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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 20, 2002

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 20, 2002

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

●(1400)

[English]

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

[Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week *Maclean's* magazine released its annual university edition. The magazine evaluates Canadian universities according to three categories: primarily undergraduate, comprehensive, and medical doctoral.

I am pleased to say that *Maclean's* this year has ranked the University of Guelph as the number one university in its comprehensive category. However, I must say that many of us in Guelph—Wellington have known for a very long time that our university is indeed number one. *Maclean's* states:

What distinguishes Guelph is a strong sense of community... it places a high priority on ensuring students' academic success... and ensures that students have a chance to become involved.

I am pleased that the values of my community are reflected in our university. The University of Guelph is an outstanding institution and I applaud it for receiving this recognition.

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SENATE OF CANADA

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, one of the cornerstones of Canadian Alliance policy remains our commitment to an elected Senate. At the convention that gave birth to the Reform Party our members saw the need to overhaul an institution that was detached, unaccountable and obsolete. Fifteen years later the Senate is even less relevant to Canadians. That must change.

In an elected Senate we have the opportunity to reinvigorate Canadian political life by better representing Canada's regional diversity. An elected Senate would provide a much needed source of opposition to the expanding power in the Prime Minister's Office.

Canadians deserve no less; they certainly should not have to pay for and support an organization that often resembles little more than a retirement home for Liberals.

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●(1405)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recent Human Rights Watch report entitled "All Our Hopes are Crushed: Violence and Repression in Western Afghanistan", and that of Afghan-Canadian women decrying the absence of security and justice, even in Kabul, particularly for Afghan women, are ominous signs of a "re-Talibanization".

It includes: first, the division of Afghanistan into provincial fiefdoms presided by warlords complicit in war crimes; second, a pattern in western Afghanistan of widespread political intimidation, arrests, beatings, torture and extortion, and complete denial of any freedom of expression or association; third, a continuing violation of women's rights with the reinstatement of Taliban-like departments of vice and virtue; a fatwa against Dr. Sima Samar; the rocketing of four schools for girls; and women denied access to health, employment and other basic human rights; fourth, the targeting of the Pashtun minority for special abuse; and fifth, a climate of fear and insecurity.

The Canadian government should: reaffirm principles of justice and accountability as the basis for human security in Afghanistan; ensure no development aid be funnelled through warlords; ensure that the ISAF presence extends throughout the country; and protect women's rights as a test of the new Afghanistan.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the House the work of the National Research Council's Institute of Biodiagnostics in downtown Winnipeg. The work of the institute is under the leadership of Dr. Ian Smith, the Director General and Dr. Roxanne Deslauriers, the Director of Research.

S. O. 31

The research teams at the Institute are involved in leading edge research in the field of magnetic resonance imaging or MRI. In groundbreaking research they are developing a one-stop multimodal procedure for the detection of breast cancer which includes identifying a lesion undetectable by traditional x-ray methods.

As well, another of the institute's research teams is conducting research in the area of colon cancer, the second leading cause of cancer related deaths among men and women. Again using magnetic resonance spectroscopy the team is developing an early detection procedure that is non-invasive and will provide a biochemical fingerprint.

The research teams of the institute are to be congratulated for their world class research in non-invasive medical diagnostics.

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NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne the Prime Minister noted that Canada's future rests in the hands of our children. We must therefore provide families with the tools they need to plan for our children's future.

November 20 is National Child Day. I would like to review with my colleagues the steps the federal government has taken to support children and families.

We have committed \$2.2 billion to the early childhood development agreement with the provinces to focus on healthy pregnancy, birth, parenting, family support, and early childhood development. We have doubled the length of maternity leave from 6 to 12 months, and increased parenting benefits to give fathers more flexibility in helping to raise a family. In addition, the federal government has continued to increase the Canada child tax benefit to help poor and middle income families, but sadly, there are still too many children who go to bed hungry at night and much more remains to be done.

The investments we make today will make a better tomorrow for all of our children.

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NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate National Child Day. On this special day we honour our country's most precious resource, our children. I rise to speak on their behalf.

Often it is easy for elected officials to ignore those who do not exert direct influence on the democratic process. Since children do not vote, often their opinions are not valued.

Today, in the name of all children of divorced parents I want to plead with our justice minister to heed the call of thousands of children across this country who want to access both parents and both sets of grandparents. For too long the adversarial winner-take-all model of our family law justice system has robbed children of their right to access both parents. Most children of divorced parents could care less about their mommy's and daddy's squabbles, but they love mom and dad in spite of their differences.

Today I ask the justice minister, for the sake of the children, to ensure that the concept of shared parenting becomes the premise on which all judgments in custody and access disputes are based.

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● (1410)

[Translation]

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, November 20, is National Child Day, proclaimed in 1993 by the Government of Canada to mark the adoption of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In 2001-02, some 2.6 million children of low-income families benefited from the national child benefit. This was a reiteration of our commitment to help children and families.

