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(HANSARD)

Thursday, October 31, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 31, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a report entitled "Getting Government Right: Improving Results Measurement and Accountability with Departmental Performance Reports", the President of the Treasury Board's annual report to Parliament.

Madam Speaker, I also have the honour of tabling 16 pilot reports on performance.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 15 petitions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Madam Speaker, honourable members, ladies and gentlemen, I have the honour today of tabling "Getting Government Right: Improving Results Measurement and Accountability". This is the second annual report of the President of the Treasury Board, a report that focuses on results, performance and accountability.

My report does not stop at listing the key reviews and their objectives, but also shows what Canadians have a right to expect for their tax dollars.

[*English*]

This report states what 16 government departments and agencies expect from their activities. We have devised a new format that makes this report easy to read. Our new approach is based squarely on program review decisions and departments' business plans. This is the first time the government has compiled this information in one document.

I am also tabling today 16 departmental performance reports. These pilot documents demonstrate our new results based way of managing in the public sector. They will help Canadians understand the objectives of each department and agency as well as the progress made in meeting those objectives.

Federal departments and agencies must from now on meet three requirements: first, identify and communicate the results expected; second, improve the measurement of these results; and, third, improve the way they report to Parliament.

[*Translation*]

The documents I am tabling today show that we are honouring our commitment to constantly improve the information we give to Parliament and to Canadians, in a way that is open and transparent. Having the right information at the right time will allow Parliament to perform its work better. Improving the quality of information will ensure better informed discussions and debates within government, in this House, and among Canadians. The quality of these debates will, in turn, lead to better decisions, improved accountability and, ultimately, better government.

I would like at this point to draw attention to the untiring work of the hon. member for St. Boniface, who has led parliamentarians in defining their needs for information on expenditure management. With his help, we have developed documents that are more concise, more clear, and focused on results.

These reports are an important step in the process of planning for the next fiscal year.

[*English*]

If the pilot documents meet our expectations, we plan to seek the permission of the House to require all departments and agencies to table separate reports on planning in the spring and on performance in the fall.

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I think that the efforts of members of the government to objectively assess how well they met their commitments will be encouraging to everyone.

Focusing our attention on results and demonstrating our achievements are an important step in our efforts to get government right.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would invite the minister to continue along the path he has begun toward more accountability and greater transparency in public administration. In particular, I would invite him to ensure that members of Parliament and ministers also have an obligation of accountability and transparency.

• (1010)

I would also invite him to keep the promises made by the Liberal government about revitalizing democracy. Too often in the past three years the impression has been that the public service and the federal administration are often being led by the mandarins, that the mandarins are often telling the ministers what to do, and the ministers are letting themselves be pushed around by these mandarins.

Revitalizing democracy, as the Liberals so well presented it during the last electoral campaign, means more transparency in the work of committees. This was not been the case in connection with the family trusts, particularly the transfer to the United States of two billion dollars, in which there was no transparency whatsoever, but rather a systematic camouflage operation. I think there is a good deal to be done in this area.

The question of revitalization of democracy, accountability and transparency raises the whole question of political party funding. We can boast of having a grassroots funding structure, but the major federal parties do not have that.

I would therefore invite the minister to continue along the path on which he has begun, so that accountability, transparency and revitalization of democracy will be made concrete, rather than remaining mere empty promises.

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the work described by the minister stems from the recommendations of the sixth report of the public accounts committee tabled in March 1994.

There is no doubt that the President of the Treasury Board has taken his responsibility to report to Parliament very seriously. We now have several detailed documents from Treasury Board which include the main estimates, the annual report on review and these new performance reports.

It is now up to parliamentarians to do their job and review these documents to see what is missing and what can be improved. The Treasury Board Secretariat, along with the public accounts and the auditor general, have also recognized the need to improve measurement of results and to improve accountability in the public sector.

I applaud the recognition but in reviewing these documents I note that we still have a long way to go. There is one question to ask at the end of the day after reading these reports. Has the system been improved and will these reports assist in reviewing and improving government policy? I do not feel this question has been answered.

Last year Treasury Board reviewed 19 priorities or key government programs. I do not dispute the fact that all 19 programs were reviewed. Many of them were reviewed by standing or special committees. After the review, have the necessary steps been taken to improve the programs or to change the way the services are delivered? Let me offer four examples.

Last year Treasury Board said that the government reviewed the GST, family trusts, the infrastructure program and TAGS, the Atlantic groundfish strategy. What has happened as a result of the review? With the GST we note that the government has initiated harmonization which includes four provinces, but not abolition. The answer is to hide the GST in the sticker price which is not a very creative solution.

The review has taken place on family trusts but the loophole is still open. Infrastructure: \$85,000 per job has been spent and the unemployment rate is still 9.9 per cent. The youth unemployment rate is still double that. There has not been a very creative response.

What have we learned about the TAGS program? It is in as bad if not worse shape. Even those who have received the benefits of this program are extremely unhappy and the Pacific fishery is still in a terrible situation.

I do not believe we have made progress in these programs. The review has been interesting but the outcomes have not illustrated any improvements in the government's decision making process. Please do not get me wrong. I can understand that quantum leaps are virtually impossible. However, one critical attribute of a well performing government organization is that it seeks optimum performance. It will not settle for second best.

In the review of the GST, family trusts, infrastructure and TAGS there are no descriptions of optimum performance. We have no benchmarks to tell us whether or not the programs are performing well or meeting the needs they were created to meet. Let me illustrate my concerns with something more concrete.

One of the so-called faults of a public institution is that there is no bottom line, no hard data, but in some cases this is not true. Last month the auditor general reported on the quality of service in the

public sector. He found that 30 million phone calls to government departments went unanswered, 20 million in Revenue Canada alone. This figure seems like a concrete starting point. Revenue Canada is largely a service department. Finance sets most of our tax policy.

• (1015)

In looking at the performance report submitted by Revenue Canada, the problem is mentioned which is a start. However, no concrete plans are put forward to solve the problem. No benchmarks are given to Parliament to help us eventually measure the success or failure to deal with the problem.

The department says that Revenue Canada is aware that some clients have had difficulty getting through by telephone. The first step is to address the problem, which has been done. But where is the progress? Where is the improvement? Meanwhile the department continues to explore further opportunities for redesigning and improving telephone systems.

This explanation would not fly at a board of directors meeting. The CEO would ask for goals, plans and back-up plans. Once again the Reform Party has asked the government to clarify its goals. Are we trying to improve our programs or are we trying to explain away our problems?

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present in both official languages to the House, a report from the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the 42nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference which was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from August 17 to 24, 1996.

* * *

FISH INSPECTION ACT

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-64, an act respecting the inspection of fish and marine plants.

He said: Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 73(1), I wish to advise the House that it is the government's intention to refer this bill to committee before second reading.

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

Routine Proceedings

CANADA ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION ACT

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of the Environment, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-65, an act respecting the protection of wildlife species in Canada from extirpation or extinction.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure on behalf of the Government of Canada to introduce for the first time federal legislation to promote and protect endangered species across the country.

Like my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, it is also our intent pursuant to the same standing order to send this bill to committee before the commencement of second reading.

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

* * *

• (1020)

[Translation]

PETITIONS

CANADA'S INDIVISIBILITY

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present to the House of Commons a petition stating that Canada is indivisible and that the borders of Canada and its provinces and territories, as well as its territorial waters, cannot be changed other than by all Canadian citizens exercising their right to vote as guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or by the process prescribed in the Canadian Constitution.

This petition is signed by residents of Saint-Laurent, Montreal, Dorval, Pointe-Claire, Lachine, Toronto, Pierrefonds and other places in Quebec and Ontario.

THE SENATE

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I welcome this opportunity to table a petition signed by 860 petitioners, residents of the Outaouais region, the federal riding of Verchères and the greater Montreal area.

Your petitioners call upon Parliament to take steps to abolish the Senate, and their petition is based on the following. First of all, the Senate consists of non-elected members who are not accountable for their actions; the Senate's operating budget is \$43 million annually; the Senate refuses to account for its votes to the committees of the House of Commons; the Senate does not fulfil its mandate for regional representation; and the Senate duplicates the work done by the members of the House of Commons.

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Considering the need for adopting modern parliamentary institutions and also the motion being debated by this House, on which the House will be asked to vote next week, your petitioners ask that the Senate be abolished.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, government orders will be extended by 11 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING PROGRAMS ACT

The House resumed from October 30, consideration of Bill C-34, an act to establish programs for the marketing of agricultural products, to repeal the Agricultural Products Board Act, the Agricultural Products Cooperative Marketing Act, the Advance Payments for Crops Act and the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee; and of motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to Bill C-34 and to have the opportunity to briefly discuss the state of this country's agricultural sector.

First let me address the matter of Bill C-34. Its basic objectives are fairly admirable. It is supposed to streamline, to clarify, to modernize, to incorporate. These modern day management terminologies are rather appealing as debt and taxes rise and services degenerate.

This bill seeks to combine four separate acts and an agricultural program into one more concise piece of legislation. I am very much in favour of reducing administration costs and bureaucratic entanglements. The reduction of bureaucracy at any level is some-

thing that the Reform Party has been strongly advocating ever since the party's inception.

I am also in favour of making this Parliament more democratic. Bill C-34 exemplifies how the Liberals, despite red book promises to allow all MPs a greater role in drafting legislation, are continuing to ram through legislation without proper consultation from Canadians and their elected representatives in this House.

Each and every amendment to Bill C-34 proposed by the Reform Party was turned down by the Liberal dominated agriculture committee. It is my hope that we will have better luck with these amendments now that they are in the House, but I will not hold my breath.

• (1025)

The point I want to make today is that I do not believe the farmers who might be watching the debate are really all that concerned about Bill C-34. The farmers in my riding of Prince George—Peace River are struggling to bring in their crops. It is winter up there now. I was home last weekend and saw that things are disastrous, to say the least.

I spoke with the crop insurance people in Fort St. John which is my hometown. They were telling me that in the B.C. Peace region probably around 25 per cent of the crops on average have been harvested. That would vary in some areas.

Last weekend I travelled to the small farming community of Buick Creek which is north of Fort St. John. The farmers up there were telling me that they have hardly turned a wheel. The land is just a quagmire and they are lucky if they can get a load or two. Obviously, less than 10 per cent has been harvested in that area. Things do not look good.

As well, when I was speaking with the department of agriculture representatives, specifically Bill Greenhalgh of the provincial crop insurance branch, he informed me that only about 21 per cent of this year's crop is covered by crop insurance. That is about 80,000 acres out of roughly 384,000 acres.

I urge the federal minister of agriculture to join with his counterpart in British Columbia and tour the B.C. Peace region. He should see the state that the crop is in himself. I cannot emphasize this too strongly. He should go there to meet with farm groups and talk to the individuals involved.

In consultation with my colleague from the Alberta riding of Peace River I know that things are bad there as well. When it comes to weather, the border between the provinces does not make a difference. Although they are a little more advanced in the amount of crop they have harvested in the Grand Prairie and Peace River regions, there are pockets throughout the Peace River region which have virtually harvested no crop. It will indeed be a very sad Christmas for a lot of farm families in the Peace River country this year.

The farmers were hopeful because of the improvement in grain prices over the last few years and the amount of rainfall they had

this summer. It looked like it was going to be a good crop. However, when the rains continued into the harvest season, the fields turned into quagmires. The farmers could not get their equipment on the land in some areas. Harvest conditions were non-existent. They would be lucky to have one day out of 10 when they could go out in the fields with their combines.

Farmers have paid a horrific price to try to get the little bit of crop off that they have. It will be years before they will see the true cost in damage to equipment and land. I want to re-emphasize that government representatives should be travelling to the Peace River country to see firsthand what the situation is.

The second issue I want to raise on behalf of the farmers of our area is that I wrote to the former Minister of Transport almost a year ago raising the issue of rail shipping costs. There are two port destinations to which Peace region farmers can ship their product by rail, either Vancouver or Prince Rupert.

The port of Prince Rupert is severely underutilized, even though it has facilities superior to the port of Vancouver in many respects. It is ice free 12 months of the year and has a better berthing capacity. That means a ship can be completely loaded at the terminal, whereas in Vancouver because of water depth, a ship can only be partially loaded at one terminal and then it must be moved to another to be topped up. More important, Prince Rupert is a day and a half shorter to grain export markets on the Pacific rim.

• (1030)

Finally, I received a reply last spring from the present Minister of Transport concerning the difference in the cost of rail transport between the port of Prince Rupert and the port of Vancouver. In that letter he stated that the problem of rail rates is a commercial matter between the affected parties, namely the shippers and the two railways and that it is government policy not to intervene in such business decisions.

A month later, following continued protest, the transport minister finally acknowledged the gravity of the situation and initiated the northwest transportation corridor task force. Ironically, this task force was not going to hold any hearings in the Peace River country until the mayor of Dawson Creek and I made our concerns known. Two meetings have now been scheduled for early next month in Fort St. John and Dawson Creek so the farmers in the area can make their concerns known to the northwest transportation corridor task force.

It really comes down to the issue of the difference between the rail rates. I am told that even with some recent changes, it still costs \$3.81 more per tonne to ship grain to Prince Rupert than to Vancouver even though the distances are virtually the same. It used to cost \$8.08 more because of the switching charges B.C. Rail is charged in Prince George to go on to CN track. I hope that issue will be properly addressed.

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In the time I have left, I would like to briefly touch on one other issue, the shortage of rail cars in the Peace River country. Despite the fact that we do not have much crop off, ironically we cannot get enough rail cars to ship the crop that is there. My office spoke with Mr. Mike Burton, an elevator agent in Fort St. John for Cargill, who said that he had orders for 70 cars and could only get 17 the other day.

I would suggest that Peace River farmers have been well accustomed, to use an old farm saying, to sucking the hind teat, when it comes to agricultural services and attention by the government. We really do not believe it is the right way to go and we would like to see the government pay more attention to the Peace River country and our farming needs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Madam Speaker, before speaking on the motion put forward by my hon. colleague from Kindersley—Lloydminster, I would like to comment on the confusion that seemed to exist among the hon. member's colleagues in the Reform Party reflecting in essence his party's view of the thrust to be given the many legislative changes on agriculture.

It is disappointing to see the reluctance of the Reform Party and especially the ideological barriers colouring its rather limited contribution to the ongoing debate in the Quebec and Canadian agricultural sector.

Now, moving to serious matters, to Bill C-34. While the motion before us today was amended a number of times in the past few days, it still contains elements that run counter to the concern the government must have for farm producers.

We are aware of the fact that Bill C-34 involves developing programs for the marketing of agricultural products, which means having products to market, which provide a profit for producers, at a fair price to consumers. This means, for the producers, having more effective tools to recover the costs associated with operating a farm.

• (1035)

The amendment put forward by my hon. colleague from the third party removes two of the elements that form the very basis for this bill. It would eliminate the government's role as regulator of the agricultural market as set in clause 31 of the bill and ensure impunity in the case of refusal to provide information leading to a better analysis process in order to properly define the principles underlying clause 31.

I get the impression that, through Bill C-34, my hon. colleague is trying set a kind of precedent in order to apply the principle in the debate on restructuring the Canadian Wheat Board. I must tell my

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hon. colleague from the Reform Party, however, that any such legislative change can in no way apply to the Canadian Wheat Board because of its status and prerogatives. In this context, what the hon. member is asking in his motion is to limit the important contribution of the government in stabilizing costs in the agri-food sector.

Concretely, this enables the government to maintain the price of a given product at a certain level in the event of crop failure or, conversely, when harvest is too good and plentiful.

To illustrate the problem, we could take the example of the 1988 maple syrup production. You may recall that, in 1988, record amounts of maple syrup were produced. Consequently, maple syrup producers found themselves with barrels of grade A1 and even AA syrup that they could not sell even for less than a basic price, to at least cover their operation costs. In the case of maple syrup, the government had decided to support prices by buying up maple syrup surpluses from producers, and thus avoid a price drop. Stocks were stored, to be put on the market later, at a time of relative shortage, or in a year when production would be much more limited. This is why the price of maple syrup fluctuates very little from year to year. The Reform member seems not to know this basic economic rule.

Based on the same approach, the second motion of the Reform member seeks to ensure impunity for an action preventing the government from obtaining information that might be necessary to fulfil its role of price stabilizer. Obviously, and you will agree with me, this way of thinking is totally unacceptable, since it defeats government efforts to make things better for farmers.

The member's logic is even more flawed when you consider the high level of confidentiality governing this type of government intervention. From an administrative point of view, no one has any business knowing someone's personal situation, since the substance of this bill is to take action for the good of farm operators, based on a global and collective vision.

Before concluding, I remind the House that Bloc Quebecois members were and continue to be in agreement with the general principle of Bill C-34. However, we strongly oppose the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster. We care too much about farmers, given their role, to risk a lowering of their industry's standards of operation.

• (1040)

In conclusion, I ask Reformers to reconsider their opinion and their position, for the good of consumers and farm producers.

Should there be a very bad crop, prices could increase unduly and eliminate a number of farmers. In three, four or five years, there could be a shortage of farmers, or else prices could remain unusually high.

For the good of the general public and of farmers, consumers and processors, it is important to support the substance of Bill C-34 and to oppose the two amendments proposed by the Reform member.

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ): Madam Speaker, you have played a little trick on me, because you told me there would be a Reform Party member going ahead of me. I therefore had 10 minutes to prepare, but no matter, I will give my speech anyway.

As you know, the riding of Lotbinière, which I have the great honour to represent, is one of the largest agricultural ridings in Quebec. It is therefore with great interest and a sense of duty, Madam Speaker and dear colleagues, that I rise today to speak to Bill C-34, the Agricultural Marketing Programs Act.

First of all, I am pleased to note that the bill tabled is intended to combine four acts into a single act that provides support for the marketing of agricultural products.

This bill affects the Advance Payments for Crops Act, the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, the Agricultural Products Cooperative Marketing Act and the Agricultural Products Board Act. It also takes in the Cash Flow Enhancement Program.

My party, the Bloc Quebecois, is generally in favour of the objectives of Bill C-34, because it is essentially consistent with what the industry is calling for and seems more in line with our values and agricultural development models in the province of Quebec.

Nonetheless, I would point out an important budgeting inconsistency. If clauses 25 and 30 are financial in nature, the government hopes to be able to pay farmers under the advance payments program and the price pooling program.

We have learned that \$40 million a year for three years have been set aside under the advance payments program. In other words, there should be \$120 million after three years. Where it all goes badly wrong is when Agriculture and Agri-Food starts to take money for marketing programs out of the envelope reserved for the income protection program.

This transfer, this misappropriation frankly, of envelope funds means an equivalent reduction in the money available for protecting the incomes of farmers. By acting in this manner, the federal government is unfortunately once again cutting into Quebec's share.

Like it or not, Quebec's share of income protection programs for farmers is already, yes already, lower than what it is entitled to, given the relative weight of agriculture for Quebec.

• (1045)

There is a distinct feeling that once again, Quebec gets the short end of the stick. It is the same old story: Quebec does not get its fair share, on a per capita basis.

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You will remember what my colleague, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, said in the House last week when he named various sectors in which Quebec did not receive its fair share.

Remember the case of raw milk cheese, where more than 50 per cent of the producers were from Quebec. A ban on this product can have a very serious impact on Quebec producers. My point is that when the government introduces measures, as in the case of raw milk cheese, it often does so at the expense of Quebecers.

To get back to the bill on agricultural marketing, we should insist that the budget for advance payments programs not be taken out of the budget for income protection programs. I think that is a major irritant for farmers in Quebec.

When that happens, the farms in my riding and throughout Quebec will at least be treated fairly under this program.

The budget envelope for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada income protection programs in 1997-98 is \$600 million. This represents a drop of \$250 million or 30 per cent from the prebudget level of \$850 million. If the federal government goes ahead and siphons off funds from the budget for income protection programs, \$120 million will have been taken out of this envelope over a period of three years.

To be perfectly frank, it is unconscionable to use part of the budget for protection of farm incomes to finance the advance payments program which, I may remind the House, is a program for the marketing of agricultural products. What connection is there between the advance payments program and income protection programs? None at all.

When the Minister of Finance tables his budget, does he do so fully intending to deceive taxpayers in Canada and Quebec? Should the budget not do what it is supposed to do? That would make sense. However, if we follow the logic of this government, should we infer that the existing figures do not mean a thing since they no longer correspond to the envelope they were supposed to cover? I am sorry but this is outrageous.

The budget for the income protection program is already inadequate, so there is certainly no reason to take money out of this budget, unless the government wants to penalize Quebec farmers. If the federal government, through the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, takes money set aside for income protection programs to finance the advance payments program, which is a program for marketing agricultural products, why did it not make those changes right now?

First of all, it would take real political will to change the situation and ensure that the money used for advance payments comes directly out of the funds set aside for the agricultural products marketing programs. I think the government should invest

more money in the budget for marketing programs and stop cutting and siphoning off funds from one budget envelope to another. The solution is simple, but it is also vitally important.

As a result, in the future, the incomes of farmers in Lotbinière and throughout Quebec would be better protected. They could also take \$120 million from the budget allocated to income protection plans, but we would not be any better off than today in that there would be less money for Quebec farmers in this area and distribution would be even more inequitable for the other nine provinces in the Canadian federation.

Another possibility mentioned by some would be for the government to inject new money into programs aimed at marketing agricultural products and transfer money from the budget earmarked for income protection programs.

• (1050)

In my opinion, this is a partly acceptable solution. That is why my party, the Bloc Québécois, is asking the federal government to make the changes required to correct the situation and ensure that Quebec farmers are treated fairly.

In clear, simple terms, we are asking the government to take the money for the advance payments from the budget set aside for income protection programs. This is a major irritant for agricultural producers in Quebec, including, of course, those in my riding of Lotbinière.

The government tells us this bill will have no impact on Quebec producers receiving advance payments, except that it would be much harsher on those who do not repay their advance payments. We can only conclude that this bill will have a much bigger impact on Quebec producers.

Furthermore, with its new eligibility rules, Bill C-34 would exclude any kind of co-operative marketing. In fact, one of the eligibility requirements for producers must be rejected, especially the one about their being able to decide when to sell their crops. This requirement would exclude crops marketed co-operatively. One of those most affected would be the VEGCO Group of Quebec.

In closing, I agree that the federal government should use taxpayers' money efficiently by rationalizing its programs so that farmers receive the same benefits and meet the same obligations. But there is a major inconsistency in the way the budget is allocated and, if the government were left to itself, it would reduce Quebec's share of income protection programs even further.

I feel I have a duty to defend the interests of the farmers in my riding of Lotbinière and those of Quebecers.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting to have the opportunity to speak on

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the act to establish programs for the marketing of agricultural products. First of all, I think it is important, especially in light of the amendments proposed by the Reform Party, to realize that the basic principle that matters here is that agriculture is a unique and very different industry, and that it has to be dealt with as such.

A well targeted approach must be used so as to not do this industry a disservice in trying to put it on the same playing field as other industries. Agriculture, as you know, is dependent on the weather, markets, all kinds of factors that are intangible and difficult to predict.

The Reform motion seeks to delete the clause enabling the minister to buy, sell or import agricultural products so that prices will be more stable, thereby improving marketing conditions. My reaction, after meeting with farm producers in my riding over the summer, is that the Reform Party is displaying a rather blatant ignorance of several industrial sectors. There are many areas of the agricultural industry where such measures are required.

There are indeed many areas, be it maple syrup, potato or milk production, where the government must have a handle to regulate the market. Otherwise, the situation will revert to what it was 15 or 20 years ago. One year, producers make good money, but the next year their profits drop and the operation has to close down. This is not good for anyone involved, neither for the family business nor for the economy at large.

• (1055)

It is imperative that this amendment be defeated so that the minister may continue to exercise a regulating role, ensuring some stability for our economy and our agricultural industry. Just compare the typical farm producer, in Quebec and Canada to their counterpart in the U.S., where they practice this kind of extreme competition without any government involvement, and you will see that the economic situation of American producers is definitely not as good.

American farmers are much more dependent on economic cycles. By comparison, in Quebec and in Canada, we have managed to develop an agriculture which, although it is not easy and requires a lot of effort and sacrifices on the part of farmers, allows them, through stabilization policies, to carry on their operations. Quebec was a pioneer in this regard. It has been periodically and systematically involved, to provide good conditions to its farmers and make sure that succeeding generations would take over farming operations.

Amendments such as the one proposed today by the Reform Party would also have the effect, in the medium term, of creating a great deal of uncertainty about agriculture. This is an industry in which a bad year, or a surplus that cannot be disposed of, creates a serious problem. People simply cannot invest their life in such an industry.

The Reform Party should go back into the field. It may not represent the same type of farmers as we have in Quebec, but its amendment is certainly not very appealing.

The other aspect is one that does not necessarily concern our farmers, but is nevertheless important from a moral point of view. An amendment such as the one proposed by the Reform Party would impede international assistance, in that the Canadian government would no longer have the means to take action in emergency situations around the world, when it is necessary to ensure that populations have food in situations of crisis.

We have to maintain the image developed over the years by our country. It is generally agreed that Canada does a lot at the international level. There are many flaws to work on, but the general principle must be maintained. Unfortunately, the amendment proposed by the Reform Party would not allow us to meet that objective.

I also want to stress the fact that we must give particular attention to small producers. This summer, I met with producers, including some from the maple syrup industry. Maple syrup production is an industry with big and well-organized chains that offer interesting product lines. However, we should promote home-made products that could be exported.

Obviously, maple syrup is one such product, but if we wanted to set up a guaranteed vintage program, for example, like the ones for wine and other products, if we wanted to single out our product and obtain a higher price because of the quality or special characteristics of maple syrup from a particular area, for instance, we still have quite a long way to go.

Governments are very sensitive to lobbying from groups of well organized stakeholders, but the people who can help small rural companies to grow must still make a major effort. They must be given access to foreign markets, and I hope that a bill such as the one we are about to pass will be a help and not a hindrance.

In summary, the government must be able to maintain its role of protecting the income of farmers. The government must not be prevented from buying up surpluses, from taking the necessary time. In this connection, we have a very interesting example. A few years back, there was a surplus of apples. The federal government bought up a large quantity of them and was then able to resell them to a company that makes juice. In this case, the producer got his price, the government was able to cover its expenses and, in addition, the juice was produced in Quebec, in Canada.

• (1100)

This allowance for a regulatory role meant that jobs were maintained, production kept up and the link between the person doing the processing, producing the apple juice, and his market was

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also maintained. The market is therefore not disrupted, resulting in greater stability for the agricultural economy.

This is perhaps what agriculture needs the most. Yes, we have good producers, yes, we must adjust in terms of research and development. The government has done some things that we did not like. We must not, however, lose sight of the important fact that if we compare agriculture in our country to that in other countries, there are certain advantages that we want to keep. We will not improve the situation by creating uncertainty for producers.

This is why the Bloc Québécois will be voting against the Reform Party's amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The question is on Motion No. 2.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The division on Motion No. 2 stands deferred.

* * *

[English]

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS (REMEDIAL AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES) ACT

The House resumed from October 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, an act to authorize remedial and disciplinary

measures in relation to members of certain administrative tribunals, to reorganize and dissolve certain administrative tribunals, to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate today on Bill C-49, the Administrative Tribunals (Remedial and Disciplinary Measures) Act.

Wherever I travel in my constituency or throughout the country I speak to people who are terribly cynical. They are not cynical about life necessarily, but they are definitely cynical about the political process.

For example, a couple of weeks ago I met a lady who told me in very plain language her estimation of politicians. I was a bit surprised at the vociferous nature of her attacks. She said: "They say one thing and do another". We all know this is not necessarily true, or it is not altogether true, but it gives an idea of the cynical attitude that exists in our country.

The pervasiveness of the cynical attitude begs a major question: Why is this so? Why are so many Canadians so cynical about their political leaders and the political system? Why are they so angry?

One of the biggest reasons I have heard why politicians have such a bad reputation is the lavish patronage this government, like governments before it, has dished out and still dishes out to its party friends.

As members of Parliament we want Canadians to have faith in their leaders, to feel confident that politicians will do what they say they will do fairly and honestly. We need a measure of this trust to do our jobs properly in representing our constituents and the nation. As legislators we have a role in establishing this positive reputation for ourselves simply by doing our jobs well.

• (1105)

For example, we could pass legislation which would eliminate partisan appointments to key government positions. That would ensure that key appointments would be ratified by an appropriate body.

Unfortunately Bill C-49 is not that kind of legislation. For that reason it should not pass the House of Commons. Bill C-49 allows the shameless abuse of patronage to continue. This bill will only perpetuate and reinforce the cynical attitude that Canadians already have toward their leaders.

How does patronage relate to Bill C-49? This bill is supposed to be the second legislative step in the government's program to streamline the operations of federal agencies, boards and commissions. It is also supposed to change the appointment process,

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reduce the number of governor in council or cabinet appointments, more closely manage some agencies and eliminate redundant bodies.

This bill has an enormous flaw. It does not ensure that employment positions to government agencies, tribunals and boards are awarded strictly on the merit principle. It allows the government to continue to build its legacy of patronage abuse.

A moment ago I mentioned that partisan appointments made by this government and former governments helped to create the cynical attitude Canadians have toward politicians. Patronage causes people to think this way for two distinct reasons. First, the government broke its word to Canadians regarding patronage appointments. The Liberal red book, now called by many Canadians the Liberal dead book, promised that a Liberal government would make appointments to boards, commissions and agencies on the basis of competence, but that has not happened. These positions are still granted to the Liberal Party faithful.

When Canadians are not told the truth, who can blame them for being cynical? Just to give an idea of how blatant the Liberals have been in breaking their word, let me read a bit of their patronage record.

First, there have been 18 partisan appointments to the Senate, the institution the Prime Minister said in 1991 should be elected, equal and effective. Second, Richard Campbell, a former campaign manager, was appointed a director of Marine Atlantic. Third, Richard Cashin, a longstanding member of the Liberal Party and MP from 1962 to 1965, was appointed a member of the Canadian Transport Harvesting Adjustment Board. Fourth, Dorothy Davey, wife of former Liberal Senator Keith Davey, was appointed to the Immigration and Refugee Board. Fifth, Fred Drummie, the executive assistant to the Minister of National Defence, was appointed to the International Park Commission Board. Sixth, Raymond Guay, Liberal MP from 1963 to 1980, was appointed to the International Trade Tribunal. Seventh, Roy Heenan, partner in former Prime Minister Trudeau's law firm, was appointed to the CBC board of directors. Eighth, Ethel Teitelbaum, Pierre Trudeau's former executive assistant, was appointed to the Immigration and Refugee Board. It goes on and on.

This Liberal government, after saying it was going to be above board with Canadians, after saying it was not going to be like the Tories and after saying it was going to make appointments to boards and commissions based on merit, not based on loyalty to the Liberal Party, has made over 200 patronage appointments. What a shame.

What is even more shameful is that some Liberal members, point blank, support these practices. Last week the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood said: "I believe in patronage. I have always believed in patronage. I am not going to change". It is no wonder Canadians are cynical when there are members of Parliament who have this kind of attitude.

Patronage appointments create cynical attitudes for a second reason. It says to people that the government is more interested in scratching its friends' backs than in protecting the interests of our nation and treating every Canadian fairly.

For example, there is a serious problem in our justice system. Since coming to power the Liberals have appointed lawyers who are not competent crown prosecutors. When a judge must depend only on the evidence brought to the courtroom by the lawyers and the prosecution's presentation of evidence is lacking or faulty, the judge still must adjudicate on the basis of the evidence and the law. No wonder justice is not done. No wonder the justice system is not protecting our citizens from criminals. No wonder people are cynical, when the evidence is not properly presented and the judge is forced to let people go free without facing the consequences of serious criminal activity.

• (1110)

Patronage jeopardizes the interests of Canadians when political appointments are made to governing bodies like the National Parole Board and the Immigration and Refugee Board. Now even these boards are left without the credibility they need to properly serve their purposes.

By all the criminals released from jail on some form of early release in 1995-96, a total of 165 serious crimes were committed. These included 15 murders, 15 attempted murders, 22 sexual assaults, 21 major assaults and 71 armed robberies.

We were told when the National Parole Board released these individuals they were not considered risks. Boy, was it wrong. Historically people who sit on parole boards have been well paid patronage appointees with little or no knowledge of criminal justice. Parole board members now must have some background in criminology or corrections. But the point is still the same. When Liberal cronies with very limited knowledge of the criminal justice system are appointed to the National Parole Board, the chance of poor decision making increases. Canadians need and deserve certainty of safety before the Liberal government looks after its party needs.

The same case can be made for the Immigration and Refugee Board. Many of the 215 appointees to this board are political appointees. For example, I found a list printed in the *Vancouver Sun*, October 5, 1995. The list outlines the British Columbia Immigration and Refugee Board members and when they were appointed. Only nine of the nineteen appointees have any formal training or education in immigration law. Immigration and Refugee Board members are responsible for hearing the oral testimony of a asylum seekers and for determining whether claimants qualify for refugee status. When the government appoints its cynical buddies and bagmen to the IRB, incompetent decisions are a certainty.

