



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, November 20, 1997**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 20, 1997

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction.

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

\* \* \*

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Transport, on Bill C-9, the Canada Marine Act.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### COMPETITION ACT

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-20, an act to amend the Competition Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other acts.

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

\* \* \*

• (1005)

### SMALL BUSINESS LOANS ACT

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-21, an act to amend the Small Business Loans Act.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-22, an act to implement the

## CANADA HEALTH ACT

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-282, an act to amend the Canada Health Act (linguistic duality).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill to amend the Canada Health Act would add a sixth principle to it, that of respect for linguistic duality.

The bill would amend the statute so that a province would be paid the full sum under the Canada health and social transfer only if it honoured the principle of Canada's linguistic duality.

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

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-283, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act (audits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise in this House and introduce this private members' bill to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act (audit).

Currently the auditor general does not have the authority to audit the Canadian Wheat Board. Over the years, the auditor general has provided a valuable service to Canadians by pointing out waste in federal government as well as showing where Canadians have received value for their money.

Western farmers and Canadians in general have demanded legislation that would make the Canadian Wheat Board more accountable to producers.

This bill endeavours to do exactly that and probably restore the faith of farmers in the Canadian Wheat Board.

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

*Routine Proceedings*

● (1010)

**CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT**

**Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-284, an act to amend the Criminal Records Act and the Canadian Human Rights Act (offences against children).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill will enable children's organizations and parents to access the criminal record of persons convicted of sexual offences against children, even if later the sexual offender has received a pardon.

This limited disclosure will only be allowed to individuals who apply for a position of trust with respect to children. This bill is in response to a public concern and a large petition that was received and presented in the last Parliament. It is aimed to better protect our children from potential abuse.

I think it is quite appropriate that it be introduced in the House on this day because it is National Child Day.

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

\* \* \*

**GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.)**: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and I rise to seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion:

That this House, on behalf of all Canadians, convey its warm greetings and best wishes to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh on the happy occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

**The Speaker**: Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to put the motion?

**Some hon. members**: Agreed.

**The Speaker**: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members**: No.

**The Speaker**: The hon. member asked for unanimous consent and unanimous consent was not granted.

Motion negatived

**Mr. Jason Kenney**: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Speaker**: Is the point of order on this matter?

**Mr. Jason Kenney**: Mr. Speaker, I received unanimous consent to introduce the motion.

**The Speaker**: You are correct. Unanimous consent was given to introduce the motion. However, unanimous consent was not given

to pass the motion and that is what we are dealing with. The motion was defeated.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## NATIONAL CHILD DAY

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.)**: Mr. Speaker, today is National Child Day and I am pleased to present seven petitions with the signature of 150 Canadians from the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. They are concerned that by ratifying and implementing the United Nations convention on the rights of the child that government bureaucrats and courts will be legally entitled to determine what is in the best interests of the child, not the parents.

The petitioners believe that the Government of Canada is creating a bureaucracy to police parents and enforce the guidelines in the UN charter, which has never been approved by Parliament. Not only are parental rights being undermined by implementing this UN convention, but they are concerned that it will create greater incentives for families to abrogate their parental responsibilities to the state.

Therefore, the petitioners request Parliament to address their concerns by supporting my Private Members Motion No. 33 which will add protection of parental rights and responsibilities to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

● (1015)

## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.)**: Mr. Speaker, the second set of petitions I would like to present comes with signatures of 52 Canadians from Manitoba and British Columbia. It is most appropriate for these petitions to be introduced on national child day.

These citizens of Canada support retention of section 43 of the Criminal Code which states: "Every school teacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child who is under his care if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances".

The petitioners believe the government is weakening the role of parents in determining what is in the best interests of the child by continuing to fund research and court challenges by people who advocate the removal of section 43. So your petitioners request Parliament to affirm the duty of parents to responsibly raise their children according to their own conscience and beliefs and retain section 43 in Canada's Criminal Code as it is currently worded.

*Points of Order*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[English]

**REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE**

CANADA POST

**The Speaker:** I have received a letter from the hon. member for West Kootenay—Okanagan with a request for an emergency debate. I will permit him a few short sentences to outline what it is all about and we will go from there.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask for some guidance. I understand it is customary that I read the actual application I made to the House for this.

**The Speaker:** What is actually needed is a statement of the reason for the request, not necessarily what is in the letter. I have already read the letter so it is just to give us an idea of what this debate would be all about.

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to present a motion under Standing Order 52(1) and 52(2) for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that requires the urgent consideration of all hon. members, the current postal situation.

It is appropriate that we examine all the issues that affect every one of the 31 million Canadians in this country. I am not asking that we specifically debate something like back to work legislation but rather that we should examine the impact and ramifications of this current action, that we examine all the different possibilities in terms of what might be appropriate actions to take to reduce the harmful impact of this and collectively arrive at some decisions as to how we may best serve the interests of all Canadians.

SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for sending me the letter. The letter in itself is quite complete. We have a general idea of what the hon. member wants in this emergency debate.

At this time it would seem to me that it does not fulfil the requirements for an emergency debate. Perhaps at a later time that would be the case.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Calgary Southeast.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, moments ago I received unanimous consent to introduce a motion. The Chair then sought unanimous consent to pass the motion. I refer the Speaker to section 552(1) of Beauchesne's:

Every matter is determined in the House of Commons upon a question put by the Speaker, on a proposition submitted by a Member, and resolved either in the affirmative or negative as the case may be. This proposition, called a motion, is a proposal moved by one Member, in accordance with certain well established rules, that the House do something, or order something to be done or express an opinion with regard to some matter.

● (1020)

I therefore put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that a voice vote should have been held on this motion rather than unanimous consent, which was already given in the introduction of the motion and which is not necessary to approve it.

**The Speaker:** Let me go through the whole thing. My understanding is that this is what happened.

The hon. member asked "I would like to seek the unanimous consent to move this motion". At that point I asked the House "does the hon. member have unanimous consent to put the motion?" At that point I heard no one dissenting. Therefore the hon. member had the right to put the motion.

When the hon. member put the motion I again sought unanimous consent. There was not unanimous consent at that time. If anyone dissents then that dies right there.

The hon. member does bring up an interesting point that this is a motion. At that point, after I had asked whether there was unanimous consent and there was a "no", my clerk informs me, and I agree with the rules, I should have put this to a voice vote.

Because I did not do that, it is my fault. I, as the Speaker, made this error. What I am going to do now, with the permission of the House, is do it again. I invite hon. members to take it from there. I will deal with this the way it should have been dealt with.

The hon. member has sought unanimous consent to put the motion. Is that correct?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I believe you have gone back too far, if I may suggest that, because unanimous consent to put the

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motion was already given by the House. The part which you have to go back to is the moving of the motion itself. That is where we were at. That was where the error occurred.

**The Speaker:** I did have unanimous consent to put the motion. I am proceeding from that point.

Now I am going to ask the House is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

• (1025)

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1035)

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

*(Division No. 26)***YEAS**

## Members

Adams	Anders
Bailey	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Blaikie	Borotsik
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Catterall	Chatters
Comuzzi	Desjarlais
Dockrill	Easter
Elley	Epp
Harvey	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary—Sud-Est)	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Konrad
Lill	Lowther
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Malhi
Matthews	McNally
Morrison	Myers
Pickard (Kent—Essex)	Proctor
Ritz	Stinson
Stoffer	Thompson (Wild Rose)
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams—40

**NAYS**

## Members

\*Nil/aucun

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

\*Nil/aucun

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

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder about the process here. We were forced into a situation where we had to hold a standing vote, yet it carried unanimously.

I wonder what precedent has been set today because of the Bloc.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** With respect, the Chair does not believe that is a point of order.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order or similar point of order. Obviously there is nothing uncommon about having a unanimous standing vote. It has happened a number of times.

My point is that, as happy as I and my colleagues are to support the motion of congratulations to the Queen and Prince Phillip on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, the House to some degree was asked to believe there had been some prior agreement that this would happen at this time.

• (1040)

That simply was not so. There had been some mention that something like this might happen, but there certainly had been no agreement.

Had agreement been sought it would have been given by the NDP, but to suggest that somehow there had been some kind of agreement and that therefore anybody is in breach of some agreement is simply not the case. I think it reflects an unfortunate willingness to play politics with something that we should not play politics with.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member's intervention has been noted. The House needs to deal with that which takes place in the House when it takes place. The matter has been dealt with, in the opinion of the Chair.

We will now proceed to orders of the day.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT**

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee; and of Motion No. 1.

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 1 moved by my colleague from Yorkton—Melville. I originally had not intended to intervene in the debate at this point, but after listening

yesterday to the debate in the House and to some of the comments on the government side I was motivated to take part in the debate.

I can speak to the issue before us, the Canadian Wheat Board bill, with some authority, being the third generation in my family to be involved in the farming profession. My family held a wheat board permit probably since the creation of the Canadian Wheat Board and certainly since the creation of the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board.

That is an important consideration to note as we take part in the debate because of some of the interventions made by the other side, in particular by the member for Hamilton—Wentworth yesterday, on the credibility and the willingness of members on both sides to speak.

I would like it understood that my constituents and I support the concept of single desk selling for prairie grain farmers. Producers in my constituency feel strongly about that and would wish to support it.

Producers in my constituency are simply asking for fairness and equality with grain producers in others parts of Canada. They are asking for transparency and accountability on the part of the board and an end to the secrecy and the closed situation we have now.

Both the interests of my producers in preserving a single desk selling agency and their desire for transparency and accountability could be achieved if the government had chosen to go that route. We could preserve the Canadian Wheat Board and provide farmers with choices.

If the Canadian Wheat Board were acting in the best interests of producers, producers would use the Canadian Wheat Board. The problem is that we are setting up a situation that will inevitably destroy the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers will continue to fight for choices and options. Eventually it will mean the destruction of the wheat board and the loss of the concept of the single desk selling agency. That would be a real change.

• (1045)

We heard a lot of discussion in the debate yesterday about who the Canadian Wheat Board currently works for and who it will work for under this bill if it goes forward. It is pretty obvious to all of us grain producers that the Canadian Wheat Board as far back as World War II was not working in the best interest of farmers and some of my colleagues raised that point.

In our contribution to the war effort in western Canada, we probably contributed more through the loss of revenue on grain sales than what the national energy program drew out of western Canada. There was a tremendous loss in revenue to the western Canadian producer. Yet there does not seem to have been any recognition of that and certainly no recognition here.

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There are all kinds of other instances where the Canadian Wheat Board has been used as a foreign policy tool and even a domestic internal policy tool, much to the detriment of the Canadian producer.

I would also like to respond to the comments made by the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth yesterday who took great grievance because of his impression that somebody over here said that he had no right to speak on this issue. As a member of this House, he certainly had every right to speak on this issue, but the question has to be about the credibility of those who are speaking on the issue.

The parliamentary secretary to the agriculture minister is a potato farmer from Prince Edward Island who judiciously guards his right to make choices in the marketing—

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The member for Athabasca seems to be referring to me. I am Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I am a beef and grain producer from Prince Edward Island.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Chair and the House stands corrected.

**Mr. David Chatters:** My apologies for that error, Mr. Speaker.

However, I feel quite confident that the member protects his right vigorously to make choices in the way he markets his products. Therefore, I think he lacks some credibility when he tries to impose on western farmers something that he does not wish to have imposed upon himself.

**Some hon. members:** That's right.

**An hon. member:** A double standard.

**Mr. David Chatters:** Of course, if we keep going in that same direction, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, I believe from the province of Newfoundland, I doubt has ever sold a bushel of wheat in his life as well.

The minister of agriculture, engaged in the profession of agriculture, enjoys a wheat board fully elected and fully accountable, yet he wishes to impose something different on the farmers of western Canada.

I think it is a question of credibility of those who speak and what they are trying to impose on others that they would not impose on themselves. I think that is an important point to make.

The Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, being from the prairies at least gives him some credibility, but I would question whether the minister has ever sold a bushel of wheat in his life.

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I have to perhaps forgive the government a little bit there because truly Liberals on the Canadian prairies are becoming as scarce as prairie chickens on the prairies these days. I have to understand the limited choice the government had when they chose.

I also want to respond to the comments by the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth about the preamble not being important. As one of my colleagues pointed out, the courts have long been famous for using the preamble to determine the intention of the legislation when they are drafting the bill. I do not think there is anywhere where that is more apparent than in the courts and the rewriting of the Canadian human rights bill.

Certainly an effort to clarify the intention of the legislatures in the preamble would be taken into consideration and it is an extremely important point and not to be ignored. Our intention is not smoke and mirrors. It is certainly honourable.

• (1050)

I have to also question the effort by the government through this bill to protect from legal action the officers of the Canadian Wheat Board and the secrecy, the lack of accountability through access to information or the auditor general. I think this effort to protect the officers of the board in good measure is a result of the actions of my colleague from Portage—Lisgar in his efforts to bring some accountability and transparency to the board. I do not think that there is really support for those kinds of actions.

Because of the lack of time, I simply say in conclusion that, in all sincerity, we are not asking for anything in this Wheat Board Act that producers in the rest of Canada do not have already. In the interest of fairness, I think it would be reasonable to provide some accountability, some transparency to a board that works for the farmers.

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Kent—Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find very interesting the position that the Reform Party has taken over whether an elected person from this House can speak about the western grain situation. I wonder if they would take the very same position if we talked about the auto pact, that no one from the west should be able to speak about the auto pact or no one from the west should be able to talk about other factors that affect this nation.

There is absolutely no question that Ontario produces a tremendous amount of grain. In my riding I would suggest to you that that grain is produced and the certificates from that grain have to be confirmed by the Canadian Wheat Board. The Canadian Wheat Board, without question, has a tremendous effect on the grain farmers in Ontario.

The new law now before Parliament is based on many months of consultation with farmers, including public hearings across the

prairies. This proposed legislation embodies the biggest changes in western grain marketing in a half century. Throughout its history, the Canadian Wheat Board has been governed by a small group of commissioners appointed by the government and legally responsible only to the government. But in today's dynamic change in this marketplace the producers will have a clear voice in what will be happening. The producers will be accountable and the sales will be accountable to the producers.

Under the new law, it is the first time the Canadian Wheat Board will be run by a board of directors. There will be 15 directors in total and two-thirds of them, 10 of the 15 directors, will be directly elected by prairie farmers. They will take office at the earliest possible date in 1998 once the new law is passed by Parliament.

All the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board will be in the hands of the directors and because two-thirds of them will be elected, they will be directly accountable to producers for how they manage the Canadian Wheat Board's business.

In addition to the power to run the affairs of the Canadian Wheat Board, the directors will have specific authority to select their own chairperson; to set the salaries of directors, the chairperson and president; to review the performance of the president and to recommend his or her dismissal, if necessary.

To ensure farmers are getting value for their money, the directors will be legally entitled to have full disclosure of all facts and figures by the Canadian Wheat Board operations, including all financial audited statements. The directors will be able to examine the prices at which grain is sold, the price premiums achieved, all operating costs, and whether the wheat board is truly efficient.

Through these elected directors the Canadian Wheat Board will gain practical expertise in the real producers. If the directors are not satisfied with how the Canadian Wheat Board deals with the farmers or its sales strategy or the way it does business, they can make the necessary changes.

• (1055)

The new law will require the directors and officers of the Canadian Wheat Board to act honestly and in good faith, exercising all reasonable care and diligence. If they fail their duty, they will be exposed and have legal consequences.

Despite the structural changes, the Government of Canada will continue to provide the Canadian Wheat Board with financial guarantees. They will cover not only the initial payments set at the beginning of each pooling period and the Canadian Wheat Board's credit sales program but also all of the general borrowings. Since the Canadian Wheat Board is a multibillion dollar enterprise, the amount outstanding under these guarantees is very large.



For this reason, there is continuing need for the government to have a window on the Canadian Wheat Board in addition to the new accountability directly to farmers.

Such a window is also necessary because the Canadian exporter of wheat and barley, whether on the prairies or elsewhere, requires a Canadian Wheat Board export permit. This safeguarding of public interest will be achieved by the government appointing a minority of directors, five in total.

All of the directors, whether elected, the ten or five who are appointed, will have the same powers, duties and functions. The farmers will hold two thirds of that majority. The new law will put farmers in the driver's seat when it comes to any future changes in the Canadian Wheat Board.

If farmers want to remove some type of grain from the Canadian Wheat Board's current single desk system, that can be done subject to three conditions. The directors must make it a recommendation, the Canadian Grain Commission must approve an identity preservation system to protect the quality standards and, if proposed exclusion is significant to all the farmers, the farmers must vote for that approval.

If farmers want to add votes, rye, flax, canola to the Canadian Wheat Board's existing mandate, that too can be done subject to three conditions. The farm organization that represents the producers of that commodity must make a written request, the Canadian Wheat Board's directors must recommend it and there must be a vote among the farmers to approve it.

These new provisions are balanced and fair in both ways for either exclusions or inclusions. In either case, the authority is where it belongs, in the hands of themselves.

The Canadian Wheat Board is going to be more flexible. It will give to farmers more options in how they are paid and how their grain is moved through the system. It will make cash purchases of wheat and barley, increase initial payments quickly whenever market conditions warrant, close and pay out pool accounts at any time, provide an early pool and cash out option, fully use modern risk management tools, issue negotiable producer certificates, offset producers' grain storage and/or carrying costs, facilitate deliveries on condos' storage systems and receive grain through on-farm mobile elevators.

The Canadian Wheat Board is a very effective marketer of Canadian grain. It has the support of the majority of western farmers. They want realistic and sensible Canadian Wheat Board changes but they do not want a scenario that would lead inevitably to the board's destruction.

Just how valuable overall has the scheme of things been? It sells some \$5 billion of grain per year at marketing costs of a few pennies per bushel. It retains no profit margin. All the rest goes to

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farmers. It is one of Canada's most significant business enterprises, doing business in more than 70 countries around the world.

It is our fifth largest exporter and our largest net earner for foreign exchange. It has earned, for itself and Canada, a positive reputation in the eyes of global customers. It is very important to the Canadian economy.

The board targets to extract maximum premiums but very important, the quality, cleanliness and consistency and our technical support are long-term, dependable, for the customer, the consumer from which we sell grain.

The Canadian Wheat Board has been rated as number one in the world.

• (1100 )

These characteristics, coupled with the size of the board, its global reach and the market clout, result in Canada having roughly 20% of the share of the world market. The Government of Canada believes that it is worth preserving.

I am very pleased with the principles put forth in the bill. I am certain it will enhance our grain sales in the future.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe I am entitled to have the member table the grain certificates to which he referred in his speech. Those certificates apply to the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and all other provinces that are not prairie provinces which have the right, without charge, to export their grains.

I wonder if he could table them so that the House could see how unfair the certificates are. Those provinces can export their grain with these certificates but the other three provinces cannot. I believe the hon. member should table them immediately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Chair will consult with the table officers.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to this point of order, the hon. member was not talking about the specific certificates. He was talking about the fact that the Canadian Wheat Board has to authorize those export certificates for other areas.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In the opinion of the Chair this is a point of debate, but the Chair will invite the hon. member for Kent—Essex, if he has the papers and wishes to table them, to do so.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not even know where to start. I am just amazed to hear all these things coming from across the way about the great consultation process that went on. We all know that the panel went across the prairie provinces and talked to prairie farmers, but the recommendations

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that were given to the panel are not being implemented in the bill. It does not even come close.

Everyone in the House should have the opportunity to speak. Nobody would deny that. Many MPs from the Toronto region will definitely support the government because they have been told that is what they have to do in this free country led by that outfit.

I invite those Toronto MPs to come to Wild Rose to visit little communities in my area and to talk to farmers. We should let farmers convince these people how they should vote rather than being told how to vote. We know that will happen. We know it will be difficult to defeat a poor piece of legislation such as this one because of the rules of the Liberal Party, the governing body.

Those ladies and gentlemen should come out to talk to the farmers. In every poll we have done in Wild Rose 80% to 90% of the people want dual marketing. They like to go out there to meet with the elite but they do not know anything about farmers. They should try it some time.

Mr. Speaker, I bet you were a businessman before you came to the House. I would bet on that. I bet you were a producer of goods of some sort or that you provided a service. I bet you did your best to maximize profits in your business. If you did not then you were doing a poor job.

Every manufacturing company or producer in the country tries to find the best place to make the best buck and get the best value for their product. That is good common sense.

• (1105)

Why is it that one segment in one region of the country that is not allowed to do that? What kind of situation is that? Let us take a look at it a little further. Some people in some of these regions—

**Some hon. members:** Stick around.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** All of sudden there are no Liberals in the House at all. That is too bad.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** With respect, all hon. members are aware that we do not refer to the presence or absence of other hon. members at any specific time.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the appropriate thing would be to call for a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** We have a quorum call.

*And the count having been taken:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There is quorum.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, too bad all members of the House are not listening carefully to the debate that is going on here before casting their votes. Instead they are waiting for the whip of a certain party to pull their strings so the little puppets can jump up and vote the way they are told, the way they have done in the House for ages. It is too bad that happens.

I was talking about maximizing profits, which is what the preamble is all about. It is only common sense. Anybody with the brain of a fish could say that makes sense.

I went to two court trials in Brandon, Manitoba, and spent some time watching the proceedings. Individuals were brought before the court for having illegally sold their grain across the border without wheat board permits and were charged. They actually broke the law; nobody is denying that. Their purpose for selling grain across the border was not as a protest against any board or any particular legislation. They were trying to maximize their profits.

In many cases the people who were doing this all across the border were trying to maximize their profits. They found themselves in the situation that if they did not get the best prices for their goods their farms could go under. They could go broke. They were trying to provide for the livelihood of their families. They had worked all their lives and were saying they had to do something or they would go under. Nobody wants to go under. They made an effort by doing that, but the legislation stated that they could not.

One court case amazed me. An individual had broken into a farm residence, ransacked the property, killed three dogs, set fire to a tractor and stolen a pick-up truck. Later he was apprehended and convicted. He received a sentence of community service. The same day a farmer was brought in who had tried to maximize his profits by taking his crop across the border. He was taken away in shackles and chains.

Not only that. One farmer who had done it two or three times received a consecutive sentence. I have been screaming at the government for ages about consecutive sentences. Clifford Olson should not be serving one life sentence; he should be serving eleven. We finally got a consecutive sentencing. We got it for a farmer who tried to maximize his profits by taking his crop across the border. That is the wisdom of the justice system.

It is terribly frustrating to look at farmers being hauled off in chains and shackles while a guy who destroys and steals thousands and thousands of dollars worth of property gets community service.

• (1110)

**An hon. member:** Shameful.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** It is absolutely ridiculous. All they are asking for in the region of Wild Rose is an opportunity to market

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their own product, the same opportunity for every individual producer or manufacturer of any kind in the whole country.

Why are they being targeted as the ones who cannot? They are asking for that opportunity. They are not asking to scrap the wheat board. They want to keep the wheat board as an option, as one of the choices they may make in marketing their goods. If they choose to do that, fine. If they choose not to, they should have the freedom to do so. That is common sense.

When I was a young fellow farming and raising crops I did not decide where we sold our grain. My dad did. He shopped around. Although it was in a different country, we would load the truck and he would instruct me on where to deliver the grain. He had made some phone calls and had chosen the place where he would deliver his grain. Guess why he chose the place? It was because he was maximizing his profits. It was the best price.

I would drive to that place. Provided it passed a required test to pay the price I would deliver the grain. If the test was not quite as good as they wanted it, I would go to another place that would take the grain, maybe at a lower price. We had choices all over.

What those people did after they bought the grain, whether they exported it to China, to Japan or to Russia, we did not know. We had the choice on how to maximize our profits. That was fairly nice. We did not have a body of people accountable to no one to tell us what we should do with our grain. We did not have to get something signed by a group of wheat board individuals about whose expertise we were not too certain.

The government is asking farmers in the western prairies to continue the same process. Bill C-4 does not change anything. Even the agricultural minister from Alberta writes that it was extremely disappointing to discover the changes served only to continue government control of grain marketing, that no other industry or no other individual was being treated in this unique manner, and that in many respects it was something requiring close scrutiny before passage of the proposed legislation.

The minister of agriculture in Alberta pointed out a number of things in his letter that were wrong with the legislation. Much of it applied simply to the fact that they lived in a free country. When will they start giving people the freedom they ought to have to do with their product as they see fit?

They are the ones that sweat hard. They are the ones who put the seed in the ground. They are the ones who try to chase the hail clouds away. They do not even know if they will get a grain crop into the bin, but when they get there they should be allowed to own it and to choose how to market it. It is their crop.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak on this topic, the most

important topic in my entire constituency. Interest in the bill is growing and growing and growing every week.

I wish to alert members to a statement once made by Edmund Burke. He said that the people never give up their liberties except under some delusions. Ever since the wheat board began it presented a delusion to many western Canadian farmers.

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville emphasized the use of the word maximizing. If the returns to the farmers of western Canada are to be maximized, it involves another component, transportation. We will talk about that later.

I want to read to the House a statement made by a lawyer employed by the Canadian Wheat Board. This was before the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

• (1115)

I want to note carefully what he had to say: “To dispose of grain in the best interest of the federal government the wheat board has no obligation to obtain the best prices for the farmers”. That is what a lawyer for the Canadian Wheat Board had to say. You come west and try to sell the Canadian Wheat Board with statements like that.

Less than three months ago we had a major dumping of Canadian grain into the Iranian market at \$15 a tonne less than the world price. We only found out about that just a few days ago. When the wheat board tells you that it has no obligation to maximize the return to the prairie farmers, that they exist only for the benefit for the government, at least it is speaking the truth.

The wheat board has its annual report out. I would like to read a few statements from that annual report. Historically the Canadian Wheat Board at numerous times has not marketed grain to ensure the maximum return to the farmers. Now hear what it had to say: “All proceeds from sales, less Canadian Wheat Board marketing costs, are passed on to the farmers”. If it is operating totally on behalf of the farmers then they had better take a look at what they are trying to do in Bill C-4. If the farmer is smart enough to grow the grain, he is smart enough to market the grain. This is phoney thing between five members, ten members, do not go out west and say that you democratized the wheat board. They will laugh right in your face. We all know what is going to happen.

A few years ago we had two very learned people who did a lot of work on this. I would like to read what they had to say: “Until World War II the Canadian Wheat Board was a government owned agency with a mandate to operate in the best interests of the producers”. That is before World War II. The next point is: “The role, structure and powers of the Canadian Wheat Board changed drastically during the war. It became the federal government’s chief means of controlling wheat prices”.

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The wheat board is in a position and it is attempting to control prices, not to do what my hon. member has in this amendment, maximize the prices. It has not been the responsibility—and we have enough evidence that it has not always sought out to operate in the best interests.

Let me read again from this report: “Its main aim was to limit grain price increases so as to safeguard the government’s wage and price controls”. Who paid that price? The farmers paid that price and they paid heavily for that.

Point three: “When world market conditions began to push up wheat prices in 1943 the government granted the Canadian Wheat Board its monopoly powers to enable it to impose strict controls over grain prices”. The Canadian Wheat Board is doing exactly the same thing today.

This report, which came from two eminent scholars, said further: “The Canadian Wheat Board was the government’s instrument of choice in the immediate post-war period to control wheat prices—into a peacetime market economy”.

Finally, it says that both Liberal and the Conservative governments extended the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly because they viewed wheat as a national strategy measure. Only wheat was used in this way both the Liberal government and the Conservative government. They used the wheat of the hardworking prairie farmers to the benefit not of the prairie farmers. That was not utmost in their minds.

• (1120)

I look at the dumping practices of the wheat board today and it is not accountable and it does not know where the grain is going. The farmer, like the hon. member, at least knew where the grain was going. We do not know where it is going. It dumps wheat on to a foreign market where there is no competition and sells it for less money. That is a terrible shame, and it exists today.

I want to draw attention also to the control of the grain industry by the government. We read that lawyers have said that the first responsibility of the Canadian Wheat Board is to the government and the producers are secondary. We out west are tired of that attitude. We are fed up.

Let me read: “Control of the grain trade by a government agency was consistent with the aims of those Canadian bureaucrats who were dictated to introducing the principles of Keynesian economics into the regulation of the Canadian marketplace”.

I know what the hon. member said. I know that people are saying that the act was made in Ottawa and therefore it must be good. Do not be fooled. They never adopted one single principle of the strategy committee that came before them. Not one principle is embedded in this new act. They predetermined what the act was

going to be. They went through the phoney stage of talking to people. The bill is before us now without one single recommendation from the advisory board.

I say that this Canadian Wheat Board bill that we have today is going to do one thing for sure if it is passed. The number of people opposed to the monopoly of the grain market industry, the number of producers, is going to drop, drop, drop until we reach a real revolution on the prairies because of the government’s monopoly in this bill.

I wish everybody opposite would come out to the prairies, talk to the people. It is a crying shame that an industry that brings billions and billions of dollars into this country cannot even control itself. The big bad government controls it.

It is a terrible shame. I beg them to read the bill and not to support it.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, some people will try to say that because this is just the preamble of the bill that they are seeking to amend that it is not important and it is not necessary.

I would like to argue that point very vigorously. This is a very necessary amendment. For the record I would just like to read what I consider to be the most important portion of this amendment:

Whereas such an organization will have a very significant effect on the producers of grain and must therefore have the securing of the best financial return to them as its object and first priority and must be accountable to them for its performance.

In other words, this amendment places fiduciary responsibility on the board to act in the best interests of farmers. About six weeks ago—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Excuse me. We do not seem to be getting the French translation. Could we confirm that we are getting the French translation, please.

Perhaps if the member resumes we can try it again.

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know at what point the translators may have been cut off. I will backtrack just a bit. I read the portion of the amendment which I feel is most important and I stated that I feel this is extremely important because it places fiduciary responsibility on the board to act in the best interests of farmers.

• (1125)

About six weeks ago a three-justice panel of the Manitoba Court of Appeal ruled that the Canadian Wheat Board has no fiduciary duty to make the best possible deals on farmers’ behalf or even to treat them equally and with fairness. The board’s only legal obligation, according to this panel, is not to farmers but to Ottawa. This is supposed to be our board, but it has no obligation to serve us.

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Anything which can be added to this bill, even if it is only in the preamble, is bound to be an improvement. The fascinating thing about Bill C-4 is that it is equally repugnant to organizations as diverse in their outlook as the National Farmers Union and the Western Canadian Wheat Growers.

I have been polling my constituents specifically on this bill to determine how the majority of them would wish me to vote on their behalf. Thanks to the brilliance of this government we now have no postal service. With no postal service I cannot complete my poll to find out how the people in my constituency would like me to vote on this bill.

However, I have done other polling on the Canadian Wheat Board with my constituents. I have also done formal scientific polling by telephone through a professional polling organization. I have a pretty good handle on how they feel.

It is regrettable that the government, with all of its grunting about going back to the people to find out what they are thinking, does not do a little more of this type of work. When it does have its road shows and it goes about to get the opinion of people on the issues of the day it is too bad it does not pay attention to the results it gets.

We have had these visitations, and I use the word advisedly, of people from Ottawa who say "We are from government, we are here to help you, we want to know what you think. Now that we know what you think, get lost". That is the Ottawa way.

Bud the Spud over there would have us always believe that these are the people with our interests at heart. They know what is best for us poor, benighted, agricultural drones of western Canada. We do not know what is good for us but, man, Ottawa sure can show us the way.

I have polled my constituents and, to my surprise, I discovered that on one commodity, that commodity being wheat, they want in my riding to retain single desk selling. However, for barley they want dual marketing.

They did not get a chance, when the government had its famous plebiscite last January and February, to vote on that option. They got a chance to say "are we doing to have barley all onboard or all off board?" In or out. Take it or leave it. What the farmers actually would have liked was not on the ballot.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** You listen up over there, you one Liberal.

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** I wish the hon. member for Wild Rose would quit heckling. He is throwing me off.