The government released two reports, one on Government of Canada activities and expenditures for early childhood development and the other a Government of Canada report on child welfare, 2002.

National Child Day is an excellent opportunity to remind us that we need to honour our children, who are Canada's future.

I trust that members will join with me in marking this important day.

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VANESSA BILODEAU AND CATHERINE MONGEAU

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to welcome to Parliament Hill today and tomorrow the MPs for a day for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, Vanessa Bilodeau and Catherine Mongeau.

These two young ladies tied as winners of the fifth edition of the MP for a day contest, winning out over close to 1,200 other fourth year secondary school students in a test of general political knowledge.

During their stay in Ottawa, they will have an opportunity to find out more about what MPs do in Parliament and to have a closer look at the exciting life here on the Hill. They and their mothers will have the honour of a private meeting with the leader of the Bloc Québécois and will also have the opportunity to meet the members of our entire caucus.

You too, Mr. Speaker, will have the opportunity to meet and talk with the two of them after question period this afternoon.

On behalf of all my colleagues here in the House, welcome to Parliament. Enjoy your time among us.

S. O. 31

[*English*]

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1998 I stood in the House to call for a national day of recognition for Sir Wilfrid Laurier's birthday. Today is his birthday and the House has passed a bill of recognition.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier was a true Canadian, a skilful and pragmatic politician with a charismatic personality. He was the dominant political figure of his era. In 1900 Laurier declared that the 20th century would belong to Canada. His vision created the country that emerged over the next hundred years, the country of which we are so proud of today. Under his leadership Canada continued its industrialization and urbanization, and was strengthened by the addition of two provinces and two million inhabitants. Laurier's vision and his determination was that Canadians, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic background, could work together toward a common goal, that of nationhood.

There is no greater gift we can give to future generations than to honour our history by leaving them a memory of our past.

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YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, in Maple Ridge, Colleen Findlay, an active member of the community and a mother of three children, was tragically murdered in her own home. The family's car and other items were stolen before the house was set on fire. A 15 year old boy has been charged with first degree murder. This young offender has reportedly had brushes with the law and is well known to local police.

This preventable tragedy once again highlights the need for the Liberal government to make substantive changes to the Young Offenders Act. The system has failed Mrs. Findlay, it has failed her family, and it has failed our community. Those offenders who refuse to take responsibility for their actions must be held to account and communities must be protected from individuals who are a danger to our safety.

On behalf of all my colleagues I wish to offer our prayers and thoughts of sympathy to Jim Findlay and his family at this most difficult of times.

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[*Translation*]

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Sir Wilfrid Laurier Day. Born in Quebec on November 20, 1881, Wilfrid Laurier became the seventh Prime Minister of Canada, and the first French-speaking Prime Minister.

A man of obvious vision and leadership, the right hon. Wilfrid Laurier was one of the great architects of national unity in this country. Of course, the most important legacy that he left us was the bridge he built between English Canada and French Canada.

Admired by the people, Laurier was a member of Parliament for 45 years, and holds the longest unbroken tenure as Prime Minister. Respected by his colleagues, Laurier was also the Prime Minister who led his party for the longest period.

Let us honour his memory.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this past May Canada signed a UN declaration, A World Fit for Children, to eradicate poverty and put children's needs first. In 1989 Parliament also declared it would eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Since then food banks have become a growth industry, child poverty has increased 39% and the Liberal showpiece, the national child tax benefit, reaches only 36% of poor families while welfare incomes have dropped 20%.

This National Child Day the Liberals should hang their heads in shame. The Liberal record and the former finance minister's sheer contempt for alleviating poverty is breathtaking. Forty-six billion dollars to bankers is where the former finance minister put his budget surpluses, while promises for universal child care and affordable housing became mere shadows and papered in fancy press releases for Liberal PR.

Their record for children is appalling and embarrassing and it needs to be said loud and clear on this National Child Day.

* * *

● (1415)

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is Universal Children's Day, proclaimed by the United Nations to promote the rights of children as well as the respect they deserve.

Despite the Prime Minister's compassionate speeches abroad, when it comes to child poverty, the promises made by the Liberals to wage war on child poverty and poverty among families have yet to be kept.

By slapping programs together haphazardly, without effective mechanisms to implement them and without the jurisdiction to do so, this government must acknowledge that it has abandoned our children and used the money that should have gone to them to improve its own visibility.

Although Quebec is held up as an example when it comes to family policies, the Prime Minister continues to try to prevent young families in Quebec from benefiting from a parental leave program that is better suited to their needs.

The Prime Minister should applaud Quebec's family policies and use this day dedicated to children to say "YES" loud and clear to children and their families.

