in the full understanding that affirmative action would never sell in Canada. To make it politically correct it was given a new name and it became employment equity rather than affirmative action.

Here we are with affirmative action in the guise of employment equity.

Ms. Clancy: Wrong, absolutely wrong.

Mr. McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): I hear wails of outrage from members opposite. I can understand that. However the foundation on which this bill rests is faulty. It is false. The foundation is that somehow or other Canadians are a mean, regressive, racist, discriminating people. Canadians are nothing of the sort. We are not that. We do not need the federal government creating more paperwork, more book work, in order to do what it feels, I am sure, is the right thing, to prevent discrimination in the workplace.

When debate on third reading unfolds we will make it abundantly clear that no such discrimination exists in the workplace. The workplace, particularly outside the federal government, is progressive. Industry leads. It is a totally unnecessary law.

I know we are all going to have an opportunity to say what we wish to say about Bill C–64 when it comes to third reading and I will leave my introductory comments at that.

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to address some of the fears and misconceptions which the Reform Party member is taking advantage of in this motion on best qualified.

These are anxious times for many Canadians. The economy, while improving, is no longer as assured as it once was. Jobs are not as permanent as once expected. Canada's labour force has experienced swings as traditional industries shed workers, while new ones arise with different skill needs. There is a sense that the economic pie is not growing as much as we would like it to.

● (1525)

The government understands that families face social pressures that were largely absent a generation ago. Young people grow up surrounded by issues from which they cannot be sheltered. There is a sense that our society is more troubled than it once was.

The federal government is pursuing an agenda that is addressing those issues. However, we recognize there are a lot of ways people respond to those different kinds of uncertainty. One is backlash against people who are perceived as part of the problem. Any groups that are seen to be by some as pushing for too much or getting an undeserved share of too limited resources face an angry response.

I think this is the real motivation behind the Reform Party's introduction of this motion on best qualified.

However, the truth is often far different than those stories would indicate. Unfortunately, lots of people are having trouble finding good work. In fact, people from the designated groups under employment equity are more likely to experience those problems that other persons.

Employment equity is not about preferential treatment. The simple fact is that Bill C–64 does not oblige an employer to hire an unqualified person. It is quite explicit on that point.

Let me quote Mona Katawne of Manitoba Telephone System who testified before the standing committee. She said:

> There is no evidence that hiring from among the designated group members is a lowering of qualifications; in fact, the evidence is to the contrary. There are people from the designated groups who are both available to work and qualified to work.

The fact is that our economy has surpluses of highly qualified people from all designated groups for many of the jobs that are out there.

However, this myth of preferential treatment persists because of misinformation. A perfect example is the Gallup poll that appeared in the December 23, 1993 Toronto *Star*. The headlines blared that 74 per cent oppose job equity programs. Let us take a look at the actual question. What was the question? It was:

> Do you believe government should actively attempt to hire more women and minority group members for management positions, or should government take no action whatsoever and hire new employees based solely on their qualifications?

With such a question the response was what the headlines blared. The question unfairly forced people to choose between actively attempting to hire more women and minority group members and hiring based on qualifications. I am not surprised that 74 per cent, when asked such a question, chose qualifications.

Employment equity means broadening access to all qualified people. It means giving people the chance to become better qualified.

On virtually any scale people in the designated groups fare poorly in today's labour market. I want to underscore that point. There are still barriers to full participation by members of the designated groups. The goal of this legislation is to end those barriers, not to create a new discrimination against someone else. It is to end those barriers.

Let us look at one specific group that fares especially poorly in our labour market and that is people with disabilities. Only about 60 per cent of adults with disabilities are in the labour market at all. They have unemployment rates that are almost double the national average and that costs us all as Canadians.

The Canadian Association for Community Living did a study that looked at people with mental disabilities. They calculated the loss to our economy of large scale segregation of these people from our economy in terms of lost tax revenue due to unemployment, social assistance costs and lost consumption. They found that the cost to Canada's economy of keeping these people out of society in many ways is about $4.6 billion a year.

• (1530)

We must reject those attacks on employment equity and defeat the motion. It is important that those of us who come here responsibly realize and recognize the demands of society, the demands that are before us and do what Canadians expect of all of us in the House. They expect us to be caring, compassionate, responsible individuals ready to meet the needs of society, ready to ensure that equity and equality exist in society.

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the motion put forward by the hon. member to amend clause 6.

Let me say at the outset that clause 6 was included in the bill to dispel certain myths about employment equity. One such myth is that employment equity means hiring unqualified people. According to this myth employment equity requires employers to lower their standards and change their job requirements to accommodate inferior candidates.

This notion is absolutely false. It is pure nonsense. It is the complete misunderstanding of what employment equity is about and it is extremely degrading to members of designated groups.

We have included clause 6 in the bill to make it perfectly clear to everyone, so there can be no mistake. However the change proposed by the hon. member is unacceptable. Although it adds nothing of substance to the bill, it creates a host of additional problems by including the new notion of best qualified.

The first problem is obvious. What does best qualified mean? How do we determine best? Best according to whose definition? I do not deny that sometimes it may be possible to establish a very sophisticated, completely objective method to determine a best candidate, but too often best simply ends up meaning someone just like me. In these situations best becomes another excuse to create barriers. We do not need more barriers.

Who is best? Is the candidate with the most university degrees always the best? Let us say we are talking about hiring a cook or a manual labourer. Book learning is not the main qualification for the job. Obviously skill is. Is the candidate with a master's degree in law better qualified than the high school graduate, even though the degree has nothing to do with the job at all? Or, have we created just another barrier? I repeat that we do not need more barriers.

The government stands firm about employment equity. It does not require any employer to hire unqualified individuals. However it asks employers to look actively for qualified applicants in places they might not have previously looked. It asks them to find qualified workers in designated groups that have been overlooked and consider them along with other qualified candidates. It asks them to eliminate barriers in these processes, but it does not dictate the outcome of the hiring and the promotion decision. It certainly never asks them to hire someone who is not qualified.

Sometimes certain employers go further. Sometimes a big hearted employer will find and train people who have not had a chance. They will see to it that these people become qualified. Let us make no mistake. These employers do not have to do it. The law does not require it. However they find it brings their companies unexpected benefits.

I will tell a story about one such employer. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a crown corporation, recently instituted a special pilot program for four young people with intellectual disabilities. Three of the four have Down's syndrome. These four individuals were carefully trained for the company for temporary photocopying, filing and messenger jobs. They were always willing and co–operative. They were extremely proud of their new found independence and their success in this work. Their families were grateful that the responsibility for their children was being shared.

• (1535)

It is most interesting that although the four people required extra supervision they unexpectedly brought much happiness and compassion into the workplace. Though their lot in life was different they never complained. Their happiness and gratitude were contagious. They caused very beautiful qualities to blossom in their fellow workers who were touched and inspired by their innocence, simplicity and gratitude.

These four individuals brought a great deal of joy to the workplace. The project's participants, supervisors and workers received one of CMHC president's excellence awards in 1994. Though they may not have been the best qualified for the job according to traditional standards, they performed their job with enthusiasm and in doing it brought something special to the workplace. They made it a better workplace for everyone.