I know how my constituents stand on that particular issue, but I do not know how they are going to come out on Bill C-4 because there is nothing in Bill C-4 which directly relates to whether or not we retain single desk marketing. It is just a hodgepodge. It is a

bunch of bandaids applied to the wrists, elbows, ears and whatever other part of the poor western farmer has been damaged by Ottawa. There is nothing substantive—

• (1130 )

**Mr. Wayne Easter:** The most changes in its history.

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** I hear a voice in the wilderness telling me that there have been substantive changes. I suppose that the reference will be to this remarkable new elected board, a board which will be ruled in effect by appointees from Ottawa who will tell them what to do, when to do it and how to do it. With 10 elected members, the government need only get three of those ten to agree with their appointed hacks and they will have the majority. This is democracy?

The CEO is a government appointee. Give me a break. This is not democracy. This is pseudo-democracy. This is a Soviet type of democracy, if I may use the term loosely.

This brings me to the point that we do not have questions and comments at report stage. I did want to make a comment to the hon. member for Wild Rose when he was expressing surprise at the discrepancy in sentencing of people who committed serious criminal offences and those who broke the wheat board regulations.

I would suggest to him that he should read a very excellent book entitled *The Gulag Archipelago* in which it is spelled out very clearly that in the prison system in the Soviet Union the people who were most severely dealt with were those who had committed political crimes. Ordinary criminals who merely robbed, raped, or killed people were treated relatively leniently even in the camps. However, it was the political criminals who were nailed to the wall. I think the hon. member should take that into consideration. It is very easy to explain if one stops and thinks about it.

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we in the New Democratic Party caucus support the preamble in Bill C-4 and, quite frankly, do not understand why the government is so opposed.

There is no question that the agriculture sector is an integral part of the Canadian economy. There should be no question that we need an organization that will work to secure the best financial return for all producers.

Grain producers in Canada recognize the value of marketing their product through one body. They recognize the value of working together and having a system that gives small and large producers opportunities and viability.

Producers have survived tough economic times because of the wheat board. I believe that the Canadian Wheat Board has the support of the majority of producers and there are very few who have not supported the wheat board.

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I and my caucus will continue to encourage changes that will see the board fully elected by producers as well as the chair and CEO appointed by the board. I urge the government to work in that direction.

I am not going to go on and on without having anything worthwhile to say. However, I do want to mention that for the sticks and stones throwing between potato producers, grain producers and someone else, I think it is extremely important that we work to unite this country and to understand the different areas of the country, whether it be the east, the middle east or the west.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I was under the mistaken impression growing up that this was a free country. I listened to what the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands was saying about the *Gulag Archipelago* and the treatment of Soviet citizens who dared to challenge the government. That was their crime. It was not that they challenged another member of society. It was not that they committed serious criminal acts but that they dared to challenge the government and paid the price.

That is why we see the disparity of treatment in this country. When anybody dares to challenge the government by directly defying what the government has ordered shall be, they will pay a very severe price indeed. I started out by saying that I thought this was a free country. As I grew older, I began to recognize that we actually live in a police state, and we do. We have environment police, we have tax police, we have land police, we have regulatory police. We even have in this country egg police and milk police.

• (1135)

Can you imagine the serious circumstances of the Canadian people if by God we did not control the production of eggs and we did not control the production of milk, butter and cream? What a threat to our national security that would be.

The only thing that we do not have is pork police. We should have because we know about all the pork that goes on on the other side.

As a person who lives on the west coast of British Columbia, and there is virtually no grain farming taking place in the riding I represent, I come to Ottawa and I get to understand the grain issue a little more. I find out that we have grain police and we have a country where a man or a family on their own piece of land, which they own and have bought and paid for, grows a crop, reaps that crop and sells it where the government tells them they are not allowed to sell it. What does the government do? As my hon. colleague said, it takes them away in shackles and chains, fines them tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars, confiscates their equipment and just about drives them out of business.

This is not marijuana or heroin or cocaine. We are talking about grain. What does the government do? It takes the people and treats them like that.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that you can get away with this kind of treatment of your citizens for a time. The Liberal Party members are the ones who dreamed up the egg police, the milk police and the grain police. They want the government to control all aspects of our lives. There are also the gun police—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** On a point of order, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that it was not the Liberal Party. It was a request from the producers themselves calling for national products marketing agencies and these requests were abided by in terms of living up to the wishes—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Chair thanks the hon. member for that point of clarification. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Skeena.

**Mr. Mike Scott:** Mr. Speaker, all I have to do is remember people like Eugene Whelan when I think about the kind of Liberal approach to managing and controlling all aspects of our economy and the kind of marketing boards that were set up by the Liberals in the sixties and the seventies. We all remember the trainload of rotten eggs.

To conclude my remarks, we live in what is ostensibly a free country, but we continue to encroach on the freedoms and the rights of citizens by such things as the grain police. Members opposite might think that this is humorous but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there will be a day of reckoning for treating people like this. There is going to be a time when this is no longer tolerated. I cannot say how that will come about. I cannot say when it will come about. But I can say that you cannot treat your citizens like this on an ongoing basis without serious repercussions.

I would ask hon. members in this House today who are going to be voting on this bill to consider the ramifications. This is an issue that is very important to many people in the prairie provinces in western Canada and we cannot treat them like this. We cannot expect them to continue to live in a civil society on these kinds of terms and conditions.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and thank the House for its indulgence.

• (1140)

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand in this House and bring the concerns of the farmers of Dauphin—Swan River. As you know, my riding is

very agricultural-based. There are farmers right through it, from one end to the other.

During my short break at home I heard many concerns about the new bill, about the attempted change to the Canadian Wheat Board. I must say that the majority of the farmers in my constituency support the Canadian Wheat Board, but they want real change. They want change that is going to impact the farmers' lives.

One comment that has been raised continuously is: Why is it that we, the producers of the crops, have no control on how it is marketed, no control on the price, no control on the transportation to market? I really have no way of responding to these types of questions because the Canadian Wheat Board is a very big monopoly that basically dictates. It is very paternalistic in its approach.

Farmers in Dauphin—Swan River are asking for a real change that will bring about real democracy. The purpose of the Canadian Wheat Board should be for the benefit of the grower and the producer, not the people who live in Ottawa who sit in this House.

Another concern that is raised continuously in my riding is the question: Why are farmers that are trying to market their product across the border treated like criminals?

As you know, in this country we really do not have a justice system, not the way the courts operate. These farmers are treated in the worst way, worse even than criminals, by far. That is a question that is continuously raised. These people probably did break the law as it exists today in transporting their products to market, but we need justice in this country. We have to treat them in a fair and equal way.

As my colleague indicated previously, that is the political crime that they have committed by doing this. Anyway, the people of Dauphin—Swan River feel that this is not fair. It is not fair to treat people in this manner.

The third concern is about the Canadian Wheat Board and the control of the direction of the full grain and how they market the grain and how they transport it out of this country. As you know, the port of Churchill with the amendment to the Marine Act is becoming part of the private sector and also, with the privatization of CN, it is going to be a big plus for the province of Manitoba in terms of exporting grain.

Considering that the port of Churchill was built in the thirties, someone at the federal level had a vision for the farmers of western Canada back in 1930. We have lost that vision over the last 60 years. That port is totally underutilized.

The big advantage of using the port of Churchill as I have vented in this House is that it is 6,800 kilometres shorter to European markets than it is from the Thunder Bay port. Yet, over the last 60 years this port has been totally neglected. In fact this year the Canadian Wheat Board has shipped, I believe, less than 400,000 tons through the port of Churchill.

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Therefore, on behalf of the farmers, the wheat board has to increase the amount of grain that it ships out of this country. It is high time that the grain started moving north and south instead of east and west at a cost to the farmer.

Shipping grain through the port of Churchill will save the farmer of western Canada \$20 per ton and that \$20 will go in the pockets of the farmers, which will in effect improve the local economy and in effect will increase what goes into the pockets of Ottawa as well.

There is no doubt that the Canadian Wheat Board has been a good thing in the past.

• (1145)

I mean in the past because I am reminded by older farmers who went through the tough times of the 1930s and the pre-war period that the wheat board was there for their protection. Today we live in the 1990s.

This is the age where governments talk about entrepreneurship, Internet technology, the shrinking global economy. There is no doubt that there are many farmers out there who can ship their own products much more effectively and efficiently than a monopoly.

I am not saying that the government should not be marketing the product but I believe the farmers in Dauphin—Swan River want that option. They want an option to market their product on their own.

It is all about accountability. The constituents of Dauphin—Swan River are looking for accountability with the new Canadian Wheat Board accountable to the farmers and not to the politicians in Ottawa. They want accountability through the organization's being more transparent and they also want more options.

The final analysis is that they want the Canadian Wheat Board to work on behalf of the farmers and not on behalf of big business and government.

**Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a western Canadian farmer certainly concerned with the future of our grain industry.

The quality of life on western Canadian farms is definitely tied to the power of this unaccountable wheat board. There is a growing dissension with the market status quo on the prairies today.

If the minister were to hold meetings in the west, he would find the people attending would most certainly have different things to say. Our input costs are rising. The end of the Crow drastically increased our transportation costs. Canadian Wheat Board grains are backlogged and plugging the system.

As a result, farm returns are now non-existent. As a result of wheat board policies, we also find that we are not allowed to bring

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our feed grains and so on into different marketplaces. Interprovincial trade and access to these markets is not there for us.

The hon. member from Manitoba talked about using the port of Churchill. That may also give us cheaper access into the maritimes with our feed grains for their poultry and hog industries. Those types of things are not done now under our wheat board system.

There are many sections and subsections of Bill C-4 that farmers in my riding on both sides of this issue agree are fundamentally wrong, mainly the continuation of the unaccountability to producers of their board.

The cash purchase clause that they are trying to put in through Bill C-4 circumvents the final payment values derived through the pooling system that we have now. The board, as it is shown in Bill C-4, would consist of 15 directors, 10 elected and placed at the discretion of the minister. That is a major point. Four are then appointed by the minister to sit on this board and the president or CEO is appointed on the recommendation of the minister.

All these people are there at the discretion of the minister and can be removed at any time should they go against the minister.

The Canadian Wheat Board also may indemnify from, in layman's terms remove, any legal liability or responsibility for the actions of its employees. This section goes on to say that this also covers the employees' heirs and legal representatives and would cover all costs, charges and expenses included in amounts paid to settle or satisfy a judgment. No one is accountable. This clause certainly protects the board over the producers it serves.

The Canadian Wheat Board annual operations plan will be submitted to the minister and will require his approval before it can be implemented. This certainly would seem to circumvent the elected portion of this board.

For the record I certainly do not oppose the Canadian Wheat Board concept in principle. However, when I see the entrenched lack of accountability of the board in this bill, my constituents, through me, can do nothing but oppose it until it can be amended for a positive impact on the depressed industry we see in western Canada.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board. I wish it were to be some real amendments because I think the Canadian Wheat Board is mired in the last century and has yet to come into this century and we are just about to go into the next one.

• (1150)

I hoped this organization would have wanted to bring itself up to date and that the minister would have wanted to bring the organiza-

tion up to date to address the global marketplace in which we now live.

My interpretation of this bill is that it is just a reiteration of where the board stands. The bill maintains the board with arm's length monopoly powers when many farmers wish the board could be opened up. We do live in a free society, and I emphasize that. But for some reason this government wants to maintain that every farmer in the three provinces of the prairies shall sell his grain to the board with no alternative opportunities. Yet farmers in Ontario can operate differently. And I thought it was a free country.

I find it rather strange that we would say you have only one buyer and no other buyer for your grain when there are people around the world who would like to participate and purchase our grain. There are buyers in the United States we know would like to buy our grain, but we have to give it to the wheat board.

That is a travesty and an insult to the farmers on the prairies who are part of the great bread basket of the world, who have worked hard to produce a wonderful environment and a way of life that sometimes involves struggle. And the wheat board sits there with more and more powers and makes some noise about trying to get itself modernized, but when we take a look at the intent of the legislation nothing has happened. The minister knows it but the minister will not say it. All he wants to do is to entrench that little monopoly.

If monopoly is not bad enough, we have to add secrecy on top of that. The auditor general is not allowed to look into the workings of the wheat board. The legislation prevents him from doing that. Access to information that allows anybody access to government documentation allows us to ask questions about government but we cannot ask questions about the wheat board. The law says that we cannot ask questions about the wheat board and have them answered because we are specifically denied access to the Canadian Wheat Board and what is going on there. Yet it is a monopoly that is protected by the government.

The Canadian Wheat Board does not report to Parliament. It does produce an annual report but it does not report to Parliament. It cannot be investigated by the auditor general. An individual cannot ask questions through access to information. It is a complete and absolute closed door shop and we as parliamentarians and as Canadians have no idea what is going on in that organization but we are being asked to endorse the status quo. Surely we as parliamentarians have the right to know what is going on in that organization.

This perfunctory thing that we are going to have a few elected members on the board I do not think will change very much because those members' hands will be tied. The minister will have a majority on the board. It is fine for the minister to tell us that this will be great stuff since he will be opening it up for elections. But if



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they are a minority on the board, the minister can get what he wants. That is how he can maintain his ironclad policy of no information about the board.

I think about the people who have stood up for democratic rights in Canada. We have seen people in China stand up for democratic rights who were sent off to jail. The whole world stood up and claimed it was an outrage that people who stand up for their rights in China should go to jail and be punished severely by the state. Yet we have farmers standing up for their rights in this country who are saying all they want is the right to sell what they produce to a buyer who is prepared to buy their produce. They have had to go to jail and what outrage have we seen from this government?

• (1155)

I have not even heard a murmur from the government as it applies the heavy arm of the law and drags these people off in chains and puts them in jail as they stand up for their rights in a democratic and free society to sell what they produce to a buyer who wants to buy their product. Is that so bad? Apparently so. Apparently it is bad because this government is not prepared to introduce legislation which is going to give them the opportunity to sell their produce in a free and open market.

NAFTA, the world trade organization and the GATT are all organizations to build opportunities for free trade where we can buy and sell our goods, our produce and our services across the country and around the world, but not the prairie farmers. Ontario farmers yes, farmers in other provinces yes, but not the prairie farmer when it comes to producing grain for human consumptions and grain for export.

It is ludicrous that any government should take this dictatorial attitude today. It is an offence and an affront to democracy and to all of Canadians that farmers would be locked into this type of situation.

I want to let the government know that I am upset because I believe in openness and accountability in government. I look at the bill, section 313, which deals with indemnification. This was a proposal being brought forward by the government. It says “the corporation shall indemnify present or former directors or officers who acted—against criminal charges”. I know that they have backed off a little on committing. Rather than “shall” indemnify, it is “may” indemnify. To me that is not a reversal. It just says if we feel that it is in our own interests we will indemnify these people against criminal actions if they act honestly and in good faith.

It even goes on to say “—in case of a criminal or administrative action or proceeding that is enforced by monetary penalty believed on reasonable grounds that the conduct was lawful”. Just as long as they think or stand up and say “I think my conduct is lawful” the board will indemnify them.

I have heard of lots of situations when people have been in court and have said “I thought I was on the right” and the court says “no, you were on the wrong”. They are left with a sentence and the cost of their own defence. But we now find that the government is going stand behind, if it so chooses, past and former people who have committed illegal acts, maybe with good intentions. Lots of people have found themselves on the wrong side of the law with good intentions. What is the phrase, the road to that place is paved with good intentions, and we may all get there but hopefully we don't. Let us hope we do not. Let us hope the government does not get there either.

I am really concerned about the wheat board and the fact that it is wrapped in a cloak of secrecy that is ironclad. We can get no information out of this organization. This government is doing nothing about it in a free and democratic society. People who want to do something today get dragged off to jail in irons. I emphasize in irons. I talked to several RCMP in my riding, one who had 20 years service on the force. He said there was only one occasion that he had to drag an offender off to jail in irons. He was a rather violent offender.

**An hon. member:** Did he get caned?

**Mr. John Williams:** I am not sure whether he got caned but he certainly got locked up in irons and presumably locked up elsewhere for a long time.

• (1200)

The point is that farmers from Saskatchewan and Manitoba were taken away in irons. These were non-violent people. We have seen all kinds of demonstrations on the west coast and elsewhere.

I hope the government takes these points very seriously and amends the legislation to make it a lot more tolerable than it is.

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the bill. It appears the government is trying to ram through a bill that will strengthen the dictatorial powers of the Canadian Wheat Board and will give it a tremendous amount of power to operate within a scope that is pleasing to it.

I am not from a prairie part of the country, but it has always been my assumption that the Canadian Wheat Board had a responsibility to operate in the best interest of prairie wheat farmers. If this is the case certainly the bill we are debating today does not do that. It gives the Canadian Wheat Board the power to operate in the best interest of itself and of its political influence in the House.

The government of the day is dominated by members from the province of Ontario and other provinces that are not involved with the Canadian Wheat Board. They have a lot of authority in the debate and will have the power of the vote by sheer numbers. The government is influenced by a part of the country that has no particular interest in the Canadian Wheat Board because it does not

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apply to the growing of grains in those other provinces. They will ram through a bill that will impose a detrimental effect on wheat farmers on the prairies and in the west.

I have some personal knowledge of the operation of the Canadian Wheat Board. I return for a moment to the fact that it should be assumed the purpose of the Canadian Wheat Board is to get the best possible price for grain products for prairie farmers.

If that is the case it would only seem logical the wheat board would be willing to sell products on behalf of farmers in a manner that would be in the best interest of farmers, which means whoever approaches with a proposition that would bring a good price for the product.

From second hand experience I know that over the last three years the Canadian Wheat Board was approached to supply large quantities of barley and grain at the top level of pricing for the day. These were to be cash deals. There was no government to government financing involved. It was cash on the barrel head.

The Canadian Wheat Board would not supply the product. It would not take the products it had in the elevators and sell it through this additional source of marketing for cash money at a higher than average price.

• (1205)

To make matters worse, I have absolute knowledge that the sales offered to the Canadian Wheat Board never went through any of the other sources of established marketing of the Canadian Wheat Board. They were lost to other countries that supplied the same product to customers willing to pay cash to the Canadian Wheat Board, if it would sell it, but it would not sell it.

They not only lost several cash deals. They not only lost finding another source of marketing for their product in addition to what they already had. They not only lost the opportunity to have a clean sale with no government financing required. They lost the sale, period. It never happened. The purchase went to another country.

I have been in business all my life, not in the grain business but in business. If those in the private sector have a product to sell, they want to sell it where they get the best price for it, the cleanest deal and the best benefit for their business. Certainly that is not the case with the Canadian Wheat Board. It cannot be the case with the Canadian Wheat Board based on the examples I have expressed today.

It begs a question. How on earth could a government, which happens to be the Liberal government of the day and the Tory government before it, support an organization like the Canadian

Wheat Board which has shown by example that it does not work in the best interest of prairie farmers?

I am happy to see there are Liberal members in the House today who have a direct interest in this matter and who have a responsibility.

**Some hon. members:** One Liberal.

**Mr. Dick Harris:** Oh, one Liberal. That shows just how much the Liberal government is interested in what the people of Canada have to say. We are truly representing the farmers from the prairie provinces over which the Canadian Wheat Board has jurisdiction. It shows how much the Liberal government cares about representation on this side of the House on this very important issue.

We are talking about the livelihood of western Canadian grain farmers. We are talking about the livelihood of families. We are talking about the buoyancy of the economy in the prairie provinces. Those farmers depend on good prices for their product. They depend on good markets for their product.

In huge numbers they would like to have the ability to grow agricultural products and sell them without having the government in their face every step of the way and so that they get maximum value for the fruits of their labour.

This has to do with rights. We are talking about the right of Canadian citizens to work hard, to toil long hours at their occupation, which in this case is farming, and to expect the harder they work the more they will be rewarded. Is that too much to ask?

Bill C-4 takes away that right. It gives the Canadian Wheat Board more power to say to prairie farmers that it does not care how hard they work. It does not care how big their farm loans are. It does not care how many kids they have to educate. It does not care how many mouths they have to feed.

• (1210)

The government will tell them how much money they can make from what they do for a living. That is what it is telling prairie farmers by way of the bill. That is simply unacceptable. I am embarrassed for the Liberal member in the House today, who is not from the prairie provinces incidentally. The member sits and represents the government on this line of thought. It takes away our right to succeed as a result of our hard work and labour.

The government has been famous for being in the faces of Canadians and holding them back from success and opportunity. This is simply one more example of that.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier there was a question from a member of the Reform

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Party directed to the member for Essex—Kent with reference to the export licence for wheat and barley. I have a copy of that export licence and I would like to table it.

While I am on my feet, in terms of transparency of records, I refer members opposite to the Canadian Wheat Board annual report which clearly shows the wheat board has obtained—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The hon. member wishes to deposit this paper.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are debating a matter of very grave importance to the people of western Canada. We are debating legislation over which people can go to jail.

For the last two hours there have never been more than two Liberal members in the House and that is shameful.

**Some hon. members:** Shame.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today on the report stage of Bill C-4, an Act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

The approach I took in examining this bill is that it concerns—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands is rising on a point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** Madam Speaker, we do not have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Ring the bells.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** We now have a quorum.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Madam Speaker, as I was saying before the call for a quorum, I am pleased to speak today on the report stage of the Act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

I approached this bill by asking myself what type of impact this kind of a bill would have on Quebec. Certainly, at this point western farmers are the main ones concerned, but I have analyzed the bill within this context: what sort of comments, suggestions, proposals for amendments would the farmers of Quebec have to make if the agricultural sector in Quebec were affected by this bill?

I was struck first of all by the dichotomy surrounding the necessity of organizing the wheat trade. In my region, no one denies the pertinence of this. However, there are significant elements missing between the desire to organize the wheat trade properly and what this bill contains.

The first thing is that the bill does not give sufficient power to farmers or board members, to those who make their living selling their wheat, to those who have to live with the effects of government policies in this area.

In this bill, could the government not have used the opportunity to make sure the farmers were given a voice, so that the reserve fund would truly be a management tool? We have experienced this in other areas where, because sufficient reserves were not made for hard times, the money is often taken from the consolidated revenue fund, and, when this is done, the people end up paying, even if they have nothing to do with this type of business.

The best example of that is what the Conservatives made us go through with unemployment insurance several years ago. There were no reserves, we had terrible deficits, and people who are contributing to employment insurance today are still paying for this lack of foresight.

We must avoid this type of situation in the area of the wheat sales. We could very well go through this type of experience again in the coming years because, we know from past experience that the wheat market can be very volatile. There can be some very good years and also some very bad years. Everything is linked to crop results in other countries and the buying power of other countries, to international politics. So there should have been a reserve fund ensuring solid management to balance variations between good years and bad years, and there is nothing on this in the bill.

At the beginning of my presentation, I said that I would address this bill by looking at its impact on Quebec, and there is a significant impact on oilseeds management. In Quebec, oilseeds represent a promising market. It is a market for which production could be increased in the future. When we look at this bill and when we consider that it could cover oilseeds, this is perhaps not the way of the future for Quebec, precisely because there are markets here, such as linseed or other products, that could be developed and that would become mixed up in a type of management that is not suitable for them. Interesting and well structured markets already exist for those products, and these markets are working well. This bill would raise a barrier in a sector that is already operational.

So things should not be mixed up. We should avoid adding barriers in areas that already work and we should ensure that the Canadian Wheat Board does not intervene in areas that are already well structured.

This is an important issue for Quebec farmers, and this is worth considering because we all know that agriculture is undergoing

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tremendous changes. In the past, there has been a lot of specialization in agriculture, since there was a sort of division in production: dairy products were mostly the specialty of Ontario and Quebec, especially Quebec; other products were the specialty of the west, and so on.

• (1220)

But with the expected changes to international agreements and the desire to diversify production in the various regions of Canada, we must make sure that we leave the door open to the future and do not put in place structures, legislation, and regulatory requirements that would then stand in the way of development in these sectors. We know that when bureaucracy gets a hold on a sector, it is very difficult to dislodge it. It would perhaps be better to do so something about this now.

There are other aspects to this bill that are of concern to Quebec's agricultural sector. They are not in line with Quebec's agricultural tradition. This tradition includes the Union des producteurs agricoles, a strong union highly representative of the agricultural sector and one which works in collaboration with government, which expresses its viewpoint and which is accustomed to being able to operate with a certain degree of transparency that is missing from the bill before us. If this spirit had been respected for matters such as access to information, real transparency would be possible. There would be a way of making information available, to ensure that those affected by Canadian Wheat Board management have access to it so they can assess whether the board is relevant and doing a good job and, on the basis of the information available, make representations to their elected representatives and to the government, and have something on which to base their assessment. There is no such provision in this bill.

In Quebec, the agricultural tradition is such that the federal government would have wanted to ensure, for instance, that the directors are elected by the producers, by those representing the industry. There is no such provision in the legislation.

While appearing to be open, the government is maintaining significant control over the Canadian Wheat Board. The terms and conditions for electing directors are set by the government. The president of the board is appointed by the governor in council on the minister's recommendation. Does that not leave the door open to partisanship? Would it not have been possible to find a way of ensuring that the president is selected without any appearance of conflict of interest or partisanship?

Those are some of the many questions we can ask ourselves about this bill as we consider a rather substantial amendment. Some major changes are being proposed, and this legislation will not be reviewed for a while. It will affect Canadian trade in wheat and several other products, as we can see and as I referred to earlier.

We must make sure it is a framework law that will facilitate operations in Canada's agricultural sector, that will facilitate the

wheat trade, and that will allow the various regions to develop new products without having to face administrative obstacles or restrictions we can no longer afford in the current context of free trade.

All in all, this is a bill which had to be introduced. It would have been possible to make it acceptable with a number of changes. The government made some efforts, but not enough.

If the government does not support amendments—particularly the ones that we are proposing—that would make for more democratic and longer term management of the Canadian Wheat Board, so as to even out the good and the bad economic years, the Bloc Québécois will have to oppose the bill.

I urge the government majority to listen to our arguments and accept those that are relevant. I hope we can state our views during the debate on the other groups of motions, particularly in these areas, and convince the government to adopt the best possible legislation for Canada's wheat trade.

[English]

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today during report stage to contribute the very important debate on this bill. It is important to me for a number of reasons.

I represent the constituency of Saskatoon—Humboldt which has a significant rural portion.

• (1225)

This bill is going to have a dramatic impact not only on the rural component of the constituency but the urban as well. Although Saskatoon is a growing city with a vibrant economy, agriculture is still a core industry in Saskatchewan. Therefore the bill will affect not only the rural part of my constituency but the entire province.

Although I have lived in Saskatoon since the early 1980s and I represent Saskatoon—Humboldt, I am originally from a family farm in Unity, Saskatchewan. All my life I have been actively involved in farming until I got into politics. I believe this bill will impact not only on all my constituents but it goes deep enough to affect my family.

There is a great deal of concern on the prairies about the contents of this bill and of course it is very well founded. The amendments that have been advanced by my Reform colleagues would improve Bill C-4 and address the concerns farmers are raising about the bill.

One need only travel throughout the constituencies of Saskatchewan and into the small towns and coffee shops to hear the discussion on the bill and the widespread opposition to it. The opposition is from many angles. However, I would like to specifically address Motion No. 5 which was submitted by my colleague

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from Prince George—Peace River. That motion would allow the entire board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board to be elected which along with the minister would decide who would be president of the board.

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I think I just heard my hon. colleague say that he wanted to discuss Motion No. 5. I thought that we were still discussing Motion No. 1. I would encourage the debate to go in that direction.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I would ask the hon. member to please confine his comments to Motion No. 1, which is being discussed right now.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Madam Speaker, Motion No. 1 is with respect to returns that producers will get for their commodity. This has a direct bearing on that because it will affect the returns.

This debate is perhaps one of the most important debates that will occur in my term in this Parliament as the representative of the constituents of Saskatoon—Humboldt. I find the remark that my comments were straying slightly beyond the scope of what was strictly being debated somewhat obstinate but not surprising considering who it came from.

To continue, the current bill the way it stands, if passed, would allow 10 directors to be elected by the farmers, but the remaining 5 directors of the Canadian Wheat Board would be appointed by the minister, of course one being the president. It would seem logical that there would be opposition to that when a full third of the board is being appointed by the minister. That would ensure that the government's grip on the activities of the Canadian Wheat Board is maintained and the desire for accountability and for farmers to have control and direction over the wheat board through a farmer elected board is circumvented by allowing the appointment of members by the minister.

Furthermore, if experience tells us anything, Liberal ministers have not been shy in the past about handing out plum patronage positions to their party faithful.

To illustrate just how bad this can get, I would like to cite some examples that have taken place so far this year. The Liberals have made 510 prime appointments to date to the Senate and various boards, agencies and commissions.

• (1230)

This practice of patronage was denounced by the Liberals when they sat in opposition to the Mulroney government but now that they are in power, they are not only carrying on the practice of political patronage appointments, but taking it to extremes.

As unbelievable as it is, it seems that they are even worse than Mulroney with their political patronage appointments. I would suggest that the Liberals are truly number one at doling out parliamentary pork.

Here are just a few examples: defeated Liberal MP Mary Clancy appointed to consul general in Boston, the Prime Minister's legislative assistant, Graeme Clark, was appointed as ambassador to Peru and Bolivia—

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This member is far off base in terms of talking about Motion No. 1. He should be talking about what the motion is about. What does this have to do with Motion No.1?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. parliamentary secretary has a very good point. We would ask the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt to get to the point and stay there.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is directly relevant because they are going to be allowed to appoint the members of the board of directors. I think we have to look at past examples of their appointments to see what we can expect.

Therefore it has direct relevance and I am simply pointing out examples such as the former president of the women's commission, Joan Koury, appointed to the IRB and former Liberal MP, Ron Fewchuk, appointed—

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the member would refer to the point of order, he would recognize very clearly that the points he is raising are not on the topic in terms of Motion No. 1.

This ridiculousness can be carried too far. This member is filibustering and he is not even on topic.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order regarding the issue of relevance, I would call the attention of the Chair to Motion No. 1 where it says that such an organization will have a very significant effect on the producers of grain. It must therefore have the securing of the best financial return to them as its object and first priority must be accountable to them for its performance.

I would consider that the whole issue of the board of directors is very relevant to Motion No. 1.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Chair would appreciate it if the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt would confine his comments to the appointments to be made to the board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board. The hon. member will then be relevant.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, that is fair enough. My point is that the blatant examples of patronage from the past leave farmers wondering just how many Liberal cronies this government is going to appoint to the Canadian Wheat Board.

Of course, these appointments will make the appointees beholden to their political masters since the government has ensured that the president of the Canadian Wheat Board will be an appointee. They have ensured their control over the organization of the

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Canadian Wheat Board. That is the fear and the concern of western Canadian farmers.

Furthermore, their ability to appoint the members of the board of directors would ensure that the board of the Canadian Wheat Board is under that type of influence.

On the other hand, if Motion No. 5 of my colleague from Prince George—Peace River would be adopted, that would ensure that the board of the Canadian Wheat Board is democratic and accountable to its electors.

Furthermore, these electors in consultation with the minister would select the president rather than the minister appointing who the president is going to be. This is a fair and equitable amendment which I am hopeful at least the other parties would be able to support.

Neville Nankivell in the *Financial Post* had some interesting comments about the election of the board as it presently stands under Bill C-4. He wrote that because the government still appoints directors, it will create a quasi-advisory group rather than a proper independent board of directors that should have the power to hire and fire the CEO. The way the bill currently stands, that power will not be in the hands of the farmers, which is just further evidence of the type of control that the minister will have over them.

• (1235)

Nankivell also wrote that there is almost universal condemnation among farm groups of the government's intention to appoint the CEO. Yet the Liberals are determined in their desire to be able to do that. As I stated earlier, it is for one reason. It is so they can continue with their political patronage appointments. That comes as no surprise.