Oral Questions

[English]

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this, the birthday of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the first since we passed the Macdonald-Laurier bill, we are reminded in this morning's *Globe and Mail* by J.D.M. Stewart of Sir Wilfrid's eloquence. Quoting him on the subject of a railway bill, I kept thinking that we could use Sir Wilfrid for Kyoto. This is what he had to say:

To those who urge upon us the policy of tomorrow, and tomorrow and tomorrow, to those who tell us, wait, wait, wait; to those who advise us to pause, to consider, to reflect, to calculate and to inquire, our answer is: No, this is not a time for deliberation, this is a time for action. The flood-tide is upon us that leads on to fortune; if we let it pass it may never recur again. If we let it pass, the voyage of our national life, bright as it is today, will be bound in shallows.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the government has been warned for years that billions of dollars in GST rebates are vulnerable to fraud, but has done nothing to close the loopholes. The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency says that it is impossible to estimate the losses from GST fraud.

It is ironic that while Revenue Canada does not have the resources to deal with this major issue, it is spending time and effort arresting ordinary fisherpersons in the Newfoundland community where over 40 fisherpersons have had EI payments suspended because of an anonymous letter it mysteriously received.

Before any investigation took place, HRDC, along with Revenue Canada, withheld these people's only source of income, which is critical especially during the Christmas season. Earlier this morning I wrote to both of the appropriate ministers expressing my disgust over the matter and I asked that they immediately reinstate payments to these people until such time as an investigation is complete.

How can the government justify ignoring the loss of billions of dollars while they have all the pertinent information—

The Speaker: Order, please. Oral questions. The hon. leader of the official opposition.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on Monday the Minister of the Environment told the House that he could not agree to all the principles put forth by the provinces for support of Kyoto. He specifically singled out his objection to provincial demands for federal funding of any adverse impacts of Kyoto policies.

Could he tell the House what he finds objectionable about the federal government taking full responsibility for actions it takes without the consent of the provinces?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has answered his own question. He talks about lack of approval of the provinces. We do not

know whether there will or will not be such approval. Therefore, he has already put a condition in which is exactly the type of thing that we would like to clarify before we go in and have an agreement with them on these other points that are in dispute.

• (1420)

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure any of us understood that. The Kyoto deal is being driven by this government over the objection of the provinces. Not surprisingly, the provinces are asking for assurances that the costs of the Prime Minister's made in Kyoto adventure will be covered by the federal government.

If the government is so convinced of the benefits of Kyoto, why will it not put its money where its mouth is and agree to the provincial demand that the federal government bear the financial risks of its own commitments?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first mistake the hon. Leader of the Opposition made in his presentation and his preamble was to describe the plan for implementing and achieving the Canadian decision of minus 6% of 1990 levels as not being a made in Canada plan.

Let me assure him that it is the result of five full years of discussion with the provinces and territories, with industry, with environmental groups and, shortly, it will have the benefit of a few hours and days of debate in the House. Therefore, it is very much a made in Canada plan.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister still has not answered my question. He just keeps insisting he could ask better questions himself.

The provinces are simply asking for a guarantee that their economies will not be unduly affected by this plan. If the government really believes its own claim that the costs of Kyoto are small, it would have no hesitation in providing financial guarantees to the provinces.

If the Liberal government does not believe the costs are small, why is it asking Canadians to go on blind faith? Why is it asking Canadians for a blank cheque on Kyoto?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the level of questioning would improve if the hon. Leader of the Opposition and his friends would let them be phrased on this side of the House.

That aside, the problem that he outlined is exactly in that weasel word he used, unduly. What does unduly mean? A weasel word. If he would explain that to the satisfaction of the provinces, the territories and the federal government, perhaps we would be further ahead as to what we could accept.

TERRORISM

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday an international fundraising network was shut down by Great Britain and the United States. The benevolent international fund of Canada is also named as part of this network which reportedly helps al-Qaeda to buy weapons and plan their murders. Today the office of the foreign affairs minister informed my office that it is unaware of any plans to shut down the Canadian arm of this fundraising network.

Other nations take clear steps to protect their citizens and others from this particular network. Why is Canada apparently doing nothing to shut this network down?

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has acted just as decisively as other nations. We have listed 366 organizations and are currently sharing that information with our international allies.

The United States just listed this organization yesterday. It has submitted the name to the United Nations. When the United Nations responds, we also will quickly trigger into our legislation exactly what it has done.

I would suggest that the hon. member keep his shirt on.

An hon. member: Yes, keep your shirt on, please.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I am sure he will. The hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla has another question though and we will all hear it.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, they can joke about it but it is a very serious issue.

Why do other countries have to do the intelligence work for our government? We have court documents. They are already available. They reveal a close relationship between Osama bin Laden and the founder of this Canadian so-called charity that includes pen pal letters to Osama bin Laden and fuzzy photo opportunities with Osama bin Laden.

This is not a laughing matter. Charity begins at home. Why will the Solicitor General not take steps to protect Canadians?