Sometimes the whole is more than just the sum of the parts. In looking for excellence we sometimes find it in the most unexpected places. We sometimes achieve it in the most unexpected ways. This is one lesson of employment equity. I would not want to tie in any way the hands of an employer who wants to undertake an innovative program such as the one at CMHC.

I frankly do not know what the full impact of including best qualified in this section might be. I fear, however, that it would ultimately constrain the efforts of employers who will look for best in new areas and for best in the sum total of the parts. For these reasons I cannot support the motion.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should like to follow on the hon. member's comments with respect to the word best and the concept of best qualified which Reform is seeking to introduce into the legislation. It strikes me that it could have a twist, an irony of resulting in imposing on the private sector a ridiculous standard. The word best is very hard to define. The prior speaker indicated that he thought the language itself was problematic.

If we use the term best qualified then we would have to look somewhere for a definition of it. I briefly looked in the Oxford dictionary and it states that the word best can be an adjective, a noun or an adverb. It is defined as follows: ''excelling all others, inherent or relative to some standard, the most appropriate, advantageous, desirable, or in a person, the kindest, the greatest in size or quantity'', and so on.

I wonder how the Reform Party will explain that kind of an imposition of regulation on the private sector. Which of those definitions should we choose? Are we asking employers to hire the biggest person, the kindest person, the most appropriate person? If the job involves answering the telephone, do we need a Ph.D. in communications, or would a graduate certificate from a business college suffice? Could we use someone who has a physical disability to answer the telephone?

My view and the view of many people on this side of the House is that the imposition of the term best qualified is ridiculous in this context. How can we legislate a definition of best, a word that could have different grammatical forms?

All this goes back to the fundamental Reform position which is absurd in my view. Government is not here to create barriers. Government sometimes has to act to take away the barriers, to intervene on behalf of our citizens to remove barriers in different situations: barriers in the legal system and barriers in employment.

Reform has stated today: ''The only criteria on which people should be hired or promoted is merit. Anything else is discrimination''.

● (1540)

Testosterone levels are a little high on the Reform benches today. The concept of discrimination is dealt with under the Canadian Human Rights Act. If Reformers would bother to read that act, they would see that their definition of discrimination does not hold water.

The Canadian Human Rights Act specifically allows special programs designed to reduce the disadvantage suffered by groups or individuals when those disadvantages are based on race, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability and other characteristics such as accidents of one's birth or accidents of one's life. These programs are allowed under that statute and under the Constitution of Canada.

I know it upsets them to mention the charter of rights and freedoms because they do not like it. However I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the law of the land, section 15(2) of the charter which deals with the right to equality before and under the law and to equal protection and benefit for all individuals.

Subsection 15(2) of the charter states:

> Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

That is part of the country's Constitution. It means that equality means more than just treating everyone identically. It means that equality also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences. That is what employment equity seeks to do, to achieve equality in the workplace through the accommodation of differences, through the elimination of barriers, through outreach recruiting programs, but not through hiring the unqualified. This is not discrimination by any stretch of the imagination.

We fully support hiring on the basis of merit. Nobody is disputing that point. However Reformers have created a strawman. They call it discrimination. They set it up and then they knock it down.

That is why section 6 is included in the act. Section 6 is there because employment equity does not require any employer to hire someone who is unqualified. That is what section 6 does.

How much clearer can we be? Reform repeatedly insists on raising this spectre. I want to be perfectly clear that employment equity is by no stretch of the imagination discrimination. It is perfectly compatible with the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If Reform members object then we should let their objection be against the

foundations of the country and not against Employment Equity Act.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have heard Reform members say that we should be hiring on the basis of merit. That is what the legislation is all about. It is what it has been all about for over eight years now.

It is about getting rid of barriers in the system that have prevented people from being hired, from being promoted, from being given job opportunity regardless of merit. Colour of their skin, aboriginal origin, disability and gender have all acted against people of merit and kept them from getting jobs. That is exactly what the legislation is about.

We disagree that the Reform Party does not want to accept the reality of life for over 60 per cent of Canadians who have not been given opportunity, despite their merit, despite their ability, despite the contribution they have to make. The legislation and the pre–existing Employment Equity Act are all about making merit and only merit the criteria on which hiring takes place.

I welcome the motion. It gives me an opportunity to clarify what the bill tries to do. It is an employment equity act. It is not an employment preference act. It is about creating equality in the workplace. It is about fairness. It is about removing employment barriers which blind us to the merit of individuals to provide all with the opportunity to compete fairly for jobs. It is about hiring qualified people to do the job, not only those who fit an image that for a long time we as a society and managers in our society have seen as the kind of person most likely to succeed.

• (1545)

Let me read what Bill C–64 says in this regard. The bill states that the obligation to implement employment equity does not require an employer to hire or promote unqualified persons. That is very clear, notwithstanding the comments that have been made about employment equity requiring somebody to hire somebody just because they are female or are black or Oriental or aboriginal or just because they use a wheelchair.

Members can refer to the existing paragraph 6(b) for confirmation. We want to create a level playing field for all workers. That is why we insist on the equal consideration of all qualified applicants. We believe that every individual, regardless of race, gender, or disability, must have a fair opportunity to prove his or her abilities and be given a fair chance to contribute to the Canadian workplace.

For far too long a large segment of our society has not been allowed to contribute to the Canadian economy the abilities they have. As we face an increasingly competitive global marketplace, we cannot afford not to use the full talents of all our people.

Bill C–64 is not about dictating to employers the result of an individual recruitment decision. It is about encouraging employers to assess their entire approach to employment, to make sure they do not either consciously or inadvertently create barriers to capable job candidates. Let me repeat that: capable job candidates.

There is no doubt those barriers do exist. I believe my hon. colleague underestimates the prevalence of systemic although unconscious discrimination in the workplace. It is as insidious as it is invisible. Countless well qualified men and women members of the designated groups have not obtained positions or promotions because of their race, their physical attributes, or their gender. To dispute this is to deny mountains of reports that consistently paint a picture of workplace injustice. To deny this is to deny the real daily, painful experience and frustration of millions of Canadians who are not allowed to contribute consistent with their ability.

Systemic discrimination is no longer acceptable. With this legislation we are encouraging employers to create the conditions in which no segment of the population will be discriminated against or excluded in job competitions. Only in this way can we be assured those selected will be the most capable of doing the task.

I hope my hon. colleague understands this bill establishes a floor, a foundation from which employers can build a more equitable and representative workforce. They can only do that by getting rid of barriers that have kept women, people of colour, aboriginal people, and people with disabilities largely in the lowest paying jobs.

The point of the act is not to tell employers how to go about the details of their business. This House is not interested in the micro–management of the affairs of business. Employers have made it clear they do not need nor want the hand of government in their internal operations. That is why this amendment is so out of place. The impact of the Reform Party's amendment would be to get into the business of telling companies how to run their businesses.

Best by whose definition? Best by the definition that has taken the category of clerks in the public service, the lowest paid and probably the least qualified in many cases. Eighty–five per cent of them are women. But in the top ranks of that lowest category, guess who rises? It is not the women, who are 84 per cent of the employees, but the men.