With Bill C-4 the Liberals want a board of directors which is mired in the past, not one that is structured to meet the demands of the 21st century.

In fact when Ted Allen of the United Grain Growers appeared before the committee, he said that Bill C-4 is fundamentally flawed and is an attempt to make time stand still or even turn back the clock.

Western Canadian farmers need to look to the future and not be mired in the past by regressive Liberal policies which are based upon political patronage appointments.

In order to strengthen the measure of accountability, we also need to bring the Canadian Wheat Board under the purview of the Access to Information Act and the auditor general. Bill C-4 does not propose to do that.

The election of the board is certainly important, but of equal importance is the scrutiny of its operations by the public and the federal government's watchdog.

However, this is not the only organization which the government has exempted from scrutiny. Canada Post and a litany of other crown corporations are not subject to access to information requests.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner:** Do you mean there is another wheat board?

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** There are lots of them.

Indeed, my colleague from Nanaimo—Alberni has been an advocate of opening up these organizations to scrutiny. He has advanced private members' bills on the subject and he has raised our awareness about the importance of not allowing government organizations to operate behind a veil of secrecy. I hope that his efforts in this area will continue. I know that his concerns certainly apply to the Canadian Wheat Board as presently structured. I urge all members to consider that when they oppose this bill.

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Pursuant to agreement made on Wednesday, November 19, 1997, the motion on Group No. 1 is deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deemed deferred.

We will now proceed to Group No. 2.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to agreement made on Wednesday, November 19, 1997, all motions in Group No. 2 are deemed put and seconded. This group contains Motions Nos. 2, 31 and 41.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.)** moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-4 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 31

That Bill C-4 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC)** moved:

Motion No. 41

That Bill C-4 be amended by deleting Clause 24.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to the second group of amendments.

As I said in my intervention on the first group, which comprised only one motion, the amendment put forward by my hon. colleague from Yorkton—Melville to create a preamble, it is very confusing.

I am sure it is not only confusing to us, but it must be confusing for the viewing public to follow how these 48 amendments have been grouped. However, we will try to work our way through them.

Group No. 2 consists of three amendments. Motion No. 2 is an amendment put forward by me. Motion No. 31 was also put forward by me. Motion No. 41 was put forward by my hon. colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party.

In speaking to these three motions, Motion No. 2 quite simply would delete the clause that makes Bill C-4 binding on the provinces.

• (1240)

In actual fact this clause would block a province from making changes which could be demanded by the majority of farmers in that province.

The official opposition believes quite strongly that this is undemocratic. We point to a possible example in the future where one province might want to bring forward its own wheat board or wheat marketing board. For example, Alberta might choose at some time in the future to have an Alberta wheat marketing board similar in structure to what exists for the farmers in Ontario. The case can really be put that by having this binding on the provinces, this would prevent a province such as Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba from doing that.

This particular clause further entrenches the inequity and the inequality of the Canadian Wheat Board. What one province is free to do, in this case Ontario has its own wheat marketing board, another province in western Canada would be denied from doing.

The second motion in Group No. 2 is motion 31, also put forward by me. It has to do with removing all the references to the contingency fund. This is where it really gets odd as to how the exact amendments are grouped. This particular amendment No. 31 goes hand in glove with amendments and Motions Nos. 25, 26 and 27 which are found in another group. All of those amendments deal with deleting any reference in Bill C-4 of the contingency fund.

At committee and while travelling throughout western Canada and speaking to farmers and farm groups in my riding and other ridings, it has become painfully obvious that the majority of farmers view this contingency fund as simply another tax on already overtaxed farmers. That is why we have put forward these four amendments that would delete any reference to the contingency fund, the farmer supported, the farmer paid for contingency fund which currently exists in Bill C-4.

It is interesting to note that one of my colleagues earlier referred to the need to survey his constituents, his farmers in his riding. He referred to the fact that he is prevented from doing this at the moment because of the postal strike.

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I did survey the farmers in Prince George—Peace River when this bill's predecessor, Bill C-72, was before the House last winter. It was interesting to note that while the farmers in my riding were, as I think they are across western Canada, very split on this highly divisive issue of reform of the Canadian Wheat Board, the one thing they were not split on was the issue of the contingency fund.

The one question I asked was would you support a compulsory farmer check off to help establish a capital base for a contingency fund? An overwhelming 76.7% of respondents, the actual farmers, Canadian Wheat Board farmers in Prince George—Peace River, said no they would not support that concept.

There are other polls which other members have done and that other entities have done across western Canada that would indicate a similar conclusion. This contingency fund, as long as the Canadian Wheat Board remains mandatory, a compulsory, government state run organization which farmers do not have the chance or freedom to choose the option of marketing their product outside of the Canadian Wheat Board, farmers are going to resist very strenuously another input cost being hoisted upon them in the form of a contingency fund, especially when it is not defined in the act in Bill C-4 how much it is going to be allowed to grow to, how quickly they are going to accumulate the funds, how much it is going to be taken off every time the farmer markets wheat or barley through the board.

It is a major concern. This is why it is accompanying Motions Nos. 25, 26, 27 which are in a subsequent group. We need to pass that and remove any reference to the contingency fund. How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

• (1245)

**An hon. member:** Too much.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** The hon. member from the governing party said "too much". It has become painfully obvious that throughout the debate the Liberals do not want to see the bill properly debated. That is why they hustled it off to committee without a proper second reading. That is why we went through the charade—

**An hon. member:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member is not on the topic.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** I am being very relevant to the main issue at stake here. For the hon. member across the way to take the issue so lightly points to the problem.

Over here we have members who have grown up on farms and farmed year after year in western Canada. They are speaking out on an issue of vital importance to western Canadian grain producers. Over there we have people like the hon. member who treat the issue frivolously.

I will briefly address Motion No. 41 put forward by my hon. colleague. The motion would delete the exclusion clause from the

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bill. We run into a problem here. I support the motion as put forward, but we must realize it goes hand in glove with a motion to delete the inclusion clause.

One great argument put forward by government members both in the limited debate in the House and at committee was that when a clause excludes certain types of grain from Canadian Wheat Board jurisdiction, in fairness there must also be an inclusion clause. Hon. members from the opposition responded by saying that was fine.

However, there is so much resistance and so much fear of the inclusion clause in the grain sector that we have said, if that is the strongest argument of the government against bringing forward an inclusion clause that hardly any farmer would support, let us take them both out. Motion No. 41 is part of Group No. 2 and moves to strike the exclusion clause. It must be viewed in conjunction with the subsequent motion to delete the inclusion clause.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise once again on Bill C-4 and to deal with the three amendments in Group No. 2. One of them is mine and two are from hon. members of the Reform Party. I promise to be relevant, as relevant as members on the government side have been. I promise not to be boring. I hope that will please the Chair.

I will clarify a couple of points. I do not believe anybody on this side of the House necessarily wants to see the demise of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is very important to recognize that. We are simply saying that we have the opportunity to make this the best possible legislation available so that western Canadian producers are able to take advantage of new techniques and new opportunities within legislation. The legislation as put forward does not allow that to happen. It is simply a regurgitation of the existing legislation with some minor amendments.

Usually when legislation is being proposed there is at least one segment of the society affected that would totally support it. I can honestly say the government in its wisdom has alienated just about everyone. There is no one who totally supports the legislation.

I asked a number of witnesses in committee whether the divisiveness among producers in western Canada would stop, whether they would be happy to go forward with the legislation. To a person, including those in support of Bill C-4, they said it would not stop divisiveness, that it would not stop the anger with respect to the controls Bill C-4 would place on producers in western Canada.

• (1250)

I will speak to the three motions put forward in Group No. 2. The first one, the deletion of clause 2, put forward by the hon. member

for Peace River, says that the act is binding on Her Majesty in the right of Canada or a province.

I also clarify that when dealing with provinces I do not believe anybody on this side of the House would suggest members of government should not have the opportunity to debate any piece of legislation or to put their opinions forward on any piece of legislation, no matter where they come from. Whether they come from Prince Edward Island or from Vancouver Island, it is very important for elected members of the House to have the opportunity to put forward their opinions.

I hope Canadians realize the legislation affects only producers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and a very small portion of British Columbia. When individuals from Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland or Quebec, my good friends from Quebec, deal with the legislation I would expect them to listen to and understand the views put forth by those people who come forward.

I did not see that happen in committee. I saw people put forward their concerns and their views, but they were not listened to. If they had been listened to, the amendments we are speaking to right now would have passed at committee stage.

It was an opportunity for me to be at a committee hearing for the first time. I actually thought we could include better amendments that would make the legislation workable. It did not happen for the simple reason it was a foregone conclusion. The witnesses were in effect wasting their breath in speaking to us. It would have been nicer if we had listened and taken their concerns under advisement.

The provinces that are being affected should be listened to, the people of those provinces should be listened to and the provincial governments of those provinces should be listened to. Two of the three provincial governments accept the fact that there should be some major changes. One unfortunately decided that the particular legislation should be maintained.

The second motion was spoken to most eloquently by my colleague in the Reform Party. It deals with the contingency clause. It is important for Canadians to understand what it is all about.

There are three pillars to the Canadian Wheat Board. The first pillar is that of pooling. We will get into that a little later when we talk about the options or the opt in and opt out and the opportunity of cash buying. That is not being dealt with in this amendment. It will be dealt with later.

The second pillar of the Canadian Wheat Board is monopoly. We have talked a lot about monopoly purchasing and the selling of one commodity, particularly wheat. We will get into that as well at a later date when considering other amendments.



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The third pillar of the Canadian Wheat Board, which is not necessarily a bad one, is that of government guarantees. The reason we have the Canadian Wheat Board is that the federal government guaranteed producers initial payments and adjusted payments.

The reason I mention this is that the contingency fund being proposed in the legislation concerns not only me but producers. The reason it concerns producers is that there is an opportunity for the Canadian Wheat Board and the government to charge producers, whether it be per bushel or per tonne, whether it be \$1 or whether it be 10¢. We do not know that yet. That will be struck by the board. It will have the opportunity via a tax to have a contingency fund that could be in excess of hundreds of millions of dollars. It could be half a billion dollars if that is the way the Canadian Wheat Board wants to operate.

The danger is that ultimately if there is a contingency fund in those numbers the Canadian Wheat Board or the government could say there is no need for particular guarantees from governments. Guarantees could be funded out of a contingency fund. This is a very serious danger to the existing Canadian Wheat Board and certainly to producers themselves.

• (1255)

There are some advantages and disadvantages, but the majority of people who spoke to us, whether pro or against the Canadian Wheat Board, indicated their desire not to have a contingency fund. I have talked to producers, as have other members on this side of the House, who had serious concerns about the contingency fund.

In this amendment we are saying that the contingency fund should be removed from the legislation and the guarantees of government should simply be put back into place.

The government wants a Canadian Wheat Board which is subject to the controls of government, of its executive officer and of members of the board. If 10 of 15 board members are to be elected it does not mean the Canadian Wheat Board will be accountable to producers. It will still be accountable to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. It is written in the legislation that the minister has the final authority and say. We should not be confused by the fact that 10 of 15 members will be accountable.

It should be made a truly elected board by having 15 of the 15 members elected by producers. It could be made a truly democratic process by having the board hire the chief executive officer. That makes sense corporately and has to be done.

My amendment speaks to the exclusion clause. As the member for Peace River indicated, it is a marriage between two clauses, an exclusion clause and an inclusion clause.

In Bill C-72, the predecessor bill, inclusion was never mentioned. Now it is in this bill. When asked at committee why there was an inclusion clause, the answer was simple: if we have exclusion then we have to have inclusion. It was not a good answer.

We asked people who appeared before committee if they would be prepared to give up their exclusion rights to get rid of inclusion. We literally heard from dozens of organizations and only three did not want it. Almost unanimously they said that in order to get rid of inclusion they would give up exclusion.

The motion has been put forward to get rid of exclusion. The motion should pass. We will deal with inclusion when that motion is being debated.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor so promptly.

Bill C-4 is a major bill for western grain producers, so much so that consideration of the bill had to be spread over more than a year. In its great wisdom and clarity of vision, the Liberal government had planned to have Bill C-72 passed during the 35th Parliament, but the early call for a general election on June 2 forced us to scrap everything that had been done. This meant a considerable waste of money.

I would, however, like to emphasize that, on the agriculture and agri-food committee, we heard the views of scores of people. The large majority of them expressed discontent with the wording of Bill C-4, which will, according to the Liberals, modify the Canadian Wheat Board Act from *a* to *z*.

In our opinion, this is a very tiny step forward, and as a result I can announce to you, to the great chagrin of the hon. member for Malpeque, that we will support this amendment to Bill C-4 for a number of different and important reasons.

• (1300)

One of the reasons is as follows. I would like to know—and from you directly, Mr. Speaker—why the Prime Minister gave responsibility for the Canadian Wheat Board to a minister other than the minister of agriculture. Is the new minister of agriculture too incompetent to manage the Canadian Wheat Board on his own? That is my question. Does the Prime Minister not have confidence in him?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on a point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the

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member from Frontenac is getting into inflammatory remarks against the current minister of agriculture.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Chair would consider that to be a point of debate, not a point of order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I would invite my friend from Prince Edward Island, the hon. member for Malpeque, to listen, which is no mean feat in his case since you cannot tell him anything. However, he can learn a thing or two from the member for Frontenac—Mégantic, which is what I want.

So, the government, under the Prime Minister, gave responsibility for this bill to the Minister of Natural Resources, on the grounds that he comes from the west. I have more fingers on my hands than there are Liberal members from the West in this House, so he did not have a choice if they were going to give it to someone from the West. So he gave it to the Minister of Natural Resources.

I suggested to my friend from Malpeque that the auditor general, who is above all reproach and whose appointment was approved by all parties in this House, should go and root through the books of the Canadian Wheat Board. The Liberals turned the suggestion down saying that a group of auditors from the west—one of the famous accounting firms like Raymond, Chabot, Martin, Paré in Quebec—could do the audit. In the West it appears to be Touche Ross & Co.

My Reform colleagues went at the Prime Minister himself on several occasions because it appears that he gets a lot of financial support from these groups of auditors.

When an organization like the Canadian Wheat Board has its books audited, only the invoices presented are audited. The auditors find that it matches the invoice, but do not check if the invoice is valid. Do you follow me?

I think that the Reform Party, the Bloc Québécois and all the opposition parties in this House agree that the auditor general should audit the books. I made some calculations. The Canadian Wheat Board will be managing sales representing between \$6 billion and \$7 billion. That is a substantial amount. A 1% error would cost \$600 million. That is quite a lot of money. You will tell me that I am exaggerating. I agree, 1% is too high. Take 1% of 1%, or one thousandth. That is \$6 million. I am pretty sure that if one thousandth of the sales were poorly managed, western farm producers would lose \$6 million without anyone noticing.

But the auditor general, with his flair, with his team and with his expertise, would figure out in no time that something is wrong and would not hesitate to single out individuals in his annual report or to point out any inappropriate spending. Then we could rub Liberals' noses in it.

• (1305)

As I said, this is a step forward, but a very tiny step indeed. The board of directors will include 10 elected members; 10 western grain producers will sit on the board. But five other directors, two of whom will be major players, will be appointed by the governor in council.

I take this opportunity to submit to the hon. member for Malpeque, who is running this debate for the government, that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food should be consulted. I am not asking that it be given a veto, just that it be consulted. The hon. member for Malpeque does not want to. He does not even trust—I am afraid my name is about to get crossed off of his list of friends, but we will see what can be negotiated later—the members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food.

This brings me to the appointments in question. This morning's papers report that the Prime Minister revoked an appointment made by his predecessor, Lester B. Pearson.

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** On a point of order.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien:** I only have two minutes to go.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Bourassa.

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** Mr. Speaker, I understand that my friend, the member for Frontenac—Mégantic, can get quite worked up—I'm not sure which hormones are involved—but I think we should stick to the point. What Canadians want to hear is his position on—

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In the opinion of the Chair, the debate of the hon. member for Frontenac—Mégantic was relevant and we will add that time to the hon. member's time.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful if you were to allow me the two minutes I have left.

This morning, the Prime Minister expelled a Liberal senator appointed by Lester B. Pearson. I will not name him out of respect for his children. The fellow will earn \$500,000 for doing nothing. This is coming out of our pockets.

In my riding, I hear about these appointments all the time. Voters turfed out Mary Clancy. Not two weeks had gone by before the Prime Minister found her a spot paying more than MPs' wages. Voters showed Francis Leblanc the door because of the treatment of the unemployed in his riding. The Minister of Human Resources

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Development will get him to administer the employment insurance fund. This did not—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The member for Bourassa on a point of order.

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** Mr. Speaker, you know what I am good at. If you want us to start rhyming off the names of members of the Bloc Québécois who have demonstrated their incompetence rather than focus on the present debate, that is fine by me.

But the voters in my riding of Bourassa want to know what is going on with this bill and I would ask the member, who is perhaps not often in his riding, to stick to important issues, in this case the Canadian Wheat Board.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In so far as the government will be appointing members to the board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board, debate concerning the record of the government's past appointments to previous boards is relevant.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, you can see as well as I that the rookie member for Bourassa lacks experience and is doing everything he can to distract us, to keep us from criticizing the blunders of the Liberal Party, headed by the member for Saint-Maurice, who can sometimes be inherently devious.

No wonder the government—

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** With respect, I think the hon. member for Frontenac—Mégantic has gone a bit too far this time. With respect, I would ask that his most recent remark concerning the hon. member for Saint-Maurice be withdrawn.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien:** You are probably right, Mr. Speaker. Being bothered regularly by the member for Bourassa, I went a bit too far. The member for Saint-Maurice, the Prime Minister, is not inherently devious.

To get back to the appointments, the former mayor of Quebec City ran up against my colleague, the hon. member for Québec, in the 1993 election. He lost the election and three days later—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has expired.

Resuming debate with the hon. member for Simcoe—Grey.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address remarks by two members opposite.

First to the hon. member for Brandon—Souris regarding his comments, I found them rather insulting and borderline prejudice. For him to suggest for one moment that as members of Parliament we are not supposed to deal with national issues, with a \$6 billion industry that this government backs and because we are from one specific area or another, those comments are nothing more than prejudice. Absolutely unacceptable.

With regard to his comments of inclusion, as a new member of this committee I did listen. I listened to my Reform colleagues. I listened to the witnesses and I listened to Conservative colleagues. Unlike the member for Brandon—Souris, I took back some of the answers the people had given me. There was a very simple statement made. What was best for the farmers was inclusion. That is why it is there, not specific special interests groups that do not necessarily represent certain numbers of farmers. That is what is best for the farmers. That is why it stands.

With regard to the member for Frontenac—Mégantic, he should hang his head in shame. He should be embarrassed for the comments he made. To insult the minister of agriculture completely unacceptable. To sit here and question the integrity of the prime minister is also unacceptable, likely one of the respected politicians in the entire world and certainly in Canada. Those types of statements are completely unacceptable in this House.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, do you know what the biggest insult is right now? The minister responsible for the wheat board and the agriculture minister are not here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member will know we do not refer to the absence or the presence of other hon. members. The hon. member would also know that is not a point of order. Resuming debate.

**Mr. Paul Bonwick:** Mr. Speaker, these types of shenanigans my Reform colleagues are pulling are completely disrespectful of this House. They too should be completely ashamed of the tactics they use. They are not only embarrassing themselves but they are embarrassing their constituents. I suggest they reflect on their actions.

As I mentioned, the comments directed at our minister of agriculture and our prime minister are completely unacceptable. Again, the member should be extremely ashamed of himself.

He was asking some pointed questions with regard to why the minister of agriculture was not overseeing the Canadian Wheat Board discussions, the same questions he asked at committee. He received completely detailed and very acceptable answers. Then he brings those questions to the House for no more reason than

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grandstanding and insulting members when he knows they are not here to defend themselves.

The Canadian Wheat Board is good for farmers. The inclusion clause is good for farmers, despite what these colleagues across the floor are saying.

On that note, I request an answer from the member for Brandon—Souris. Are we not entitled to discuss issues relevant to Canada in an industry which encompasses \$6 billion dollars or should we just sit here and remain quiet?

• (1315)

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member to refer to *Hansard* because he asked the question—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** With respect, that was a point of debate and perhaps that debate would be best behind the curtains. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Palliser.

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the next grouping of motions that are before the House this afternoon. Specifically, we are looking at Motions Nos. 2, 31 and 41 as has already been outlined by previous speakers.

As I listened carefully to the mover of two of those three motions, it was clear that on Motion No. 2 what the mover of the motion is seeking is the ability of a province to opt out of the Canadian Wheat Board. Motion No. 31 deals with a contingency fund and Motion No. 41 deals with the exclusion clause as well and obviously the inclusion clause is part of both of those, as has been pointed out.

What is beginning to become clear is now that we are past the words in the preamble, the support by the members in the opposition for the Canadian Wheat Board is like Liberal support on the prairies, a mile wide and an inch deep. That is particularly true of some of the speeches that have been coming forward.

With respect to Motion No. 2, clearly what is at play here would be, as the member for Prince George—Peace River pointed out, that a province such as Alberta could opt out. Obviously a move like that would totally cripple the Canadian Wheat Board. We certainly would oppose any reference to an opting out provision.

Of the three motions that are before us, Motion No. 31 is critical. It would delete clause 8 which deals with using any profits from bonds, debentures, notes or other evidence of indebtedness in payment of expenses incurred by the corporation or putting money into the contingency fund.

It seems to me that some members of this House, in particular members of the Official Opposition, want to eliminate any reference to a contingency fund and so does our caucus, but I think

we have different motives in mind. What is at stake here is to delete any reference to the contingency fund and not to have any borrowing contingencies from the federal government. In other words, the Canadian Wheat Board would stand or fall on its own.

We are not supportive of that. We do support the wheat board and recognize that there needs to be government guarantees along this line. In fact, we want to see the government guarantees be the same as they have always been for the Canadian Wheat Board. This has not been a big drain on Canadian taxpayers to have had that kind of support.

It seems to us to be a very difficult argument to persuade western Canadian wheat and barley growers that a new, improved wheat board bill is going to be good for them and at the same time have significant increased input costs, costs of production, to maintain the contingency fund.

We tried during committee stage to have some estimate of how big that contingency fund might be. We never did get a satisfactory response from government officials, although some people have put it as high as \$575 million. Whether that is 10% of the value of the Canadian Wheat Board, I do not know where that figure comes from, but it is from usually reliable sources.

We do not know and farmers obviously do not know how big that contingency fund is going to have to be or how much they are going to have to pay for it. We certainly reject the idea of a contingency fund.

• (1320)

As I said earlier, we would like to see the Government of Canada continue to have the borrowing authority for the Canadian Wheat Board, more correctly, to be able to go through the government for its borrowing requirements on an annual basis.

The Canadian Wheat Board, it seems to me, is a classic example of farmers in this case banding together to create an entity which would allow them to do collectively what they could not do individually or separately.

Because there has been a lot of chatter about the history of the wheat board and how it was invoked on an unwilling farm community in western Canada, I would like to quote from an eminent Manitoba historian, Gerald Friesen, who says that Prime Minister Bennett's cabinet was under enormous pressure to relieve the burdens of farmers and to judge by the leaders of prairie farm movements, the prairie preference was for a national wheat marketing board.

Farmers supported the wheat board in the dirty thirties and they are still supporting it in the nebulous nineties as we saw from the vote last year, to the member from the Reform Party. Sixty-seven

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per cent, as a matter of fact, of the barley growers voted to have the board continue marketing their crop.

**An hon. member:** What do you know about farming?

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** I represent some farmers. I thought I heard a lot of chatter. I know the difference between Motion No. 2 and Motion No. 5.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** With regard to Motion No. 41, the Conservatives and the Reform propose to do away with the exclusion clause. Again, we see rugged individualists at work here far more in common with the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the National Citizens' Coalition than with grain farmers.

We think it is a simplistic solution to say that we do not want the inclusion clause, therefore we will take out the exclusion clause as well and we will all live happily ever after.

Our preference in this caucus is to give the Canadian Wheat Board both options of exclusion and inclusion clause for the future. We may all have our views about what the future holds for the Canadian Wheat Board, but no one can say with certainty what it will look like in five or ten years from now.

I think not to give those kinds of options to the board of directors of the future Canadian Wheat Board would be to hamstring it significantly.

In conclusion, it would be a democratic decision, including a vote. There is certainly nothing wrong with that. We say that farmers should be allowed to vote on inclusion clause and exclusion clause as the bill currently is, although we will have something to say on deleting a portion of the inclusion clause when we get to that portion of it.

**Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to address a couple of points and provide some information that might be helpful as this debate goes forward.

The hon. member from the New Democratic Party who spoke last wondered out loud about the size of the contingency fund. He intimated that he could not get a proper answer as to how large the contingency fund might be.

It is a reasonable question but I think if people are in possession of the facts, they will understand that the answer to that is that no one really knows exactly how large that fund will be. It will depend on the decisions made by the board of directors.

Members have to remember that 10 of the 15 directors will be elected by farmers. People from the Reform Party always have real difficulty in listening to facts.

If I could just proceed, the size of the contingency fund will depend on decisions made by the board of directors. For example, how much use will they make of cash buyouts or the early cash pools?

• (1325)

It depends on what the board of directors does. If it does not use those options very often, it could be that the contingency fund will be quite small. However, it could choose to use the extra tools which we are giving it, the tools which farmers have wanted. One of the reasons for the bill is to give the farmers and the wheat board more flexibility. If it chooses to use those options very seldom, chances are the contingency fund will be quite small.

With respect to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Brandon—Souris, his proposal concerning the contingency fund would rob the board of one more flexible tool. If we considered his motion, the only way that a contingency fund could be built up would be through the route of check-offs. The way the bill is written now profits could be used from the sale of bonds, debentures, notes and other financial instruments to credit the contingency fund.

Is the Reform Party saying “No, we should not give the board of directors those options. No, we want to handicap it. We want to tie its hands”? Let us get serious. Surely the board of directors should have as much flexibility as possible.

The hon. member for Brandon—Souris has proposed in his amendment to get rid of the exclusion clause. What is the exclusion clause about?

It has the same principle as the inclusion clause. It sets down a set of rules for orderly procedures. If someone wants to take a grain away from the wheat board, under this bill there will be a set of rules and much of the uncertainty will be removed. Would farmers not want that? I think they would. But not the Reform Party. It does not want any rules or procedures.

The exclusion clause sets out a procedure. The inclusion clause does exactly the same thing.

The bill is seeking orderliness, a set procedure. If we talk in those terms to most farmers, they will understand that there is a need for rules so they will know exactly where they stand. Right now, if someone wanted to exclude a grain from the wheat board, what is the rule? It is all up in the air. The bill addresses that issue.

It is the same thing with inclusion. What rules are there to add a grain to the board? There are no rules. That is what the bill is about.

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

**Mr. John Harvard:** I know that members of the Reform Party have trouble with facts. They have trouble with information. Any time we try to bring facts to the debate, what do we hear? A whole lot of hollering from a bunch of yahoos.

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

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, coming from a bunch of crooks, that is not a bad comment—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** With respect, the House has gone as far down that road as it is going to go.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what we are debating now are the amendments in group No. 2 to Bill C-4. After the last speech it might not have been completely clear, but in this grouping I find to be strange, there are three main amendments which do not relate very closely one to the other.

The first amendment, as the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River has already pointed out, would take away the power to bind all western provinces to the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly.

Ontario has its own wheat board. Many Albertans, quite frankly, want to have that same type of board. The board would have a completely elected body and it would give choice to the farmers.

• (1330)

They have to go through the token process of getting a Canadian Wheat Board permit to export but those are granted routinely. Many farmers in Alberta would be very happy to have that kind of situation. That is the first amendment.

The second amendment which was also put forward by the Reform Party would remove the contingency fund completely from the legislation. It is difficult to understand why these two motions were grouped together because they do not really relate to each other in any way.

The third amendment in this group was presented by the Conservatives. It was also presented by Reform. It would remove the inclusion clause, a clause that would allow the inclusion of grains other than wheat and barley into wheat board jurisdiction. Try to figure how that relates to the other two. I am very concerned about the groupings.

The fourth amendment in this group would remove the president as an appointed member of the board. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Board has demonstrated very clearly that we do not want the president appointed by the minister. The president should be hired and fired by an elected board of directors. That is the situation we should have within the wheat board. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Board has a board much like that being proposed under Bill C-4 with some members being appointed and some being elected.

A situation developed recently in which a former Liberal was appointed as president CEO of the board, much as a Liberal could be appointed as president or CEO of the wheat board when this

legislation passes. In that situation the board was so much against having this person running its marketing board that the board completely removed the power the president would have so the person it wanted to run the board would retain that power.

What those board members did will help them. At least they will have the person they chose to run the board. But there will probably be interference from this patronage appointment. Meanwhile the 2,500 fishermen who have their fish marketed through this board are paying for that salary, which is about \$103,000, plus all the perks that go with this patronage appointment.

That is the situation in the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board, which is what would happen if the proposed changes in Bill C-4 go through. That is the reason we have put forth our amendments in this grouping. Those amendments would at least make the president a position that required hiring by what we want, an elected board of directors. Under this legislation that position requires appointment by the minister. The legislation also specifies a board with five appointees and ten elected members. In a nutshell that is what is included in this group.

I will discuss the amendment related to inclusion and exclusion. I recently saw a letter that pointed out four groups in support of the inclusion clause in Bill C-4. These groups were the National Farmers Union, the Family Farm Foundation, the Catholic Rural Life Ministry and some of the delegates of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

The letter failed to mention the various groups that have stated in committee and through letters to the minister that they do not want this inclusion clause in the legislation. I will go through this list for the members opposite who should know if they have been paying attention to what has been going on with this legislation that in committee these groups have vigorously opposed the inclusion clause.

The first group is the Canadian Canola Growers Association, one of the largest producer groups in Canada. The second is the Manitoba Canola Growers Association. These two groups represent thousands of farmers from western Canada who are very happy having canola marketed on a completely open marketing system.

• (1335)

Back in the early 1980s we had a plebiscite on the inclusion of canola into the wheat board and it was defeated by a large margin even back then. The mood of farmers now certainly is not for more inclusion under wheat board jurisdiction. If the members opposite on the government side would just look at the polls that have been done, at the surveys that have been done, they would know that the mood in Canada today among western farmers is clearly toward

having the monopoly completely removed from the Canadian Wheat Board.

I refer to the plebiscite in Alberta, a plebiscite which I think was well run. It showed that 62% of farmers in Alberta preferred a voluntary board or a dual marketing systems in wheat. Sixty-seven percent of farmers in Alberta preferred a voluntary board for the marketing of barley. That was for domestic and export marketing.

Clearly the farmers of Alberta support a completely voluntary board and in no way support this piece of legislation and are particularly against the inclusion clause.

The Government of Saskatchewan, which wanted to get the results showing that the monopoly should be retained, found to its shock, even with the poll as it was done, that 57% of farmers in Saskatchewan were in favour of voluntary marketing. They were in favour of a voluntary board, a dual marketing system run by the Government of Saskatchewan, even though it wanted a much different result. That is clear evidence.

In my own constituency of Lakeland I had a professional pollster out of Edmonton, a reputable organization, do a poll and in that poll there were about 700 and some people involved. We were polling on different issues. We had a response of somewhere around 250 farmers in that constituency and about 80% favoured a voluntary marketing system. I know that in my constituency farmers do not support the inclusion clause. They do not support this wheat board monopoly in any way.

To finish the list, the Flax Growers Western Canada are strongly against the inclusion clause. The Oat Producers Association of Alberta, the Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and its members polled do not support this inclusion clause. The Saskatchewan Canola Growers, the Alberta Canola Producers, the Canadian Oilseed Processors Association, the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange and the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, being one of the larger associations with a completely voluntary membership, which has with it a pretty hefty membership fee—

**Mr. John Harvard:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which has a membership larger than all the organizations he mentioned, supports this clause.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That is a point of debate.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I am really quite shocked that these members want to interrupt us at every opportunity they get. That same Canadian Federation of Agriculture is against this piece of legislation as it is. It wants some major amendments to this legislation before it will be put in place.