• (1425)

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I was referring to the hon. member's haste rather than to the substance of the matter.

We take the substance of this very seriously. We do not have court documents. We have a newspaper article. According to what we can ascertain, the fact of the matter is the Americans triggered this just yesterday, and the United Nations is immediately acting on it.

When they list, this automatically triggers a Canadian listing. I do not think we can do more than that at this time.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, even the Prime Minister, who denies the existence of a fiscal imbalance while his government rakes in enormous surpluses, wrongly assumes that, and I quote, “if the financial situation of the Canadian government is better, it is because in recent years management in Ottawa has been better than that in Quebec”.

The reality—instead of blindly applauding, they should listen and look at the reality—is that there are 37,000 more public servants today than in 1999 because of these enormous surpluses.

Will the federal government finally admit that, compared to Quebec, its tax field is much too broad in relation to its obligations?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at present, in the public service per se, there are still fewer public servants today than before the program review.

That having been said, we are asked on a daily basis to invest more in certain areas and to provide our fellow citizens with higher quality services. It follows that we have an appropriate size public service to deliver these programs and quality services to all the people of Canada, including in Quebec.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the programs. Outside of health, departmental expenditures in Quebec have increased by 7.3% since 1994, while federal departmental expenditures increased by 21.7% over the same period. That is three times more. Exactly three times more.

Will the federal government admit that, by collecting more taxes than its level of responsibility warrants, it is managing abundance while, in Quebec, there is a shortfall?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, never before have I heard such a thing: a government being accused of good management.

Look at what we have done since 1993, at the fact that we have eliminated the deficit, reduced the debt and lowered taxes, and cut program spending. Then, they blame us for having managed the country's finances well.

The proof is in the pudding: the people of Canada voted for us again last time, and I think they will do so again next time around.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the same period, the expenditures of the federal departments increased by 21.7%, while those of the Quebec government, with the exception of health, increased by only 7.3%. When we compare the results of the two levels of governments, we can see which one really made an effort to manage properly.

Will the federal government admit that, by letting its departments' expenditures increase by 21.7%, it is obviously not, in spite of its claims to the contrary, the one that really made an effort?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the level of public satisfaction with our government.

Oral Questions

Let us look at the figures. We can toss numbers around. We can always interpret figures the way we want and use the approach we want.

Based on the gross domestic product, spending went from 17% at the time, in 1993, to 11.6% now, which is unprecedented. We also reduced public expenditures.

More importantly, we have provided good government to the citizens of this country, and Quebecers recognize that.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is easy to see: the federal government has made no effort in terms of management. The federal machine has a life of its own and the only real effort it has made has been to cut transfers to the provinces and to cut benefits for the unemployed, while the government keeps on raking in the money.

Will the government admit that, in this context, anyone can claim to have a good balance sheet and to be a good manager?

• (1430)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we want to compare what is comparable, let us compare Quebec with the other provinces. Let the Bloc Quebecois explain why taxes in Quebec are 40% higher than the average, and why Quebec is one of the provinces with the largest debt, if not because it is run by a government that should take a good hard look at what it is doing, instead of always blaming the federal government.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. If hon. members want to carry on discussions on this issue, they can do so behind the curtains. The hon. member for Halifax.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to a memo to cabinet leaked to *Le Devoir*, the government is changing its position on NAFTA chapter 11.

[English]

That investor-state provision protects investors' rights to make money over environmental and labour standards. The government used to say that it opposed it. Now this leaked cabinet memo says that it wants to expand it.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that when it comes to expanding chapter 11 the government's position now is the sky is the limit?

Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess the leader of the NDP has not been in the House when the Minister for International Trade repeatedly made it quite clear that the government does not support simple replication of chapter 11.

Having said that, with some \$389 billion of Canadian funds invested overseas, obviously we want to protect such investment.

BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, as we applaud the winners of the Governor General awards, our government continues to undermine our book publishing industry.

This summer Canadian heritage allowed Amazon.com to enter the Canadian market. Today we learned that Distican has been sold to Simon and Schuster with Canadian heritage approval.

The heritage department is responsible for the Investment Canada Act as it pertains to the cultural sector.

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell the House what steps she will take to stop the sell off of our book publishing industry and put teeth back into the Investment Canada Act?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the proof of the success of the Canadian book publishing policy is that this year for the first time we have actually had three Canadians nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize.

If we look at the incredible authors who are here in the audience today, they are from diverse backgrounds and diverse parts of the country. It is probably the healthiest industry of its kind in a country of similar size. I think we should applaud book publishers and especially the authors.

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HEALTH

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Krever report recommended that all hepatitis C victims be compensated. In 1998 the government rejected that advice and limited compensation to those who were infected between 1986 and 1990.

The RCMP has now laid charges against four doctors, the Red Cross and an American pharmaceutical company in the tainted blood scandal. Those charges reach back before 1986.