• (1550)

We have had employment equity not by legislation but by policy in the federal government for over a decade. Still barely 18 per cent of our management category are women.

Maybe Reform Party members would like to make the argument that women are inherently less qualified and that is why they have not risen to the top. Well, I would love to see them try to justify that argument.

Maybe they have not read the reports that say that equally or better qualified black males in the country earn up to 20 per cent less than white males. Maybe they have not seen the reports that document how the disabled are kept out of employment and if they do get employment it is often temporary, short term and low paying.

Maybe Reform members want preferential treatment for less than half of our population to continue. Maybe they do not want everybody to have an equal opportunity. Well, this government does. We believe that we have an extremely talented population and it is going to be essential to our competitiveness that we use every bit of talent this country possesses. We have to get rid of the blinkers and blinders that have kept both government and the private sector from giving opportunities to people based solely on their merit. We have to get rid of the perception of gender that says women cannot do certain kinds of jobs or certainly cannot do them as well as men.

I do not know a man who is competent or capable who is not prepared to compete on an equal playing field with any woman in Canadian society. Those who want to continue preferential treatment must have something to fear, and they all seem to be concentrated in the Reform Party.

This country has prided itself on equality of opportunity. This is another step forward in equality of opportunity. The Reform Party keeps referring to social engineering. Well, it is social engineering when 90 per cent of those who rise to the top represent less than half of the population. That is social engineering. It is unconscionable. It is a waste of the talents and energy of the majority of the Canadian population.

No, I do not have all the answers. But I do know that I do not want to walk into the banks of this country and tell them very precisely that they must hire only the best qualified, which then government would be constrained to define in the legislation so they could apply my definition to every single hiring process, which happens by the hundreds of thousands in the banks of this country every year. No, I do not want to operate that way. Yet that is the way the amendment from the Reform Party would have us operate.

I urge the House to reject the amendment and I urge us to get on with the business of hiring people in the country based on merit and not on their gender, race, disability, or aboriginal origin.

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak on the bill and maybe share with my colleagues some of my own experiences in this area.

I can tell the House that Bill C–64 is very progressive because it is the way corporations and large businesses are going. As members of the board of directors of B.C. Hydro, we adopted a theme and a vision for the corporation that the workforce of the corporation should reflect the community it serves.

The bankers have said it is the right way to go. Let me read to the House what the Canadian bankers have stated on employment equity: ''It has stimulated fundamental reviews and enhancement in the bank's human resource policies and practices, which have benefited everyone. It has helped us lay the foundation for managing an increasingly diverse workforce, something every employer of choice in the 1990s wants to do well.''

• (1555)

Whether it is West Coast Energy, the banks, or any other corporation, they have recognized that the future workforce is going to be diverse. They have to plan for that diverse workforce. They have to ensure that the future workforce has the skills. Employment equity takes the barriers down. It takes away those barriers that do exist. And they do exist.

I remember when I was about 18 years old I used to work in a sawmill at Crown Zellerbach. I noticed that out of a very large workforce of 2,000 to 2,500 it did not reflect what every other sawmill reflected. It came to my attention that the personnel manager at that time was discriminating. He was discriminating against hiring visible minorities.

I had a job there. I got a job and I could have said I have my job, I do not have to worry about this. But it did not reflect the community. People who would apply there from visible minority groups and who had the qualifications would not get hired.

I remember I was 18 years old and I made an appointment with the vice–president of the corporation. I went there and said he had a personnel manager who discriminates against certain groups and is not hiring them. Of course they were very defensive and said that it was not true, but in fact it was true. It was true.

Even though the vice–president of the corporation at that time did not admit that, the personnel manager was let go. Lo and behold, over the next two or three years we saw quite a different hiring procedure, quite a different way in which people were hired.

There are barriers all the time. There are barriers against the disabled. I know that. My own father unfortunately lost his vision around 22 or 23 years ago, when he was a young man of 40. When that happens to someone who is close to you, you realize the barriers that exist for them, the barriers in their daily life, never mind the barriers of trying to get employment, trying to make sure that you are fulfilling your daily life, the things we take for granted.

This employment equity bill recognizes that barriers exist against certain groups. We want to have a plan to reduce those barriers just as we do in this House. We want to ensure for example that more women are represented in the House. Is it wrong to plan to do things in a better way to improve their representation in the House? Is that wrong? That is right.

There are ways we can do things to take away those barriers, to reduce those barriers. That is what the employment equity bill is all about. It recognizes that barriers exist and that we want both in the public sector and in the private sector to lay out a plan. Maybe it is their hiring procedure. They have to look at how they hire.

For example, the aboriginal community has been left out, and we have to work hard to include them. Look at the social problems in the aboriginal community. I have gone through the streets of Vancouver with a policeman and walked through some of the most difficult areas there. We know that we have neglected our job, that we have not done it, because we see so many of them with drug and alcohol problems, with tremendous social problems. They have been left out. They have not been able to participate in the benefits and in the economy.

First we must recognize those barriers exist. All of this is a plan to see how we can tear down those barriers, reduce those barriers by saying we are not doing things the right way. Maybe we are not hiring in the right way. Maybe we are not planning, maybe we are not training. All of these things are very important.

It is also beneficial and profitable for the corporation. As someone who was an employer, I know how important it is to make sure you have a diverse workforce because in the global economy that diverse workforce will be a great advantage to you. It will provide new sources of energy, different ways of looking at things and it will open doors when we trade in the international community and in the global economy. We have to recognize that as an asset. We have to recognize that our diverse population is a tremendous asset. We have to recognize that in all our corporations and companies the diverse population should be reflected in those institutions and in our private sector corporations.

● (1600)

This is an excellent bill. When the members of the Reform really have a good look at this bill they will support it. It will make sure we do things better, that we include people, that we make sure we have a good reflection of what this country is all about in all our institutions, in our private corporations as well as our public corporations.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 78, the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

We will now turn to Group No. 4, Motion No. 7.

[*Translation*]

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

Motion No. 7

That Bill C–64, in Clause 15, be amended by replacing lines 14 to 27, on page 10, with the following:

''(*b*) the preparation of the employer's employment equity plan.

(2) Where the employees are represented by a bargaining agent, the bargaining agent shall participate in a consultation under subsection (1).

(3) A consultation under subsection (1) is not a form of co–management.

(4) The employer and its employees' representatives must implement and revise the employment equity plan jointly.''

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to say that this is one of the best motions you will see during your career, and I am rather confident at this point that even the government will support it.

We spent a lot of time reviewing Bill C–64, which was referred to our committee at second reading. This motion essentially provides that employment equity must be based on a joint effort, so as to ensure that it is effective and that the prescribed objectives are reflected in the workplace.

Any organization that has been successful in promoting employment equity has managed to do so because the employer's and the employees' representatives got together and agreed on certain objectives.

This amendment seeks to ensure that employees' representatives can participate in the preparation and implementation of the employment equity plan. As you know, the Bloc Quebecois is very much in favour of employment equity.