In March last year the citizenship and immigration committee heard from two former members of the IRB. These men stated that

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at least half their former colleagues did not have the educational expertise needed to do their jobs. Let me quote from the testimony of one of those witnesses, Mr. Bauer. He said:

I would say, and I think most of my colleagues would have agreed with me, that about a quarter of the members of the IRB are incapable of even properly conducting a meeting. Even as second members, some of them are a bit embarrassing. I say that rather reluctantly, and I do not say it lightly, but I can assure you that it is true. Approximately another quarter, with a tremendous amount of training, education, coaching and monitoring, might be able to barely get through the process single-handedly, although I would think there would be a number of legal and procedural problems arising that would cause a great deal of difficulty with the board.

We have seen the incompetence described by Mr. Bauer in action. For example, on November 12, 1995 the Federal Court of Canada had to throw out a refugee board decision that denied a woman asylum. This woman was first ordered by her boss to submit to sexual assault and then convicted of prostitution. Mr. Justice Frederick Gibson who overturned the decision said "there should be a new hearing because the board made legal mistakes and overlooked key evidences".

This is a classic example of what happens when patronage appointments are made to government boards. We cannot blame people for being cynical when we have a government that takes care of its friends better than it takes care of the people of our refugee and immigration process and those seeking safety of Canadians.

Patronage not only endangers the safety and interests of Canadians, but it treats people unfairly. For example, the electoral returning officer in my riding is now a Liberal appointee. The person may be able to do the job competently but that is not the point. The person who had the job was competent, had done it through two elections but was fired to make room for this person. The job was not advertised. There was no open competition. How do the people in Cariboo—Chilcotin know that the most qualified person got this job? In fact, they do not know. What they know for sure, however, is that the Liberal government is more interested in doing favours for its friends than in treating Canadians fairly.

• (1115)

A moment ago I mentioned that the Canadian public is cynical toward politicians. The main reason for this cynicism is the patronage appointments that this government and the Tory government before it dished out and still dish out to their party friends. Just as the government is to blame for the problem, it could be part of the solution if it chose to do so.

The way for the government to give Canadians confidence and earn their trust is by giving them a fresh start. This means taking the Reform platform and putting it into action. We have an entire section on how to make politicians accountable.

Reform's fresh start to Canadians, guaranteed, will do the following. First, it will give Canadians the tools to ensure politicians keep their promises by bringing in the means to recall MPs who do not keep their word. Second, it will provide Canadians with a better representation, more direct input into the democratic process, and the ability to hold politicians accountable for their decisions. Third, it will allow freer voting in the House of Commons. Fourth, it will replace the current undemocratic, unrepresentative Senate with a Senate that is elected, equal and effective. Fifth, it will give voters direct input into the decision making process through referendums and citizens' initiatives on important issues. Sixth, it will involve citizens directly in amending our most basic law, the Constitution.

Most important in relation to this debate, Reform's fresh start guarantee will end patronage appointments by ensuring that employment positions and contracts are awarded on the merit principle and subject to open scrutiny by parliamentary committees.

If the government amended Bill C-49 to include this kind of provision, it would be taking an important step toward earning the trust of Canadians and putting the needs and concerns of the Canadian people over the interests of its Liberal friends.

In closing, I reiterate that a cynical mood exists in Canada toward politicians and their public institutions. Patronage is one of the root causes of this mindset. As members of Parliament we want Canadians to have faith in their leaders, to feel confident in their politicians, that their leaders will have the interests of the people first in mind and that we will act fairly and honestly in representing Canada and our constituents.

As legislators we have a role in establishing this positive reputation for ourselves. For example, we could pass legislation that would eliminate partisan appointments to key government positions. Unfortunately Bill C-49 is not this kind of legislation. For this reason it should not pass the House of Commons. Bill C-49 allows the shameless abuse of patronage to continue. It will only perpetuate and reinforce the cynical attitude Canadians already have toward their leaders.

Patronage creates a cynical mindset for two reasons: first, the government broke its word to Canadians regarding patronage appointments and, second, patronage says to people that the government is more interested in scratching its friends' backs than in protecting the interests and needs of society and treating every Canadian fairly.

Therefore I urge the government to pass legislation not only to end patronage appointments but to ensure that employment positions and contracts are awarded on the merit principle. This is one way we can earn the trust and confidence of people. It would also be the fresh start Canadians are asking of their political leaders and political institutions. It would be a fresh start that Canadians truly deserve.

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Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a few comments.

The government's criterion is based on competence and merit. It is an open process. The jobs are advertised and appear in the official *Gazette*. Our selection process is transparent and is based on job descriptions.

What the member said are his words and his imagination. The record will show that since we have taken office the government has appointed approximately 2,000 people to agencies, boards, commissions and crown corporations since November 4, 1993. Of this number 525 were reappointments. We do not know these people, but they were reappointed obviously because they did a good job. They knew what they were doing. They carried out their functions quite well. We had transfers and promotions of persons appointed by the previous government. The government then had a principal concern, that appointees should qualify for the jobs they do.

• (1120)

It is meanspirited to make comments that cannot be backed. It is meanspirited to say the government is not here to work for the people. That is why I came here. I was one of the first to speak in the House and I said that integrity and competence were important to me. That is the way I operate. I am sure most members of the House would like to do that.

The member talked about the member for Broadview—Greenwood. As I recall at the time the member said that bankers or industrialists appoint people they can work with, people they had confidence in and people with ability. These people are from right across the board. They may be Reformers, Conservatives or Liberals. Why would that exclude them from the job?

When the hon. member makes these comments he should give examples. He should make them transparent and ask questions in the House. That would make the process better. He should not just rise to say that government is bad. I do not think so. We have play a significant and important role for the people of Canada. The people of Canada want us to be transparent. They want us to be honest. I think most of us are.

Mr. Mayfield: Madam Speaker, I am dismayed the hon. member paid so little attention to what I was saying. I backed up what I said with concrete illustrations.

With regard to the matter of competency, I pointed out the serious problem in our justice system with the appointment of prosecuting attorneys who are not qualified and who are not doing their jobs well. Judges have problems dealing with evidence that is not properly presented and are unable to hold people to account for serious criminal activity. That is a very serious situation. It points

directly to the patronage appointments of lawyers who are not qualified to do their jobs.

I also mentioned the situation in my constituency where the job of electoral returning officer was not advertised. We only found out about the appointment by accident. I talked to the previous returning officer and learned he had been fired although he had done an admirable job through two previous elections.

He was not a Reformer. He was not politically motivated but he was not a Liberal either. He does not have the job, which he regrets. He did the job very conscientiously. He took it very seriously. He entered into the program of witnessing elections in other parts of the world on behalf of the government. He did an outstanding job. I do not speak about him as a Reformer because he is not one. He was a credible returning officer who no longer has the job.

I am sorry that in asking the question the member is not aware of what is happening within his own party. It is a serious situation in terms of the results of appointing people who are not qualified. It is also serious because it feeds the cynicism of people toward their political leaders. Many of us are trying to change this reputation but we cannot do so until the government with the power to change begins to act in that way.

• (1125)

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Madam Speaker, could the hon. member for Cariboo—Chilcotin advise the House if in his opinion there are circumstances upon which it is appropriate for the government of the day to make appointments based on the party or philosophical approach of a person in any circumstance? Is there an occasion when patronage is an appropriate consideration in government appointments?

Mr. Mayfield: Madam Speaker, the blatant patronage we see today that has no reference to the qualifications of the person involved but simply the loyalty of the person to the party is what I am speaking about.

It would be unfortunate if the qualifications did not list the needs, the intention of the governing party and the direction it is going so that the person appointed can properly act out government policy.

I am speaking against are people who are not qualified and are being appointed primarily, if not only, on the basis of their party relationship. That has to come second. The needs of the nation must come first.

Just to emphasize what I have said to my hon. colleague, it would be unfortunate if the government selected or appointed a person who was not in tune with the direction the government had in mind in changing programs. It would be unfortunate if a person was appointed to maintain the status quo when change was needed.

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The government making the selections must do it very carefully. It must be open. The qualifications must be listed so that the general public knows what they are and can find out if they are interested. The appointment should be made with the government's needs in mind and ratified by the appropriate body.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Madam Speaker, what does the hon. member feel should be added to the bill? What kind of an amendment could be made to make political patronage more or less vanish or disappear? That is something that must happen.

Mr. Mayfield: Madam Speaker, I am pleased my colleague asked this question. Perhaps the single most effective means of accomplishing that purpose would be to have appointments ratified in a public forum such as a parliamentary committee. If that were the case the public would know, scrutinize, understand and make its objections if it was not properly done.

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a quick comment. In my previous role I spent 19 years in municipal politics. There is no easy way of finding people.

At one time we had to hire a police chief. People said let the rest of the police chiefs select the person. If the person is not screened, in the culture of that organization they may hide all the facts. It is the minister's decision. There is no magic way of hiring people.

Does the hon. member think that all people are perfect and his selection process is a perfect one?

Mr. Mayfield: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that there is no magic in the process, but the process must be open. The Canadian people, the appropriate people, must be involved. It must be more than a political adventure in appointments. When openness is there, when people know what jobs are available, what they can apply for and when the applicant who is successful has the scrutiny of not only the government but of the public at large, the process will become much fairer and will much better serve the needs of the Canadian people.

* * *

● (1130)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That any recorded division requested Thursday, October 31, 1996, on any government orders, including the divisions already requested on Bill C-34, and on Friday, November 1, 1996 on the address debate, be deemed deferred until Tuesday, November 5, 1996 at 5.30 p.m.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS (REMEDIAL AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES) ACT

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

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today against Bill C-49, an act to authorize remedial and disciplinary measures in relation to members of certain administrative tribunals. We must particularly note the word "disciplinary". The minister wishes to have the power to smack his administrators around a bit. Our colleague and fellow member of the Bloc Québécois has proposed an amendment stating that there ought to be a parliamentary mechanism governing the appointment or revocation of the appointment of members of administrative tribunals.

As my introduction, I would like to offer a brief explanation of what administrative tribunals are, what their importance is. Bill C-49 makes major changes to the operation of administrative tribunals. Although these modifications have not attracted much media interest, they are nonetheless important.

The administrative tribunals, while often less well known than the superior courts, nevertheless have major impacts on the daily lives of Canadians and Quebecers. Often they bring down far more decisions than do the superior courts. What is more, the consequences of their decisions are often very important to citizens and to the state, whether Canada or Quebec. Indeed, the significance the administrative tribunals have assumed in recent years is now an accepted fact. They have become the preferred decision-making venue, where citizens wishing to confront government regularly stand up for their rights.

I will name a few of these tribunals to show how significant they are and the role they play in our society. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board, the agricultural products review board, the Canadian Grain Commission, the Immigration and Refugee Board, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal, the Competition Tribunal—this one is very important—the Copyright Board, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. These are commissions and tribunals that play a very important role in our society.

The Liberals have decided to change the way these tribunals are administered. This will have serious consequences. I believe the main reason, and they have said so, is to cut positions and administrative spending. That seems legitimate. But if we take a really good look, it is not the real reason.

The changes the government makes will infringe on the independence of these tribunals and will also further centralize the powers of the federal government in Ottawa. The real reason for these changes in the constituent legislation of administrative tribunals is

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mainly that the government wants to designate the presidents instead of appointing them.

• (1135)

To designate is a very serious matter. When one designates, one can also revoke a decision very quickly, and as mentioned in the legislation, if the minister responsible feels that he has a role to play and the president of a tribunal does not exactly reflect the ideas of the minister or the government, he can be removed—in other words, fired—for reasons that are more or less substantiated. This is supposed to enhance administrative flexibility, but it is a very serious matter, and I will explain this in a few minutes.

In the past when the president of a tribunal was appointed, it was for two, five or seven years. This created a certain stability and a certain independence in the way the president made his decisions. However, if the president is designated and can be removed at any time, this means he will always be at the beck and call of the government in power.

I think the main reason behind this bill is to make it easier to appoint friends of the government. As you know, the Conservatives were in power for nine years. During that time they changed practically all the incumbents, all 2,000 of them, on these tribunals. These are very attractive appointments to positions that are very well paid.

The Liberals have been in power since 1993. Three years later, they now realize they cannot hand out these positions fast enough to their friends. They are changing the act to be able to do so quickly, in other words, to have the power to fire most of the people who are sitting on these tribunals and put their friends in instead.

To me this kind of bill is outrageous. That is why I am pleased to have this opportunity to criticize publicly the current government's conduct in this respect.

We know that many of the people who will be appointed are friends of the government. In fact, during the last election campaign, one of the Liberal Party's officials came out and said publicly to the defeated candidates that they did not have to worry, that a job would be found for them, that there were plenty of jobs, and that those who so desired would be able to get a job from the federal government.

I think that today, the government has realized it cannot appoint its friends fast enough. So they are changing the legislation to make it easier to remove incumbents and appoint their Liberal friends to these administrative tribunals.

I believe that is the main reason for all these changes in the legislation. This is why they must be denounced, and also why my friend, the hon. member for La Prairie, has presented his amend-

ment calling for the House of Commons to have a say in the appointment of members of administrative tribunals.

If we are to have responsible governments in future, we must not use this as a pretext for forcing people to back the winning horse. In recent years, we have noticed that often those involved in politics or political organizations are like weather vanes. Often, if the government is winning, if people or polls say that this or that party is on top, many people change sides at the last minute. In the final weeks, rapid changes can be seen taking place. Often one of the reasons they do so is to have a chance at an appointment to some commission or other.

In this sense, this does not seem good either. People involved in politics must be prompted to do so by their ideals, their belief in a party's philosophy, not because they are angling for a job, that is to say serving their own interests. In my opinion, if we want to have governments that are responsible and capable of selling their ideals, the machinery must be cleaned up, and when it comes down to it, this bill does the opposite. It has people working with a view to a chance at job in future if their party wins the elections. These amendments on the appointment of members of administrative tribunals are, to my mind, quite shameful.

• (1140)

What is unfortunate with this bill is that it will hamper the independence of the tribunals. Our judicial systems have always been world-renowned. Our judicial systems and our tribunals were truly stable. There was no interference between the legislative system and the justice system. What the minister and the government are doing now is providing the government with the power to interfere directly in tribunal decisions. A tribunal must be independent of the legislators.

What the government is proposing is exactly the opposite. It wants to interfere, by equipping itself with means of discipline. That is what is written into the law, moreover. It will be able to take disciplinary measures in order to direct the administrative tribunals, which means direct government involvement in the decisions of the administrative tribunals. This strikes me as very, very serious.

As we know, judges in the judicial system are appointed until the age of 75. These long appointments make it possible for the judicial system to be stable and totally independent. What the minister proposes is the exact opposite in that it would make administrative tribunals less stable.

The president of the Quebec Bar Association was very clear about this when she said that "the lack of job security may have an unexpected psychological impact on the decisions of a person who may be more concerned about pleasing the government than rendering a fair judgment". As I pointed out earlier, these people will be more concerned about pleasing the government and meet-

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ing its expectations from day to day than about making the decisions they must be free to make.

This bill and these changes are a disgrace because they do the exact opposite. This goes against common sense. We want our society to move forward, but the government is taking us back to the 1920s, the 1930s, the Duplessis era, or the turn of the century. This kind of measure is totally unacceptable.

We often criticize the United States for the way they do things. But I can tell you that in the U.S., for example, tribunal members are appointed by committees, which, I think, is a much more equitable approach. Committee chairs and members should not be appointed by the party in power alone, but by House of Commons committees.

• (1145)

The government could propose names, but the appointments would be debated in committee so that these decisions can be made at arm's length from those in power and committee members chosen for their abilities and not their political ties. These people could then do their jobs with competence and great freedom of action. This, I think, is very important in order to clean up the system.

We should follow the U.S. government's example in appointing our legal authorities.

The government is giving itself enormous power over administrative tribunals. When the minister alone appoints all these people on behalf of the government, he does so unilaterally, without ever consulting the provinces, and yet these tribunals often need to make rulings in very important areas like the oil, uranium and electricity industries.

The large corporations in the energy sector wield a great deal of influence. If the minister is not happy with the rulings made by a tribunal, he might simply appoint someone else. The minister's power to appoint someone else is considerable as it gives him direct control over decisions. That is the issue. The minister's power to appoint and dismiss tribunal members for all kinds of more or less valid reasons gives him direct control over decisions. It makes no sense for the minister to establish tribunals while keeping this great power to decide.

We know full well that these people will have to meet government expectations and that decisions affecting major areas like those I mentioned earlier—the oil, uranium and electricity industries—could displease or penalize Quebec, especially when electricity is concerned. The government could take matters into its own hands instead of letting the tribunal decide, for the reasons I gave you earlier. It could make its own decision and hurt Quebec's interests. It is very important to mention this.

As you know, it has been quite difficult in the past to get justice as far as Quebec's major economic sectors are concerned. And the government is about to give itself extraordinary powers. What this means is that the government will never consult with the provinces before making appointments, and that the person appointed to the chair will not make a decision without first notifying the minister because, if he displeases the minister, the minister can dismiss him—as the bill points out—without compensation. He could be dismissed just like that, because the government does not like the way he handles cases.

This is a real case of judicial interference, which I condemn today, like several of my colleagues as well as some Reform members. We can never say it often enough. I hope the minister will reverse his decision, because this is really unfair and unacceptable. This is a step backward instead of forward.

Bill C-49 will have serious consequences for our tribunals' independence. Instead of moving democracy forward, we are regressing. The government is giving itself way too much power. That is why I am in favour of the amendment put forward by my colleague from La Prairie and opposed to Bill C-49.

• (1150)

[English]

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a lot of the discussion we are having today has to do with change and people's imaginations. They are imagining hypothetical situations which may or may not occur.

When I listen to question period in the House, the minister is accountable. When the minister does not do his or her job, opposition members want his or her head on a silver platter. The image I have in my mind is a cabinet minister in a ring with Mike Tyson with his or her hands tied behind their back, but the minister is supposed to win the fight.

If we want good government, we must have competent managers responsible for a file. We can then hold them accountable with regard to their competence in running that file. Competence in that file does not mean that we put so many regulations in it that they cannot do their job.

I ask the member: Who is responsible for the file? Who do they hold responsible when something happens in a department?

[Translation]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that the government is responsible. But being responsible is one thing and giving oneself excessive powers is quite another. Here, in Canada and Quebec, it was decided that the legislative power and the executive power, that is to say justice, should be separate.

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If the government is linked directly to its courts, why bother creating any? The minister might as well make his own decisions and appoint administrators, but there is no point establishing a tribunal to settle disputes while giving himself the authority to settle disputes.

Furthermore, the real reason for these tribunals, in my opinion, is that the government wants to appoint its friends. When this bill is passed, it will be able to make at least 1,000 appointments. I say at least 1,000; the fact is there are 2,000 positions to fill in various tribunals. With an election just around the corner, the government cannot wait to be able to appoint its friends. It has not been able to do so up to now, because the Conservatives had already done the same thing, but at least in their case, they did not appoint a friend just for a month. Now, the Liberal government will be able to designate friends for one, two, three or four months, then throw them out and designate another bunch, playing this little game over and over. This whole thing is scary and downright outrageous.

At least, there were appointments for three, five or seven years in the past, but now this is all changing. Appointments are being replaced with designations and these will be for as long as the Liberals have left on their mandate. They have one year left, so designations will be for one year, and if they get re-elected, they will get to start over, appointing new people whom they can expect will work hard for them in the next election. This is what this means. This is outrageous. It is really taking us back 100 years. We are going backward instead of forward with this government, might I say a totalitarian government. Are we headed for a totalitarian regime or will democracy prevail?

We want those who have responsibilities to be free to exercise them, without having to account directly to the government. There lies the big problem. Such an approach must be strongly condemned. This is serious, much more so than what the hon. member of the Liberal Party suggested, when he said that the government's role was to manage. The government is indeed elected to pass legislation and make regulations. Then, people are appointed to implement the legislation or regulations, but the government must not get involved directly in the implementation of the legislation and regulations it puts in place. The two must be kept separate to ensure that, after it has been passed by the government, the legislation is implemented by individuals operating at arm's length, without having the government on their backs.

• (1155)

What the government is doing on an interim basis, by designating the chairpersons of administrative tribunals, is giving itself the power to dismiss them at any time. That is the problem with the government's interfering with administrative tribunals. In many cases, this will have serious implications for anyone who has to face the big machine often.

In the judicial system, the little guy is often the winner. He has the advantage. It used to be that this was also the case in tribunals, but with the administrative changes the government is introducing, the tables will now be turned and the big guy will win. The little guy will always come out the loser. The government will interfere directly and indirectly with the decision making process. That is totally unacceptable. The Bloc Quebecois will vote no, a strong no.

[English]

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on Bill C-49, the administrative tribunals act.

Before speaking on the bill, I want to quote from the Liberal red book, the tome that was going to govern the actions, responsibilities and promises the government made to the Canadian people. The red book promise on Liberal patronage and patronage in general appears on page 92:

A Liberal government will take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government—and make competence and diversity the criteria for federal appointments. Open government will be the watchword of the Liberal program.

What have we found instead? We have found that patronage is alive and well in the Liberal government. No fewer than 1,800 positions have been put forth. It is fairly wide ranging.

For example, the National Transportation Agency, which was reorganized this summer, was appointed with well connected Liberals, such as former MPs Richard Cashin from St. John's, Newfoundland and Keith Penner from Kapuskasing, Ontario. Let us look at some recent appointments to the bench. One appointment with a salary of roughly \$140,000 per year went to the minister's sister, a former Liberal Party president. Another appointment went to an ex-Ontario Liberal MPP. Defeated MP Gary McCauley, Pierre Trudeau's former executive assistant, received an appointment to the Immigration and Refugee Board with a salary of over \$86,000 per year.

These are but some of the hundreds of appointments that have gone to people whose only claim to fame, or whose primary claim to fame, is that they are members of the Liberal Party. That flies in the face of the Liberal red book promise of decreasing patronage.

Bill C-49 does not smack of the cavalier attitude that the former Conservative prime minister had. Rather it smacks of political hypocrisy.

A number of important issues affect this. The budget for consulting contracts should have been cut by at least 15 per cent but this has not been done. No chopping has occurred at all in

consulting contracts by the government even though it promised to do that.

Parliamentarians should have been given mechanisms to review senior cabinet appointments but have we seen that? Not at all and no excuse has been given as to why this important aspect of accountability has not entered into the process of ensuring that the best people are appointed to these important jobs. All appointments should have been made based on competence and merit and not because they hold a card to the Liberal Party in their back pocket. So far more than 1,800 appointments have been made, the vast majority of which have been longtime members in good standing of the Liberal Party, the party of the government in power.

• (1200)

The government said that individuals should be appointed to positions on the basis of merit and on the basis of competence, that those were the primary reasons. We have not seen that. We believe the most important aspects upon which a person should be deemed appropriate for a job should be merit and competence. It should not be the sociodemographic groups they represent, nor their gender, nor the colour of their skin, nor their racial group, nor their language, nor the province they come from. It should be on the basis of merit.

To judge anybody on a basis other than merit and competence is to be discriminatory. That is why affirmative action, in our view, is discriminatory. However, we must do all we can for underprivileged groups within our country, for those groups that have traditionally had a difficult time succeeding. We must do all we can to give them the tools and the opportunities to become the best that they can become.

We are opposed to determining outcomes. We cannot say in this House that we want 25 per cent of a certain group and 15 per cent of another group represented. The determination of outcomes by its very nature is discriminatory and disturbing. The process insults the people intended to be put forward in these positions. They are being judged not on the basis of their competence and merit but on the basis of the colour of their skin or their gender or any other criteria which really has no bearing on their ability to do the job.

It is one of the most disturbing issues for me as someone who is from a very mixed ethnic background. It is discriminatory for individual human beings to be judged by anything other than their merit and competence.

When the time comes in Canada that we can all be judged on our merit and competence but primarily as human beings, then we will have created a society based on equality, mutual respect and understanding. To do anything else and to judge people on any other criteria is to do a disservice to them. It is discriminatory.

I am sure the public would be very interested to find out that our charter of human rights, the document that is lauded as a tome for

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equality which preserves the rights of people, is actually a discriminatory document. Much to my shock when I read this document, it says specifically that it is acceptable to discriminate against a group of people who have previously been advantaged in our society.

That has to be struck because it is a discriminatory statement by its very nature. It defeats the purpose of being Canadian. It defeats one of the many things that we are very proud of as Canadians; that we are for equality for all individuals regardless of their colour, their race, their nationality, their gender, or whatever other criteria we could define people by. At the end of the day those criteria do not matter at all. It matters what kind of a person one is and the merit and competency the person will bring to a job and all situations. This is not what the government has done.

The bill does a number of other things, or I should say that it fails to do a number of things. It does not affect cabinet's power to make appointments. It removes the ability of this House or any overseeing body to look at the appointments that cabinet makes.

The bill states that it will eliminate 271 jobs. Members should be interested to know that those 271 jobs are currently vacant. The government is being hypocritical in presenting legislation to the House, saying that it will eliminate jobs although those jobs are currently not in existence.

• (1205)

The bill also makes very few changes to existing travel and per diem perks. It also does not add an element of accountability.

The vast majority of people I know who work in this House or in the bureaucracy are honest individuals. They take their responsibility to the Canadian people very seriously. They are very concerned about the amount of money they spend because at the end of the day, that money comes out of the pockets of the hard working taxpayers.

There are individuals who choose not to recognize this and have shown irresponsibility in the travel that they do. They have abused their power as elected individuals within Parliament or appointed individuals. These individuals must be brought to heel. There must be an element of accountability and transparency in the way in which spending takes place by these individuals. Bill C-49 does not do that even though it provided the government with a great opportunity to do so.

Remedial and disciplinary measures also should have been standardized by the administrative tribunals. However, the power of the minister to interfere with disciplinary measures is not decreased but is increased. It is the minister who in all likelihood made the appointment who is now responsible for disciplining the very person the minister put in the position. This is not what the

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Reform Party thinks should be done. Those responsibilities should be done in conjunction with other individuals. Increased transparency, reportability and accountability must be added into the system.

There are many other plum patronage jobs I could speak about. The list as I said amounted to 1,800 in total. I remind the House again of the red book promise and I would like to compare it with the promise the Reform Party is putting forth.

The Liberals promised to Canadians in 1993 that they would take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government and make competence and diversity the criteria for federal appointments. Open government would be the watchword.

Our promise to the Canadian people is as follows. The Reform Party supports restrictions and limitations on the number and types of orders in council permitted by government during its term of office. We also want to add that element of accountability into the system.

The government had an ideal opportunity when it came into power to restore the confidence of Canadians in this institution. We in this House and the Canadian public know very well that an extraordinary amount of apathy exists in the Canadian public about this House, about this institution and about the elected officials who are here. It is not without a great deal of truth historically.

The government had an opportunity to democratize this House. The government had an opportunity to bring back into this House the power of the people through their elected officials. Instead, the government chose not to. Even when the Liberals themselves were in opposition, they brought forth good documents and good ideas on how to democratize this House. We have not seen anything of that in this House.

With the new appointment to the Chair this week, we found that the government itself broke its promise. The government should have put forth a member from the opposition into the Chair, but it has put forth one of its own.

We can still do some things regarding the committee structure. Committees were put in this House to keep members busy and to keep them running around in circles. The vast majority of work that a committee does is often done at great expense not only to the members themselves in terms of their time, but also to the House and the ancillary staff who work very hard and conscientiously to put forth documents that they hope will make a difference.

What happens in committees? Committees sit and listen to the hard, earnest and learned opinions of members of the public. A committee document is put forth after many months of study and

review. The document gets about a day of play in the media and then it is shelved with numerous other documents.

• (1210)

A poignant example of this took place in the health committee when the head of the Inuit Tapirisat society came before the committee. The House of Commons health committee was going to consider studying aboriginal health in Canada, which is a very serious problem that should have been dealt with decades ago, a profound tragedy in our midst.

The head of the Inuit Tapirisat society came to us with an armful of dockets. She said: "If you want to come up to Inuvik and study us, you are not welcome because these documents in my arms are just a small example of the dozens upon dozens of studies that I have on aboriginal health. We do not want any more studying. We need action".

It is action that the Canadian public wants to see come out of this House. But it is not action that we often see. The government could have taken it upon itself to give committees the power to introduce legislation, to give committees the power to put forth good solutions, to decrease the reins of the whip structure.

The whip structure cowers members of Parliament and prevents them from representing the public in a way that is effective in this House. For government members to speak against the government of the day is to bring forth the wrath of the whip. Members of Parliament could have their rights and responsibilities to speak in this House removed. They could be ostracized by their colleagues and removed from committees.

Two poignant examples occurred, one of which was on Bill C-68, the gun control bill. Members of Parliament, a half dozen or so from the government, courageously represented their constituents and spoke out against the bill, as they should have done, and were summarily hammered by their own government. They had their ability to speak in this House removed. They were removed from committees. They were ostracized and for a significant time were made defunct, superfluous and vestigial.

When a government does that it is not doing it only for the member. Most important it is doing it to the members of the public who elected that individual to represent them in the House. We do not live in a democracy; we live in a fiefdom and that is part of the problem.

On private members' bills, the government through Bill C-49 could have brought forward good solutions in making sure that private members' bills could be put forth in the House and become votable. We are the only nation in the world that calls itself a democracy and has non-votable private members' bills. Why do we bother to go through the hoops to bring forth private members' bills

that are going to be made non-votable and therefore can never become law? What a waste of the taxpayers' money.

We could empower the public through their members by ensuring that all private members' bills could become votable and therefore could become law. It would maximize the great talent that we have in this House by members across party lines. It would bring those talents to bear and would bring the good ideas that are in the public domain to bear in this House for debate so that we could have effective legislation being brought forth for Canadians.

If the public looked at the pea soup type of agenda that exists in the House, they would be appalled. They would be shocked to find that the legislation we have today does not affect by and large jobs, or the economy, or safety in the streets, or poverty in any meaningful way. It does not strengthen our social programs. It does not touch the hearts, souls and the lives of Canadians in any meaningful way.

• (1215)

The vast majority of legislation brought forward in the House is a pea soup agenda that will only affect a small number of people. The government should be ashamed. It should have brought forth good legislation to address the situation.

In closing, we will vote against the legislation because it demonstrates the hypocrisy of the government. It had an opportunity to strengthen the democratic institution of the House and once again it has chosen not to do so. It is just another broken promise.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the comments of the member. I am sorry the bill was not addressed fully because there are some important aspects to it.

The member has taken the opportunity, as is his right, to make the debate a partisan one and to look for opportunities for partisan gain.

The member began by making reference to the whole issue of patronage. It is a word that conjures up a lot of negative connotations. He did correctly quote from the red book with regard to the undertaking of the government to ensure that competency and diversity were the hallmarks of approving any appointment.

The member suggested the only people who get appointments are well connected Liberals. I do not think the member would suggest to the House that Liberals need not apply. That has nothing to do with competency or diversity. He referred to some appointments as that their only claim to fame. I do not think he gave any examples or qualified whether competency or diversity was part of the appointment. He referred often to political hypocrisy. I do not see how appointing competent people who represent diverse interests to public bodies or boards has anything to do with political hypocrisy.

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Unfortunately when we get into partisan types of debate it tends to paint all members of Parliament with the same brush. It tends to degrade the position of member of Parliament. All members are working very hard to improve the credibility of the elected representatives of the people in the House.

The member should know there is a risk in making an appointment to any board or body. They are subject to the scrutiny of the public at large.

I have a specific question for the member and will conclude with this point. The credibility of an individual or body approving an appointment that is publicly announced is subject to the scrutiny and the criteria of the public at large.

Notwithstanding his remarks, could the member give the House an example of any appointment that does not reflect competency or diversity?

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

I will give some examples. As much as I respected the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in that capacity I wonder what he knows about Canada Post. This former MP received \$160,000 in addition to his MP pension which, I might add, all members of the Reform Party but one gave up. He has received the top job of chairman of Canada Post and I fail to see the connection between foreign affairs and Canada Post.

We could talk about defeated MP Gary McCauley, a former executive assistant of Pierre Trudeau, being appointed to the Immigration and Refugee Board. I wonder what knowledge and qualifications the individual had about the Immigration and Refugee Board. There is a list I would be happy to provide to the member. The list goes on and on and I will not bore the House with it.

• (1220)

The fact remains—and this is not partisan; this is calling a spade a spade—that one of the prime criteria for receiving a plum patronage job quite simply is to be a member of the Liberal Party. That is wrong.

Mr. Szabo: Mr. Speaker, the point has been well made. I clearly asked the member whether he could give any examples that would show there was not competency or diversity in an appointment. His example was a former minister who is now head of Canada Post. He asked what possible linkage there could be between foreign affairs and Canada Post. That is a good question, but he should also know that minister happened to have been responsible for Canada Post in a previous post and ran the post office. He is in error in that example.

The second example he gave was the stipend a person received. The amount of dollars involved is subject to guidelines for certain jobs. Also in the second example the member did not give an

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example in which incompetency was demonstrated. It is not speculating whether someone has competence. It is showing that it was a bad appointment and they did not demonstrate competence in discharging their new responsibilities.

Again I ask: Could the member give an example to the House of an appointment that demonstrated there was incompetency in the appointment?