Is the government prepared to reconsider its decision to limit compensation and will it now help all the victims of the tainted blood scandal?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that question is no, we are not going to reconsider our position. It would be singularly inappropriate for anyone to comment at this point. Charges have been laid. These matters will be dealt with before the courts. Obviously we need to await the outcome of that litigation.

* * *

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, she will await the outcome but her answer is no.

Oral Questions

Earlier this fall the Minister of Finance asked both the House of Commons finance committee and the banking committee of the other place to review the current rules on bank mergers.

Obviously, to do their work effectively, the committees need to hear from the minister who sent them their task. So far the minister has not agreed to come before the committee in the other place.

Is that because the government has no position on bank mergers or is the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the minister for fouling up Canadian security just too busy to attend committees of the House of Commons and the Senate?

• (1435)

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already been to the committee of the House of Commons. I was there just two weeks ago.

I have asked the committees, both in the House and the Senate, for their advice. I presume they do not need my advice to give me their advice.

In any event, I have indicated to the chairman of the committee that I would be happy to make myself available to the Senate committee at an appropriate time. In the meantime, in helping fill out the scope of the public interest considerations related to possible mergers of financial institutions, I think that is a committee well qualified to give us advice without any further input from me.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, New Zealand warned Canadian officials about the potential for GST fraud at the very beginning, yet the barn door was left open.

By 1995 the Liberal government knew it had lost over \$10 million to GST fraud, yet it failed to include safeguards when it revamped the GST legislation in 1996.

My question to the minister is quite simple: Why did the government sit idly by while criminals and con artists helped themselves to millions of dollars of taxpayers money?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is wrong when he says that we did not heed the warnings. In fact, we did.

We have taken very significant action that has resulted in 13 successful prosecutions, 14 additional prosecutions that are before the court today and 20 more that are under investigation.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there is simply no excuse for this. The government was warned repeatedly about the dangers of GST fraud, yet it failed to plug those loopholes.

Even today the Liberals talk about auditing, investigating and prosecuting instead of closing the loopholes that led to these scams in the first place.

What we are talking about is fraud that may have cost Canadians over \$1 billion. That buys a lot of Sea Kings and a lot of hospital beds.

When will the government do something concrete to stop the flow of free money to criminals and con artists?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about loopholes, we are talking about income tax credits, which are a very important instrument for business to remain competitive internationally. If this member and his party are calling for an end to import tax credits, he will hear loud and clear from some of his own constituents.

What I can tell the hon. member is that we are talking about fraud. We have upfront screening in place right now for those who apply for GST rebates. We also have a very effective 1,000 person investigation team doing a good job ensuring that where we find fraud we prosecute.

* * *

[Translation]

BUDGET SURPLUS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all the studies indicate that the federal government surplus is going to reach as yet unattained heights in the years to come. By 2007-08, for example, barring corrective action, over \$71 billion will have been accumulated.

Can the federal government deny that, without any particular effort, those in charge of the Government of Canada in five years will find they have astronomical sums available to them? This indeed confirms that, unfortunately, its tax field is too broad for its obligations.

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is well aware, in the year 2000 we announced federal tax reductions totalling \$100 billion. It is unfair to suggest that there will be no other tax breaks or increases in federal government spending on federal programs or transfer payments to the provinces.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government, through its Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister, ought to admit that there is indeed a fiscal imbalance between the federal government and the governments of all the Canadian provinces. The taxpayers are tired of having half their tax dollars being sloppily managed by the federal government, while the provinces are being forced to pinch every penny and are having a tough time funding the services they are required to provide. Is this so hard to understand?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is easy to understand. There are two facts: first of all, the provincial debt load is half the federal debt load. Second, over the past 30 years there have been 25 federal deficits. Was there always a fiscal imbalance when these deficits took place? I do not think the hon. member will admit that there was.

Oral Questions

•(1440)

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

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue says that there is adequate screening in place to detect a GST fraud. That is simply not the case. The agency may have found \$10 million but there is \$1 billion still out there.

I will tell the House why that is. It is, at least in part, because in 1995 the government shut down the fraud squad that was dedicated to detecting this fraud in the GST system.

Why, in 1995, did it shut down the one team that was doing the work?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Wrong again, Mr. Speaker. We have an investigation directorate of 1,000 persons and the result is that we are doing double the number of prosecutions today than we were in 1995.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the government is satisfied with collecting about one cent on the dollar but we are not.

The GST fraud squad was axed in 1995 so now the system works like this: all people need is a numbered company, an anonymous post office box and a word processor to get millions of dollars from the government.

Why did the government shut down the GST fraud squad that was at least able to pick up when someone was ripping off the government? Why is it picking on the legitimate business owners instead of picking up on the fraud artist?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is insulting to compare legitimate business people to people who are being successfully prosecuted for criminal activity like fraud.

Second, the member opposite is throwing around all kinds of unsubstantiated numbers. I would say to him that the numbers he is using are not based on any fact.