The problem that we found when we reviewed this bill, and the parliamentary secretary should pay attention since his support would be helpful, is that there is no clear provision to ensure that workers will be involved in the implementation of the plan.

The bill only includes a rather vague provision on the implementation of employment equity plans, and the parliamentary secretary cannot claim to ignore the fact that the clause did not receive much support.

Indeed, the parliamentary secretary surely remembers that, when union officials appeared before the committee, they expressed a great deal of concern about clauses 14 and 15 dealing with the consultation process. Clause 15 refers to a consultation, but it does so in general terms; there is no mandatory or compulsory process.

• (1605)

It is very important to understand the purpose of the amendment, and I think the Reform Party will agree that an employment equity policy is not feasible without the consent of all parties within a company.

That is definitely the purpose of this amendment. Companies and workers even came to see us to compare notes. They told us that in the Canada Labour Code, a provision required the policy on sexual harassment to be posted. What kind of action or measures should be part of an employer's policy against sexual harassment? A number of unions came to see us and said that ideally, to promote employment equity each employee should receive the employment equity plan. The plan would be available in the company and be posted in public rooms and areas.

We can never stress enough the importance of consultation and consensus in achieving this goal. We were, and still are, afraid that if we as parliamentarians, if the House of Commons does not adopt this amendment, the bill will again suffer a degree of imbalance and there would be a definite bias towards the employer and a tendency to be less forthcoming to the representatives of the workers.

I may recall that this bill will make the Canadian Human Rights Commission responsible for monitoring employment equity. In case of violations of this legislation, the commission may establish an employment equity review tribunal.

This is a major innovation. Unfortunately, the tribunal will not include labour representatives. What also bothers us in this bill is that because there will be an employment equity review tribunal consisting of three people, there will be no right of appeal. This is quite a decision, and I see Mr. Speaker, that you share my reservations and that is your social conscience speaking out.

My point is that there are few instances under our justice system when there is no right of appeal. In most cases, whether we are talking about criminal law or an administrative tribunal, it is a foregone conclusion, and the hon. member for Lotbinière is aware of this, that the person who appears before a tribunal always has the possibility of launching an appeal.

In this case, there is a clear imbalance which the amendments of the Bloc Quebecois are meant to correct, and I am confident that the government majority will support this view. As for the Reform Party, knowing what they are like, I never felt very confident about their support.

It would be very interesting at this time, for continuation of the debate, if the parliamentary secretary would rise and agree with me that the bill would be improved by acceptance of the Bloc Quebecois amendments, which I would remind you would ensure that negotiating agents, if present in a company, would be involved in more than just the drafting process, through the employer's possibility of consulting them. These consultations, however, are often optional rather than mandatory.

With our amendments, there would be an obligation not only to consult the workers' representatives, the negotiating agents, but also to involve them in the implementation process. Consultation is equally important during implementation, when an employment equity plan has been agreed upon, as it often has to be lived with for two, three or four years. There may be staff turnover, but the basic objectives remain.

• (1610)

We on this side of the House are of the belief that the way to meet the objectives, and to ensure that the plan is what both management and labour want, is to require the employer's representative, who may make his views known in a tribunal specifically designed for that purpose, to remedy any existing imbalance, and to ensure not only that workers and their representatives are consulted on an optional basis, but rather that their participation in the implementation process is mandatory.

As you know, the implementation process is, in concrete terms, the way the objectives will be met after concrete agreement on an employment equity program is reached. This is something no legislator can put into the wording of a statute, because it is part of the internal dynamics of a company. It is a bit like a marriage contract. You may well say: ''Who does he think he is, talking of marriage?''

But you would be wrong in that, Mr. Speaker, because I have many examples around me of what marriage is, and I know that marriage is a matter of trust. It is a matter of an undertaking between two individuals, whether of the same sex or of opposite sexes, who have chosen to forge a link of trust. For employment equity to be a viable entity, for it to be realistic, there must be trust and understanding involving all parties concerned. And by

all parties concerned I mean of course the negotiating agents, if present in the company, and the representatives of the employer.

I would be extremely disappointed—having invested a great deal of energy, working hard on the committee, as the government is well aware, the parliamentary secretary as well—extremely disappointed if ever these amendments were struck down. I must admit that my confidence in this government would be seriously compromised in future if that happened.

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express our reservations concerning the amendment presented by my colleague. Like my colleagues I do, however, appreciate what my colleague and his party, the Bloc Quebecois, are attempting to do with a view to improving Bill C–64.

Examining the motion, I find it goes a bit too far. Its intentions are probably honourable, but if we look at it in detail, the amendment is not practical. What is being proposed in this amendment is to create a prerequisite that both groups, employers and employees, establish equity plans.

[*English*]

This proposed change to the legislation would create a requirement for employer and employee representatives to implement and revise employment equity plans jointly.

I can appreciate that my colleagues believe it is essential to have labour input for the planning and application of employment equity in the workplace. I assure them that within the existing legislation provisions have been made to ensure there will be consultation and collaboration between the parties in the preparation, implementation and revisions of companies' employment equity plans.

The bill was amended by the standing committee as a result of input from the Bloc Quebecois. It was the previous speaker who encouraged the committee to include this provision.

Clause 15 of Bill C–64 acknowledges that collaboration between management and labour is necessary if changes sought by employment equity are to come about. It signals that success in achieving an employment equity workforce requires the active collaboration of labour and employers to eliminate artificial barriers to members of the designated groups. However, we must not confuse representation with responsibility. Collaboration is not co–management for very good reasons.

If implemented this amendment could seriously compromise the prerogatives of management to implement employment equity at the work site as it sees fit.

• (1615)

The employer must have the final say over the way employment equity affects the workplace because it is ultimately the employer who is legally responsible for the act's implementation. Only management is accountable for meeting the obligations set out in this legislation. It would be patently unfair to impose that responsibility on management if it was forced to share all decision making with its employee representatives.

There are several other good reasons this motion must be defeated. Among them is the fact that the proposed amendment would only preserve the co–management limitations for the initial preparation of an employment equity plan. This provision would be removed for the implementation and revision phases of the employment equity plans. Further and perhaps of greatest consequence, the amendment could lead to a requirement for negotiation between labour and management rather than a consultation.

I can assure the House that we are not prepared to see employment equity used as a bargaining chip in contract talks and negotiations. A bargaining agent might refuse to co–operate, perhaps motivated by reasons that have absolutely nothing to do with the goals of employment equity and thereby bring the implementation of a workplace plan to a halt. We will not have this critical piece of legislation compromised by the vagaries of union–management talks in negotiations.

Another important consideration is that employment equity is an integral part of human resources management. Company after company testified before the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons and told us what an important tool employment equity has become in their overall business plans.

The sort of regime proposed by the Bloc Quebecois might provide unions with an opportunity to exercise direct influence in areas that remain the sole prerogatives of management, such as recruitment.

I have several other fundamental problems with this motion, which is obviously very flawed. Let us look at the reality that the collaboration requirement cannot be the subject of a direction by the human rights commission or an order by a tribunal. Clearly a true spirit of co–operation has to come about spontaneously. It cannot be forced or coerced.