So if the member is going to refer to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, he had better give the whole story. It does not support

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this legislation as it is. In fact, even the wheat board advisory committee is strongly against. It said it wants this bill defeated if the parts of the bill that refer to cash purchases are not removed. It does not even support it, if you can believe it.

In fact, the only witness who supported this bill, and even with amendments or with relatively minor amendments, was the current chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board, Lorne Hehn. He is the only one. In committee I asked Chief Commissioner Hehn if he in fact was not in line for an appointment as president, CEO, and he did not deny it.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, just before the last speaker rose, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt referred to members on this side as crooks.

• (1340)

He finds this very funny but I will refer members to section 489 of *Beauchesne's* where “crook” is not accepted as parliamentary language. I would ask you to ask the member to withdraw, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis is quite correct. The hon. member was responding to another comment that was thrown across the Chamber, “yahoo”, both given in the same spirit, both received in the same spirit. The Chair ruled that we had had enough and that we were not going down that road any further. Resuming debate.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do not think you will find in *Beauchesne's* that the word yahoo is unparliamentary but certainly the word crook is there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** With respect, I think the House should note that the Chair has a great deal of respect for the hon. member who has just made this point. However, it is in the Chair's opinion that there are no words in and of themselves which are unparliamentary. It is the context and use of the words which make them unparliamentary. Resuming debate.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Saint-Eustache—Sainte-Thérèse, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

My colleagues in the Bloc and I agree with the government's intention to amend this act. It is interesting to see that, finally, the government seems to want to give more decision making powers to grain producers. I say seems to want, because the amendments to the act are being made by the government, not by and for the producers.

It would have been in order for the government to first seek a consensus among producers before making these amendments, but it did not do so, if we are to believe what we are hearing in this House. I will not get into the technical aspects of the act, but I will

*Government Orders*

raise the issues of fairness, honesty and patronage as they relate to the legislation.

I firmly believe, as do the majority of members sitting on this side of the House, that the Auditor General of Canada should have the right and the authority to look into the activities of the Canadian Wheat Board. I sometimes wonder. Why are government members opposed to the auditor general doing that? Why are they opposed to the auditor general checking into the Bank of Canada? Why are they opposed to him looking into the Canada Post Corporation? Why are they opposed to him checking into the Canada Ports Corporation? I could go on and on.

These are corporations which are funded by us, the taxpayers. The auditor general must not just write an annual report. His primary role is to check on how public money is spent and then report on it, so that this government can make the necessary changes.

• (1345)

I have here a few questions. What would have been the government's response to cases involving the Canadian Wheat Board if the auditor general had looked into this? It is all very fine and well to use chartered accountants—my colleague, the member for Frontenac—Mégantic, said they will check the books—but accountants do not make recommendations about mismanagement of a corporation.

I also wonder how it is that our friends opposite did not pay attention to the Canadian Wheat Board mini-scandal over the revamping of Churchill Falls.

How is it that our friends opposite turned a deaf ear to the pleas of the mayor of Thunder Bay? How is it that the mayor of a city in Ontario is forced to turn to a member from Quebec for support? The mayor of Thunder Bay, like all residents of Ontario in the Lake Superior area, is wondering why the federal government invested \$44.5 million on window dressing in that city. Why did this government's Department of Transport give \$16 million to CN in compensation for selling off the Winnipeg—Churchill Falls section to Omni Tracks, which Omni Tracks operates on Hudson Bay Rails? CN received \$16 million in compensation for this.

Why is the Department of Transport investing over \$14.4 million in a dust control system in the port of Churchill and \$1.6 million in a system to unload trains? This unnecessary spending adds up to almost \$50 million.

What purpose will it serve? Instead of grain going to Thunder Bay, across Lake Superior and then up the St. Lawrence to Europe, it will go to Europe through Churchill Falls, a port that is not open 12 months a year.

This change, according to figures provided by the city of Thunder Bay, will send 700,000 tonnes of grain through Churchill Falls instead of through Thunder Bay, which will deprive Thunder Bay of \$35,750,000 annually. This pointless spending will cost 12 Thunder Bay employees their jobs. In addition, this policy will cost Thunder Bay \$1.7 million in taxes annually. To put it plainly, the government is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The experts—not me, but the experts—say that from a common point between Vancouver and Redford, Saskatchewan, and from Redford to Thunder Bay or to a port on the St. Lawrence, the cost per tonne of grain, of wheat shipped, differs—

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member is talking about transportation policy. What we are dealing with here are the motions in Group No. 2. The member is not speaking to those motions. I would request that you ensure he does.

• (1350)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The parliamentary secretary is accurate. We are speaking to the motions in Group No. 2 and our remarks should pertain to Group No. 2.

Therefore I invite the hon. member to resume debate and ask that his comments be limited to that which is relevant to Group No. 2.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I understand your concern and your decision that I comment only on Group No. 2. But seeing how fast the members opposite are moving this debate forward, with their objections, their points of order, etc., Group No. 5 will only be discussed in two or three years. Pardon me if I go from one group to the other, but I will now move on to Group No. 2.

As I was saying, it costs \$76.33 a tonne to ship wheat from Redford to Vancouver. From Redford to Thunder Bay, it costs \$53.80. I wonder why the Canadian Wheat Board ships its grain, its barley and its wheat to countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Germany and Belgium through ports in Vancouver. Why not ship the wheat through Thunder Bay and then through the ports in Quebec? This makes no sense, I cannot understand it. I cannot understand it, unless this is part of a certain Plan B to isolate Quebec from Europe. Maybe that is the reason. I cannot understand it.

I will stop here, even before the minute you gave me is over.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The member for Selkirk—Interlake has a point of order.



*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not feel the Bloc member is speaking to the matter at hand either. I would like to have the references to useless Churchill investments and whatnot stricken from the record.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** This is a very complex bill and it is a very wide-ranging debate. The Chair will allow as much latitude as possible to all hon. members in the debate.

The hon. member for Saint-Eustache—Sainte-Thérèse has one minute remaining.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if I irritated my dear colleague from the Reform Party, but, yesterday, I was looking at Reform Party members performing, and I can tell you that they too were going all over the place.

I am pleased to participate in this debate and to express my humble point of view.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Resuming debate with the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar who, the House may be assured, will be very relevant and right on topic.

**Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, having had that encouragement I would like to go on the record as saying that transportation probably is a very important part of the bill. I would like to challenge some of the statements that have been made.

The second grouping suggests that the provinces should be eliminated from making decisions on the Canadian Wheat Board bill and transportation probably has a very big part to play in that regard.

• (1355)

I point that out because during the late 1970s and 1980s we moved tremendous amounts of grain to the Soviet Union and other east bloc countries. We could move it for about \$30 or \$40 a tonne cheaper through Churchill. They even offered to bring in icebreakers to move the grain out of that port. For some reason there was enough clout either in Ottawa or somewhere else to defer all that grain down the St. Lawrence, which cost us an extra \$38 a tonne to move.

The provincial governments should have some clout. They should have some say. I cannot comprehend why hon. members would object to that. Ontario, for example, runs its board completely by itself. It ships its grain in whatever direction it wants and sells it to whomever it wants. It seems very strange that the bill would

specific that provincial authority or provincial input should be outlawed. That just does not make sense.

I would think we would want to make sure the bill was beneficial to farmers and put the most money back into their pockets. Those are the people who have sweated and worked hard. They have taken chances. They have paid all the input costs and should get out of it what it is worth.

Another thing I want to comment on for a few minutes is the contingency fund. I do not know why farmers would support a bill with this type of fund when they have no actual control over it. With the five appointed commissioners or directors the government would still have control because it will put in the CEO at its pleasure and fire the CEO at its pleasure. Why would we want to put money into a fund that we cannot control? That seems to be plainly ridiculous.

Members of the wheat board appeared before us as witnesses. They were asked what the contingency fund would cost farmers and what percentage of the funds from what is to be sold through the cash market will be deducted for the contingency fund? They said that it would be from 5% to 10% of the gross amount of that cheque.

I do not know if Liberal members have not paid attention to the return on agriculture investment today. The top investment money one can get from one's assets today is probably 1.5% to 1.75%. If the board is to deduct 5% as a minimum and up to 10%, farmers will lose money selling their grain. There is no way to make the contingency fund pay. Why would any farmer be so foolish as to sell his grain in that kind of market? It does not make sense.

I cannot understand why a person would want to take money out of his pocket and put it into a fund where the auditor general cannot even look at it to see whether it is invested properly.

A year ago I introduced a private member's bill to put the auditor general in control of the wheat board. Every member on that side said no way. They did not want accountability.

That nice book the hon. parliamentary secretary to the minister of fisheries holds up in the air is a smoke screen. It is not worth putting a match to it. If members want to find out why they should look into the elections act to find out how many millions that auditing firm paid to the election fund of the Liberals. It is very interesting.

I flew back to Ottawa in August to do some work. I picked up the *Hill Times*, and what did I see? I saw a whole page ad by the Canadian Wheat Board telling western farmers how good it was. How many western farmers read the *Hill Times*? It cost western farmers \$3,200 to put that ad in the paper. Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? I cannot believe it.

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• (1400)

**The Speaker:** Well, if you have a tough time believing it, I am sure we would all have a tough time.

It being 2 p.m., we will now proceed to Statements by Members.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### AVCORP INDUSTRIES INC.

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recently my colleague, the Secretary of State for Asia Pacific, announced \$4.4 million in federal investment in Avcorp Industries Incorporated based in Richmond, B.C. This investment is part of Industry Canada's technology partnership program which supports innovation in technology and job creation.

Through companies like Avcorp, the government is promoting Canada's role as a leader in technology. As a consequence economic prosperity is being fostered in B.C. and across this country.

The technology partnership program is proof that the government is creating jobs and is taking action to boost our economy in British Columbia.

\* \* \*

### TRADE

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, three years ago this government, along with all provinces, signed the agreement on internal trade.

This agreement laid out a framework and timetable for completing the agreement which would remove barriers to trade within Canada. Each province agreed that removing internal trade barriers would benefit that province. Yet this government has done little to complete the agreement. One deadline after another has been missed.

Studies have shown that a 10% increase in internal trade would create 200,000 jobs and that the removal of trade barriers would increase average family income by \$3,500.

This afternoon my Private Members' Bill which would lead to the completion of this agreement will be debated. This bill would force the government to complete the agreement in areas where it has the consent of the majority of provinces, including at least 50% of the population. The bill is supported by the President of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the President of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce and a list of others.

This afternoon we will see whether this government has any interest at all in completing the agreement which would do so much for Canadians.

## PERSONAL BANKRUPTCIES

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, though Canada is experiencing firm economic growth, personal bankruptcies are at record high levels, reaching 79,631 in 1996, a 22 per cent increase from 1995, according to Industry Canada.

It is our duty to ensure that everyone, including women, students and self-employed Canadians, enjoy the benefits of Canada's strong economic growth.

One way we can come to the aid of honest Canadians currently facing a growing mountain of personal or small business debt would be to enforce tougher penalties for those who abuse the bankruptcy process.

To that end, the government should consider setting up a special investigation unit to stop such abuses.

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[*Translation*]

## AFRICAN INDUSTRIALIZATION DAY

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are celebrating today African industrialization day, as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly.

In this resolution, the international community commits itself to supporting Africa's efforts to achieve faster growth and sustainable human development.

There is still much to be done to eliminate poverty, to promote democracy, to strengthen civil society, to enhance the status of women, to find solutions to the debt problem and to encourage the development of the African economy.

Canada's efforts in these areas leave much to be desired. Canada's contribution to poor countries over the next several years will fall below 0.2% of GNP. In 1998, Canadian international assistance will be at its lowest level since the 1960s.

The Bloc Québécois strongly disagrees with Canada's withdrawal from poor countries and especially from Africa. We urge the government to respect its commitment to earmark 0.7% of its GNP for official development assistance.

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[*English*]

## DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, November is Diabetes Awareness Month. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation for its efforts in raising awareness of this disease and for raising \$3.5 million for diabetes research this past year.

• (1405)

The foundation was founded 23 years ago by parents of children with diabetes who were concerned that not enough research was being done to cure this disease. Since that time the foundation has awarded \$28 million to research, making it the largest donor to diabetes research of any other health agency.

Some of the leading diabetes research still takes place in Canada. Banting and Best may have discovered insulin in 1921, but today the work continues at universities in Edmonton, Montreal, Toronto and London.

The Juvenile Diabetes Foundation deserves our support.

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### FESTIVAL OF NORTHERN LIGHTS

**Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 14, 1997 Owen Sound's Festival of Northern Lights celebrated its tenth anniversary.

From a modest beginning as a display of Christmas lights along the Sydenham River, it has grown to one of the largest tourist attractions in northern Ontario during the holiday season.

The festival now features 170 displays and 11 kilometres of lights trimmed along the Sydenham River from the inner harbour to the heart of the city.

On November 14 over 1,000 people took part in the official opening of the festival. Two of its original architects, Marie and Cecile Walpole, were there to officially turn on the switch. It was a moving ceremony and a tremendous honour to Ann Kelly and all those volunteers who have made this festival the pride and joy of Bruce—Grey during the festive season.

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### NATIONAL CHILD DAY

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on this National Child Day I would like to bring attention to the plight of the children in Canada whose parents are finding it difficult to feed and clothe their families, a situation which the government has perpetuated through high taxes.

In many cases the troubles families find themselves in are no fault of their own. Families that work long hours, work more than one job still find that their after-tax income is not enough to properly care for their children.

The average family spends more on taxes than on food, shelter and clothing combined. This causes a great deal of anxiety and pain to hard working Canadians. This situation does not need to exist nor should it exist.

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When will this government wake up, get its hands out of the pockets of hard working Canadian families and give them their money back? Through inflated income tax, job killing, high EI premiums and now an almost doubling of CPP premiums, the government continues to take, take, take.

Children are living in poverty in Canada because the Liberal government is taxing their families into the poor house.

\* \* \*

### LITERACY

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some of us take reading and writing for granted, but for many it is a daily challenge.

Bob Croxford, who resides in Forest, Ontario, had trouble reading a newspaper or directions on a paint can. But those days are now behind him. Turning to a literacy class at Lambton College in Sarnia, he worked tenaciously on improving his skills. Two years ago he started writing a book.

Today in a special ceremony to kick off the Ninth Annual Read Up On It program, Senator Joyce Fairbairn and Mr. Croxford presented his book "The Unknown" to the National Library.

Literacy problems affect nearly 40% of Canadian adults with many living in fear of admitting it. Bob Croxford has advice for others. Do not hesitate. People are here who will help you. You have to help yourself too.

On behalf of the constituents in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, we extend congratulations to Bob for providing inspiration to all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs said that any unilateral declaration of sovereignty by Quebec would be contrary to Canadian constitutional law and to international law.

Is the minister telling us right away that the federal government will refuse to negotiate partnership calmly and serenely, thumbing its nose at the interests of Canadians and Quebecers alike?

The wish of the sovereigntist movement is clear: to obtain a yes for the sovereignty of Quebec in a democratic manner, along with the mandate to negotiate a partnership with the rest of Canada.

Is the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs aware that, in his attempt to put fear into Quebecers, he is at the same time making clear his disdain for the economic and political interests of Canadians and Quebecers? He would do well to read the statement

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by the previous Minister of Justice, who called for recognition of the referendum vote and negotiation with a sovereign Quebec.

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[English]

**NATIONAL CHILD DAY**

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Child Day, a day to recognize the important role which children play in our lives. One in five Canadian children live in poverty and many do not receive adequate and nutritious food. Kids who do not get enough to eat are tired, have short attention spans and do not learn to solve problems as well as their classmates.

• (1410)

It is for these reasons that the Canadian Living Foundation established its breakfast for learning program. Since 1992 this remarkable organization has helped over 1,700 community supported nutrition programs across Canada. To date, over 18 million meals have been provided for kids in need which include the children at Cambridge Street Community School in my riding.

I thank the staff and volunteers at the Canadian Living Foundation breakfast for learning program and I congratulate them on a job well done. I also encourage our government to make children's needs a top priority.

I join with my colleagues in congratulating all those who are celebrating their birthdays today.

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a bill has once again been introduced in this House to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code. That section admits that parents and guardians may use corporal punishment if the situation warrants. Although opponents of section 43 would have us believe they have the interest of the child at heart, it is our responsibility to examine the motives and logic they bring to this debate.

The United Nations sponsored convention on the rights of the child has been mentioned as a document that prohibits corporal punishment. Our own charter of rights and freedoms has also been mentioned although the reference is less clear. In either case the intention is to say to parents that special interest groups and politicians who hide behind their self-described expertise are much better qualified to raise your children than you are.

Canadians do not condone family violence but they are sick and tired of hearing the outrageous abuse of facts that come from government subsidized conferences held in foreign countries. I

urge all parents to love their children and to look critically at any statement that begins, the convention—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Churchill.

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**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the following are the words of Ila Bussidor:

I dream of an eagle  
 Forever coming to me with messages of strength  
 Always in friendship and kindness.  
 I touch the great sacred bird of spirit.  
 He cares for me, each time I vision him.  
 He lets me carry him.  
 He gives me his sacred feathers.  
 He walks with me.  
 I am not afraid of him.  
 I believe he is my guardian.  
 The spirits of my father and mother  
 Beside me in my times of pain.

Ila Bussidor is one of the Sayisi Dene who have survived the tragic cycle of discrimination, poverty and violence that saw the death of one-third of her people, a cycle of destruction that is a direct result of their uprooting by the department of Indian affairs. Ila Bussidor's account of that relocation and its disgraceful result is the subject of the book *Night Spirits*. Night spirits are the spirits of the dead.

I urge the minister of Indian affairs to read this book, to meet with the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake, to work toward compensation for the government's actions and to apologize to Ila and her people.

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[Translation]

**NATIONAL CHILD DAY**

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Today we are celebrating the fifth National Child Day.

This day was created in order to commemorate two measures adopted by the United Nations, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. That convention, which Canada ratified in 1991, is aimed at ensuring the survival, protection and development of children.

Recent statistics show that children under the age of 18 constitute 42% of those receiving assistance from food banks, and that 20% of Canada's children are poor.

In Canada, and in Quebec, the number of poor children is growing at the same astounding rate as the number of millionaires. I am therefore inviting the government over there to reflect upon the consequences of the actions it intends to take for future generations.

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**HENRI-BOURASSA BOULEVARD**

**Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 14, the new Henri-Bourassa Boulevard at the edge of Montreal North was officially inaugurated. The project cost \$113 million.

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It was begun in 1994 and tripled the width of the boulevard over a distance of 8.5 kilometres. Funding for this project was provided by the federal and provincial governments and by the municipalities involved, that is, Montreal, Montreal East, Anjou and Montreal North.

As you can see, federal-provincial co-operation can produce worthwhile results and shows once again that federalism works. This project meets objectives set for the movement of people and goods, and it also provides significant economic support for the industrial development of Montreal's east end.

When two governments put their shoulder to the wheel to carry out projects of this size for Quebec, we wonder why political parties are fighting to separate Quebec from Canada or, in other words, we understand why there is no reason for the Bloc to be in Ottawa.

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**NATIONAL CHILD DAY**

**Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to National Child Day. Today, November 20, is the day set aside for all children whatever their origin or their nationality and whether they are rich or poor.

• (1415)

Today, for 1.5 million Canadian children, or more than one child in four, taking a step in our society where money means happiness brings fresh pain, which, unfortunately, does not go away.

For these children, the ray of hope they have each day as they get up is dashed, as their dreams are often under the shadow of a cloud. Their breakfast is often not enough to satisfy their hunger.

I would remind this House and the Minister of Human Resources Development that these children will be running Canada's economy tomorrow.

These children will remember tomorrow what you do for them today.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, after seven months of collective bargaining at the post office and assurances from the minister that this is the best way to go, what do we have today? A strike at Canada Post and a shutdown of mail service right across the country.

We know the minister and the government can be counted on to defend the rights of management in the collective bargaining process. We know the NDP and the Bloc can be counted on to defend the rights of the union, but we are here to uphold the rights of the long-suffering Canadian public who is sick and tired of strikes at Canada Post.

I ask the Prime Minister, in the name of that long-suffering Canadian public, will the government legislate the post office workers back to work today?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the parties are talking at this time through negotiations. Under the law of the land, workers have the right to strike and we have to respect that law of this land. We would not take away the right to strike before a strike occurs.

Now we hope that the parties will find a solution. They were very close a few days ago, and I hope today's discussion will bring about a conclusion through these negotiations. This has always been the position that this government has preferred.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we support the collective bargaining process, but when it fails the government has an obligation to act.

This government claims to be concerned about the economy. This strike will cost businesses millions of dollars. It cripples the direct marketing industry at the worst time of the year. It hurts the economy.

I ask the Prime Minister, in the name of economic common sense, in the name of fiscal responsibility, how many millions of dollars does the Canadian business community have to lose before the government will legislate workers back?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have in the laws of Canada a provision that gives these employees the right to strike. Perhaps the opposition party does not want to have the collective bargaining process exist in our nation. That is fine. That may be its position, but it is not ours.

We know that when we give the right to strike, the right to strike can be used. At this moment, I am urging the parties to sit down and find a solution in the interests of all Canadians.

The union has the prerogative to go on strike. It knows it is causing problems for the people of Canada. I urge them to be reasonable—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister upholds the right to strike. When is he going to uphold the right of the Canadian public to its mail service?

Appeals to fiscal and economic sense do not get anywhere. Perhaps we can appeal to the jaded social conscience of the government. The disruption of postal service, as everyone in the

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House knows, falls most heavily upon the poor citizen. It falls upon the ordinary citizen who has no alternative except the post office.

In Montreal, the Old Brewery mission serving 1,200 meals a day is going to have a mail campaign—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since there was no question, there is no need for an answer.

I said, and I will repeat it, if they want an answer, yes, there is a strike because the Parliament of Canada has given the right to strike to this union. That is in the law and we have to respect the law of the land by giving the two parties a chance to find a negotiated solution.

• (1420)

**Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday on CBC TV the Minister of Labour said he would not interfere with postal negotiations because 90% of all collective bargaining in government sectors is settled without a strike.

That may be so but Canada Post certainly is not one of them. This is the third strike in 10 years, the fourth if we count the two separate strikes we had in 1987. That brings Canada Post's 10 year average to less than 50%.

Will the minister admit that Canada Post is not one of his success stories and legislate an end to this disruption?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the collective bargaining system has worked well in this country.

As my colleague indicated, over the last year in fact 94.5% of the businesses under federal jurisdiction have been settled without a work stoppage.

What we want to have here, and what the prime minister has indicated, is to let the process work. The strike is only a few hours old.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister thinks that an average of a strike every two and a half years is a good record, I hate to think what his bad record is.

Over 1,000 people in direct marketing were laid off prior to the strike actually starting. Tens of thousands more in direct marketing, charity organizations and businesses that depend on mail in the operation of their business will soon be joining them. Merry Christmas, Canada.

Can the minister tell this House how many people need to be laid off and how much suffering they and their families have to go through before he will act?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Canada have little sympathy for a strike or a lockout at any time, particularly this time of year.

What we must do is follow the law. Under Part I of the Canada Labour Code they certainly have rights. This government is letting the process work.

What I urge my colleague to do is encourage the parties to get to the table, look in the whites of the eyes of each other, come up with a deal, a deal that is better for the people of Canada.

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[Translation]

**OPTION CANADA**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in his report, the director general of elections in Quebec says precisely what the Minister of Canadian Heritage would never admit: Option Canada was indeed a gimmick through which the Council for Canadian Unity could get directly involved in the referendum.

In the light of this damning report, could the Minister of Canadian Heritage stand up and tell us in unequivocal terms what Option Canada did with the \$4.8 million supposedly spent during the referendum campaign?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we did the same thing Mr. Duhaime did with his funds.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conseil de la souveraineté du Québec headed by Yves Duhaime submitted a report of its activities, thereby clearly acting within the law, while the same can unfortunately not be said of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who is twisting the facts as she did with the GST.

Will the Prime Minister, who is responsible for the integrity of his government, state in this House that Option Canada did not violate in any way the Quebec referendum act, which was in effect at the time of the 1995 referendum?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member should mention this act because I think it was declared unconstitutional and that it why there was no follow-up after the referendum.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The federal government took close to \$5 million from the budgets allocated to the promotion of the official languages and gave the money to Option Canada. This is six times the annual subsidy to the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada.

*Oral Questions*

What distorted logic did the minister use to divert funds from the official languages promotion budget to a phoney organization whose role was to spread federalist propaganda during the last referendum campaign?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will simply remind the hon. member and anyone else interested in this issue, that the amount of the funds allocated to Option Canada is exactly the same as the amount given by the Quebec government to Option souveraineté Québec.

• (1425)

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we would like to see the minister table a report that would confirm the transparency of the process, as the Quebec government did in full compliance with the law. The same cannot be said of her and that is the problem.

The minister once said “If I am accused of fighting for my country, then I plead guilty”. In all likelihood, the money given to Option Canada was used to double the budget of the no side, which was in contempt of the Quebec referendum act in effect in 1995.

Are we to understand that, for this government, which has a holier-than-thou attitude and tries to lecture everyone, any—

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Canadian Heritage.

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have never made excuses for fighting for my country and I never will.

If the hon. member wants to talk about costs, let us talk about the real costs of the referendum, as reported in *Le Soleil* on December 2: “Government advertising aimed at Quebec’s welfare recipients, \$273,000; unveiling of the preamble at the Grand Théâtre de Québec, \$175,000; hiring—”.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Halifax.

\* \* \*

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Banks have registered record profits over the past five years. Part of the reason for this is the service charges they require their customers to pay. It is easy for the banks to strangle their customers. This government does not require them to publish the figures that could explain such charges.

Why not set up a parliamentary inquiry to determine how much of these profits were made at the expense of Canadians?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if banks are making profits, the leader of the NDP can rest assured that we will tax them. This government, in fact, levied \$100

million in taxes on banks in its second budget. This government has taxed major corporations, and this includes major financial institutions.

It is a good thing that the banks are stable, but we are ensuring for Canadian taxpayers that we are getting our share of the pie.

[*English*]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the issue is why banks are making obscene profits while Canadians are paying obscene service charges. Bank service charges are user fees. They are regressive taxes feeding massive profits and they play a part in preventing over 400,000 low income Canadians from even having a bank account.

Will the Minister of Finance introduce legislation requiring financial institutions to provide a lifeline account, assuring basic, affordable financial services to all Canadians?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the banks have already published that and undertaken that in accordance with our instructions to them.

Let me quote from a press release of December 4, 1996, when the leader of the fourth party said: “We welcome bank profits if they are earned through good management, sound long term investment and progressive participation in the Canadian economy”.

Why is she changing her mind?

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**DRUG PATENTS**

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC):** Mr. Speaker, next Tuesday, in the Town of Fleurimont, a Pharmacology Research Centre will be inaugurated at the University of Sherbrooke.

This project would not have been possible without Bill C-91, which was passed in this House. I would like today to ask the Prime Minister to clarify his government’s position on this legislation.

Does the government intend, yes or no, to amend this act or its regulations? This was not made clear by the answers provided yesterday by one of his ministers?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it was rather clear, I think. We undertook to respect our commitments under international treaties, including with the World Trade Organization and also NAFTA.

We also received a report from a House committee suggesting that we review the regulations. We are proceeding with this, but we will be maintaining the 20-year period for patent protection.

*Oral Questions*

• (1430)

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the minister today is confirming the doubts we had, because his answer is unclear. He speaks of the 20-year period, but he leaves the door wide open when it comes to the regulations.

The Prime Minister knows how important this bill is for Quebec and for investments. Can the Prime Minister tell us clearly today that he will not be changing the regulations to do through the back door what he cannot do through the front door?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I said clearly that a House committee studied this issue and asked the government to review the regulations.

The legislation requires that we review the regulations in 1997. The legislation required that we review the regulations and also the act itself in 1997. So we are only doing today what the law as passed requires us to do for 1997-98.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADA POST**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this labour minister just said that the government follows the law. Well, guess what? This government writes the law. It is time that this government wrote some law that is going to help the Canadian public right across the land.

My question is for the labour minister. Why will this government not put its foot down and get legislation in place to get these postal workers back to work now?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what this government wants is a collective agreement. It is unfortunate that we continually hear talk of legislation, talk that will do nothing but hurt the negotiations. Both parties are at the table. Let us leave them at the table to see if they can come up with a collective agreement that will be better for the people of Canada. Let us not be making statements that will hurt the negotiations.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, both parties have been at the table for seven months and the strike started yesterday.

This morning the office of the Liberal MP for Leeds—Grenville told a constituent that the government did not want to legislate the workers back because it would hurt the morale of the union members.

Let us look at who is hurting here. The Canadian public is hurting.

I want to ask the labour minister right now does he have legislation in place to put these workers back to work and if he does have legislation in place, what is the hold-up?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that they have to continue talking about something that does nothing but hurt the negotiations. Let us be constructive. We have both sides at the table. They want to come up with a collective agreement. Let us support both sides in order to come up with an agreement that will be better for CUPW, better for the post office and better for the people of Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUEBEC'S PARTITION**

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Yesterday, the minister said that when it came to the sovereignty of Quebec, they could not exclude the possibility that changing borders is the lesser evil. This is clearly a statement in support of the proposal to partition a sovereign Quebec.

Are we to understand that, by making this statement, the minister is becoming the moral support, the political representative and the chief leader of the partitionist movement in Quebec?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is typical of the separatist leaders: when they do not know what to say about something, they try to run down their opponent.

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Prime Minister.

Will the Prime Minister admit that the partitionist movement being led by his minister is rejected by the Quebec people and that his government should dissociate itself for once and for all from this completely irresponsible, not to say outright dangerous, movement?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Quebec have voted twice to remain in Canada.

Second, every time the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs writes a letter, the Parti Québécois, the Government of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois, being unable to reply in writing, try to insult him.



*Oral Questions*

• (1435)

*[English]*

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have lost access to the postal system. The Minister of Labour says that he supports the collective bargaining process. So do we. But when will he act to do something about this monopoly that 30 million Canadians do not have an alternative to?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all I can say to my hon. colleague is please let the system work. Both parties are at the table. They are trying to come up with a deal that will be better for Canada, better for the post office and a deal that will be better for CUPW. Let us let them do their negotiating.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, for seven months this process has been going on and the results have been that there has been not bargaining in earnest but actually depending on the government at some point to legislate them back to work, like it has done time and time again.

When will the minister take some action and restore the postal service?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the only unfortunate thing is that these statements are doing nothing but hurting the process.

My hon. colleague talks about businesses under the federal jurisdiction. I have indicated before that in the last year of the businesses under the federal jurisdiction, 94.5% have settled without a dispute. It is a good system. The collective bargaining system has served us well in this country for years. Let it work.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]*

## THE ENVIRONMENT

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

Yesterday, in Montreal, the Minister of Transport said that his government intended to become involved in public transportation, which is under provincial jurisdiction, as part of the struggle against greenhouse gases.

Before he starts meddling in other people's business, why does the minister not give priority to saving VIA Rail, which is dying a slow death because the federal government lacks the courage to act to enable it to develop? This is something that is in his bailiwick, let him mind his own business.

*[English]*

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** My goodness, Mr. Speaker, I never thought that one speech in Montreal would excite the hon. member so much.

The fact is the reports of the federal government interfering in provincial jurisdictions in this area are totally wrong. We have a collaborative approach with the various transport ministries across the country which work very well. However, there is no denying that there is an urban congestion problem.

What I said in Montreal I will say here again. We want to work with the provinces and others to help relieve that problem.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

How does the minister justify the fact that her government is paying out hundreds of millions of dollars directly or indirectly to support the oil industry, when it is throwing only crumbs to support the development of renewable energy?

