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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Friday, April 26, 1996**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 26, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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[*Translation*]

## CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS ACT

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the House would give its unanimous consent to the following. I move:

That a Bill entitled "An Act establishing the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians" be now deemed adopted at all stages without debate or amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Consequently, the bill is deemed read for the first time and ordered to be printed, read the second time and referred to committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed passed at report stage, read the third time and passed.

(Motion agreed to.)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1996

The House resumed from Thursday, April 25, consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 6, 1996, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and the amendment and the amendment to the amendment.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to talk about the budget bill which is before us today.

The budget is very much about preserving the future for Canadians. A major thrust is preserving our social programs and particularly the pension plans which have done so much to alleviate poverty among the elderly and provide Canada's seniors with a safe

and secure retirement from an economic point of view. We want to make sure that we are able to continue to offer that same sense of security to today's young people when they are retired.

The budget is also about preserving economic opportunities for Canadians, with a very heavy emphasis on enhancing trade opportunities, removing internal trade barriers as well as getting more Canadians out there in the international marketplace trading, producing jobs and economic prosperity here at home.

It is about recognizing that the knowledge industries are where the job opportunities of the future will be and investing strategically what limited resources we have in those areas of technology that we think offer the greatest potential.

We promised Canadians that we would deliver efficient, effective government. We have done that through putting Canada's economic and fiscal position in a much better state and moving toward a balanced budget and eventually debt reduction. We have done it with no tax rate increases at all in this budget. In fact, in the last three budgets there has not been an increase in personal tax rates.

Part of the plan has been smaller, more effective, more affordable government, to look at what we do as a government, to look at how we do it and to look at how we can do it better. Part of that has been examining the best ways to deliver services. Some measures involve privatization and the setting up of special agencies which will operate in a much tighter and more accountable way.

Part has simply been to stop doing things that we felt government no longer needed to do and sorting out with the provinces what is their proper area of activity and what is ours, especially in those areas of government endeavour where there is overlap and duplication between the two levels of government.

As we have been going through this change there is no question at all that it has had a significant impact on employees, many of them my constituents. The fundamental principles, as we have gone through this period of change and as we continue through it, is to be fair to employees, to make changes in a way that will be less disruptive to them, to their lives, to their careers and to their families.

I want to put a few comments on the record on areas where we have achieved that with some success because some comments were made in the House yesterday that did not quite accurately reflect things that have been done and things that are planned. When my colleague from the Reform Party, the hon. member for

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St. Albert spoke, I hope he was ill-informed and was not being mischievous with the facts of the situation.

• (1010)

I will put on the record a couple of facts that may correct some misapprehensions arising from his speech yesterday. He talked about air navigational service employees. It is important to know these employees will receive their severance pay when they move to NavCan. The employer has respected the collective agreement which was in place at the time the agreement was signed. Subsequent negotiations have occurred on the treatment of employees who will be affected by alternative delivery mechanisms, some of which I have mentioned.

The majority of public service unions, although not those representing the majority of employees, agreed to changes in the collective agreement such that severance payments will not be made at the time of transfer, but the liability for that severance payment will be transferred to the new employer when the collective agreement is transferred through successor rights.

This agreement with the unions was conditional on the government introducing successor rights through amendments to the Public Service Staff Relations Act and the Canada Labour Code. While one of the public service unions does not agree, I can only say to those unions which were involved in concluding this agreement that they bargained well for their members.

I know the kinds of things they achieved for their members and this is one measure that would not have been accomplished without their involvement and without their working and fighting very hard for their members. The government has honoured its commitments to the 13 unions that did sign this agreement by introducing these amendments and legislating them in Bill C-31.

During question period yesterday, the member for St. Albert, the Reform critic for human resources, pointed out the difference in treatment of these workers with air navigation services and other employees with respect to severance pay. The hon. member also commented that the introduction of successor rights in budget legislation seems to be the employer's way of avoiding negotiating with its union on each transfer case.

Our employees want to know exactly where they stand when new arrangements come into place. I believe their unions have bargained well for them and have provided the kind of security that anybody in a climate of significant change in their place of work would want to have. I do not want to get into the details of that issue, but this is a continuation of our commitment to the employees to change government without drastically altering their lives.

I am pleased to note that the budget has announced that the Public Sector Compensation Act, which froze federal government wages for five of the past six years, is due to expire in 1997. The act will expire as planned. It was introduced under the previous government. We have let it run its course but we do not intend to renew or extend it. We intend to get back to collective bargaining with our employees.

We are also reinstating this June the normal process of increments and performance pay for government employees. There is no question that our fellow citizens who work for the Government of Canada have borne a major portion of the cost of starting to restore fiscal order to Canada's house.

I hope this return to collective bargaining and the way in which the reduction of employment in the public service has been handled has been a signal to them that we value and respect the work they do. I hope they are looking forward, as the government is, to a return to collective bargaining.

No budget is perfect, no piece of legislation is perfect. However, this legislation represents a reasonable balance of many of the objectives we are trying to accomplish.

• (1015)

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on the budget implementation bill. I would not be standing here speaking today if this government and previous governments had done their jobs.

The situation we find ourselves in today is a very serious one indeed. It compromises the lives of every Canadian, every social program and not only the lives of Canadians today but the lives of Canadians tomorrow.

Today we see, through the budget implementation bill, the facts. The government is having to borrow on the futures of children of today and tomorrow to pay for what it is spending today.

Three years ago we gave the government our zero in three plan. It was a definitive, specific plan to get Canada's economic house in order. It told the government where to cut, how to cut and how much to cut. It was not some nebulous plan, not some mythological plan, but a highly specific plan to get Canada's house in order. What did the government do? It ignored it. It ignores it at its peril.

The finance minister has repeatedly said "we will stay the course because we are doing just fine. Don't worry, Mr. and Mrs. Public, Canada is doing just fine with out economics. The Liberal government has a hold on things. We are in control. We are staying the course".

Staying the course for what, so the Canadian economy can run head first into a brick wall? That is not a course the Canadian public wants to take. It is not a course it wants for its future or the future of its children.

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We have solutions. We put them forth. I implore the government once again to look at the zero in three plan so that we do not need to bring forth budget implementation plans.

We have been accused many times by the government and by members of the public of being a slash and burn party. I would like to refute once and for all that the Reform Party is the slash and burn party. We are the only political party that has the plan to save social programs in Canada. It flies in the face of conventional wisdom. It flies in the face of what has been put forth by members across the way. Those are the facts, and I will explain why.

The single greatest compromise to social programs is the inability to get our fiscal house in order. Why is that so? When we were first elected three years ago, one-quarter of all the money the government spent went to interest. It went to service the \$550 billion debt which saddles all of us. It is our responsibility.

Today because of government overspending, because of repeated deficit spending, we have added to the national debt. I am speaking only to the federal debt. Provincial and municipal debts are another matter. We have added to the federal debt and the interest payments have increased.

Imagine the pie once again; one-quarter three years ago and today that number has moved around to about 35 per cent of that pie. As time passes the amount of the pie to be eaten up and eroded by interest payments will increase. It will swallow up the ability of this government or any government to spend on education, on health care, on welfare, on pensions; in short, to provide for those people who need our justifiably laudable social programs.

It compromises not the rich, but those who are poorest. One thing we pride ourselves on as Canadians is our ability to take care of those who are less fortunate than ourselves. It is in a sense a defining aspect of being Canadian.

• (1020)

Therefore it is the inability to get control of government spending, the inability to get our deficit to zero and attack the true ogre in this equation, the debt, which compromises our social programs and our economy. If interest payments rise, the amount of interest will increase, greatly impeding the ability of the government to provide those things we hold dear, things Canadians rely on.

It also crushes the life out of the economy. Why? Repeated deficit spending and the debt force us to have higher relative interest rates than other countries.

There was a superb article which looked at relative interest rates compared with other countries. Although our interest rates are apparently low, the real interest rates are some of the highest in the world. It is those interest rates that compromise the ability of our

companies to invest and spend. They also compromise the ability of Canadians to spend because of the relatively high tax rate on Canadians in order to service the debt.

There is a terrible vicious circle and the only way to break it, save our social programs and kick start the economy and get people back to work, provide for education and for a stronger economy is to bring the debt down.

The finance minister has said they are doing a great job, contrary to what the International Monetary Fund said at the end of last year. It gave a stern warning to the finance minister: "Stay the course and your country will hit the wall. The budget projections are completely inadequate. You must upgrade them in order to have a strong economy for Canadians in the future".

We in the Reform Party have absolutely no desire to compromise social programs for the poor. The reason many of us here gave up good careers and a comfortable lifestyle was to get Canada back on track. There is a narrow window of opportunity to do that. As time passes it will be increasingly more difficult to get the country back on track.

The failure to address the problem today will produce the biggest compromise Canadians have seen in the last 75 years. Solutions are there. We have provided them. I say to the government that its failure to ignore this will imperil Canadians from coast to coast. Its failure will show up at the next election. I implore members to work with us and use some of our ideas. We do not have all the answers but a lot of them are backed up by Canadians through our grassroots process. Use the ideas. Do not just talk about them repeatedly. Do not study them again for the 100th time. Put them into effect and take action on the problem now.

During the election campaign the Liberals told the Canadian people they would abolish the GST, knowing full well it is a financial and economic impossibility. Now they are doing a mea culpa and eating crow. Some members volunteered to give up their seats if the GST were not abolished. They know full well they could not get rid of it. It think it is reprehensible that they have pulled the wool over the eyes of Canadian taxpayers by this myth, this illusion that they will get rid of the GST.

The harmonization process they are proposing to the Canadian people that will somehow get rid, eliminate or decrease the GST is another illusion put forth by the magicians across the way, bad magicians at that.

• (1025)

The harmonization process is nothing but a gerrymandering of dollar figures. It is inequitable and unfair to Canadians outside the maritime provinces. They are asking the rest of Canada to give \$1 billion to the maritime provinces. Furthermore, the maritime provinces do not accept harmonization because they know it will cost them more at the counter, particularly the poor and the middle

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class. As well, the tax base will broaden to include essentials. The rich will not suffer; the poor and the middle class will suffer.

The government should take a long, hard look at harmonization. The public will not accept it, which the government will find out at the next election.

Economically it is fundamentally wrong. There are good solutions. The government must control spending and decrease taxes. Once it has decreased the debt it can lower the GST rate. That is the responsible thing to do.

The debt and the deficit will not go away by themselves. Strong leadership is required. The budget implementation act will not solve the problem. However, using the solutions we have suggested will solve the problem.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join my colleagues in a few words about Bill C-31 and the related issues of the March 6 budget.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca made much about his party's commitment to a zero deficit in three years, the so-called zero in three program. We heard a lot about that when the Reform Party introduced it. However, this year as preparations were being made for the federal budget the promised Reform Party alternative budget never materialized. We really have to ask ourselves whether zero in three has gone by the boards. The program should be renamed zero in one. If the Reform Party continues to behave as it has recently, in one year there will be zero members of the Reform Party in the House.

We are here to work together for all Canadians. We understand the cut and thrust of Parliament and the need to criticize, but that criticism must be fair. It must not be designed to confuse people so they do not know where a party is going.

Good government can be best exemplified by the historical expertise this party has brought to government in Canada. We have the best country in the world. The Prime Minister has said that many times. I have said that many times. My constituents know we have the best country in the world.

In December I spent a few days in Russia observing the parliamentary elections to the *duma*. I can confirm that even though that great superpower has an important political place in the world, few of us would choose to live there or in many other countries. Canada is a beautiful country, built on the honest effort of people around the world who believe that working together and co-operating is the only way to build a country. I dare say to my colleagues across the way that we have the best country in the world because we have had good government for most of the past

century. For that I think we should thank the Liberal Party of Canada and the excellent leadership it has provided.

• (1030)

Good government is not perfect government. During the next election campaign I will be questioned on certain matters but I know I will be able to stand proud in front of my constituents and say that we did a good job in this last term. We did not do a perfect job but I suggest that nobody could do a perfect job. Anybody who said they could do a perfect job would be attempting to pull the wool over the eyes of voters. We have done a very, very good job.

Our approach to the problem of getting Canada's deficit in hand has been very responsible and reasonable. We have not done it on the backs of middle and low income Canadians. We have not done it on the backs of those who can least afford it. We have provided a transitional means of cutting back on federal expenditures. It is our commitment to have the federal deficit down to 2 per cent of GDP by the end of fiscal year 1997-98 which literally is just around the corner. We will have achieved that without putting the country in a state of confusion and uproar.

The Minister of Finance reminded us in his budget speech that we went into our mandate with four very key principles or areas of concern.

The first is to secure our financial future which means that we provide stability for those in the business sector who must plan for the future. We provide stability for Canadians who unfortunately find themselves out of work, who must themselves plan for the future. In so doing we have introduced the employment insurance legislation. As they study it more and more, Canadians will find it is the right answer to the dilemma this country is facing as far as balancing the need to protect those who are unemployed against those who are able to work but who must be more able to respond to the changing workplace.

The second major principle we must pursue is to secure our social programs, and Canadians agree with us on this point. Another signal or sign of a good government is one that does not sacrifice in this process those least able to take care of themselves: the handicapped, single parent families, those who find themselves at the lower end of the economic scale, those who are disadvantaged for one reason or another. These people will not be forgotten under a Liberal government. Other parties might not be able to accomplish what we have been able to accomplish thus far in this regard.

The third key area the finance minister outlined in his budget is investment in the future. This is where we recognize the importance of high technology for the future of this country and for the future of the world. We must not only engage business and all

Canadians in general, but more specifically our young people who find themselves facing a workplace that has changed drastically. It changes dramatically year by year.

When I graduated from engineering school more than a few years ago there were jobs for all the graduates. The world of work was more stable, more predictable. One could expect to be with a company for their full career. It is the nature of the world that this has changed. With the flow of information, the vast improvement in the availability of high technology and the fact that these things change almost every week, it is true that graduates now must be flexible, adaptable and prepared for a workplace that will require them to learn throughout the rest of their lives. Our young people are prepared for that and it is our job to assist them in their preparation.

• (1035)

The fourth significant area, which is the subject of Bill C-31 which we are debating today, is getting government right. I remind my hon. colleagues across the way that my constituents, and I am sure Canadians from coast to coast, in expecting good government do not expect perfect government.

As the Prime Minister outlined the other day, we have already completed three-quarters of our campaign commitments. I would expect that by the next election call we will have nearly completed the balance of those commitments.

I look forward to standing in front of my constituents during the next election campaign at various all-candidates meetings and saying that we accomplished the vast majority of our campaign commitments and the only reason we did not complete the others was that the opposition parties would not allow us to do so or the province of Ontario would not allow us to do so. I will be able to say that the Reform Party was full square behind the idea of harmonizing the GST and the provincial sales tax but it made so much to do about the issue it made it more difficult for us to get the agreements with the provinces. It gave Canadians the wrong impression about where we were going.

This is a good government for Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my turn has come to speak on Bill C-31, and I will be better able to concentrate on my speech as soon as I have some quiet.

This bill is aimed at privatizing certain services and gives the government the opportunity to dispose of rail stock. It makes minor changes to the old age pension—until the real thing comes along in five years—provides for the Canada social transfer, in other words it combines three transfer programs to the provinces into one. Of course, it will be transferring cuts to them at the same time. It gives

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more power to the Minister of Industry and it modifies the Student Loans Act. But mainly, the bill enables the Minister of Finance to give \$963 million in compensation to the Atlantic provinces in exchange for harmonization of the GST.

My colleague, the finance critic for the Bloc Québécois, has addressed this at length, so I shall concentrate my remarks mainly on unemployment insurance.

So Friday has arrived, the end of the week, and what a week we have had here in the House. A rather special week, since the government imposed two gag orders, the first on Bill C-31, on which we are speaking today, and the second on the committee stage of Bill C-12 on unemployment insurance, in the human resources development committee. But Bill C-31 also addresses unemployment insurance.

• (1040)

It is a bit odd. With this approach, the government could be said to be wearing both a belt and suspenders. In other words, the amendments to the unemployment insurance plan are in two bills that are being considered at the same time. Different.

Furthermore, Bill C-31 is worse than Bill C-12 in that its effect is retroactive to January 1, 1996. People should be reminded that, while we are being gagged and while the time spent by the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development in consideration of this bill is being limited, as it was this past week, here we are passing another bill containing two measures: the reduction in the ceiling on insurable earnings to \$39,000 and its effect being made retroactive to January 1, 1996. This is quite something. They are not taking any chances. Perhaps they are afraid of protests against this bill in the Senate, the House or somewhere outside Parliament. They are not running any risks; they are going at the unemployed with two bills.