Our people are very aware of these issues and we are working very diligently to ensure that we collect as much as we possibly can from the criminals who in fact are sitting in jail. He should ask those in jail if they think we are doing a good job.

* * *

*[Translation]***BUDGET SURPLUS**

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the enormous federal surplus has ballooned effortlessly and it is so sizeable that the federal government's only worry is to figure out where to spend it in order to justify itself.

Can the government deny that its main concern is finding new areas in which to spend its surplus, and that it should give this excess money—which it keeps taking from the pockets of taxpayers—to the provinces, who are the ones who provide real services to the public?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the years, there have been a great many investment projects for Canadians that have come before cabinet. And I can assure the member that it breaks our hearts every time we realize that we do not have the money to implement them all.

There is nothing frivolous about the Government of Canada's spending, and if the member thinks there is, I would ask him to name one program that he would like to see cut by the federal government.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what we want is for the federal government to mind its own business and respect the provinces. The fact of the matter is that the upcoming initiatives fall under provincial jurisdiction, a few examples being urban affairs, training, pharmacare, home care, early childhood support.

Can the government deny that it is interfering in areas of provincial jurisdiction because it no longer knows what to do with the surplus taken from the pockets of taxpayers?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member asked if we can deny erroneous statements. Of course we can deny them, they are false.

Is the member aware of any single government of a modern state in the world that would say that urban housing does not concern them; that urban transit is none of their business; that quality of life in cities or immigration or how newcomers are welcomed into big cities is not their concern?

Obviously this concerns us, and we will work together with the provinces, as mentioned dozens of times in the excellent report just released by the Liberal caucus.

* * *

*[English]***CRIMINAL CODE**

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on November 5, 2002, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice said in this House, with respect to the age of sexual consent, "There are many social and cultural differences that have to be reflected in the law". Yesterday the minister inaccurately suggested this had not been said in the House.

I repeat, what cultures in Canada would voice concern about raising the age of sexual consent from 14 to 16 years of age?

•(1445)

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the member keeps going back to what was said. That was a statement made by the parliamentary secretary.

I believe it is a very serious matter, the question of protecting our children in this country. We have been discussing the question of raising the age of consent. There is no consensus. What we would like to achieve is to offer much better protection for our children. Maybe we can achieve that through other means, or other offences within the Criminal Code.

Oral Questions

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, unless pedophiles are a culture now in Canada, why will the minister not give an answer to that question? He continues to hide behind this cultural slander to do nothing on the issue.

Why will the minister not specify what cultural group would voice objection to this, other than pedophiles?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House when it comes to talking about the protection of our children, we talk about action. We took some action in the past in order to amend the Criminal Code. As the House will soon see, before Christmas we will table new legislation with regard to the question of child pornography and protecting the most vulnerable people in our society. This is good action. This will make a difference in our society.

* * *

AFRICA

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Cooperation.

The new economic plan for African development is to be based on the principle of responsible partnership among African nations and between Africa and the international community. The Prime Minister has announced a \$100 million investment fund to end Africa's marginalization. Since Africa receives only 1% of global investments, what steps have been taken so far in the creation of the Africa investment fund?

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister for International Trade and the Minister for International Cooperation jointly announced the first step in creating the Africa investment fund. This fund is expected to be operational and financing projects in Africa within the next year. It will help Africans seek out new capital, take advantage of business opportunities, earn income, invest and create jobs.

The Africa investment fund is a concrete example of Canada's clear commitment to help Africa enter the global economy.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like the health minister to think carefully about her response to the charges of criminal negligence laid today by the RCMP in the tainted blood tragedy which saw thousands of lives lost and destroyed. It is now clear that the negligence of the federal government extended beyond the 1986-90 period for which the government has compensated victims.

Will the health minister today end the government's stubborn denial of its responsibilities, comply with the Krever recommendations and ensure full and fair compensation for all victims of the tainted blood tragedy?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it very troubling and disturbing that a member of the House would presume to prejudge the outcome of any trial. In fact, charges

were laid today but it would be singularly inappropriate to prejudge the outcome of the trials that will take place.

As the hon. member should be aware, the government has in fact taken action in relation to hep C victims who are post-1990 and pre-1986. The government has committed approximately \$525 million to assist with the care of those people.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's report "Too Little, Too Late?" is a damning indictment of CSC's failure to deal with the HIV-AIDS crisis in Canada's prisons. Cases have increased over 35% in four years and still prisoners are denied access to basic HIV prevention measures. CSC has a legal responsibility here.

I ask the Solicitor General, will he commit today to implement needle exchanges and other basic health measures as recommended by his own committee in 1999? Any further delay would be reprehensible and cowardly. Will he implement those recommendations and needle exchanges?