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I did not really want to raise this because I did not want to disparage in any way, shape or form our honourable defence forces. The rank and file work hard in a courageous way to bring honour not only to Canada but to our international peacekeeping forces.

However, one need not look any further than the former chief of defence staff, General Jean Boyle, who was appointed over and above other more highly competent and experienced individuals. That appointment was a disaster. It demonstrates what can happen when an individual who is in some way connected to this party is appointed to a position at their greatest level of incompetence.

The hon. member could look at that as a prime example, if his memory goes back that far.

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what gives a politician the authority to denigrate any person. The hon. member should make that comment outside. I think that would be a more appropriate place to do it.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, history bears out the level of incompetence of the individual. Otherwise the sorry state of affairs that took place at the highest levels of our military would not have occurred. The facts speak for themselves.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address Bill C-49. We have recently seen an increase in attention paid to Liberal patronage practices so it is appropriate to look at the bill at this time.

The Reform Party opposes the bill because it does not go far enough to reduce patronage. It does not affect cabinet's power to make appointments. It can still appoint whomever it wants.

There are still 2,225 appointments available to the cabinet. Considering the way the Liberal government does business, that is probably a guarantee that patronage will continue until the end of the session.

• (1225)

The Liberals claim the bill will standardize remedial and disciplinary measures for administrative tribunals. The power of this minister to interfere with the measures is increased. The minister will decide whether or not a member should be disciplined. As a member of the agriculture and agri-food committee I have seen the

Liberals draft bills with provisions that allow them to continue patronage.

Bill C-60, currently before the House, will create a new food inspection agency. Provisions in that bill create an environment for empire building and patronage. It states that the governor in council shall appoint a president and an executive vice-president to the new agency. These individuals will be responsible for the day to day operations of the agency and will provide advice to the minister on matters relating to the mandate of the agency. There is no mention of the qualifications required by these people. This type of situation opens itself up to more pork barrel politics.

Bill C-60 states that the president and the executive vice-president shall be paid such remuneration as fixed by the governor in council. We do not even know the salaries of these two positions. I wonder why there is not an advertising program for positions like these. It requires expertise to take over these boards and tribunals.

In the private sector usually advertisements go out and qualifications have to be presented. Not only that, usually the remuneration or wages are said to be negotiable. This seems to be the direction in which the government should go to get more accountability into these boards and tribunals.

First, we could become more efficient by negotiating better wages or wages that represent the qualifications. Second, if we could by advertising encourage the expertise to come forward and run the boards, it would be more efficient and accountable in the long run.

The bill also states that each member of the advisory board shall be paid such fees for his or her services as are required by the minister. Again we cannot tell Canadian taxpayers how much that will be because we have not seen the amount. This shows the Liberal way of doing business. There is no accountability and only Liberals need apply.

The Liberals have had a busy summer filling patronage appointments. We have seen the reorganization of the National Transportation Agency with the appointments of several well connected Liberals. Recent appointments to the bench include a cabinet minister's sister, a former Liberal Party president and an ex-Ontario MPP. They must have been carrying Liberal cards. If they did not, they were very fortunate.

The government has named Liberals to appointments within Petro-Canada, the Bank of Canada, the Federal Court of Canada and the Senate. The brand new Canada information office will be staffed with some Liberal cronies or political people and will be cranking out Liberal propaganda at taxpayers' expense.

The main criterion these individuals must have is some sort of Liberal tie. No other factor seems to be important. Probably the most cited example of Liberal patronage is the National Parole Board where incompetence and outright blunders have resulted in

dangerous criminals going free to commit their horrible crimes all over again.

I have spoken a number of times on the issue of crime. It is sad to see that political interference can have an effect on how the parole system or the justice system is working. The Liberals would rather put rewarding political friends ahead of ensuring the safety of Canadians.

• (1230)

This is the party that promised to take steps to ensure that the confidence of Canadians in their government institutions would be restored. The last couple of days we have been involved in a debate concerning the appointment of a deputy chair. This was a promise that could have been kept so easily without any financial burden to the taxpayers. It would have improved the independence of the Chair and shown the country that we are determined to increase democracy on the Hill.

The Liberal Party promised in the red book to take steps to ensure that Canadians' confidence in government institutions would be restored. The red book promise stated that open government would be the watchword of the Liberal program. These words ring very hollow now, contrary to the promise on the campaign trail.

I vividly remember when the Conservatives defeated the Liberals in the 1984 election and Mr. Mulroney pointed a finger at the then prime minister, Mr. Turner, as he said: "You did not have to make those appointments. You had an option. We will be different".

What happened once the Conservatives took over in 1984? Patronage appointments continued to escalate. It became even more important at that time. The Senate was stacked with Conservatives so the GST legislation could be passed. We know how controversial the GST legislation has become. It could not have passed if the Conservatives had not had the power to stack the Senate with eight extra Senators.

It is important that this system be changed and that it be changed very shortly. This country cannot afford these appointments, programs or the decisions that have been made by this type of politics.

When we look at the \$600 billion debt it is easy to see some very unwise decisions have been made and future generations will have to absorb and correct them. I do not think it will be done by politicians. It will take men and women in this House with superb intelligence, character and honesty. The first place we can improve is with the disbandment of political patronage appointments.

It scares me sometimes to think that we have come so close, not just to bankruptcy, but to splitting the country and dividing us to such an extent that we cannot co-exist.

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When I look at the news of the last day or two and I see what is happening in Zaire and Rwanda, it is scary to see brothers fighting brothers. That is something I do not think we ever want to see in this country. We would rather give up politics than become so divisive that we have to take stronger action than just at the voting box or the ballot.

If we do not try to change the system within this Parliament how can we be sure that we can do it in the next one? Clearly the Liberals are trying to cash in on the disgust that Canadians had for the Mulroney Tories. I sure do not blame the government for addressing that issue with some vehemence. There was tremendous abuse heaped on this Parliament by that government.

• (1235)

We know political appointments reached new heights during that period of government. We do not have to believe that two wrongs will make a right. We have to start addressing the issues that are facing us and that are—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his 10 minutes have expired. After five hours, we are in 10-minute speeches.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe if you ask, you will receive unanimous consent so that the finance committee might table its fourth report. This involves the examination of the legislation affecting Canada's financial institutions.

In tabling this report, I would like to thank, first of all, the employees of the House of Commons, particularly our clerks, who have done such a fantastic job of getting this ready in such record time. They had very little time.

[*Translation*]

I also want to thank all Mps, committee members and particularly, from the official opposition, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. I did not give him much time to reply to the majority report, but his co-operation was greatly appreciated.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to accept the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition tabled a dissenting opinion, as an annex to the report of the Liberal majority. There are three basic

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arguments supporting this dissenting opinion. The first one is that the official opposition refuses to let the federal government get involved in securities, an area that comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of provincial governments, including the Quebec government.

The Liberal majority report proposes the establishment of a national securities commission. We absolutely oppose such a measure, because it contravenes the Canadian constitution, the 1982 Constitution. The second argument is that it would deal a blow to Montreal's economy, since its most competent people in the fields of securities, management consulting, etc., would be transferred to Toronto, with all the financial consequences that could follow, particularly from an economic point of view.

We also oppose the recommendation to the effect that foreign banks interested in getting involved in the area of securities would have to ask the federal Minister of Finance to do so, even though this area comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces.

Finally, we oppose the Liberal majority recommendation to the effect that a federal consumer protection office should be established. We are certainly not opposed to consumer protection, but the government would create more overlap, duplication and inefficient schemes, since consumer protection initiatives such as the consumer protection bureau, privacy legislation, the Insurance Act, trust companies in Quebec, etc., already fulfil the mandate that would be given to a federal consumer protection office.

For all these reasons, the official opposition is asking the government to give up its project to create a national securities commission, to let the provinces look after consumer protection, since this area comes under their jurisdiction, and to let them decide whether to allow foreign broking subsidiaries to do business on their territory, since this also comes under their exclusive jurisdiction.

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• (1240)

[English]

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS (REMEDIAL AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES) ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, an act to authorize remedial and disciplinary measures in relation to members of certain administrative tribunals, to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-49, the administrative tribunals act. Bill C-49 seeks to make administrative changes to boards, agencies and tribunals. I join my colleagues in opposing this bill. It should be scrapped and rewritten with meaningful changes to patronage and improved accountability.

Bill C-49 does not make substantive changes to public accountability. It does not go far enough to eliminate or reduce patronage. In fact Bill C-49 does practically nothing to change what is already going on today.

Many Canadians will disagree with Bill C-49's proposal to eliminate the Canadian citizenship requirement for appointments to nine organizations which include CMHC, Canada Labour Relations Board, CRTC and the CBC. Bill C-49 also proposes to make changes to the Immigration and Refugee Board to allow for a one-person panel. It is doubtful whether this will make the board more accountable and in fact it may do the reverse.

Bill C-49 proposes to increase, not decrease, the role of the governor in council and ministers in a number of appointments. This Liberal government can continue to appoint all its friends to high places with no regard to accountability, competence or quality in the appointees.

When the Liberals were in opposition they were very vocal in criticizing patronage appointments made during the Mulroney government. At that time they completely forgot their own party's overwhelming use of this political tool during the Trudeau administration.

Page 92 of the Liberal red book says: "The Conservatives made a practice of choosing political friends when making thousands of appointments to boards, commissions and agencies. A Liberal government will," take note across the way, "take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government and make competence and diversity the criteria for federal appointments. Open government will be the watchword of the Liberal program". I suggest that will be just after pigs start to fly.

The list of patronage appointments is so large I could not read all the names of appointments during the limited time I have today but it is important that some of these appointments be read into the record, the Liberal record of shame.

Patronage appointments go right to the very top with the appointment of Romeo LeBlanc, a lifetime servant of the Liberal Party to be Governor General of Canada. LeBlanc was a press secretary, speech writer, organizer, member of Parliament and senator for the federal Liberals.

This summer the National Transportation Agency was reorganized to make room for several well-connected Liberals such as the former member of Parliament for St. John's, Newfoundland, Richard Cashin and the former member of Parliament for Kapuskasing, Ontario, Keith Penner.

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Recently the Liberal cabinet appointed Roger Legare, the former director general of the Liberal Party of Canada and defeated 1993 candidate to the most senior management position at the National Capital Commission.

The list of patronage appointments to the bench, paying about \$140,000 a year, is long. Some of the recent appointments include the new minister of defence's sister, former Liberal Party president Michael Robert; ex-Ontario MPP Albert Roy; Thomas Lofchik, a Liberal organizer in Hamilton was appointed to the Court of Appeal of Ontario; John Richard, the former partner of the Prime Minister and son of the former Liberal MP Jean T. Richard was appointed to the bench; Bryan Williams, a long time Liberal supporter courted as a possible Liberal candidate appointed as judge to the B.C. Supreme Court; and Gerald Albright, another well know Liberal supporter was appointed judge to the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench.

A few of the patronage appointments to the Immigration and Refugee Board include Gary McCauley, the defeated Liberal member of Parliament and Pierre Trudeau's former executive assistant; Dorothy Davey, the wife of former senator Keith Davey; Elke Homsy, a campaign worker for the Minister of the Environment and long time aid to Ontario MPP Tony Ruprecht and assistant to various Ontario Liberal MPs.

The list of patronage appoints to crown corporations such as Canada Post is also long. Patronage appointments to Canada Post have been so political that the recent Canada Post mandate review recommended that Canada Post board of directors be composed solely of individuals with expertise and ability to effectively make an optimal contribution to the governance of a corporation of that size. What does this say about the quality of appointments? Surely, competence should be a factor when making appointments, yet the Liberals do not seem to see that.

• (1245)

Ironically, George Radwanski who was appointed to chair the Canada Post review himself was a former speech writer for the Prime Minister and an active participant in the 1990 Liberal leadership campaign. He obtained his position clearly through patronage.

Former Minister Andre Ouellet was appointed chairman of Canada Post, to receive an additional \$160,000 a year in addition to his already lucrative MP pension.

More recently Gilles Champagne, a long term Liberal fundraiser for the Prime Minister, was appointed to the Canada Post Corporation board of directors.

These kinds of patronage appointments have very negative implications regarding the ability of government to have the

highest quality people serving it. Unfortunately, this is only the very tip of the patronage list.

Lawrence Freeman, a well-known Liberal and friend of the Minister of Health, was appointed to the Canada Communication Group advisory committee.

Roy MacLaren, the former Liberal Minister for International Trade, stepped down from his seat in the House and took the cushy position of high commissioner in Britain.

Some of the appointments to the Senate chosen by the Prime Minister include: Lorna Milne, a Liberal organizer in Ontario; Leonice Mercier, a longtime Quebec Liberal strategist and organizer; Celine Hervieux-Payette, a former junior minister in the Trudeau government; John Bryden, a former New Brunswick Liberal leader and New Brunswick campaign manager for the Prime Minister's 1990 leadership campaign; Sharon Carstairs, former provincial leader and MLA of the Manitoba Liberals and daughter of a former Liberal senator; and Landon Pearson, the daughter-in-law of Lester B. Pearson. William Rompkey, a former Liberal MP; Jean-Robert Gauthier, the former Liberal MP for Ottawa—Vanier; and Shirley Maheu, a Liberal MP, all resigned their seats in the House to take their turn at the trough. Nick Taylor, a Liberal who was elected to the Alberta legislature and who ran for the provincial Liberal leadership also found his reward in Senate heaven.

The patronage list seems to be endless. This does not sound like the government which pledged in the red book that it would do things differently. The Liberals have favoured their friends when making appointments to the courts, to the Immigration and Refugee Board, to corporations, to the Bank of Canada's board of directors, from one end to the other, large and small. And the media has allowed most of these appointments to go by without so much as raising an eyebrow. Perhaps they are a bit tainted as well.

The government defends its record saying that everyone appointed is qualified. What does that mean, given the fact that there are no qualifications for these positions other than of course being a member of the Liberal Party?

Before the last election the Liberal member for Scarborough—Rouge River told Canadians that there are two bottom lines in the way appointments should be made. The first is that we demand quality; the second is that we require accountability in the appointment process. We need to ensure that when appointments are made, they are reviewed by the House of Commons or a House of Commons committee, or some other mechanism.

What happened to that promise? Who reviews Liberal appointments? Not a committee, as suggested by the Liberals before the election, but the wife of the former minister of defence, Penny Collenette, a patronage appointment herself. This speaks volumes for the Liberal act of accountability.

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The patronage list speaks for itself. The Liberals have demonstrated their flagrant lack of accountability to Canadians by bringing all their friends to the trough once again. Canadians deserve more than what they are getting. It is time for Canadians to get what they deserve: competence and quality in these appointments. The government for the first time must become a leader, one that can set an example with its appointments to these very important posts. The faith of Canadians in our government and the integrity of our institutions clearly must be restored.

• (1250)

The Reform Party supports restrictions and limitations on the number and types of order in council appointments permitted by a government during its term of office. Individuals should be appointed on the basis of their qualifications. We must have strong, independent and effective people in these positions of leadership and influence, not political hacks tied to the purse strings of the governing party.

Rather than giving ministers more discretion and more power, it is time to make appointments accountable not to the governing party but to the people of Canada. If the government is not willing to make the necessary changes, a Reform government will.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the hon. member's remarks, I do not think I heard once any attempt by him to address the number one issue of competence for any of the individuals in his long list of appointments. I will leave one on the floor for his consideration. If he is prepared to say that His Excellency the Governor General is not qualified or competent, I dare him to put that to us today. I do not think he is prepared to say that.

I am going to suggest three reasons that the hon. member should support this legislation.

First, the legislation in partnership with another bill before the House will eliminate 88 organizations which were in existence before the last election. That involves 868 positions; 868 appointments are gone. It entails a savings of approximately \$10 million per year. That is a change and I hope the member will acknowledge it.

Second, he said that there is not a credible mechanism to review the appointments. I am sure he is aware that there has been put in place an advisory committee for all federal judicial appointments which is operating well. There has also been put in place an advisory committee for Immigration and Refugee Board appointments which is operating well.

Just by way of an anecdote, within the last month a Liberal said to me: "I just got a letter from the advisory committee that said I was not qualified to serve on the IRB. How can this be?" I said: "Just because you are a Liberal does not mean you are competent to serve on the board". That person was disappointed. That is what

the advisory committee is doing. It is telling people of all backgrounds if it believes they are not capable of doing the job and those people are not recommended to the minister.

Those are two examples, the federal judiciary and the IRB, where there are non-political people making recommendations for appointments.

Third, with respect to reviewing appointments, having served on the justice committee, I know that every judicial appointment stands referred to that committee. If that is not an accountability mechanism for judicial appointments I do not know what would be.

I also know that every appointment in every area of the federal government's jurisdiction can be taken up under the standing orders by any of the standing committees dealing with those departments. All that is necessary is for the members of the committee to decide at some point in time to review the appointment.

I have sat on committees when that particular agenda item has been considered. I have seen it happen with respect to the Correctional Service of Canada. I have seen it happen with respect to the National Parole Board and in numerous other areas, including the referral of judicial appointments, which because of a standing order are not agenda items for the committee, but the resumes of every judicial appointment are referred to the standing committee.

• (1255)

I hope the member will accept that there are mechanisms in place. Maybe they are not comprehensive, but mechanisms have been put in place. Changes have been made since the last election and 88 separate organizations have been liquidated. The volume of appointments has decreased by 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 25 per cent under program review. There is a provision to ensure competence, not comprehensively across the board but we are making great headway in that regard. I hope he will acknowledge at least some of what I have put to him now.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River may not have realized it, but we are not into questions and comments. In any event, that will be taken as an intervention on behalf of the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I feel it is incumbent upon me to rise in this House to address Bill C-49, an act dealing with appointments and designations or in short, patronage.

I was happy to hear the member from the government side who just spoke say that there are steps being taken, even though they are small and hesitant, to change this abuse of power. Everyone knows that there is an over-abundance of patronage promoted by this government. Perhaps no greater example of patronage or abuse of power exists than what can be found in the other chamber, the Senate.

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Yesterday a motion to abolish the Senate was voted down by this Liberal government. Reform does not want to abolish the red chamber. We want to change it and reform it. What this country really needs is a Senate that reflects the views of Canadians right across the country and a chamber that provides a balance in Parliament.

The model we are advocating is the triple E model: a Senate that is elected, effective and equal. That is the model of the upper house which is the cornerstone of Reform's parliamentary reforms.

I think most Canadians would agree with me that in its present form the sleepy Senate is pretty much a rubber stamp for the ruling government. However, after the next election a Reform government will initiate change to the slumbering chamber of sober second thought which would provide for a measure of much needed accountability.

Having senators elected rather than appointed would be our first step in reforming the Senate. That can be done and it can be done without cracking the Constitution wide open. Recent history proves that Senate reform can be done without full-blown constitutional change, debate and negotiation.

My home province of Alberta, which leads the way in a number of ways in this country, has already paved the way for Senate reform. In 1989 the provincial government passed the senatorial election act. In the fall of that year Albertans voted on the first elected senator in this country. They overwhelmingly elected Stan Waters, a Reformer. He was the first elected senator in the history of Canada.

Do Albertans still want to elect their senator? I will read a letter dated May 9, 1996 addressed to my colleague from Kootenay East:

This is to confirm I intend to write to the Prime Minister asking him for a commitment to appoint a senator from Alberta to replace the late Senator Earl Hastings. Such an appointment is to be given to the successful candidate in a senatorial election in accordance with the Senatorial Elections Act of Alberta, 1989.

Yours truly,

Ralph Klein,
Premier of the Province of Alberta.

• (1300)

Of course, Albertans still want to elect their senators.

It is a sad commentary that during the dying days of the Mulroney government and during this current administration, no elected senator has been appointed to the upper House. This government, in fact this Prime Minister, chooses to appoint non-elected people to the Senate in spite of the fact that the Prime Minister stated that the Senate is in need of reform, that it needs to undergo a major transformation.

Here is what the Prime Minister said when in opposition on September 24, 1991: "A reformed Senate is essential. It must be a Senate which is elected, effective and equitable". A logical subsequent observation would be: What action has the Prime Minister taken? Has he acted on his own recommendation, on his own advice? What has the Prime Minister done? Has he kept his promise or is it another broken Liberal promise?

Here is a sample of the Prime Minister's attempt to reform the Senate since his party assumed the mantle of power in 1993: Lise Bacon, the former president of the Quebec Liberal Party and a supporter of the Prime Minister was appointed by him to the Senate.

Sharon Carstairs, the daughter of a former Liberal senator, was chosen by the Prime Minister to sit in the upper Chamber. Not only does the Prime Minister keep it within the party, he also keeps it within the family. How about the appointment of Céline Hervieux-Payette who was a junior minister in the Trudeau government? They were all appointed by the Prime Minister. They are all Liberals.

Time prohibits me from naming all the obvious patronage Senate appointments. In short, a Senate seat has become available 17 times under the current Prime Minister, and you guessed it, 17 times Liberals have been appointed to the Senate.

What happened to the Prime Minister's commitment to support the Reform initiative of a triple E Senate? He certainly did not live up to it, that is for sure.

This is what the Prime Minister said on May 9, the same day that the premier of Alberta wrote his letter regarding patronage appointments: "I will name a senator who I will choose and who will represent my party in the House of Commons". This leftist Liberal arrogant attitude is a far cry from the Liberals' previous promise of a reformed Senate.

We are not supporting this bill. It does nothing much to curb patronage appointments and it is not worthy of consideration in this House.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

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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: Pursuant to the order made earlier today, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, November 5 at 5.30 p.m.

* * *

[Translation]

HUMAN REPRODUCTIVE AND GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES ACT

The House resumed from October 23, 1996 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, an act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction, be now read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the subject of Bill C-47 is of very great importance for citizens.

• (1305)

Human reproduction is a topic that affects everyone, without exception, and as parliamentarians it is our duty to debate this bill in a mature and thoughtful manner.

For the very reason that the topic is both private and universal in scope, many of the issues are emotionally charged. As proof, we need look no further than the debates on abortion, assisted reproduction, protection of the foetus, contraceptive methods and genetic engineering.

These topics speak to something in all of us, because they concern our origins, our lives right now and the lives of our descendants. Think, for example, of the recent strong reactions to the case of the British woman who received fertility treatments. Against the advice of her doctors, this woman conceived eight fetuses and lost them all. The reason this story captured the world's attention is that each and every one of us reacts instinctively to the new reality of reproduction and the questions it raises. When human life is involved, all human beings react, and this is completely understandable.

In order to deal with this reality, the responsibility of elected representatives in this House is to determine the best approach to adopt in light of the scientific developments that now make it possible to influence considerably the reproduction of Canadians and of Quebecers.

In this bill, the government is proposing an approach based on the recommendations contained in the Baird Commission report. The commission thoroughly examined all related issues and even went beyond its original mandate, because the range of problems was so immense.

The bill on new reproductive technologies was placed on our legislative agenda because the voluntary interim moratorium imposed last year did not work. However, before attempting an analysis of the bill, I would like to make a few general comments which, as I see it, should precede any discussion of a bill that deals specifically with new human reproductive technologies.

All the authors, all the experts who have examined the issue of new reproductive technologies are unanimous in saying that this is first and foremost a matter of ethics, of moral and social values.

Although on the whole I do not agree with the recommendations of the Baird commission—I will get back to this during subsequent debates—I agree it has a wealth of expertise, based on the amount of testimony it heard and the number of experts that were consulted.

These experts claim they are aware of the problems raised by new reproductive techniques, problems that are not only legal, ethical or health problems. Research and development and the use of new reproductive techniques have raised national concerns that may be social, ethical, legal, medical, economic or otherwise and that are of interest to more than one level of authority.

Unfortunately, the commission concluded that the federal government should take all aspects of the issue in hand and regulate and manage them without taking into consideration the jurisdictions of the parties concerned and the reality of Quebec society. The Bloc Québécois deplores this fact.

It is the same old story we all know. In fact, I will get back to this a little later in my speech.

So these are moral concerns above all, which I feel raises the initial question whether legislation is necessary.

The experience of France, which two years ago passed legislation that is roughly comparable to the bill before the House today, is very revealing.

France passed legislation on in vitro fertilization, prenatal diagnosis, pre-implant diagnosis and other aspects of reproductive technology.

However, it was decided to refrain for the time being from passing legislation on such sensitive issues as surplus embryos and embryo reduction.

In an article published in the magazine *l'Express* in February 1994, the author, Luc Ferry, discussed several problems. He noted first of all that technically assisted reproductive techniques are so controversial that one wonders whether it was really necessary to pass legislation to deal with such a sensitive area.

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• (1310)

The question arises because of the complexity of the biological phenomena and the minute percentage of the population that is actually concerned.

In fact, several observers felt that since the number of cases was so small, it would have been preferable to let the courts decide on the merits of each case.

The author mentioned several problems that were difficult to regulate because of practical considerations and the issue of ethics and individual freedom. For instance, how could one actually prevent the use of prenatal diagnosis for sex selection when parents do not tell their physician the real reasons for having this done.

Another difficult situation is the one where a woman uses donor insemination to ensure that her offspring is entirely different from herself, for instance, a woman of colour, because she has experienced racism, will select a donor who is white, so that her child will not have to face certain problems.

Similarly, a woman could give birth after menopause. This possibility has caused a controversy, the reason being that nature was prevented from taking its course. But what about freedom of choice?

One might also consider the phenomena I mentioned earlier such as embryo reduction, when in order to allow some embryos to survive, the others are destroyed, and surplus embryos, when more than the requisite number is produced and then preserved for use in case the initial procedure fails.

Clearly, all these situations have a number of aspects that are not medical at all and can hardly be regulated with rigid and specific legislation. Nevertheless, they are all connected with human reproductive technologies.

So initially, we must ensure that we properly identify the scope of these problems and their complexity, before we can pass appropriate legislation.

I would now like to consider the general scope of the bill introduced by the Minister of Health. I will wait until third reading to give a detailed analysis of the bill. Today, I will broach only one subject which has even broader consequences, and I am referring to the fact that this is one more intrusion by the federal government in an area under provincial jurisdiction.

First of all, I would like to remind the House that the Bloc Quebecois has asked time and time again that the government take action in an area falling under its own jurisdiction: criminal law.

Indeed, the Bloc Quebecois believes that certain practices should be prohibited under the Criminal Code, as they are not socially acceptable to the vast majority of citizens. We had asked that practices such as the trade in ova, embryos and foetal tissue be criminalized.

In fact, the report states, on page 447, and I quote: "Commissioners are strongly opposed to commercializing human reproduction, as are Canadians generally. We heard clearly from Canadians that they are uncomfortable with any situation involving the development of reproductive technologies or services on the basis of their profit potential, particularly where only those with the means to pay can have access to them".

This is a social consensus the Bloc Quebecois agrees with.

However, we totally disagree with the situation where, in the name of federal government's power to ensure peace, order and good government, the commissioners suggest that the government have sole jurisdiction over anything having to do with human reproduction. That spoils it for us, and we strongly disagree.

To understand this conclusion, we must analyze the commissioners' reasoning. First, they state that because of the concepts and practices involved new reproductive technologies are unique. Also, the primary purpose of these techniques is to ensure procreation, with all the distinct historical, social and ethical implications that it may have.

Such logic is hard to accept. Based on the same logic, the federal government should have jurisdiction over anything occurring during the perinatal period, since birth is the final outcome of the procreation process.

• (1315)

The federal government would also have full jurisdiction over education, the environment, health and what not, all on the basis of uniqueness.

The fact that something is important to human beings is not a valid reason to give a level of government control over an area that does not fall under its jurisdiction. You are probably familiar with Quebec's position on the matter, which is: anything coming under provincial jurisdiction should be left to the provinces to deal with.

The reported stated further: "New reproductive technologies are, in many ways, unique in Canada's health care system, in that they are administered under the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories, but, because of their profound social, ethical and legal implications, raise issues that require national attention. Few individuals or families in this country are not touched in some way by new reproductive technologies".

The commissioners themselves agree that this is a societal issue relating to health.

On the one hand, as far as we know, health comes under the jurisdiction of the provinces because they are in a better position to make appropriate decisions for their people.

On the other hand, precisely because we are dealing with social values, it is obvious that this should be a provincial jurisdiction. To

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act any differently would deny, once again, the existence of Quebec as a society, with all its elements and its differences.

We will not accept any such thing, it is out of the question.

There is also no question of the Bloc Québécois supporting a bill containing provisions to establish a Canadian reproductive technologies control and monitoring agency. In our opinion, if the provinces are capable of enforcing the Criminal Code, they are also perfectly capable of making and enforcing regulations relating to health.

In fact, they already do, and the thought has not crossed the mind of anyone at the federal level to question their jurisdiction in that area. So why do it in another area?

The Bloc Québécois squarely rejects the government's approach, whereby it will pass a statutory act instead of criminalizing unacceptable practices.

We repeatedly asked the government to amend the Criminal Code. Instead, it proposes a federal act, whose implementation will be monitored by a federal body, while applicable penalties will be imposed under the sole authority of the federal government. This is what is unacceptable.

So, instead of letting the provinces implement the act through their courts and legal staff, as is the case with the Criminal Code, the federal government totally excludes them and takes over everything that relates to new reproductive technologies.

Again, the Bloc Québécois will say no to this new intrusion.

One year after the Quebec referendum, it is appropriate to remind the Prime Minister and his cabinet of the commitment they made to Quebecers in the heat of the federalist fervour that prevailed at the time. Quebecers were solemnly promised, and unfortunately too many of them believed it again, that federalism would be renewed, that powers would be decentralized, and that provinces would be given back the fields of jurisdiction, which are already theirs on paper.

How can we reconcile these fine promises with the bill before us today? It is impossible. Far from decentralizing, the federal government wants to get more involved in the health sector and, worse still, it wants to appropriate all future rights in this sector. This is unacceptable.

Once again, the fine rhetoric was just that, and I hope Quebecers will remember. This is yet another good example.

This bill is unacceptable because it infringes on the jurisdiction of the provinces.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and for all of the information she has provided to us concerning the new reproductive technologies and Bill C-47.

• (1320)

I would now like to make some comments and ask her a question.

First of all, I would like to give a quick review of what has led up to Bill C-47. As you know, in 1977 a group of feminists put pressure on the government for the creation of a royal commission. Twelve years later, in a throne speech, the promise of this famous commission was made, and the Baird Commission was born.

In 1993, the Baird Commission tabled its final report. There were 40,000 witnesses heard, and 300 researchers provided us with their research data. This cost \$30 million dollars in total, and lasted two years longer than planned. In other words, they took four years to deliberate and to come up with 293 recommendations.

I would like to make one clarification. The entire inquiry went on without consulting those in the best position to respond to the needs of the public, that is the provinces, the provincial ministers of health. Not one province was consulted by the Baird Commission about these new technologies, they were left on the sidelines, not asked if they had any recommendations to make to us, totally ignored.

The result is a report rather similar to the main thrust of Great Britain's Warnock report. As you know, Great Britain's federation is not in the least like ours. Its provinces do not have the same powers as ours do at this time. This report, therefore, bears no relevance to the needs and demands of our provinces.

While this report urging the government to introduce a bill was tabled in 1993, a decision was made to impose a voluntary moratorium in July 1995 because some of the latest developments in reproductive technologies were totally unethical.

Can you tell me what a voluntary moratorium means when researchers and scientists are now involved in cloning and producing human-animal hybrids? There is a voluntary moratorium in effect. It should be pointed out that experts and researchers reacted to this voluntary moratorium with complete indifference. It was a failure, it did not make any sense.

In June 1996, the minister tabled a bill. Although measures in this area have been demanded for 20 years, the bill that was tabled is not only incomplete and impossible to understand, but it also ignores provincial needs under the Constitution, because the provinces are responsible for providing health care services.

This bill criminalizes certain activities without amending the Criminal Code. This makes it a parallel law allowing the federal government to impose national standards. And this is what the

government does by implementing the bill in three stages. First, it prohibits certain procedures, which we agree should be criminalized although we feel the government should not interfere in areas like health care. According to the Constitution, the provinces have jurisdiction over health care.

• (1325)

The government is quietly putting forward a minor parallel bill in order to centralize even further. I will give a concrete example: the proposed national agency, which will impose national standards and be in charge of controlling and monitoring activities.

The bill also provides that the minister reserves the right to make appointments to a supposedly distinct, independent agency, but all the administrators in this agency will be appointed by the minister. You may not see things the way I do, but if this is not the ultimate in centralization, I do not know what it is.

Furthermore, some of the clauses in this bill are rather vague. Even the title contains an inconsistency between the French and the English text: the phrase “manipulation génétique” in the French version is more restrictive than the words used in English.

In closing, I would ask my colleague from Québec to elaborate on clause 5, just to show you how vague and confusing the clauses can be.

Mrs. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments. She explained very well how, with this statutory act, the federal government will interfere in a field of provincial jurisdiction.

I wish to reply to my colleague regarding clause 5, which deals with surrogate mothers and which prohibits anyone from giving or offering consideration to obtain the services of a surrogate mother. This prohibition seeks to prevent the payment of money and the use of intermediaries.