Worse yet, there was contempt of the House this week. This is why I called this the week of the gag. I am not talking about yawning but about being gagged. I am talking about being very wide awake and being gagged. We were very much awake in opposition, even if we did go to bed very late, even going without sleep Tuesday night, because we tried to convince the government and the whip opposite that it did not make sense, at the stage of considering the bill clause by clause, to allow only five minutes per clause.

What is more, I showed that clause 5 alone—my only example—took 12 minutes to read. So, with the time limit the government wanted to impose this week, it was not even possible to read the clauses. It was not permitted. It was impossible. So, as you can imagine, there was no time for answers to our questions, and we could not complain, obviously. So, they pushed it through. The government, for the second time in this Parliament, is setting time limits with this bill against unemployment insurance, as it did with

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the bill sending railway employees back to work, where we sat here on a weekend.

What is worse, they are so contemptuous that, on January 1, they issued an employer's guide, a job statement I have in my hands, asking that contributions be made on the basis of \$39,000 instead of \$42,400. Employers were advised to comply since a bill to that effect would be passed. They said one bill, not two. So this measure has already been implemented.

We know that this measure, which would reduce maximum insurable earnings from \$42,400 to \$39,000, represents an amount of \$900 million that the government agreed to forgo on a retroactive basis. I wonder what kind of game they are playing.

Then they accuse us of wasting the government's money because we want to take our time to study the clauses. The government, for its part, can give a present to business and to people making more than \$39,000 to make them more receptive to its bill. Meanwhile, people who did not have to pay premiums before will now have to, including those working less than 15 hours a week, whose contributions represent another \$900 million.

This is the exact opposite of Robin Hood, who tried to help the poor by robbing the rich—although the means might not have been the most appropriate. The government, however, gives to the rich so it can take more from the poor. What is the world coming to? This is a week of muzzling; nothing makes sense any more.

They send this to employers, thus showing their contempt for Parliament.

• (1045)

I will not say much about the GST. As we know, the Prime Minister does not want to acknowledge the statements he made about the GST, although the Minister of Finance admitted that they indeed made a mistake, that they did promise to kill the GST but that it was not feasible. I am not talking about the red book, but about the Prime Minister's statements.

The Prime Minister refuses to acknowledge his comments, but he may recognize the letter he sent *Mouvement action-chômage* on March 26, 1993. I would like to read it, as it is not very long:

Thank you for your fax expressing your opposition to the legislative measures taken by the government—the Tory government and former minister Valcourt—to amend the unemployment insurance plan.

I can assure you that the Liberal Party shares your concern about this attack against the unemployed. We do not believe either that the recent superficial amendments will change the fundamentally unfair nature of these measures.

Our country is still in the throes of the worst economic crisis it has gone through since the thirties.

I will skip the next paragraph as it contains figures.

Given how serious the crisis is, the Liberals have urged the government—the Conservative government—to take steps to stimulate the economy and create jobs. Yet, the Minister of Finance says not only that he will renew the same fiscal, monetary and trade policies that have plunged us into this recession, but that he will go after the unemployed in order to reduce government spending.

The Liberal Party is appalled by these measures. Obviously, by reducing benefits and further penalizing those who leave their jobs voluntarily, the government shows very little concern for the victims of the economic crisis. Instead of getting to the heart of the problem, it goes after the unemployed. These measures will have a disturbing impact, for they will discourage workers from reporting harassment cases and unacceptable conditions in the workplace.

Finally, you can be assured that the Liberals will continue to call on the government—the Conservative government—to withdraw this unfair bill. As Leader of the Opposition, I appreciate your taking the trouble of sharing your views on this matter with me.

Sincerely,

Jean Chrétien,

Leader of the Opposition.

This is not a statement but a letter. I will not repeat it. Now, through Bill C-31, and especially Bill C-12, the government will reduce UI benefits even further. People will no longer qualify.

In conclusion—you are indicating my time is up, but I know you are not trying to muzzle me—I deplore this week of muzzling. It is the end of the honeymoon and the beginning of the end for this Liberal government.

**Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak, Lib.):**

*[Editor's note: Member spoke in Inuktitut]*

*[English]*

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to say a few words about the 1996 budget, the government's third budget.

In October 1993 when the Liberal government took over from the Conservatives, the country's deficit and debt situation was out of control and swift decisive action was needed. The deficit had to be reduced and the role and priorities of the government had to be clarified.

Steps were taken immediately to get the country back on track. A comprehensive review of all federal government programs and services was launched. As a result of that review, some programs have been eliminated, others have been cut and still others have been transferred.

By the end of the 1998-99, program review measures will have reduced program expenditures by \$9 billion. In that reduction process, however, the government is being careful.

Protecting the most vulnerable is paramount. Better targeting of spending is crucial. While the government is reducing overall



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spending, it has at the same time identified its core role and refocused its resources on priority areas.

• (1050)

I am pleased to note that the needs of the aboriginal people have been identified as a government priority. Accordingly, while aboriginal programs are experiencing some reductions, they are comparatively few compared to other areas of government spending.

In this regard, I am also happy to say that the government has decided to maintain the food mail program, which is very important to the health and well-being of northerners. Under this program, the government funds the transportation of nutritious, perishable foods to isolated communities. Without this program, most people could not afford a healthy, nutritious diet. I am pleased that the government has recognized the importance of this program to the future health and well-being of northerners.

Securing the future of Canadians is the main theme of the 1996 budget. Investing in the future is another major theme. The jobs and growth initiatives of the budget focus on youth employment opportunities, technology and trade. Protecting the most vulnerable is another key feature of the budget.

The 1996 budget contains some good measures for families, particularly low income families. It provides more support for children, youth, women and the elderly. There are no tax increases in this budget. Affordable, accessible social programs are being ensured.

Support for seniors is being maintained and support for low income seniors is being enhanced. Pensions are being protected. Under the new seniors benefit to be introduced in 2001, guaranteed income supplement recipients will get an additional \$120 a year. The spouses allowance will be increased by \$120 a year. Seniors will only have to apply once when they turn 65, although they will have to continue submitting annual income tax returns.

Support for children is being ensured. New child support awards after May 1, 1997 will not be considered as income of the recipient for tax purposes. The age limit for the child care expense deduction is being increased to 16 years from 14 years.

Support for low income families is being increased. The working income supplement under the child tax credit will be increased from \$500 to \$750 in July 1997 and to \$1,000 in July 1998.

The budget contains additional support for youth education and jobs with an additional \$165 million over three years through the tax system to help students and their families deal with the costs of education.

Single parents will now be eligible for the same child care expense deductions as are available to couples. High school students will now be eligible for the child care deduction.

There will be an additional \$315 million over three years to help create youth employment opportunities, in addition to existing youth internship and youth service Canada funding. Some of the funds will go to summer jobs. Funds for 1996-97 student summer employment are doubled to \$120 million.

There is more help regarding the information highway. Every school and library in Canada will be connected by 1998 and more rural communities will also be connected.

Federal transfers to provinces and territories for health, post-secondary education and social assistance, the Canada health and social transfer, will be secure, stable and will grow.

The budget also contains some cuts. While the budget's positive measures will benefit my constituents, they are also being asked to assume some of the restraint in areas of direct concern to them. Spending on Indian and Inuit programs is being restrained. The increase in growth of spending will be reduced.

The changes to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation also affect my constituency. The budget indicates that CMHC is getting out of social housing except for housing on Indian reserves. Provincial and territorial governments are being offered the opportunity to take over the management of existing social housing resources.

I would like to say a little more about the housing situation in my constituency. There has been no ongoing funding for new social housing units since 1993. For the Government of the Northwest Territories, the decision by the former Conservative government to discontinue funding new social housing units meant a reduction of \$47 million. The Government of the Northwest Territories has been unable to replace the \$47 million lost in 1993, yet it spends more of its budget on housing than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

Housing need in the NWT is severe. In recognition of this fact, in October 1994 the federal government announced a special one-year strategic housing initiative for northern and remote communities. Seventeen million dollars was made available for emergency housing needs in northern Canada. The NWT was allocated \$9.5 million of this amount.

• (1055)

The assistance was gratefully received, but there are still major outstanding needs, particularly among aboriginal people. Twenty-five per cent of northern NWT households are in need. This is the highest proportion of households in need in any Canadian jurisdiction.

*S. O. 31*

tion. Over 87 per cent of the NWT households in core need are aboriginal people.

In the NWT aboriginal people make up nearly 98 per cent of the social housing client base. There is only one reserve in the Northwest Territories and the Inuit do not live on reserves at all. Therefore, assistance for housing on reserves does not benefit the vast majority of aboriginal people in the NWT. This fact is important for members of this House to understand.

Most Indian and all Inuit people of the Northwest Territories do not qualify for the department of Indian affairs' housing program because they do not live on reserves. Housing assistance for aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories comes through the NWT government, so any cuts to NWT housing mean cuts to aboriginal housing.

Most communities in the NWT are almost totally dependant on government for shelter. Aboriginal people have moved off the land into permanent communities only during the last 30 to 40 years. There has never been enough housing in the NWT to adequately house all the people requiring shelter.

In addition, the NWT population is young and is growing rapidly. The birth rate in the NWT is almost twice the national average. Forty-one per cent of NWT children under the age of 12 are living in overcrowded conditions. This negatively affects their health, social development and school performance.

In conclusion, housing remains an area of great concern to me and all northerners. I continue to urge the federal government and the territorial government to work together to address the serious housing needs of northern aboriginal people.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being close to 11 a.m., we will now proceed to Statements by Members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### B.C. SUMMER GAMES

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the area of southeastern British Columbia that I represent is a great place to visit at any time. When I moved there in 1976, it was only intended to be a temporary move, but the beauty of the area and the warmth of the people soon convinced me there was no better place to be.

This summer there is a further special reason for Canadians to visit this jewel of the B.C. interior. The cities of Trail and Castlegar are combining to host the 1996 B.C. summer games from July 25 to July 28.

Both of these communities and other local surrounding communities will be pulling out all the stops to ensure that visitors have a

very rewarding experience. In addition to the games, visitors will be able to experience restored and preserved wild west history, pristine lake fishing, championship golf courses, hot springs, hiking trails, areas of breathtaking beauty and much more.

I invite all the members of the House and those watching in the various parts of the country to visit the west Kootenays this summer and discover for themselves the reasons we are so proud of our area.

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### ARMY CADET MONTH

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the upcoming month of May is designated as Army Cadet Month.

Through their training, cadets are fortunate to acquire a sense of citizenship, leadership, discipline, comradeship and a healthy lifestyle which are all hallmarks for success and unique to our Canadian identity.

Further to this special designation, the Minister of National Defence will visit Carleton—Charlotte for a special ceremony and annual cadet inspection at the Border Arena in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, on May 2.

I also wish to acknowledge the adult leaders who give so generously of their time, talents and energy in order to guide the cadets in their training and development.

I thank the Minister of National defence for taking the time to recognize this important event in Carleton—Charlotte, and further to congratulate all cadets across Canada for the significant role they play in our Canadian identity.

\* \* \*

### TWO-DOLLAR COIN

**Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq, Lib.):**

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.]

• (1100)

[English]

Mr. Speaker, over the years Inuit have been teaching the rest of the world their language. Because the rest of the world is awfully slow, we teach them about one word every 10 years, such as kayak, igloo, umiak, anorak. Over the years we have taught the world about 60 Inuit words and it will take a few thousand years for people to learn the Inuit language.

I would like to teach Canadians one more Inuktitut word which they can remember for the next 10 years. That is the word "nanuq" which in English means polar bear; majestic, strong, powerful and mysterious, the creature which now graces our two dollar coin.

I suggest we adopt the name nanuq for our two dollar coin in honour of Inuktitut, one of the original languages of this country, and the name of a truly northern Canadian animal.

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### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to salute and thank all of the volunteers across the country, particularly those in my Elk Island constituency.

Special mention must go to Henry Unrau, Jeanne Frame and the other community leaders who are managing the Information and Volunteer Centre for Strathcona County. These special volunteers in my community have spearheaded a new national initiative helping to recognize the important contribution volunteers make.

Volunteer Spirit Day exemplifies the motivation and satisfaction of the millions of people across Canada who give freely of their time and bountifully of their resources to help others. This is truly the spirit that makes Canada the outstanding compassionate society it is.

I am sorry the rules of the House do not permit props because I have a volunteer T-shirt to present to the Prime Minister from this group in Elk Island.

Congratulations and thanks to volunteers everywhere.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### FÉDÉRATION DES COMMUNAUTÉS FRANCOPHONES ET ACADIENNE

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on October 17, 1996, in the middle of the referendum campaign, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne issued a press release stating that the assimilation of francophones in Canada had declined. But the federation made a mistake. Its president, Jacques Michaud, recently confirmed on the CBC that indeed an error had slipped through when the announcement was made in October last year.

It is surprising enough that the federation would make such a mistake concerning the assimilation rate of francophones, but the fact that it did not rectify its mistake and make a public apology for this blunder is inexcusable. This incident has sullied the credibility of an organization on which francophones outside Quebec depend.

Since it is never too late to acknowledge one's mistakes, what is the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne waiting for to apologize?

[English]

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### WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on April 28 we will commemorate the National Day of Mourning. I urge all hon. members to reflect on the horrendous tragedy of accidental death and serious injury of Canadian workers on the job. Our most recent statistics are for 1994 when over 700 workers were killed while performing their jobs. On the National Day of Mourning we are also renewing our determination to reduce and prevent accidental deaths and injuries in the workplace.

The federal approach to occupational health and safety dealt with in part II of the Canada Labour Code is based upon the internal responsibility system. This system recognizes that an employer has the right to manage its enterprise in an effective manner and at the same time the employer has a responsibility to protect the safety and health of its workers.

Governments, workers and employers must continue to strive toward greater improvement in workplace safety and health.

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[Translation]

### OLYMPIC GAMES IN ATLANTA

**Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, Canadians from coast to coast share the great pride of knowing that a fellow citizen has been selected to sing the opening theme at the upcoming Olympic Games in Atlanta. Canadian composer David Foster's "The Power of the Dream" will be performed by none other than Céline Dion.

Accompanied by about 100 musicians, the great singer born in Charlemagne, Quebec, will perform this beautiful song in front of an audience of 80,000. It is estimated that more than 3.5 billion viewers worldwide will watch the show on television.

• (1105)

Canada is delighted, to say the least, with the honour bestowed upon Céline Dion and we can assure her right now that, from the moment she steps on to perform on July 19, the hearts of 29 million Canadians will be beating in tune with hers.

\* \* \*

### DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence must take his responsibilities. Here in this House, he has always defended his new protégé, Jean Boyle, the chief of staff of the Canadian armed forces, against allegations of conspiracy to withhold information

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from the public and to wilfully deceive taxpayers, the media and members of this Parliament.

However, based on new documents and testimonies, the chief of staff may have been more than aware of this dishonest practice and may even have taken part in it.

Who runs the Department of National Defence? Is the minister capable of running that department? Is he a mere puppet whose role is to hide the facts and the unscrupulous actions of some high ranking officers?

The credibility of the armed forces is at stake and the risks of a faux pas are obvious. The minister should suspend his chief of staff until all the facts are known regarding this issue.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's is a debilitating disease, the negative effects of which are not limited to the affected individual. Family members and friends are left helpless in this battle and endure constant suffering.

The impact of this disease will continue. Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population. With age, the odds of falling victim to Alzheimer's increase dramatically.

Yesterday I met with a representative of the Alzheimer Society to discuss this disease. Just recently I had the chance to take part in Perth county's Alzheimer Society open house in my riding.

I am impressed by the great work performed by the Alzheimer Society. The work of this organization reaches far beyond care for the individual. The society works with the community to aid in the adjustment process for family and friends.

I salute the Alzheimer Society of Canada for all its hard work and wish the representatives gathered in Ottawa for their annual conference a pleasant stay.

\* \* \*

**PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION**

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the ruling body of the Palestine Liberation Organization voted decisively to delete from its founding charter all references calling for an armed struggle to destroy Israel.

This vote, coming on the 48th anniversary of Israel's independence, is a very important step toward creating a just and permanent peace for all peoples in the Middle East.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres has offered the highest praise to PLO chairman Yasser Arafat for keeping this vital commitment.

Canadians and all peoples of goodwill join in this praise for a courageous act of leadership. We pray for successful talks between the Israelis and Palestinians as their leaders strive to settle the permanent status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in a just and equitable manner.

\* \* \*

**CHERNOBYL**

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 10th anniversary of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl. This was the biggest peacetime nuclear accident, so far. Fully one-third of the area of Ukraine has been contaminated by nuclear fallout.

Many Ukrainians, especially children, have been affected by nuclear radiation. Medical scientists are presently studying what has become known as post-Chernobyl syndrome. It affects all victims and gives them a distrust of government and a feeling of being ignored by the rest of the world.