*[English]*

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman's information is factually incorrect. Since the late 1980s the amount of direct spending by the Government of Canada in relation to the energy sector has dropped dramatically. In our last two budgets, 1996 and 1997, we substantially enhanced the amount of resources dedicated to renewable energy, energy efficiency and alternative sources. The hon. gentleman should catch up with the facts.

\* \* \*

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that we are the only party in the House that is concerned about this post office strike.

The minister tells us to have confidence in the collective bargaining process at Canada Post. That process has led to a strike or a disruption once every two and a half years for the last 10 years.

So I ask the minister again will he acknowledge that the process is broken and legislate those workers back to work?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is most unfortunate that we have to continually talk about something that does nothing but hurt the process.

*Oral Questions*

• (1440)

The member is criticizing a system that has been over 90% successful in the last year. The collective bargaining system has served us well over the last many years.

Let it work. Let Canada Post and CUPW come up with a collective agreement that will serve Canadians well.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what hurts the process is not statements from this side. It is inaction, an unwillingness to act, on the part of the government. That is what encourages both sides not to co-operate.

Will the minister not acknowledge that the process he is relying upon is broken and do something to fix it and do something today?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this process is under part 1 of the Canada Labour Code. It has been updated periodically. In fact legislation was just tabled. What it does is that it updates the process.

The process has served us well for years. A process that has over a 94% success rate is not a process that needs to be torn apart and then fixed. The collective bargaining process has worked well. Please let it work.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Many voices have been raised to decry the sad history of residential schools for native peoples, which were set up to break their ancestral culture. These schools almost wiped out a generation of native people, and the federal government has an enormous responsibility in this sad story.

When and how does the minister plan to publicly apologize to the native communities that were the victims of this tragedy?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the stories of residential schools were explained and described very well in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

It is a commitment of the government to respond to the royal commission as soon as possible, and we will do so.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade.

Last week I had the opportunity to participate in the business women's trade mission to Washington which involved 120 participants from across the nation.

What action is the government taking following this trade mission to ensure that women are meaningful participants in the export industry of Canada?

**Mr. Julian Reed (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in thanking the hon. member for her question I should report to the House that she was part of a history making event, the first female entrepreneur trade mission in the history of the country.

I am also pleased to report to the House that the minister announced a women's trade summit would be held in Toronto in 1999. Women are making a great contribution to the economy of the country.

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**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, low income people, seniors and people who live in rural Canada are the people who depend on Canada Post to stay in touch with their friends and family. We have an instance of a charity in Montreal that uses Canada Post to do its fund-raising so it can do its good work.

Why is the government allowing all these very vulnerable groups and individuals to suffer because of its inaction?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course the government is concerned but we must let the process work.

As far as social assistance cheques are concerned they will be delivered by CUPW.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we have 9.1% unemployment. Some 1.4 million people are unemployed in the country today. This strike will cost Canadian businesses about \$40 million a day.

How can the minister stand there and not do anything at all, knowing that hundreds of thousands, millions of Canadians, will suffer because of its inaction? When will the government legislate them back to work?

• (1445)

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like these people to realize that we are protecting seniors. In that way the government has reacted very well.

*Oral Questions*

We have negotiated with Canada Post to deliver employment insurance and social security benefits that Canadians need. I would like Canadians from coast to coast to know that we have organized the establishment of over 400 distribution sites so that social benefit cheques will be available to them.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, now a question from the only party in the House that sees the workers of CUPW as Canadians.

The current crisis facing Canadians and Canadian businesses is because the Minister of Public Works and Government Services has turned Canada Post into a cash cow with excessive dividends and demands for the government instead of quality postal service for all Canadians.

Will the minister advise the House that the government will get its greedy little fingers out of the coffers of Canada Post so that bargaining between the management and CUPW will begin in earnest in an atmosphere of openness and fairness?

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the moment that we speak and since last night talks have resumed.

Canada Post is at the table with the union. Canada Post has a mandate to negotiate. I am sure that with good will from both parties we will have a negotiated settlement as soon as possible.

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**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is another area in which Canadians are being sidelined for profit. That is telephone service.

Since 1992 some local phone rates have increased by over 100%. Thousands of homes are without phones because the rates have gone through the roof. Now phone companies have gone to the CRTC wanting more increases so their shareholders will have higher dividends.

My question is for the Minister of Industry. How will the ministry make basic telephone services affordable for all Canadians?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very good question. I know the member will be aware that Canada currently has the lowest telephone rates in the world both for local and long distance service.

She will also know that we have moved to ensure that basic service is made available. We have asked the CRTC to ensure that is the case and that it is increasing telephone service across Canada.

Canadians will have access not just to basic telephone service but to the very best services the new technologies have to offer as well, as we become the most connected nation in the world.

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**AIRBUS**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Ottawa RCMP Association president stated that the Liberal government singled out the police as scapegoats in the Airbus affair.

Earlier the government tried to cover its tracks on this Airbus matter by placing a gag order on a golden handshake for former Staff Sergeant Fraser Feigenwald. The rank and file of the RCMP are not accepting responsibility for political interference in the matter.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he live up to his shallow rhetoric on government accountability and tell the House once and for all who is responsible for this mess?

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been through this many, many times. The fact of the matter is that an investigation was done, hearings commenced, the Staff Sergeant resigned, and they stopped.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister have repeatedly quoted from a document signed by Brian Mulroney as a means to protest their innocence.

How does the Prime Minister reconcile this fact with the fact that we have another letter charging that an innocent man has done something in a foreign land? This letter is still existing out there. When will the letter be withdrawn and when will we have a public inquiry into the matter?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned at the suggestion the hon. member has just made.

It seems to me he is suggesting that the government interfere with an ongoing police investigation. I would think that hon. member would be the first to complain if we were to do so.

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[Translation]

**FRANCOPHONIE SUMMIT**

**Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie.

The Francophonie summit was held at Hanoi this past November 14 through 16. Could the minister tell us how the summit turned out and if Canada attained its objectives?

*Oral Questions*

• (1450)

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform this House that Canada attained all of its objectives at the Francophonie summit in Hanoi. Most particularly, Moncton was selected to host the 1999 summit.

The Francophonie has elected its first Secretary General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, we succeeded in advancing the Francophonie in a number of areas, particularly the information highway, the permanent international criminal court and human rights.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for West Kootenay—Okanagan.

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*[English]***CANADA POST**

**Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a little collective bargaining lesson for the Minister of Labour.

Collective bargaining has four parts: negotiate, conciliate, mediate and a settlement mechanism. Canada Post and CUPW do not have a settlement mechanism; they have a confrontation system.

When will the minister put a settlement mechanism in place and stop holding Canadians to ransom?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Labour I am trying not to come up with statements that will harm the discussions between CUPW and the post office.

I want to see a collective agreement. Let the parties sit down and come up with an agreement that will be better for all Canadians: a Canadian solution to a Canadian problem.

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*[Translation]***RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

When I met with executives of Via Rail on November 10, they confirmed their intention of having the Océan and Chaleur trains back up under the Quebec bridge all the way to Sainte-Foy.

Does the Minister of Transport find this a safe solution, and what does he intend to do with the Lévis station?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already stated in this House, no decision has been taken on rail service at the Lévis station in the hon. member's region.

I must, however, inform the hon. member that Via Rail has asked CN to defer the decision until January 13, in order to make holiday season travel easier for everyone.

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*[English]***PORTS**

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Transport what he knew about a complaint laid with the RCMP about alleged wrongdoings by Canada Ports police officials.

The minister told the House that he understood the investigation was under way and he could not comment further.

Outside the House the minister changed his tune and said the RCMP were evaluating the complaint to decide whether or not to launch an investigation.

Still later, an RCMP spokesperson in Halifax said that the force was assessing the nature of the complaint.

Is there an investigation under way or not and, if not, why not?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been quite consistent. The fact is that certain allegations of wrongdoing were made. They were brought to the attention of the RCMP. They are evaluating that particular complaint and will decide whether or not to investigate.

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**EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, at a foreign affairs committee meeting earlier this month the president of the Export Development Corporation, Ian Gillespie, confirmed that the EDC was reluctant to sign a code of ethics championed earlier this year by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

How could the Canadian government ask Canadian corporations to sign this code of ethics when crown agencies are unwilling to sign the code of ethics and play by the same rules?

**Mr. Julian Reed (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I will take it under advisement and report back to him.

**CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a recent survey found that nearly one in two Canadians would fail the citizenship examination given to immigrants. This suggests that a large number of Canadians lack the basic civic knowledge required to understand and participate in Canada's public life.

My question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. What role does she think the federal government should play to ensure that history and civics are taught in schools across Canada? Does she think that the federal government should develop national standards in these areas?

• (1455)

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington for his question. I know that in his past life he had a particular interest in heritage.

The statistics he quoted are of concern to all of us. That is why at the last meeting of federal-provincial ministers of culture we agreed to establish a pilot program with the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education at its request because it said that we needed more material to teach Canadian about our own history.

We are working with the CCME. At the next meeting of the ministers of education we hope to have a very concrete proposal for a clearinghouse for Canadiana that will be available to all Canadian students.

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**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a million Canadians who want jobs cannot find them. Millions of others who have jobs basically have not had a pay increase in years. Meanwhile Canada Post has guaranteed lifetime employment to its 45,000 unionized members and offered them a 3% pay increase over two years. This strike will cost Canadians millions of dollars.

Is this what the government and the Minister of Labour call fair?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the government calls fair is the collective bargaining system.

Let the collective bargaining system work. Let the people in CUPW and the post office sit down and come up with an agreement that will be better for the people of Canada.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**SEAL HUNTING**

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The opponents of seal hunting are currently running ads in which hunters are seen performing unspeakable acts on these animals. There are two possibilities: either this is fake footage, in which case it needs to be denounced for what it is, or these acts really were committed, in which case the perpetrators need to be prosecuted.

Can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans make a commitment to initiate an investigation in order to inform this House as to whether seal hunting is indeed being carried out in accordance with the standards and the law?

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the seal hunt is being directed according to law.

The facts are that the total allowable catch for last year was not met. There were 261, 354 harp seals caught and 7,058 hooded seals. We can assure the member that DFO is doing all it can to see there is no illegal seal hunt.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have had political interference with parliamentary signings on drug patent legislation. We have had political editing of an independent audit of drug research and now we have a political whitewash of scientific findings that show dangerously high levels of lead in children's toys.

Whatever his agenda, will the Minister of Health at least agree to put children first and will he pull off the market any children's toys and plastic products that exceed his department's own standards for lead content and that could create irreversible neurological damage among children?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member would confine herself to the facts when she speaks about the safety of children. It is not fair to children or their parents to create misimpressions about these things.

We recently received and looked carefully at data about the safety of toys. We satisfied ourselves that all the toys tested had levels of materials that did not pose a threat to the safety of children.

*Business of the House*

This is National Child Day. I urge the hon. member to join with me and the government in celebrating our children, not in scaring them in this way.

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**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC):** Mr. Speaker, this week the government told Canadian charities that they would have to run out of money. It told small businesses that they would have to put some employees out of work. Yesterday the government ran out of time and now it is clear that it is out of ideas.

Does the government have any clue how it will end the postal strike, or will it leave Canadians wishing that they had thrown the government out of office?

• (1500)

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again what we must do in this country is let the collective bargaining system work. The collective bargaining system has served workers and management well.

Let the people of CUPW and the post office sit down and come up with a collective agreement that will be better for all Canadians.

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**DAVID GUSSOW**

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, today is rather a special day for one of our table officers.

[*Translation*]

Today is the last day David Gussow, Deputy Principal Clerk in Procedural Services, will act as table officer.

[*English*]

David will be leaving this week to take his well earned retirement after 25 years of devoted service on Parliament Hill. He began his career at the Library of Parliament in 1972 and he went on to work in various capacities in the House, becoming a table officer here with us in 1990.

I know, my colleagues, that you would like to join with me in recognizing David's long and successful career.

I want to wish you, David, your wife Margaret and your two children good health and much happiness in the years to come.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**The Speaker:** Before we proceed to tributes to a former parliamentarian, Mr. Thompson, I am going to entertain a question of privilege from the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville and then I am going to come immediately to the tributes.

**PRIVILEGE**

## COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of personal privilege. I must say that in between the tributes that we are about to pay I am troubled that I should even have to say this because this is a very honourable place in which we work, and I think everybody realizes that.

During question period the member for Edmonton North saw fit to refer to some sort of clandestine operation she undertook and then alluded to comments that one of the people who worked on my staff said. That person is not here to defend themselves.

I fall short of saying that this is McCarthyism but—

**The Speaker:** This is surely not a point of privilege. We have one member saying one thing which is perhaps a point of view, an interpretation of the facts. We have another member who I think was going to say that this did not take place.

• (1505)

If that is the case, then we have a matter of dispute of the facts. I would hope that this type of thing would not occur, but it is not a question of privilege. It is a point of information, surely, that he wants to pass on. The point is well taken by the House.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to get the government House leader to provide the House with some information about the legislation that is coming forward in the House for the remainder of this week and for the balance of next week.

More specifically, I would also like him to let the House know how many days are planned for the debate on Bill C-2, the Canada pension bill.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking the House leaders of all parties for their co-operation in trying to arrange what I believe to be so far an orderly program for this House.

That program calls for the business for the next week as follows. Tomorrow morning we will deal with second reading of Bill C-17, respecting Teleglobe. In the afternoon I understand that there is agreement to deal with the report stage and third reading of Bill C-7 regarding the Saguenay park.

On Monday I understand that there is also agreement to deal with all stages of the legislation on land mines that was introduced earlier today. It is also my understanding that the House may sit into the evening to complete the said bill.

*Tributes*

Tuesday shall be the final allotted day in the present period with votes on main and supplementary estimates and on the consequent appropriation bill or bills at the end of the day.

I am pleased to respond as well on Bill C-2. Next Wednesday and Thursday it is our intention to consider the report stage of Bill C-2 respecting the Canada pension plan.

Next Friday we will consider the report stage and third reading of Bill C-10, respecting certain international tax conventions.

This is the business statement at least as can be determined at the present time.

\* \* \*

**THE LATE ROBERT THOMPSON**

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, we will now proceed to tributes to Mr. Thompson, who was with us. He was a member of the Social Credit Party and also a member of the Conservative Party.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Robert Thompson who came to this House in 1962 to represent his constituents of Red Deer, Alberta and to lead the Social Credit Party at a time of great political change.

He served in the House from 1962 until 1972, a decade. What a decade in political life. In those ten years there were five general elections. The Social Credit Party which Bob Thompson led in 1962 was a power to be reckoned with in the west and in Quebec.

Press accounts of the day paint a picture of a new leader and a new party running against the establishment. When the Social Credit Party collapsed, he ran successfully as a Progressive Conservative and in 1968 he was a member until the general election in 1972.

Bob Thompson served his country in Parliament and also in the Royal Canadian Air Force when Canada was engaged in pilot training during World War II.

He served humanity as an educator here and in Ethiopia. He was a minister of education in the imperial Ethiopian government from 1947 until 1951. After his political life, he maintained his interest in teaching and public affairs. In 1982 he prepared a model constitution for Canada.

His strong religious faith is reflected in his coat of arms, the motto being translated "In the will of God". Mr. Thompson was made an officer of the Order of Canada in national recognition of his service.

Today the House of Commons pays tribute to him. In doing so, we thank his family for sharing him with Canada. His eight children and his widow Evelyn had less of his presence and time because of his public service.

Today we mourn him, we honour his memory and we thank his family for sharing him with this House and with Canada.

• (1510)

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that we learned of the passing of Bob Thompson. His career was rich and varied in service to others. Bob taught school in Alberta before the war. He was an officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He went to Ethiopia in 1943 both as a teacher and as an air force officer. During the forties and fifties he served with distinction as an educator in Ethiopia and in the Sudan before returning to enter public life in Canada.

He was the national leader of the Social Credit Party from 1961 to 1967 and was elected an MP for Red Deer in 1962, 1963, 1965 and 1968. When he retired from Parliament in 1972, he resumed his career as a university teacher and administrator and completed his public service as a member of the parole board.

I served in this House of Commons with Bob throughout his parliamentary career. I recall him as a man of substance and integrity. He was at the centre of events at a time of unusual political tumult. But even those of us with greatly differing political points of view came to respect and admire him for his sincerity and his personal high standards of parliamentary conduct.

I think it is fair to say that despite what a distinguished Canadian author called the distemper of the times, Bob Thompson was a leading parliamentarian without personal enemies. He made a strong contribution to this House and to Canada.

Therefore I wish to extend our sincere condolences to his widow Evelyn and to his family. Bob will certainly be missed in terms of service to Canada. Once again, our sympathy to his widow and his family.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the official opposition to pay tribute to an amazing Canadian today.

Robert Norman Thompson gave his life to public service in teaching, missionary work, elected political life and as a roaming emissary, specifically in Ethiopia.

Bob was active as a very young man in the Social Credit movement in Alberta. He honed his political skills at the feet of William Aberhart. This would stand him in good stead for his entire lifetime.

Bob, his wife Hazel and their children served in Ethiopia for years as missionaries. Bob was a teacher who organized and helped set up the modern education system there. He organized an air force training school and was the head of a leprosy mission, among other things. Bob got things done.

When he arrived back in Canada, Bob took over the leadership of the federal Socred Party in 1961 and, as has been mentioned, he was elected to Parliament for Red Deer in 1962 and re-elected in

*Tributes*

1963 and 1965. He then ran as a Conservative and was re-elected in 1968.

In 1972 Bob left politics and moved out to the west coast. He helped found Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C. He taught political science there and sponsored many Ethiopian students over the years.

It was at Trinity that I met Bob Thompson in the mid-1970s. One strong memory I have of him was when I was involved in a terrible accident with the Trinity van. He was planning on taking a singing team out that same evening and called me after I had been released from the hospital. He said to me "Well, sis, what am I suppose to use for a vehicle tonight now that you have wrecked the van?"

When I was elected to this Parliament in 1989, Bob became an instant adviser. How I appreciated him as a mentor. I mentioned the other day that Bob was fast, feisty and a fierce competitor when it came to political debate. We had some wild and exciting political discussions which taught me a lot. He was a wonderful role model to me and I appreciated that.

After Bob's wife Hazel passed away, he married a long time friend and fellow missionary, Evelyn Brant, in 1993. Lew and I also married in 1993, so we considered ourselves the twin couples. Lew and I quickly fell in love with Evelyn and all enjoyed every chance we could get to have a visit when we were out in the Vancouver area.

Just this past summer we enjoyed a wonderful visit, complete with Bob's giving me advice about my new position as a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. It is a special memory that I will always treasure.

The world is a better place because Bob Thompson was in it. Thank you, Bob, for all you gave us. Thank you, Evelyn, and all Bob's children for sharing him with us. Bless you all.

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, both personally and on behalf of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, I would like to offer my most sincere condolences to the family of Robert Thompson, who passed away on November 16.

Mr. Thompson was born in Duluth, Minnesota. After World War II, he was involved in the reconstruction of Ethiopia, holding a number of senior positions within the Ethiopian government. He earned particular renown as the director of the Ethiopian Air Force Academy, and subsequently as the deputy minister of education, a position he held for 16 years.

On his return to Canada in 1958, Mr. Thompson got actively involved in politics. He became the leader of the Social Credit Party in 1962. That same year marked his first election to the

House of Commons. He was to represent the people of Red Deer for 10 years, first as a Social Credit MP from 1962 to 1967, and then as a Conservative from 1968 to 1972.

Once he left politics, Mr. Thompson moved on to a distinguished career as a professor of political science and vice-chairman of the board of governors of Trinity-Western University. In 1975 he was appointed Canadian High Commissioner to Singapore.

We parliamentarians realize full well how demanding political life is, and what commitment and generosity it demands. For this reason, we must pay particular tribute to the professionalism and devotion shown by Mr. Thompson throughout his entire political career. His family and friends have every reason to be proud of him and of all his accomplishments.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do want to add the voice of the New Democratic Party to those of others in expressing our sadness at the loss of Mr. Bob Thompson.

When I was first elected to Parliament in 1968 he was a member of the Conservative Party, actually sitting in the House roughly where the Conservative Party sits today. I remember speaking to him. I was only 22 years old and he was one of the more seasoned veterans, what I considered to be a very older person in those days, although he was probably only in his fifties at the time. He certainly was a very wise and honourable member of the House and I really appreciated him very much.

He was very unique in many ways. First, he was a teacher, but he was also a chiropractor, a combination we do not see very often. He was a flight lieutenant in World War II with the Royal Canadian Air Force and then, as members have heard, he became involved in Ethiopia where he spent many, many years involved in education and in government.

He was also very unique because he was the Minister of Education for Ethiopia and later on, of course, a Canadian member of Parliament. Those are a couple of unique combinations and very rare indeed. He was a very interesting man.

He returned to his country in 1960, I believe, and became President of the National Social Credit Party. That was an interesting time because the Social Credit Party had been wiped out in 1958, the CCF was down to eight seats at that time and both parties were in the process of rebuilding. The Social Credit Party did rebuild, came back with a stunning 30 seats in the House, with 26 from Quebec led by the deputy leader Réal Caouette, who later split away and formed the Ralliement des créditistes.

Mr. Thompson persevered and stayed on and ran again in 1963 and in 1965 and was re-elected as a member of the Social Credit Party. If my understanding is correct, he did not like the direction that his party was taking or the configuration of the party after the split with the créditistes. He switched parties in 1968 and ran as a



member of the Conservative Party in the same riding of Red Deer and, of course, was re-elected.

Our party differed on many of the ideas and philosophies that Mr. Thompson held, but we respected him as a very honourable man who made a great contribution to the House and to this country. I think we can learn a lot from his legacy.

With all sincerity, I wish to convey my condolences and the condolences of the New Democratic Party to his wife Evelyn, his eight children, to his many grandchildren and great grandchildren and his friends. This country will surely miss him.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Bob Thompson was a most influential political force in the House during the 1960s, but that is not where his political influence started or stopped.

• (1520 )

His involvement as a political science professor at Trinity-Western University, the very university he was a founder of, has influenced many a student to change this country for the better. The deputy leader of today's Reform Party, my colleague from Edmonton North, was indeed one of the people influenced by Bob Thompson.

Very few people have influenced our nation in so many ways as Bob Thompson has. How was it possible for one person to be an officer during the Second World War, a federal member of Parliament, the organizer of Ethiopia's boy scout group, a school principal, a deputy minister of education, a leader of a federal political party, chairman of the board of governors of a university, founder of a school for dyslexic children in my riding, an author, and on and on and on his influence goes.

Yet, through all of that, he devoted much of his time to his family, his friends, his community. His influence on me was significant. Bob often shared his vast experiences with me even when I was a rookie candidate. He advised me, he informed me when I was on the wrong path and as recently as a couple of months ago, he summoned me to discuss my position and responsibilities as opposition house leader and how to deal with the complexities of the unity issue.

I was proud to be asked to speak with him. He was a sincere, knowledgeable and wise visionary. Bob Thompson's family, friends, community, church and country will miss him dearly and I send my sincere condolences to all of them. As for me, I shall miss the greatest political mentor of my life.

Thank you, Bob Thompson.

### *Government Orders*

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee; and Motions Nos. 2, 31 and 41.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar has four minutes remaining in his intervention.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the last four minutes and address the issue of exclusion costs. The hon. member for Brandon—Souris moved this amendment to exclude both the inclusion and the exclusion clause.

You would wonder why this clause became an issue. We were dealing more or less with the exclusion clause in Bill C-72 and we did not hear too many complaints about the exclusion clause until an ill wind from the east brought up the idea of an inclusion clause. This idea was planted in committee. It was planted in hearings that we held in western Canada. We found out very quickly that this inclusion clause that was proposed for C-72 would create a lot of problems.

Now we see what this has really done. The member for Brandon—Souris, and I think rightly so, has made an amendment to exclude both. When we looked at the commodity groups or had them before as witnesses, they were dead set against this inclusion clause because their farmers that control the commodity groups would have nothing to do with the inclusion clause. I was somewhat surprised why they were so hesitant or why they objected the most to this clause.

I was talking to some railway officials just this last week and we got by accident on this inclusion clause and I said: "Can you inform me somewhat why, in the special crops industry, this is such a harsh clause or this is such a harsh thing to deal with?"

They explained to me that with the exclusion of the special crops from the wheat board, the commodity groups controlled completely the buying of the grain, the moving of the grain and the transporting of the grain across the ocean. When customers want to buy some of the special crops like canola, sunflowers, canary seeds, they buy it on the basis that it is delivered right to their plants. That relieves a lot of headaches for them. They demand delivery. When they buy a product, that product better be delivered on time or else there are huge fines or huge discounts.

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• (1525)

The companies that control these special crops have a tremendous record of getting that crop to the destination. This has always been the problem of the wheat board grains. We do not want to just blame the board for some of these problems but the board grains are always on the basis f.o.b. Vancouver, Thunder Bay or Montreal and that is where it stops.

After that, it is up to the customers to try to find transportation to organize it, to bring that product to their plants or to their processors. This has become a real issue as far as the Canadian Wheat Board grains are concerned, the delivery of those board grains.

Customers demand that they have delivery on time because it offsets their production times. It offsets the commitments they have made to the finished end users of their products.

I think this clause has to be removed. If it takes the exclusion clause to go along with the inclusion clause, that has to be supported by this House no matter what because we do not want to ruin or hamper the special crops industries which have really been the survival of western farmers in the last decade or two.

If we should take away the special crops, farmers would all be bankrupt today and they would not be able to survive on just the wheat board grains.

It is sometimes hard to believe the issues that arise when some of these bills or amendments are dealt with. It has made me a little wiser as far as the transportation of special crops is concerned. I think we have to do everything humanly possible to either amend this bill to a point where it is acceptable by farmers or completely table it and forget about it until some other government will take the bull by the horns and give western farmers what they want, a choice that will make the system work.

As one of the Liberal members asked, how can we fix this inclusion and exclusion clause issue? It is very simple. All we have to do is make the Canadian Wheat Board a voluntary institution and all these problems will be resolved by themselves.

Farmers will take their product to the place where it is shipped, where it brings the best price, where it is delivered to the customers because they want to produce a product that is used and has benefited other countries as well as our own.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose a lawyer board at this time. Rather than a wheat board, I think we should have a lawyer board in Canada.

All lawyers' services should be marketed through a central agency and this central agency should have its contracts approved by government. It should apply only to the lawyers in Ontario and

Quebec and these lawyers should not be paid directly. All earnings should go through a central fund.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not believe this member is talking about the motion before us. Maybe he is proposing a new agency that the Reform Party might support, but we are really talking about the Canadian Wheat Board here and how to maximize returns back to primary producers.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I noticed that the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville in his remarks did not seem to have ones that were immediately relevant to the bill, but I assumed that he was going to draw a parallel between the board he was discussing and the bill before us and indeed the clauses that we are currently debating in Group No. 2. I know the hon. member will do that soon so that it will be clear to all hon. members that he is on topic.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, anybody who was in this House for the last two days would know the relevance of what I am saying. We are discussing the Group No. 2 amendments which apply to only three provinces. They are very undemocratic. They control only farmers. I am drawing an analogy and I am going to continue.

• (1530)

The lawyer board I am advocating, analogous to the wheat board, would not allow lawyers to market their services outside this area. It could only market its services to certain customers, not to everyone. The lawyer board would control profits. It would prevent lawyers from making certain contracts because the lawyer may make too much money. The board should not, however, be allowed to be audited by the auditor general. If the funds are not being properly managed that should not become public.

How many lawyers would protest would not matter. They would be forced to pool all their returns and distribute them equitably, except for those who could maybe manipulate the system and get outside it.

Any lawyer who was caught marketing his services outside the designated area would have his property confiscated, be put in jail, in leg irons and handcuffs. He would be strip searched every three days because he marketed his services in a way that the government did not want him to. He would be kept there for five months even if it meant changing the law within an hour.

Lawyers would be limited on where they could deliver their services. Lawyers would have quotas, limits on how many clients they could have. If after 50 years of this lawyer board they thought it was an undemocratic lawyer board and the government felt some

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pressure to change it, the government could come up with a question that would have a predetermined outcome to keep control over lawyers by the board and the government.

The question would probably read something like this, if we could ever get lawyers or anybody to agree on that kind of question. Do you want lawyers to be paid adequately for their services? What do we think lawyers would say? Lawyers would probably say yes. Then the government would come around and say that means they want to have a lawyer board. That is how fair the question was that the government asked.

I am trying to make a point that relates directly to the amendments. Why does the government single out one particular area of the country, discriminate against one narrow sector, the agricultural sector? Why does it not pick lawyers. Why does it not start having a lawyer board and put control on them?

There is something very seriously wrong here. I am very concerned about this issue. I have worked on it.

This morning I asked a Liberal member to table a piece of paper. I do not have it yet. I happen to know what is on it in any event, or I would not have asked for it.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that item was tabled this morning. Maybe the hon. member was not in the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I think the parliamentary secretary is indicating that the document was tabled. The hon. member can continue his speech.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, the member is just trying to interrupt me. I hope I get some extra time.

I saw that document. It was illegible. The Table apologized and was going to try to get me one that I could read. I was here when it was tabled.

In any event the point I am trying to make in relation to all this is that it is not fair. There is a blank on these applications to export wheat or barley. The export licence asks the number of tonnes to be exported, who wants to export it and so on. Then it says exported under the export licence application dated and that it was grown in the province of. If three words appear in that line an export certificate will not be granted. Those three words are Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It is as simple as that.

Do you get the point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker? It is undemocratic. It is not fair. That is the point we are trying to make.

I listened to my Bloc colleague this morning. He began by saying he supported Bill C-4. I thought everything they are saying contradicts the fact that they are supporting Bill C-4, very flawed legislation. I began to ask myself why they were supporting Bill C-4.

• (1535 )

Could it be that it continues to guarantee the Canadian Wheat Board can determine that grain from the prairies will be shipped through the sea ports of Baie Comeau or Montreal rather than through the port of preference for the people in my constituency, that being Churchill?

Would he agree with a board controlled by the federal government that shipped products from Quebec through the prairies? I do not think he would agree with that any more than lawyers would agree to a lawyer's board. Nor would the Bloc want to have all of their products shipped through the prairies if that were not cost effective.

Farmers in my area want more grain shipped from Churchill. Because it costs less, they would be able to put more money in their own pockets. However, the Canadian Wheat Board controls their wheat and barley and the route by which it will be shipped.

I have something else to reply to from this morning. I was shut down by the Speaker but I think it needs to be mentioned. The member said that we were insulting the House by raising some of the points we have in relation to government controlling this and all that.

Do members know the biggest insult? The people in my riding are saying it. It is not that we rise on points of order and that the minister does not have courtesy. One of the greatest insults to the House is that the government is not listening. We have not had the minister responsible for the wheat board here one minute yet.

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

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I apologize.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know the hon. member is interested in the attendance of all members of the House, but he also knows that it is quite improper in debate to refer to the presence or absence of members in the House. I know he would not want to breach the rules.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Anyway, what is the bottom line on Bill C-4, the Canadian Wheat Board bill we have before us? The bottom line is that it does not solve the problems with the Canadian Wheat Board. None of the proposals that have been brought in address the division, the problems or the big issues that concern farmers.

Should the Canadian Wheat Board have the exclusive jurisdiction over grains like wheat and barley? Farmers want control over their property. How does the bill diffuse the division that exists? Not one speaker on the Liberal side has addressed that serious problem. It does not in fact.

Then we have the other underlying issue of property rights which my colleagues have adequately addressed and I will not take the time to do so. I appeal on behalf of all farmers to the government to listen. Our city cousins should take note of the debate that is

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happening here. Without their help we cannot get rid of this discriminatory legislation.