Consequently, a woman could act as a surrogate mother, if she did so as a free service. The clause is not very clear, particularly in subclause 3, which reads as follows:

(3) No person, other than the surrogate mother, shall arrange or offer to arrange—the services of a surrogate mother.

On the one hand, the bill makes it impossible for someone to give or to offer consideration, while on the other hand it allows a surrogate mother to make arrangements for her services. Let us be clear. It should be either one or the other.

The purpose of this provision is to prevent the negotiating of amounts of money for bearing children, through intermediaries between a couple and a surrogate mother. However, the situation becomes totally different if the service is provided free of charge, or if it is negotiated by the surrogate mother herself.

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This is where we have reservations. The stated objective will not be met, because the bill does not reflect a clear and well defined will. One can easily imagine that this provision will be circumvented. Moreover, the provisions of the Quebec Civil Code confirm that contracts entered into by surrogate mothers are absolutely null and void.

I mentioned clause 5, but there is also clause 7, which prohibits the use, without the consent of the donor, of sperm, ova or embryos, for human reproductive technologies or for medical research. Again, several terms used in the provisions of the bill create problems because of their lack of clarity.

For example, clause 4 prohibits the use of any diagnostic procedure for the purpose of ascertaining the sex, except for reasons related to health. What are these health related reasons? Is the mental health of the woman one of them? Are we talking about the health of the foetus or of the parents? Again, the wording of the bill is not clear.

Here is another example of lack of clarity that can lead us to believe that these prohibitions are not for real. Clause 7 prohibits the use of sperm, ova, embryos or zygotes for the purpose of research, donation, maturation or fertilization without the consent of the donors involved. Again, it can be presumed that such activities will be allowed if donors give their consent.

• (1330)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support Bill C-47, the Human Reproductive and Genetic Technologies Act, which seeks to preserve the dignity and the sanctity of human reproduction, and the dignity and safety of all.

The bill seeks three objectives. Protecting the health and safety of Canadians is one of them.

[English]

I want to comment on the remarks of the hon. member for Quebec. The member spoke clearly to the fact that the whole idea of the royal commission's report was not appropriate.

The point to remember is that the commission on reproductive technologies was a federal royal commission. When it was finished and the report was made public, over 50 stakeholder groups were consulted over a long period of time to decide on some of these issues, how the public saw them and what the public's interests were in them.

I first have to address some of those issues because there is a misunderstanding or a misrepresentation of them. I also want to address some of the aspects of the issue raised earlier by the member for Drummond and to correct some of the misinterpretation of facts.

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The member for Drummond claimed that in 1977 a coalition of feminist groups called for a royal commission on new reproductive technologies. The coalition was formed in 1987 and the first IVF baby was not born until 1978. The member for Drummond seems to have overlooked her party's record on the whole issue of the bill.

The member continually asked for the report to be tabled and for decisions to be made concerning the royal commission report. On May 4, 1994 she complained in the House that the government was too slow to act on the report. She said that such an action would have a major impact on ethics and research.

On October 7, 1994 her colleague from Laval Centre called for the government to table a bill to regulate practices connected with new reproductive technology.

On December 9, 1994 the member for Laval Centre said in the House that it was increasingly clear that the commercialization of human genetic material, embryos and fetal tissue was growing in Canada. She called for regulation in this area as soon as possible.

When the government placed a voluntary moratorium on some of these techniques in July 1995 there was criticism from the hon. members that the government was not going far enough, that there were no real sanctions against those who would continue with these practices.

What is more, the member for Laval Centre held a press conference on February 19, 1996 to complain that the government was not acting quickly enough on the issue. She demanded immediate action to have the more egregious of these practices inscribed in the Criminal Code.

On June 5, 1996 the member for Drummond repeated that this area was in urgent need of legislation. Now we have before us the long awaited legislation. Based on the record of the members opposite I fully anticipate their support.

The bill is about ethical considerations. All technology needs to be regulated. The good that is done by a new technology must be checked against the harm or the potential for harm that can be done by that technology. The number one ethic of physicians is to consider first the well-being of the patient and to do no harm.

The bill specifically set out to control unethical and unsafe uses of new reproductive technologies and to regulate practices that are unacceptable to ensure that they are offered to Canadians in an effective and safe way.

Many Canadians will be affected by these technologies but more especially women and children. Some prohibitions clearly address serious ethical issues the technology is forcing us as a society to consider: cloning and creating animal human hybrids, to name only two. However we cannot forget that it is women who are most

deeply affected by these technologies, that they are practised almost exclusively on women's bodies.

Commercial surrogacy, for instance, the practice of bearing a child for another party in return for payment, brings forward shades of *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. Commercial surrogacy violates the dignity of women by reducing procreation to a market phenomenon and parenthood to a transaction. Women's reproductive functions become commodities to be bought or sold. Women are not commodities.

• (1335)

Women who are surrogates tend to be younger, less educated and have lower incomes than the couples who commissioned them to bear a child. The imbalance of resources and power means that the surrogate mother is vulnerable to infringement of her autonomy. No matter how willing she is to participate she cannot negotiate on an equal footing with the other parties involved.

With regard to the commercial sale of eggs and sperm, a woman who agrees to sell her eggs takes risks with her health and her well-being. Generally this woman is perfectly healthy and she is certainly not infertile. Yet this healthy fertile woman will be prescribed fertility drugs to stimulate multiple egg production. She will undergo painful medical interventions to retrieve those eggs and in exchange she will earn \$2,000 or less. The government will not permit a payment based system of egg donations to develop in Canada.

As a physician I have often seen the joy and the wonder of the birth process. In fact I have delivered over 800 babies myself. I find the idea of seeing reproduction transformed into a commercial act to be completely unacceptable. Women are deeply affected by these reproductive technologies. In many instances some are no more than experimentation on women's bodies.

What of the children born of these technologies? The greatest threat to children's emotional well-being arises out of the use of donated eggs and sperm. The elements that have characterized the sperm donation system as it developed in Canada are secrecy and anonymity.

Closely related to secrecy is the principle of anonymity where the identity of the sperm donor is kept from both the recipient and the child. The pressure of maintaining the secret of donor insemination can place tremendous strains on a family. Adult children born through donor insemination have testified to the harm that maintaining secrecy has caused them, particularly if the truth emerges in the middle of a family crisis.

Anonymity too causes great strain for children finally aware of their birth through the use of donated eggs and sperm who want information about their genetic parents, only to find that it is not available.

We know that the health status of people is dependent on their genetic and familial history. Research in adoption has revealed the importance of information about birth parents to a child's physical and emotional well-being.

As part of its commitment to comprehensive management for new reproductive and genetic technologies, the government is examining the implications of a more open system of information both in gamete and embryo donation. It is appropriate to insist as a government that children born of these technologies be given a full disclosure of his or her history because the health and well-being of children have to be of paramount importance in the decisions we make about new reproductive and genetic technology.

The value of children in our society is self-evident but it is important to state firmly and unequivocally that children are not a means to an end. They are of value not only because of any great gifts that they possess, not because of the way in which they fulfil their parents dreams and not even because of the joy they bring to their parents. Children are of value merely because they exist, because they are.

The government values children. It believes that the hallmark by which our society can be judged is the priority placed on the interests and well-being of its children. The government has established a transparent and explicit framework for its policy on new reproductive and genetic policies.

Concern for children's interests is a vital aspect of that framework. We have approached the issue of children and new reproductive technologies from the perspective of the need to protect those who are vulnerable to adverse consequences of the technologies. Who indeed is more vulnerable than a child?

These technologies affect children in different ways apart from their emotional and physical well-being. Some practices and procedures have consequences so adverse and so easily apparent that prohibition is the only possible response. The consequences of other uses of technologies, adverse or otherwise, are less obvious or are controllable through regulation as we are trying to do.

The government is saying some practices must be regulated and some practices must be absolutely prohibited. These include the implication for the child's health and for the child's long term well-being. Serious issues about the legal status of children must be raised.

By putting forward this legislation we have said that some procedures are so abhorrent that there is no alternative but to prohibit them and to set criminal penalties for their use because they all are practices that have turned children into commodities to bought or to be sold. This is why the legislation makes it criminal to buy or sell human sperm or eggs. Sperm and eggs are the

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building blocks of human life. To make them into commodities subject to the conditions of the market is to commodify them, to turn them into products. This in turn is dehumanizing. It will affect in the long run the way we as a society value children and how we value human life.

• (1340)

Permitting payment for sperm and eggs also increases the possibilities of health problems for the children who might be born as a result. Studies have shown that when a donation is made for payment, donors have less reason to be honest about the state of their health and about their family history.

The prohibition on cloning is obvious to everyone in terms of its impact on the health of children. We simply do not know the health implications of creating large numbers of genetically identical people, either for individual children or for the population as a whole. We only have to read *Boys from Brazil* to know what we are talking about.

The use of fetal eggs to create a human embryo could be harmful if they are from a miscarried fetus since genetic disorders in the fetus usually are one of the major causes of miscarriage.

Children's physical health can be seriously damaged from using many of these technologies. It can be affected in the short term and in the long term. We do not know enough about the long term effects of some of these technologies on children. These children have not lived long enough in their life span for us to see some of the effects on their lives. We are taking risks in experimenting with children in Canada.

Canadian and American studies have shown that 20 per cent to 25 per cent of low birth weight babies suffer some form of serious disability and will continue to need attention and care in varying degrees for much of their lives.

Other health effects of new reproductive technologies are simply not known right now. That is why the advent of technologies such as intracytoplasmic sperm injection, or ICSI, has to be treated with a great deal of caution.

ICSI helps to overcome male infertility by selecting just one sperm, often an immature or inferior sperm, and injecting it into the centre of the eggs. The use of ICSI is spreading rapidly throughout the world, including in Canada.

We do not know until the children born through this technique reach adulthood if that sperm was a healthy sperm. If it turns out that the sperm would have been much better through natural selection not to have been fertilized at all, it is not the physicians who will suffer and not even the parents. It is the children who will bear the greatest burden of the use of this technology in the long run.

Privilege

We do not know what effects fertility drugs may have on children. Yet we use these drugs now almost routinely. We do not know if there is some damage involved in being fertilized in vitro instead of in a woman's body. Gathering information about the long term outcomes of assisted reproduction for children is one of the functions the government would assign to a regulatory structure as outlined in the position paper that was released when Bill C-47 was first introduced into the House.

Physical harm is just one aspect of genetic technology. Let us talk a bit about sex selection which is prohibited in the legislation because it contravenes the government commitment to safeguarding the emotional well-being of children. A child who knows that he or she was born only because of being the right sex may not feel valued. The sibling of such a child may feel forever unworthy of their parent's love and care because of having been the wrong sex.

It is only one small step when we undertake some of these prohibitive technologies to genetic, ethnic and gender manipulation of our society as a whole.

It is clear to me, as it should be clear to members of the House, that Bill C-47 is a balanced response to the dangers posed by the unhampered proliferation of reproductive technology. It does not say that reproductive technology is inherently bad. It says that we do not know enough about some of them, and it says that some of them do not fit into our society's attitudes to human rights and to people.

It makes clear that human life and human dignity are not for sale at any price. It is the only possible way to reassure Canadians that our societal values are being respected, that we place a value on the rights of all of our people regardless of their gender or their age, and that we will allow neither to be so crassly exploited.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this topic today, a topic that gives me the shivers. As you know, when we talk about reproductive technologies, we are talking about research, genetic engineering, all sorts of things. It is a debate that could not have taken place 30 years ago. As research advances, we must ask ourselves serious questions, and I am glad that we are discussing them. This is a field of medicine that was once in the realm of fiction, but has now become reality. We can see what the consequences will be in the longer term.

I was listening to the speech by my colleague across the way, on the government side, and there are certainly a number of points on which we do not agree. What bothers me the most, as I have just said, in such an extremely delicate matter—

[*English*]

The Speaker: I have received notice of a point of privilege. I am in receipt of a letter advising me that the hon. member will be raising a point of privilege. I received it well over an hour ago and so this point of privilege is in order. The hon. minister for youth.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

EXPENSE ACCOUNTS

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today on a point of personal privilege to address the issue of my use of government credit cards and to clarify outstanding questions and concerns.

When I was appointed Secretary of State for Training and Youth by the Prime Minister in November 1993 I was provided with both En Route and American Express credit cards by the Department of Human Resources Development.

At that time I was fully advised of the departmental guidelines governing the use of these credit cards. It was clear to me then, as it is today, that I would be responsible to the department for the full reimbursement of all personal expenses incurred.

Since being issued these credit cards I have both incurred business and personal expenses. I have never hidden or denied this. As a matter of routine procedure I have fully reimbursed the Receiver General for any personal purchases. This has been my practice since day one.

I have always known that my record of credit card use was subject to public review under access to information and I have never acted to hide records or to mislead the public. For the record, I would like to note the following three points.

I never asked for the use of a government credit card and I certainly never asked for special treatment or exemption from applicable guidelines.

The administrative procedure in place for repayment of monthly credit card statements was of departmental design. I had no say or input into this procedure.

Yesterday in the House the member for Elk Island referred to a memo dated January 22, 1996. He did not mention that attached to this memo was a personal cheque to cover all non-departmental expenses. He did not mention that also attached to this memo was an itemized breakdown of those expenses with complete notation of personal expenses. He did not mention that five days prior to this expense claim on January 17 my office sent a memo to the

department outlining what my personal expenses were and pointing out that I would be submitting a cheque for them.

I admit this administrative procedure is very convoluted. The covering memo referred to by the member for Elk Island is a form document prepared by departmental officials and as a stand alone record is misleading. In fact, my staff raised this concern with HRD officials and requested a revised covering memo that more accurately reflected business and personal expenses. A copy of that revised memo forms part of the subsequent record and certainly predates any access to information request.

During the three years that I have used these cards I have not once been advised that I was in breach of departmental guidelines.

To the Canadian public, my constituents, my family of course and my loyal friends, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you that at no time did I use these credit cards in bad faith or for personal financial benefit.

• (1350)

The suggestion in the media that I have used government credit cards for the purchase of vacation airline tickets to Hawaii and Mexico is simply false. I did vacation in Hawaii. I like to think that I have worked hard for my money and deserved the vacation. I paid for my airline tickets with cash. I have the receipts which I can make available to the media.

I have also travelled to Mexico and I have a cancelled personal cheque to confirm my payment of those airline tickets.

On the charge of purchasing a fur coat with a government credit card, I can only say that a deposit of \$554.53 was required and that a credit card imprint was needed. That expense was promptly reimbursed. Like many Canadians I now have an outstanding balance and I am on a monthly repayment plan with the retailer.

Finally, I am in full agreement with the Prime Minister and his observation that while conforming to departmental guidelines, my use of government credit cards for personal purchases was a mistake and in poor judgment. As a northerner with much of my time spent in remote communities with no access to financial services, I have not had any previous need for a personal credit card.

With the benefit of hindsight I see that reliance on government issued credit cards was a mistake. Following discussions with the ethics commissioner, I have applied for and received a personal credit card for all non-departmental purchases.

At this time, I am prepared to table documentation in the House to support my statement on this issue. I ask for unanimous consent to table this documentation.

Privilege

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: I am not sure if this is a question of privilege. Surely it is a statement by the minister. I am going to permit the hon. member for Elk Island to make an intervention because his name was directly mentioned in the statement.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I also appreciate the member rising in the House today. My purpose has been and will be to bring accountability for the taxpayers of this country.

I have something to say about some of the allegations she has made with respect to the fact that I did not mention the cheque that was attached, that I did not mention the itemization. Try as we might, we could not get that data. We received information that had more white-outs, in fact, over half of the items were whited out. We did not have that data. That is exactly what we were driving at.

We want that information to be available so there is open accountability, as the Prime Minister promised in the red book and in other places. That is the intent.

We are now going to examine what the minister tabled. I hope we can put this to rest. If not, our pressure will continue.

The Speaker: We have a statement made by an hon. member of Parliament. We have an intervention by the other hon. member who was mentioned. I would rule that this is not a point of privilege. However, I am prepared to accept the documentation, as you have indicated that I should by unanimous consent.

• (1355)

Therefore, I now consider this matter to be closed. It is not a point of privilege. It is a point of information. And the information, now being part of the proceedings of this day, are available to all members of Parliament and any other interested groups.

[*Translation*]

My dear colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean was in the middle of his question. I wonder if we could perhaps set aside the question and you could put it again after question period, at which time the hon. minister will be able to reply.

[*English*]

It being almost 2 o'clock and since we always need a little more time to get in all of our statements, with your permission I am going to go to Statements by Members if the hon. members are, indeed, ready to make them.

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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ONE ROOM SCHOOL

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the S.S. No. 14 restoration committee and the many volunteers and donors of building materials who were instrumental in the renovation and relocation of the one room school, S.S. No. 14, from Enniskillen township on to the Petrolia Discovery in the riding of Lambton—Middlesex.

I was fortunate enough to attend the official opening of S.S. No. 14 on September 15 and I can attest to the historical significance of this landmark.

This one room school, which has been in existence for over 100 years, has served generations of my constituents until it was finally closed by the Ontario Board of Education in 1969. When members of the Petrolia Discovery learned that it was scheduled for demolition, they asked the township of Enniskillen to consider donating the building to them to relocate on the Discovery site.

The rest, as they say, is history. I salute those in my riding who have been instrumental in keeping the proud heritage of Lambton county alive.

* * *

WEBBCO WEST INDUSTRIES INC.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I would like to pay a special tribute to Webbco West Industries Inc., winner of entrepreneur of the year award at Kelowna's Business Excellence Awards this past week.

Four and one half year ago in my constituency of Okanagan Centre, Greg Webb told his family, "it is our turn" and formed a steel manufacturing company. From a one-man operation, the firm today employs 65 people manufacturing parts for Western Star trucks and Newness Sawmill manufacturers. They also build hydraulic pumps for the oil industry in Alberta and supply the stainless steel skirting for an upscale motor home manufacturer in the United States.

Mr. Webb has developed a widely diversified company that is not dependent on a single market sector. He attributes his success to good networking skills and treating people as they should be treated.

Please join me in congratulating Kelowna's entrepreneur of the year, Greg Webb of Webbco Industries Inc.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, concern is increasing for the welfare of six Kurdish trade union officials arrested by Turkish security forces. These arrests highlight a now longstanding criticism that my NDP colleagues and I have expressed about the way the Turkish state treats the Kurdish people living in Turkey.

The suggestion has been made by the Canadian Kurdish Information Network that the Red Cross be allowed to visit the Kurdish region. This is a good idea and Canadian support for it should be accompanied by much stronger objections on the part of Canada about the behaviour of the Turkish authorities.

The six trade unionists and others who have been similarly treated should be returned safely to their families. Turkish membership in NATO should not blind us to their faults or make Canada more silent about Turkish treatment of Kurds than we are when Kurdish minorities are being mistreated in other countries.

The Kurdish people are currently without a homeland of their own. Perhaps some day that will change. But in the meantime it is up to the international community and countries like Canada to make sure their human rights are respected.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the last day of breast cancer awareness month. I would like to remind everyone that in Canada over 17,000 women are diagnosed every year with breast cancer. This means that every day an average of 49 Canadian women come to know of their problem.

[*Translation*]

Of these women, 5,400 die every year, and 15 die every day. Unfortunately, very little is known about this illness. Its cause is still a mystery.

• (1400)

[*English*]

The cure remains elusive. Too many women put off self examination of their breasts day after day due to fear. This diminishes their chances to beat the disease.

[*Translation*]

Only the families and friends of women with this form of cancer know the tragedy that has befallen them. Only those who see a woman die of breast cancer know what it really means.

Research is necessary, but for that we need money and the government must continue to provide assistance.

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[English]

In Vancouver 1,600 women participated in two very successful events organized by the Breast Cancer Society. Breast cancer still remains a woman's greatest fear.

* * *

[Translation]

BLOC QUEBECOIS LEADER

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year, Halloween brings us its procession of ghosts, witches and monsters. Yesterday, the separatist cemetery released a most troubling apparition: the former grand sorcerer Parizeau came back from the grave to haunt his successor, whom he accused of being too timid about promoting sovereignty.

As soon as he saw the ghost of his master appear on the horizon, the little goblin from Roberval, like a frightened child, rushed to point his finger at his ex-leader Lucien Bouchard, stating: "I am not the one who does not talk any more about sovereignty".

The Leader of the Bloc Quebecois would be hard pressed to hide his true colours now that we have seen through his disguise. At the next election, the leader of the Bloc will go back to sit on Jacques Parizeau's right, in the cemetery for defeated separatists.

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[English]

ATLANTIC ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honour the nominees from Halifax West for the Atlantic Entrepreneur of the Year award. The Entrepreneur of the Year award recognizes Atlantic Canada's best business people and puts them at the forefront of this national awards program.

Nominees from Halifax West include: Joe Dunford, president of EnviroSeal Engineering Products in Waverley; Glenn Wadden and Rob Spencer of Trihedral Engineering Limited in Bedford; Ron Mayhew, owner of Sportwheels in Lower Sackville; and Canada's best known green grocer, Pete Luckett, president of Pete's Frootique in Bedford.

The award sponsors, including ACOA and Ernst and Young, have realized what the people of Halifax have always known: Atlantic Canadian entrepreneurs are among the best and brightest in Canada.

* * *

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate McMaster University, Connaught Laboratories and DORSET Industrial Chemicals Ltd. on receiving university-industry synergy research and development awards.

These awards, sponsored by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Conference Board of Canada, are designed to foster closer ties between university researchers and Canadian industries. The close ties between McMaster and its industrial partners are examples of the co-operation that has helped to generate jobs and growth in Hamilton.

McMaster and Connaught Laboratories received the award for their efforts to develop a new vaccine technology which would allow vaccines to be given orally. This successful partnership has helped to position Connaught and McMaster as world leaders in this field.

McMaster University and DORSET Industrial Chemicals received an award for their joint development of processes to reduce pollution from the pulp and paper industry.

I am sure all members of the House will join me in congratulating all the recipients of these awards.

* * *

[Translation]

MENOPAUSE

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this year, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada launched its national public awareness campaign called "Menopause: Let's talk about it". It is the first time in North America that a medical association launched such a significant campaign on the subject.

Between now and the year 2000, more than 40 million women in North America will be going through menopause, including 4 million in Canada. In other words, every ten seconds during the next 20 years, a woman in the baby-boomer generation will reach the age of menopause.

Menopause is no longer a taboo subject, but much remains to be done about prevention, since menopause increases, for instance, the risk of osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease. Women today can expect to live at least 30 years after menopause.

Life goes on after menopause, and prevention is the best guarantee for a good quality of life.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

LIBERAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.):

'Twas Halloween night and all through the land,
Liberals are wiggling and squirming like worms in the sand.
Millions to Bombardier are to be found,
In the laps of the Liberals grovelling around.
Liberal red book promises are strewn all about,
And gold plated pensions found on many a snout.
From deep in the shadows what did appear?
A broken promise minister with a hint of a sneer.
The dark silent night was shattered with a shrill,
Promising flags and a higher tax bill.

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Abolish the GST, that was a trick, not a treat.
Is the ghost of Pinocchio in the Prime Minister's seat?
Away from the Hill Reformers doing their part,
Talking to real people about a fresh start.

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[Translation]

NINTH INTERNATIONAL MEET OF LOG DRIVERS AND RAFTSMEN

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Mauricie and, more specifically, the City of Trois-Rivières recently hosted the ninth international meet of log drivers and raftsmen. This event drew more than 500 participants from France, Italy, Spain, Norway, Sweden, the United States, Austria, Germany, Finland, Canada and, of course, Quebec.

Log drivers and raftsmen—in Quebec, draveurs and raftmen—are a courageous group which helped to develop entire regions of Quebec like the Outaouais and the Mauricie.

It was an honour for our region to host this outstanding cultural, historical and tourism event, especially since it was being held for the first time in North America.

I would like to draw your attention to the exceptional job done by François de Lagrave, of Pointe-du-Lac, the president and executive secretary of this meet and his organizing committee, who made this event an outstanding success.

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[English]

THE LATE MERVIN GOODEAGLE

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart I rise today to pay tribute to the life of a young man. Nineteen year old Mervin Goodeagle committed suicide in a community in my riding. Mr. Goodeagle touched the hearts of many Canadians as Joey on the popular CBC series “North of 60”.

Many will feel the pain of this tragedy; the death of a person so young and with such potential is hard to accept. This type of occurrence is not unusual in my riding. It occurs all too often.

This tragedy compels us all, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, to work together to heal the hurt within our society that results in such tragic consequences for our young people. In all that we say and all that we do, let us bring dignity and self-respect to all people. Our words and actions can help or hurt. Let us always make the choice for reconciliation and compassion.

I am sure hon. members will join with me in extending heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Mervin Goodeagle. Our thoughts and our prayers will be with them during this difficult time.

* * *

PARLIAMENTARY SIBLING DAY

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week marked the first Parliamentary Sibling Day here in the House of Commons.

On Tuesday, October 29, 22 of my fellow parliamentarians and I had the privilege of serving for a day as big brothers and big sisters to boys and girls from the Ottawa-Carleton Big Sisters and Big Brothers Associations.

Both organizations worked together with my office and the office of the member of Parliament for Burlington to pair a little sister or brother with an hon. member of this House.

Parliamentary Sibling Day provided these young Canadians a window to the parliamentary process and gave them a close-up view of the parliamentary precinct.

The boys and girls received a private tour of the House of Commons, met with their respective MPs, watched question period and were granted a special audience with you, Mr. Speaker, in your official chambers. As one sibling so eloquently put it: “That Speaker guy, he’s pretty cool”.

Parliamentary Sibling Day is an excellent example of how we in this House can work together to support young Canadians. I hope my colleagues will lend their support to the work of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters Associations right across Canada.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL FIGHTER PILOTS COMPETITION

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to salute Canada’s top guns. Recently at the high profile International Fighter Pilots Competition in Florida, Canadian fighter pilots won the world series of flying. For the first time the Canadian team was the overall winner of the competition.

I applaud Captain Ross Granley of Red Deer, Alberta; Captain Brian Murray of Markham, Ontario; Captain Dave Mercer of Montreal; and their flight crew. I also wish to extend my recognition to the maintenance crew and other ground support personnel who contributed greatly to the Canadian team’s performance.

In particular, I would like to congratulate Captain Steve Nierlich of Sunderland, Ontario who won the prestigious top gun award for the best individual score in the aerial combat competition.

• (1410)

Canadian fighter pilots and the flight crew of Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake have positioned Canada as number one in the world in air combat. On behalf of all members of this House, I would like to pay tribute to Canadian fighter pilots and congratulate them on a job well done.

* * *

[Translation]

ZAIRE

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to salute the UN's decision to send a special envoy to the eastern part of Zaire. This mission will not be an easy one: UN special envoy Raymond Chrétien is to ease Zaire out of the current crisis by calling for a ceasefire and organizing an international conference on the African great lakes region.

The situation is escalating dangerously with every passing day. Yesterday, the conflict spread to the Rwandan army and victims now number in the hundreds. The situation is also becoming increasingly critical in refugee camps, with 500,000 refugees anxiously awaiting a resolution of this conflict. The challenge facing the UN special envoy to Zaire is therefore a difficult one, and we wish him every success in his mission.

* * *

[English]

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the last day of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

October has been an especially poignant time for me as it also marks the first anniversary when one of my assistants, Renée Fairweather, began treatment in her battle with breast cancer.

In Canada a woman dies every two hours from this disease. In other words about 400 women have died during Breast Cancer Awareness month.

On October 1 the member for Lambton—Middlesex pointed out that the federal government spends almost \$5 million a year on breast cancer research. What she did not mention is that this is almost \$20 million less than what the Minister for Canadian Heritage is spending on free flags.

While some may believe a moment of silence is appropriate for the victims of breast cancer, I believe that a moment of outrage is called for. The spending priorities of this government are all screwed up. Maybe the Minister of Canadian Heritage should explain to the families of the victims who have died of breast

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cancer this month why her flag program is more important than breast cancer research.

* * *

[Translation]

FAMILY TRUSTS

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is spreading misinformation on family trusts. But the facts speak for themselves. Let me sum them up for you.

The family trust controversy started in 1991, when the Tories were in office. In May 1995, the Auditor General of Canada expressed some concern about the legislation governing these trusts. The federal government having acted diligently, since October 2, we can assure the public that every effort has been made to ensure that nothing similar will ever happen again.

If they really want to make themselves useful, Bloc members should press the Government in Quebec to plug the loopholes in its own tax system. Even if it does not involve bashing the federal government, that too is in the interest of Quebecers.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals brag about their spending cuts, how the budget is under control, how they have tamed Leviathan. Balderdash.

The \$14 billion in spending cuts have hardly scratched the monster. Of this amount, only \$4.1 billion or 29 per cent came out of monster government that writes regulations, pays MP pensions and writes cheques for multiculturalism, a mere \$1 billion cut per year.

Three-quarters of all cuts came from reduced UI payments of \$3.4 billion due entirely to economic recovery and from cuts to social transfers to the provinces worth \$6.5 billion.

These figures show clearly the Liberal strategy: Keep big government; let the provinces take the political heat.

Now the Prime Minister promises to fatten Leviathan again with more spending. Remember Canadians: Liberals, like leopards, never change their spots. They will always find ways to spend your money.

* * *

• (1415)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: My colleagues, we are going to do something a bit different today.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

We have a special guest in our gallery today.

[English]

A native of Regina, Saskatchewan, he has become one of Canada's most recognized faces in film and television. My colleagues, please join me in welcoming this accomplished actor, veteran comedian and we claim him as a Canadian, Mr. Leslie Nielsen.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago in this House, the secretary of state for youth made a statement concerning the situation which was brought to the Prime Minister's attention a few days ago. We are not in any way questioning the accuracy of this statement, but we have a few questions for the Prime Minister regarding the process which led to the present situation.

Yesterday, CBC's *The National* informed viewers that the ethics counsellor had not seen the minister's expense account, nor her written statement, when he made his decision. We know the Prime Minister's propensity for defending his ministers right to the limit, and sometimes beyond.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister, and he is the one under scrutiny in this matter, how he justifies his statement of yesterday that he had checked with the ethics counsellor, when the latter has apparently said that he had seen neither the expense account nor the secretary of state's statement. I would like him to give us some explanations.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as in every matter of this nature, the ethics counsellor was advised of the problem. He spoke with the secretary of state. He then concluded that the explanation was satisfactory.

Allusion has been made in this House to a document that he had not seen, but that had apparently been explained to him verbally. When he saw the document, it confirmed the version given by the secretary of state.

I accept the completely acceptable version given in the House by the secretary of state.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the question is not about the secretary of state. I took the trouble to point out that we accepted her explanations. That is not what is at issue. What is at issue is the Prime Minister's propensity

for defending his government at all costs, with or without justification.

When, without taking the facts into consideration, the Prime Minister has relied on an opinion given by the ethics counsellor, how can he claim this opinion is of any value, when it was arrived at solely on the strength of a few discussion, without all the documents having been seen? Of what use is the opinion of an ethics counsellor who has not looked into a matter thoroughly? That is the question.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the counsellor checked the document which was shown in this House. He analyzed it. As I was saying earlier, it was entirely consistent with the version given him by the hon. secretary of state.

I have nothing to add. If the hon. member is not questioning the version given by the secretary of state, let him suit action to word and stop asking questions.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for the Prime Minister, I would like to say to him that I will ask all the questions I want, however I want. That is my affair, not his. And I would like him to be so kind as to answer the question.

• (1420)

How can the Prime Minister justify having sought the opinion of the ethics counsellor without personally ensuring, in his capacity as Prime Minister, since it is a question of defending his government's integrity, that all the documents were brought to the counsellor's attention?

Is that not the normal way to proceed, before holding up such an opinion to defend the integrity of his government? Would that not be wiser, more prudent, more reassuring to the Canadian public? And is not the purpose of seeking opinions of an ethics counsellor who does not have all the documents in his possession so that accommodating opinions will be given?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): I said, and I repeat, that all the documents were checked by the ethics counsellor and that the version given by the Secretary of State is the version behind the decision about which I informed the House yesterday, to the effect that there was no intention to harm in this administrative error. And, as it happened, when the additional document was shown to him, the ethics counsellor examined it and concluded that it in no way changed the decision he had initially made to inform me that there was reason to pursue the matter, that the version given by the secretary of state was acceptable.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in an article published in the *Ottawa Citizen* and headlined:

[English]

"The Deputy Prime Minister dodged the blame for budget cuts at CBC".

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[Translation]

—it says, and I quote:

[English]

“Don’t blame me for cutting the CBC budget”, the Minister of Canadian Heritage told an audience of journalists in Ottawa, “blame the finance minister”.

[Translation]

The article goes on to say, and I quote:

[English]

“She repeated several times that the finance minister should be held accountable for the cuts”.

[Translation]

Does the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage admit she said that the Minister of Finance, her very dear colleague, should take the blame for the cuts to the CBC?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not an actual quote, for the very good reason that what I said at the conference is that, when I became minister responsible for the CBC, I told them at the outset that I could not bypass the budgetary process already in place, but that I would fight for a \$100 million programming fund.