• (1450)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to tour a facility last Friday and in the health care section see what kind of work they are doing at CSC in terms of the problem the hon. member raised. Yes indeed it is a serious problem. We have improved our prevention and our treatment. We are using a number of measures to ensure that the health matters of inmates are handled in the best possible way.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

If a company registered for the GST, sent in the GST reporting form which included a fraudulent input tax credit entry in box 106 for \$30,000 with no amount collected, no receipts, no documents, no paperwork to back up the claim, would Revenue Canada send that person a cheque for \$30,000?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, likely the pre-screening that we have had in place over the past year by our agency would result in an application like that being identified for audit.

I want to say as well to the member opposite that we have a very extensive investigations unit of 1,000 people who are experienced in these matters. It is because of their work that we are so successful with prosecutions.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, that is why there are millions and millions of dollars worth of abuse.

Oral Questions

The form is really just an order form for a government cheque. People could just pencil in the amount they want and wait; \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000, no paperwork involved, no documentation required, and a cheque will be in the mail.

When will the minister implement a documentation process that will even allow a minimum of accountability on these claims for government money?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong and he was not listening.

We have in place today 5,000 auditors. We began as of two years ago to increase those by some 20%. We also have an investigations unit who are experts in these fields. Two years ago we began and continue to increase that by 25%. A year ago we put in place a pre-screening of all registrant claims. Our best practices are among the best in the world.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, two years after being ordered deported as a failed refugee claimant, Laszlo Adorjan has been arrested for allegedly running the biggest auto theft ring in B.C. history. Interpol wants him for armed robbery and suspicion of murder. Police watched him for months, but did not even know about the deportation order.

The government is so inept at removing internationally wanted criminals from Canada that it does not even know it has them when it finds them. Why did the RCMP and the auto theft task force not know about the deportation order against this guy?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm or deny what CSIS and the RCMP know on this matter. I cannot get into the operational policy matters in this particular case. That would be wrong for me to do.

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in 2000 Adorjan secretly married a woman after paying her \$500 to sponsor him. In doing so, he abandoned his refugee claim and was ordered deported. An arrest warrant was issued.

Last week his so-called spouse said she did not know when they met. In her words she just bumped into him one day. Her sister-in-law, living two doors away, knew nothing of the marriage, yet it took until earlier this year for officials to determine that the marriage was bogus.

Could the minister explain just how it possibly can take the best part of two years to come to such an obvious conclusion that the marriage was a marriage of convenience?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member seems to be into some kind of case work. We believe on this side that there is due diligence of the law and people should have a right to the due diligence of the law.

I can tell the member that the RCMP and CSIS cooperate with other agencies around the world. I know they are doing their job. I cannot comment on the individual aspects of any case.

[*Translation*]

SECURITIES

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the MacKay report tabled yesterday again raises the spectre of creating a Canadian securities commission. In Quebec, the National Assembly and the Commission des valeurs mobilières du Québec are opposed to the creation of a central agency.

Will the Minister of Finance respect the Quebec consensus and assure us that he will not go ahead with the doomed project of establishing a Canadian securities commission, which would violate the exclusive jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces?

• (1455)

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to say that Mr. MacKay, who is a lawyer from Saskatchewan, did a very good job. We have received his report, which is now available.

Mr. MacKay indicated that if one of the models that he proposed were adopted, it would up to the provinces whether or not they participated. There is no question of forcing the provinces to do anything. If they want to continue to have a limited market in their province, it is up to them.

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that the threat of this doomed project adversely affects the harmonization work that securities experts have already begun and is therefore detrimental to small shareholders?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that that is the case. I think that the work done by Mr. MacKay was requested by interested groups and was well received by several provinces. I hope that all the provinces will participate in finding ways to improve securities regulation in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the United States is requesting our JTF2 forces be sent over to Iraq, as they were in Afghanistan.

The government announced last year it would double JTF2. Unfortunately, even the department admits this is just another unfulfilled promise.

A potential conflict in Iraq is looming large and the government is clearly unprepared to handle it.

Why has the government failed to complete the expansion of Canada's top counterterrorism force?

Oral Questions

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any request by the United States for us to take part in any operation would be very premature to talk about because the United States has not asked us yet.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it gets worse. The Liberal record of neglect and mismanagement continues.

In the Kosovo air campaign, Canada contributed 18 CF-18s and flew a total of 678 combat sorties.

Today Canada would only be able to send two war planes and our army could not even last six months. Canada used to be a force, now it is simply a farce.

How can the government pretend that things are improving when three years ago we sent 18 planes and now we are down to only two?

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the member is very poorly informed. Our CF-18s are being refitted. They are very capable aircraft.

Any time that the government is asked to respond to international terrorism or to war, whether it is Kosovo, Bosnia or anywhere, we respond with professional people and do a job that the world thanks us for.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Internationally, Canada has been leading a movement to preserve and enhance national cultures at a time of increasing globalization.