As we commemorate this disaster and send our sympathy to the people of Ukraine, may it spur us on to co-operate with all other nuclear nations in seeking better safeguards for the use and disposal of nuclear materials.

Ten years after the accident in Chernobyl, let us work together to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**QUEBEC CITY BRIDGE**

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government's inaction regarding the restoration of the Quebec City bridge is a constant threat to the survival of this structure. Last fall, Jean Pelletier, the Prime Minister's chief of staff, promised the Coalition de sauvegarde du point de Québec that the issue would be quickly settled after the referendum. "Do not make waves regarding this issue before the referendum", he said.

Since October 30, Mr. Pelletier is nowhere to be found. Moreover, it is just as difficult to discuss this issue with the Minister of Canadian Heritage, even though the Quebec City bridge was recognized as a heritage site of national interest by her predecessor.

Is the Liberal government acting out of revenge in dragging its feet, given that it did not succeed in getting a single member elected in the Quebec City region?

• (1110)

If this is the case, such an attitude is outrageous. Otherwise, the federal government should do like its Quebec counterpart and quickly announce its contribution to the restoration of the Quebec City bridge.

\* \* \*

[English]

### NATIONAL UNITY

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, recent events show that we can no longer ignore the true voice of federalists in Quebec.

This week 2,500 Quebecers marched on the Fairview Plaza in Pointe-Claire to protest against Quebec's oppressive language laws restricting the use of English.

Last night in Hudson, Quebec it was my honour to be in the company of hundreds of loyal Canadians wishing to remain a part of Canada should Quebec separate. Those in the standing room only crowd have a message they want conveyed to politicians in Ottawa. In the event of a future yes vote on sovereignty, they demand the federal government recognize and protect their right to remain Canadian citizens.

I was also presented with a petition signed by 4,400 Quebecers asking Parliament to act upon their concerns. I call upon the member for Vaudreuil to join me in tabling the petition and asking the Prime Minister to personally respond to these petitioners' concerns.

Reformers stand solidly behind these Canadians from Vaudreuil.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### FÉDÉRATION DES CAISSES POPULAIRES DE L'ONTARIO

**Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year the Fédération des caisses populaires de l'Ontario is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Since the establishment of the first caisse in 1912, the concept of a bank belonging to the community and serving the community rapidly spread to all of Ontario. Today, the Fédération includes 42 caisses, 65 service centres, close to 200,000 members and assets in excess of \$1.6 billion.

Franco-Ontarians are rightly proud of their institutions and the central role they play in the development of their community. I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Fédération and its directors, who are meeting in Ottawa this weekend to plan the successes of the next century.

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[English]

### PHYSIOTHERAPY WEEK

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, April 21 to 27 is National Physiotherapy Week, marking an annual campaign sponsored by the Canadian Physiotherapy Association to increase public awareness of physiotherapy. The theme for 1996 is "All the Right Moves—Entre bonnes mains", highlighting a profession in motion.

For more than 75 years, physiotherapists have helped Canadians achieve their highest level of physical functionality. As frontline health care workers, they help patients enhance their mobility, strength and well-being. Physiotherapists will continue in this important role and will become increasingly involved in promoting good health. Physiotherapists play a key role in restoring health to Canadians in the post-operative care they provide. They also provide preventive health remedies for many Canadians.

I join Canada's 10,000 physiotherapists in reminding Canadians of the important role they play as members of the health care system in their community.

[Translation]

I congratulate physiotherapists for their devotion to their profession and their contribution to the establishment of a system of modern medicine in Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CANCER

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, April is cancer campaign month. During this month thousands of Canadians across the country have generously donated their time, energy and money to rid us of this terrible scourge. Last year more than \$45 million was raised.

The Canadian Cancer Society spearheads this campaign. Its mission is the eradication of this disease and the enhancement of the quality of life of people who are suffering from it.

All of our lives have been touched in some way by cancer. I know we all stand shoulder to shoulder in wishing our colleague from Windsor West a speedy recovery in his battle with this terrible disease.

In 1996 it is estimated that 129,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer and 61,000 will die. For almost 60 years the generosity of Canadians has enabled important cancer research and education to occur.

*Oral Questions*

I congratulate and thank all Canadians from coast to coast who have generously donated their time and energy to this worthy cause. I know that through them cancer can be beaten.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

### COAST GUARD

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Montreal, Vera Danyluk, Chairperson of the Montreal Urban Community, Patrice Simard, President of the Metropolitan Montreal Chamber of Commerce, and Serge Ménard, ministre d'État à la métropole spoke out, on behalf of all Quebec industries dependent on marine shipping, against the government's intentions regarding new fee scales for aid to navigation.

Does the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans realize that he will be placing American Great Lakes ports at an advantage over Canadian and Quebec ports, since a ship taking the seaway en route to Chicago, for instance, will not be subject to the new fee scale, whereas one taking the same route but stopping at Montreal will have to bear the burden of the increased charges the minister proposes?

• (1115)

[English]

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that marine services fees are user fees that pay for the use of public facilities which taxpayers pay for right now. He also knows that the charges are applied fairly across the country. The system was developed over a period of five months, stemming from recommendations made by the Marine Advisory Board.

With respect to being fair and equitable, 850 consultations were conducted in this period of time. I believe the standing committee itself looked at 26 industries.

I can assure the hon. member that the fees levied in Montreal are as fair as those levied in any other part of the country, including the Great Lakes area. If there is a difference in the total cost, it relates to the volume of traffic.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the answer I am being given is unbelievable.

What I am saying to the minister is that a ship going to Chicago, U.S.A.—it is not in this country, it is in the U.S.—will not pay. Our jobs are being exported to the U.S. Yesterday those in charge of metropolitan Montreal, speaking on its behalf, were asking what

the ministers, the Liberal members for Quebec, were waiting for before criticizing this policy.

The minister speaks of integrity, equity. He is also proposing that part of the costs that ought to be borne by Newfoundland, and all of the costs paid by the northern ports, including Churchill, Manitoba, be assumed by the other regions. How then can the minister justify the fact that the user pay principle is not applied in these two cases, unless it is to favour those two regions? I would point out to you that, just by chance, one of the two is Newfoundland, the minister's own province.

[English]

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not in the position nor will I ever be in the position of pitting one region of the country against another. I simply want to say two things to the hon. member.

First, he asked why the opposition in Quebec would not go along with the concern which he has expressed. I do not know the full details, but I believe its reasoning was that it would be prepared to look at these fees if indeed the Quebec government would look at some of the fees which it is contemplating for the little guy, the small taxpayer, for bridge tolls and that kind of thing.

Second, if the member is looking at one region against another, I will tell him one more time that the fees that are paid are based on the level of services provided. To make sure that this will work properly there are two impact studies in place which will show what is in fact happening.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the regions pay for their traffic. Is that the principle? How can it be, then, that the other regions pay for part of the traffic that goes to Newfoundland? This proposition represents a precedent, and one that makes no sense. He will have no reply to that, since he knows very well that this is true.

Capt. Tremblay, the Trois-Rivières port administrator, has estimated that the coast guard could save up to \$90 million if the icebreaker fleet were better managed.

Does the minister not realize that it would be wiser to declare a one-year moratorium, as three-quarters of the witnesses have asked the committee to do, and to wait for the impact studies to be over in September, rather than to impose his policy before they are ready? In the meantime, some housekeeping could be done in the coast guard, for there are savings to be made there.

[English]

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. member in response to his concern that if he is suggesting Newfoundland is being subsidized, he

*Oral Questions*

should get in touch with the premier of Newfoundland who yesterday suggested that Newfoundland was paying more than its fair share.

Everybody thinks they are paying more than their fair share. Everybody believes in user fees, but nobody wants to pay one cent. I will tell the hon. member that the taxpayer of Canada can no longer assume the cost of these kinds of services. We have to move forward.

We are moving forward with the lowest possible tariff: 10 per cent of what it costs to do this. We have to move forward at this low level. At the same time we have to reassure ourselves and those companies that are saying they are going to lose everything that paying less than 3 per cent of the port cost at the taxpayers' expense, paying less than 3 per cent of a voyage cost and paying less than 10 per cent of the cost of the services is fair and equitable. I believe it is fair and equitable, as do most people in the country.

\* \* \*

• (1120)

[Translation]

**SOMALIA INQUIRY**

**Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in response to a question by the official opposition, the Minister of National Defence said yesterday that the military police had reopened its investigation of allegations of document falsification and destruction against the chief of staff, General Jean Boyle. New documents submitted to the commission of inquiry have rekindled serious suspicions against the chief of staff.

How can the Minister of National Defence justify the chief of staff's remaining in command of Canada's armed forces, when the military police are investigating him in a matter involving the falsification and destruction of documents?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the military police are investigating events in the division of our department concerned with documents. They are not investigating an individual.

It is usual for military police, as it is for the RCMP or any other police force in Canada, to reopen an investigation if there are new witnesses. It is standard procedure.

As regards the chief of staff, I have confidence in him. I met with him this morning. Canadian forces operations are going smoothly.

**Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is crazy. When an enlisted man is involved, he is relieved of duty during the

investigation, so is a police officer, so is a public servant. The minister is waiting and doing nothing.

What sort of credibility does the minister think our forces have with our allies, when serious allegations weigh against the chief of staff, who is being investigated by his own military police?

[English]

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has heard my answers in the last couple of weeks on this issue. There is a commission of inquiry that is looking into all these matters, and the answers will be forthcoming.

With respect to the military justice system, it is a system of justice that is upheld as constitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. As the chairman of the commission, Justice Létourneau, said a few weeks ago, the hearings will go on and if there is any wrongdoing, either the military or the civilian authorities will then take their responsibilities.

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**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the acting Prime Minister.

Millions of Canadians who thought the Liberal government would scrap, abolish and kill the GST are disappointed and confused. The finance minister said on Tuesday he is sorry the Liberal government broke its election promise.

Yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister said she had loose lips and regrets her promise to resign if the government failed to scrap the tax. But the Prime Minister, reading chapter and verse from the red book, maintains his government has honoured its commitments.

Which is it? Is the government sorry or is the government not sorry for breaking its 1993 campaign promise to kill the GST?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the year or two run-up to the 1993 election there were many conferences, including the Aylmer conference, developing policies for the election. Those policies were instilled into a book called "Creating Opportunity". Some words of mine made it into the book and some words did not.

However, every one of the 295 Liberals who ran in the election in 1993 ran on "Creating Opportunity", the red book. That includes page 22 in the English version and page 20 in the French version which says we would replace the GST with a system that generates equivalent revenues, is fairer to consumers and small business and minimizes disruption to small business and promotes federal-provincial co-operation and harmonization. That is what we did.

*Oral Questions*

• (1125)

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, that response fails completely to answer the basic question troubling Canadians who place their trust in the government: can voters count on politicians to keep their word?

The Deputy Prime Minister blames her pledge to resign on loose lips. Far from it. Her comments were deliberate, calculated and repeated over and over again on the campaign trail.

Will the government keep at least one promise? Will the Deputy Prime Minister, the member for Hamilton East, do the honourable thing on her word to Canadians and resign?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in the previous answer, every one of us who ran for the Liberal Party ran on “Creating Opportunity”, and those were the words. Never was the Canadian public better informed as to what a government would do in advance of an election.

I had in my riding alone some 2,000 copies of the red book handed out from my campaign office. We stand by what we said in the red book.

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the acting Prime Minister is not speaking for two Liberal members, certainly not for the member for York South—Weston.

With the Prime Minister’s promise to kill the GST the government has called into question the basic integrity of all politicians on both sides of the House. The Deputy Prime Minister’s claim that the Liberal government has fulfilled the essence of its GST promise leaves Canadians to believe that campaign promises are completely worthless.

Despite the Deputy Prime Minister’s contention, voters cannot take the government out of context. They counted on the Liberals to keep their word.

Will the government keep its promise to drop its scheme to spend \$1 billion to hide the GST in Atlantic Canada, go back to the drawing board and come up with a plan to honour its pledge to Canadian voters and scrap the GST?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening with great interest to the hon. member strong protestation for the need for consistency because I had taken the time to look back at what the Reform Party had said about the GST.

In 1990 the Reform Party leader said “let’s rip up the GST”. In 1991 he said “oh, no, we cannot repeal the GST because it would affect the deficit”. Then in 1992 he said “what we need to do is reduce it in stages”. In 1994 in front of the finance committee the

Reform Party said “let’s harmonize the GST and congratulate the government for moving toward harmonization”.

If there is any example of inconsistency on the position on the GST, the hon. member should be asking questions of his own leader, the leader of the Reform Party.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**LEBANON**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it would appear that Israeli army shelling of southern Lebanon has finally stopped, as reports of a ceasefire between Israel and pro-Iranian Hezbollah fighters are reaching us this morning. For the first time in 16 days, it would seem that peace has been restored to the region and there is every indication that a peace agreement could be negotiated after all.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirm that a ceasefire agreement was indeed reached by Israel and Hezbollah fighters and, if so, could he tell this House what the terms of this agreement are?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to point out this morning how important the agreement between the parties to the conflict in southern Lebanon is. This is a preliminary agreement whereby both parties agree to put an end to their show of force. A task force will be formed to explore avenues for peace and at the same time efforts will be made to develop a plan to rebuild those areas of southern Lebanon that were affected by the fighting.

I think that all members of this House will be very pleased with the efforts made to reach this agreement.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition also rejoices at the news of a preliminary ceasefire agreement.

Now, could the minister tell us what contribution the Canadian government intends to make in support of the ongoing peace process, so that a lasting peace agreement can be implemented in this region?

• (1130)

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, along with many other countries we did, during this past week or 10 days, add our voice to the efforts of developing a ceasefire.

We have also committed, this past week, close to \$500,000 to give direct assistance to the displaced populations in Lebanon so they can do some reconstruction. We also have over 200 peace-keepers in the area. There is a consultative group that has been established under this new agreement.



*Oral Questions*

We are quite prepared to participate and co-operate with any efforts in those areas. I welcome any proposals or ideas put forward by members of the Chamber, including members of the opposition, as to how Canada can play a constructive role in this very important effort toward a peaceful solution.

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**COPYRIGHT ACT**

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the “get over it” Deputy Prime Minister announced amendments to the Copyright Act, introducing a new tax on blank audio and video tapes. This measure is in direct violation to the finance minister’s boastful misleading claim that in his budget this year there are no increases on personal taxes, no increases on corporate taxes and no increases on excise taxes. He bragged about no new taxes.

Now the government cannot even keep a promise for two months.

Does the Minister of Industry have special permission from the finance minister to implement this tax and how much is it?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will correct at least a few of the errors in that question.

First, the home copying charge will apply to audio tapes. Second, it is not a tax. It might be useful if the government could retain that revenue but the levy will be established by the copyright board and will be distributed on behalf of the producers, the performers and the composers who, after all, are entitled to it.

If the hon. member wishes to countenance the unauthorized copying of artistic works then perhaps he should explain his rationale for why he feels those who compose, produce and perform artistic works should have their works randomly copied, easily copied, with no compensation whatsoever for the economic value they have created.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by a response like that, that they have no compensation altogether.

The minister knows full well there is a system of royalties in place for artists and producers. Some in the industry think they even get too much. It has nothing to do with that. His definition that this is not a tax leaves a lot to be desired.

Why does the government insist on breaking election promises and now even breaking a budget promise?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is really convoluted. Of course there are private royalty arrangements. The very reason one would impose a home copying charge is so that one can ensure producers, performers and composers receive compensation for their work.

Unauthorized home copying is a way to avoid people being paid for what they have created. Does the hon. member think that is unfair?

They do not pay attention to what is written in the red book but if they did they would see a clear, explicit promise to introduce copyright reform in this Parliament, and that promise we are fulfilling.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

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

On March 20, in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition and following the tabling of the Yalden report, the Prime Minister pledged to introduce, before the next election, a bill to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act, so as to include sexual orientation among the prohibited grounds for discrimination.

Can the minister tell us if he intends to introduce his own bill to finally fulfil the promise made by the Prime Minister during the last federal election campaign, or does he intend to support Bill S-2 introduced by the Senate?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we intend to introduce our own bill and to do so soon.

• (1135)

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House when he will introduce his own bill, and can he make a clear commitment that he will not water down the provision on sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination, as proposed in Bill S-2?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have always said, we intend to amend the act by simply including the words “sexual orientation”. We also intend to introduce the bill in the next few days.

*Oral Questions**[English]***SOMALIA INQUIRY**

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is little wonder the government appointed General Boyle. He shows all the traits of being part of the Liberal family.

He admitted he did know about plans to tamper with documents but he forgot that his own signature was all over the memos linking him with the cover-up.