Aside from that, there is the fact that the primary reason the government decided against making this collaboration the subject of a direction or order is that there is no provision in the act for a tribunal to make orders against a bargaining agent.

Collaboration requires two parties working together. It would be discriminatory to enforce this provision against only one of those parties, that is, the employer. It is worth noting that the proposed amendment will also reduce the consultation requirement that exists in Bill C–64.

In the amendment there no longer has to be consultation about the implementation or revision of an employment equity plan. That consultation requirement can be the subject of a direction by the commission or an order by a tribunal. I must say I find it surprising that the Bloc would recommend deleting these crucial provisions and replacing them with weaker provisions that cannot be the subject of a direction or order.

For these reasons, it simply does not make sense to seriously entertain this motion. The government is satisfied with the clause the way it now stands as amended in committee.

Again I want to thank the Bloc for its contribution in committee in this regard. I believe our willingness to accommodate the Bloc's concerns is testament to the goodwill we see in this House. But we must not be tempted by good intentions to push the process too far. To go further is inadvisable.

Our approach to this issue is not arbitrary nor is our amendment despotic. It is simply realistic. Management has the final responsibility for all employer obligations under the bill and will be answerable to the Canadian Human Rights Commission if the obligations are not met. Therefore final decision making must continue to belong to management.

I trust that this explanation satisfies the House that this motion must be rejected. I urge my colleagues to do precisely that.

• (1620)

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I am rising to speak in support of my colleague's motion.

Members present all know that this legislation is going to go through come hell or high water, so the very least we can try to do is make it better. This motion by my hon. colleague does make it better. It ensures that the workers, the people who are intimately involved in this, have a say in what goes on.

As long as we are going to have this employment equity or affirmative action, the very least we can do is try to make sure it is going to work. The motion put forward by my colleague from the Bloc will go a long way in helping to ensure that it does work. Therefore, I rise to make the point that we are in support of this motion.

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can hardly stay on my feet after that. It is phenomenal.

The hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve has made a great contribution to this legislation at committee. Although I am not a permanent member of that committee, I do have some interest in this particular legislation. I sat in on that committee a couple of times and was very encouraged by his participation.

I do have some reservations about this motion but not because I am not sympathetic to union–sided labour requests. In fact I am very sympathetic to their concerns. However, it seems to me this section is not necessary in order to get co–operation between management and trade unions or employee unions in this context. Any employment equity plan could and should and indeed probably will be the subject of a collective agreement.

The problem I have with this is in legislating union involvement as opposed to leaving the balance between management and unions the way it is so that management retains the prerogative in terms of recruitment.

It seems to me that clause 15, which the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve had a hand in establishing at committee, sets out the necessary collaboration between management and labour. However, the problem is that ultimately, because management has the prerogative to hire, only management can have the responsibility under the scheme of this act.

I would be afraid that if we create a scheme where management and union are both responsible, then effectively we undermine our ability to enforce employment equity through management. We cannot simultaneously undermine management and promote a scheme that would make labour responsible for management activities. It seems to me this is an integral part of human resources management and an important part of the general Canadian way of doing business.

Only the employer has the final decision on who to hire, promote, train or terminate. The hon. member should be conscious of the importance of that within this bill because it allows us to maintain the balance between management and labour. There is no disagreement here. We need the unions to participate fully, but we cannot upset the balance by forcing them to co–design a program or to consider them co–responsible with employers or we are going to undermine the system.

I would like to remind my colleague that workforces of employers are often represented by more than one union. This happens frequently, for instance, in Windsor, Ontario where I am from. If all union representatives were expected to co–manage the preparation, implementation and revision of this kind of plan there could be a situation of protracted delays in implementation, increased costs to employers and possible deterioration in labour–management relations.

● (1625)

To my good friend from the Reform Party, I would like to point out the cost of this to government would be phenomenal. If unions as well as employers were to submit reports and the human resources ministry required to make the reports public, there would be significant additional costs incurred. Since the human resources development ministry is required to make reports public, every expansion requires a greater budget for copying and distribution to interested parties across the country.

It is because of the Canadian people and in their interests that the Employment Equity Act is where it is today. It is a viable and effective tool for human resources management. I think we should let it continue to work the way it is, working co–operatively between management and unions. This has been done successfully in most employment equity activities for over a decade. Employers should continue to strive to get the input of interested parties in this valuable process, but let it be part of the collective bargaining system rather than something we enforce.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by associating myself most strongly with the cogent and competent comments of my colleague. I would continue the alliterative strain by naming her, but that of course would be unparliamentary, so I would merely congratulate the member for Windsor—St. Clair.

I want to say that I congratulate as well the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve because I know he has worked very hard on the committee. However I think his amendments in this particular vein do not go anywhere to further the spirit of the bill. It is furthering the spirit of the bill that the passage is all about. I guess I could say we want it to go through spiritus intactus, because this is a very important piece of legislation. It is important because it is broadly misunderstood in more than one area.

I heard earlier today, before leaving the House to go to committee, people equate employment equity and affirmative action. I want to talk about that first of all because employment equity and affirmative action are not the same thing. Indeed, if I could go into employment equity, especially today, when we have all been visited by members and representatives of the Canadian Medical Association, a medical metaphor might be appropriate. When I say that employment equity is preventive, affirmative action is curative.

I might add that affirmative action is something that is enshrined in our Constitution, in our charter of rights and freedoms. Employment equity too has a very respectable and respected history in the House and indeed in the legislatures of a number of the provinces.

When I hear employment equity attacked I constantly hear it attacked on the basis of a new disadvantaged group. I want to make it very clear that I am not speaking now with tongue in cheek. I am not being sarcastic. I am, if anything, being plaintive. As I stand here in the House of Commons in this fall of 1995 I am a little tired of hearing that white males in this society are some sort of endangered species. White males still get 60 per cent of the jobs in this country. Name the profession, name the job category, name the area and they still do better than anybody else.

Just look at the Chamber when it is full. Look at it tonight when we have the vote. Who are the overwhelming members of this Chamber in all parties? White males, and fond I am of most of you. However there is no question that it does not reflect the demographic picture of this country.

First, if the House were to reflect this country demographically, 52 per cent of the seats would be taken up by females first and foremost. We are slowly but surely getting to that point.

● (1630)

An hon. member: Right on.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. There appears to be some problem with the ventilation system in the Chamber. I am not responsible for the noise I assure you.

The Deputy Speaker: The member has a good point but I would ask her if she would please not use the term ''you'' except when referring to whomever happens to be in the chair. I am sure the noise will diminish.

Ms. Clancy: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. At any rate I have used this phrase in a somewhat humorous vein but I will use it in truth here in this Chamber.

A number of my colleagues in debates on gender equality, employment equity or in whatever particular area you want said to me: ''There are women's groups, where are the men's groups?'' I say not at all in jest there is a men's group and it is called western civilization. That is the men's group.

If you go to any legislative assembly in the western world with the exception of two of the Scandinavian nations, the majority of elected members are white males. This is not to say that white males do not do a good job. Sure they do. But it is not the only face to be represented. Nor is it the only face to be represented on television stations, in radio stations, in fire stations, in whatever areas of employment, particularly those that come under the purview of the federal government.