If I lived in Quebec and hollered "separation" if you did not pay attention to what I want, I would probably get some attention. However, if I am a farmer from Saskatchewan I am not getting that attention. I am not about to holler "separation". Surely to goodness we can have some fairness in the country.

If I was an aboriginal and I wanted to suddenly export all my grain, would the government suddenly listen? The bottom line is that it is not fair. I showed the certificate earlier.

Because of the inaction of the government the Canadian Wheat Board will be destroyed. I have in my hands a statement that reads "the constitutionality of the Canadian Wheat Board is going to the courts in February 1998". Why? It is because the government has not addressed the serious problems that exist.

"Property rights will be the focal point of the challenge. However discrimination may prove to be the trump card", this person says. This will be a very important case with regard to property rights in Canada. The bill of rights, United Nations conventions, common law and international investment agreements concerning this issue all address property rights. If we do not look at the amendments that the Reform Party is putting forward we will lose our wheat board for those who truly want it as a marketing agency. There should be some concern about that.

I one to talk about process. There was an argument about the legislation being sent to the committee before second reading. Now we are reporting it back from committee. We were assured there would be many witnesses and those witnesses would be listened to. I want to ask a question of the government. How many substantial changes were made to the bill because of the witnesses and their testimony? I sat there and I listened. I looked at the bill and those concerns were not addressed. It is a slam in the face to democracy.

• (1540)

It is important to listen to the witnesses and not simply to go through the formality. Listening means that we hear what is being said. The parliamentary secretary to the fisheries minister sits here casting cat calls with a smirk on his face but not hearing what we are saying. That concerns me greatly.

If the board were to become more accountable it might change the way it operates. We are asking for that. Producers want to be assured that will happen.

I have many other remarks but I will have to wait to finish.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform member said that the government party is not listening, and he is right. This government is truly not good at listening.

However, the member who just spoke does not seem to be terribly good at listening himself, because the Bloc Québécois members who spoke before me all said we were opposed to the bill. For at least two minutes, he got some mileage out of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois by saying we were in favour of the bill, but that is not the case.

The Bloc Québécois is opposed to this bill. On initial examination, certain provisions are interesting, but they do not go far enough. There is mention of greater participation by representatives of agricultural producers, of wheat or grain producers sitting on the board of directors.

Here I agree with the Reform Party member that the federal government is retaining too much authority over the administration of the Canadian Wheat Board. In the end, the only opportunity for industry representatives, for producers, to manage the board is symbolic and somewhat meaningless.

I repeat, that is the position of the Reform Party, and on this point we are in agreement. But the members from Quebec represent first and foremost the interests of Quebec and it must be remembered that we do not produce enough grain in Quebec for export purposes, or at least very little. That is why, when it comes to the Canadian Wheat Board, we would not necessarily want to stand in the way of others, but this is not yet an issue that concerns us greatly. We do not produce enough grain crops to be able to export.

What the Reform Party and other parties are saying is that the current situation, even if it remains unchanged in the bill, means we are not creating a large enough contingency fund for the Canadian Wheat Board. When a problem arises, who pays up? The government and thus all Canadian taxpayers.

As we are still in a federal system and as Quebec represents 24% of the population, it means that each time the Canadian Wheat Board has to pay out subsidies, the shortfall will have to be made up. The situation is the same as in the case of the famous harmonized GST in the maritimes, where Quebec has received no compensation and has to pay its share to help the maritimes harmonize their tax. It is the same situation.

I know that the Minister of Human Resources Development, who wants to make known his presence in the House, is trying to question me, but he is also distracting me.

This is why we in the Bloc Québécois oppose the bill and I have a hard time understanding—and this is my closing point—all the arguments of the Reform members, or at least those of the last one

to speak. He gave the House the impression that we support this bill, when we oppose to it. Is it a problem of language? Perhaps, but regardless, I want to dispel the misunderstanding immediately. We oppose the bill.

• (1545)

I would just like to comment on something he said. I found it—I was going to say in poor taste—let us say unpleasant. It is as if he were saying that the Liberal government opposite did not listen to the people in his province or to those in the two other western provinces. He said “Yes, but if I were in Quebec, this government would certainly listen to me”. He is wrong there, because one of the problems Quebecers face with the federal government and the federal system is they are not paid enough attention.

If he thinks he is not paid as much attention as we are, there is a serious problem, because we have a very hard time getting Quebec’s point across in the House. In several the standing committees, we have a hard time getting documents in French. This morning, we spent an hour explaining that the French version of a clause did not say the same thing as the English.

And yet, he, who speaks the same language as most Canadians, is saying that, despite that, he does not feel he is listened to or understood. It is not enough just to be listened to, people have to be understood. Understanding requires two or three mental states: openness, receptiveness and a willingness to be convinced. Without these, a debate becomes a monologue and not a dialogue.

I will have the opportunity to talk about other groups of motions on the subject of this bill, because it covers a variety of aspects. I will draw on my experience as assistant to Jean Garon, who was the Quebec minister of agriculture at one point in time.

[*English*]

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify one important thing for my colleague who has just spoken.

The Canadian Wheat Board and the movement and selling of grain has never been subsidized, never since the beginning of the Canadian Wheat Board. The contingency fund is not a subsidy fund. It is a fund that the western Canadian farmer eventually pays if he does not pay it up front. I want to make that clear.

When I began my study of this, I went back and read two very important books on the history and origin of the Canadian Wheat Board. Depending on the history book, the origin of the board and the purpose for its beginning are dubious. But this is 1997 and we are soon going into a new year, soon going into a new century and we are still trying to move grain under a board which is completely out of date.

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Today there is a whole new generation of farmers. These young people do not have just \$20,000 invested. Many of them have \$3 million and \$4 million invested. They know what is going on in the country and what is taking place with sales around the world. They know when the Canadian Wheat Board is selling grain. They know that they are being taken.

I want to say that all but two letters that have crossed my desk have stated that people are very afraid of this new bill. Why are they afraid? It is because of the inclusion clause. Western Canadians are afraid of the inclusion clause.

Some may argue that if they want in or out, they have to have the same regulations. They got out of the business of growing wheat for the simple reason that they did not want to be mastered by a wheat board which was made in Ottawa, not made in western Canada.

• (1550)

It is a real fear that they have. We have a new era of farmers. They are going out. They are growing different crops. The real fear of the young person who is coming on is what they are doing in the way of specialty crops such as the canola crop flats and so on. Some dingbat of an organization is going to give them the idea, let us include it and put it to some phoney vote, and I want to say phoney. Every person in western Canada would tell you that the latest vote was a phoney. It was phoney because it was an all or nothing at all vote.

While those people will tell you that it was a major victory for the wheat board, it was a major disgrace for the wheat board. It was 37%. I would like to tell you if that same vote was held today it would be 47%. In a year’s time it will be 57% if the government continues with Bill C-4 the way it is.

They are going to kill themselves. Do not blame the Reform Party for that. Blame nobody but yourself. We are the new era of transportation. We have huge boats that come in the harbour of Prince Rupert. Most important, western Canada should now have the right to dictate where its grain is going and to what transport facility. Whatever brings the most dollars back to the farmers of the west, that is the route the grain should go. If we can fill the terminals in Halifax and in Montreal by going through a cheaper route, then it is the God-given right of western producers to have their grain sent that way.

**Some hon. members:** Right on, right on.

**Mr. Roy Bailey:** We are not going to tolerate this. If the government does not want to listen, then it had better start listening to a \$6 billion industry which is being controlled from Ottawa. They dictate the transportation route.

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We have a new era also in communications. Most of these young farmers are on the Internet. They know what is going on. You cannot fool them anymore by Bill C-4.

I want to say this. This bill, if not amended, is doomed to die. Maybe it will get passed in this House. But as we go into the new year and into the new century, this type of ancient marketing, a monopolistic marketing on the international trade that we have today and unless a farmer is given some freedom, will self-destruct and nobody will be to blame. That phoney document says that the Canadian Wheat Board, the document the government is so proud of, does not always sell grain in the best interests of the farmer. That is exactly why we are here.

It is too bad the country cannot see and hear what we are trying to do. We are trying to preserve an industry that is a billion dollar industry, although we do not have as many people involved in the industry. We want to save it. This government is going to destroy it by this bill.

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are here today to discuss Motion No. 2.

I am having a great problem with everything in this bill. Let us take a look at the clause. This clause makes the Canadian Wheat Board Act binding on the provinces. This would block a province from making changes demanded by a majority of its farmers. Correct me if I am wrong, Mr. Speaker.

It was not quite two weeks ago, November 11, when I happened to speak at a function on a day called Remembrance Day in this country of Canada. While I was there I talked to many of the old vets. Many of them were farmers. Many of them still have children on the farm in the prairies.

• (1555)

I have to wonder just exactly what they fought for. They fought to be independent, to be allowed to make their own decisions and to freely sell their products in this country. Everybody seems to be able to do that except western farmers.

In Ontario the board members are freely elected. With this bill the board in the west will have ten elected members and five who will be appointed by the government. They will be patronage appointments, including the president and the CEO.

There is only one message that a person can take from this. The government does not think that our farmers are capable of managing their own affairs. The government needs positions in which to put its friends, relatives and defeated candidates.

Farmers are not silly. It will not take them long to realize that all the rats are not in the granary when they look at what the government is trying to impose upon them.

These are the people who have spent literally hours, more than many members of this House are willing to put in, trying to scrape together a living, only to have the government intrude in every facet of their lives.

We know that under socialism the object is that the farmer grows the product, keeps part of it and the government takes the rest. Under communism the government just takes it. Under liberalism farmers will not only buy product in order to seed the field, they will not only care for the product, they will not only cut it, harvest it and get it to the shipyards, but they will be told who they can sell it to, where they can sell it, at what price they can sell it and what route it will take.

When farmers go broke, our caring, sharing Liberal government says "That is too bad". The farmers are not given any handout. They do not get a bit of help. I have to wonder how long the farmers will put up with this. I would suggest not too long.

This bill would block a province from making changes demanded by a majority of its farmers. Who the heck does the government think has spent the time to get the product ready? It sure as heck was not the government or any of its members.

The government refuses to allow not only farmers but the majority of citizens in this country to work for profit. The government fully recognizes that the biggest threat to that side of the House is a farmer or any other businessperson who can stand up and say they are independent.

The government will do everything in the world to block any fashion of businessperson in this country from being able to say that because it knows full well that when a person can stand and say they are independent they no longer have to depend on the government.

• (1600)

Yet that is one of the functions that we were taught very young in school. When I went it was that the harder someone would work, the better they produce, the earlier they could retire.

It is bills like this that make that impossible. Today the harder the farmer works, the more he is penalized. Does that make any sense? It does not. Does it make any sense to the government opposite? Yes, I see some nods over there that it does. I have to wonder is the government in place to govern for the people or to the people. I see over there it is to the people, not for the people.

Again I have to wonder why our farmers, along with other parts of society, took up arms in order to protect a so-called democratic society.

We see today that it is a total farce. There is no such thing in this country any more. We have to look at some of the functions that farmers play. These are the people who will feed the people and their families, but not as long as they are being driven out of business, not as long as they cannot get the best price they can for

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the product, not as long as they are told who they can sell to, when they can sell and how much they can charge.

This is not what farming was all about, yet farming was one of the basic institutions that built this country.

They can sit there opposite and smile because they know it will not directly affect them. They will allow other parts of Canada to become independent and allow them to freely elect the members of their board who will make the decision on how they will make their livelihood. They will do that but not out west. God help us if we ever get that decision. The farmer may be able to put a few dollars in his pocket when he goes to town so that he can afford to buy new clothes for his family for a change.

I have to wonder just how far this government is willing to go to make sure every facet of society is kept broke.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate this afternoon to put on the record what I think are the feelings of the people of the prairies, particularly Saskatchewan, in terms of some of these amendments.

I know some people watch the parliamentary debate on CPAC. MPs follow it closely. We have a member now from Saskatchewan, from Souris—Moose Mountain, who has said that people on the prairies clearly oppose the inclusion clause. He said they fear for the inclusion clause. There is overwhelming opposition for the inclusion clause.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom:** I am glad that they rose to that bait and again showed that they clearly oppose the inclusion clause.

That is why the election results are very important. We have some balance back in this Parliament, so this kind of misleading information will be challenged in the House of Commons.

I want to put on record, and let them yelp if they want, that here are some of the players that support the inclusion clause. The Government of Saskatchewan—

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

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom:** They may laugh. Here is a government that has the support of about 60% of the Saskatchewan people. It is one of the most popular governments anywhere in this country that represents—

**An hon. member:** 38%.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom:** Run against us. If you want to get into provincial politics, run against us. Here is the Reform Party that does not have the guts to run in provincial politics in Saskatchewan, a government that has MLAs from all parts of the province,

urban and rural. It supports the inclusion clause and they said nobody does. Misleading of the House.

• (1605)

Second, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture supports the inclusion clause. Is that an irrelevant organization? Does it not speak for a few farmers across the prairies and in the province of Saskatchewan? I am sure it does. The people should be aware that the Reform Party is misleading the House and the Canadian people.

**An hon. member:** There's some cheap barley in Ontario.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom:** That is true. Now let them squirm and let them listen because they are being taken to task.

Who else supports the inclusion clause? The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the prairie pools. Reformers laugh. The biggest company in Saskatchewan is the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The wheat pools speak for thousands and thousands of farmers. It is the majority farm organization, it markets grain and it supports the inclusion clause. And the Reform Party says that nobody does. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool does.

The Reform Party should not be misleading the House, and that is why we in our party are very proud to support the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. My family has been involved as members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool since its foundation. It supports the inclusion clause.

Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc. of Manitoba also supports the inclusion clause as well as the Concerned Farmers for Saving the Wheat Board. Finally, the wheat board advisory committee, whose members are elected by prairie farmers, supports the inclusion clause. The overwhelming majority of people across the prairies and in the province of Saskatchewan are in support of the Canadian Wheat Board and they want an inclusion clause so that if farmers want more grains in the wheat board, they will have that right.

It is about time the Reform Party was taken to task. The Reform Party is not telling the truth in the House of Commons and not reflecting its constituents' views. That is the party that said it would reflect the voices of its constituents when it was in the House of Commons. It is not doing that. The Saskatchewan government is supportive. The wheat pools are supportive. The wheat pool is a big, credible organization. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is supportive. The wheat board advisory committee which is elected by farmers supports the inclusion clause, but here is the Reform Party, which is not used to being challenged in the House, trying to mislead the Canadian people that prairie farmers oppose the inclusion clause.

There is the member for Souris—Moose Mountain who used to be a member of the provincial Conservative Party in Saskatchewan as an MLA. We know what happened to that party. It has now been put to sleep for 10 years.

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The Reform Party believes in referenda and in consulting people. A while back a very clear question was put to the prairie producers. It concerned whether or not they wanted barley marketed by the wheat board or outside the wheat board. The prairie producers responded with 63% who voted that yes, they wanted to keep barley in the Canadian Wheat Board, while 37% voted no. They responded to a very clear question.

The Reform Party is supposed to be reflecting those views in the House of Commons. Reformers are supposed to reflect the views of their constituents in the House of Commons or resign or be recalled. Why do they not reflect that point of view in the House of Commons? It was a clear question.

The National Farmers Union is also in support of the inclusion clause. The farmers union itself, which has been very involved in these issues, thought the question was clear. I wonder where the Reform Party comes from. When it comes to really representing the point of view of its constituents in the House of Commons it just does not do it.

I assure the House that the people of Saskatchewan support the Canadian Wheat Board. They have always supported the Canadian Wheat Board. They want some collective clout in the marketplace and we will reflect that point of view here in the House of Commons.

I have another concern that was raised by the Reform Party, that there is no reference to provinces. It has been said in the House with some of these rather right wing points of view that they would like the provinces to opt out.

• (1610)

Now, of course, Reform Party members applaud these extreme right wing points of view, these friends of Conrad Black, friends of the Canadian grain exchange and of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. They listen to them instead of listening to the wheat pool of Saskatchewan, the farmers union or the federation of agriculture or the people's organizations. They just listen to the people who have the money. They want to destroy the wheat board. They want a province to have the option of opting out of the Canadian Wheat Board like the province of Alberta. Of course, if that power is put into the act it will be the destruction of the wheat board. So I certainly oppose that as well. I am sure that Canadian farmers will also oppose that point of view.

Here are some so-called farmers from British Columbia and Alberta who are campaigning against the Canadian Wheat Board. However, I can assure members of the House that there is very strong support for orderly marketing and for the Canadian Wheat Board. All the major credible farm organizations that support the board want the inclusion clause. They want farmers to have the

right to vote if they so wish to include other grains under the authority of the Canadian Wheat Board. They also support the exclusion clause so that farmers if they so wish can vote to have a grain taken out of the authority of the wheat board. Why is the Reform Party against that democratic right? It is a right that the farmers want.

I know the truth hurts. If we listen to the Reform Party we would think there was never a vote on barley or that the question was fudged on barley. The question was very clear and there was a very clear answer. I am very surprised that the Saskatchewan Reform members, in particular, are talking this way. In Saskatchewan the yes vote for the inclusion of barley was higher than in Alberta and Manitoba. Why are Reform members not reflecting the wishes of their constituents in the House? Why are they not listening to their constituents? Why should they not be recalled?

Why will this very shy member from Souris—Moose Mountain not get up and say “the farmers in my riding voted to have barley in the wheat board”? Instead he stands in the House and says people in the province do not want the inclusion clause. They are against it and they are fearful of the inclusion clause. That is a bunch of bloody rubbish and he would know it if he used his two ears to listen to his people. People are very supportive of that clause. It is important that be put on the record.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to sit hear and listen to some of these things.

I would like the member who just spoke to come out and stand on the street corners of Hussar, Standard, Olds, Sundry or Didsbury and talk to the farmers I talk to day in and day out. He would find out that what he is saying is not true.

What really amazes me is that they are not talking about freedom of choice. It does not seem to me that they want it. But then I have to stop and remember these people are of the old line governments and parties that figure they always know best and they want control. It is as obvious as it can be. If the government is not involved, it is no good. That is the old rule, the old way of doing things. That is in the past. Count on it. It will be gone.

A very wise man said to me when I was elected in 1993 “There is one thing about it, you have now obtained power.” I felt like sticking my chest out a little bit. I had not had much power before in my life and now he said I have power. He said he wanted me to remember one thing, “Please remember this on behalf of us. When you go to Ottawa, the power you have received is the power to serve”, not the power to dictate like they do behind closed doors.

There is legislation coming out from behind closed doors day in and day out. It is brought in and presented to the House like Bill C-4, and all the little puppets will have their strings pulled and they will jump up and vote the way the party told them to vote. That is



the way they do it. The Liberals will do what they are told. They will vote the way they are told to vote.

• (1615)

If members were truly serving Canadians and were truly using their power, they would take the time before casting their votes to go out to the ridings of prairie farmers where the legislation has the most effect and talk to them. They should not be like the phoney Liberal panel that was set up. It backfired because the panel brought back all kinds of recommendations from farmers. The Liberals got rid of that panel and did not follow those recommendations because they did not suit their little cup of tea.

It is the same old story over and over again. The Liberals, the NDP, and right down the line. Every old line party that has ever been here says "We know best. We will have it our way". That is something Canadian people are sick and tired of. That is something I am sick and tired of.

In 1993 when the Conservatives were in power they had the wisdom to open up the intercontinental barley market. They did that for a while. Guess what? During that time farmers did better than they had ever done in the history of growing crops.

Guess what else? The wheat board did better than it had ever done. For the first time it had some competition. It decided it had to get off its backside, get out there, get to work and find some of these markets as well. That is good healthy competition. That is why farmers are saying keep the wheat board but give us a choice.

I do not believe that is asking for too much. I can hardly wait to go back home. A Wild Rose constituent asked me when I expected the minister to rise in the House and announce that canola growers want to market through the board. My constituent hit the nail on the head. After all, canola growers have nurtured, researched and developed a former niche industry into an agricultural powerhouse. The farmers did it. Canola producers did all this without any dictated government involvement. Now that it is to be such a success, mark my words, one day the government will want control of it.

The government's power is to dictate. It has not learned the power to serve. I challenge government members to do that. I challenge every one of them when they vote on this piece of legislation to vote in the interest of the people it is affecting, prairie farmers.

God help me if I ever vote against any legislation that hurts the fishing industry. I do my best to try to represent them with my vote, and I do not have anything but little brook trout in my riding. I try to understand their problems and try to vote in their interest. I talk to fishermen whenever I get a chance.

Come on out to Wild Rose. Stand on the street corners and talk to the farmers who grow grain. Ask them what they think about Bill C-4. Talk to them one on one.

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Perhaps those members want to continue to listen to phoney panels and the phoney things they do across the country. They fly around, as they say, consulting with the elite and making sure all the right ones are in the ivory towers of Calgary instead of visiting Hussar, Standard, Olds, Didsbury or other small communities where farmers live and thrive. Then it might change some things.

The government ought to start thinking about the power to serve and stop the power of dictation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques—Employment Insurance.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-3, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 and the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Act, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee; and of Motions Nos. 2, 31 and 41.

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again I remind Reformers that they are obviously having a very hard time listening to the number of people who support the Canadian Wheat Board. I would like to mention some of them. They are the Government of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, prairie pools, the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the National Farmers Union, the Concerned Farmers Saving the Wheat Board and members of the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee who are elected from across the prairies to provide advice to the board's operations.

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• (1620)

It is extremely important that Canadians do not get caught up in the usual Reform rhetoric that goes on and on about nobody representing the people of Canada except Reformers, that we will never have freedom unless we listen to Reform. If we want to talk dictatorship let us talk about Reformers spouting they are the only ones who are here on behalf of Canadians and serving them. I had to listen to the rather childish diatribe from the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt who said “I’m a farmer, I’m a farmer, I’m a farmer” as if nobody else could understand what farmers go through.

Numerous people in Canada know what farmers go through, what fishermen go through and what every other person goes through if they take the time to consider those people and to make themselves aware of their troubles. I suggest that just once Reformers should take a look at the whole picture instead of their own narrow vision.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, several things come to mind as an opener, not the least of which is that I too am a farmer.

I guess another thing that should be said is that the times, they are a’changin’. It is a long time since my father and my father-in-law saw the birth of the Canadian Wheat Board. A lot of things have changed since that time when farmers would haul most of their grain in the winter. Practically all the grain was hauled on sleighs. The roads were bad during the summertime when they could only use wheeled vehicles and they did not have enough horses to pull a load of wheat through the muddy roads. They hauled their grain in the wintertime, when they had time to do it as well. They would haul about 100 bushels of wheat five, ten, twenty or whatever miles it required to get it an elevator. Most elevators were about 20 to 30 miles at the very most from farming communities.

The grain would be hauled in dribs and drabs by today’s standards to the elevators where it would be loaded on to rail cars and shipped out in greater quantities.

Technology has evolved now to the point where we have trucks that can hold two or three the capacity of old time granaries. Once they get the truck rolling it really does not matter how far they have to travel. Once it is loaded on the truck it can be destined for almost anywhere in North America. The marketing of grain has changed immeasurably in the 50, 60 or 70 years since the birth of the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Canadian Wheat Board is stuck in the 1920s. I listened with great interest to my colleague from the NDP trying to defend the system and all the people he claims support single desk selling. I am reminded of a discussion with a friend back home who was of like mind. He thought the single desk marketing of grain was the only way to go because that was how to get the best results.

I asked him to extrapolate his thinking a bit. He also raised cattle. Maybe I should become the single desk buyer for cattle. He could sell all his cattle to me. Everybody in Alberta could sell their cattle to me and I would get the best price that I could. He thought about that for not even a second and said no, that he could not do that. He could not possibly think about selling me all his cattle exclusively and all the cattle of all producers in that area, in that province or maybe in all western provinces.

• (1625)

I would like to be in that position. Most people in the House would like to be in the position where they would have an absolute monopoly. That is what we are talking about today.

Farmers in western Canada have overcome drought, flood, hail, poor weather, too much rain, not enough rain, seed borne diseases, late yielding varieties and all sorts of things in the production of grain.

Now there are better seed varieties and better genetics. Seeds mature earlier. We are avoiding frosts. We have better machinery than we have ever had to work the land, to cut the grain and to combine the grain. It would seem oftentimes that we have more grain than we know what to do with, or at least what the Canadian Wheat Board knows what to do with.

It would seem production is not the challenge it once was. The huge challenge today is the marketing of grain. Because our input costs are so high that our margins naturally are proportionately lower. The marketing of grain is of the utmost importance. By introducing these amendments we are trying to put some flexibility into an absolutely inflexible Canadian Wheat Board.

The NDP member from Saskatchewan accused us of wanting to do away with the wheat board.

**An hon. member:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** It would appear our NDP friend from Saskatchewan would agree with that sentiment. He has it wrong, as usual.

We want to have a flexible wheat board. We want to have a board where we can be in or out. Why not have a choice?

Let me give my esteemed colleague examples of some things I am sure he supports. What about co-ops? What about credit unions? What about pools? I am sure my friend from the more socialist party believes those are good things.

Let us take a quick look at how they operate. Do the credit unions in Mountain View, Ponoka and Bashaw, Saskatchewan, operate under a board that is appointed by the premier of the province or the reeve of the county? No. Those people are elected. The boards of directors are elected.

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Some of those people are not even paid. They may collect mileage to and from meetings. They may get their registration fee paid to attend conferences and that sort of thing. A lot of these people donate their time to the board. They are elected by the members of the credit union, by the producers in the hog pool, or whatever it is, or by the people who are members of the co-operative. They are accountable to the people who elect them. Those elected people hire an administrator. The administrator makes administrative decisions and the elected board makes political decisions.

Is there any resemblance between what I have just described and the Canadian Wheat Board? None whatsoever. They are not even in the same ballpark.

We are asking for a completely elected board of directors that is accountable to producers, a wheat board farmers could be members of or excluded from and market their grain one way or the other.

• (1630)

My NDP friend from Saskatchewan said “it will not work if you are not all in it”. How does he know that? If it did not work because it was not a monopoly, if it will not work without being a monopoly then it must be a pretty poor system.

I think that anybody in this House would say that competition is good. I am sure my hon. colleague feels very good about the fact that he ran against other opponents in the election and was victorious. In that case he would say “Certainly competition is great. Competition is good”.

Why is competition not good in the grain market business? We evolved immensely in agriculture in the 60 or 70 years since the dawn of the wheat board. What we are trying to do is to drag the wheat board and proponents of same kicking and screaming into the 21st century in a marketing system that answers the requirements, in fact the demands, of the producers.

I wish I could think of the member's riding. The member for Qu'Appelle likes to say these groups support the inclusion. Let us have a look. The National Farmers Union, the National Foundation and three others we have listed here.

Mr. Speaker, because of time constraints I have 12 groups of people listed here; Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, Winnipeg Commodity Exchange, Canadian Oilseed Processors Association, Alberta Canola Producers, Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Western Barley Growers Association, Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission, Oat Producers Association of Alberta, Flax Growers Western Canada, Manitoba Canola Growers Association and Canadian Canola Growers Association all are vigorously opposed to the inclusion. I think we will find certainly not the least of which should be added to that is the Reform Party of Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans I believe has spoken in the debate. Is he rising on a point of order?

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I want to outline to the member opposite that the kind of competition he is talking about will be the same as Reformers running against Reformers in an election.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid that the parliamentary secretary has an interesting point, but it is not a point of order.

Resuming debate the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I have to wonder why the Liberal government is bound and determined to ram this legislation down the throats of western farmers? It does not represent the west. How many Liberal MPs come from the west?

We are here representing western farmers. Many of us are farmers and we are telling them plain as day we do not want this. We want the option. Why will they not give us a choice? Why can farmers not have the choice? Wouldn't that be good? Other marketing boards would spring up. There would be competition. The Canadian Wheat Board would be driven to get better prices, to find newer and better markets for farmers. Everybody would benefit. Why will they not understand that? Well I can tell you why. I see one Liberal member in the House.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Tempting as it may be, and I have experience at this I assure the hon. member, to refer to the presence of members, it is improper to refer to the absence of members. The way the hon. member is phrasing his remarks, he is clearly referring to the absence of certain members. I invite him to comply with the rules and refrain from making such suggestions.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I am trying to draw attention to the fact that they do not care. They are not here engaging in the debate. It is sad to feel that we are here trying to tell them why the farmers are asking for changes to the act, but it is falling on deaf ears. It is falling on no ears.

The other thing I find interesting in the debate today is members of the NDP.

• (1635)

They insult me and make fun of me for saying that I am a farmer and for representing the farmers in my constituency. The member for Qu'Appelle who was going on and on in his Marxist-Leninist

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rant did not even run in the rural riding that represents farmers. He had to put his tail between his legs and go to Regina.

People who live in Regina also are going to be impacted by this because what hurts farmers hurts every community in Saskatchewan and everyone in western Canada.

**An hon. member:** —Marxist-Leninist.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** They continue to insult me when I stand up and attempt to defend the right of farmers to have a wheat board that they can participate in when they want, to have a wheat board that they can be elected to, to have a wheat board that is accountable to them and that they can be represented by and not a wheat board that is run by Ottawa under the dictates of Ottawa from Ottawa politicians.

How about having farmers run the Canadian Wheat Board and have farmers determine what is best for them? Why force that upon anybody?

There is the idea of an inclusion clause. We grow a lot of canola on our farm. What right does anybody have to tell me where I can sell it? What right does anybody have to do that to me?

However, if canola is grown in Ontario, that is okay. That will not apply. They will be able to market it wherever they want. If we apply the inclusion clause to canola in the west, then I am going to be bound to that.

I say—they can insult me all they want—on behalf of all farmers, we do not want that. How much clearer can a guy be?

**An hon. member:** What about the barley vote?

**An hon. member:** Say it slow for him over there.

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to correct the member. He has given the impression to the House that I was suggesting or making fun of farmers.

In actuality, I have the utmost respect—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I think the hon. member recognizes that her point of order, while interesting, is really a point of debate. Resuming debate.

I think hon. members must realize that remarks are not intended to be personal to hon. members. I hope they are not taken as such in a debate of this kind.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to agreement made yesterday, all questions on the motions in Group No. 2 are deemed put and the recorded divisions are deemed requested and deemed deferred.

The House will now proceed to the debate on the Motions in Group No. 4.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to the agreement concluded on November 19, 1997, all motions in Group No. 4 are deemed to have been moved and seconded.

[*English*]

This group contains Motions Nos. 4 to 19.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC)** moved:

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended

(a) by replacing lines 7 to 14 on page 3 with the following:

“3.02(1) The directors are elected in accordance with section 3.06 to 3.08 and the regulations. The president shall be appointed by the board.”

(b) by deleting lines 15 to 17 on page 3.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 18 and 19 on page 5 with the following:

“pleasure for the term that the board of directors may determine.”

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.)** moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 7 to 14 on page 3 with the following:

“3.02(1) Fifteen directors are elected in accordance with sections 3.06 to 3.08 and the regulations. The president shall be appointed by the board in consultation with the Minister.”

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by deleting lines 22 to 24 on page 3.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 22 to 24 on page 4 with the following:

“(e) the manner in which the board, in consultation with the Minister, may decide to remove the president and the manner in which the board, in consultation with the Minister, may implement a decision to remove the president.”

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended

(a) by adding after line 33 on page 4 the following:

“(2) Producers shall be eligible for votes based on the following levels of production:

For the purposes of this Act, 1 tonne of grain is defined as 1 tonne of wheat or 1.5 tonnes of barley. A producer will be eligible for 1 vote if they grow or market a minimum of 50 tonnes of grain in a given year. This information will be obtained from permit book records or in a signed affidavit submitted by the producer.”

(b) by replacing line 34 on page 4 with the following:

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“(3) After the date referred to in section 3.08.”