These are the sorts of things we expect to hear from the Deputy Prime Minister, but Canadians deserve better from our top military man. When will the minister demand accountability and relieve General Boyle from his post?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question many times. I have also addressed it in question period in reply to a question from the Bloc Québécois.

There is a commission of inquiry looking into all these matters. There will be a lot of testimony given, including the testimony of the chief of defence staff. He will be going in a couple of weeks. He will have his opportunity to put all the facts on the table.

I am surprised the hon. member opposite, himself a former general officer in the Canadian forces, does not recognize the system of fairness in our justice system which allows people to give their side of the story.

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I recognize a lot of unfairness in the whole set-up within national defence these days.

The military police are reopening their investigation of General Boyle, but the military police report to General Boyle, the chief of defence staff, the very person they are supposed to investigate. This is a very patent conflict of interest and is quite unacceptable. Boyle has already admitted he has mislead one investigation.

Will the minister show some leadership, act responsibly and call in the RCMP to get to the bottom of this mess?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the military police investigation is on a series of incidents that happened in the public affairs branch of national defence, not on one individual or another.

For all police, whether municipal, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or the military police, if new evidence surfaces, an investigation has to be reopened. This is what has happened in this case. This has also happened with respect to Mr. Grace, the information commissioner.

I ask the hon. member to allow all individuals concerned in this matter, including the chief of defence staff, the basic Canadian right to express their views to an impartial commission before he draws conclusions and perhaps casts aspersions on their character in the House of Commons.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***HUMANITARIAN AID**

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On April 2, the Canada-Cuba Friendship Group, whose members include Liberal members of Parliament, sent the Minister of Foreign Affairs a letter which said, and I quote: "We trust that your department will not accept the American version of events and that it will intercede with the American authorities as quickly as possible".

What is the government waiting for to react to this blockade, which is hampering the efforts of humanitarian aid organizations to get medical supplies to the Cuban people.

*[English]*

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question might be a little more specific. Could she give me an exact reference as to what she is talking about. I know about the letter. The hon. member also knows that the government has taken very strong action protesting the application of extraterritorial legislation.

● (1140)

My colleague has introduced actions under NAFTA to protest against the Helms-Burton bill. The first meeting is being held today. We are taking very strong action in those areas that are under our control and maintenance.

Third, the Prime Minister and the minister of trade have been very actively working out alliances and collaborations with a number of other countries to protest against the U.S. action in Helms-Burton. All those efforts are designed to protect Canadian interests as effectively as we can. I can assure the hon. member that we will continue to do so.

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs earlier told my hon. colleague from Verchères that he had spoken out against the conflict in Lebanon. As we speak, however, and the minister is perfectly aware of this, Brian Rohatyn, a young student from Regina, is in the 66th day of a hunger strike to protest against the American authorities and against the seizure of humanitarian supplies from Canada destined for Cuba.

We are still at an impasse and I would like to know what, other than protesting, the minister intends to do to get us out of it.

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for defining her question more directly.

In the case of the young man who was protesting in Washington, quite legally, my office is in touch with him every single day to determine the state of his health and condition.

We are working actively with American officials to try to find some resolution of the problem. That issue is under negotiation at this time. We are also ensuring the full weight of our counsellor services to make sure that proper medical attention and legal protection is being applied.

We are very aware of the case. It is a very serious case. We take it seriously. We are in touch with both the young gentleman and his family on a daily basis to make sure that we can provide the best protection possible.

\* \* \*

#### MIDDLE EAST

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in an earlier answer, the House greeted with tremendous relief the news from the Minister of Foreign Affairs that there was an interim ceasefire agreement in the Middle East.

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. How will Canada play a constructive role to ensure that this ceasefire is more than just an interim agreement so that the people in that area can live in safety once again?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish I had an easy answer to that but I do not. It is an issue of enormous complexity and difficulty for generations.

I want it understood this is an interim agreement. It stops the fighting. It gives all countries, including Canada, time to take measures to begin to work on those difficulties. We have to make a very concerted effort for the implementation of resolution 425 at the Security Council. That is an important legal basis that the international community has established.

At the same time, we have to work as part of this new consultative work in the reconstruction areas. Third, we have to support those individuals, those governments and those groups in the Middle East.

There was a sign of it yesterday with the decision by the PLO and by the Labour Party in Israel to pursue the peace process, to give every support to those who are interested in peace and to stand up against those who are interested in terrorism or disruption. That is the major contribution we want to make.

#### Oral Questions

#### CANADA PENSION PLAN

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the finance minister.

Yesterday, the finance minister rejected tripling CPP contributions from 5 per cent of worker's income to 15 per cent. Does that mean he intends to double them now and take only 10 per cent of worker's income?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the CPP is a joint federal-provincial arrangement set up with the provinces. It has been that way from the beginning.

The consultation committee is out consulting right now and no decision will be made until the provinces and the federal government have both agreed to those changes.

• (1145)

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the minister that his worker in the field has already mentioned this doubling of CPP contributions so we are concerned about the issue.

You cannot expect the workers to pay an additional 5 per cent or more of their income without reducing benefits to seniors. Will the Minister of Finance tell the House how much the CPP payment to seniors is going to come down? Will it be 50 per cent or more?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister answered that question yesterday.

Unlike the Reform Party that is going to destroy pensions for low income Canadians, we are sure that we can maintain a public pension system for the benefit of Canadians and that is what we intend to do.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State responsible for the Status of Women.

Ann Raney is an engineer. Until quite recently, she had a job repairing the Peace Tower. The victim of sexual harassment, she is now without a job, as are the colleagues who supported her. Her harasser, however, still has his job.

Can the minister tell us when the Canadian government will decide to terminate its contract with Fuller Construction, which is responsible for hiring the subcontractor, Colonial, by invoking the clause which states that a company committing discriminatory actions breaches that contract?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the answer to this question is quite straightforward. There is an agreement already between the general contractor and the subcontractor.

When issues of this kind come to our attention of course we are concerned. At this time there are discussions between our department and Labour Canada to work toward strengthening anti-discrimination clauses in contracts. An agreement has already been reached between the general contractor and the subcontractor.

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it seems clear that the government is taking full advantage of an out of court agreement. The problem nevertheless remains unresolved. It also seems clear that the government does not wish to take any action against sexual harassment committed by subcontractors. Would this by any chance be because the government thinks that the Canadian Human Rights Act is worth no more than the paper it is written on?

*[English]*

**Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate what I said before. An agreement is already in place between the general contractor and the subcontractor. That settlement does not speak to any sentiments that we have with respect to human rights legislation.

Let me also point out that there are a couple of outstanding issues in this regard having to do with moneys owed. The government is concerned about that. It has appointed a facilitator to try to work out a settlement so that all parties can be satisfied with the outcome.

\* \* \*

**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this web of deception coming from the government now covers Atlantic Canada as well. In addition, it involves provincial Liberal governments.

The cost to this government in terms of its credibility is mounting, not to mention the \$1 billion it tacked on in out of control debt.

Would the finance minister please explain to us beleaguered taxpayers listening from coast to coast why he considers it good financial planning to spend another \$1 billion of their money to

rearrange a tax, simply to bail this government out of an election promise it had not intended to keep in the first place?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is simply nonsense. The government has never pitted one region against another.

When the government enacted tax reform in 1972 every single province received compensation over a five-year period. When Ontario was hard hit by the recession in 1991 and 1992 it received \$1 billion in stabilization payments. When grain marketing dived in the late eighties the federal government provided \$7 billion in assistance to western farmers.

• (1150)

I could go on, but all of these things are compensation. This is a further example of the federation working properly.

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I doubt whether a response like that would be acceptable in British Columbia where I come from.

If the finance minister will not explain to Canadian people how deceptive Liberal governments can be, I would be glad to do so.

The tax grab is under way in Nova Scotia already. Yesterday it announced the first new tax to help cover the inevitable shortfall which harmonization has created.

How could the finance minister sit there yesterday and say nothing when the people in Atlantic Canada demanded an answer to this question: Why did he tell them they were going to get a tax break during the election when it is plain that taxes will increase in Atlantic Canada, not decrease?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. Taxes will be reduced in Atlantic Canada. Taxes will be lower. The sales taxes will be considerably lower in Atlantic Canada. Our calculations show that in each of the provinces in Atlantic Canada that have harmonized individual families will be paying lower taxes. They will be paying as much as \$400 less in Newfoundland. It is less than that in the other two provinces, but there will be substantially less taxes in each one of those provinces.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, public attention has recently been focused on the issue of air quality in urban centres. The coming summer brings concern about rising smog levels and ozone depletion. Vehicle emissions are a major contributor to air pollution.

What is the government doing to promote alternative methods of transportation with a view to addressing air quality issues?

*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question.

Those of us who live in large urban centres are all very aware of the effects of summer air pollution. I am very pleased to announce to the House that the federal government will contribute \$200,000 to the establishment of a centre on sustainable transportation in Toronto.

This centre of excellence will provide leadership in achieving sustainable transportation systems in Canada. It will contribute to a cleaner environment. It will improve health for Canadians. It is a tremendous opportunity for Canadian business and another fine example of many levels of government working together.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

With the tabling of his crab fishery plan, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has spread confusion, once again, by allocating part of the quota to other categories of fishermen. In so doing, the Minister has sown division in the ranks of the fishermen and thus weakened the industry.

Since the traditional crabbers are taking twice the available resource, does the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans intend to finally speed up and improve the plan for buying back permits, as in the B.C. salmon fisheries?

[English]

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, but I think there may be some confusion as to what is happening.

I would like to set the hon. member straight. The total allowable catch was 16,100 tonnes. The traditional catch was basically divided between the traditional crabbers, the large crabbers, and the non-traditional crabbers, those smaller ships and boats of the inshore fleet. Therefore, 77.5 per cent went to the large crabbers and 22.5 went to the inshore fleet.

• (1155)

Essentially this was done in the years when we had larger than traditional quotas in such a way so there would be a balance between the inshore fleet and the large crab fishermen at a time when fishermen have a great deal of difficulty coping with the situation.

I think the tenor of his question is that he may have been against the inshore fishermen. I am sure that is not his intent.

\* \* \*

**MARINE USER FEES**

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot this morning about Liberal consultation. Unfortunately, Liberal consultation means either stack the meeting and get people who agree with you or else ignore what they say.

Recently at a meeting of the fisheries and oceans committee, 35 of the 42 users who came in said: "We accept the user pay concept, but let coast guard first rationalize their costs and do a socio-economic impact study so that you do not destroy the surface of the ocean the way you have destroyed what is underneath it".

Can the minister explain to the House why expensive hearings are held if the wishes of the 35 of the 42 of those people who came forward are ignored?

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us put this in context.

First, the study of the fees is a decision of the Government of Canada passed by Parliament. The system fee was put forward by the marine advisory board that controls what happens in this regard in Canada. There were 850 consultations with members of the industry and there was a final look by the committee, as the member suggested. The majority report of the committee said that the fees should go forward with the system which is very complex and developed.

The premise of the hon. member that their views were not taken into consideration is very wrong. It is for that very reason that I am still studying the minority report as well as the majority report. He is wrong.

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**TRADE**

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade who has already distinguished himself in this role since his appointment in January.

In view of Canada's important role on the world stage, can the minister advise the House of the progress that has been made as a result of the recent quadrilateral meetings in Japan?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

The meeting of what is called the quad recently took place in Kobe, Japan. The quad is made up of four major trading entities in the world, the United States, Japan, the European Union and Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

At that series of meetings we were able to advance the cause of world trade, greater market access and more of a rules based system in quite a number of ways. It means jobs for Canadians. It helps to provide more secure access to markets, more security for investment and that means jobs for Canadians.

\* \* \*

**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party, courier businesses, advertising businesses and others have long held that the government dominated tax advantaged crown corporation, Canada Post, should be privatized.

Now the government's own bureau of competition policy is recommending that Canada Post should be stripped of its monopoly.

My question is for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services. Will the government begin planning to take this old and long overdue step?

**Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

Members of the House know that the Radwanski commission is in progress right now, hearing ideas, concerns and proposals from all Canadians. This particular proposal has been heard. The work of the commission will continue. According to the current schedule, Mr. Radwanski will report mid-summer, approximately.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SECURITIES**

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

Last week, Jean Martel, the president of the Commission des valeurs mobilières du Québec and former national board member of the Investment Dealers Association of Canada, voiced his vehement opposition to the creation of a Canadian securities commission. His comments backed up the equally vehement criticism of the minister's plan by the president of the Montreal stock exchange.

The government is constantly claiming that it enjoys the support of the industry for its planned Canadian securities commission. Will it finally admit that the only consensus in place in Quebec in this connection is around opposition to the creation of such a commission?

• (1200)

[English]

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that the proposal is not a federal one. The proposal was

brought forth by some of the provinces that asked us whether we would arrange a Canadian securities commission.

The objective of this was to improve the efficiency of Canada's capital markets, to reduce investment barriers and costs to Canadian issues and make Canadian companies more competitive, which means more competitive for Quebec and more jobs in Canada. That is the objective of this and if any province—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt.

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**WAR CRIMES**

**Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who recently travelled to the former Yugoslavia to see firsthand the tragic impact of this war on human lives.

Given the importance of fostering respect for human rights and building a lasting peace, can the minister tell the House of Canada's role in the prosecution of war criminals?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, about two weeks ago I visited Bosnia. One of the major questions was how we can support the whole civil reconstruction.

The key to peace in Bosnia is to have a proper implementation of the whole war crimes procedure. Canada is making a major contribution. As we know, Justice Arbour is now the chief prosecutor.

My colleague, the minister for international development, has made a major contribution on the economic and social investment, much of which will go into supporting the work of the war crimes tribunal.

As a government and as a country we have offered every assistance we can to the parties within Bosnia and Serbia to help them ensure the rights of those individuals are protected and that we provide full security for all investigations taking place in that area.

\* \* \*

**MEMBER FOR NANAIMO—COWICHAN**

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, can I have a two-part question? I decline.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. John Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to

table, in both official languages, the government's response to 14 petitions.

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## CHERNOBYL

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is the 10th anniversary of the disaster of the Chernobyl nuclear station. On behalf of all Canadians I express anew our profound sympathy and condolences for the survivors of this tragic accident, for those who lost family and friends, for those who lost health and peace of mind and for those who lost their homes and their livelihoods.

We pay particular tribute to the courage, commitment and competence of the many Ukrainians, Russians, Belarusians and others who took determined and effective action to contend with the costs and impact of the accident, often at the risk of their own lives. Many have since perished.

Chernobyl symbolizes the necessity for the operators of nuclear reactors worldwide to put safety first. We must all learn the lessons of Chernobyl so that such a tragedy never recurs.

The Moscow nuclear summit contributed to this goal by highlighting the absolute priority of the safe use of nuclear energy and by strengthening international co-operation in security and safety issues.

Both the Canadian government and the Canadian private sector have provided assistance through many channels to the victims of the accident. We have committed some \$32 million to projects aimed at relieving the suffering caused by the accident and to nuclear safety projects aimed at ensuring such an accident will not happen again.

Canadians have shown their solidarity with the citizens of the affected areas in many different ways, from inviting to their homes young people living in areas exposed to radiation to participating in projects setting up systems to monitor the environment in radiation fallout areas.

• (1205 )

Canada has been particularly active in the G-7 to enable Ukraine to meet its energy needs while closing the Chernobyl nuclear station and containing its lingering dangers. As the chair of the G-7 last year, we led the successful negotiation of the memorandum of understanding on the closure of Chernobyl signed with Ukraine in Ottawa last December by the Deputy Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was also active at last week's Moscow summit in reaffirming the mutual commitment to the implementation of this agreement.

## Routine Proceedings

Our decision to organize and host the Winnipeg conference on Ukraine's economic transition has served as a catalyst for the subsequent efforts of leading industrialized nations to come to the assistance of Ukraine.

We intend to continue our political and economic co-operation with Ukraine in nuclear safety and energy sector development and other vital fields both bilaterally and multilaterally. We will work to help Ukraine lend meaning to its precious new independence and to win a better life for its people. That is the best way to help the victims and to honour the memory of those who lost their lives.

Today, the 10th anniversary of the disaster at Chernobyl, I speak on behalf of all Canadians in expressing our support and friendship for the people of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus who have all suffered the consequences of this accident. Let us keep working together to ensure a similar tragedy never happens again.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pomerleau:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to the motion just tabled—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will hear your point of order after the minister's statement.

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, April 26, 1996 marks the 10th anniversary of the tragedy in Chernobyl. According to the Ukrainian authorities, this tragedy has, in the ten years, killed over 4,220 people, more than half of whom had been assigned to decontaminate the site after the explosion.