It was my great pleasure and to my great benefit in the area of education that in the last Parliament I was the vice–chair of the committee that reviewed the employment equity legislation. I listened to a number of well–meaning white males who came before the committee and bragged. For example, in one organization—I will not name it but it has something to do with horses and red coats—in 24 years of an employment equity program it had added to the very highest echelons something like 20 women. Mr. Speaker, I think you will sympathize with

me that I found that statistic a little wanting, not to say a little daunting as well.

There is not a homogeneous culture in this country. There are any number of phrases that can be used to describe the beautiful face of Canada. The one that I heard most in my childhood was a vertical mosaic. I still like that one. I think it speaks very well to us.

We have used the phrase multiculturalism over the years and I like that one too. I like the fact, no, I love the fact that in this House of Commons today we see represented a variety, a rainbow of races, religious backgrounds, creeds and so on. That is the face of Canada. Our sorrow, our tragedy and our fault as legislators is that the rainbow is not represented the way it should be in the employment categories in those various institutions that fall within the federal purview.

When we dealt with employment equity in that committee in the last Parliament the big problem was enforcement and teeth. This bill is going to change that. This bill is going to make employment equity a reality.

I can only say that those people who fear it—and I am prepared to explain the difference between affirmative action and employment equity if they have a problem—do not really understand it. There is nothing to fear in allowing, encouraging and promoting the participation in the fullest sense of the word of all Canadians. It is our country. It belongs to all of us. Everyone should have equality of opportunity.

• (1635)

I do not for one instant think that anyone on either side of the House would be prepared to stand and deny that he or she agrees with equality of opportunity. That is something that all of us, no matter what our political stripe, agree with.

Consequently, if one agrees with that, then they must support this legislation. This legislation is not about special rights. It is not about saying to people they deserve something better because they are different. It is saying: ''You deserve your share of the Canadian dream. You deserve equality of opportunity. You deserve to have systemic discrimination, unnatural barriers removed so that with your training and your ability no matter what your skin colour, your gender, your religious background, your regional background, et cetera, you have the same road ahead of you as any other Canadian''.

As we stand here and go forward in these pre–referendum days, Canadians are looking to us as legislators to talk about what this country really means. All of us know that what it really means is fairness, a sense of justice and an opportunity even for people who do not know what they are talking about to speak.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is part of the government. I would hope she would stay for just a few moments because I want to back up some of what she just said.

There are some things she could do as a government member that ought to be done with regard to a certain problem that has developed literally outside the doors of this Chamber. As we all know, a construction program is going on outside. Fuller Construction has a renovation job. It has subcontracted to another contractor who has in turn subcontracted some more to a unit run by Ray Wolf. He apparently made the mistake of having a 32–year old female engineer named Ms. Raney in charge of the project. The intermediate contractor forced Mr. Wolf to quit the job because he was using a female engineer.

Since the hon. member is part of the government I would hope she is listening to this and will do what she can to intervene to make certain this injustice is corrected.

I realize the interim construction company is headed by someone from the Middle East who has a different view of the role of women than some of the rest of Canadian society. However, we live under Canadian law. These are the Canadian Houses of Parliament his company is working on. Surely there could be more ability to recognize people on merit rather than to discriminate against them because a company chooses to use a female engineer.

I do not want to say very much more about this legislation. I am just so angry this kind of thing can happen here on the grounds of Parliament Hill that I wanted to make sure it was raised after someone who has been a firm and loud protector of the equality of women as is the member for Halifax who preceded me.

I was hoping I could add some fire to her usual ability to get things done that would have her take on this case and see if the minister of public works cannot correct this great injustice which has no place in the Parliament of Canada or in this country.

• (1640)

Mr. Peter Thalheimer (Timmins—Chapleau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that the Bloc's recommendations have resulted in improvements to Bill C–64. My hon. colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve contributed to the work of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. His dedication to employment equity has added to the legislation.

I have to admit I was somewhat surprised to see Motion No. 7 put forward by the opposition. The Bloc Quebecois has already raised this issue in committee and the committee has gone a considerable way to accommodate it. The hon. member persuaded the committee to accept a requirement that employers

and labour must collaborate in the preparation, implementation and revision of the employment equity plan.

Let me begin by reminding the House the existing act only calls for consultation between the employer and worker representatives. Bill C–64 would go further, ensuring that employees through their unions or employee representatives will have considerably more input to their company's equity plan when the plan is developed, implemented and revised. We saw the merit of this approach and have endorsed it. However, the proposed amendment to the bill goes too far and is not advisable. Allow me to explain why.

This amendment would preserve the employer's sole responsibility to prepare its employment equity plan in consultation with employee representatives. However, if adopted this motion would import a government imposed requirement for co–management rather than collaboration between the employer and employee representatives in the implementation and revision of employment equity plans.

This poses some potentially serious problems since the obligations set out in the act are imposed on employers alone. A bargaining agent might very well refuse to co–operate, perhaps motivated by reasons that have nothing to do with employment equity, and could bring the implementation of employment equity to a standstill, potentially putting the employer in a situation of non–compliance.

Furthermore, since employment equity is an integral part of human resource management this sort of regime might provide unions with an opportunity to exercise direct influence in areas that have usually remained the sole prerogative of management such as hiring and promotion.

Surely my hon. colleague will recognize that management should have the final responsibility for all employer obligations under the bill and would be held accountable if those responsibilities are not met. It is only reasonable, therefore, that final decision making continue to belong to management in this area.

For the benefit of all employers and worker representatives and for the good of workplace relations, I must recommend the House not accept the proposed amendment.

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that I endorse the principle of labour–management consultation and co–operation on matters relating to the workplace under federal jurisdiction.

We all know that working together brings out the best results for all concerned. This is what we are trying to achieve in the wording of clause 15 of Bill C–64 as it has been reported back from the standing committee.

Let me read the introductory portion of what clause 15 currently says:

> Every employer shall consult with its employees' representatives by inviting the representatives to provide their views—

Bill C–64 also explicitly recognizes the role of bargaining agents in the workplace. I quote further from clause 15:

> Where employees are represented by a bargaining agent, the bargaining agent shall participate in a consultation under subsection (1).

The above provisions underline the kind of environment we all want to have in the workplace.

• (1645)

We do not want management to be making arbitrary decisions without addressing the interests of employees. We want the employees to be fully involved in all matters that involve them, be they health and safety issues or employment equity issues.

We want to have a policy of inclusion followed, not one of exclusion. We believe that everyone in the workplace should have the opportunity to put forward their ideas and views. In line with the entire spirit of employment equity is the elimination of barriers.

The standing committee recognized the value of this type of consultation when it reviewed the bill introduced at first reading. The testimony they heard from the witnesses at their hearings led them to strengthen the provisions. The provisions currently in the bill have already been strengthened from what was originally proposed. All one has to do is to read further in clause 15:

> Every employer and its employees' representatives shall collaborate in the preparation, implementation and revision of the employer's employment equity plan.

The standing committee added the concept of collaboration. This goes beyond the concept of consultation. However the standing committee recognized that the concept of collaboration could not interfere with employers' obligations under the act.