The Minister of Finance went ahead with this programming fund, 50 per cent of which will go to the CBC. That is what I said when I was appointed at the end of January. That is what I delivered with the finance minister’s support.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it may not be an actual quote, but we saw it live on television. It was even better. Another minister who needs video evidence.

Yesterday, the minister said she was working with her colleague, the Minister of Finance, on multi-year financing for the CBC. In fact, Southam reported last weekend, and I quote:

[English]

“The finance minister told reporters the government intends to do the right thing for the CBC after it has wrestled the deficit to the ground”.

[Translation]

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage again blame her finance colleague next March on television, whether or not it is an actual quote, for her government’s future cuts to the CBC?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before many times in this House, like all government agencies, like Radio-Québec, the CBC has been cut. Unfortunately, the cuts the Quebec

Minister of Culture had to make to Radio-Québec were even deeper than those at the CBC.

We are all going through some difficult times, but I am confident that with the finance minister’s support in the upcoming budgets, in the next budget, we will continue to strengthen the CBC for all Canadians.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government puts ministers in a very awkward spot by not revealing and making public the so-called ethical guidelines for cabinet ministers. Integrity means more than just saying I am sorry after the fact.

• (1425)

The Prime Minister promised and promised again to restore public trust in our political institutions. Canadians deserve to see the ethical guidelines the government says it has come up with. It is not good enough for the Prime Minister to hide behind imaginary parliamentary tradition.

In the interest of restoring public trust and confidence in this parliamentary institution, will the Prime Minister release his guidelines on ethics for cabinet ministers? Yes or no.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a directive that the Prime Minister sends to his ministers for their guidance. Ethics cases are discussed when they come to the House of Commons. Members of Parliament and the press can look at the decisions that are made.

On the case we discussed yesterday, I am satisfied with the explanation given by the Secretary of State earlier today.

These are the facts. The member may not agree with the facts, but I am satisfied the Secretary of State has acted in good faith all along. All the bills have been repaid properly to the crown. There was some problem in the administration but no money was spent illegally or against any guidelines. It was done properly and all the money has been reimbursed properly in good time.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am not particularly keen on the Prime Minister just saying the facts. I want to see the facts and I think the Canadian public wants the same.

This has been a very awkward spot. I wonder how many more cabinet ministers on the front bench are in the same position today. Maybe we should ask for a show of hands. Why would it be so

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strange or incongruous that one minister would get caught in this kind of bind yet there would not be others? Maybe we should ask for a show of hands. We have seen how well some of these systems work with these imaginary guidelines.

Yesterday the Prime Minister said that he consulted the ethics counsellor about the youth minister's expense claims. Lo and behold, the ethics counsellor admitted that he had not seen the expense claims, that he just took people at their word.

Let me ask the Prime Minister about their word, about his word and everyone else's word. Will he come good on his word in the red book that he would have an independent ethics counsellor who is responsible and reportable to Parliament, not just to him?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last analysis the person who is responsible for the conduct of all ministers is the Prime Minister of Canada. I maintain that and I have the responsibility.

She will be the first one to know if I say someday that it is not my decision, that it is the decision of somebody else. As Prime Minister I have to take responsibility for the activities of all my ministers and I will not give that responsibility to someone else. I will always face all my responsibilities.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what kind of comfort that is to his cabinet or the Canadian public watching right now.

I sense a double standard. The former defence minister was forced to resign for a technical breach of the government's ethical guidelines. Whether the guidelines are public or private, we really do not know what they say. Cabinet ministers are supposed to know what they say but I am not sure they are entirely clear on it.

The Prime Minister stubbornly defends the youth minister who in her estimation and I think in that of the Canadian public did something worse. She admitted today in the House of Commons that it was a mistake and we appreciate that.

However, this minister knowingly signed a document on which she said these were government expenses. I will ask the Prime Minister one more time: Why is the defence minister called out on a technicality yet the youth minister is called safe for a blatant breach of the Prime Minister's guidelines and we do not even know what they say?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, days before the form was signed, the Secretary of State indicated that some elements of the expenditures were personal. The expenses were accounted for the same day. When she signed the document she attached a cheque to reimburse her personal expenses.

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. A Statistics Canada bulletin released yesterday indicates that the number of employment insurance claims is at its lowest level since 1981. However, we should not rejoice too soon, because the number of unemployed is now 55 per cent higher than in 1981.

• (1430)

Will the minister, who extols the virtues of his reform, tell us why the number of unemployed is currently so high, while the number of recipients is constantly decreasing?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to answer the short digression of the member for Mercier. The fact is that 700,000 jobs have been created since 1993.

As for the member's question, it is important to realize that the employment insurance act is the result of an extensive consultation process involving 100,000 Canadians. This legislation will prepare Canadians to enter the 21st century and to adjust to the new market reality.

Using the actual number of hours worked results in a system that is more fair and better balanced. The new program currently allows an additional 500,000 people to be covered, including 270,000 women.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for July and August 1996 alone, the number of UI claimants dropped by 5.3 per cent. According to Statistics Canada, this drop in the number of claimants and beneficiaries is due to the new legislation. Will the minister agree that, contrary to his comments, his reform deprives more than 50 per cent of those unemployed of the right to claim benefits?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we put a very high value on work. We value work and we do not want a passive system that encourages people not to look for work. On the contrary, we are investing in those who are prepared to get training and to take the necessary steps to find work.

We are extremely pleased that our active return-to-work measures meet the needs of Canadians. What Canadians need in our new economy is to go back to work with the proper training.

We are pleased that this reform meets the needs of my constituents in Papineau—Saint-Michel, including women who are poor and who are often unable to work more than a few hours per week. These women are now covered from the first hour of work and they are grateful to us for that.

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[English]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, one of the main promises the Liberals made in the red book was to preserve medicare. What they actually delivered slyly was a dissection of some \$3 billion per year out of that program. The result is that this year there is \$395 million less in Quebec for hospital care.

Will the health minister admit that every woman suffering from breast cancer who is on a waiting list today is on a longer waiting list because of those cuts?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an important subject in terms of breast cancer. I do not think there is anyone in the House on either side of the aisle who is not supportive of initiatives as they relate to breast cancer.

The government, in co-operation with a variety of different groups, is contributing a fair sum of money in terms of research and how we can effect positive solutions.

Over the last number of years \$25 million have been directed toward research. More has to be done.

We have signed a memorandum of understanding with the United States to focus not only our capital and our money but our human resources to find the kinds of solutions women and society in general would like to have as they relate to breast cancer.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, representatives of 44,000 Canadian doctors appeared in front of the finance committee this week. What did they ask for? I quote: "Stop the devastating health care cuts". They gave the Liberals a failing grade on medicare. They asked for a reinfusion of funds into medicare. Strangely that sounds a bit like Reform's fresh start on medicare.

● (1435)

Will the minister steal another plank from the Reform Party, do exactly what the Canadian doctors have asked and reinfuse more money into medicare?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, flip-flops and inconsistency have been characterizations of the members opposite.

In September 1993 the leader of the third party said that his party "would support user fees or deductibles and would eliminate universality". Days before the federal election in 1993 the Reform Party said it was opposed to private health care and user fees.

If that is not a flip-flop, if that is not an inconsistency, I say to the hon. member to go back to med school and become a real spin doctor.

* * *

[Translation]

THE FILM INDUSTRY

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry. A study released today by Heritage Canada concludes that 97 per cent of the money paid in Canada by film distributors for Canadian productions comes from businesses which are under Canadian control, and that, proportionally, these Canadian-controlled distributors create six times more jobs than do foreign-controlled distribution companies.

What is the minister waiting for to block Polygram's request, since there are no grounds to justify this foreign company's distributing films in Canada, particularly since this is categorically against Canadian policies in this area?

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, as I explained to the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata last week, it is impossible, under the Investment Canada Act, to discuss specifics while the issue is still before me.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from the Heritage Canada study which says, among other things: "We conclude that the Canadian distribution policy is well justified and continues to be pertinent, and that the consequences of its not being applied would be highly prejudicial to the Canadian industry— and contrary to the public interest".

In reality, what the minister is being asked to do is to ensure that Canadian cultural rules are respected and to not negotiate any cut-rate deals. Will the Minister of Industry assume his responsibilities, do his duty, and reject the Polygram application?

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 shall certainly assume my responsibilities, and I will explain my decision when it is time to do so.

I would also like to point out that I agree with the hon. member on the importance of Canadian culture. I am pleased the Bloc is also in favour of protecting Canadian culture. I trust that they will work with us to create a country where we can all have a strong culture and develop an appreciation of our two cultures, French and English.

Oral Questions

[English]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if either I or my colleague were to become spin doctors we would have to spin across the other way to do that.

Yesterday 100 Canadians died and today, tomorrow and the next day 100 Canadians will die from tobacco related diseases.

The Minister of Health has promised without delay tough strong new measures to address this epidemic among us. He promised this twice last June, once in March and once this month.

When will the minister bring forth tough new legislation to address the epidemic in our midst?

• (1440)

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they do not know when to stop.

I would like to know where the Reform Party really stands. The hon. member for Macleod has said that he does not support tobacco legislation. He said: "I do not for one second believe that an advertising ban is the way to go". Then on February 7 he wrote to me and said that he would give me unqualified support for the new strategy for tobacco advertising.

Yesterday he said: "Reformers see the answer to reducing tobacco consumption in education, not legislation". But on June 21, 1994 he said that education campaigns were not the way to go.

Canadians and the House would like to know where the Reform Party stands on the tobacco legislation. Is it with the hon. member for Macleod, the leader of the party or the hon. member who has just spoken?

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Health said: "Judge me by what I do, not by what I say". That is exactly what we are going to do.

Since the government rolled back the taxes on tobacco there has been a 30 per cent increase in consumption among youth; 10,000 young people will start to smoke every single month. That is at the feet of this member and the government.

Once again, what is this minister going to do to decrease the epidemic? For the children of Canada, what is he going to do to decrease the epidemic in our midst?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were told by the leader of the third party that he wished to reduce taxes. Now the hon. member is in favour of a tax increase.

We accept full responsibility for a comprehensive package as it relates to tobacco and we will introduce the legislation when I am ready to introduce it.

* * *

[Translation]

FAMILY TRUSTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

On October 2, in response to repeated requests from the Bloc Quebec relating to the family trust scandal, the Minister of Finance announced new rules for transferring assets out of the country. Yet the minister is still dragging his feet in tabling his bill.

Can the minister indicate to us when he intends to introduce his bill, so as to plug for once and for all this loophole through which billions of dollars have gone out of the country without a single cent of tax being paid?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a ways and means motion, une motion des voies et moyens—in both languages—which took effect immediately, as soon as I rose to speak in the House.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is a little bit of the reply still missing. Let us see whether he can provide it in response to a supplementary.

According to the *Globe and Mail*, a number of big tax firms numbering rich taxpayers among their clientele are displeased with the new guarantees required by the government.

Does the minister intend to bow to these firms of tax specialists, who are calling upon him to lighten the financial guarantees their clients will have to produce when they take assets out of the country?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):

[*Editor's Note: Technical problems (sound system).*]

The Speaker: That was pretty fast!

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[English]

Canadians attach great importance to strengthening our socio-economic relations with Ukraine, a growing European economy.

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• (1445)

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell the House what was accomplished last week when he led a delegation of 70 senior Canadian business leaders to Ukraine?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, Canadians have established a very special and important relationship with Ukraine. In the five years since its independence, we have worked very closely with Ukraine in helping to establish basic institutions of democracy.

It is now the government's view that we have to broaden that to a new dimension of trade in economic and commercial relationships.

As a result of the meetings last week in Ukraine, where we had the largest foreign delegation ever to visit Ukraine, we were able to sign over \$600 million worth of business arrangements which have established Canada as probably one of the largest investors and participants in the Ukrainian economy.

In addition to that, we signed a deal by which Air Canada will become the designated carrier for Ukraine. We inaugurated the new intergovernmental commission bringing Canadian and Ukrainian business people together to solve many of the problems of red tape and bureaucracy.

I think we have really moved that relationship to a new plateau that will substantially enrich our opportunities.

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BOMBARDIER

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry regarding the \$87 million loan to Bombardier.

The real question here is the government's integrity and accountability: \$1.2 billion has gone to Bombardier in 15 years with no openness and no accountability to the Canadian taxpayer.

Will the Minister of Industry stop the cover-up and divulge all the repayments that Bombardier has made in the last 15 years?

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, the hon. member keeps wanting to talk about this as a loan. I have explained to him a couple of times that we are not talking about a loan but an investment which in fact will be repaid out of royalties as aircraft are sold at Canadair.

I also want to point out to the member that this entire program is not only about science and technology or research and technology. It is also about creating jobs. Yes, these are jobs in Montreal but they support jobs across Canada.

When I flew out to British Columbia last week to give the first contribution under this program to Paprican it was to create jobs in British Columbia as well as in Montreal. When I was in Alberta last July to give money to TR Labs on a repayable basis to support wireless technologies it was to create jobs in Alberta. Where are the complaints from the hon. member about those job creation efforts?

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the cover-up continues.

The government introduced legislation that was to get the highest standards of ethical conduct by public officials and lobbyists yet these guidelines are hidden in the secret vault in the Prime Minister's office.

Today we find that the president of Bombardier's aerospace group, Canadair, sits on the advisory board of Technology Partnerships Canada, the same body that granted the \$87 million loan.

Can the minister please tell the House if this situation is a conflict of interest or is it not? If it is not, why not?

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, first, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question because he gives me the opportunity to point out the important role that we think the private sector needs to play in helping this program to work well.

We put together a private sector advisory board which is helping us to review the parameters of the program in the most effective way. We are using the board to give us a foresight into the technologies we should be supporting. We are asking it to review in retrospect the allocation of funds so that it can give us advice on whether it thinks the effectiveness of the program is as great as it could be among sectors.

I will tell the member that we have been absolutely scrupulous in ensuring that in reviewing any specific application that are made through Technology Partnerships Canada that no member of that advisory council is consulted in the review of the application. This is done entirely by officials. It is based on the guidelines that were set out and made public when the program was announced. We know that the government is creating jobs not only in the immediate term, but into the next century.

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• (1450)

*[Translation]***FORMER EMPLOYEES OF SINGER**

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The federal government was a trustee of the pension fund of former employees of the Singer company from 1947 to 1962. Its mandate was to protect the interests of the employees of this company. However, the federal government allowed Singer to draw funds from the pension surplus, thus depriving retirees of an amount that today is estimated at more than \$8 million.

Will the minister acknowledge the demands of former Singer employees by granting them their request for compensation, and do so before the last pensioner dies?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have noted the question put by the opposition member, and I will give him a reply as soon as I have had time to look into the case.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I got in touch with the new minister and his office about this almost three weeks ago, and I may add that the average age of the Singer employees is 80. So we cannot afford to wait.

Would the minister agree that if he lets this dispute go to court, because that is what is bound to happen, it would generate tremendous costs for the taxpayer and mean intolerable delay for the retirees, whose average age is more than 80?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to a decision that was made in 1962. I must admit that I was nowhere near the government at the time, so, as I said in reply to his first question, I will look into the case as soon as I have a chance. I can assure you I will give the most comprehensive answer that I can, because this issue is certainly very important to the people concerned, and I think it is entirely legitimate to look into a case instead of improvising an answer.

* * *

*[English]***GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia finance officials are predicting that the changeover for the GST harmonization deal is going to cost businesses in Nova Scotia about \$200 million in the first year alone, and \$100 million annually in ongoing costs due to tax and pricing.

How can the minister justify implementing this disastrous plan when it will mean lost jobs and higher prices and hundreds of millions of dollars in higher costs for the people of Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite. In fact the most recent independent studies that have come out of Nova Scotia have demonstrated that it is going to lead to very large scale job creation among small and medium sized business.

What was indicated in the study that came out yesterday was that the harmonized tax was going to reverse the cash flow drain that was coming out of Nova Scotia and the other Atlantic provinces as a result of the original introduction of the GST.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the case. The finance officials in Nova Scotia are saying \$100 million annually and \$200 million in the first year.

While the finance minister is promising jobs, jobs, jobs, the government robs, robs, robs.

Large chains will survive this because they can pass on higher prices to consumers across Canada, but small business will either be forced to lay people off, charge customers more or simply go out of business. Those are not very good options. When Canadians are crying out for jobs, why is the minister setting out to kill jobs?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party in terms of its questions lobs, lobs, lobs.

It was made very clear by independent studies in Atlantic Canada, specifically in the case of Nova Scotia, that the harmonized sales tax will lead to substantial job creation because it will lower the costs for small and medium sized business. For the first time they are going to have the opportunity to incorporate and put tax credits into their cost base which is going to lower their costs. That is the reason they did it. It is a reason that Newfoundland did it.

• (1455)

I do not understand why Reform Party members consistently stand up in front of this House and say that they oppose measures that allow Atlantic Canada to compete. Why can they not speak for the whole country?

* * *

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and sustainable development.

A previous endangered species proposal came under intense criticism. How does the legislation tabled by the minister today

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respond to these criticisms and provide effective protection for species by also protecting their life sustaining habitat?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a good question.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Marchi: Quite frankly, the Reform are specialists on this file: endangered species.

The government listened to the task force that was put in place, a task force that reflected industry, agriculture and environmental concerns. If members look at the legislation that we tabled today, the first ever federal legislation on endangered species, they will find that 80 per cent of the task force recommendations are covered.

If they check, they will find more territory covered by the legislation than previously. Also, whether the quality is on habitat, offences or including the public, the files have been moved forward.

Last, the provinces and territories need to be complimented on agreeing on a national accord so that we have a national plan and not a patchwork plan to protect and safeguard endangered species.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on September 30 when I asked the minister of immigration about the government's ineffectiveness in deporting foreign criminals, she responded that her government's Bill C-44 had solved all the problems.

However, on October 18, a Federal Court judge found many parts of the government's legislation to be lacking and quashed the decision in the Williams case.

Since the government has used Bill C-44 as a cure-all for all the immigration department's problems, what is the minister going to do now to protect Canadians from immigrants and refugees who pose a threat to Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, in the existing legislation, we have all the powers we need to turn away criminals who come to our country. We even have the power to prevent them from going before the Immigration and Refugee Board.

That was the purpose of the new legislation we passed in this House. Clearly, Canada will never be a haven for criminals.

* * *

NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. In June, the minister tabled his policy on new reproductive technologies, announcing among

other things the establishment of a federal agency responsible for monitoring the use of these new technologies. After the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, a new agency is threatening to interfere in health matters.

Knowing full well that reproductive technologies are a health matter, which makes them a provincial jurisdiction, and knowing how much establishing such an agency will cost, how can the minister justify establishing yet another federal agency in these days of budget restrictions?

[*English*]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe hon. members opposite were the first political party to call on me, as the minister responsible for health, to move with dispatch as it relates to new reproductive technologies. We have done that.

We have come forward with a bill that will go to committee. It will be examined. Hearings will take place. If improvements are necessary, they will be made.

It is certainly not the intention of the government or the administration to have any overlap and duplication. Where it is pointed out, we will act accordingly.

* * *

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier today to the media and in question period, the Minister of the Environment talked in glowing terms about his plan to protect endangered species and habitat in Canada. In doing so he has conceded that the co-operation of the provinces is critical to making this process truly effective.

• (1500)

As far as federal lands are concerned, is the minister prepared to do a full habitat inventory for species currently on the list? As far as provincial co-operation is concerned, can the minister tell us what enforcement powers he has at his disposal if any or all provincial governments fail to include habitat protection within their own legislative framework?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for too many years in this country when it has come to endangered species the time clock on the species has ticked while federal and provincial governments have bickered over the rock that the bird lands on. We argue: Is it your rock, is it my rock and what do we do about it?

Instead of continuing in that old, frustrating and losing manner the government decided to start on the other end. We started with the endangered species.

We will take responsibility on federal lands. We will take responsibility for co-ordinating interprovincial species. We will take responsibility for international cross-border species. The

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provinces and the territories have signed on to a national accord that they will take their proper responsibilities.

If we do that, it is not a question of patting the federal or provincial governments on the back, the endangered species will be the winners. That is the object of the exercise.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women.

The minister recently made an announcement regarding the government's race relations and multiculturalism program. Could she please tell the House why she made the announcement now and whether the results of the program review reflect the recommendations of a report which called for the elimination of funding for ethnocultural groups?

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

I would like to state that first and foremost, the Race Relations Foundation is in keeping with a red book promise which we made. Second, multiculturalism is not about ethnocultural organizations. Multiculturalism is about how all the peoples of Canada—the aboriginal people, the French, the English and people who have come here from every corner of the globe—learn to live together in mutual respect with social justice and with compassion.

We will continue to support that and we will continue to fund whatever groups and institutions encourage that.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would like to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of Mr. Sean Doherty, leader of the delegation of the Public Accounts of the Dail of the Irish Parliament. He is accompanied by members of Parliament and officers.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like the government to tell us what is on the legislative agenda for the coming week.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

tomorrow, November 1, and next Thursday, November 7, the House shall consider the address debate, the concluding portion of the debate on the speech from the throne.

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday we will consider legislation beginning with Bill C-41, the divorce and child support bill. When this is complete, we will return to the list on which we have been working, namely: Bill C-34, the agricultural penalties legislation; Bill C-47, the reproductive technologies bill; Bill C-62, the Fisheries Act amendments; Bill C-59, the water transportation bill; Bills C-39 and C-40, the York Factory and Nelson House agreements bills; and finally Bill C-46, the Criminal Code amendments.

This completes my weekly business statement.

• (1505)

The Speaker: My colleagues, we will have statements now with regard to the Remembrance Day ceremonies. I recognize the hon. minister of veterans affairs.

* * *

VETERANS WEEK

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Secretary of State (Veterans)(Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in my place today as November 11 approaches to pay tribute to Canadians who gave their lives for their country in two world wars, the Korean war and in peacekeeping operations around the world. Their sacrifice protected the democracy Canadians cherish today.

On Monday, November 11 we will pause for a minute of silence to mourn the loss of these Canadians. At cenotaphs from one end of the country to the other and in cemeteries around the world where Canadians lie, we will remember them. But today as I remind this House of the coming ceremonies to mark the sacrifice of those who never returned from war, I would also like to remind our colleagues that in the coming week we are also going to pay tribute to the people who did come home.

The Prime Minister has declared the week of November 3 to 11 as veterans week. It is an occasion when people across the country can reflect upon the achievements and sacrifice of Canadians during wartime and in peacekeeping operations around the world.

Canadian veterans have served with distinction, winning respect and gratitude. I would remind this House that these Canadians were drawn from the entire country. They built the foundations of our national spirit.

Hon. members will recall that last year Canadians celebrated veterans week as part of the Canada Remembers program which marked the 50th anniversary of the end of the second world war. Veterans Affairs Canada was very pleased to help co-ordinate many of the events which paid tribute to our veterans. I know many

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individual Canadian men and women enjoyed the opportunity to re-create emotions, both happy and sad, from their youth.

Perhaps most important of all, the Canada Remembers celebrations last year gave many of today's young Canadians their first history lesson about what our country accomplished during the war. It gave an opportunity for one generation to speak to another. Young Canadians have grown up without the spectre of war casting its chill over their future. They could be excused for taking our cherished freedom for granted.

I hope that during this year's veterans week we will once again create the bond between the generations that will invite an older generation to tell its stories to a younger generation. I hope too that teachers across the country will use this week to talk to students about Canada's proud history and the important role we played on the international stage during these years.

Finally, I hope that Canadians of all ages will take time to honour those who gave so much of themselves, both overseas and on the home front, to bring Canada through those trying times.

I invite all members of this House to help us honour Canada's veterans during veterans week and indeed all year long.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this House today, in my capacity as the Bloc Québécois critic for veterans affairs, to acknowledge, as is tradition, Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week, which will run from November 3 to November 11.

The least we can do is to set some time aside every year to remember the men and women who served in the two world wars and in the Korean conflict.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank all those who served at the front, the sailors and airmen from all regions of Canada, the members of the merchant navy, the nurses, and all the men and women who risked or gave their lives to overcome tyranny.

• (1510)

Need we remind the House that over 100,000 young Canadians and Quebecers died in the two world wars, while hundreds of others were killed in Korea and the various peacekeeping missions?

Unfortunately, many bloody conflicts are still raging around the globe. I cannot help but think about the serious consequences of the conflict between the Tutsi rebels and the Zairian army. Over 1 million refugees are caught in the middle. Yet, the international community seems totally incapable of mobilizing and intervening between the warring factions. Worst of all, the humanitarian agencies had to leave the area immediately. The consequences are extremely serious. We may be powerless to prevent another disaster for humanity.

If I mention the tragedy unfolding in Zaire, it is because I am also thinking of all those who assume the responsibility for maintaining peace in the world, particularly the Canadian peacekeepers. As you know, more than 2,000 Canadian peacekeepers are currently deployed overseas in places like Bosnia and Haiti.

Today we remember the sacrifices made by those to whom we owe this legacy of freedom and democracy, and by all those who are now working for peace.

The extensive human losses and the horrible suffering endured by all the people caught in these endless wars defy understanding. What can we say to the widows and orphans, the brothers and sisters who lost loved ones forever?

All these brave people fought, all these lives were sacrificed so there would be no more wars. So that future generations would be spared all this pain and suffering.

Again, I join with all my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois in expressing our sincere gratitude to all those who gave their lives and, of course, to all the survivors of these tragedies. Let us not forget there are still many survivors who deserve all our admiration and support.

In this regard, I condemn this government's lack of consideration for the members of the merchant marine. Their concerns must be considered a priority. We must make every effort to ensure that this government pays due attention to the views of merchant marine veterans and holds proper consultations with the coalition representing them.

Having said that, I will conclude my speech by saying how much the Bloc Québécois wants to honour the memory of our veterans and pay them a fitting tribute.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Madam Speaker, six Books of Remembrance lie in the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower, each page bearing the names of those who died carrying the torch of freedom.

Over 114,000 Canadians were killed during the course of World War I and World War II and the Korean war. Many more returned battered in body and spirit.

The peace, security and freedom you and I enjoy comes as a result of the blood they shed and the courage and determination they devoted to casting aside the tide of oppression. Their fate, our future; what a very great price to pay, what a very great debt to owe.

The Memorial Chapel bears the inscription: "They are too near to be great but our children shall understand when and how our fate was changed and by whose hand".

Last fall during the Far East pilgrimage, I stood with youth delegates before a marker on a grave in the Commonwealth Cemetery in Yokohama, bearing the name of a young man who at age 19 died as a prisoner of war. He had been captured at Hong

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Kong three years prior at age 16. The impact this marker left on our minds and hearts will never be forgotten.

• (1515)

It also took me to my stepfather, Stanley Edward Akrigg, who died in January at age 96. He was a big boy and he joined the Canadian army in 1914 at the age of 15. At the age of 17 he won the military medal and fought in the battles of Vimy Ridge, the Somme and Passchendaele. Two days before his 19th birthday, in October 1918, he lost his brother, who served in the same regiment, to a German artillery shell.

It also brought to mind my cousin, Ronald Loughton Movold, who was a tail gunner in a Lancaster bomber. He lost his life in Europe in April 1944.

The torch of remembrance must pass to those too young to have known the Canadian warriors who were too young to die. The poppies we wear are a time honoured symbol of their sacrifice. They were inspired by the poem written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae after surviving 12 days of heavy bombardment in his Belgian bunker on May 3, 1915. Through the shelling he saw a cemetery across the road filled with red poppies. Tearing a page from his diary, he wrote the poem "In Flanders Fields". We are responsible to remember their gallant contributions so their sacrifice will not have been in vain and to ensure that we preserve the precious rights and freedoms for which they died.

We must also remember the tens of thousands of Canadians who have served in more than 30 individual missions over 36 years of Canadian peacekeeping. More than 100 Canadian forces personnel have lost their lives and hundreds more have been wounded during peacekeeping tours. They too must be remembered.

Our gulf war veterans were exposed to the intensity and volatility of modern day warfare during their fight to preserve the delicately balanced stability in the Middle East. During the war, many Canadians witnessed on their television screens a blaze of oil fires and exploding warheads. In service to our country and the global community, Canadian lives were scarred. Here too we find personal tragedies and sacrifice.

Veterans week, November 3 to 11, is a time to pause, remember and accept our heroes' challenge: "Take up our quarrel with the foe: To you from failing hands we throw the torch; be yours to hold it high. If ye break faith with us who die we shall not sleep, though poppies grow in Flanders Fields".

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I join with my colleagues in the New Democratic Party caucus today in the House of Commons to pay tribute to Canadian veterans. We pay tribute particularly to those who made the supreme sacrifice: those men and women in the army, the navy, the air force and the merchant navy who gave their lives in World War I

and World War II; those who died in the Korean war; those who have died in the course of peacekeeping operations.

Fortunately no one died in the Gulf war but as the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands indicated, there is evidence that people who served in the Gulf war have a variety of lasting effects which need to be acknowledged by the government.

That is why when we gather on Remembrance Day we pay tribute not just to those who died but also to those who came back, as the legion says in one of its creeds, after having given the best years of their lives.

A long time ago, just before my 20th birthday I was cycling with a friend through Holland. We came to a big monument. We had stopped at the Canadian war cemetery at Bergen op Zoom. We went for a walk through the beautiful place which has been kept wonderfully by the Dutch all these years. We realized what we had stumbled upon. We spent a couple of hours there because we were struck with the row upon row upon row of Canadians who were buried there. It struck me that at the time of their deaths they were about the same age as I was then, 19.

• (1520)

It was not until 10 years later that I had an occasion to visit the cemetery at Adagem in Belgium and another 10 years later I visited Vimy. The older I get, the more it is impressed upon me how young these people were, giving more meaning to the passage which is used at every Remembrance Day service: "They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn". If anyone has ever lost a relative not necessarily in war but to an accident at a young age, we all know what that means. Those people are forever youthful in our imaginations. They grow not old.

I was struck, as I always am, by images of those cemeteries, by the images of the Menin gate outside the village of Ypres where the names of 35,000 Commonwealth soldiers are inscribed who have no known grave. Every week the people of that town gather to do a last post ceremony at the Menin gate. They have been doing that since 1918 with the exception of the years when the town was captured during the second world war.

I say this because in Europe, whether it is in Holland, or at the Menin gate or elsewhere, people appreciate what Canadians and other Commonwealth and allied soldiers gave at that time. I think we in Canada could do no less. I often feel that we do not appreciate to the extent that we should what our veterans gave.

I hope this Remembrance Day and in Remembrance Days to come that future generations will be lucky as my generation was. My grandfather served in the first world war, my father in the second world war, but my generation was not called to war. I hope

that will continue to be said about my son's generation and my grandson's generation. We all should devote ourselves to that goal.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, I wish to pay tribute to the many Canadians who sacrificed so much for the peace and freedom we enjoy today.

The first world war ended at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918 and the devastation was felt deeply. In just a few short years the lives of 70,000 Canadians were lost and twice as many were wounded in the name of peace. I know because my uncle served overseas and was wounded very badly at that time.

The second world war, a horrifying episode in history, claimed the lives of 45,000 Canadians and many thousands more were hurt. Many did come back home and we thank God for that.

Canadians also gave their lives during the Korean war and our armed forces answered when the United Nations called for action to put an end to Iraqi aggression against Kuwait.

Two of my brothers served in the second world war. They were in Belgium, Holland and France. It was not easy. It was not easy for my mother who made all of those fruitcakes to send over to them, who made all of their little pillows. She sent over their socks that she knitted. She cried as she waited for the mail to come, hoping and praying that they would come home safely. Luckily, both of them did.

Canadians have never backed down or run away in the face of aggression. Canadians know that to ensure world peace, the laws that govern relationships among nations must be respected and enforced. That is why we have almost 2,000 members of the Canadian military serving throughout the world on peace and humanitarian operations.

This year marks the 51st anniversary of the end of the second world war. On Remembrance Day, November 11, I would ask everyone to make a commitment to honour the sacrifices made by so many Canadians and to honour all of those who returned.

Last year in Holland during the VE Day celebrations, Canadian veterans were treated like the heroes they are for their role in the liberation of that country. Here at home we must never forget the risks these heroes took and the sacrifices they made so we can enjoy the country, the peace and the freedom we have today. A freedom we often take for granted for which a very high price was paid.

• (1525)

Out of thankfulness, respect and gratefulness, we must work harder than ever to preserve and protect the programs vital to the

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well-being of so many veterans. I say that because many of our veterans come to see me because they are worried about the cuts in the last post fund. We must look after our merchant navy vets as well.

Today I say thank you to those who fought for the freedoms that we enjoy. I say thank you to those who continue to wear the uniform of Canada for their extraordinary service to us.

Let us never forget the high price that was paid so that we can live in peace, individually and collectively. We must be vigilant about maintaining that peace.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MOTION M-221

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Madam Speaker, there was a misunderstanding yesterday, at the end of the debate on Motion M-221. I believe I now have the unanimous consent of the House to consider that the recorded division on the motion has been called for and that, consequently, the vote will take place on November 5, as was agreed during the discussions. However, there was a misunderstanding yesterday on the part of the opposition, regarding the motion tabled by the government.