The official opposition wishes to offer its most heartfelt condolences to the survivors of the tragedy and to all those who lost someone near to them in this accident.

In addition, it is estimated that more than 3.5 million people, including thousands of children, have been seriously affected by radiation, which continues to wreak its devastation. We wish all these people the courage they need to get through this terrible ordeal.

The members of the Bloc Québécois, on behalf of all their constituents, wish to thank all people and governments providing technical and financial assistance and comfort to the Ukrainians affected.

Chernobyl is a tragedy with a lesson for us all. It must lead to a tightening of standards and safety requirements for nuclear power plants. However, most importantly, we must not forget that no technology is perfect, however sophisticated it may be.

Political decisions compounded the effects of the catastrophe at the time it occurred and subsequently. While the events at Chernobyl may be due to a technical error, they were due just as much to political error, from which no government can claim to be exempt.

*Routine Proceedings*

The recent incidents at Pickering, Ontario, although of a very different scope, show that the Government of Canada is not above trying to hide information from people on the potential dangers they face.

We hope that the minister's speech today will encourage the heads of this power plant to respond to the pressing questions of people in the region and of environmental groups, who are entitled to answers.

Today we are recalling the 10th anniversary of Chernobyl. May it be an event that is the last of its kind.

[English]

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party I extend to the victims of Chernobyl our deepest and heartfelt sympathy to them and their families on the 10th anniversary of this nuclear disaster.

We express our commitment to working with the former Soviet Union states and Russia in working with the international community to clean up Chernobyl and get it under control.

• (1210)

Chernobyl is only the tip of the iceberg. Massive dumping of nuclear waste into the Bering Sea has occurred in Russia, twice the amount of the other 12 nuclear countries in the world. Western Siberia is an ecological disaster. The people themselves have called western Siberia an ecological disaster as there are massive levels of long lived radionuclides, cesium-137, carbon-14, strontium-90. They have all existed and they are affecting humans with radiation. The fallout is affecting our arctic regions and is found in our indigenous peoples.

The result is that over the last 25 years there has been a 75 per cent increase in cancer rates and a 250 per cent increase in birth defects in children in this area. Our arctic does not have similar amounts and yet, as the minister well knows, the cancer and birth defect rates of aboriginal people living in the arctic are higher than they ought to be.

On the Kola Peninsula there has been a massive nuclear waste dump. Large parts of the peninsula are contaminated beyond what we have seen virtually any where else. There are high levels of these radionuclides found in the tissue of animals, plants and indigenous peoples

Russia is decommissioning its nuclear submarines. Over the next 10 years it will have to decommission 200 nuclear submarines and ships. Historically it has dumped most of its nuclear waste into the environment. This is not isolated in the former Soviet Union but it is something that affects us all.

We have to push together with the international community for a comprehensive test ban treaty and the enforcement of its prin-

ciples. We have to push the non-signatories to the nuclear proliferation treaty, those with nuclear capabilities, to sign it. International co-operation will be required to do this.

We have to work with the former Soviet Union states to catalogue and identify these waste dump sites and also have international groups to monitor the clean-up and the fallout.

We must encourage trade and economic ties with the former Soviet Union states. By doing this we will push forward trade liberalization, movement toward democratic principles. We will dampen the rise of ethnic nationalism occurring with the likes of Mr. Zhirinovskiy and dampen the rise of the Communist Party in the former Soviet Union. By increasing ties we do much for increasing international co-operation between our countries.

We have in the former Soviet Union an ecological and nuclear disaster which most of us do not know much about. It is the Chernobyls of the future that are waiting to occur. They will affect the former Soviet Union and our people through the ebb and flow of waters and through the movement of air masses. These nuclear materials will affect all arctic countries. Because these radionuclides spend so long in the food chain they it will affect Canadians with higher levels of birth defects and higher cancer rates.

I implore the minister to work co-operatively with the international community and the former Soviet Union states to develop methods to get this under control to avoid the Chernobyls of the future.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as hon. members know, April 28 is the National Day of Mourning. Every year, we pay tribute to Canadian men and women who were killed or seriously injured in the workplace.

Since, this year, April 28 falls on a Sunday, I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to this commemoration.

In Canada, work accidents requiring workers' compensation benefits to be paid out happen every 39 seconds on average. Every day, one worker out of every fifteen is injured at work and two die. These figures speak volumes. The loss of lives sustained, and the ensuing pain and suffering of family, friends and coworkers, are unbearable. Such losses are simply unacceptable.

In economic terms, work accidents cost the Canadian economy more than \$15 million per day, or 10 times the total number of days lost to strikes and lockouts.



• (1215)

In 1994, the direct and indirect costs of work accidents amounted to more than \$10 billion.

[*English*]

The good news is that occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities in Canada have declined substantially over the past decade. While we are making progress, these tragic incidents are still far too high. It is imperative that we improve occupational safety and health.

[*Translation*]

That is why, on the occasion of the National Day of Mourning, we pay tribute to those injured or tragically killed in the workplace. We reiterate our commitment to reducing the incidence of accidental death and injury.

We can be proud of Canada's occupational safety and health expertise, which is recognized worldwide. I believe that to a large extent we owe our success to the approach we have taken. Canadian occupational safety and health legislation is based on the internal responsibility system.

[*English*]

I believe it is important for hon. members to note that the federal occupational safety and health system has three partners: employers, employee and government. All three have rights and legal responsibilities to ensure safe and healthy working environments.

This is the continuing challenge we are facing. This is what the national day of mourning accomplishes. It raises our awareness about these issues, the awareness of all Canadian employers and employees who must address occupational safety and health concerns on a daily basis if we are to reduce work related injuries and deaths.

This challenge must be met by strengthening our effectiveness, developing innovative measures to prevent loss of life, and finding viable alternatives to increase efficiency. To that end we must consider the impact of new technology, frequent changes in duties and the international competitive market.

The foundation upon which this system functions is evident in the roles of the federal, provincial and territorial authorities. They are responsible for helping to ensure compliance, to monitor how responsibilities are fulfilled and to address matters of non-compliance.

[*Translation*]

It is clear that occupational safety and health concerns are always on the minds of Canadian workers and employers. We all share in this responsibility. And the Government of Canada recognizes and fully appreciates the vital role played by unions and employee representatives in that regard.

### *Routine Proceedings*

I now urge my hon. colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Canadian workers who paid such a high and tragic price. They will not be forgotten. Their memory will act as a constant reminder of our duty to preserve and to work together to substantially improve occupation health and safety conditions across Canada.

If you do not mind, after my hon. colleagues are through with their remarks, we could observe a minute of silence in memory of all those killed in the workplace.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition wishes to join with the government and the other parties in this House in paying tribute those who died or were seriously hurt in the workplace.

These injuries were undoubtedly an important, a disturbing moment in the lives of those concerned, and it is our duty as members of Parliament to remember, so that such accidents do not happen again.

We are fully aware that, despite the laws now in effect across the country, two workers are killed every five working days in Canada.

• (1220)

Every two minutes, a worker is seriously injured in one of Canada's workplaces. In total, each year, 57,000 workers are involved in sometimes fatal accidents. On an economic level, \$100 million in compensation is paid to workers who can no longer earn a salary as a result of an accident; last year, 860,000 work days were lost to accidents, which could have been prevented in some cases.

Let us hope that we can work together to improve health and safety in the workplace. The best way to do so is to co-operate so that the workers, unions and employers can arrive at the wisest decisions and work on prevention together. In this regard, the official opposition wants to work on improving the existing legislation.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party of Canada, the national opposition, I am pleased to join my colleagues in paying tribute to the victims of work related accidents and to those suffering from occupational injuries or disease.

Work conditions and occupational health and safety have evolved greatly since Confederation and are now fundamental to managing the workplace. The rights and duties of employees are now embedded in our laws and regulations.

It is one thing however for Parliament and legislative assemblies to pass occupational health and safety laws but it is another to ensure they are followed. The time to become safety conscious is not after an accident occurs. Prevention has to be foremost in our minds.

Laws, regulations and governments play an important role in accident prevention. In the final analysis however, it is the employ-

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ers and the employees who are responsible for preventing, eliminating or controlling hazards in the workplace. This is a responsibility no one can shun.

Preliminary statistics for 1994, the last year for which I found them available, show that there were 709 workplace related fatalities, 152 of which occurred in my home province of British Columbia. That is an increase of 124 from the previous year.

Workplace fatalities, whether they claim one life or 26 as was the case in the 1992 Westray mine disaster, are devastating not only for the family and friends of the deceased but for co-workers and employers as well.

Workers make this country productive. We have to do our utmost to ensure that the workplace is health and safety conscious, that those are necessities, not options.

The world economy is becoming increasingly competitive and technologically advanced. New challenges abound and workers face previously unheard of hazards. Labour and management must work together to provide a healthy, safe and prosperous workplace necessary to secure and maintain a competitive edge.

Let us use this national day of mourning to promote awareness of the vital role that health and safety play in the protection and preservation of our Canadian workers.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Colleagues, the minister has proposed that we observe a moment of silence for those killed or injured in the workplace. Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Editor's Note: Whereupon the House stood in silence.]

\* \* \*

[English]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the third report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development regarding Bill C-12, an act respecting employment insurance in Canada, which as agreed to is reported with amendments.

• (1225)

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the first report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern

Development concerning the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997.

\* \* \*

## CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-276, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (registration of political parties).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill is to amend the Canada Elections Act to allow the registration of political parties by the chief electoral officer only when the party nominates candidates in at least seven provinces that have in aggregate at least 50 per cent of the population of all the provinces and in at least half of the electoral districts in each of those seven provinces.

For the purpose of the Canada Elections Act, the provinces include the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

There are four principal aims of this bill. First is to ensure that those parties entering into federal elections are nominating candidates in a majority of ridings across Canada so that their support and point of view will be national in scope. Second is to ensure that each party provides a platform which is reflective of national interests and not of regional scope. Third is to provide greater access to the majority of Canadians to pass judgment via a national convention or a general election on a party's political platform. Fourth is the aim to keep Canada as one, united and indivisible.

I ask all members of the House to support my private member's bill.

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

\* \* \*

## ETHICS

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion:

That this House support the truth, integrity and ethics in politics and the belief that a politician's promise should be upheld, including a promise to resign.

I would like to hear individually from each party as to how its members feel on this motion. The Reform Party certainly supports the motion. I would appreciate unanimous consent to proceed with debate.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois certainly agrees to debate the motion. If there is a debate, we deeply regret the absence of the Deputy Prime Minister, who would certainly give her consent regarding this motion.

[English]

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at this point we cannot give unanimous consent to the motion. The hon. member who moved the motion is the House leader of the Reform Party. He knows very well that there are other appropriate channels where we discuss on a daily basis how the business of the House is conducted. If he is serious about this motion he should use those channels and then maybe we could have a debate.

There is not unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question becomes academic, but I will ask it anyway.

Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** No.

\* \* \*

#### PETITIONS

##### GASOLINE TAX

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions to the House today.

One petition contains 161 signatures of individuals from across British Columbia. The petitioners request that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline and that it strongly consider reallocating its current revenues to rehabilitate Canada's crumbling national highways.

##### DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition contains 1,305 signatures.

• (1230)

The petitioners would like to be added to the growing list of petitioners calling on Parliament to enact legislation against serious personal injury crimes being committed by high risk offenders by permitting the use of post-sentence detention orders and specifically passing Bill C-240.

Bill C-240 has been renumbered to Bill C-254 in this session of Parliament.

##### NATIONAL UNITY

**Mr. Nick Discepola (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition which calls for Parliament to declare and confirm immediately that Canada is indivisible, and that the boundaries of Canada, its provinces, territories and territorial waters may be modified only

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by a free vote of all Canadian citizens as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or through the amending formula as stipulated in the Canadian Constitution.

This petition is signed by 27 people from the West Island area and parts of my riding.

##### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I present two petitions today on behalf of constituents of Simcoe Centre.

The petitioners request that the Government of Canada not amend the human rights act to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation. Refusing to define this statement leaves interpretation open to the courts, a very dangerous precedent to set. Parliament has a responsibility to Canadians to ensure legislation cannot be misinterpreted.

##### CONSENT

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition concerns the age of consent laws.

The petitioners ask that Parliament set the age of consent at 18 years to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse.

##### JUSTICE

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present the following petition which has 449 signatures. I present it on behalf of the petitioners and on behalf of a very concerned constituent, Mrs. Lori Smith.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament proceed immediately with amendments to the Criminal Code that ensure the sentence given to anyone convicted of driving while impaired or causing injury or death while impaired reflects both the severity of the crime and zero tolerance toward the crime.

This is certainly a commitment and concern of my constituents they would like the Government of Canada to meet.

\* \* \*

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. John Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions stand.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statements, government orders will be extended by 20 minutes.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1996**

The House resumed consideration of the motion, the amendment and the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to such a full house today on such an important issue as the budget of the country.

Several comments were made by my colleague in the Liberal Party which bear repeating. One is "we have done a very good job". Having been here for two and a half years, I sort of missed where the good job came in and so have a lot of people where I come from in British Columbia.

"We cannot expect perfection in this country". It had to do with the remarks on GST, which I will get into a little later. Canadians, although disappointed with the lack of perfection, are probably just as disappointed with the mediocre performance we have seen thus far.

The Minister of Finance made a great deal of his claim in the budget speech: "We are not raising personal taxes, we are not raising corporate taxes, we are not raising excise taxes. In fact, we are not raising taxes".

Unfortunately in this country we tend to get duped with that kind of statement. When people think they are safe this year with no more raising of taxes by the government they miss some important points. Since this government came to power two and one-half years ago, it has overspent an accumulated debt of \$100 billion.

• (1235)

I could ask people sitting in the gallery or anyone else in this country how much that is. I speak to a lot of high schools and I ask them how much \$1 billion is. How much does the country owe in debt? I have yet to go to a classroom that can tell me.

The young people in the country have no idea what is coming at them and I think a lot of adults have no idea what is coming at us, particularly when the finance minister stands up in the House and says we have not raised taxes. They think they are safe for today.

Since I have been in the House the debt has risen from approximately \$450 billion to \$575 billion. That is five hundred and seventy-five thousand million dollars. When you ask students they say \$5 billion, \$10 billion, but when you say five hundred and seventy-five thousand million dollars they look at you with this blank stare and say "I guess somehow it will go away". It will not go away.

Taxes will increase under this government. We have to deal with the annual borrowing of the government. This year it will likely be around \$30 billion. Overspending one's budget by that much is almost criminal when the debtload is \$575 billion. Somehow, some way we have to make people aware exactly what is coming at them.

There are all kinds of places to cut budgets. The Liberals say they have done a very good job, but they have made no cuts in some areas. These are the kinds of things they are spending money on. When you are overrunning a budget by \$30 billion plus every year, do you really need to give \$33,000 in grants to promote and develop music in alternative spaces? Grants of \$280,000 are given to various professional small ensembles to produce or rehearse for special events.

Lots of people would say we need that, we have to keep our arts going and so on. However, in view of the fact we are collecting and overspending by \$30 billion plus a year, must we continue to do this at this point? The Axis Mime Theatre got \$65,845. The Buddies in Bad Times Theatre got \$65,000, and on and on it goes.

I have negotiated many collective agreements in my day. I negotiated at the other side of the table with the Canadian conference of Teamsters. I find it ironic the government gave them \$138,000 last year with a membership as large as theirs. When we are running this kind of deficit and debt one wonders hello, is anyone home over there? Today it does not look good.

The Canadian Federation of Labour got \$297,368; the Canadian Labour Congress, \$3.7 million. What is wrong with the government that in the face of borrowing all of this money it is still throwing it out the door like there were no tomorrow?

I would think a message would have been received by the way we dismantled the Tory organization, but I guess not. Do we have to give \$500,000 to complete a nine-hole golf course in Newfoundland? Is that a necessary expenditure of the taxpayers who contribute their hard earned money from where I come from? I do not think so. Do we have to pay \$5,400 for somebody to travel to Tennessee to gather information on sprout farming?

• (1240)

I could go on. There are books full of this stuff. I bring it up year after year but no one is home. No one is listening. That is sad. They will listen when young people are short of jobs, as they are today, and when their taxes are so high they cannot afford to live in some areas of the country. They are going to say "what have you baby boomers done? You have borrowed enough money to sink a fleet of ships and now you expect us to pay it back".

I have two children in university. One is graduating this summer. What will he do with his engineering degree? He is looking at leaving Canada for a job, and that is really sad.

*Government Orders*

I believe we have an uncaring government when it cannot make as its top priority balancing the budget and paying down the debt.