It is for the individual employer who has specific obligations under the act that there are provisions for non–compliance when the employer fails to meet these obligations. That is why there is a very important provision at the end of clause 15:

> Consultation under subsection (1) and collaboration under subsection (3) are not forms of co–management.

We need to recognize the responsibility for implementing employment equity in the workplace is that of management. The current wording of the bill provides for this. That is why I have so many problems with the wording of Motion No. 7. We have to be very careful in considering the implications of the proposed amendment.

If adopted the amendment would require the employer and its employees' representatives to implement and revise the employment equity plan jointly. In a perfect world perhaps this would work, but we must recognize that we are still trying to achieve a perfect world, as my colleagues from the Reform Party tell me on a daily basis. This is one reason there is need for an employment equity act and this is one reason the proposed amendment goes too far.

A number of problems would result if the motion were adopted and the act subsequently proclaimed into law. Employers could try to evade their responsibilities by saying that progress is being stalled by an unco–operative bargaining agent. Presumably there would be a call for a compliance officer to intervene, but there are no enforceable obligations on bargaining agents in the legislation. There would be nothing a compliance officer could do in a case where there are bad relations between labour and management, perhaps as a result or in connection with an industrial dispute.

Employment equity is related to the human resources management field and to the hiring and promotion processes. These are traditionally considered to be areas reserved for management. We have to recognize this reality.

• (1650)

Again I reinforce the purpose of the act as set out in section 2:

> The purpose of this act is to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfilment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

In summary the purpose of the act is to achieve equality in the workplace and to correct the conditions and disadvantages experienced by certain groups. Bill C–64, as currently worded, provides the appropriate balance between employee participation, management powers and obligations. That is why we should not adopt the motion.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Davenport—nuclear tests.

[*English*]

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak to Motion No. 7 that is before us.

I congratulate the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve who has been an excellent member of the committee on human rights which I had the privilege of chairing and which looked into the bill before the House today. The member made a lot of useful contributions to the committee. I am glad he affixed his signature to the majority report.

There are still sentiments the member would like to continue to advance. I respect his need to see to it that employees' representatives be at the management table. Although he indicated that the amendment would not result in co–management, I think there are grave doubts and concerns about the amendment. That is why the majority of committee members saw to it that it would not happen.

Why was that? It was because one of the underlying principles of the bill was a balanced approach to the setting of plans and the implementation of the employment equity plan. In that so–called balanced approach we must ensure that as we invoke obligations for employers we do not provide them with unnecessary onerous and impractical burdens. Were the employees to be given this right despite the disclaimer it is very conceivable that it would be construed as a co–management approach. Certainly we feel it will add a real burden for businesses in particular.

In recognition of the contribution of the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve we amended the bill to see to it that employers and employees collaborate and consult in the preparation of the plan. We would have liked to have seen the employees' representatives being in on the co–management approach. In the spirit of co–operation at committee level we saw to it that employers would provide information to the employees about the purpose of the employment equity measures of the bill that will be undertaken in the implementation of a given employment equity plan.

The committee also made the point that the bill would not require public availability of employment equity plans which, to be effective, would contain confidential and proprietary information on the part of businesses. Every member of the House would like to see to it that we do not divulge what businesses feel are their proprietary properties and therefore necessary to ensure their competitive advantage in the business world.

• (1655)

We feel we must reject the amendment. In effect it would take the prerogative of management from employers. It would impose an impractical burden on them. Since the act in its totality imposes that legal obligation only on employers for failure to set and adopt an employment equity plan, it is only fair this kind of responsibility rests solely with employers where the legal obligation rests.

I can conceive of one possibility, for example. In the process of the joint approach to the development of the plan the bargaining agent for the employees, for reasons not related to

the implementation of the equity plan, could stall or delay the finalization of the plan for reasons other than those related to the employment equity plan. It would delay what we would like to have happen. On that basis we have to continue to retain the prerogative of the act to give the obligation, responsibility and privilege to employers.

Briefly, again to put into context the motion before us, why is it important that we not overburden employers? In the beginning the employment equity concept in Canada started as a consequence of bias, of prejudice against employees. Those instances happened before the sixties and in the sixties the practice was recognized. Human rights legislation was enacted to potentially correct the biases and discrimination.

Those approaches proved to be insufficient and so came the second phase in the evolution of the concept, that systemic barriers exist in the system; unintended bias one may call it, systemic discrimination, but not without malice.

To solve the problem of systemic barriers it is important to get the full co–operation of employers on the business side. It is important that we do not introduce any kind of provision in the act that businesses will see as an additional burden.

Canada should be proud today that in so far as the employment equity legislation is concerned we nearly have unanimous support from the business community at large. We should thank that community for its confidence in the initiative of the government. We should continue to recognize that privilege. If we work on a co–operative and collaborative basis, we will achieve more. Canada is unique in that regard. I can sense the hon. member is now agreeing to the arguments I am proposing.

We welcome the contribution of the member, but I feel we should reject the motion for the reasons I have indicated. We need the full provisions of the employment equity law in Canada and we need to reinforce it very strongly. Now that we have extended the coverage and now that we have invoked an enforcement mechanism, the world is looking to us as a model. Contrary to an earlier amendment from the third party, we have embarked upon a new milestone, the further evolution of the concept of employment equity.

As I said earlier in the debate on another motion, the committee in its wisdom respecting employment equity made a commitment to merit. I think even Mr. Speaker is smiling at the beauty of this report.

I ask members to reject this motion.

CULTURAL PROPERTY EXPORT AND IMPORT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–93, an act to amend the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C–93, an act to amend the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act.

Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 342*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Althouse	Anawak
Anderson	Assad
Assadourian	Asselin
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud–Centre)
Baker	Barnes
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bernier (Beauce)	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Blondin–Andrew
Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Caron	Catterall
Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	Clancy
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Comuzzi
Cowling	Crawford
Culbert	de Jong
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dromisky	Duceppe
Duhamel	Dumas
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Fewchuk	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Fry	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gagnon (Québec)
Gallaway	Gauthier
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Grose
Guimond	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Jacob
Jordan	Keyes
Kirkby	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lalonde
Landry	Lastewka
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loney	Loubier
MacDonald	Maclaren
MacLellan (Cape/Cap Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Maloney	Marchand

Marchi
McGuire
McLaughlin
McWhinney
Mercier
Milliken
Murphy
Nunez
O'Reilly
Paré
Patry
Peric
Phinney
Pillitteri
Proud
Regan
Rocheleau
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Skoke
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Torsney
Ur
Venne
Volpe
Wayne
Whelan
Young
McCormick
McKinnon
McTeague
Ménard
Mifflin
Mitchell
Murray
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Payne
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pomerleau
Reed
Richardson
Sauvageau
Serré
Sheridan
Solomon
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Taylor
Terrana
Tobin
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Valeri
Verran
Wappel
Wells
Wood
Zed—168

NAYS

Members

Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Chatters
Duncan
Forseth
Gilmour
Grubel
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Hart
Hermanson
Hoeppner
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Ramsay
Schmidt
Silye
Stinson
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)
Bridgman
Cummins
Epp
Frazer
Grey (Beaver River)
Hanger
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud–Ouest)
Mills (Red Deer)
Penson
Ringma
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Thompson
Williams —36

PAIRED MEMBERS

Arseneault
Bakopanos
Bélisle
Bouchard
Campbell
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond–Guiral
de Savoye
Dubé
Fillion
Gerrard
Graham
Guay
Lincoln
Manley
Minna
Picard (Drummond)
Robillard
Tobin
Bachand
Beaumier
Bergeron
Brien
Canuel
Crête
Daviault
Deshaies
Dupuy
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine)
Godin
Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)
Langlois
Maheu
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord–Ouest)
Peters
Plamondon
Speller
Vanclief

● (1725)

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

[*Translation*]

OCEANS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the House will now proceed to the recorded division on the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I believe members would agree that those who voted on the previous motion, the main motion for second reading of Bill C–93, be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Quebecois will vote against this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, Reform members will vote against the motion, except for those who might wish to vote otherwise.