Therefore, I believe I have the unanimous consent to hold a vote on Tuesday, and I thank the chief government whip for behaving like a gentleman regarding this issue and for showing great openness and understanding.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[*English*]

HUMAN REPRODUCTIVE AND GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES ACT

The House resumed from October 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, an act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am directing my remarks today to Bill C-47, an act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction.

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This is an important subject touching on moral, ethical and scientific issues and economic issues as well, plus the role of the state in private lives. It is also a subject I have a personal interest in. I have dealt with infertile couples, helped by test tube procedures in my own medical practice, helping them to fulfil their fondest dreams to have a family. I cannot forget the joy, the excitement and the satisfaction of those individuals as they were successful in having their children.

This is not an academic or dispassionate subject but one that has a personal interest for me. Since it also touches upon life itself and my personal and strongest beliefs as a Christian individual, I put these practices into my personal belief structure that life is not just an accident, that there is a higher authority.

Let me start by saying that Reform's approach on a bill like this one is very specific. There is a moral component to this bill. I state my position as a Reform MP, provide the facts to my constituents, determine the position of my constituents, and vote their wishes if a clear consensus is evident. I want the Canadian public to know that I am in the process of doing that right now. My householder is going out with a questionnaire on human reproductive technology.

The objects of the bill are threefold: (a) to protect the health and safety of Canadians in the use of human reproductive materials or assisted reproduction, other medical procedures and medical research; (b) to ensure the appropriate treatment of human reproductive materials outside the body in recognition of their potential to form human life; and (c) to protect the dignity of all persons, in particular, children and women, in relation to uses of human reproductive materials. Those are noble goals, but how shall we reach those goals?

The bill has prohibited a number of things. The prohibitions are strenuous. The first prohibitions are almost science fiction procedures that are possible but not plausible for most Canadians, such as the fusion of human and animal egg and sperm, the implanting of a human embryo into an animal. These activities are abhorrent to most Canadians. Strong controls are reasonable in these areas.

• (1530)

The second area of prohibitions are the attempts to control assisted reproduction by making commercialization of these practices illegal. These activities today are controlled by self-regulating professional bodies with standards for licensing, training, technology and ethics. The actual things being controlled in this area are much more available to Canadians. For instance, sperm donation is currently available. Donors are paid for their donation. That would not be allowed under the bill. Under the bill a sister could not bear a family member an infant, be a surrogate mother, and receive compensation for time lost at work. In the bill as well an altruistic woman could not donate extra eggs to receive services she could not otherwise afford.

Controls are probably necessary in this area. How stringent should they be? Some of these decisions are personal and private.

Many consider such decisions to be too private for government to intervene.

Since the science fiction procedures and the assisted reproduction procedures are not of the same magnitude, the bill should reflect that significant difference. A division of the bill would be useful.

On enforcement in the bill, criminalization, penalties for breaking the prohibitions are very severe: \$500,000 fine and 10 years of imprisonment for breaking some of the prohibitions. On the regulatory apparatus that will likely follow the bill, we have had a discussion paper laying that out. The bill is quite vague. Clause 12 says the minister can designate anyone he wants to be an inspector or an analyst. Clause 13 says the governor general can make regulations unspecified. These are big powers and big issues. It sounds like: "Just trust me and all will be well".

First, I accept the principle that these technologies require regulation by law. In principle I accept the bill at this stage of the debate.

Second, I urge the government to divide the bill along the lines of science fiction procedures on one hand and the commercial aspects of childless couples on the other.

Third, I do not accept the premise without more discussion that harsh penalties and criminalization are necessary or advisable in this area.

Fourth, I remain sceptical that government monopolistic regulation is the only or the ideal way to control such activities.

Fifth, I have gone over the reproductive consultation process which was very thorough. In Bill C-47 and the proposals that will follow I find many definitions and phrases that are vague, such as human dignity and protecting the dignity of all persons. To leave that undefined for me is very difficult. By whose definition do we look at dignity?

I present these thoughts for other members' consideration and review. My colleagues and I will carefully review the bill at committee hearings.

• (1535)

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to debate Bill C-47, the new reproductive and genetic technologies act.

Many people in Canada today live with the knowledge that they are at risk of passing on a serious sex related disorder to their children. They have witnessed at close range the devastation that these disorders, for example hemophilia and Duchenne muscular dystrophy, can wreak on those who suffer from them and on their families and friends. For many the only alternative to the risk of

passing on the disorder that is acceptable to them is not to have children at all. That is a very high price to pay.

The development and availability of prenatal diagnosis and other technologies which permit couples to find out the sex of an embryo or fetus have meant that they can for the first time make informed decisions about whether and under what circumstances to have children.

There are some people, however, who have strong preferences for children of one sex, not for health reasons but solely for personal or cultural reasons. The same technology that provides such profound assistance to couples who risk passing on genetic diseases, the families who are facing potential tragedies, can also be used to satisfy the desires of people who for varying reasons strongly want a boy or a girl.

Using technology to try to predetermine the sex of an embryo or, even worse, using prenatal diagnosis simply to choose the sex of a child is a practice which I believe is abhorrent to the majority of Canadians.

The government examined the issue carefully and concluded that there are serious grounds upon which to prohibit sex selection for non-medical reasons. The practice puts vulnerable people at risk, particularly children and women. It contravenes our country's commitment to equality between the sexes. It is an inappropriate use of medical resources.

For these reasons Bill C-47 makes it illegal to use technology to try to influence the sex of an embryo or to determine the sex of a fetus.

When we talk about sex selection we are talking about three different uses of technology, each with the same goal. The first method of sex selection takes place before conception. An egg, fertilized with X bearing sperm, leads to the birth of a girl. One fertilized with Y bearing sperm leads to the birth of a boy. It follows that if the X can be separated from the Y the likelihood of having a child of the desired sex can be increased. Once separation has occurred the gender of a child can be predetermined.

This method of sex selection is not always effective, but there is enough of a market for it that two private clinics have been opened in Canada, as well as clinics in the United States, the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

The second method of sex selection has arisen from the practice of in vitro fertilization. IVF results in the creation of embryos outside the body, usually more embryos than can safely be transferred back to the woman's body. Some criteria are necessary to decide which embryos should be transferred to the womb. A technique called pre-implantation diagnosis involves removing several cells from an embryo while it is outside the body and examining them for the presence of chromosomal or genetic

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disorders. Embryos with any disorders obviously would not be implanted.

The pre-implantation diagnosis can also be used to determine the sex of the embryo. Those who have strong preferences for the sex of their child can arrange for the embryos of the desired sex to be transferred back to the woman's body. The first two methods are used before pregnancy has been established.

The third method is used much later in the development of the fetus. Prenatal diagnosis, usually amniocentesis or ultrasound, can be used to determine the sex of a fetus.

Protecting vulnerable members of society including children, respecting the Canadian commitment to sexual equality and ensuring that medical resources are used appropriately are the principles underpinning the prohibition on sex selection for non-medical reasons. Sex selection renders children vulnerable to a range of harm. The impact of sex selection on children's emotional well-being can be profound. It is not he alone who bears the burden imposed by sex selection. Siblings can also be harmed by the belief that they are not the right sex and that they are not as deserving of their parents' care and love. Children's self-esteem and sense of self-worth are fragile. The knowledge that their parents prefer a child of the opposite sex can do untold damage and the effects can last a lifetime.

● (1540)

Women can also be made vulnerable by the use of sex selection technology. Some women, particularly those from cultures where male children are more highly valued, have been subjected to pressure to use sex selection techniques to ensure they give birth to sons. This pressure can take the form of threats of marital breakup and violence. We are not as far removed as we perhaps thought from the days of Henry VIII.

Women representing minority communities have made great efforts to resist pressures for sex selection within their communities and to promote the wider adoption of fundamental values such as sexual equality.

The government does not want to undermine or compromise its efforts. Respect for cultural differences cannot be used to justify coercion. Countries where preference for male children is strong have seen a skewed birth ratio since the advent of prenatal diagnosis with many more males born than the normal birth ratio of about 51.5 males for every 48.5 females.

There is little evidence that the availability of sex selection for non-medical reasons could have as significant an impact in Canada. However, the consequences of even a relatively small change in the ratio of males to females are not known. In the absence of this information it would be foolhardy to risk tampering with ratios that have developed over thousands of years of human existence to allow for the continuation of our species.

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For those reasons sex selection is sex discrimination. Society should not allow technology to be used to promote some arbitrary standard of the ideal family as consisting of both sons and daughters.

Sex selection techniques involve the use of limited health care resources. Except for sex related genetic disorders they are not medically necessary services. They do not treat or avoid disease. Nor do they promote human health.

People in this country view their health care system as one of the defining elements of being Canadian. To squander such a precious resource in ways that are ethically questionable would be wrong. The government is acting to ensure this does not happen.

After much consideration and consultation with stakeholder groups, the government has come to the conclusion that sex selection is so unacceptable to Canadian values and to the health and well-being of Canadian children that it cannot be provided.

Sex selection offends notions of sexual equality and of protection for the vulnerable. It has the potential to harm vulnerable women and children. It could have unknown impact on population health in the future should a skewed sex ratio be the result. It is an inappropriate use of our finite health care resources.

For all these reasons the government is prohibiting sex selection for non-medical reasons through the new reproductive and genetic technologies act. I am pleased to speak in support of the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I must congratulate my government colleague on her speech. She has clearly listed all of the dangers of the new technologies if time is not taken to criminalize them, if we do not come up with a detailed and responsible bill.

I would like to return to Bill C-47 on a somewhat more technical level. I would like to ask her whether she agrees with what I am going to set out. These clauses, in my opinion, might lead to legal debates, and I therefore feel that this bill is incomplete.

• (1545)

In clause 1, there is an inaccuracy in the French text compared to the English. The French says “manipulation génétique”, while the English says “genetic technologies”. I would like to begin by asking whether she grasps the difference between the two.

In the explanation given on the short title, reference is made to assisted procreation, and this is confused with basic research. I believe that, when assisted procreation is referred to, what is meant is the provision of care and treatment, while on the other side there is medical research in genetics. I would like to know whether she

does not think that combining these two is dangerous. I feel these are two completely different things.

I would like to know whether these definitions have really been studied seriously by the members of the government in connection with Bill C-47. I am only at clause 1, and could refer to them all up to 49. I believe this bill is totally vague, that it is not clear and will lead to legal wrangling. Could she answer me on this?

[*English*]

Ms. Clancy: Madam Speaker, indeed I could respond. With regard to the first part of the hon. member's question on manipulation génétique and the phrase in English, I am not an expert in the French language. If it has a different meaning I can only suggest to the hon. member that this is something that should be brought forward at the committee stage of the bill.

I am sure that the people at the committee, the clerk of the committee, the researchers, the people responsible in the Translation office, will correct those words. That is a housekeeping kind of correction and I do not think it is incumbent on me in my knowledge of the bill to make any kind of response. I suggest the hon. member bring it to the committee.

On some of the other questions—goodness knows I am a lawyer and I am used to splitting hairs—but on May 4, 1994 the member for Drummond complained in the House about the government's slowness to act on this issue. I can only suggest with regard to some of the questions that she is putting in a hair splitting manner—I do not know if she shares my profession or not, if she does not she should because she is good at it. She said such an action would have major impact on ethics and research and that we were too slow.

These kinds of questions do not help to speed the delivery of the bill. I would be delighted to address any questions the member might have on the substance of the bill. With questions that really relate to terminology, the short title and definition I think she knows there is a legislative branch and people in committees that can solve these problems. I would hope that the hon. member might have questions with more substance to bring to the debate.

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-47, the new reproductive and genetic technologies act.

It is not often that legislative measures come with an explicit ethical framework attached. Bill C-47 addresses issues that touch our most basic beliefs about the nature of human life, the value which we attach to it and the role of reproduction and parenthood in our society.

Following the lead of the royal commission on new reproductive technologies, the federal government developed an ethical framework to guide its policy development in the area of new reproductive and genetic technologies. These principles are outlined in the

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petition paper that the government released at the same time it tabled Bill C-47. The government did this in the belief that ethical principles must be open to public scrutiny and debate if they are to have any meaning. I would like to touch on some of these now.

• (1550)

One of the ethical principles guiding the government's policy making is the need to balance individual and collective interests. Individual autonomy is a value that Canadians espouse but decisions are not made in a vacuum. Every individual is part of the larger society and decisions made by individuals can have repercussions for that society.

Individual autonomy does not include the freedom to harm others, to coerce them or to undermine social stability. Those seeking assisted reproduction or prenatal diagnosis, gamete donors and the children born as a result of assisted reproduction, are all individuals whose interests are affected by policy making about new reproductive genetic technologies. Their interests must be balanced with the interest of society as a whole, as well as those of identifiable groups in society.

For instance, the provision of prenatal diagnosis has implications for how we as a society view people with disabilities. Women as a group are of particular importance since it is women who experience the technologies most directly. Women from ethnic or racial minorities have special interests that must also be considered. Individual interests do not automatically take precedence over collective interests nor can the collective tyrannize individuals.

We must protect those who are most vulnerable to the harmful effects of the technologies while respecting the rights of infertile individuals or those who are at risk of passing a genetic disease to their children to seek the intervention they see as being of most help to them.

Canada is committed by the charter of rights and freedoms to the principle of equality between men and women. This is the second principle in the government's ethical framework. This does not mean, however, that men and women must be treated equally. Rather we must recognize that the physical and social burdens and risks of reproduction are borne primarily by women.

The prohibitions contained in this legislation reflect the careful consideration given to the special needs and interests of women. Practices and procedures that leave women vulnerable to exploitation and coercion such as commercial surrogacy arrangements or egg donation for payment have been expressly prohibited in no small part because of the negative impact on women's equal status in Canadian society.

Protecting those who are vulnerable is a priority for the government. It is the third element of our ethical framework. Society has a responsibility to ensure that those who are vulnerable are not manipulated or controlled by those in positions of power and authority. Any individual or group who does have the power or the resources to adequately represent themselves is in need of special protection. Women are vulnerable to such exploitation in part because of social and economic factors that limit their power. Individuals or couples seeking to use these technologies are also vulnerable. They need technology to help them have a child, technology to which access is limited and determined by others.

That is why the government is prohibiting the use of their embryos for research purposes without their express informed consent. Children born through the use of these technologies are particularly vulnerable. Technology such as sex selection and commercial surrogacy demean the value of children in our society and have been prohibited because they make children into commodities.

With Bill C-47 the government is also seeking to protect the health and safety of Canadians. This requires a commitment to the appropriate use of medical treatment. Currently we would like to help all people who are infertile but in a world of diverse needs and finite resources it is our responsibility to ensure that decisions about the provision of medical treatment be made in accordance with clearly defined health care priorities.

The first step in ensuring an appropriate use of health care resources is to minimize the number of people requiring medical treatment by emphasizing prevention. In its position paper on a comprehensive management regime for new reproductive and genetic technologies, the government has outlined non-legislative initiatives it is taking, including the establishment of a framework for sexual and reproductive health. This framework will, among other things, provide the basis for a comprehensive strategy for the prevention of infertility. Even with the best preventive efforts in the world, there will still be people who suffer from infertility. The principle of the appropriate use of medical treatment requires the simplest and least invasive intervention should be used first to assist those people in conceiving a child.

• (1555)

Non-commercialization of reproduction and reproductive materials is the fifth tenet of the government's ethical framework. By commercialization I mean the introduction of a profit element into reproduction, the buying or selling of reproductive materials or reproductive services. Commercialization is contrary to the basic values we hold about the inalienable rights of people not to be bought or sold. It disregards the importance of reproduction and its significance in our lives as human beings.

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Finally, the government is committed to the principle of accountability at all levels. Individuals have a responsibility to safeguard their own reproductive and sexual health to help prevent infertility in the first place. Canadian society has a right to regulate and monitor how the technologies are used to ensure that our values and priorities are being respected.

Governments and practitioners have a joint responsibility to protect the reproductive and sexual health of their communities and the individuals they serve. These ethical principles provide one pillar of the government's approach to our new reproductive and genetic technologies.

Other important aspects are concern for the health and safety of Canadians, a perspective on infertility and a consideration of the well-being and the interests of children. These are also essential components of the government's approach. Together these pillars make up the framework that has guided the government in prohibiting certain practices and procedures. They will continue to guide us as we develop our regulatory components.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to point out something that is very clear. I understand very well all these debates we are having on Bill C-47. This is a social debate concerning our values, but I wish we could work on the bill before us.

Before going any further, I would like to say to all the government members that the official Opposition is in favour of criminalizing many reproduction techniques. Indeed, it must not be said that the opposition is against regulating and criminalizing certain techniques.

The problem is that the bill before us is, in our opinion, incomplete. I was part of feminist groups which, in 1977, called for a royal commission of enquiry because, considering what was to come, we thought something had to be done before the scandals arrived.

Twelve years later, in the throne speech, the government promised to do an enquiry. This enquiry took four years and cost a lot of money. Many people were met, but they forgot to consult the provinces, which are the only ones who can, according to the Constitution, administer health care. I believe reproduction techniques are a health care matter.

What the official opposition asked for was to criminalize certain techniques and modify the Criminal Code. What we see in Bill C-47 is a parallel law, which gives all the powers to the federal government, not to the provinces.

I would like to ask the member who just spoke why the government is trying again to centralize powers. Once again, when

we are talking about health care, under the Constitution, and they are frequently referring us to the Constitution, it is the provinces that have the power to administer health care.

Can the member explain to me why the government is so intent on centralizing while the member pretends that it is, in fact, decentralizing? In reality, it is the other around, and it is harmful.

• (1600)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Madam Speaker, in response to the question, I can only say that the exercise of the federal government in areas of health and safety is well-established.

I need only recall how many times the hon. member has called on the federal government to take action. There seems to be some inconsistency in calling on the federal government to take action and, at the same time, to suggest that by taking action it is trying to somehow centralize a power. It is not at all unusual for the federal government to be engaged in areas of this nature. I can think of many that we discuss as members of the health committee.

On that point, the member has also mentioned, in questioning my colleague earlier, the fact that the legislation is somewhat inconclusive. That will lead probably to a more meaningful debate in committee as we look at the legislation. I am sure if it was more definitive then the accusation would be, what is the point of looking at this bill since the decisions have all been taken.

Consequently, I do not think it is at all unusual for the federal government to take a leading role in acting in the health and safety interests of Canadians. There is a lot of precedent for that. I welcome the government's attention to this matter.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-47, an act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction.

This bill, which follows the voluntary moratorium on certain reproductive technologies proposed by the Liberal government in July 1995, is the result of the deliberations of the Baird Commission, which worked from 1989 to 1993, and whose mandate was to inquire into and report upon current and potential medical and scientific developments related to new reproductive technologies and their health repercussions.

The commission was also requested to study the ethical, social, economic and legal consequences of these new technologies in order to recommend what policies and safeguards should be applied.

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The main conclusions and recommendations of the Baird Commission were in line with other studies done elsewhere in the world on the same subject. However, several recommendations are problematic because they do not respect Canada's unique situation, specially with regard to the constitutional distribution of powers.

Several recommendations the federal government would like to implement affect areas under provincial jurisdiction such as health, family law and civil liability, which could be a problem.

This bill was meant to be—and I said was—the government's response to society's concerns about scientific advances in the area of human reproduction and the possible use of these technological innovations for questionable commercial or scientific purposes.

But it proves to be a belated and incomplete response to public concerns. Since the report of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies was made public in November 1993, the Liberal government has dragged its feet on the matter.

It was not until July 1995, more than two and a half years after the Baird report was tabled, that the government took a first step to put the brakes on the unbridled growth of the reproductive technology industry by proposing a temporary voluntary moratorium.

The Bloc Québécois along with several newspaper editors, former members of the Baird Commission, including Patricia Baird, interest groups, including groups representing women and the clergy, criticized the fact that the moratorium was voluntary, since some physicians and clinics continue to provide services banned by this moratorium, which the government cannot or does not want to enforce.

• (1605)

Last January, the federal government announced the creation of a temporary advisory committee, whose mandate was to enforce the moratorium.

That did not prevent a newspaper from advertising for young women to sell their ova to infertile couples; institutions from continuing to pay sperm donors; doctors from retrieving sperm from deceased husbands on the request of their widows. To help you understand what is meant by the expression "new reproductive technologies", I will give you a list of a few activities which were carried out and are still being developed because the government's moratorium is only "voluntary": contracts in which surrogate a mother is paid to carry a child she will give up to her customers after delivery; trade in human ova, sperm and embryos; child gender selection for non medical reasons; free in vitro fertilization for women who cannot afford it in exchange for ova; alteration of the genetic material of an ovum, sperm or embryo and its transmission to a subsequent generation; experiments on bringing babies to

term in artificial wombs; duplication or cloning of human embryos; production of human and animal hybrids; use of ova retrieved from cadavers or foetuses to give birth to babies or for research purposes.

There seems to be a consensus in our society on the fact that these technologies give rise to ethical, moral, social, economical and legal problems and that they must be controlled.

Canadians and Quebecers concerned by the situation think that it is about time the government began to do something. However, they are still worried to see that it does not seem to know exactly in which direction it is going.

Indeed, the government itself admitted that Bill C-47 was incomplete and temporary. It does not reflect a comprehensive vision of the issue and only confirms some prohibitions included in the moratorium while waiting for another bill that would complete the legislation.

In addition, even though this bill meets the demands of the official opposition with respect to criminalizing certain practices, the federal government is not amending the Criminal Code, enforcement of which would fall to the provinces. On the contrary, it is proposing parallel legislation that paves the way for the creation of a federal agency to monitor new reproductive technologies. Another federal agency.

Thus, the primary object of the bill is not to criminalize practices deemed unacceptable by society, but rather to set up a federal agency to monitor new reproductive technologies.

A good example of this barely concealed goal of concentrating all the power at the federal level is clause 11 of the bill, which says that the Attorney General of Canada must give his consent before a prosecution for an offence under this Act may be instituted. This just shows that the federal government does not wish to co-operate with the provinces. This will complicate enforcement of the legislation, since hospitals, for one, come under provincial responsibility.

This new federal agency to monitor new reproductive technologies would be responsible for granting licences, inspecting clinics and enforcing regulations, and would also be called upon to oversee the development of reproductive technologies and to advise the federal health minister in this regard.

It would be responsible for granting licences for practices considered acceptable. These technologies could include, for example: in vitro fertilization; donor insemination; use of foetal tissue; preservation, manipulation and donation of human ova, sperm and embryos; research on embryos; diagnostic testing on a foetus before it is implanted in the uterus; late life or postmenopausal pregnancy.

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• (1610)

As well, this agency would set up a data bank on donors and children of donors in order to allow future meetings in certain special cases. But a serious oversight in this bill is that it does not define how, by what mechanism, approval would be refused. Somehow, we do not know when, this will be done in a later phase of the supposed federal strategy.

There is also a problem in clause 2 of the bill. Its definitions of certain technical terms do not correspond to their medical definitions and a number of terms are missing from the list. This will sustain endless legal debates when this legislation deals with the first offences. It seems to me that as parliamentarians we have a responsibility not to pass laws without knowing whether or not they can be enforced.

In the case before us, we have every reason to believe that the federal government, because it does not wish to co-operate with the provinces, will have to acquire additional policing and legal structures in order to be able to enforce its law. The federal government will have to deploy considerable resources in order to oversee hospitals, research centres and private companies in all provinces.

Apart from the fact that once again the federal government is interfering in the field of health, which, according to the Constitution, comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces, the creation of this agency promises to be costly and a source of duplication, resulting in delays and inefficiency.

As well, seeing the federal government's inability to apply or obtain compliance for its moratorium on certain reproductive technologies, there are doubts about its ability to enforce its legislation without the support of the provinces, which in their capacity as the administrators of health systems, are in the best position to act.

The confusion we see in this government is reflected in its bill, and it is astonishing that it deals with reproductive techniques, commercial operations, and genetic manipulations on the same footing. It would have been appropriate to make a clear differentiation between assisted procreation, basic research and commercial ventures.

On the one hand, there is the issue of the provision of legitimate care and treatment to people who are merely trying to create life in order to establish a family, but who are unable to do so without the assistance of medical science to overcome the obstacles nature has placed in their way.

On the other hand, there is the issue of medical or scientific research in genetics, perhaps with praiseworthy intent, but raising serious ethical issues, the first of these being whether the end justifies the means, and whether, consequently, all manner of

manipulations of living matter may be permitted provided they are for the good of humanity.

Finally, there is the commercial aspect, relating to the sale of products created using the latest scientific techniques, if the word "product" can be used when transmitting life is involved. In our health system, which is public and accessible to all, the underlying concept is still the provision of medical care and services to the public.

Private enterprise can benefit from participation in the provision of this care, but it is difficult to stomach the idea of strictly commercial operations, the principal purpose of which would be profit, without throwing our entire system open to re-examination. The idea of selling human beings, which became obsolete when slavery was abolished, must not be allowed to be revived.

You will have readily understood that the new reproductive techniques can be applied to completely different areas, and that it would be dangerous to liken them without distinction. Yet this is what the government has done. After its initial slowness, now it is acting precipitously and in an atmosphere of confusion.

It is ironic to note that the federal government is creating a new structure to control reproductive technologies, while the successive cuts being applied on the federal level to health transfers, which are disguised under the lengthy title of Canada Health and Social Transfer, have had the effect of placing the provinces in a difficult situation as far as health care funding is concerned.

• (1615)

How can the Liberal government, which is cutting health financing, force new national standards on the provinces for reproductive technologies, which they will have to apply, subject to financial penalties, without even consulting them on the content of those standards, while at the same time imposing a major cut in financing? The explanation is that this government wants to centralize at all cost, and the federal minister wants to control everything in order to have greater powers.

This rigid approach, which brings more federal standards and less financing, shows clearly enough that expressions like "flexible federalism" or "profitable federalism" have become futile and outdated.

The whole approach of this bill shows that the health of Canadians and Quebecers is not a priority for this government. Its priority is to control everything from Ottawa and to centralize in an atmosphere of confrontation. Co-operative federalism is gone, welcome to the Liberal kingdom of Plan B.

There are numerous reasons why the Bloc Québécois cannot support this bill. It is incomplete and does not contain an appropriate definition of the goals of the act and responsibilities for its implementation.

Second, this bill does not amend the Criminal Code as the Opposition had asked, which complicates its implementation. Third, it creates a federal agency in the area of health, which is a provincial jurisdiction, and tries to impose national standards, which will cause more jurisdictional disputes. Finally, this bill imposes national health standards.

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like so many people I am concerned about the health technologies, and having followed the proceedings of the Baird commission, which went on for a number of years, I looked forward to the tabling of the federal government's bill on reproductive and genetic technologies.

There are many new approaches to health care and research, and one of them involves altering the genetic code. This is useful because some diseases can be cured in this way, and now we can see whether babies who are still in their mother's womb are likely to have certain health problems and then try to correct them. There are many reasons why we were looking forward to this bill. And especially since there is both a moral and a medical dimension.

When we started altering the genetic code and talking about sex selection and the various technologies that are possible, when we talk about the sale of embryos and surrogate mothers, this is what society has been debating in Canada and Quebec for years.

I expected the federal government's bill to be complete at least in one respect. I listened to the speech by the member for Laurentides, and I realize that eventually another bill will compensate for the shortcomings in the one before the House today.

I just want to put a question to the hon. member for Laurentides, considering the fact that Canada, in its present state, is a vast country whose diversity is such that people differ in the way they see things.

• (1620)

I realize, as I read polls like Angus Reid, that people in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces do not react in the same way to certain questions as people in British Columbia and Western Canada.

I think this might be one of those areas where we should have decentralized. This is probably one of those areas where we should not have national standards. I am not saying that ethics should vary from one area to the next, because I think certain practices should be condemned in Quebec as well as in British Columbia or the Atlantic provinces, but I think that depending on the location, there may be a way to put some different interpretations on certain practices.

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If we had decentralized towards the provinces, since health care is their jurisdiction, I think we would have had a better and more flexible interpretation of the legislation. What I am afraid of in this area is uniformity, the federal approach, the national approach. I do not think this area is one that lends itself to uniformization.

My question to my colleague is this: even if we did not consider the constitutional implications, according to her, would it have been better to proceed with a form of decentralization, to amend the Criminal Code and let the provinces be responsible for enforcement, so that enforcement could be flexible across what is now Canada?

Mrs. Guay: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that what my colleague for Drummond—our health critic—asked was that instead of this bill, it would be legally more desirable for the justice department to draft legislation banning certain technologies.

But instead, the government is interfering in an area of provincial jurisdiction. This must be pointed out. For the benefit of all our viewers, I would like to read the position the Bloc Québécois has always maintained and will continue to maintain with regard to health care.

I quote:

Under subsections 92(7) and 92(16) of the 1867 act, and according to their interpretations by many courts, health and welfare are areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. This being said, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of the five national standards enshrined in the Canada Health Act, in other words it supports the underlying principles of the health care system. However, it believes that the provinces must have full authority in the matter.

This position stems from a number of factors, especially the government's financial withdrawal. As a matter of fact, the repeated unilateral cuts in health care funding to the provinces have resulted, in Quebec alone, in a \$7.9 billion shortfall in health care budgets. While the provinces are subject to national standards coupled with financial penalties for non-compliance, they have no control over the level of funding they get from Ottawa.

The Bloc Québécois finds this situation unacceptable since all the federal government is doing is passing on to the provinces the cuts aimed at controlling the federal deficit, without any regard for their impact on the health care system, which it claims it is protecting. The Bloc Québécois is extremely concerned and worried by the consequences these drastic and repeated cuts might have for the health care system as we know it today.

For these reasons, the Bloc Québécois intends to do all it can, through the stands it takes, to preserve the principles of universality, accessibility, public management, comprehensiveness, and portability.

However, it believes that, in the current context, the federal government is jeopardizing its own standards by making the provinces bear the burden of these cuts in order to bring its deficit under control.

Therefore, the Bloc Québécois demands that the federal government respect provincial jurisdiction in the area of health care; consequently, it must withdraw from this area and transfer all federal health care moneys to Quebec.

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• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech. She brought forth a number of very interesting concerns.

Most poignant was that the concerns of the Bloc Quebecois member and the people of Quebec are the same as those of the people of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Newfoundland or any other province. The legislation demonstrates the heavy-handedness of the central federal government. It is a concern for all of us.

If Quebec separates, does the member feel the people of Quebec would be covered under the principles of the Canada Health Act? Would that coverage be effective if they travelled to other Canadian provinces, and vice versa?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Guay: Mr. Speaker, I will try to give a short answer. That was a very long question, which would require a debate that could last a very long time. I would like to say to my colleague that Quebec has always been innovative in its legislation, in particular in the area of health. Quebec would continue to be innovative, and might do so even more rapidly as a sovereign country.

This being said, today's debate does not deal with the Quebec constitution or the Canadian Constitution but with health, an area which also involves morality and ethics. I would like us to go back to this bill rather than talking about the Constitution.

[*English*]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted you are in the chair because your great love of literature is well known to us all and I will take the House on a literary voyage this afternoon.

First, I will make a few remarks on Bill C-47 which address how the government and this country will manage the reproductive and genetic technologies that face us in the next century.

It is to a great extent a bill I support but it is a bill based on fear. We now realize we have attained the technological ability to actually manipulate the human entity, the physical human being.

There are some prohibited practices which are particularly horrifying. I think I speak for most Canadians when I say we are very nervous when we read of this type of thing being possible, the actual genetic alteration of genes and changing the very character of the human being which may be born in next generation. The cloning of human embryos is something that is straight out of science fiction novels. It is something that we may see in "Star

Trek". Now as a government we see this as a possibility and it is something we want to prohibit.

One prohibited practice is the creation of animal human hybrids. It gives us shivers to think of the possibility we now have the technology that may make it possible. The transfer of embryos between humans and other species is something which is horrifying. The creation of embryos for research purposes seems to lower human dignity to the point where only scientific endeavour is important and not human dignity.

• (1630)

We are all concerned about and abhor these things to a greater or lesser extent. Fear sparks the bill, a very legitimate fear that has its origins in our culture and in our literature.

I will take the House back to *Frankenstein*, a novel by Mary Shelley in 1818. *Frankenstein* is probably one of the most well read or distributed novels in the English language. It has probably been translated into every imaginable language.

The story deals with a scientist in the early 19th Century who harnessed electricity. As a result he found he was able to animate a human being that he created out of body parts obtained from cemeteries. He was engaged in body snatching. At the time that Mary Shelley wrote the novel—and she did it in about three days—body snatching for medical research was a common and accepted practice in Britain although the public was horrified by it.

In any event the monster was created. He was not a monster initially. He was seen by Dr. Frankenstein, the scientist, as something he could create as a result of science. He could put these body parts together and give this being life. For a moment Dr. Frankenstein became like God. He animated life.

We know what happened. The human being that was created by the scientist became a monster in the eyes of humankind. He was an individual with a sense of emotion, a sense of wanting to belong, who eventually committed murder. He was so horrible and monstrous to look at that he was pursued and destroyed.

The picture of Frankenstein is something that has echoed down through the years. It is a part of our culture. It is a part of the francophone culture as well because the *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, for example, is about another monster in our society that could be created by humankind.