Are there any other areas where we could save money? I could list a host of them. I do a lot of work in the criminal justice system, especially in the solicitor general's department, and I can think of a host of things we could do there.

A couple of weeks ago I found out that in one of our maximum institution, where all the real bad guys are going, they are now allowing prisoners to buy rollerblades. They spent \$4,000 refinishing the pool tables for them.

They are provided legal aid at the expense of taxpayers to sue the crown. For those who do not already know, Clifford Olson has approximately 32 litigation cases against the crown. I wonder if the government has thought a minute about that, about the kind of money we are spending on this creep when victims have to wait their turn in court behind this guy to get their day of justice.

Are we spending any more money in prisons? I found out something this morning I would have loved to raise in question period. I could have had a lot of fun with it. I have a real problem with a prison system that talks about zero tolerance for drugs and gives one ounce bottles of bleach to prisoners to sterilize their cocaine needles so they will not spread HIV. Talk about convoluted messages. It is a contradiction, much like saying "we did a very good job but we overspent only by \$100 billion in the last two and a half years".

I knew about project bleach a year ago and I have been hollering about it ever since. I did not know about this little memo that just came from the commissioner's office which says a bleach kit pilot project has been operating successfully in Matsqui institution since June 1995. That institution is in my riding and I happen to know that success is somewhat over rated. Even the staff disagrees with it. The staff in many prisons disagrees with it. What does the government do? It is giving bleach to sterilize cocaine needles belonging to prisoners for cocaine intake at the same time as it has a zero tolerance for drugs.

If that member leaves, I am calling for quorum. I will not stand in the House talking to some television across the country with an embarrassing crowd like this in here.

• (1245 )

The government has frozen the RRSP dollar contribution limit at \$13,500 until 2003. What does the government do? It gives itself a gold plated pension plan. Congratulations. There are 51 out of 52 Reformers in this House who refused that plan. While these people fill their fat faces with their own pension plan, they tell the rest of Canadians sorry, but you do not get much for yourself. Talk about a contradiction in terms. Open the doors and let the rest of these people come in. Hello, is anyone home?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege today of taking part in the debate on Bill C-31. It is a privilege since the debate at second reading began late Wednesday and will already end today. Obviously, the Liberal government prefers to gag the Bloc Québécois in the House regarding Bill C-31, just as it did when the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development considered Bill C-12 on unemployment insurance reform.

The Liberal government is in such a hurry to pass these bills that it resorts to undemocratic measures rather than taking part in the debate and explaining the real objects of these bills, as well as their negative impact on Canadians.

Bill C-31 seeks to enact a series of controversial measures which will hit Quebecers and Canadians hard, and which will result in the continuing deterioration of their living conditions. All this in the name of the fight against the deficit.

Sure, order has to be restored in public finances. We are all aware of the situation. However, this must not be done on the back of the poor and the unemployed. Shovelling into the provinces' backyards is not a solution either: winter is over.

Part III of Bill C-31 amends the Unemployment Insurance Act so that maximum weekly benefits will drop from \$445 to \$413. This change will make claimants even poorer, and this means young people and single mothers mostly.

Moreover, the maximum insurable gains are being lowered to \$39,000 per year. This means that it is primarily high income earners who will make lower contributions to the unemployment insurance fund. The change will result in tax savings of \$900 million for high income earners. These measures directly affect the unemployed and will be applied retroactively to January 1, 1996.

Oddly enough, these two provisions are also found in Bill C-12 on unemployment insurance reform. Is the government trying to use the back door, in case the UI reform does not go through soon enough?

Despite all the demonstrations against this reform, particularly in Quebec and the eastern provinces, the party in power, the Liberal Party, is reiterating its intentions and including measures that will penalize the unemployed in Bill C-31.

This bill also affects the Canada social transfer, especially in Quebec. Unfazed, the government will continue to cut social program funding, which in Quebec will mean a shortfall of \$5 billion over the next four years. The government is cutting but, in the same breath, maintaining national standards so that it can tell the provinces what to do. We have said this over and over: the government must withdraw from social program funding and give

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the provinces what they need to fund these programs. All that the government is doing now is reducing the deficit on the backs of the provinces, by cutting transfers and continuing to call the shots on standards.

What is more, social program transfers will now be based on the population of provinces, instead of taking real needs into account. It is therefore the richer provinces who will benefit from the social transfers. Finally, with this bill, the red book government is reforming the GST.

• (1250)

The announcement by the finance minister this week concerning the agreement reached between the federal government and the provinces of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick showed us without a shadow of a doubt how this party really governs.

During the last election campaign, the Liberals made the abolition of the GST one of the main planks in their electoral platform. Back then, the Prime Minister told the public that the GST had to be scrapped.

The Deputy Prime Minister, for her part, was heard on CBC on October 18, 1993, just a few days before the election, saying, and I quote:

[*English*]

“I have already said personally and very directly that if the GST is not abolished I will resign”.

[*Translation*]

This morning's newspapers show that, surprisingly enough, the Deputy Prime Minister herself admitted talking through her hat when she made that statement. In this morning's *Le Devoir*, the Minister of Canadian Heritage gives her own version of history with respect to the GST: “I never said it would be scrapped without being replaced; no one ever said that”.

Barely six months after being elected, the Prime Minister repeated on May 2, 1994: “We hate this tax and we will kill it”. I think the statements made by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister could not be any clearer. As recently as last Wednesday, the Minister of Finance himself admitted that promising to kill the GST had been a mistake. In fact, the real mistake is not that the Liberals promised to kill the GST, but that this government, which has no qualms about renegeing on its most important election promises, was elected.

The hon. members for York South—Weston and for Broadview—Greenwood did not hesitate to condemn the government's refusal to honour its commitments. There were at least two members on the other side of the House who did not suffer from collective amnesia.

No matter what is written in the famous red book, all the people in Quebec and Canada heard key government figures promise to kill the GST. Not only does the agreement between the three Atlantic provinces and the federal government not kill the GST, it reinforces it.

The Minister of Finance talked about harmonizing provincial and federal sales taxes; in fact, provincial taxes will not be harmonized with but absorbed into the GST to become a national tax fully administered by the federal government, depriving the provinces of their autonomy in controlling their own tax rates.

To add insult to injury, the Minister of Finance is making the other provinces pay for this agreement. In fact, \$960 million will be paid to the three Atlantic provinces concerned, including \$250 million taken directly from the pockets of Quebecers. And this is only the beginning, as this measure will be implemented in the same way after the federal government negotiates agreements with Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island.

To top it all, the government is paying to renege on its promises while pretending to honour them. The GST stays, and the government continues to dump its deficit onto the provinces. Obviously, things could not be any better.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be able to stand in Canada's Parliament and talk about the one issue which is probably more important to Canadians than almost anything else.

Canadians are concerned about the justice system and its failures. They are concerned about the fact that these days they are not represented in Parliament by their MPs because the rules of the party do not permit that to happen. Undoubtedly what hits people the most across the country is the problem of jobs, of balancing their budgets and paying their bills. With that comes that greatest of all expenses for most Canadians, the largest single expense that they incur, their monthly tax bill. That is the biggest item in family budgets.

• (1255)

We are in this House today debating on behalf of the Canadian people whether or not their money should be spent wisely or foolishly and how it should be allocated. I am somewhat appalled that there is little accountability here.

I do not know exactly how to put this. I need to stay within the rules of debate. I will studiously attempt to do that. It is totally unconscionable for individuals, for citizens of this country, to go around during an election campaign laying out their plans so that the voters can presumably make a decision on who to send to Ottawa to represent them while during that campaign, the words they use cannot be trusted. We have heard so much rhetoric these

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past days about what we meant, about we said and about what we wrote. Frankly, those three should coincide.

We should write what we intend to do. We should communicate what we intend to do and we should intend to do what we say and write we intend to do. How can the voters during an election make an informed decision if they cannot trust the words that are being used?

That is really the crux of the matter. There are 295 members of Parliament. I am very honoured to be one of those. We have that awesome responsibility of being, in essence, the board of directors of this giant corporation called Canada.

Some people say that government cannot be run as a business. I am afraid in some areas there is no choice but to run it as a business. That is when it comes to budget.

We can certainly debate what we want to spend our money on. That is a legitimate debate. How much should we spend on welfare? How much should we spend on health care? How much should we spend on education?

I am appalled that the governments of the past 30 years have arranged our affairs so that right now Canadians from coast to coast are being cut down at the knees. There is no longer sufficient money to support education. There is no longer sufficient money to support a proper level of health care. There are cutbacks all over the place.

Every week I get letters and phone calls from people who say that my son cannot get a job, therefore he will not be able to continue his education. I get others who say that mom is in the hospital and if we were not there to care for her, she would have no care at all because all of the nurses have been let go. That is not acceptable.

Our predecessors in this place over the last 30 years have not been honest with Canadian taxpayers. They kept telling them election after election: "We will do this. We will do that. Elect me and you will have this in your community especially if I become a cabinet minister. There will be all sorts of grants and special privileges available. If I am already a cabinet minister, be sure to re-elect me. Those goodies will continue if you do".

Meanwhile the government is spending \$1,000 each second more than is taken in. That is unconscionable. To add the greatest insult of all to Canadian taxpayers, at election time, when their candidates say that they are going to do this and this with taxation, that they will eliminate the GST or whatever the issue of the day is, the word, eliminate does not mean eliminate.

Usually in the English language, we have come to a consensus. I am sure it is the same in French. There is a consensus on the usual meaning of words. In the fall 1993 election campaign not once did I hear the Liberal candidate for Elk Island tell the people in our constituency that if elected the Liberals would harmonize the tax. I do not recall hearing that word once, yet the Liberals are now

saying that eliminate means harmonize. A new synonym. A change to the dictionary.

• (1300)

The poor taxpayers do not have any input which is not right. It has happened year after year. The taxpayers are given a choice, but once elected the people sent to this place do whatever they want. There is no accountability. I do not want to hang my head in shame because I have done everything I could to resist this. I will have to exclude myself, members of my party and frankly, some members of the other parties in the House.

I have spoken to some government members in private conversations. I will not divulge names but they have said: "Keep hammering the budget. You guys are right on". Liberal members have said that to me, yet they are not permitted to rise in the House of Commons to speak against the budget or to move amendments.

How can taxpayers, through their elected representatives, ever get control of the spending of their hard earned money if we are not going to permit members of the House to speak and to vote according to their own conscience and according to the wishes of their constituents? If that does not happen, I do not hold out much hope for Canadians. It has to happen.

I am very proud to be a member of the Reform Party of Canada which, since its inception, has endorsed this as part of its principles. In fact it is one of the things which drew me to the party. I will stand here and try to communicate as forcefully as I can for as long as I can that what this country needs is a system whereby, like in the Reform Party, members not only have the right to represent their constituents when they debate and when they vote, but they also have the obligation to do so.

I would be out of step with my party if I went against the wishes of my constituents. I do not know whether my party would kick me out of the caucus; we have not discussed that. I really doubt it. Although it might because I would be breaking a very fundamental principle of what Reform stands for and also what is right for the country.

I will say one more thing about the budget and the fact that the government is overspending so greatly. The government proclaims how wonderful it is because it has brought the amount of overspending from \$40 billion to \$35 billion, from \$35 billion to \$30 billion, and down it goes. The present number it is projecting is somewhere in the area of \$17 billion. Some Canadians, because of the way the words are spun and because some people do not bother to explain the difference between the debt and the deficit, really think that the debt is being eliminated.

I do not wish to embarrass him, but it just so happens that last week I hauled out the campaign literature from my riding and I looked at the Liberal literature to see what that candidate said. Believe it or not, in the brochure which he distributed to the voters of Elk Island, his statement was that a Liberal government would bring down the debt to 3 per cent of gross domestic product. The debt. Of course, the official platform of the Liberal Party was to bring the deficit, the amount of overspending per year, to 3 per cent

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of the gross domestic product. I will forgive him. I think it was a legitimate error. He did not know any better. However, I think it is unconscionable.

When there are deficit budgets it means the debt is still growing. I want every member of the House and every Canadian to understand that the debt is not decreasing under this government. The debt is still increasing. Admittedly it is increasing at a slower rate than it did before. If I can give any commendation to the government I will give a reluctant one on that issue. At least it is not putting us into the hole as fast as it could.

• (1305)

When the government continues to add to the debt, right now at \$17 billion per year, that is premised on a very important assumption. Those who have lent Canada the money it is borrowing, whether they are foreign investors or domestic investors, all expect their money back. That is based on the assumption that sometime in the future we will have a surplus of over \$50 billion a year for 25 years in a row before we can pay off that debt.

Mr. Speaker, you do not know how much I regret that my time is up because I am just starting, but thank you.

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on the government's third budget. In speaking against it I hope to ring the alarm bells across Canada that this is not the budget which is being portrayed by the government as a be happy, do not worry, go back to sleep budget, this is a budget that all Canadians should be alarmed at.

There were two major election promises made by this Liberal government which are not even mentioned in this third budget. The first is jobs, jobs, jobs which Canadians were so desperately looking for and the second of course is the GST. The words goods and services tax do not even appear in the budget. The only reference is to a federal sales tax. In this budget two major election promises that were broken are not addressed. All Canadians should be deeply concerned about that.

A third promise has been destroyed in this budget and has been magnified this week. It is the promise by this government to do something about the level of cynicism across the country today which has developed between the voters and the politicians. There was an opportunity for the government to do something about it.

As a matter of fact the Liberals alluded to it in their famous red book under the chapter "Governing with Integrity" on page 90. At the beginning of chapter 6 it states: "The most important asset of government is the confidence it enjoys of its citizens to whom it is

accountable. If government is to play a positive role in society, as it must, honesty and integrity in our political institutions must be restored".

Instead of restoring it in this budget, what has happened in the House today has shattered it. What the government once described as sleaze by the Conservative Party is now depicted as an honest mistake: "We did not know what we were doing".

At least there is some disagreement here between the Prime Minister and the finance minister. The finance minister says it was an honest mistake but the Prime Minister does not agree. He still says it was not a mistake, that the government is living up to its word in the red book.

To suggest that government members do not know what they are doing, they are not new members of Parliament; most of the people in cabinet have been here for many years. To suggest that all of those years in opposition have been wasted and that they have taken over the reins of government and do not know what they are doing is an absurdity Canadian voters will not accept.

• (1310)

When our current finance minister was in opposition he was very much opposed to harmonization of the GST; harmonizing the GST with the PST would entrench it forever and we would never be able to do anything about this hated tax. How the rhetoric changes when one moves from opposition to government. One wonders which statement to believe, the statement that was made in opposition or the statement being made by the government today.

This is the old style politics of saying one thing to win votes and doing whatever once elected. The promise to scrap, abolish, get rid of the GST was a cold and calculated vote grabber. It was made with every intention to win votes. When we consider that some of the ridings were won by as few as two, three and eleven votes, the promise that was made in less than good faith could very well have swung those seats to enable the government to win its mandate on a policy of deception and not one of being honest with the voters.

When the Deputy Prime Minister, a veteran politician and by no means a rookie to this House, said that she would resign if the GST were not abolished, it was done in a cold and calculated way. She is currently suggesting it was done in the heat of the moment but that is not a fact. The videos of past press conferences will prove that. It was said more than once. It was said repeatedly during the 1993 campaign.

Canadian voters will not miss the glaring contradiction this week in the Prime Minister's reaction to two members of this House.



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There was his reaction to the member for York South—Weston who stood on principle and said: “This is not what we said to the Canadian people. This is not what I said to the people in my riding and in all conscience I must resign from this government. I must step aside. I cannot face my people on anything less than that”.

The member for York South—Weston was reprimanded for being honest with the voters he represents in this place. I should not have said he resigned. The Prime Minister removed him from caucus on the basis that the member should not represent his voters and be honest to himself but that he must do as he is told.

Contrast that situation with the situation of the Deputy Prime Minister who said to the voters: “I will resign”. The Prime Minister sees no problem there. She did not really mean it and she will remain as a member of this House.

That contradiction, that double standard has not been missed by the voters across Canada. The public has lost confidence in this place and in their politicians. On the basis of what has happened here, that loss of confidence is certainly with good reason.

I mentioned in question period that all of us will pay because of the lack of integrity displayed by the government in not living up to and honouring a promise that was made to the voters. Members on both sides of the House, federal, provincial, municipal, all politicians will be tarred by this brush that the voters cannot trust what politicians say when they are out seeking their votes. We will all pay very dearly for that, which is the tragedy of what has taken place here this week.

The Prime Minister referred to the red book and said: “There is not one promise I will not keep. Point to any page, any time and ask me”. Let us take a moment to do that.

We have covered the GST. Compensation is now being offered to provinces to come onside at the expense of all of the provinces. Pressure is being put on Ontario. Ontario’s finance minister has made it clear that the province of Ontario is not in the tax increasing business, it is in the business of decreasing taxes and giving some relief to taxpayers.