Mr. Solomon: Mr. Speaker, New Democrats present will vote yea.

Mrs. Wayne: Mr. Speaker, I vote yea.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(*Division No. 343*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Althouse
Anderson
Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud–Centre)
Barnes
Bélanger
Bernier (Beauce)
Bethel
Bhaduria
Bodnar
Boudria
Bryden
Calder
Catterall
Clancy
Collenette
Comuzzi
Crawford
de Jong
Dhaliwal
Alcock
Anawak
Assad
Augustine
Baker
Bélair
Bellemare
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Blondin–Andrew
Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Caccia
Cannis
Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)
Cohen
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
DeVillers
Dromisky

Duhamel
Easter
English
Finlay
Fontana
Gaffney
Gallaway
Goodale
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Jordan
Kirkby
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Loney
Maclaren
Malhi
Marchi
McGuire
McLaughlin
McWhinney
Milliken
Murphy
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peric
Phinney
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Serré
Sheridan
Solomon
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Taylor
Terrana
Tobin
Ur
Verran
Wappel
Wells
Wood
Zed—137

Dupuy
Eggleton
Fewchuk
Flis
Fry
Gagliano
Godfrey
Grose
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Iftody
Jackson
Keyes
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
McCormick
McKinnon
McTeague
Mifflin
Mitchell
Murray
O'Reilly
Parrish
Payne
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Skoke
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wayne
Whelan
Young

NAYS

Members

Asselin
Bernier (Gaspé)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Caron
Cummins
Dumas
Epp
Frazer
Gauthier
Godin
Grubel
Hanger
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jacob
Landry
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)
Marchand
Mayfield
Ménard
Meredith
Morrison
Paré
Pomerleau
Ringma
Sauvageau
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Thompson
Venne
Williams —67

Bellehumeur
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bridgman
Chatters
Duceppe
Duncan
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Gilmour
Grey (Beaver River)
Guimond
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Hart
Hermanson
Hoeppner
Lalonde
Laurin
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud–Ouest)
Mercier
Mills (Red Deer)
Nunez
Penson
Ramsay
Rocheleau
Schmidt
Silye
Stinson
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Arseneault
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Bélisle
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Campbell
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond–Guiral
de Savoye
Dubé
Fillion
Gerrard
Graham
Guay
Lincoln
Manley
Minna
Picard (Drummond)
Robillard
Tobin

Bachand
Beaumier
Bergeron
Brien
Canuel
Crête
Daviault
Deshaies
Dupuy
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles–de–la–Madeleine)
Godin
Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)
Langlois
Maheu
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord–Ouest)
Peters
Plamondon
Speller
Vanclief

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

(Bill referred to a committee.)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

NUCLEAR TESTS

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in September I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs whether in light of the French government's decision to resume nuclear tests he would call for a boycott of products made in France. The minister replied that although he deplores France's decision to test, it is more important that next year France sign the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

● (1730)

Last May in Geneva, 25 years after the nuclear non–proliferation treaty was signed, 178 nations voted to extend it and make it forever illegal for any member country beyond the original five nuclear powers to develop nuclear weapons. In return, nuclear powers would sign a permanent test ban treaty next year, a first step in dismantling their nuclear arsenals as required under the non–proliferation treaty.

While negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty are under way, France has embarked on a course of action that threatens to destabilize this important treaty process. When these actions are combined with a reopened debate in the United States on whether nuclear tests below 500 pounds of explosives should be allowed under the proposed treaty, you can see why non–nuclear nations are wondering whether nuclear powers are truly committed to a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and the eventual elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

The government of President Chirac argues that the principal reason the present tests are necessary is to provide data for developing nuclear test simulation software. I repeat: nuclear test simulation software. By contrast, in 1991 President

François Mitterrand ordered that nuclear test simulation software be developed without further tests. In addition, the American and British governments have already developed nuclear test simulation capabilities. The fact that the technology for nuclear test simulation already exists renders current tests by France unnecessary.

As we talk in this chamber, the O.J. Simpson trial and other recent murder trials command more attention than the actions taken by the French government, which threaten the comprehensive test ban treaty process and the South Pacific environment. Such actions should not just be deplored, they ought to be forcefully criticized, as the Australian and Japanese governments have done.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs ought to call in the ambassador for France and ask that the French government stop all further tests. If this is unsuccessful, Canadians can register their disapproval by simply boycotting products made in France, from wines to perfumes, from cheese to fashion, from cars to tourism.

In Sweden the voluntary actions of citizens have resulted, I am told, in an 80 per cent reduction in the sale of French wines. Canadians as consumers can express their disapproval too. It is the only weapon we have as citizens to convey our sentiments about a primitive use of power or about an action that is best described as the pornography of power.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Davenport for reminding the public of the importance of this subject.

With respect to French nuclear testing, the Government of Canada has expressed its view on the matter in a clear and unambiguous manner. We deplore the resumption of these tests and have made our position known to France in no uncertain terms. When China resumed its tests earlier this year, we also expressed our views on that matter.

Our position is clear. We call on all nuclear weapons states to stop these tests. We call for a speedy progress toward the signature of a comprehensive test ban treaty, the CTBT, which is the best way to ensure the end of all tests for all time.

Canada's position with respect to nuclear testing is not a recent one. This is a bedrock policy that we have had since the days of former Prime Minister Trudeau when he set out the strategy calling for the suffocation of nuclear arsenals. The hon. member was here at the time and helped to develop this policy.

We are one of the few countries in the world that has the capability yet has decided as a matter of policy not to develop nuclear weapons. We have also chosen not to have any nuclear armed weapons stationed on our soil.

Having succeeded in getting the non–proliferation treaty extended for an indefinite period we are now working very hard to ensure a truly comprehensive verifiable nuclear weapon test ban, the CTBT, is signed by June 1996.

We are very heartened to learn that so far three of the five nuclear weapons states, the U.S., the U.K. and France, have come out supporting a zero option CTBT, which the hon. member will be pleased to hear. This means a treaty which will allow no nuclear explosions whatsoever.

Again I congratulate the hon. member for helping Canada develop our policy in banning all nuclear weapons from this planet.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

(The House adjourned at 5.35 p.m.)

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