Another novel comes even closer to the type of prohibited practices we talk about in Bill C-47, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, which was written in 1896 by H. G. Wells. H. G. Wells is famous for having written the novels *The Time Machine* which involved going back in time and *War of the Worlds* which involved an invasion of earth by Martians.

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The Island of Dr. Moreau is less well known. In this novel a young man is marooned on an island where experiments are being undertaken by a surgeon-scientist by the name of Dr. Moreau. Dr. Moreau takes creating human beings a step further. He has travelled to a remote island and he is in the process of taking animals and reshaping them by surgery into human beings. The island becomes filled with various types of beasts who resemble humans.

The theory at the time was that if body parts were changed around to make an animal look human it would acquire human characteristics including speech. On *The Island of Dr. Moreau* these various animal humans had the power of speech. Our hero on the island is very frightened by them.

Let me read a bit from the novel. This part describes the hero encountering the creations of Dr. Moreau. It reads:

The two most formidable Animal Men were my Leopard-man and a creature made of hyena and swine. Larger than these were three bull-creatures who pulled in the boat. Then came the silvery-hairy-man, who was also the Sayer of the Law, M'ling, and a satyr-like creature of ape and goat. There were three Swine-men and a Swine-woman, a mare-rhinoceros-creature, and several other female whose sources I did not ascertain.

One of the most chilling moments in the novel is when the hero on the island tries to escape from the compound of Dr. Moreau and enters the jungle. He encounters these animal humans and is chased by all nightmarish creatures that are half animal and half human. There was a chillingness. I would like to read the passage but it would take too long. It was a chilling to imagine this man going through the dark and moonlit forest and being chased by various creatures that were half leopard and half man.

• (1635)

This image of horror achieved by H. G. Wells just about 100 years ago entered the psyche of English speaking society of the day just as the novel *Frankenstein* and similar novels dealing with cloning and the creation of human animal creatures have done. We have this sense of horror when we even contemplate the concept of marrying the human being with the animal, with a creature.

Obviously both these novels spring out of Christian traditions from the Middle Ages, medieval paintings of the devil's creatures as being half man and half beast. Literature and the arts have an effect on culture like a pebble thrown into the pond. The ripple goes down through the ages and touches all people. We do not need to have actually read the novels. We do not need to have read *The Island of Dr. Moreau* to have felt the effect of the story told by H. G. Wells at that time.

The reason we react so negatively and we feel Bill C-47 is necessary is that we see the possibility of creating animal human hybrids. We experience the same fear innate in the novel *Franken-*

stein or the novel *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. In many respects we are reacting to something in our culture as a result of our literature and our religion.

There is one problem. What will happen in the future when we pass these laws, when we forbid as we will do genetic tinkering? What will happen a decade from now when a married couple want to have children but carry the cystic fibrosis gene or the muscular dystrophy gene? Will there not be a huge pressure to do something to prevent these couples from having children who will die by age 30? I had a friend who had a daughter with cystic fibrosis. It is a terrible wasting disease of children. Their lungs fill up with fluids, a thick mucous. Muscular dystrophy is similar in a sense that it is a wasting disease. It is a tragedy to see young people suffer from it.

In both instances they are genetic illnesses. It may be possible through genetic tinkering to prevent the embryos from carrying that genetic defect. There will be a huge pressure to go around the essence of this law when it comes to tinkering with human genes. There will be people who will be wanting that change to have healthy and whole children.

There is another aspect. Science marches on. Science is something that humans at various points in history have tried to stop. They have tried to stand in its way because they feared the results coming down the road. We are not the first ones who have tried to pass legislation that prevents the development of new technology. In this case it is human technology but there are many times in the past when there has been an effort to prevent changes we are afraid of.

I will quote again from the book *The Island of Dr. Moreau*". This is the doctor himself speaking. He is explaining why he has undertaken this fearsome experiment of creating human beings out of animals. We should all take note of what he said:

You see, I went on with this research just the way it led me. That is the only way I ever heard of research going. I asked a question, devised some method of obtaining an answer, and got a fresh question. Was this possible or that possible? You cannot imagine what this means to an investigator, what an intellectual passion grows upon him!

• (1640)

While I support Bill C-47 absolutely, we will never be able to stop the progress of science that heads in directions of which we are fearful. The very technological possibilities we fear will nevertheless become subjects of curiosity and research. Ultimately I am sure research will continue on those subjects.

I have a few more words of Dr. Moreau. He was talking about these beast humans he created. He said:

To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter. The study of Nature makes man at last as remorseless as Nature.

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I will use the opportunity of speaking to Bill C-47 to make a prediction. There are a number of prohibited practices here including those I have mentioned. I predict that in 50 years two-thirds of these prohibited practices will be legal in this country and one-third will have been tried somewhere in the world.

[Translation]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise a second time to say how much I appreciated the speech of the member who just spoke. I think he put the question well and his selection of literary quotes was relevant.

There is a French novelist—I am not sure of his name—who wrote a book entitled *Les animaux dénaturés*, a story about a crossbreeding between monkeys and man that turned out badly.

The member mentioned a number of practices that are objectionable, and I agree with him. He also mentioned all the possibilities that science has to offer to cure a number of illnesses. I agree with him on the fact that in maybe 50 years from now, considering what is happening now in the field of genetics research, something around two thirds of what will have been done will be for the best and the other third will have been made illegal, if the laws of ethics and, more simply, of humanity, remain the same.

There is a French scientist who, at some point, ended genetic research performed on animals because the same procedure could have been applied to man. He thought that, considering the present state of science, ethics and even religion, this research had to be stopped.

But research must go on. However, such things as paying donors, sex selection, artificial uteruses, cloning, choosing the sex—as we all know, in some cultures, it is far better to be a man than a woman—those techniques could create a situation where there will be more men than women. This is the cultural issue, but there is also a moral and even a religious issue.

I ask my colleague why the government did not include these measures, which it often describes as horrifying and terrifying, in the Criminal Code. I think Canadians would have readily understood that some of these procedures are in fact in the criminal realm.

What about cloning. If I remember well, that means you create two genetically identical human beings. These are not twins, they are clones, just like computers.

• (1645)

I think that would be criminal. Why did the government not seize the opportunity to ban these procedures and include them in the Criminal Code? Then, Canadians would have understood that it is a crime to do such things, that those procedures are criminal activities. Now it seems we equate something forbidden by the

Criminal Code with something immoral. We all know that very often there is a difference between the two. Some activities might be very immoral but acceptable according to the Criminal Code.

Why were those procedures the previous member called horrible and reprehensible, and for good reason, not incorporated in the Criminal Code?

[English]

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Jonquière for his question. I do not think there are any easy answers for that.

It is very difficult to make a branch of scientific research into a criminal offence. I hate to bring up such a subject but it is like abortion which is a medical practice.

When you apply the Criminal Code to that type of activity, Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous moral quagmire because scientific research, scientific and medical understanding is always a two-edged sword. On the one hand, in the case of chemical weaponry or germ warfare research we should condemn these activities and practices as criminal.

On the other hand, chemotherapy for cancer is a direct result of the development of mustard gas bombs during the first and second world wars. The aerosol spray can is a product of research on germ warfare. Penicillin, the antibiotic, was developed as a result of research into germ warfare.

When we enter into the field of reproductive technology we are fearful. It is, after all, just another step in a scientific endeavour and the expansion of the understanding of ourselves and the world we live in. We want to apply moral standards and rightly so.

The principle of applying Criminal Code sanctions against scientific research is dangerous. I prefer that the moral, ethical and irresponsibility problem is dealt with—with penalties—in a separate body of law, separate from the Criminal Code.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth for his intervention on this bill. I have some concern about the type of reading material he enjoys but we all have our likes and dislikes.

I was interested too in the question from the hon. member for Jonquière who is calling for this type of activity to take place over amendments to the Criminal Code. It confused me when I heard that because on October 7, 1994 the member for Laval Centre called for the government to table a bill to regulate practices connected with new reproductive technologies.

On December 7, 1994 the member for Laval Centre said: “It is increasing clear that the commercialization of human genetic material, embryos and the fetal tissue is growing in Canada”. She called for regulation in this area.

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The position of the Bloc is further confused by the fact that on July 5, 1995 the government brought forward a voluntary moratorium on some of these practices and there was criticism that it was not going far enough and that there were no real sanctions against those who would continue with these types of practices.

• (1650)

On June 5, 1996 the member for Drummond said that this area was in urgent need of legislation. The government is doing exactly what Bloc members asked us to do.

Then they come forward with this notion that somehow an amendment to the Criminal Code is the way to go. They have to talk with one voice. They have to talk on one steady theme. They cannot be jumping all over the place when it comes to deciding whether this should take the form of legislation in a bill or amendments to the Criminal Code.

That argument aside, I was very interested in the argument put forward by the member for Hamilton—Wentworth because he did touch on—we are all exposed in one way or another—an individual who he knows with cystic fibrosis.

I went back to check it out because I was interested in the line that the member brought forward. Something like germ line genetic alteration apparently has the potential to permanently alter the human gene pool by changing the genetic structure of individuals in ways that are passed on to their offspring.

Several other geneticists in the field are against this idea. Several other countries have already investigated it. They are against it. The geneticists are not sure how these genes interact after they have been altered. They quite frankly admit that they do not have the knowledge of what happens to these genes when they are altered. It is because of that lack of knowledge that the countries and the geneticists have come together to say that currently there is still great potential for harm in this area. We are still in the research stage.

Again, when this bill comes forward—it may be void of what the hon. member is including in the bill—it does not preclude the government at this date or in a date of review two, three or four years, depending on whenever the committee decides when this bill should be reviewed, to look again at this germ line genetic alteration and say: “Okay, it is safe now. Let’s bring it in as an amendment to the bill and incorporate it”.

Until we know it is a safe practice, until the geneticists and other countries come together in their research to know that it will not significantly harm or further complicate the gene pool, then we have to be very cautious in the implementation of this legislation and what it contains.

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Hamilton West, my neighbour, for his remarks. Let me say that the lack of knowledge about the consequences of genetic research is precisely what I was talking about.

The reason we are worried about it is that we do not know the impact it will have on future generations of human beings. We do not know what those human beings will look like and what problems they will have.

The point I was making in my speech is that, nevertheless, despite this fear, despite the fact it will never be safe to alter genes, to tinker with the genes, the desire to help the people who have genetic diseases like cystic fibrosis or muscular dystrophy will overwhelm those fears.

It will be precisely as the speaker says, this law will be amended in the future. It will be changed and we will experiment in that area. We cannot stop the progress of science. We can delay it no matter what the fears but science will go on.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak to Bill C-47. Before I get into my primary intervention, I would like to make a few comments about what my hon. friend from the Liberal Party said.

He mentioned that this bill is based on fear. Yes, it is based on fear. It is a triumph of fear over fact and a triumph of ignorance over knowledge. That is a shame.

The hon. member quite correctly and eloquently mentioned the tremendous benefits that could be derived. He eloquently demonstrated that in the examples of cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy, two genetic diseases that exact a terrible toll on the youth of the world. These are diseases which snuff out life in its prime, before it can ever achieve its true potential.

• (1655)

Having personally seen these diseases up close and having watched many of these people die, I can only say it is beyond belief that this House would even comprehend a bill that would deprive people from the opportunity and hope of having a cure.

The member quite correctly mentioned that genetic surgery can take place all through the genes. That would help people in the future not have these terrible diseases. We can eliminate these scourges within our midst if we have the tools. However, Bill C-47 states that the bureaucrats will now have the power to stop the research and medical communities from developing and accessing the tools that can be of such enormous benefit to people.

The member quite correctly mentioned the fact that many previous discoveries have come from research that people tried to ban in times past. Thankfully for all of us here, that research was

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not banned. If it had been I can guarantee that some of the people in this room would not be here today. It is because of research that we have been able to eliminate these scourges and save millions and millions of lives.

There are 13 proposals in this bill for banning certain things. Some ought to be banned because they pose a threat to our species and to other species. However, we need to determine what those are. We ought not take a sledgehammer and deprive the research community from developing those tools that are going to benefit humanity.

Canadian researchers have made significant and enormous contributions to the international medical community, to research in many areas. Unfortunately, the government is gutting research and depriving the research community so it cannot provide these important discoveries that are going to benefit everybody.

This bill stems from a study that cost the Canadian taxpayers over \$30 million. This is money that could have been well spent in some other areas, particularly in view of the fact that Canadians are not receiving essential services that they need and in fact are getting sicker and sometimes dying on waiting lists. Essential health care services are being rationed because there is not enough money to meet the demands on the health care system.

In that backdrop, the government chose to spend \$30 million putting this study together, a study, I might add, which did not consult some of the primary players in reproductive technologies and infertility. They were grouped into a few areas and I would like to illustrate a few of those.

I cannot believe that the government would ask that bureaucrats deprive the 15 per cent of Canadian couples who cannot have children and who desperately want to have children. How arrogant can it be to deprive people from having the choice? The government has lumped into this bill things that need to be treated in a very serious fashion, but some of things need to be regulated or in fact banned. However, we need to determine what should be banned, what should be regulated and what should be allowed.

The government has taken a cudgel and has said to the Canadian people: "Bang. This is not going to be allowed. The benefits of the research in these areas are simply not going to be allowed".

There are other areas that are extremely important. The government talks about germ cell line alteration. The Liberal member who previously spoke brought up some fanciful descriptions from *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and from *Frankenstein*.

However, I think we need to look at this in a very factual way. As we speak some genetic alterations are taking place in animals, for example pigs, to provide people with organs which will be able to survive in people who need organ transplants.

• (1700)

I ask that members look very deeply into their souls. I would like members to ask themselves if they would deprive a 20-year old person who was previously healthy but through no fault of their own has a viral infection of the heart and needs a new one. Without a new heart that person would die.

Sadly, there simply are not enough organs to provide all the people who need them. Bless the hearts of those souls who die tragically but who have arranged that their organs be donated to other people. That gift of life brings honour to them and their families.

This bill would deprive science of providing people with organs that would work a lot better in their bodies. Researchers are working on the organs of pigs which will have a much greater chance of surviving in humans with fewer side effects.

The hon. member from the Liberal Party mentioned cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and a host of other genetic problems. These research capabilities that the government chooses to ban will deprive Canadians and the rest of the world of being able to share the benefits of any discoveries.

There are many other genetic possibilities. Science is on the threshold of discovering areas where we can make very significant improvements in the health and welfare of Canadians. However the government wants to deprive Canadians of this benefit.

The government wants to create a new registry. The purpose of the registry indicates that the bureaucracy thinks it knows more than research. The registry is going to cost money that we do not have because it has to come out of the existing health care budget. This budget is strained beyond the demands that are placed on it right now.

We need not look any further than the Ottawa heart institute where people sadly have died while waiting for important and urgent cardiovascular surgery.

The bill also proposes to spend money. The bill also proposes as its hidden agenda to have things such as in vitro fertilization covered under the medical services plan. In committee I asked Dr. Patricia Baird how this would be done, given the fact that the demands of society on our medical services far exceed what can be provided. How can we afford to cover procedures such as IVF which costs \$5,000 under the medical plan? This would make it a right for every single person in Canada. We do not have the money to do this. It is high time we prioritized our spending. The government has chosen to prevent infertile couples from having access to this.

In its wisdom the government's rationale is, why should things such as in vitro fertilization be brought down to the lowest common

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denominator of commerce? Nobody is going to get rich donating their sperm or ova. It is not a business people want to get into. The moneys given to the people who choose to donate their sperm or ova is compensation for the time, effort and the extensive studies and trial tests necessary in making a donation. It is not much money and compensation is necessary to get willing donors.

In other countries where the compensation factor has been withdrawn the number of donors has dropped precipitously. When that drops precipitously, the access couples have to in vitro fertilization drops too. What will they do? They will go to the United States and get it done there at a greater cost and with greater suffering to them. They do not need that when they are already suffering under the yoke of not being able to have children.

• (1705)

Philosophically I do not see how the government can take it upon itself to put research under the realm of a group of bureaucrats who may not know anything at all about the complex issues at hand. Would it not make more sense first to determine what needs to be regulated because research is being pursued in an area where there is a danger to society, to our species and others?

First determine whether these research initiatives pose a threat. If that is so, then let us work with the research community to produce regulations or if necessary to ban them. The government has chosen not to do that. Instead it has chosen to take its sledgehammer and squash these initiatives lock, stock and barrel.

Some constructive solutions could be employed. Some of these solutions involve the identification of the procedures to be covered, the procedures that should not be banned and the procedures that should be allowed to take place.

I do not know where the government has come from on this issue except that it wants to create a new registry and regulate an area in which it has no place. I ask rhetorically whether the government is going to regulate other areas of medical research, or physics research, or chemistry research, or research in other basic sciences. The government has not done that. It is singling out this area because a very small number of people who have ingratiated themselves into Health Canada have brought it upon themselves in their moral way and decided they are the ones best suited to decide which way research should go. That is heavy handed and completely arrogant.

The government should not have bothered itself with an area in which it has no place. It should have concerned itself with the far more pressing problems which exist concerning the health and welfare of Canadians.

Today I attended an international conference on smoking which the Minister of Health was at. He said this morning in a heartfelt

way to the hundreds of people who were there: "I am going to bring good, constructive health legislation to the House forthwith". He also said: "Judge me by what I do, not by what I say". The minister was talking out of both sides of his mouth because in the House today the minister said that he would bring forth legislation when he was good and ready.

In March the minister promised that he would bring in tough legislation to regulate tobacco forthwith. He promised it twice in June. He promised it earlier this month. He promised it today. To date no one in this country has seen any regulation or any tough constructive ideas and legislation to prevent that which is the single most preventable cause of death within Canada.

I need not remind the House and most of the members who have children that smoking is the single most important, detrimental problem that exists for Canada's youth today. And it is preventable. It is most tragic that with the tobacco tax rollback brought forth by the government in 1994, there has been a 30 to 40 per cent increase in the consumption of tobacco by children and teenagers. Every month 20,000 teenagers pick up tobacco. Every year 40,000 Canadians die of tobacco related diseases. It is an issue which the government should be deeply concerned with.

• (1710)

Instead of concerning itself with the single most preventable cause of death in this country, one that exceeds the deaths from suicides, car accidents, gun shot wounds and AIDS by a factor of three, the government concerns itself with legislation on human reproductive technologies. It is depriving the Canadian public of research which would benefit many people around the world and technologies and medical benefits that would enable the 15 per cent of Canadians who are infertile to have an opportunity to have children.

I cannot fathom how the government in all conscience can do this. I do not understand why the Minister of Health does not bring forth proper legislation to enable Canadians to have access to essential services. Government members continually claim that they are the ones who are going to uphold the Canada Health Act. They are the ones who say they will ensure access to essential health care services to every Canadian in a timely fashion.

Accessibility is one of the most important aspects of the Canada Health Act. Access to health care is worse today than it was when the government came into power. Waiting lists are getting longer. The waiting lists for special services are much longer than they should be. That is not access. That is not upholding the Canada Health Act. That is not enabling Canadians to access health care in a timely fashion. It is deplorable that the government is playing politics with this issue, an issue which is so important to Canadians from coast to coast.

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With respect to the smoking issue, I remind the House it is particularly important in the province of Quebec where consumption is the highest in the country. It is a profound and tragic addiction which affects Quebecers. It puts an enormous strain on Quebec's health care budget. But it is an epidemic which is occurring from coast to coast.

I hope the government will try to work with members across all party lines. Believe it or not, we all have the same goal. We all want to improve the health of Canadians. We all want to ensure that Canadians have access to health care in a timely fashion. That is the goal of the Reform Party. I am sure it is also the goal of the Liberal Party, the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party. We have to work together on this issue and put aside the rhetoric. We have to build a stronger, made in Canada health act with made in Canada solutions to provide better health care to all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to my colleague from the Reform Party. But before doing so, I would like to remind government members that, indeed, it is true that the official opposition has urged the government to make some reproductive technologies a criminal offence. However, we have always said that health is under provincial jurisdiction. As for the Criminal Code, it is in the purview of the federal government. So it is the federal government that must take action in this area.

I would like to ask the Reform member, who is a doctor, if he has noted in the bill before us that several clauses, definitions and terms are used and that these terms, clauses and definitions are vague, and if he noticed that, because they are very vague, they might be open to interpretation. Has he noted that the definition of these terms does not correspond to the medical definition?

• (1715)

We know our Reform colleague is a doctor, so I think that, through his professional activities, he has surely identified in the clauses some terms that are not really defined by medicine.

Has he noted, like I did, that the vagueness of some of these terms might give rise to legal debates when this legislation deals with these first offences?

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from the Bloc Québécois for her question.

[*English*]

The hon. member raised a very good question. She is absolutely correct. The government has used a ham-fisted approach to try to craft a bill based on fear and not one based on any knowledge of the issue.

The terms and definitions used are vague and broad. In a court of law they would be very difficult to support unless the government

were to be more explicit on the issue. The fact of the matter is that the government has a lot of work if it is to do this.

That will be one of the stumbling blocks. It is one of the major reservations I personally have about the bill. The government has used a scythe to cut through huge areas of research. It has taken the good out with the bad. I am sure that is part of what my friend from the Bloc Québécois was referring to and is one of the major problems with this ill crafted bill rooted in ignorance.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start with my comment first and then go to the question.

An hon. member: Why?

Mr. Keyes: The hon. member across the way wonders why. He said a little earlier that he deplored playing politics with this issue. I could point to a couple of the inconsistencies coming across the floor from the member of the third party.

In September 1993 the Reform Party supported user fees, deductibles, and would eliminate universality. I remind the House of what magazine that was in: *Canadian Living*, September 1993. Just before the election of October 1993 the Reform party said that it was opposed to private health care and user fees. Where is the consistency there?

The member for Macleod said in the House on October 17, 1995 that medicare was bad for everyone. Can we imagine a Reform member saying medicare was bad for everyone. I am quoting from *Hansard*. Then on November 23, 1995 the member for Macleod said that medicare was important to all Canadians.

Where is the consistency there? If they want to start playing politics there is plenty of it, but we are not interested in playing politics on this issue. Quite frankly I have a great deal of respect for the hon. member. He is an emergency medical surgeon. He knows what he is talking about when it comes to medical stuff. He has lived it. He has breathed it. He has partaken in it. At the same time he must understand that the objectives of the bill are to protect the health and safety of Canadians, to ensure the appropriate use of human reproductive materials outside the body, and to protect the dignity and security of all persons, especially women and children.

Appropriate is the operative word we are using. We have to team up not just as researchers in the great country we call Canada but as geneticists outside Canada in other countries around the world who have done some research in this area. What may appear to the hon. member to be some kind of a broad stroke in the area of specifics in the bill are there intentionally to ensure that we are paying attention to the world when it comes to actions of speciality medicines, the actions of new research, the actions or the findings that come with research in the field of medicine. As I said earlier, we have to protect women and children. We have to protect reproductive

materials outside the body and protect the dignity and security of all people.

• (1720)

The hon. member spoke of in vitro fertilization. He attempted to build his case on a falsehood. He made the contention that the bill would ban in vitro fertilization. On what basis does the hon. member say this? Can he point to anywhere in the bill that says it would ban in vitro fertilization?

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend from the Liberal Party. His concerns are the same as our concerns. Our interest is in protecting the health and welfare of all Canadians, all people in this country. Our goal is exactly the same as that of the hon. member. The word appropriate is extremely important and I will get back to it.

In answer to his question, Bill C-47 indicates that the buying and selling of eggs, sperm and embryos including their exchange for goods, services or other benefits but excluding the recovery of expenses incurred in the collection, storage and distribution of sperm, ova and embryos for persons other than a donor will be prohibited. The government will ban in vitro fertilization.

I will address some of the hon. member's other concerns. He spoke about partisanship in the House. If the hon. member would look at my blues he would know that at the end of my speech I said I am sure members from all parties would be happy to work with the government to ensure we have effective legislation in this area and, more important, to ensure that Canadians get their essential health care services. The hon. member alluded to that.

Canadians are not getting their essential health care services when they need them. Accessibility is being denied to Canadians. Provincial governments ration essential services because there is not enough money to do all we ask for right now. The government ripped out \$3 billion in transfer payments to the provinces.

If the government thinks that providing Canadians access to essential services is ripping out \$3 billion in transfer payments to the provinces for health, it has another thing coming. That is not what we want to do.

The Reform Party, for the 100th time, is committed to ensuring that every Canadian regardless of how much money they have in their pockets will have access to essential health care services when they medically need them, not when their pocketbook allows it and not when the bottom line in provincial coffers allow it. We are vehemently opposed to an American style health care system. We are the party that wants to ensure that Canadians have access to the essential services they need.

If we are to move to an era where Canadians have access to essential health care services we must change our mindset. We

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must move toward an era where we will amend the Canada Health Act to give people choice. It is not a magic bullet. It is not a panacea for all that ill the health and welfare of Canadians, but it is a start.

In conjunction with other initiatives including better management, identifying effective preventive measures and effective legislation on smoking and tobacco regulation, these measures can be used to build a stronger health act and to build a system that is distinct and superior to the those of the Americans, the British, the Germans and the French. Canada will build it. We can do it by making these amendments to the Canada Health Act.

We cannot be entrenched in an act put forth decades ago that hamstring the ability of our country and Canadians to move forward. If we adhere to the act in its entirety as it stands now, it prevents that from happening. The government is living a sham. The government is hamstringing the provinces from being able to provide health care to Canadians.

• (1725)

Members of my party and I would be happy to present to the government any place, any time, anywhere, effective solutions to ensure that Canadians obtain their health care in a timely fashion.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to participate in the debate at second reading of Bill C-47, an act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction.

We have been waiting for several years for a bill regulating the new rapidly changing reproductive technologies.

What could be considered science-fiction only a few years ago is now an ever present reality that raises basic ethical issues. This is a complex problem that requires government intervention, of course, to ensure that science continues to serve mankind and not the other way around.

This bill, which was tabled last June, results from a long process that started with the hearings of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, the famous Baird Commission named after its chair.

First demanded by several feminist organizations in 1977, this commission was finally established 12 years later in 1989. After four years of work marked by internal management problems, the resignation of four of its commissioners and, above all, an astronomical \$28 million cost, the commission had heard, believe it or not, more than 40,000 witnesses. It is important to mention that no provincial government official was among these 40,000 witnesses.

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The commission also looked at the work of more than 300 researchers before finally tabling in the fall of 1993 a 1,435-page report containing over 300 recommendations. So there was something to act on. But what did this government do after this report was tabled? It did not do anything except stall for a long time and act with a carelessness that is reflected in the bill before us today.

So between 1993 and July 1995, this government did absolutely nothing except say that something needed to be done. Despite the official opposition's repeated demands for more than two years, the government persisted in doing nothing. For instance, when questioned, the Minister of Health of the day used to respond with vague examples and empty promises.

Essentially, the debates went something like this. In January 1994, in response to question by a government member, the then Minister of Health stated that Health Canada was actively addressing the recommendations contained in the Baird report which could be acted on quickly. That was in January 1994.

Then, in February 1994, one month later, the Minister of Justice stated that studies were under way and that he would report back to the House in due course with the speed the urgency of the situation dictated.

In October 1994, the Minister of Health indicated that she was developing rules in this respect and that there were some jurisdictional problems. "But we are doing our job", she concluded. We know how the federal government deals with problems that arise concerning jurisdiction: it ignores provincial jurisdictions. I will come back on this later.

Still in 1994, it was a long year, in November this time, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health makes a statement to the effect that the issue was a serious, difficult and complex one, that raised controversy. In December 1994, the Minister of Health, in turn, stated that what was a complex problem back in November had become extremely complex. If nothing else, they were certainly single-minded.

In March 1995, the minister announced her intention to put forward a policy on a new reproductive technology and that clearly the government was going to act.

• (1730)

Act it did, in July 1995. While the House was not sitting and we were all trying to take some off, the minister imposed a voluntary moratorium on certain procedures involving new reproductive technologies, a moratorium that did not even cut it with those concerned and was mocked left and right.

In January 1996, the second last stage, the Minister of Health announced that a committee had been established to do a follow up on the infamous moratorium, which was no longer described as voluntary but interim.

This brings us to the tabling, in June, of Bill C-47, a bill that is as thin as it is vague, as my opposition colleagues have pointed out. But this bill clearly bears the stamp of the federal Liberals in terms of interference in provincial areas of jurisdiction, and the area of health in particular.

Since the Baird report was tabled, the opposition has been relentlessly asking that governments provide a framework for reproduction technologies. The Government of Quebec has already included in Quebec's basic legislation, the Code civil, a provision that will make any surrogacy arrangement absolutely null and void. This is one way of using existing tools to make new laws.

The area of health being a provincial area of responsibility, it is up to the provinces to set the standards and restrictions with respect to certain human reproduction procedures. It would have been easy for the federal government to act within its field of jurisdiction: it simply had to amend the Criminal Code so as to prohibit certain practices. This is what we wanted it to do. In this way, it would have added to the efforts of the provinces, while staying within its own field of jurisdiction.

Once again, the government had a golden opportunity to act efficiently, while respecting the autonomy of the provinces regarding this issue.

However, as we have often seen in this House, the government would rather interfere in fields of provincial jurisdiction. While it could simply have amended the Criminal Code to prohibit certain practices, such as the trade of embryos and ova, the government creates another useless national agency, which will impose standards from coast to coast, instead of letting the provinces define these standards themselves.

I also want to draw your attention to clauses 4, 5, 6 and 7, which list prohibited activities. This is very enlightening: the cloning of human embryos, it took three years to introduce a bill on this; the creation of animal-human hybrids and the fusing of human and animal zygotes or embryos, again three years to arrive at this; the implant of a human embryo in an animal or an animal embryo in a woman; the alteration of the genetic structure of germ cells; the retrieving of sperm or ova from a foetus or cadaver for fertilization or research purposes requiring it to mature outside the human body; the choosing of the sex based on non-medical criteria; ectogenesis, that is the maintaining of an embryo in an artificial uterus.

There is more. I will continue. This is very instructive. The research on human embryos after the 14th day following conception; the creation of embryos solely for research purposes; and, finally, giving or offering consideration for prohibited services.

It is also prohibited to buy or sell ova, sperm or embryos, or to barter or exchange them for goods, services or other benefits, except the recovery of costs incurred in the collection, storage and distribution of sperm, ova and embryos for other persons; and, finally, the use, without the consent of the donor, of human sperm, ova or embryos for assisted human reproductive technologies, or for medical research.

Thus, the prohibitions included in the voluntary moratorium are maintained, along with new ones.

• (1735)

Yet, after all these years since the report Baird was tabled, we could have expected much more rigour in this piece of legislation.

For example, when we prohibit the use of diagnostic procedures solely to ascertain the sex of the foetus, except for medical reasons, for health reasons, what health reasons are we talking about? Does that include the mental health of the mother, or are we referring to the health of the foetus or of the parents? The bill says very little on that.

Clause 7 prohibiting the use of sperm, ova or embryos for the purpose of research, donation, maturation or fertilization, specifies that the donor's consent must be obtained. One then can logically deduce that these uses would be allowed with the donor's consent. It is a prohibition without really being one. Moreover, this situation is inconsistent with some of the provisions of clause 4, which prohibits certain uses. This illustrates the lack of clarity of this bill.

However, one question arises: is it possible that lack of clarity is provided to give full scope to the national agency that will be set up shortly to control and monitor new reproductive technologies? I am afraid so. The bill is of a very general nature, and the new agency, whose members will be appointed by the federal Minister of Health, will be given free rein to develop and implement policies concerning, probably, other areas besides the new reproductive technologies and to set new national medical and health standards.

When the time comes to legislate on such an important issue, that raised basic concerns concerning the role of science in the human reproduction process, I think it is disgraceful for the federal government to see this as just another opportunity to infringe upon the areas of jurisdiction of Quebec and all the other provinces. Instead of setting up national agencies in each and every area and therefore creating useless and costly duplication, the government should consult with Quebec and all its other provincial counterparts, let them make decisions within their own areas of jurisdiction and act in its own areas of jurisdiction.

All that would be needed are a few amendments to the Criminal Code to prohibit the use of some technologies throughout Canada. Instead, the government introduces a bill for which both the justice minister and the health minister are responsible, and we know what this will entail, and creates a national monitoring agency.

Private Members' Business

One could hope that the government's only motive is to protect the health of all Canadians and Quebecers. However, it has another major motive, and I might go as far as saying a permanent motive, which is to ignore provincial areas of jurisdiction.

As a former member of Parliament once said, the government is good for us, it wants what is best for us and will do anything to get it.

The Deputy Speaker: I must inform the House that there are two minutes left in this debate.

I recognize the hon. member for Lévis for a question or a comment.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, even though I studied that topic in detail, every time I listen to the hon. member for Laval Centre, I learn something new. She gave us an extraordinary historical background to this issue, not only by telling us what she witnessed in this House, the vague and virtuous answers provided by the former Minister of Health, but also by highlighting the report of the Baird commission. She reminded us that the commission heard some 40,000 witnesses.