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 35 to 40 on page 4 with the following:

“the board, in consultation with the Minister, shall make regulations respecting the election of directors, including geographical representation on the board and the staggering of the terms of office of directors.”

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 41 to 45 on page 4 with the following:

“3.07 After the date referred to in section 3.08, the board, in consultation with the Minister, shall determine the proper conduct and supervision of an election of directors, including”

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 18 and 19 on page 5 with the following:

“the pleasure of the board of directors for such term that the board of directors may determine.”

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by adding after line 35 on page 5 with the following:

“(2) The president shall implement measures to include the Canadian Wheat Board as a signatory to the International Code of Ethics for Canadian Business, no later than six months following the first election of the Board of Directors.”

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 36 to 41 on page 5 with the following:

“(3) If the president is absent or unable to act or the office of president is vacant, the board of directors, in consultation with the Minister, may appoint an interim president. An interim president shall not act for more than ninety days, unless approved by the board.”

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing line 5 on page 6 with the following:

“view to the best interests of producers;”

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by adding after line 9 on page 6 the following:

“(c) comply with guidelines as established by the International Code of Ethics for Canadian Business.”

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chretien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ)** moved:

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing line 14 on page 3 with the following:

“sultation with the other directors, and following the approval of the committee of the House of Commons that normally considers matters relating to agriculture.”

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.)** moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 12 and 13 on page 4 with the following:

“rum at the meetings, which shall be at least two-thirds of the board members and a ratio of two elected directors to one appointed director, and the confidentiality”

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-4, in Clause 3, be amended by adding after line 10 on page 5 the following:

“(3) Directors shall be elected by producers on the basis of one vote per producer permit book

(4) There shall be limits placed on the expenditures made by any candidate for election to the Board of Directors.

(5) There shall be limits placed on the expenditures made by any third parties toward the election of candidates to the Board of Directors.”

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and address my comments to Group No. 4 of the amendments before the House.

I must say that it is exceedingly difficult for all of the members from whatever party and whatever point of view to address such a large group of amendments because they deal with so many different areas.

We have 16 amendments in this group that we are going to endeavour to try to adequately address and debate in a short 10-minute intervention. In light of there being 16 amendments in 10 minutes, I will have to confine my comments to just a few of them.

Perhaps for the viewing public watching this debate at home with interest I am sure, I should note that Group No. 3 comprised Motion No. 3 and was dropped because apparently it had been brought forward at the committee and therefore was ruled out of order.

I did want to make the point when I put that motion forward that what it did was remove reference to the president as a member of the board of directors.

● (1640)

In other words, the president would not have served on the board of directors.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on a point of order.

**Mr. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, this issue has been debated at committee and lost. The member is debating Group No. 3 which has been ruled out of order by the Chair.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thought the hon. member was making a passing reference. He did say it had been ruled out of order and I

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am sure he is not going to continue discussing the motion. He is proceeding with his remarks, I am certain.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I was just making passing reference to it for the sake of the viewing public at home who might not have known why we moved straight from Group No. 2 amendments to Group No. 4.

On to Group No. 4 amendments of which, as I have indicated, there are some 16, Motion No. 5 is an amendment put forward by myself on behalf of the Reform Party of Canada, the official opposition. It calls a fully elected board of directors. The rationale for this is that if this board is going to be put into place for the best interest of farmers, for the best interest of western grain producers, then certainly they should have the right to elect all of the directors to the board.

We have the situation in this legislation where the government and the minister still retain the right to appoint five directors, one of which will be the president and the chief executive officer of the board of directors. We find that completely reprehensible. We do not understand the inequity, the inequality in the system whereby the Ontario Wheat Marketing Board can have a fully elected board of directors to run the affairs of the Ontario Wheat Marketing Board and yet western grain farmers are denied that fundamental right of electing their entire board of directors.

We would certainly urge all members of the House in light of that to support Motion No. 5 and ensure that this bill is amended so that we have a fully elected board of directors.

Motion No. 7, also in this Group No. 4, deletes the powers of the board of directors. The bill, as it is presently structured, lays out different powers for the appointed directors and the elected directors. Of course, if Motion No. 5 is successful and passes and you have all 15 elected as they should be, then there would be no need to have a differentiation in the powers of those individual directors.

Motion No. 9 ensures that the elected board and not the minister would have control over the hiring and firing of the president. If farmers are to truly have a say in the way that the board operates, I think that this is fundamental. During committee hearings, the witnesses who appeared before the committee, and time after time we heard this, the groups who appeared, as short as the list was and as confined as the time was allowed at committee, did make the point that they felt that the board of directors should have the power to hire and fire the president and the chief executive officer.

We had some of my hon. colleagues remark about that earlier and cite examples of the credit unions and the co-ops and other successful co-op enterprises where Canadians have seen fit to band together for their mutual financial best interest on a voluntary

basis, but they retain the right to elect their board of directors and that board of directors then hires the administrators. We see no reason whatsoever that this new structure, this new Canadian Wheat Board, would not have a similar process in place.

I would like to add to that and to the comments of my hon. colleague from Wetaskiwin who spoke a few moments ago. I find it more than a bit strange that the more socialist people in this country, whenever a state run enterprise is under scrutiny, always fall back and say that it cannot exist in a free market economy. It is in the best interest of the producer, but we have to protect that interest because if there were any competition, it simply would not survive. In the long term interests of the farmers, in this case the western Canadian grain farmers, we need to ensure that the monopoly, the compulsory nature of the Canadian Wheat Board, is retained.

• (1645)

I find that somewhat puzzling, just as my hon. colleague from Wetaskiwin did, in the sense that there has been a longstanding tradition in western Canada as there has been across this country of enterprises that have not only survived but have indeed thrived in a free market economy. He cited the examples of the co-ops, the pools and the credit unions which I am familiar with as I am from a rural area and was a farmer in my previous life.

Nobody said when credit unions were put into place that Canadians would be forced to join a credit union. No one said you cannot do your business at a bank because it is in your best interest to belong to a credit union. Imagine the open rebellion there would be in this country if everyone were forced to bank at the same institution. The credit unions have done quite well. They have filled a niche market and they continue to enjoy enormous support especially in the rural areas of western Canada.

Motion No. 10 would ensure some minimum production level so that the vote of a hobby farmer would not totally cancel out the vote of a full time farmer, someone who is earning his living and has a lot more at stake with the business conducted and the decisions made by the Canadian Wheat Board than someone who is earning all or most of his income off the farm.

The rationale for Motion No. 11 is that once the initial elections have taken place, the minister's involvement in the election of the director should be limited if farmer interests are to be served. The minister's control of the barley plebiscite earlier this year proved that at times when a minister is directly involved, he can structure a vote to ensure the outcome he wants.

Motion No. 14 also refers to the hiring and firing of the president. At the end of the day it is the board of directors that must retain that control over the president and the president cannot be

beholden in any way to the minister or to the government of the day.

It is very difficult when we look at the way many of these motions are grouped to go through them in a singular manner. I refer briefly to Motion No. 19 which ensures that the new corporation will have to adhere to the code of ethics guidelines for corporations. The federal government initiated the signing of this code by Canadian businesses in September 1997. The code sets out standards for ethically, socially and environmentally responsible business practices. However, the federal government did not instruct its departments and agencies to sign the code.

Given that the wheat board markets extensively abroad we feel it is more than appropriate that the corporation become a signatory to the code in which it would commit among other things not to make illegal and improper payments or bribes and will refrain from participating in any corrupt business practices. That is just a small part of the code.

It is interesting to note that question was put to the government by an hon. member during question period, that it is pretty hypocritical of the government to insist that businesses now adhere to this code when crown agencies themselves are not required to. That is the purpose of that amendment.

I look forward to a return of the lively debate we have seen over the past hours.

• (1650)

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this interesting grouping as previous speakers have indicated. Motions Nos. 4 through 19 include a large variety of important items, the election of all directors, giving the standing committee some insight into the ongoing work of the Canadian Wheat Board, the equality of those who are elected and those who are appointed, the removal of the president and how we would proceed on that important note should it ever come to that, minimum production levels, which I will come back to in a short while, regulations respecting elections and the staggering of elections, which I think is an important point as well, the terms for the president, code of ethics and so on.

I did want to talk a bit about Motion No. 10. This is a motion put forward by the previous speaker, the member for Prince George—Peace River. I think I understand what he is getting at here. He wants a minimum level. In fact, he talked about the difference between a hobby farmer and a somebody who earns his living in farming and who should have the right to vote and who should not.

I want to go on record to say that this caucus will very strongly oppose that. I heard a member from that party talk about two tier. If there is anything that is two tier it is clearly this.

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In this caucus we think that as long as a farmer is sending one bushel of grain to the wheat board that he or she should have the right to a vote on the election of the board of directors.

I also want to talk about Motion No. 13 which is contained in Group No. 4. I think how the directors are elected is very important. I want to take a minute for the benefit of the people listening to read Motion No. 13:

(3) Directors shall be elected by producers on the basis of one vote per producer permit book

(4) There shall be limits placed on the expenditures made by any candidate for election to the Board of Directors.

This is a very important aspect of it:

(5) There shall be limits placed on the expenditures made by any third parties toward the election of candidates to the Board of Directors.

I want to elaborate on Motion No. 13 if I may. If the wheat board is to have a board of directors, and we certainly go along with that, then it is essential that the majority of them are elected through free and fair elections. That means, as I said before, one vote per producer holding a wheat board permit book.

It seems to me on Motion No. 10 that the Reform Party wants to see the large scale agribusiness farmers have more votes and more clout than their neighbours. We say this is totally anti-democratic and we want no part of it.

Fair elections also mean a limit on campaign spending by candidates just as in federal and provincial elections so that wealthy individuals do not have an unfair advantage. Fair elections mean the strict and transparent limit as to how much third parties can spend on elections and how much they influence the outcome.

We are reminded of the million dollars that the Alberta government poured into the barley vote last year to try to influence that one and fortunately to little or no avail.

As has been pointed out repeatedly, the wheat board is a \$6 billion industry and certain corporate interests would love to get their hands on it. Western grain farmers do not want those folks with deeper pockets than the rest of us to influence these elections unduly on the board of directors.

We are also witnessing what could only be termed as a disgraceful media campaign by other friends of the Reform Party, the National Citizens Coalition, again to try to discredit the Canadian Wheat Board.

• (1655)

The coalition claims to be funded by ordinary Canadians, but we all know that it is bankrolled by the friends of the Reform Party and the big business community in this country. We know who is in line to be the next president of the National Citizens Coalition, a former member of the Reform caucus.

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With those points, we think it is very important that the election of the new board of directors be done in a free and fair way. We will be watching and hoping that the government will move to make some accommodation so that can result.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have come to Group No. 4. I will go through the motions one by one, after which I will give an overview, because I have the feeling we will not go any further.

The first motion in Group No. 4, Motion No. 4 moved by Mr. Borotsik, proposes that 10 out of 15 directors be elected. There is a small problem, however, because this motion means that directors would be elected according to regulations made by the governor in council as set out in clauses 3.06 to 3.08. This eliminates what makes clause 3 attractive, which is that producers are appointed by other producers. There is no longer a specific reference to their being elected by producers, as was the case in clause 3.02. This reduces the significance of the representation by producers on the board of directors.

It is the same for the amendment deleting the paragraph about the maximum term of office of directors, and this is unthinkable. We are therefore going to be voting against this motion, although we were very much in favour of greater representation by producers.

Motion No. 5 would increase the number of directors on the board from 15 to 20. For the reasons I gave earlier, we will vote in favour of this amendment, which fits in with our wish for greater representation and a greater role on the board of directors for producers.

Now, on to Motion No. 6. I am certain that, had my colleague, Mr. Chrétien, been able to debate it, he would have done a splendid job.

**An hon. member:** Jean-Guy?

**Ms. Hélène Alarie:** Jean-Guy Chrétien of the Bloc Québécois. Jean-Guy on this side, not Jean on that side.

Mr. Chrétien pointed out that the government does not want the president to be appointed by members of the board of directors but by the governor in council. The Bloc is therefore moving that this appointment be considered by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food. We did not get the results we were hoping for when this bill was considered in committee, but we still believe in the strength of this committee and the interventions that must be made, and we think that the appointments should be subject to the approval of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food.

This brings me to Motion No. 7. The proposed amendment would create a potential distinction between the powers, duties and functions of a director who is elected and those of one who is

appointed. At this point, we have little or no idea of what this amendment would mean in practical terms, and in the absence of information, we are abstaining. We will therefore vote against.

Now comes Motion No. 8; I feel like a school teacher. In Motion No. 8, the proposed amendment would set the board's quorum at two-thirds of the board members and a ratio of two elected directors to one appointed director.

• (1700)

If we keep looking at what it wanted at the grassroots level, namely, greater control by grain producers, farmers and people who have a major interest in this bill, we do of course support an amendment that would see a quorum of at least two-thirds of the board members, thus twice as many elected directors. This is consistent with what we want, which is more board members who are producers. This is why we support this motion.

This brings us to Motion No. 9. Under this motion, the board, in consultation with the minister, decides the terms of removal of the president of the board and implements them. The amendment substitutes the chairman of the board for the president. We therefore support this amendment, because it puts power in the hands of the board. And as we want the amendments to increase the number of farmers to be agreed to, for reasons of consistency we support this motion.

This brings us to Motion No. 10. Under this amendment, in the bylaws for board members, the governor in council should give a vote to producers producing a certain quantity of grain.

I listened with considerable interest to remarks made in this House on this motion. However, the experience I have had in my riding of having many part time farmers and realizing that they provide strong and solid support to the agricultural community makes it hard for me to oppose their participation, however limited, in the Canadian Wheat Board. If the Canadian Wheat Board is there to efficiently market a crop—I heard some colleagues say this morning that it was a bit of a monopoly, but it is not a monopoly when it is in the hands of the producers, in my opinion—it is appropriate for all these producers, even the smallest ones, if the Canadian Wheat Board is a good one, to be protected by a structure for the marketing of their crop.

Of course, when a person has thousands of hectares, this may be an amusing question, but in real life we sometimes see part time farmers or small scale farmers end up as large scale ones. They all make a valuable contribution to agriculture and we find it very hard not to consider them all, to reject them. For this reason we will vote against this motion.

This leads us to Motion no. 11. Here the amendment makes it not the minister who makes regulations in consultation with the board, but the board which makes regulations in consultation with the minister.



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This is a very subtle point, but basically the power is given to the people who have to do the administration, and not the minister. I have been surprised to hear very little reference to increased federal government power over the Canadian Wheat Board where there is a possibility of some difficulty with the rules of international trade.

This amendment returns much more power to the board of directors, and moves the minister onto the back burner. This may not be what our friends across the way are after, but I believe we must attain that objective if the Canadian Wheat Board is to be properly administered. That is why we will vote for Motion No. 11.

Motion No. 12 is much like 11. Moreover, in the motions that follow there are some things that overlap. That is why I will have far less to say about the following ones, for example, Motions Nos. 14 and 15. In Motion No. 14, the proposed amendment sets a limit for the mandate of the president to be determined by the board of directors, so in Motion No. 15 this should also be the board of directors and not the governor in council. We totally agree with this motion, which reduces the federal government's power to appoint someone to this position for an indeterminate period.

• (1705)

You can see that the same logic has been followed from the start and there is an attempt to give more power to farmers on the Canadian Wheat Board and the board of directors, and thus to move it a little away from the control of the federal government.

As for Motion No. 16, its purpose is to have the president implement measures no later than six months following the first election of the board of directors to include the Canadian Wheat Board as a signatory to the International Code of Ethics for Canadian Business. This, I believe, is self-evident. We will therefore vote in favour of this motion.

We shall do likewise for Motion No. 19, which is a consequence, or at least a corollary, of Motion No. 16, in which it is stated, as has already been mentioned, that the code of ethics governs the conduct of Canadian businesses abroad by ensuring that they do not exploit child labour and that they apply the same labour standards elsewhere as they do here. What this means, therefore, is that the Canadian Wheat Board must act as a good corporate citizen both here and elsewhere.

Now for Motion No. 17, the amendment on the absence or inability to act of the president, I think that this is a routine matter, this is normal. We will therefore vote for there to be a replacement when required.

Finally, to address Motion No. 18, where the amendment stipulates that the board members shall act in the performance of their duties with integrity and good faith, which I do not doubt. We will therefore vote in favour of this statement of good intention.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, once again I am pleased to speak to the amendments. We are now debating Group No. 4. In this grouping our party has two amendments. I will speak to those amendments as well as others. These amendments have been grouped together, as a number of them work in conjunction with each other.

There are two areas in this legislation about which I am concerned. One of the areas has been dealt with to a certain degree and we will get to it a little later when we debate the amendment with respect to the inclusion clause. Exclusion and inclusion are very serious components of this legislation and should be amended in order to improve the legislation.

The second area about which I have very serious concerns is the governing section of the legislation. There have been substantial improvements put forward in this legislation which improve the existing governance of the Canadian Wheat Board.

For those who do not know, the current governance of the Canadian Wheat Board consists of a membership board, a commission if you will, with a maximum of five commissioners. Currently there are three commissioners acting as the head of the Canadian Wheat Board. There is also an advisory board. The advisory board is made up of elected representatives, but the advisory board has absolutely no power. It is a eunuch. It simply advises not only the commissioners but the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

As proposed, this legislation would improve that governance. In fact, there would be 10 elected board members out of the 15 who will comprise the membership of the Canadian Wheat Board. Ten will be elected and five will be appointed.

In our motion we have proposed a change to make it a fully democratic board of 15 elected members. There is no reason the government should have any objection to having a fully accountable board of directors elected by the producers.

A precedent has already been set with respect to this type of governance. The Ontario wheat board has a fully elected board of directors. It makes sense that a parallel organization, the Canadian Wheat Board, should have elected members.

• (1710)

The government will say because it has certain requirements and certain guarantees that are outstanding for the Canadian Wheat Board that it has to have five appointed members of which one is the chief executive officer. That is absolute hogwash. It is not necessary.

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As part of governance there is a manager, a chief executive officer, referred to in the legislation as president. The president under this legislation will be appointed by the government and the minister.

I can say from experience I have had in the House over the very short period of time that the government has not given us an awful lot of confidence in those people it will be appointing to the position of chief executive officer.

There have been examples of people who do not understand the business of being appointed as chief executive officer. This is not the chairman of the board. This is not a board member. This is the individual who is going to be taking a corporation from the year 1997 into the 21st century. Here is an individual who has to have an awful lot of business acumen, understanding of the business, understanding of the industry, understanding of trade arrangements and organizations in order for us to succeed as western Canadian grain producers.

This cannot be a Liberal patronage appointment, which unfortunately has been shown to happen many times in the past. I am very nervous of that situation. There is no reason why an elected board of directors cannot have the confidence placed in them to appoint and hire a chief executive officer. That is what these amendments speak to. They speak to the point that this chief executive officer should be hired and report to the board of directors who would hire him, not to report to the government and the minister who really have no understanding of what is happening to the Canadian Wheat Board.

I talk about governance. We have the board of directors and a chief executive officer. I have some further concerns when we talk about the current commissioners who are now operating the Canadian Wheat Board. They run under a very sheltered cocoon operation, obviously, having it as a monopoly corporation. It runs basically the same way now as it did in 1943.

I have with me an interview which was done by the current chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board. It was given to the *Manitoba Co-operator*. I would expect that would be a fairly reasonable source and acceptable source by the members of government. It says Chief Commissioner Lorne Hehn said: "I said to the minister if the board and the minister want me to be there, I will be there for one year but not beyond that", Hehn said after speaking at a Manitoba pool annual meeting. 'I am prepared to do it, be the chief executive officers, but the price has to be right'".

I have some concerns about that because, quite frankly, what has to be right has to be right for producers and Canadian farmers, not what is right for a chief executive officer or for a minister of the crown. It has to be right so we can put into place the proper marketing measures to compete in a global society right now, to compete in a global marketplace where there is substantial competition.

So that speaks to these amendments, where in fact we should have a fully accountable elected board of directors and an appointed chief executive officer by the board.

Two other motions I would like to touch on. One is Motion No. 8. The reason I bring this up is I originally tabled this motion at committee and then withdrew it. It obviously found its way to the amendments here. I bring it to the attention of the House. It says "—rum at the meetings, which shall be at least two-thirds of the board". That obviously means quorum, but when I read this I almost had unanimous consent of the committee.

• (1715 )

However, the amendment is a legitimate and logical one. It speaks to a quorum being struck for the board of directors. It should be two-thirds board members and a ratio of two elected directors to one appointed director. For every meeting of the board of directors there has to be two elected members to one appointed member and two-thirds of the board present for a quorum. That makes good corporate, business sense.

I will be speaking against an amendment which is obviously not mine. It was an amendment put forward by the hon. member for Peace River. It speaks to the actual election of the board of directors and the criteria people must achieve before they can register a vote for the board of directors.

I understand where the hon. member is coming from because there are large and small producers. All producers should have a vote for the person they wish to have on the board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board.

We will not be supporting the amendment. I appreciate where it is coming from and I understand why it is there. It has merit but it flies in the face of democracy. It should not be based on the number of bushels produced or the numbers of acres farmed. It should be that farmers and producers have the right to elect the board of directors.

In wrapping up on this section I do not know if the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries would like to be the CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board. He seems to be heading in that direction. I have some concerns with respect to the appointment of the CEO.

In a brief rebuttal, let me say that a number of organizations and people are still very concerned about the inclusion clause. We will have a chance to speak to that in another category that is coming up.

**Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today in the Chamber the hon. member for Skeena started to talk about the Liberal approach to managing and controlling all aspects of our

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economy. He referred to marketing boards that were set up by the Hon. Eugene Whelan.

It shows the lack of understanding of marketing boards of the member for Skeena. What was even more ironic was that he talked about the Liberal approach in the 1960s and 1970s. He should be aware that when Eugene Whelan became agriculture minister there were already over 108 marketing boards in existence in Canada, mostly provincial.

When the member talked about it being a Liberal policy, it is ironic that the provinces with a long history of Conservative governments also had a long history of marketing boards. There were 25 marketing boards in existence under the government of Bill Davis.

I want to ensure the member for Skeena knows what a marketing board is if in the future he wants to talk about it. I thought I would put on record that marketing boards vary in practice but the principle is very simple.

It is a system whereby producers, in this case the farmers in case the Reform Party does not know what those are, pool their products, decide on a cost price formula, when and how much to produce, how much to sell and at what price.

As was not understood by the member for Skeena, farmers have democratic control over a marketing board. They run it themselves. It is not forced on them. A marketing board for perishable products makes the most sense.

That is the difference. The member for Skeena did not understand that marketing boards are mainly for perishable products in Canada. Some products can be stored in a bin for years but that cannot be done with a pound of butter or meat. To produce a surplus of perishable products and assume that the market will take care of it is utter economic nonsense and wasteful.

“A marketing board is an efficient way of protecting domestic producers and assuring that there will always have a supply for domestic consumption”. The hon. member could have read that. It is a quote from a book published by Eugene Whelan, in case he has not had the time. It was given to him in 1993 to read.

He also talked about rotten eggs. Again it showed a lack of understanding of the industry. The incident he referred talked about the number of eggs spoiled. The number was quite small when one looks at the industry in context. It was only about a half of 1% of a year's production which under any circumstances is not bad for any perishable product. I challenge the member for Skeena to find another industry that did so well. It is quite impressive when we remember that we are dealing with a perishable product.

• (1720)

It is interesting to note that the person he referred to, Eugene Whelan, was not responsible for the storage facility but only for

the legislation establishing the board. It is even more ironic that same person, Eugene Whelan, became the first agriculture minister in Canadian history not to have to subsidize the poultry industry. I thought that would be something the Reform Party would reward. I thought they would be happy to hear there was no subsidy under his leadership.

It is interesting how the Reform Party throws in comments and does not recognize the importance of marketing strategies or, in particular in this case, the difference between marketing boards for perishable products and the Canadian Wheat Board. The Canadian Wheat Board is guaranteed for all farmers.

To end my comments today, I wanted to say that the only rotten egg in parliament today was the member for Skeena.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, that is a hard act to follow and I will try not to do so.

I will talk about Group No. 4. It contains over a dozen amendments to Bill C-4 which deal with a wide range of issues. The issues are so wide ranging that it will be very difficult to touch on half of them in the time I have. I am concerned about the fact that the amendments are not grouped in a way that would make debate a little easier.

The first motion I want to talk about is Motion No. 5 brought forward by the Reform member for Peace River. The member for Brandon—Souris already talked about this amendment. It was interesting that he was quoted in a newspaper recently as saying he had found friends in the Liberals and the New Democrats but would never co-operate or find friends in the Reform. Yet here he is fully supporting the amendment of the member for Peace River. I appreciate the change of heart on the part of that member. I think it is progress.

The member for Brandon—Souris presented the case on Motion No. 5 quite well. I think I can leave it at that. He did a good job of explaining that amendment.

The next amendment I will talk about is Motion No. 8 which I put forward. The purpose of the amendment is to set out what a quorum would be on this partially elected and partially appointed board which it seems the Liberals are determined to give us. What Reform wants is a completely elected board. We think farmers will settle for nothing less. We are to get a partially appointed and partially elected board. The board will consist of 15 members, 5 appointed under Bill C-4 as it stands and 10 elected.

Depending on how quorum is set by the minister, I have concern that a quorum could consist of all appointed directors. In a case where a meeting is called and for some reason the elected members cannot make it to the meeting, we have nothing to assure us that a board of only appointed members could make serious decisions about the future of the board or about operations of the company.

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I do not think this amendment could possibly be opposed by government members. It would ensure that we have a good quorum with at least two-thirds of the members, 10 out of the 15, and that we have a ratio of at least 2:1, two elected directors and one appointed. That is very important. We can then be assured that at least the elected directors will be there and will have their say at the meetings. I encourage the government to support Motion No. 8. It will be difficult to understand why it would not.

• (1725)

I will talk a bit now about Motion No. 9. It concerns the hiring and firing of the president-CEO. The way Bill C-4 amends the Canadian Wheat Board Act the minister would appoint the person to the position of president-CEO. It is very unusual for a president and a CEO to be the same person. It is very unusual to have the chief executive officer whose job is to run the daily operations of the company also sitting on the board as its president. It is extremely difficult to understand why the government would propose that type of a situation.

Let us look at the background, at the philosophy of wheat pools, for example. Members opposite often refer to what pools offer and how pools operate. If they looked at how pools and co-operatives operate they would know that no one but an elected board of directors would hire or fire the president of the board.

For example, delegates and directors of the Alberta Wheat Pool are elected by members who meet. First they elect a president. Then the same board of directors hires the chief executive officer. At any time they choose they can fire the chief executive officer. These people would never be the same two people. It is a situation which to some extent would involve a conflict of interest, having the chief executive officer who is to carry out the wishes of the board of the directors sitting on the board as president. Having one person filling both positions is extremely unusual.

If we look at the model set out by co-operatives and by the prairie pools we find that it is in complete conflict with what the government has done in Bill C-4, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

Motion No. 9 in the name of the member for Prince George—Peace River is an extremely important amendment. It is important that this is passed. I hope members opposite will understand the importance of the motion, especially those who so strongly support co-operatives as I do. Let us learn from what we have seen in co-operatives.

There are several other motions that I want to talk about, but I will have to limit myself in that I only have a few minutes. The next one is Motion No. 10. It deals with who should vote and how many votes a certain operation should have. We do not know how the voting will be set up. That will be dealt with in the original election under the regulations. That is a concern because it should be in the legislation.

The rules for voting should be right in the legislation so that we know how the voting will take place. That will not happen. The regulation will be set after the bill is passed as it surely will be because the government will ram it through.

A member of the NDP said earlier that a farmer that grows one bushel of grain should have the same vote as a farm that has a permit book and may be the sole means of support of three, four or five families. Many farms have one permit book for several families. That member said that a farmer who grows one bushel of grain should have one vote the same as a farm that supports three, four or five families.

It is nonsense. It makes no sense. That is why we have an amendment that would at least say that a minimum of 50 tonnes of grain have to be produced to be eligible to vote, and 50 tonnes is not much. A commercial farm would grow many times that. It is certainly not a number that would eliminate any farmers who are anywhere near being commercial farmers.

• (1730)

Another change that must take place in the voting arrangements is to make it so that farmers who do not have a permit book but who grow grains like wheat and barley that are under wheat board jurisdiction will have a right to vote. Many farmers have chosen not to use the wheat board so they do not get a permit book. It is a very deliberate move on their part. Why should they not be allowed to vote when it comes time to elect a director to the Canadian Wheat Board? The answer is very difficult to understand.

I have heard several members of Parliament from other parties say that is the way it should be. If you do not have a permit book, you should not be eligible to vote. Of course that will all be determined in the regulations and we do not know what will be in the regulations.

I am very concerned about the voting. I was hoping this bill would never get to a stage where there would be a vote. Maybe the government will see the error of its ways here and completely scrap this bill. It might happen. In my dreams it will happen. I suppose it is not very likely.

This piece of legislation should be scrapped because clearly it is not going to do anything to improve the Canadian Wheat Board. It is not going to make it any more accountable to prairie farmers. It is not going to reduce the power and control of this government and of the minister. I think that is another extremely important amendment.

Since I am getting an indication that my time is up, I will say that I have so much more that I would like to say to these amendments. If I have no more time, I will make some further comments when we get to future amendments. It is important that there are members of the Reform Party who can really identify with the

farmers who will be affected by this legislation to speak out on these amendments.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### AGREEMENT ON INTERNAL TRADE IMPLEMENTATION ACT

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** moved that Bill C-203, an act to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise to speak to my private member's bill which I believe will do an awful lot to remove barriers to trade between provinces within Canada and between businesses within a province.

I will give some background to this bill, I will speak on what Bill C-203 will do, I will talk about the importance to Canadians of implementing this bill, then I will do something very important and read from letters of support I have received from various institutions and individuals across the country.

The agreement on internal trade was passed in this House in 1994. It was signed in 1994 by this federal government and by all provinces and the territories. It came into effect in July 1995 and I took part in the debate that preceded the passing of the bill. I supported the bill. I did not think it had gone far enough, I did not think it was strong enough, but I supported many aspects of the bill as did the Reform Party. It was right to support it.

Many of our concerns were very legitimate.

● (1735)

The agreement came into effect in 1995, but what the agreement really did was set a timeline and a framework for future negotiations that would complete an Agreement on Internal Trade, that agreement which would remove most of the barriers to internal trade within the country.

Unfortunately, every timeline that was set in that Agreement on Internal Trade which was passed in 1995 has passed and has not been met. None of the timelines have been met. The dates that were set have passed. What we find is a situation where a piece of legislation which had good intent, which was passed by this government in 1995, has had very little positive effect on its stated

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purpose which was to remove the barriers to internal trade within this country. So it has not done the job.

A main part of the reason that it has not done the job is due to a couple of terms used in the agreement, particularly the term "agreement by consensus" between the provinces, the federal government and the territories, or between all provinces and the territories. This term "agreement by consensus" has been interpreted by this group to mean "unanimous consent".

The way the provinces and the territories have been interpreting this term "agreement by consensus" is that every single province and each territory and the federal government must all agree to any change which would help complete the Agreement to Internal Trade.

My bill would remove that unanimity requirement that has been self-imposed by the board. It would instead put in place a mechanism which would require consent of at least seven provinces, including at least 50% of the Canadian population. That is a formula which is much more realistic and which will allow, I believe, the completion of this Agreement on Internal Trade. With the completion of the Agreement on Internal Trade will come removal of most of the barriers to trade within this country. I will talk a little later about the importance of that to Canadians.

Back to a little bit of background, I have had people say: "With what you are proposing"—not many, mind you; they have mostly been from the Liberal Party—"are you not letting the federal government be heavy-handed in this issue?"

In fact, that is not the case at all. It is not the case at all because again what I am saying is that only in cases where the provinces and the federal government and the territories together have not been able to reach an agreement could the federal government impose a settlement when we have had agreement of at least seven provinces, including at least 50% of the population.