Concerning NAFTA, the government promised to renegotiate, although that promise was not kept.

MP pensions were not dealt with. There was some minor tinkering but the overhaul Canadians were looking for was not done. I am very proud to say that 51 out of 52 members of my party opted out of it where 97 per cent of government members stayed in. The government has lost all credibility in not dealing with that issue.

• (1315)

Freer votes were promised in the red book. I believe three private members’ bills had free votes but not one government bill in two and a half years has been put to a free vote.

The Liberals promised that old age security would not be cut and yet 25 per cent of seniors are going to be cut by 10 per cent. Universality, as they had promised, is dead.

Let us go to the infrastructure program. Let us quote from page 60 exactly what was outlined in the red book on infrastructure.

The term “infrastructure” refers to undertakings for the common benefit, such as transportation and communications links, and water and sewage systems.

Nowhere is there talk about bocce courts. Nowhere is there talk about a canoe museum. Nowhere is there talk about trade centres or hockey arenas. It talked about benefiting all citizens.

That program was a \$2 billion shell game that was played on the voters across Canada. What a great offer, a two for one. How could anyone resist it? The one taxpayer was being bribed with their own tax dollars?

Finally, the ethics counsellor. On page 95, getting right to the core of returning integrity to government, the red book says:

The Ethics Counsellor will be appointed after consultation with the leaders of all parties in the House of Commons and will report directly to Parliament.

That did not happen.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I regret to tell the member his time has expired. Is there unanimous consent to let him continue?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on this legislation which will allow the enactment of certain provisions of the budget for this year.

It distresses me somewhat when I talk to people who do not seem to understand the serious financial situation in which this country finds itself. I believe it was a Liberal government about 30 years ago that started us on some very serious deficit financing and that was carried on by the Conservative Mulroney government which preceded this Liberal government.

Canadians felt that when we entered into the election debate in 1993 that the people who now represent this government recognized that this trend to go into serious deficit budgeting had to stop. It distresses me that although we hear them talking about lowering the deficit from \$40 billion to \$38 billion or \$36 billion that they seem to believe that is going to solve the problem. It will not.

Canadians are looking for a government that is committed to reducing government spending in very serious and real ways.

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Speaking for voters and taxpayers of British Columbia, I know it concerns them when they see that the government seems to deal differently with different parts of the country.

The Liberals talk about things like equalization payments. There is a program which is supported by most if not all provinces where those provinces that do not have the ability to provide some of the basic services for their people that the taxpayers in those provinces who are in a better position economically are more than willing to add financial support to see that the basic services are provided to those have not provinces.

Not only is there this equalization payment act that allows for this up front, but we are also finding, over and over again, that in different government policy programs there continues to be special financial considerations for these other provinces above and beyond the equalization payments that fall under the equalization payment act.

The people in British Columbia are getting a little bit tired of carrying not only the additional burden under the equalization payments but a continual added burden in various legislation, whether it is the regional development grants, whether it is in the infrastructure program or whether it is the billion dollars that is going into Atlantic Canada to convince them to co-operate with the federal government in its harmonization of the GST and the provincial sales tax.

• (1320)

The people of British Columbia are getting tired of having to pay for these programs in order to convince the have not provinces to co-operate with the federal government. To be quite honest, it is not fair to the taxpayers of British Columbia to have to support the equalization payments which give money to the have not provinces. It is not fair to the taxpayers of British Columbia to have to support Quebec's \$90 million grant for settlement services for their immigration program.

British Columbians know that the number of immigrants and refugees that province is going to be taking in is a very small portion of the total number of immigrants and refugees coming into Canada. It is not fair for taxpayers outside of the have not provinces to not only be hit with the equalization payments, but to continually support government programs which favour one region over another.

The west coast fishery is struggling. It is proposed that the fishing fleet be cut in half. Hundreds and hundreds of west coast fishermen will be put out of business. They will not be able to afford their boats, their homes or look after their families. What is the response of the federal government? To throw a few pennies in that direction compared to the financial and other support that went to the east coast fishery when it was in difficulty.

It is these inconsistencies in how the country is operated which promotes questions about being part of this country. Canadians do not understand the differences. Canadians do not understand why

they pay for the equalization program, the Canada-Quebec accord and again for the billion dollar buyout of Atlantic Canada. They have paid for programs which built hockey rinks and boccie courts. I do not know what boccie is, but that is okay. I do not have the time to play it anyway.

Canadians do not understand how the government with a national debt I believe of \$575 billion and growing, knowing that it is going to be \$600 billion in debt in 1997, can continue to spend money for these programs at the expense of three provinces of the country.

It is also difficult for Albertans to understand how it could be hit with the national energy program, where it put \$900 billion more into confederation that it has received. It is continually being asked to spend more and more to support government programs such as the billion dollar expenditure to convince some of the have not provinces to let the federal Liberal government walk all over them one more time.

I would suggest that with the exception of a few of the younger members of the House, the real tragedy is for the future generations. The real tragedy will be the young people of today who are having a difficult time affording a post-graduate education and when they do get that education they are not able to find work. When they do find work it is at minimum wage which does not allow them to buy a house, buy a vehicle or establish a base to start a family. That is the real tragedy.

Part of the tragedy is that the federal government continues a process which expects those individuals who are already struggling to make their place in Canadian society to pay for programs and policies which they are not going to receive any benefit from. It is my children and my grandchildren who are going to see most of their income going to pay the debt of the federal government, the debt of the provincial government and to pay the cost of municipal government.

• (1325)

That is not fair. It is not fair to these young people who are looking to the future with some hope and excitement to find out that all they are doing is paying for programs of which I and my parents have had the benefit.

In my two and one-half years in this House I would like to say I have seen some change in attitude from the government side, but I cannot honestly say that I have. I do not see any difference between the Liberal government of today and the Brian Mulroney Conservative government of days gone by. It has an attitude of largesse when spending money, of not understanding that the government's money comes from the taxpayers and that the government does not have this great big money tree growing outside of Centre Block.

I can honestly say I do not see any difference in attitude and that is the greatest tragedy of all. We are no further ahead now than we were three or four years ago when the Canadian people said they

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wanted something different. They wanted a government to take control of government spending.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I might indicate that I have to interrupt the debate 1.35 p.m.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by doing something just a little different. I have to offer the House a correction of what my own colleague, the hon. member for Simcoe Centre said.

He pointed out that the Prime Minister had said: "There is not one single promise I will not keep," and he suggested that he did not live up to that. I have to point out to my hon. colleague that the Prime Minister, in fact, did. The Prime Minister said there was not one promise that he would not keep and he is absolutely right. There is a whole pile of them.

The Prime Minister likes to twist things around and use semantics. By doing that, he is technically correct but it is a bigger shame to say that he did not keep one promise. He did not keep any of his promises, relatively speaking.

I am the Reform Party's transport critic. I might add the national transport critic. I would like to focus my comments on those transport issues that relate to this budget.

One in which I have had a lot of involvement is probably one of the bigger and more scandalous pieces of legislation that this Liberal government has been involved in, and that is the Pearson airport development contract.

I did not see anywhere in this budget proposal money allocated for the cost that this government is going to incur because of its unwarranted interference in the private marketplace and its overturning of the rule of law in the mess that it has started with this Pearson airport legislation.

There are all kinds of costs involved in that legislation and one cost which is huge and growing daily are legal costs. I see nothing under transport that shows the cost of defending this absolutely unconscionable legislation originally called Bill C-22. Now I believe it is Bill C-28. It was hardly worth giving it a new number when it came through the House again. It only took one minute and 35 seconds. Nobody was allowed to speak on it. I do not think it was worth the costs for that second time around.

The government had to involve its legal and justice departments in order to draft this terrible piece of legislation. Then when justice did seem to prevail a bit and it could not get this bill through the House and through the Senate, the consortium, as is its right in normal society, took the matter to the Supreme Court of Ontario.

First the government used the might of the tax dollar, the Canadian taxpayers' money, and mounted first a legal challenge to try to prevent it from going to court.

• (1330)

That cost us a bundle of money right there. There is nothing in the budget about that. When they lost all their stalling tactics and ran out of things they could do, they finally went to court.

The court case was dealing with whether there was a contract and if so was the government in breach of that contract. The government mounted a tremendous defence with a battery of justice department lawyers and lost.

There were big costs involved in that. There is nothing in the budget dealing with that or future legal costs. Having lost it and having the unlimited resources of Canadian taxpayer money, they mounted an appeal.

They did all their preparation, it went to court and through the whole appeal process. They lost again. Millions and millions more of taxpayer dollars were wasted. Now they are in court for a third time, with the court having recognized that there was a contract and that the government was in breach of that contract.

The government, having exhausted its appeal rights, is now in court asking what compensation should be given. When we get the compensation, the consortium that had a contract, which the courts have said was a legal and binding contract breached by the government, is asking for over \$600 million in compensation.

Most of this is lost opportunity for profit. This is a normal thing to sue for when one unjustifiably has a contract taken away. Once again, the government has its battery of lawyers trying to defend the terrible piece of legislation the Liberal government brought forward.

Again it is costing untold amounts of taxpayer dollars. This is in this fiscal year, but nothing in the budget. There is nothing in the budget about the compensation package either.

Are we getting our money's worth for all these millions of dollars in legal costs? Here in the House the government said for two years while this bill was going through that this was a terrible contract, that it was far too rich and that the developers would make too much money. That was the justification for the cancellation.

What have these lawyers done with all the money they are spending, money that is not in the budget? What are they using for a defence? They are saying to the court there should not be any costs awarded to the contract holder for lost profit. It was such a bad contract with such a likelihood of the contractors going broke that they probably would not have made any money at all.

It seems like one side of the justice department lawyers should get together with the other side and get their stories straight. If the

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government is then to squander millions of dollars on legal defence of this legislation, at least we might get something by way of some value for our money.

Let us look at the financial impact of the contract. Thousands of jobs were involved in this contract at not \$1 cost to the Canadian taxpayer. One of the many utopian schemes the Liberal government came out with is jobs, jobs, jobs; it would create jobs.

Before the government started running on this, there were studies done that indicated that it cost the government \$75,000 to create a \$35,000 job. For this, it gets \$10,000 worth of economic benefits, tax revenues versus paying out on social programs, for a net loss of \$65,000 a job. That is the cost to the Canadian taxpayer of the government's buying jobs.

Now that the government has run through its infamous job creation program dealing with infrastructure, if we take the number of permanent jobs the government claims it created and divide it by the amount of money spent, we find \$75,000 a job. Is that not interesting?

Thousands of jobs could be created by the contract the government cancelled with not \$1 of cost to the Canadian taxpayer. The contract holders were to spend over \$800 million at not one dime cost to the Canadian taxpayer.

I do not see anything anywhere in the budget dealing with replacing those jobs at Pearson airport at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Because this construction is not going on, we have tax loss of all kinds.

• (1335 )

The government specifically banned passenger facility tax to the consortium to build this. Now it has to build the facilities itself at a cost now of over \$1 billion. There is nothing in the budget for that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. Pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under Standing Order 45(6), the division stands deferred until Monday, April 29 at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

### BROADCASTING ACT

The House resumed from March 27, 1996 consideration of the motion that Bill C-216, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act (broadcasting policy), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-216 entitled "An act to amend the Broadcasting Act (broadcasting policy)", which was introduced by the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, gives me an opportunity to rise in the House today to address this issue.

I am doubly pleased to do so since I share the hon. member's concerns, and I congratulate him on supporting the protection and preservation of cultural industries in Quebec and Canada.

The bill before us proposes to amend section 3 of the Broadcasting Act to protect consumers against the questionable practices of certain cable companies and to question the almost abiding role played by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, the CRTC.

We will recall that, over a year ago, cable companies were authorized by the CRTC to increase their revenues through negative option billing. What is this high handed method used by cable companies?

In 1994, the CRTC licensed eight new specialty services, including the Réseau de l'information, or RDI. These services were available starting on January 1, 1995. That is when the new channels were added, in most cases, to the basic service provided to subscribers, who then had to pay a monthly surcharge without ever having been notified or consulted.

Cable companies had introduced negative option billing before finding themselves confronted to angry subscribers. They have since had to backtrack and apologize to their customers, promising that, in the future, when they introduced new services, they would give subscribers a choice.

Is it not paradoxical for the CRTC, whose mandate includes looking after the interests of television service consumers, did not say a thing and that circumstances led the cable companies to self-regulate? In light of the CRTC's neglect of duty, Bill C-216 proposes to legislate to prevent this kind of situation from ever occurring again.

• (1340)

We agree with the spirit of Bill C-216, which seeks to give consumers greater control over the programming services they get and, of course, over the costs of such services. We certainly hope that Canadians and Quebecers can enjoy adequate protection, so that no company can demand from them money for programming services that they never requested or accepted. TV viewers must pay for the services they want, not for those a cable distributor or the CRTC wants to impose on them.

That being said, we wonder, as the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton did on March 27, about the federal government's authority to legislate on this matter. As the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe pointed out, Quebec already has a consumer protection act to prevent abuse such as negative option billing.

The member for Richmond—Wolfe also said that such bill tabled in this House is very clearly a duplication of regulations and an intrusion of the federal government into the jurisdiction of the state of Quebec. It is not ill will on the part of the member for Sarnia—Lambton, added my colleague, it is because his own government has not taken its responsibilities and he is calling it to order. He is also reminding the government that many provinces have no consumer protection legislation and that the present government, with the CRTC, is sending a very clear signal to cable distributors to take whatever action they see fit.

This bill reminds us once more of the ineffectiveness of Canadian federalism. The Consumer Protection Act is a provincial law, while broadcasting is regulated by federal legislation. The result is that when consumer rights need to be protected in the broadcasting sector, there is overlap.

Even in the case of something as simple as consumer protection, regarding which there seems to be a consensus, the whole issue turns into a federal-provincial tangle. Last year, the former heritage minister himself thought that broadcasting was a field of provincial jurisdiction. A few days later he revised his position and stated that broadcasting came under federal jurisdiction. If the former Minister of Canadian Heritage had trouble making sense of all this, how can ordinary citizens figure out these contradictory signals?

Let us be clear, Quebec, just like Nova Scotia, has already passed legislation to protect its consumers against negative option billing. The problems experienced by Canadian subscribers in January 1995 did not happen in Quebec. Quebec has, for some time now, assumed its responsibilities with its Consumer Protection Act.

What Canadians and Quebecers want is a government that is effective, able to act rapidly in the interests of the public, not governments that overlap, contradict each other and duck issues. In

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the area of consumer protection, we believe that the provinces can best meet these needs. If people in the other provinces are not happy to find themselves subscribing through negative option billing, they must urge their provincial governments to take action.

Incidentally, when all this happened, at least three provinces, British Columbia, Ontario and Manitoba, indicated their intention to step in to prohibit commercial practices such as negative option billing. Why does the federal government now want to bring in legislation, unless it is to duplicate what the provinces are doing or make up for others' failure to act.

The other question raised by Bill C-216 concerns the appropriateness of adopting such a measure at this time. The disputes in question took place over a year ago and were resolved subsequently, under pressure from consumers. Well after everyone else, when the problems are a thing of the past, when the provinces are beginning to assume their responsibilities, when the cable companies have regulated themselves, the federal government would now like to pass this bill today. Why? The Liberals know why and we have a good idea.

• (1345)

We repeat that the provinces are best placed to regulate the business practices of cable companies, including negative optioning.

The member for Sarnia—Lambton and the federal government should, instead, look at the new challenges created by technological developments in telecommunications, which will increase in both number and complexity. We already have a pretty good idea of what to expect at the turn of the century. It is only a matter of time before consumers have broadcasting services on a pay-per-view basis. Apart from a few common interest channels, people will make their own choice and pay only for the services they want.

The choice available to consumers will be ever more vast, and government control will be increasingly difficult. This is where the government will have to be more vigilant than ever before in order to ensure the survival of Canada's cultural institutions.

The Bloc Quebecois shares the concerns of the member for Sarnia—Lambton and, as we said earlier, the principles underlying Bill C-216. However, for the reasons given earlier, including the duplication of provisions of the Quebec consumer protection act, we cannot support this bill.

**Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to speak to you briefly, you and those assembled here, on bill Private Member's Bill C-216 on negative option billing.

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First of all, I wish to congratulate my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton for his unflagging, and finally successful, efforts over recent months to get this question onto the Order Paper.

Most Canadians will recall the launching of the new Canadian specialized services some 15 months ago. It is unfortunate that this excellent opportunity to discover these Canadian programs was overshadowed by the issue of what is called “negative option billing”.