• (1740)

I know that the hon. member for Laval Centre has read the report, so I do not want to bore her with that, but what she is saying is that this very bulky report has resulted in a very slim bill of only a few pages. The report dealt with a significant issue, but only led to a bill so slim as to look trivial for such an important and a serious issue. I would like the hon. member to comment on this.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has run out of time. It being 5.41 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

RADIOACTIVE WASTE IMPORTATION ACT

The House resumed from October 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-236, an act to prevent the importation of radioactive waste into Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to inform the House of the negative consequences of passing the legislation proposed in Bill C-236.

Private Members' Business

There are many negative consequences of the proposed act. My intervention will concentrate on the negative consequences to the health of Canadians and other residents of developing as well as developed countries. It will also concentrate on the negative consequences on sustainable development activities that may require international co-operation.

Canada has no plans to import nuclear fuel waste. Nevertheless Canadian officials are participating in the development of international recommendations on the practice of importing and exporting radioactive waste, particularly low level radioactive waste.

The International Atomic Energy Agency or IAEA indicates that a state exporting radioactive material should take the appropriate steps necessary to permit readmission into its territory of any resulting radioactive waste which the importing state cannot dispose of properly unless another arrangement can be made.

Thus the bill would affect the availability of medical, industrial and research equipment containing radioactive sources for developed and developing countries.

With regard to developing countries, very few of these have disposal facilities and therefore may not be able to avail themselves of this type of equipment. In many cases, Canada is the leading exporter of such equipment and in some cases the only supplier to the world. Since many developing countries are in no position to adequately dispose of any radioactive waste resulting from the use of such equipment and materials, these countries may have but two alternatives.

The first alternative is to turn to a non-Canadian supplier, if available, that would accept the return of radioactive waste but that may or may not properly dispose of this waste. The other alternative is simply to give up the health and environmental activities. This would necessarily increase risks to both health and the environment and make it more difficult to move toward sustainable development activities.

If we believe that giving up good medical practice is not desirable, then to which states will the resulting radioactive waste be exported? Canada has the technological capability to properly manage this waste. Would passing the bill put forward by the member for Fraser Valley East indicate to the world that we are shirking our responsibilities to the developing world?

We were very pleased to hear the member opposite state in the previous debate that "Canada has a responsibility as an advanced industrial society to look for ways of helping other societies that are perhaps having a little trouble right now to find ways of treating the nuclear waste produced".

How do we help these countries? By pressuring them to spend considerable sums of money to deal with their own radioactive

waste resulting from various uses, including medical procedures? Many developing countries cannot afford to do so and must export their waste if they are to benefit from the peaceful and beneficial uses of nuclear energy. Should developed countries close their borders to them? If so, then not only would they not be helping in the development of these countries, but they would also be wilfully inhibiting the progress of developing countries toward sustainable development activities. This would be contrary to Canada's international relations, particularly in view of our past and present activities in assisting countries that are endeavouring to develop in a sustainable manner.

• (1745)

The legislation proposed in Bill C-236 could also impact on international co-operative activities on overall waste management services not only with developing countries but also with developed countries, particularly with the United States. Good co-operation with our neighbours on waste management issues is essential in view of future special circumstances which may arise requiring mutual assistance for the safe and effective management of waste.

For instance, there have already been cases in other countries where hospitals have had to stop using certain medical procedures on patients because they were unable to ship the resulting radioactive waste to national disposal facilities due to temporary unavailability. In such instances it would be more than justifiable on a health basis to permit shipping the waste to a neighbouring country either for storage or disposal purposes until the temporary problem was resolved.

A ban on the importation of radioactive waste might seem questionable to our neighbours. Therefore this bill would hamper Canada's assistance and co-operation with nations around the world, resulting in a decrease in the quality of health protection systems for Canadians and for residents in developing as well as developed countries.

I urge the members of the House not to vote for this bill.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of Bill C-236, an act to prevent the importation of radioactive waste. This bill was introduced by my colleague from Fraser Valley East who I know has carefully studied the issue of nuclear waste and its potential for seriously harming the environment and endangering public health and safety. I know he is very concerned and has put a great deal of effort into this bill.

One of the questions I want to address is one with which I think Canadians are concerned: Will Canada become the garbage bin of the world for nuclear waste? We certainly hope not. I am concerned to learn that there are over 400 commercial nuclear reactors in the world and many more small nuclear reactors in universities, on ships and in submarines. All of these reactors need a place to

dispose of their radioactive waste, waste which remains highly toxic for thousands of years.

What better country than Canada to ship all this waste to? Canada has lots of land. It has a relatively small population. There are groups who might be willing to take a time bomb off the hands of other countries, especially those countries which have the ability to pay and pay handsomely. This thought is deeply disturbing to me. It has been a challenge for us to find suitable locations for our own nuclear waste. We certainly do not need to take on the radioactive waste of other countries, and there is certainly lots of it out there.

The United States will be looking to dispose of 50 tonnes of plutonium over the next 25 years. Russia has another 50 tonnes. My colleague from Fraser Valley East tells me that at the Hanford site in the United States there is enough high level waste to fill 86 football fields one metre deep. It will cost \$57 billion just to dispose of the waste from that site.

Some might suggest that allowing nuclear waste to be disposed of in Canada would have an economic benefit. However, our economic problems are not going to be solved by allowing Canada to become the nuclear garbage bin of the world. We have to solve those problems here. The provinces have shown us that we are on the way to a solution. If the federal government would get on board to a greater degree, we would be able to resolve our economic problems. This is not a method which we should use to solve those problems.

We hear that there are certain aboriginal groups in Canada that are considering offering their lands for disposal purposes. Their lands lie over the Canadian Shield. They figure that they can make a fair amount of cash by allowing nuclear waste to be buried there. They call it economic development.

• (1750)

With the pollution coming into Canada from some of the European countries and the United States, the Canadian Shield does not even have the ability to filter out the pollution problem we have. Some of the Canadian soil on the prairies has the buffering actions that are necessary but it certainly does not exist in the Canadian Shield which is basically rock.

It seems to me that in the Nisga'a agreement, which will be used as a pattern by many other aboriginal self-governments, allows an aboriginal government to run its own environmental assessments. In effect, that local government can decide how harmful burying nuclear waste is on its land and whether it is worth the risk.

I have no problem with aboriginal communities taking on Canadian nuclear waste if they feel it is profitable enough for them to do so, but I do not like the idea of taking on international waste. We need to solve our own problems but we do not have to solve the international problems. That has to be done in their own countries.

Private Members' Business

It is bad enough to have to worry about our own highly toxic garbage. Let us not take on the dangerous toxic nuclear waste of other countries.

I want to examine the question of whether this agreement contravenes NAFTA. There is some question about whether passing this act would contravene our trade agreement with the United States and Mexico. There is a NAFTA dispute settlement panel. If the panel was asked to look into this matter, several factors would have to be considered.

Chapter nine in the NAFTA would certainly be scrutinized. This chapter sets out the permissible barriers to trade that are related to standards that a country might want to set for itself. Article 904 allows a country to adopt any standards related measures that are important to its safety. The protection of human, animal and plant life is included here, as well as the environment. The article allows a country to prohibit the importation of a good or the provision of a service by another country that does not comply with this standards related measure.

There would probably be some debate as to whether nuclear waste burial is the trade of a good or the provision of a service. There would also need to be some evidence of the danger to the environment for humans, plants and animals. There might also be some debate on whether prohibiting the importation might not pose an even greater danger to Canada. Burying the waste near our border might be more dangerous for our safety than burying it far away from populated areas.

It is always difficult to predict the outcome of the legal wrangling that would take place. Much depends on the skill of the lawyers and the make-up of the panel. I would certainly be willing to place a bet that Canada could defend its standards related measure and maintain its right to prohibit the importation of nuclear waste. This is a very serious matter.

I would like to add my weight to those who are calling for the ban on the importation of nuclear waste into Canada. Because it is a commodity that has a very dangerous level to our safety and has a life that goes on thousands of years, this has to be considered very carefully. We need some kind of provisions that limit the ability of certain groups to bring this into Canada.

In conclusion, I call on all members of the House to support this bill and to vote in favour of it. Canada is a beautiful, wide open country with lots of forests, lakes and streams. Let us keep it as clean as we can and as waste free as possible. Let us not allow Canada to become the nuclear garbage bin of the world.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I take part today in this debate at second reading of Bill C-236 introduced by my colleague from Fraser Valley East, an act to prevent the importation of radioactive waste into Canada.

Private Members' Business

I want to remind you at the outset that, in May 1995, the report of the Auditor General of Canada contained a chapter on this issue, entitled: Federal Radioactive Waste Management. Page 3-5 of this report provides, and I quote: "Canada has no disposal facilities for any of its high-level or low-level radioactive waste." And further on: "Decisions still have to be taken in Canada on whether and how to proceed to a disposal solution. Despite the significant investment, in Canada, of about \$538 million in research and development, there has been no consideration of alternative approaches for moving Canada's high-level radioactive waste program forward after March 1997, when current federal funding ends."

• (1755)

Clearly, Canada is not yet equipped to receive foreign countries' radioactive waste. Since Canada does not know yet what to do with its own waste, how could it deal with, dispose of or store other countries'?

In this sense, the bill by my Reform colleague may seem premature and untimely, since Canada is not soon going to become the nuclear waste dumpsite of the world. But as untimely as it may be, Bill C-236 is to me a good message to send to the authorities so that they seriously question the appropriateness of bringing foreign countries' nuclear waste to our shores.

Currently, Canadian nuclear authorities are considering two projects for our nuclear waste. The first one deals with the permanent storage of spent fuel, or highly radioactive waste, and the other one deals with the development of a low radioactive waste disposal site in Ontario, in Deep River to be more precise.

As far as the permanent storage of spent fuel is concerned, the authorities are considering the possibility of storing this highly radioactive waste in a huge cave dug into the Canadian shield. According to present plans, this cave should be ready by the year 2025 and more than 4 million spent fuel clusters could be stored there. For your information, a cluster is about the size of a fireplace log and the anticipated 4 million clusters represent a volume equivalent to that of seven Olympic swimming pools. This spent fuel, 85 per cent of which is produced by Hydro Ontario reactors, remains highly radioactive for at least 500 years, and its handling requires appropriate steps to ensure the protection of human beings and the environment during this period.

In fact, certain elements of this fuel remain harmful for tens of thousands of years if they escape containment and are ingested or inhaled.

In view of this portrait of the Canadian situation, not to say Ontarian, we must ask if we really want more of such hazardous waste, especially coming from abroad. An article published in the *Globe and Mail* on October 27, 1994 entitled:

[English]

"Canada eyed as world site for nuclear waste, proposal to use Canadian Shield called dangerous".

[Translation]

—shows the fears and apprehensions of environmentalists with regard to this issue of permanent disposal. The article says at the beginning, and I quote:

[English]

"It may take 20 to 50 years to happen, but Canada has moved one step closer to becoming the world's nuclear waste dump site, environmental critics charged yesterday".

[Translation]

Environmental groups argue that Canada cannot legally ban the import of radioactive waste from the United States and that Canadian nuclear authorities might find it beneficial to open their future site to foreign waste. One can also read, and I quote:

[English]

"You build a dump here and you can bet the U.S. will be beating the bushes to get rid of their stuff".

[Translation]

These are very real concerns of environmentalists that we must consider very seriously.

More recently, the Prime Minister of Canada gave his support to a feasibility study to import into Canada plutonium from Russian and American nuclear warheads to burning it as fuel in our CANDU reactors. This plutonium considered waste by these countries is considered fuel by Canada.

That is about one hundred tonnes of plutonium that we would burn in the interest of a peace effort, according to the Prime Minister. But once this plutonium is burned, it produces highly radioactive waste. How many bundles will be added to ours, to the 4 million bundles expected by the end of 2033? This roundabout way for foreigners to dispose of their plutonium waste raises some serious questions.

• (1800)

Would it not be better to sell them Candu reactors so as to make them autonomous and responsible for their own waste? And why should those countries not find their own solutions to this problem?

This overview of the status of highly radioactive waste clearly shows we must be careful and the apparent danger of linking the issue of financial profits to that of the environment in this matter.

Spent fuel is and must be considered extremely toxic, with all the adverse effects that may occur in case of management problems.

As for low level radioactive waste, Canadian authorities are also considering a type of permanent storage. Deep River was chosen as the site, as I said earlier. One of the technologies being developed involves the use of an underground structure protected against intrusion, consisting of a series of concrete vaults where waste would be stored for 500 years, after which it would be harmless. This project is not going down smoothly in this Ontarian locality and serious concerns are being expressed throughout the region. Can you imagine the reaction the communities concerned would have if, in addition, they were to receive waste made in the USA?

I look favourably on the bill put forward by the hon. member for Fraser Valley East. While Canada may be renowned around the world for being accommodating, it should not have to become the nuclear waste-basket of the world just to live up to its reputation.

Finally, I would suggest that the Prime Minister and his ministers and members of Parliament take a good hard look at what impact importing plutonium will have in Canada.

Members from Ontario, and particularly those in whose riding CANDU reactors have already been designated to burn plutonium, thereby adding to the radioactive waste problem, should consult their voters on this issue.

[English]

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-236, proposed by the hon. member for Fraser Valley East. The bill would prevent the importation of radioactive waste into Canada.

Although at first this bill appears somewhat harmless, in reality it is fraught with a number of negative consequences. Those consequences are international and domestic in scope. They pertain to health and have serious environmental impacts. Presently Canada does not import any nuclear fuel waste whatsoever. The Government of Canada has no plan to do so.

The hon. member from the Reform Party mentioned plutonium. There are international agreements and conventions in operation at the present time to prevent the transportation of plutonium across borders.

Plutonium is one of the deadliest materials available at the present time. As a result, every nation in the world must be on guard and vigilant in the prevention of the transportation of any plutonium through the black market which comes from the dismantling of nuclear bombs and nuclear warheads in countries such as Russia.

However, we import radioactive waste produced by medical equipment that is used in other countries. To discontinue this practice would have serious negative consequences. For example,

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the potential exists for significant impacts on the health of people from developing countries that often cannot effectively manage radioactive waste disposal like we can.

Specifically, developing countries with inadequate waste disposal systems may not be able to utilize radiological treatment of cancer and early detection analysis of various diseases. This would be a very real possibility if we refused these countries access to our disposal systems. At present clients from all over the world obtain products from Canadian firms that manufacture radio isotopes and equipment containing radioactive materials which are used to make medical diagnosis and treat disease, particularly for cancer and heart patients, sterilize surgical instruments and blood for transfusions, prevent diseases such as malaria and increase the efficiency of agricultural methods.

• (1805)

When discussing the benefits of nuclear energy, we often concentrate on the production of an economic, environmentally sound way of producing electricity. We often forget to highlight the other benefits such as those just mentioned in the health area which lead to the avoidance of diseases, the elimination of infections and the provision of good nutrition and food.

There are many examples where the uses of nuclear energy considerably improve the health and economic development of people worldwide. Let me highlight one. Chile has developed a multibillion dollar food export industry. It is also the only country in South America that is internationally recognized as being free of the Mediterranean fruit fly. Until recently, however, Chilean fresh foods were still excluded from certain markets because of the fear of outbreaks originating from Med flies in northern Chile.

After many unsuccessful attempts with insecticides, finally in 1990 Chile turned to a biological method using flies sterilized with radiation. As a result of this, no wild Med flies have been detected since mid-1995. And in December 1995, Chile was formally declared a fly free zone by international experts.

According to the Chilean minister of agriculture, this will mean an annual increase of \$500 million in fruit exports over the next five years. This is a very good example of the use of the type of material and equipment produced and exported by Canadian firms.

The countries that utilize medical equipment and material exported by Canada expect us to assist them with their waste disposal. If they are refused assistance in waste disposal, in turn they could readily refuse to buy equipment containing radioactive sources and radio isotopes from Canada. Canadian exporters of medical and industrial equipment and materials would lose a sizeable portion of their clients. A reduction of this nature would lead to job losses here at home. Certainly the Reform Party does not want job losses.

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With know-how and good marketing practices, Canadian firms have managed to be leaders in the industry that provides radio isotopes and irradiation equipment around the world. They have proven themselves to be a reliable supplier of these products. They contribute significantly to Canada's exports and in the process provide quality jobs for Canadians in this rapidly growing high technology field. Bill C-236 would put the brakes on the growth of this industry.

I would like to highlight one of the Canadian firms in this field. Nordion International Incorporated is a leader worldwide in the production of radio isotopes. Nordion contributes worldwide to the prevention of diseases and healing patients. Nordion's total revenues in fiscal 1995 were \$191 million. The company exports to over 70 countries and 98 per cent of its sales are from export markets. It has over 700 employees and more than 50 per cent hold post-secondary degrees or diplomas. Nordion's Canadian facilities are located in Montreal, Vancouver and in Kanata, Ontario.

This company expects that future growth will see a considerable expansion of their products, including the development of new radio pharmaceuticals, new sterilization processes, food irradiation, sewage sludge treatment and commercialization of therapeutic based opportunities. All relevant export sales by Nordion involve the return to Canada of the spent radioactive sources from the irradiation equipment.

• (1810)

Bill C-236 would prevent Canadian companies such as Nordion from providing essential products to companies that unfortunately cannot properly dispose of radioactive waste resulting from the use of these products.

The reality is that this bill is of no value. Canada has the expertise and regulatory system to ensure that radioactive waste is treated in a manner such that it would not pose a risk to human health or the environment. We are the leaders in the processes. We are the leaders in knowledge. We are the leaders in this field. Passing this bill would negatively affect the health of people in some developing nations. It would harm the environment of these countries and lead to job losses in Canada. It is for these reasons I cannot support Bill C-236.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today in full support of Bill C-236 put forward by my colleague from Fraser Valley East. I have listened to the assertions made by members from the government. I honestly cannot believe in good conscience that they have actually mentioned their claims. Obviously they have not read the bill.

The purpose of the bill is to protect Canadians now and in the future. Currently we do not have any legislation to protect Canadians from waste from other countries being brought to our shores for disposal. There are no regulatory measures. That means

radioactive waste can be imported. That is the purpose of Bill C-236. The member has proven to be proactive on this issue. This should not be taken lightly and has been put forward with justification.

The justification has been seen here in the House today and I will give some examples. Members from the government strongly suggested that we as a caring, considerate society in the face of sustainable development ought to be bringing nuclear waste from other countries to be deposited on our shores because these countries do not have the capabilities of waste disposal. This will be done under the guise of sustainable development.

Sustainable development is not bringing somebody else's waste to Canada's shores. It means dealing with your own waste in your own country in your own fashion. It is true that these countries probably do not have the technology to deal with waste disposal. That is where Canada can make an effective contribution because we are leaders in the nuclear industry. This is an opportunity for Canada to provide technical assistance to these countries to deal with their nuclear waste.

We should not be bringing their nuclear waste to Canada. It is not our responsibility to do that. We would be abrogating our responsibility to the health and welfare of Canadians if we brought these highly toxic, carcinogenic and teratogenic, mutagenic substances to our soil. Later I will give examples of how serious this problem is in the Arctic.

Contrary to what government members have been saying, we export plutonium from Saskatchewan, which is our second largest producer of plutonium, to Japanese power plants. That is a serious problem because this plutonium, which can live for tens of thousands of years, has to travel across Canada and then across the oceans. We rely on other regulatory bodies in order to ensure the safety of Canadians but that should not be the case.

• (1815)

My colleague from Fraser Valley East brought forth this very strong and important bill to protect Canadians by ensuring that waste is not brought to this country, transported across Canadian soil through Canadian towns and cities, creating a potential for the public to be exposed to lethal material.

We are clearly in favour of sustainable development. We fully support Canadians using our technology to help those who are less fortunate in other parts of the world, but let us not bring their problems to our shores.

It is also important to dispel the myths put forth by some Liberal members saying that we are against the importation of nuclear materials for technology and medicine. I ask the hon. member to read the bill. The bill deals with waste, waste, waste. It deals with nuclear waste, not nuclear material effectively used in industry and in the world of medicine.

It is important for us to put the bill in perspective and to look at the international complexity of it and why the member brought it forward. There are over 413 nuclear reactors in the world. Each of them produces nuclear waste, much of which is a real problem to get rid of. We have our own problems in our own country in disposing of our own waste. We do not need to bring in literally thousands of tonnes of spent nuclear rods and nuclear materials out there looking for a home. That home is not in Canada.

We should also look at another issue. I was at a meeting with a number of scientists from Russia who said they had to decommission over 100 nuclear submarines within the next few years. They were referring to the nuclear material within the submarines. The response of the Russians has been widespread dumping on the Kola Peninsula, widespread dumping in northern Russia.

This is not a problem happening half a world away that will not affect us. This problem very much affects us. One need not look any further than at the aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories, the Arctic and Yukon. They have much higher rates of genetic abnormalities and birth defects as a direct result of the outpouring of nuclear material that is being negligently, irresponsibly and criminally disposed of over areas of the Kola Peninsula in Russia.

That is the problem. It is affecting Canadians today. We have to be very clear about that. The government ought to pay very close attention to the problem. Nobody is speaking for those aboriginal people in the north who are suffering from the effects of this nuclear material.

It is not something that Canada should take on its shoulders alone. Clearly it is something in which we can take a leadership position in the international community to bring forth all the good ideas out there to provide help to the Russian people on how to deal with the problem.

It is not the only problem. We have seen much about Chernobyl. We have heard much of the problems associated with this disaster. However the Chernobyl reactor is just one of many other reactors that exist in Russia today. There are literally dozens and dozens of leaky nuclear reactors in Russia that will produce other Chernobyls in the near future.

The international community will not have the ability and the funds to deal with the problem when it actually becomes a horrendous situation along the lines of Chernobyl. It is extremely important for us as a country to work with other countries to address the problem in a proactive fashion now, before the reactors leak in a widespread fashion, the outcome of which will affect Canadians. It is that simple.

The leakage of nuclear materials half a world away indeed affects us. Members from the government said that we do not need

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to worry about nuclear material being brought into Canada because nothing has happened of the sort. The fact remains that international organizations have found that Canada is an ideal place to dump nuclear waste. In Ontario alone 1,300 spots have been identified in the Canadian Shield.

• (1820)

The theory is that we dig a hole half a kilometre into the Canadian Shield and dump the nuclear waste into it. Earthquakes and seepage into the groundwater have not been taken into consideration. There is also the consequences of the nuclear material, some of which has a life in the tens of thousands of years. It kills. It is carcinogenic. It is mutagenic and teratogenic. It causes terrible defects in children. This is not pie in the sky; this is happening now.

People are closely looking at Canada, particularly the Canadian Shield, as an ideal place for the disposal of waste from other countries.

In closing, I fully support Bill C-236 in the name of the hon. member for Fraser Valley East. I encourage all members of the House to support it for the sake of the health and welfare of all Canadians.

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on Bill C-236 which has a significant international component. Canada has an important role to play in strengthening international co-operation in radioactive waste safety. This assistance would diminish if the bill passes.

Radioactive waste from peaceful uses of nuclear energy has many uses from medical treatments to the production of electric power. It must be properly managed at national and international levels by all countries.

It seems the whole issue is an example of how we have become a global village. Environmental issues like pollution and radioactive fallout as we saw in the case of Chernobyl have no boundaries. The issues of air pollution do not know boundaries. We cannot put up walls and prevent that kind of pollution from crossing over into our country.

Therefore we have to take an interest in it and look at it not simply on a domestic basis. We must look beyond our borders and realize that we are responsible citizens of that global village who have to consider this issue in that light.

Canada happens to be the world's leading supplier of radio isotopes for cancer treatment. Radio isotopes also have other uses such as industrial ones. They are used in checking for leaks in sewage and other kinds of pipes. They are also used for sterilising food. Perhaps members have heard of irradiated food.

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We must assume our responsibility for the proper disposal of the isotopes we are exporting from this country. How can we do that if we do not allow them back into our country?

The last member suggested that we were taking the wrong approach. However, I recall the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca saying less than an hour ago that we should not be leaving decisions regarding technology to bureaucrats in the health department. The bill would leave discretion about what waste means and what kinds of waste would be allowed into the country and what could not to the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada. It is strange on the one hand the member does not want to leave things to the bureaucrats and on the other hand he really does. This seems to be a contradiction.

Canada has taken a leading role in disposal technology for this kind of waste. From the long term perspective it is better to know where waste from products created in Canada and exported goes. We have an interest in it. Wherever it ends up in the world it can come back to haunt us later.

The management of radioactive waste is now regulated in most countries. Canada's approach to safety generally exceeds international recommendations. By the way, it is important to note that Canada has no plans to import or export nuclear fuel waste. From our point of view we are not talking about that. If the bill had been clearer about what it intends we might not have that problem, but it is not. It simply talks about radioactive waste and does not clarify whether we are talking about nuclear fuel waste, radio isotopes or other kinds of such products.

Nevertheless, some less developed countries are worried that industrialized countries will be tempted to dump or get rid of their unwanted waste within the developing world. I can understand why they would be concerned about that possibility. They have banned the import of radioactive waste. However, most developed countries do not have such a ban. On the contrary, they see this practice as one in which they have considerable expertise, thereby helping to eliminate undue risks to health and the environment by properly disposing of these products. They also consider this practice to be compatible with sustainable development activities.

• (1825)

The mid-1970s saw an increase in worldwide concern about the transboundary movement of waste in general. At that time the major concern was that nuclear waste and radioactive waste could be exported from industrialized countries where there was an absence of legal, administrative, regulatory, financial or technical capabilities. In fact, the waste could have been sent to less developed countries, causing great problems.

OECD member countries have also been concerned with the control of transboundary movements of hazardous waste since the

beginning of the 1980s. This eventually led to the preparation of the convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. This important international convention was adopted in Basel, Switzerland on March 22, 1989, under the auspices of the United Nations environment program and entered into force on May 5, 1992. Canada is a party to that convention.

Under the general obligation of the convention each party will prevent the import of hazardous waste if it has reason to believe that the waste in question will not be managed in an environmentally sound manner. The convention also indicates that the exportation of waste is allowed if the state of export does not have suitable facilities to deal properly with the waste in question and also if the waste is required as raw material for recycling or recovering industries in the state of import.

Developing countries have also established their own conventions, having recognized that they are particularly vulnerable in not having adequate radioactive waste management facilities. For instance, the Bamako convention on the ban of the import of hazardous wastes into Africa and the import or transboundary movement of hazardous wastes within Africa was adopted in Bamako, Mali, on January 30, 1991. Although the convention bans the import of wastes by African states, it permits the export of such wastes when a state does not have adequate disposal facilities.

Generally, it is recognized by states that the practice of importing or exporting waste is not in itself detrimental, but that conditions must be attached to this practice.

The first condition involves the proper notification of all countries involved, followed by their acceptance. Governments must respect the right of other governments to decide whether they wish to provide disposal sites for radioactive waste originating from other countries.

Second, there must be proper management of the waste by all countries involved. Any country considering exporting its waste would have to assure itself that the levels of protection for workers, the public and the environment in the importing country are, at the least, equivalent to those observed within its own borders.

Over the years general principles have evolved internationally with regard to importing and exporting hazardous or radioactive wastes. These principles include, if feasible, that waste should be managed within the generating country. There can be sound environmental or socioeconomic reasons for exporting or importing waste for a variety of objectives, such as treatment, temporary storage, recycling or final disposal. Controlling the import or export of wastes, in the form of providing notification, granting licences and compliance with regulations is necessary.

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Any state may exercise its sovereign right to permit or ban any imports or exports of waste within its borders. Every state wanting to participate in the international transboundary movement of waste should have a regulatory authority and should adopt appropriate procedures, as necessary, for the regulation of such movement. No state should permit the receipt of waste unless it has the administrative and technical capacity and regulatory structure to manage and dispose of such waste in a manner consistent with international safety standards.

• (1830)

Last, the ultimate aim remains to minimize the production of any waste, as it should be, taking into account social, environmental, technological and economic concerns and considerations.

With specific reference to the safety of radioactive waste management, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA, is recognized as the premier international body to provide expert advice. Canada continues to actively support the IAEA efforts in this area. The following IAEA activities are particularly relevant to the import of waste.

In 1990 the IAEA established a code of practice for transboundary movement of radioactive waste. The IAEA has developed regulations for the safe transport of radioactive materials which are binding on member states. Experience has shown that these regulations are effective in ensuring safe transport of such materials. Member states are currently developing an international convention on the safety of radioactive waste management. The IAEA has produced a technical document on the nature and magnitude of problematic spent radiation sources.

In September the IAEA adopted a resolution which indicated that under certain circumstances safe management of radioactive waste might be fostered through voluntary agreements among member states to use the disposal facilities for low level radioactive waste available in one state for the benefit of the other states.

For over 20 years, nations around the world have been working diligently to find a sustainable way to deal with the transboundary movement of chemical and radioactive waste. While we must continue to be vigilant, the progress that has been made and that continues to be made at the international level provides increased confidence that the practice of importing and exporting radioactive waste can be conducted within the context of sustainable development not only on a regional scale but truly within the global village.

We have shown that some countries do need to export the radioactive waste that results from activities essential for sustainable development. We must ensure that such countries export their waste to countries that have the expertise needed to effectively

handle the radioactive waste. Canada can be such a country and should not turn its back on countries in need.

I urge members of this House not to support this bill.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Bill C-236 put forward by the member for Fraser Valley East. The purpose of this bill is to prevent the importation of radioactive waste.

Worldwide there are 413 commercial nuclear reactors, an untold number of small research reactors at universities and other reactors on ships or submarines. Together they have generated and will continue to generate enormous amounts of highly toxic nuclear waste, waste that will be deadly for 10,000 years.

Canadians in general do not want radioactive waste in their backyard. It took eight years and \$20 million for the siting task force struck by the Minister of National Resources to find a place for our low level radioactive waste. Note this does not cover high level radioactive waste. The town of Deep River finally said yes in September a year ago, but only two communities in Ontario even volunteered to consider the question.

It should be self-evident to most that the import of radioactive waste should be banned. As I will explain, there are some compelling reasons why a law should be passed to firmly establish this principle.

In doing so it should be clear that this bill would not ban the importation—I hope members are listening across the way—of plutonium from U.S. and Russian warheads to be burned as fuel in CANDU reactors. This idea is only one of nine separate proposals the Americans are considering as an option.

In essence the plan calls for the CANDU fuel bundles to be fabricated in the U.S. and brought into Canada as fuel, not as waste. It would be a great contribution to global disarmament but Canadians would be expected to subsidize the conversion process. In that regard I am opposed to the idea that the Government of Canada should do any subsidization of a process such as this.

• (1835)

If the process were to be done, I understand it would be on a commercial basis most likely with help from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. As a crown corporation close to the federal government, AECL's role might consist of paying and in effect subsidizing the retool of facilities such as the old Bruce reactor which might then burn the plutonium.

Clearly any support should be contingent on the Government of Canada controlling the regulatory side but staying out of the financial side. Pointedly, we Canadians should not be paying to beat American and Russian swords into ploughshares. If we want to use our tools to act as the blacksmith for the military powers of the world, we should not have to pay for the raw materials.

Private Members' Business

This proposal is not without an environmental cost to Canada. The Department of Natural Resources tells us that the United States is looking to get rid of 50 tonnes of plutonium over a 25-year period. We are also looking at the same amount from Russia, 50 tonnes over 25 years. In total, 100 tonnes is how much plutonium will be generated from the dismantling of a total of 40,000 nuclear warheads.

By way of comparison, at the moment we already have 22,000 tonnes of high level waste in Canada stored on sites of over 22 nuclear reactors. This includes 78 tonnes of plutonium. By the year 2025, we will have 58,000 tonnes which will include 200-odd tonnes of plutonium.

The price Canada would have to pay is increasing radioactive waste in our country by a third. The government's decision will have to strike a balance between the environmental security of Canadian citizens and the probability of plutonium in nuclear warheads being used for more harmful purposes. Once Canadians learn about this plutonium deal, they may want to think twice about it. However Bill C-236 does not specifically address that issue.

To get back to the purpose of my colleague's bill, why do we need a law regarding the importation of fissionable waste materials? Because of the profit in the business of burying high level radioactive waste. That is the reason.

There are profit oriented groups which might want to import waste for money. The United States alone has an enormous high level waste problem. Because of that, there is an enormous profit potential in it.

The U.S. Hanford site located 300 kilometres south of the B.C. border has enough waste to fill 86 football fields one metre deep. It

will cost \$57 billion to dispose of that. It is estimated that the clean-up cost in the United States alone will total a staggering \$230 billion.

The problem continues to grow. The U.S. has a total of 77,000 tonnes of waste to bury. Someone is going to look to this for a profit. Let us take an example. The Meadow Lake Tribal Council, which represents nine Indian communities in northern Saskatchewan, reported on February 25, 1995 that it was considering the offer of land for a price. That underlines the problem.

I will try to draw this to a close although I do have much more to say about it. Even the Nisga'a law which is under consideration in British Columbia can have an effect on this.

In conclusion, Bill C-236 provides a golden opportunity for Canada to send a discouraging message to the United States and to profit seeking groups within Canada who might view the absence of legislation as a way to capitalize on the import of nuclear waste. It is an opportunity for the government to respect the wishes of a majority of Canadians who are opposed to the importation of hazardous radioactive waste.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[*Translation*]

It being 6.40 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 6.40 p.m.)

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