Second, Bill C-203 would apply only to cases where the proposal falls within the federal legislative powers as established by the Constitution Act of 1867. That is the part of the act that relates to the interprovincial trade. Particularly, we are talking about section 91 of the BNA Act of 1867, which states that legislative authority of Parliament extends to the regulation of trade and commerce, and section 121 of the BNA Act which states that all articles of growth, produce or manufacture of any one of the provinces shall, from after the union, be permitted into each of the provinces.

Clearly, section 121 of the BNA Act says that it is the obligation of the federal government to ensure free movement between provinces. The federal government has abdicated this responsibility in particular for the last 80, 90 years and it has allowed one barrier after another, after another, after another build up so that we do not have free movement of goods in this country anymore. It has come to the point where people who run successful companies have come to me and said "It is absolutely ridiculous in this

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country when it is more difficult for me to move goods to another province than it is for me to do business with a company in the United States”.

• (1740)

I have also had people who run successful companies come to me and say “I have stayed in Canada as long as I possibly can. I want to be a Canadian. I want to do business in this country. But if I want to do business with all ten Canadian provinces and the territories, I can do it much more easily from a company based in the United States”. That is the situation we have today. It makes no sense. It is costing Canadians an awful lot of money.

I will mention some of the studies that have been done which have shown the cost to Canadians.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce stated that a 10% increase in internal trade would result in 200,000 new jobs. With unemployment hanging around 9%, those 200,000 new jobs would be very important indeed. Of course, an increase in internal trade beyond 10% would mean even more jobs.

The Fraser Institute stated that removing interprovincial trade barriers would increase family income by \$3,500 a year. The average family income would increase \$3,500 a year.

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association stated that removing these barriers to internal trade would mean \$6 million to \$10 million more being put into the Canadian economy. That would have a huge impact.

I know I only have five minutes remaining, so I am going to skip over some of the things I was going to cover. However, I am going to refer to two studies which I believe must be referred to when we are talking about the complete lack of success of the agreement on internal trade that was passed in 1995.

A federal study leaked last May found that the agreement on internal trade only addresses 13% of the thousands of interprovincial trade barriers faced by the 50 companies who were taking part in this government survey. The study found that 56% of the trade barriers could be addressed if the agreement were completed. Only 13% had been removed, but 56% of the barriers would be removed if the agreement were completed.

We have to wonder why this government has not been more serious about removing these barriers. Surely that alone should indicate that this government should implement this bill. If it does not like the bill exactly as it is, then I say “Go ahead. Make the changes that you want to make to it, but put in place legislation which will implement the agreement on internal trade”. It is too important to Canadians to ignore.

Last spring the Canadian Federation of Independent Business asked their members the following question: Should the federal government take steps to ensure that the provisions of the agreement on internal trade are enforced without further delay? Of those who responded, 58% said yes, 21% were undecided, 10% were not interested in the issue and only 11% said no. When asked a question which directly relates to my private member's bill, only 11% said “No, don't do that”. Fifty-eight per cent said “Yes, and do it quickly”.

I would like to refer to some letters of support which I received from important groups in Canada.

The first letter comes from the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce. This letter is dated November 3, 1997. I sent a letter to a couple of dozen key institutions across the country and asked them if they would write a letter of support specifically for my private member's bill.

This letter is from John Winter, president of the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce. It reads: “The British Columbia Chamber of Commerce would like to commend you on your initiative to improve trade opportunities within Canada. Much has been made of the success Canadian businesses enjoy in a free trade environment within North America, and the opportunity to improve trade conditions in Canada is overdue. We support you in your efforts and wish you much success in passing An Act to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act.” That is the title of my bill.

• (1745)

That is from the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce.

From the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Catherine Swift, CEO, a letter written November 4, 1997 in response to that same letter: “Thank you for your recent letter on Bill C-202, an act to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act. Small and medium size businesses in Canada have long supported the elimination of internal trade barriers and welcome your initiative on this matter.

“In your letter, you cited CFIB's recent mandate ballot survey which showed that 58% of the respondents supported the federal government ensuring that provisions to the agreement on internal trade are enforced without further delay.

“I have attached the full text of the question as well as two earlier member votes on related topics to your information.

“Please be assured that Canada's small businesses are supportive of your initiatives in this area”.

From the C.D. Howe Institute, I want to make clear up front that this letter is from Daniel Schanen, a real expert in this area. He does say, and I want to get to this first: “Our mandate as an independent institute does not allow us to support or disapprove of

particular bills". But the rest of his letter goes on to show strong support for the initiative that I have taken through this piece of legislation.

They also expressed the importance of the barriers to internal trade being removed in this country. So many of the letters really stressed their disappointment in the lack of action on the part of this government when it came to making some progress on implementing the agreement on internal trade, finishing the deal so that we have barriers to trade reduced and eliminated in this country.

We have the information from studies on the importance of removing these barriers to internal trade. The industry minister has stated on several occasions that he thinks this is an important issue.

I guess I have to ask why this same industry minister who again and again has stressed the importance has said, and I have a quote here on that, that maybe it is time that the federal government went beyond what it proposed to really do what it has a right to do and ensure that this deal is completed.

Every single province and every territory in this country said that if the agreement on internal trade is passed, the people of their provinces would be better off.

That confirms the information that has been received from studies and from the responses I have received from the letters I have sent out on this bill.

I appreciate the time given to me to present my bill and to make some key points on it. I look forward to the debate from other members on this bill.

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak on Bill C-203, an act to amend the agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act.

This bill serves as a timely reminder of how important trade is to Canada not only in international but in domestic trade. From its very beginning, Canada has been a trading nation. Trade is the lifeblood of this country.

The well-being of Canadians depends on our ability to create and profit from competitive trading environments both at home and abroad. It was for that reason that the federal government and the provincial governments during 1993 and 1994 negotiated the agreement on internal trade.

The purpose of the agreement was to create a framework for continued co-operative efforts among governments to open up the domestic market. It established a set of rules and a work program aimed at ensuring the free flow of goods, services, people and capital and, more generally, governing trade and trade disputes between provinces and territories.

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The agreement on internal trade came into effect July 1, 1995. It is no secret that there are problems with the agreement. From the start, the government recognized that the agreement was only a first step. We have accordingly consistently sought to bring other governments to agree to make it a more effective instrument for economic growth.

• (1750)

The Minister of Industry has at every meeting on internal trade pressed his provincial colleagues to ensure the work mandated by the agreement was done within the deadlines set. He has repeatedly challenged the other parties to the agreement to seriously consider ways to improve both its scope and the way it operates.

Recent studies and reports by business organizations such as the chamber of commerce and other observers have underlined many of the weaknesses in the agreement. They have pulled few punches in identifying the reluctance of various provincial governments to live up to the spirit or the letter of their commitments.

Most of these observers have identified the decision making process and the agreement, that is, its requirement for a consensus as a major impediment to progress.

This bill reflects an attempt to address that particular issue. The intent is understandable. The bill itself, unfortunately, is neither realistic nor practical.

As most hon. members will recall, last year we considered and passed the Agreement on Internal Trade implementation Act which this bill proposes to amend. The government introduced that legislation in 1995 because we were then and remain today firmly committed to making the agreement work.

The Agreement on Internal Trade and Implementation Act enables the federal government to meet its obligations under the agreement on internal trade. That legislation was necessary to give the government the appropriate authority and specific tools to act within its own areas of direct responsibility. However, it is most important to recognize that our Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act and the agreement on internal trade are quite different and distinct instruments.

The one is legislation by and for only one government within its own jurisdiction and powers. The other is a collectively achieved accord on how all the governments that are party to it will exercise their respective powers within their own jurisdictions. The agreement on internal trade was the outcome of a difficult process of negotiations between the federal government, the provinces and the territories during 1993 and 1994.

The authority of the agreement on internal trade does not derive from federal legislation. Rather, the authority of the agreement on internal trade derives from the commitments, obligations and undertakings which all governments accepted when they signed it.

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That is a fundamental point which the bill before us fails to recognize.

Simply put, no one party to the agreement on internal trade can on its own amend that agreement. That is what this bill is attempting to do.

There are therefore two main reasons why this bill is inappropriate. First, it cannot accomplish what it wishes to do, which is amend the agreement on internal trade without the agreement of all the other governments that signed it.

Second, it directly conflicts with the fundamental basis on which the agreement was negotiated, co-operation, joint action and national interest. The Canadian business sector has a legitimate expectation that the agreement on internal trade should deal effectively with internal trade barriers and impediments.

It has a legitimate expectation that the agreement should also deal with the burden of extra costs imposed by conflicting, overlapping and duplicate regulatory requirements. Ordinary Canadians have a legitimate expectation that the agreement should make it possible for them to live and work wherever they can be gainfully employed or wherever they are able to provide marketable services. All Canadians have a legitimate expectation that the agreement should make it possible for them to invest freely and conduct honest business freely throughout the country.

The agreement as it now stands does not deliver on those expectations. It is only a first step. The fact is that dealing definitively with internal trade issues is not a simple task.

• (1755)

It is easy to read through sections 91(a) or 121 of the Constitution and conclude that what is needed is bold and decisive action by the federal government; easy but simplistic and ultimately ineffective.

It is simplistic because unilateral federal action could not address some areas that are exclusively within provincial jurisdiction like labour mobility or local government spending on subsidies and other incentives. It is ultimately ineffective because it fails to recognize how this country works best.

Permanent, practical and effective change is best achieved when based on acceptance and co-operation among governments, not on the basis of legalism and coercion. All governments in Canada must work together to ensure that the national economy is strong, efficient and producing new products, services, jobs and growth opportunities.

It is important to that end that all governments be pressed to make the agreement on internal trade work better. The agreement

belongs to all its parties. Its implementation is the responsibility of all its parties, not just the federal government.

While I cannot support this bill before us for the reasons I have outlined, I hope its message will not be lost by other governments and that the member opposite proposing this bill encourage in his own province that his own province be proactive and a leader in making sure that internal trade barriers come down.

In that regard, it is encouraging that the provincial premiers at their annual meeting in August directed their ministers and officials to complete the outstanding work of the agreement and to embark on a major expansion of the activity under it.

This government certainly can be counted on to continue to try to co-operate and work with others to strengthen and improve the agreement on internal trade. We look to others to work with us and be proactive to make things happen.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I rise to speak to Bill C-203, the purpose of which is to amend, and I will come back to this in detail, the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act.

I am glad to see you there, Mr. Speaker, because I am sure that this is a topic of great concern to you and that you will listen closely to what I have to say. Two topics seem to have you terribly worried lately; obviously, the postal dispute, and the impossibility of delivering mail from your riding, as well as your inability to send out your seasonal greetings in the coming weeks. I know that this concerns you greatly, and that internal trade weighs just as heavily on your mind.

What is the bill before us all about? I will read the bill's summary, which explains this very clearly.

This enactment will give the Governor in Council—

In other words, cabinet. I continue:

This enactment will give the Governor in Council the power to bring a proposal into force under the Agreement if, although not having unanimous provincial consent, it nevertheless has the consent of two thirds of the provinces that have at least fifty per cent of the population of Canada. This would apply only to cases where the proposal falls within the federal legislative powers established by the Constitution Act, 1867 that relate to free interprovincial trade.

There are two parts to this bill: the first is the amending formula, and the second deals with the jurisdiction of the federal government in matters of interprovincial trade.

I will start with the first point. Right now, the approach is based on consensus, meaning that the agreement of all the provinces is needed before proceeding. It strikes me as very appropriate to ensure that the parties involved agree before the rules affecting them are passed. The big risk in the proposed formula is that the government would be imposing rules on the provinces with which



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they were not in agreement, and the odds are that, if these provinces were not in agreement, it would be because their citizens were not in agreement either.

When it comes to questions of trade, whether we are talking about opening up borders to international trade or about interprovincial trade, there is obviously very strong pressure to liberalize that trade, but at the same time there is also pressure to do so with respect for the particular characteristics of diverse industries. There is, for example, the whole issue of the colouring of margarine, which is of concern to a lot of dairy producers. We have to understand their concerns.

• (1800)

So, it is certainly not up to the federal Parliament to decide to impose rules without a consensus among the provinces involved. So, I repeat, the current practice, a relatively recent one, is to obtain the unanimous support of the provinces.

The second element of the formula proposed, which is in fact the seven and fifty formula, that is seven provinces and 50% of the population, was never accepted by Quebec. It had long claimed—all sorts of problems arose subsequently—to have veto power. However, no Bloc Québécois member would agree in this House to this formula, which, in the case of interprovincial trade, would reduce the powers currently enjoyed by Quebec.

I have a warning, because I know the members of the government are listening carefully. There is a danger in interprovincial trade. This is my second point, and I will move to it now because it follows nicely. The danger is that little by little the federal government—and the supreme court has given it all the tools it needs—will claim that many sectors of interprovincial trade are under its jurisdiction.

We have long seen the Constitution from the standpoint of the sections that speak of sharing jurisdictions. There are two ways, however, that the federal government can use the Constitution to acquire new powers. There is public order and good government, and there is the Criminal Code. We are not concerned with the Criminal Code here, but I will explain how that would work anyway. The federal government would introduce criminal offences in a particular sector to claim that it had jurisdiction.

Whenever there have been disputes, the supreme court has always ruled in favour of the federal government. This happened again recently. There were a series of decisions recently—I will not look at all of them individually—which meant that everything was on the table if the federal government decided to go ahead and use this provision of good order or good government to take over areas of provincial jurisdiction with respect to interprovincial trade. This

is undesirable and I hope the federal government will not resort to this. It knows very well that, because of the way the court interpreted the Canadian Constitution in its decision, there would be the potential for the federal government to centralize further.

Therefore, as I was saying, there are two aspects to the bill. The seven and fifty formula, which is unacceptable to a province such as Quebec, would also be inconsistent with the claims of a number of political parties, although in the case of the Reform Party, this is less and less obvious, that they support the unique character of Quebec, the new phrase we have been hearing.

This formula merely adds force to our argument that Quebec can be considered to have a unique character on paper, in a declaration with no constitutional value, but when it comes to introducing bills or making legislation, and so forth, that does not count. This has symbolic value, it is a piece of paper that can be given to Daniel Johnson to parade around with in the next election campaign.

This must not have any legal impact, though, and still less have any use as a means of recognizing more powers, or specific powers, for Quebec, never, never. It is clear that if the Calgary declaration were sold under that angle, it would sell even less well than now. That agreement is not out of the woods yet, but that is not what we are debating now.

Now back to the second aspect, which states that the seven and fifty formula ought to be used for jurisdictions currently belonging to the federal government. This is what I am explaining. The problem is that the federal government is then going to claim that other areas of jurisdiction belong to it, where interprovincial trade is concerned. We can pretty well bet that the supreme court would back it up, as usual. There is an old expression in Quebec, with which you are very familiar, which says that the supreme court is like the Leaning tower of Pisa, it always leans in the same direction.

In the case of interprovincial trade, once again they are nibbling away at the powers of the provinces—in the case I refer to, the powers of Quebec—so that the federal government from the heights of its great wisdom here in Ottawa can declare that it is in the best position to ensure the proper operation of government. They would say that good governance and law and order should be left with the federal government. The government would then gradually invade provincial jurisdictions. So we cannot agree on either count.

• (1805)

Now, as far as interprovincial trade per se is concerned, it would clearly be desirable to further harmonize all kinds of existing regulations. I am in a good position to comment on this, since I live in a border riding. Geographically, the riding of Témiscamingue is

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in northwestern Quebec, on the border with Ontario. Naturally, we do a great deal of trade.

We have a very serious transportation problem. There is all sorts of regulations, and trucking regulations in particular. In our riding, on the border, there is this company called Tembec Inc. Its trucks only have to travel a few hundred feet to cross the border but they are subject to a different set of standards regarding loading and so on, depending on which side of the border they are on. That does complicate things somewhat and there are serious problems.

But this does not mean we should give the federal government the power to decide what would be best for these people. Hopefully, the provinces will step up negotiations to improve interprovincial trade, in the interest of businesses, individuals, workers and ultimately consumers.

In some cases, it is easier to trade with a foreign country, and the United States in particular, than between two Canadian provinces. Everyone agrees improvements are required, but certainly not along the lines of the proposals contained in the bill before us today, as it would not be in keeping with the amending formula Quebec wants, it would not give it a veto. On the other hand, it would enable the federal government to avail itself of this means to help itself to more and more power in the area of interprovincial trade. In the end, this would lead, once again, to a greater centralization of powers.

For these two very valid reasons, we cannot support this bill.

[English]

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-203.

The bill before us proposes to amend the powers of the government to enforce the agreement on internal trade. Under Bill C-203 unanimous consent from the provinces will no longer be required to reduce interprovincial trade barriers.

Internal trade is an area of great interest to me. My background is in small and medium size business. My family have been historically involved in small and medium size business. Our family and our region in Atlantic Canada prospered under more liberalized trade both with other Canadians and with people around the world.

Currently 20% of our national income and over 1.9 million Canadian jobs are created by trade among provinces and territories. Trade between the provinces totalled \$314 billion in 1995 alone. Recognizing that internal trade in Canada is a vital part of our economy, I am distressed that since the internal trade agreement was negotiated and implemented it has received very little attention and even less leadership from the government.

Working harder to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers might stop or at least slow the recent increase in the unemployment rate. Canadian consumers, Canadian taxpayers and Canadians looking for work are paying the price for inaction on reducing internal trade barriers.

The initiative on the internal trade agreement was brought forward by the former Conservative government in partnership with the first ministers of the day. In 1987 the partners reached an agreement in principle to negotiate an agreement on internal trade. In the spring of 1993 negotiations began with a deadline of June 1994.

Unfortunately this agreement has not had the effect its originators had envisioned for it. This is especially distressing when one reads the red book distributed by the government in 1993. In it the Liberals promised to urgently address the issue of internal trade if they were to form a government. Today Canadians still find the economy hampered by internal trade barriers which give the provinces protectionist powers that cost Canadians jobs.

• (1810)

The current agreement is fundamentally flawed. There continue to be differing rules for a wide range of goods and services and specifications for things as ludicrous as the colour of margarine to the standards that trades people must meet in neighbouring provinces. Self-governing professional groups have erected qualification and certification barriers that prevent mobility of the workforce between provinces.

The current agreement does not cover the \$50 billion public procurement market involving municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals. A recent proposal to open this market was vetoed by the British Columbian government. Since the agreement contains no enforcement mechanism, when a province wishes to break the agreement it can do so without fear. These trade barriers are creating false economies, are creating higher costs for consumers, taxpayers and are hindering employment growth.

The Liberal Party has in its past fought free trade. Now it cannot get enough of it. One week it will sign a deal with Chile. The next week it will sign a deal with Israel. While we are supportive and have been consistent in our support of the principles of liberalized trade and have recognized its benefits, it is time to bring down the barriers that create more trade barriers between Newfoundland and Ontario than exist between Newfoundland and Chile or Newfoundland and Israel.

This is not an issue of partisan politics as members of each party recognize the importance of bringing down these barriers and ensuring that we further grow the Canadian economy through liberalized trade.

Since the Liberals negotiated the agreement they have continued to pass legislation that increases barriers to internal trade. The current Minister for International Trade, the government's latest choirboy for trade internationally, was singing a different tune just a short time ago when as minister of the environment he cham-

pioned Bill C-29 which created internal trade barriers within Canada that are now being contested under chapter 11 of the investor state provisions of NAFTA. This represents a potential \$350 million loss to Canadian taxpayers because of his ineptitude at the time he championed Bill C-29.

The former minister for international trade, now the defence minister, cautioned the member for York West in a letter dated February 23, 1996. He told the minister "Bill C-29 could have many adverse implications for Canadian trade without compensating environmental benefits". The government is guilty of creating more internal trade barriers within the country, not eliminating them.

Bill C-29 created internal trade barriers and is inconsistent with our current international trade minister's philosophy du jour espousing the benefits of liberalized trade. Now the minister's trade policy contained in Bill C-29 has brought the lawsuit from Ethyl Corporation. It is one of three lawsuits now against the Canadian government from foreign companies under chapter 11 provisions of NAFTA.

Not only did the government introduce Bill C-29 but it also tried to push taxation barriers on the Atlantic provinces through the implementation of the HST. Tax-in prices would have done more to create internal trade barriers and would have cost more jobs in Atlantic Canada. It is completely contrary to the basic principles of liberalized trade the government consistently represents, at least in terms of its rhetoric. It is completely inconsistent in terms of its policy inaction.

The motion put forth by the member for Lakehead is headed in the right direction as it asks for trade barriers to be reduced. It has enabled the House to have a lively debate on the important issue of internal trade. The motion on its own is too simplistic to completely address the barriers surrounding internal trade. I fear that what is needed is leadership from the government on an issue that is all too important to be downsized.

The government has shown a propensity to downsize and offload responsibilities to the provinces in the race to fiscal responsibility. We cannot offload or downsize leadership. That is what I fear has happened with this important issue of internal trade.

The problems with this agreement are much deeper than unanimous consent of the provinces. This is an example of the need for an enforcement clause which I touched on earlier. Furthermore, the motion asks the government to unilaterally change the internal trade agreement without consultation with the provinces. It is this type of federalism that the Official Opposition has used at times to divide Canadians while our party, the PC Party, is trying hard to unite Canada.

### *Private Members' Business*

• (1815)

The PC Party believes it is time to deal with this problem of internal trade barriers with a holistic approach. The jobs at stake are simply too important for the federal government to sit on the sidelines. We believe that free internal trade can be negotiated co-operatively with the provinces.

The government needs to provide courageous leadership on this issue. The government has demonstrated basically that it is not interested in playing that important and critical role with the provinces on these types of important negotiations.

Earlier this spring my party proposed making internal trade an integral part of something we call the Canadian covenant. Under the Canadian covenant the PC Party proposed forging a new and lasting federation with a new level of co-operation between the federal government and the provinces.

Besides health care and post-secondary education, the covenant would have focused on interprovincial trade. We support the establishment of a commission to regulate and enforce the rules of interprovincial trade. We need to negotiate with the provinces to harmonize provincial standards in areas of corporate and business registrations, professional or occupational certification so that the costs of doing business in this country are not increased but in fact are reduced. The PC also supports strengthening internal trade through the transportation procurement provisions.

In closing, interprovincial trade like international trade is vital to our economy. The current government has focused too little time on improving trade conditions right here at home.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimates that a 10% increase in interprovincial trade will create 200,000 very necessary and important jobs for Canadians. It is time for a Team Canada for Canada and it is time that we demonstrate leadership and it is time that the federal government actually works hard to provide this type of leadership at this critical time for the Canadian people.

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and speak on Bill C-203, a bill to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act.

I would like to congratulate the member for Lakeland for this initiative. I would like to congratulate our government as well for making some early moves in the right direction. As the parliamentary secretary indicated, more needs to be done, but I am very happy that we have started the process.

If we look at it from the point of view of economic efficiency, it does seem somewhat ironic that as we are breaking down barriers to trade internationally, we still do have some barriers to trade within our own country.

*Private Members' Business*

Within that context I wonder if we could talk briefly about the brewing industry. The brewing industry and the location of brewing plants in Canada has been one of those issues within the context of the internal trade agreement that has received some profile and some attention.

In my riding of Etobicoke North I have two very large breweries, a big Molson brewery and a big Labatt brewery. I have many dealings as a result of that with the brewing industry. When I speak with them we often discuss how the brewing industry in the United States has evolved. There are typically very large brewing plants in the United States in one location or two locations and they serve the domestic U.S.A. market and perhaps the market internationally. They tend to have huge plants and they capitalize on some tremendous economies of scale.

In Canada the brewing industry has developed somewhat differently. We have a number of smaller plants which are relatively large in size but compared to the megaplants in the United States, they tend to be smaller and they tend to be spread out across Canada. As I understand it, the reason that has evolved is that many provinces—including I suspect the province of Alberta, but I do not know that for certain—but various provinces have insisted that for the national breweries to do business in their province, they have restricted transport movements of beer. It really has meant that the brewing industry has been required to set up brewing plants in very many of the provinces. Presumably some of the major breweries have established plants in Alberta. Again, I do not have those facts in front of me.

• (1820)

If the barriers to internal trade are removed for the brewing industry, it would undoubtedly mean that some of the smaller plants across the prairies, in British Columbia, in the maritime provinces and in Ontario would shut down and a lot of the production would be consolidated into megaplants. I wonder if the hon. member for Lakeland would see that as a positive step and whether he would support it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** If the hon. member for Lakeland speaks now, he will close the debate. The hon. member for Lakeland.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I will respond to some of the issues which were brought up by the members who spoke. I do not have much time obviously to spend on the response to any one particular member. I will start by responding to the questions posed by the hon. member for Etobicoke North. He asked what would happen to some of the smaller breweries if barriers to internal trade were removed. He asked about Alberta specifically.

If the member wants to refer to Alberta, it would be important for him to know that the province of Alberta has led the movement

to remove barriers to internal trade. Unilaterally it has made many of the changes which will be and should have been put in place by a completed agreement on internal trade. Alberta has done it unilaterally because it feels that this issue is important to Albertans.

There have been a few people who have complained about this unilateral action. They feel that Alberta should have waited until the agreement is completed. That is what my private member's bill would do. It would lead to the completion of the agreement.

Members who have called it simplistic obviously have not read it and thought it through. It is simple. It is a simple amendment, but it is not simplistic and it will do the job.

In terms of the breweries, many successful breweries are in fact micro-breweries, smaller breweries. I cannot say for sure that some would not close down as a result of removing barriers.

However, every province, each territory and the federal government, when they signed the agreement on internal trade agreed that there would be a net benefit to the people of each and every province.

That brings me to the comments made by the Bloc member. He was concerned that Quebec would lose its veto within the formula which would remove the unanimous consent requirement and put in place the consent of at least seven provinces having at least 50% of the population. His concern is completely unfounded. In fact, the Government of Quebec signed the agreement on internal trade. It agreed to a step by step process to complete the agreement. All my bill would do would be to allow for the completion of the agreement on internal trade.

The concerns put forth by the hon. Bloc member are completely unfounded because Quebec has already agreed to it, as has every other province and territory in the country.

Furthermore, I believe that Bloc members supported the implementation agreement which was introduced in 1995 and passed in 1996. This nonsense about Quebec losing its veto is completely unfounded. It has already expressed the desire to have this agreement completed and that is all my bill would do. It would put in place a more realistic formula for approval for each step in completing the agreement on internal trade.

The reactions of government members have been very vague in some ways. However, they did say they were concerned because the agreement on internal trade was signed by all governments in Canada, so how could the federal government alone make this amendment.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary if the government has even attempted to consult with the provinces and the territories to make this change or a change like this. I do not care if they use the

exact method that I am putting forward. I do not care. I just want the job done.

• (1825)

The government has far more resources than I have in terms of coming up with a way of doing it. I believe it will work, as do members of these institutions who have studied the issue in some depth. They agree it will work.

I do not believe it is simplistic. I believe it is simple. The concerns the government has expressed are completely unfounded. I will use some quotes from Liberal ministers in the last government to back that up.

One is from Alan Toulon, writing in *The Financial Post*, October 25, 1996. He referred to the minister from Edmonton West hoping for agreement on internal trade in electricity. She also raised the possibility that Ottawa would use its constitutional powers to manage the country's economic union.

That would mean a more active federal government, a role in bringing about deregulation for that minister and the Minister of Industry.

On February 25, 1997 the Minister of Industry spoke to a group of Edmonton small business people at a small business conference. He said that from his point of view it would soon be time for the federal government to consider alternative strategies. To say that he was disappointed, angry or frustrated is not only how he felt but an understatement. Being this far along into the agreement with so little progress to show indicated to him that it was certainly time to re-examine the strategy.

I will close with that. I had several quotes from constitutional experts. I would be glad to table them if I am requested to do so. I thank members for their input. I thank them for their clear support in dealing with the issue. It was unanimous, I believe. If government members do not believe my bill is the best way to go in this regard, I encourage them to come up with their own and I will support it wholeheartedly.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** As no other hon. member wishes to speak, and the motion was not selected as a votable item, the hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### *Adjournment Debate*

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on October 24, 1997, I questioned the Minister of Human Resources Development about the fact that the matter of the use made of the surplus of billions of dollars in the employment insurance fund should be included on the agenda of the next federal provincial conference.

• (1830)

We must not forget that, last summer at St. Andrews, the premiers decided that there were two things the federal government had to do about employment insurance. It had to lower contributions and improve the living conditions of workers who are between jobs, that is unemployed people receiving benefits.

Since then, there has not been a peep out of the federal government. The minister told us that the agenda was not his responsibility, it was the Prime Minister's. Today, we have reached that point in the autumn when—and we can see it at the Info-Centres—in Shawinigan they are getting calls from all those who are dissatisfied with the employment insurance reform. Our riding offices are systematically flooded with calls from people who say they can no longer get through.

In this wonderful federal system, it used to be that each Canada employment centre could provide answers to those it served. Through some incredible coincidence, it was decided to centralize everything in Shawinigan, in the Prime Minister's riding, and nothing works any more. There is no one to answer the phone. People call and call, but the line is always busy. This is example of the contempt shown by the Liberal government, which did not heed the message sent by the public during the last federal election.

Several Liberal MPs from the maritimes lost their jobs here. They were replaced by New Democrats or Conservatives because the public sent a clear message to the government that the employment insurance issue had to be reconsidered.

People do not call it employment insurance. They still talk about unemployment insurance. They know that the new program is not a guarantee of employment, but a guarantee that they will have increasingly less money when they find themselves between jobs. They want to know whether the government is prepared to lower the requirement of 910 hours of work for first-time contributors, such as graduating students or women who re-enter the labour market. Would it be possible to lower this requirement to a more reasonable figure, so that people will not give up?

Would it be possible to change the fact that, at the end of every 20 weeks of collecting employment insurance, people will see their benefits diminish by 1%? It means that if someone is starting this fall at 55%, he or she will get 54% in 20 weeks. If that person needs to rely on employment insurance again next year, the same thing will happen. The clock is not set back to zero. This means that in three years, seasonal workers will find themselves with 50%,

*Adjournment Debate*

while a person who lives in another region and who does not have to rely on employment insurance on a regular basis will get 55%.

Is there any possibility that the federal government can promise to put this issue on the agenda at the first ministers' conference that will be held in December, as requested by the Quebec premier and the other provincial premiers last summer? That would tell us something about this government's ability to show compassion.

[English]

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the hon. member's question by reminding him, and the Minister of Human Resources remarked on this recently, that the last federal budget and the main estimates already contain a great deal of information on the employment insurance account.

That said, there is no great mystery regarding the employment insurance account reserve. A reserve is necessary since it makes it possible to apply more stable premium rates throughout the economic cycle, thus making it possible to avoid increasing them in a recessionary period. In addition, the reserve makes it possible to ensure that there are sufficient funds to pay benefits when they are most necessary.

Let us recall for a moment what happened in the last recession. A \$2 billion surplus in the Employment Insurance Act turned into a \$6 billion deficit in two years and it was necessary to increase

premiums by 30% in what was already a difficult time for job creation. That is no time to increase premiums. Consequently the government believes that it is wise to establish a reserve in the employment insurance account.

The size of the reserve varies continually. It increases and decreases depending on the rate at which benefits are paid out. The reserve is currently estimated to contain some \$12 billion. However, this amount is to be reviewed and the government will soon be announcing its decision in this regard.

• (1835)

It should be remembered that the funds are kept in an account in anticipation of future expenditures that might be incurred under the program. The interest is credited to the employment insurance account. As indicated in the main estimates for 1997-98, interest this year totalled \$345 million.

The employment insurance premiums of workers and employers make it possible to provide income protection. That is very important for persons who unexpectedly lose their jobs.

**The Deputy Speaker:** A motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.36 p.m.)

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