The public did not criticize the choice of programming, but rather the fact that they were trying to force subscribers to pay for a whole package of programs and then burdening them with the need to reject the options they did not want.

My colleague's proposal will amend paragraph 3(1)(t) of the Broadcasting Act on distribution undertakings, making use of the negative option approach illegal.

It is important to point out that the Minister of Heritage and myself, as well as the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, are all vigorously opposed to the practices that were common early in 1995, and we hope that the committee debates will cast more light on the optimum way of solving this question once and for all, so as to implement an approach that is better suited to the concerns of the Canadian consumer.

You may be aware that the Broadcasting Act is mainly concerned with key principles and objectives in the area of culture, and not with trade practices such as negative option billing.

Therefore it might be worthwhile if, during their discussions on the matter, committee members considered referring it to the CRTC with a view to amending its regulations or the mechanisms governing the licensing process.

By changing the regulations, the commission might set new requirements for negative option use, or make the standards imposed upon industry for customer service more stringent.

• (1350)

[*English*]

Perhaps it is time for a national approach to the rights of consumers. Despite the need for Canadians to know about the diversity of quality Canadian programming on the newer specialty channels, it cannot be done at the expense of consumer choice. It is the right of Canadian consumers to have Canadian choices but not to have these forced upon them.

New information technologies are transforming the traditional parameters between producers and consumers. New players can offer an ever increasing range of viewing choices that transcend territorial boundaries and pose new challenges for the dissemination of our cultural products. Canadians know this. Therefore, it is important that all distribution undertakings follow the same rules

and recognize the consumers' right to be consulted before subscribing to new services.

The CRTC is preparing to re-examine a wide variety of new applicants ready to deliver to Canadians new and exciting program venues. Previously the CRTC has expressed its concern about negative option marketing. The minister is strongly behind the end of negative optioning and is prepared to support measures which ensure that all future programming entries are evaluated on their own merit without resorting to a marketing instrument such as negative optioning. This point will be made clearly to all persons concerned with broadcasting regulations.

This reminds me that the issue of Canadian content and programming which underlined this episode provoked some very strong views, particularly from the western provinces. In my view, the past 25 years or so of Canadian content regulations have allowed us to grow from a fledgling music and television industry to one that has gained international acceptance and recognition. We should take great pride in everything that has contributed to forging our identity.

The competition will be fierce for the specialty channels that want their programming to go to the largest possible number of Canadian households. However, we know the CRTC has received as many as 40 proposals for its May hearing on new specialty devices or services. This large number of proposals demonstrates that Canada's creators and broadcasters still contemplate original concepts and remain optimistic about the Canadian public's reception of their offerings.

At this critical time when tensions and divisions loom to tear us apart, we must call on the ideals and values that bind us. We must affirm our commitment to Canada's cultural objectives which define our national identity.

In the era of a multichannel universe and the information highway, the challenge to keep our domestic content on the airwaves can be both frightening and exhilarating. The new opportunities created by technical advances also translate into global consumer empowerment, making McLuhan's global village a reality. McLuhan could also have said that in this global village the Greek democratic ideal is resuscitated in a modern form in which the consumer is poised to become a pivotal player in a newly emerging marketplace.

I personally support the project put forward by the hon. member.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will also speak in favour of Bill C-216.

Bill C-216 is interesting in that it deals with regulating the broadcasting industry so it cannot bill somebody for something they really do not want. It cannot force somebody to take a service and then charge them for it unless that person indicates they do not want the service.

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During the debate when this actually happened I was taken aback by the consumer response. My riding has two cable companies. One of the cable companies chose to use negative billing while the other company chose not to do so. It reminded me of when I was in municipal politics and was phoned at all hours of the day and night about barking dogs, garbage not being picked up, and all those other issues that hit so very close to a person's home and environment. This issue really seemed to catch consumers and get them up in arms trying to find some way to change the policy.

• (1355)

The amount of animosity from these individuals when they phoned my office, came to see me or wrote letters was interesting. What most concerned them was that the concept was supported by the regulating body. The CRTC supported it then and as I understand it the CRTC continues to support the concept of billing individuals for something unless they indicate they do not want it. The consumers had a feeling of helplessness in trying to deal with the issue. I find it a little distressing that a Canadian licensing body would support such a concept.

I heard the argument from across the way that it is important to protect Canadian content and our Canadian heritage through the broadcasting industry but I do not buy it. If Canadian content and Canadian culture is done properly, it will sell itself. People will be more than willing to pay for that programming and will want to watch it. Canadian artists do not need a regulating body which is forcing consumers to pay for something they do not want.

The Bloc member mentioned that Quebec and Nova Scotia had legislation in place which prevented this kind of negative option billing. What she failed to mention is that British Columbia also has legislation which prevents this kind of negative billing but only in some services. Unfortunately broadcasting falls under federal legislation and therefore the provinces do not have control over the broadcasting companies, such as the cable companies.

With the new conversation of today, the information highway, and the competition among the telephone companies, the satellite companies and the cable companies as to who is going to control the information highway, we should be looking at how they practise business. If there are companies in the cable industry which choose to exercise their monopoly and control over broadcasting and the delivery of this service to the consumer by using these kinds of practices, there are Canadians other than myself who would be very concerned about allowing them to control the new technology of the information highway.

We would be very uncomfortable with a company which thinks nothing of providing people with something they do not want without asking them, billing them for it and then hiding behind the

federal regulatory body saying that it agrees so it is okay. I have extreme difficulty in suggesting that the Canadian government should be supporting cable companies having control over the information highway.

I want to get back to the two cable companies in my community, the one which chose to use negative billing and the one which chose not to do so. The reaction and attitude of the consumers to those two companies was interesting.

One local company chose to offer the new programming at an extra cost but provided it to the consumers I believe for a period of 60 days so that they could see what was offered on the new channels. The consumers appreciated that. They could decide whether or not they wanted to purchase the service. Consumers appreciated and supported that approach. I would imagine many consumers chose to take on these new channels.

• (1400)

On the other hand, consumers were outraged at being billed for something they did not want. However, if they asked not to have those new channels they would also lose channels they had previously and still wanted but which were tied into these new channels.

I do not think that is right. Consumers indicated to the companies which did this that they did not think it was right. Unfortunately the biggest voice consumers can have is to cancel their service or refuse to buy the product. That was precisely what I presented to them, that if they did not like what was happening, the consumer has a choice. That choice is to say they no longer want the services because they do not appreciate what you are doing.

These people will not have the choice anymore because, as in many other communities, one cable company has bought out other cable companies. In my community now there will be no choice. There will not be two cable companies to provide different ways of dealing with these situations. There will be a monopoly, a cable company with no competition to do whatever it wants.

Members of the Reform Party caucus will be quite interested in supporting Bill C-216. The bill proposes to amend the Broadcasting Act to disallow this type of negative billing. It will amend section 3 of the Broadcasting Act by providing in the context of broadcasting policy that a cable distributor or other distribution undertaking should not demand money from a person for the provisions or sale of a new programming service where the person has not agreed to receive the new service.

It is important that it will include other distribution undertakings. We have competition for control of the information highway. There are telephone companies and satellite companies that want to move into this new field.

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This bill and the amendments it suggests would include any other companies coming into the system, be they telephone companies, satellite companies or more cable companies. I believe this is an important consideration for us today. It is clear to anyone who has taken an interest in this that there will be distribution companies outside of cable companies. This is very important, knowing what happened last year, to make sure it does not happen again by anyone involved in providing those services.

We are pleased to support this effort. We feel it will be an important contribution to the Broadcasting Act, even though many of us question whether the CRTC even has a place in Canadian society. It would put some controls on it. I believe that is important.

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of Bill C-216.

Negative option billing has been used by cable companies in the past to the consternation of tens of thousands of Canadians. As parliamentarians we face a clear choice on this issue. We can lead Canadians into the 21st century by creating laws to regulate the manner in which cable companies market their increasingly vast array of channels or we can leave it to the industry to formulate these policies.

Parliamentarians are accountable to citizens. The industry is accountable to its shareholders. It is up to us to determine whose interests are paramount. We must take a leadership role and ensure Canadians are presented with clear choices from cable companies. Our decision on this matter will send a clear signal on the manner in which parliamentarians view the role of government in the large communications revolution sweeping Canada and the world. The cable industry is part of this phenomenon, which includes the Internet and soon direct to home satellite television.

• (1405)

The emergence of these new technologies has evolved to a level where we can truly say we are witnessing the evolution of a new frontier. It is a frontier without political or geographic boundaries, a frontier which offers infinite choices to consumers and a frontier where entertainment and productivity share the same medium.

We must be mindful that it is also a frontier in which the roles of government and large corporations remain largely undefined. We are faced with the choice of how to approach this frontier. We have demonstrated we are not afraid to act in the best interests of Canadians with respect to the Internet.

The Minister of Justice has indicated that he intends to introduce legislation to deter the promotion of hate propaganda in cyberspace. I applaud the minister for this initiative which reinforces the principle that government should become involved in an issue when it is in the best interests of Canadians.

From an ethical perspective this is certainly the case with respect to negative option billing. The notion that a consumer can be charged for a product which they have not explicitly indicated they wish to purchase contradicts the principles of the free marketplace. Specifically, the principle of consumer choice which is central to our economy is threatened by such schemes.

The unprecedented consumer protests of early 1995 against negative option billing strongly suggest Canadians support the salience of consumer choice. Bill C-216 recognizes this reality. Canadians joined together to protest negative option billing. Now is not the time for parliamentarians to abandon them to cable companies.

There is certainly a great need for clarity among the billing practices in the cable industry. A poll by Compass Research in 1993 found that 66 per cent of cable subscriber recipients believed they are receiving basic cable service, the lowest priced channel package. The reality was that only 8 per cent of the subscribers actually received basic services. Ninety-two per cent of cable subscribers received extended services of some kind but only 34 per cent were aware they were paying more than the basic rate. This is unacceptable.

I am confident it would have been remedied if we had been dealing with any other industry. In all fairness to the cable industry, there is currently a lag between the technology available to allow consumers to pay for only those channels they want and the technology which offers a virtual universe of channels.

Cable companies are feeling pressure from consumers to expand the choices available to them. In response to these demands they have assembled packages of specialty channels. The element of choice which cable companies are trying to promote through this scheme is lost with negative option billing.

The president of Rogers Cablesystems stated that without negative option billing subscriber acceptance rates would be cut and new channels would have difficulty surviving. While I have only the best wishes for new specialty channels, this cable company is pinning its survival on successfully deceiving Canadians into making a purchase they otherwise would have refused.

It is time for a new plan. It is not acceptable to implement a billing regime whose purpose is to deceive consumers into making a purchase. The cable industry has admitted this the main appeal and function of negative option billing. In the interests of Canadian consumers it is time we put an end to this practice.

I congratulate the member for Sarnia-Lambton for introducing this much needed legislation.

**Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and with the confidence and backing of my constituents that I stand in support of Bill C-216.



*Private Members' Business*

This bill is about protecting the consumer's right to choice and the banning of a marketing practice which should have never been allowed to take hold in this country.

Negative option marketing is a practice by which a company can automatically add a service and its related charges to contracts without the prior consent of the consumer. The service and charge remain as long as the consumer does not notify the company that he or she does not want the new service. It is like someone dropping off a package at one's door and demanding payment unless it is returned. The difference is that the consumer who receives the package at the door can call upon laws to protect his right as a consumer. No such protection is available to the consumer of broadcasting and telecommunications services.

• (1410)

We know we are here today debating Bill C-216 because of the cable revolt in 1995. It is regrettable it took a revolt to bring us to the point of debating legislation that guarantees basic protection for cable subscribers. For all of us, that revolt served as a real eye opener as to the true consideration given to consumers by the CRTC and the cable companies.

The CRTC in pursuit of its mandate and the cable companies in pursuit of profit forgot the consumer who did not want new channels, new packages, or new fees. Hundreds of people called, wrote and faxed my office to protest the changes and the practice.

My response was simple. As consumers, we hold the ultimate power. If one is dissatisfied with a cable company, cancel the cable or reduce it to basic service. Send a strong message. They did and I did. Within a few days, our local cable distributor announced new packages, new fee schedules and new trial periods for new channels. Consumers were successful, but should they need to resort to a revolt to protect their interests? No.

It is our job as responsible parliamentarians to listen to consumers and implement a ban on negative option marketing. This is only common sense. A company should not be allowed to introduce a new service into an existing agreement unless the consumer expressly consents to accepting the new service.

The legitimacy of a contract depends on mutual intent and agreement: an intent to enter into a contract; an agreement on the subject matter of the contract, an agreement on the party's respective obligations to one another and an agreement on the consequences for failing to meet those obligations.

A reasonable consumer would not agree to let another unilaterally modify the conditions of the contract without prior consent. Nonetheless, the courts allow negative option marketing. The

CRTC accepts it as a necessary evil and the Government of Canada permits its continuance.

Recently I read media reports that stated a government preference for industry self-regulation and market solutions to deal with negative option marketing. I truly hope this is not the case. Canadians know and appreciate the advantages of competition and the discipline of the markets, but we are not dealing here with open markets. We are dealing with cable companies that have CRTC sanctioned monopolies.

Consumers do not have a choice as to their cable distributors. This represents a significant disequilibrium in power in favour of the companies, unless of course consumers revolt from coast to coast to coast. Such astute market based solutions are not a viable option for protecting subscribers.

Recently Canadians witnessed the CRTC approve the introduction of the V-chip as an effective tool to empower parents and to combat violence on TV. It is ironic that the CRTC did not extend this support for consumer empowerment to the elimination of negative option marketing.

Certainly, the logic behind the power to choose what programs we view applies to the channels we want to receive in our homes. Bill C-216 does just that. In the heat of the cable protest, the experts told us that yes, the situation was regrettable and yes, the CRTC was the broadcasting regulator but it did not have the power to eliminate the practice. We were told that the responsibility for the regulation of marketing practices was couched in the legislative powers of the provinces, presumably under section 91(13), the provincial jurisdiction over civil rights in a province.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton has proven the experts wrong. The member must be congratulated for his determination and ingenuity in devising constitutionally valid legislation that will stop negative option marketing. I know the hundreds of Canadians who called my office in January 1995 to protest against the cable companies and the thousands of others who felt powerless faced by the decision of a monopoly support, thank and commend the member for Sarnia—Lambton.

• (1415)

It is said that negative option marketing is a necessary evil, a necessary tool to assist the introduction of Canadian broadcasting services. Few question the need or desirability of Canadian programming nor the urgency to establish a strong presence prior to the inundation of American programming in the 500-channel universe.

However, we must question the method of achieving those objectives. The CRTC will not win over supporters for Canadian programming by permitting cable companies to introduce new channels without obtaining the prior consent of subscribers.

*Private Members' Business*

Equity and fairness is at the heart of this bill. It is our duty as responsible parliamentarians to respond today to a situation that has for too long been tolerated. Consumers have not only asked, but demanded, an end to negative option marketing. Protecting subscribers from an unconscionable marketing practice is central to this bill. It establishes a legislative framework in which the consumer matters despite a monopolized marketplace. Protecting the consumer does not only benefit the consumer but it benefits the industry. It sets out the rules for commercial transactions in the sale of broadcasting services. This creates stable and predictable rules and a more level playing field.

However, more importantly, it ensures the long term viability of the industry by guaranteeing that the consumers will determine the success and failure of new channels. If this is not done, consumers will turn away from cable and embrace new mediums that better reflect their choice of programming. I do not believe that such a situation would benefit Canadian programming and the Canadian film and television industries. We must seek a balance between the recognized need for Canadian voices on our airwaves and respect for the consumer.

I believe that banning negative option marketing is an important step, not by far the last, in re-establishing this balance.

I stand in support of Bill C-216 and invite all my colleagues to join me in that support. After all, it is a bill that was demanded by a vast majority of our constituents. In closing, I would like to once again thank the member for Sarnia—Lambton for his efforts on behalf of all Canadians.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Sarnia—Lambton has the right to briefly summarize the debate.

**Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the sponsor of this bill it is my pleasure to be the last speaker.

I will speak very briefly. I hope that all members of this place will support this bill. As many members have stated, people want this bill because they want control over what comes into their homes. People do not want to give control to the CRTC. The CRTC can determine who will be on the airwaves but people want some mode of governance of what they see on their televisions and what they are going to pay for.

This, to me, is not a question of Canadian culture. It is a question of choice for Canadians. That is the reason I brought in this bill and why I am going to ask all members of this place to support it.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** That was a close one. May I do it again, and please put your energy into this time. All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will say that very narrowly the yeas had it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under the standing order the division stands deferred until Monday, April 29, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

The House stands adjourned until Monday, April 29, at 11 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 2.20 p.m.)



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