What is the Minister of Canadian Heritage doing to preserve and enhance cultural communities in our own country?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Cambridge for his particular interest in this issue.

I would like to underscore that the International Network on Cultural Policy founded by Canada will be hosting a very important meeting next year in Croatia. I know the member, with his unique interest in the Croatian community in Canada, will also make sure that the message on cultural diversity includes Canadian diversity and not simply international diversity.

* * *

COAST GUARD

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a briefing document prepared earlier this year for the minister responsible for the Coast Guard advised:

The Coast Guard does not have a mandate for maritime security and the events of September 11 have not altered this.

Is it the position of the government that the Coast Guard lacks a mandate for maritime security?

• (1500)

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the position of the government that the Coast Guard works for the Department of Transport, with National Defence, the RCMP, the CCRA, and all other government agencies, on a very appropriate level of national security.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that sounds like a mandate to me. A mandate means resources to do the job. The Coast Guard has less resources today than it did when the memo was written. Today there is no fuel for its ships and no uniforms for the crews.

How can the Coast Guard contribute to maritime security when its ships and crews cannot put to sea?

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again he continues in his comedy of errors. The Coast Guard is fully fuelled. It is capable of going to sea if needed. In an effort to save expenses, to be responsible with our budget, we have asked that it curtail unnecessary movements. The primary responsibility for maritime security is with the Minister of Transport. We support it, as well as the RCMP, the military and all other agencies.

* * *

[Translation]

IRAQ

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, American pressure on Canada to join a coalition to attack Iraq is mounting. After the diplomatic representations by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell last week, the United States has now officially asked Canada to contribute to the war effort.

While the government feels that the ratification of Kyoto is a matter worth debating and voting on in the House, and we agree, does the minister not believe, as does Tony Blair who just made a decision to that effect in Great Britain, that a matter as serious as a war—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are having regular meetings, on a weekly basis, of House leaders, at which time various themes for debate are suggested, among other things. I sincerely urge the hon. member to discuss this issue with the House leader for her party. In my opinion, he is doing a fine job and could represent these views at the House leaders' meeting about having this as a theme for debate, if the wish is there.

Government Orders

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry and the minister responsible for infrastructure.

As the minister knows, my constituents in the communities of northern Ontario are pressing for the completion of the four lanes on Highway 69. It is a matter of health and safety for travellers and of economic development for the region.

Could the minister tell the House whether federal funds could be made available under the Canada strategic infrastructure fund to accelerate the four lanes on Highway 69?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in order for such a thing to happen we would need to have the Ontario government identify such a project as a priority for that government, agree to an accelerated timetable and commit the matching funds to make it happen.

We have not heard that it is a priority for the Government of Ontario. In fact, we have not heard yet from the Ontario government at all with respect to its priorities under the strategic infrastructure fund.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the maritime helicopter project website claims that the deadline for accepting new bids to replace our Sea Kings was to be October 2002, but in this week's *Hill Times*, however, the defence minister states that his department has no timeline whatsoever.

Will the minister tell the House what he is going to do to get that contract back on track? When will the new deadline for the bids be set? We have the safety of men and women in our Sea Kings at stake.

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence has invested approximately \$80 million in major upgrades to enhance our Sea Kings, and they presently fly very safely and are doing a good job for our country. I remind members that nothing flies in the military that is not safe. That is the commitment we make to our men and women of the forces: that their safety comes first.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a group of Canadians of extraordinary talent and accomplishment in the field of literature. They have devoted their energies toward enriching the cultural life of Canada.

● (1505)

[Translation]

I am referring to the recipients of the Governor General's Literary Awards.

[English]

The recipients are here today. I will call their names in order and ask hon. members to refrain from applauding until I have completed the list: Gloria Sawai; Monique LaRue; Roy Miki; Robert Dickson; Kevin Kerr; Daniel Danis; Andrew Nikiforuk; Judith Lavoie; Martha Brooks; H el ene Vachon; Wallace Edwards; Luc Melanson; Nigel Spencer; and Paule Pierre-Noyart.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY ACT, 2002

The House resumed from November 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-17, an act to amend certain Acts of Canada, and to enact measures for implementing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, in order to enhance public safety, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:05 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-17.

Call in the members.

● (1515)

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

*(Division No. 19)***YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Assadourian
Augustine	Bagnell
Barnes (London West)	B�elair
B�elanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Coderre	Copps
Cullen	Cuzner
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Efford
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Folco	Frulla
Fry	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Harvey	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson

Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Peric
Pillitteri
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scott
Sgro
Simard
St-Jacques
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood— 135

Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Patry
Phinney
Pratt
Redman
Regan
Rock
Scherrer
Serré
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Valeri
Volpe
Wilfert

Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)

Supply

Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tremblay
Wayne
Yelich— 98

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Binet
Bourgeois
Crête
Dubé
Gagnon (Québec)
Karetak-Lindell
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Savoy
Torsney

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Blondin-Andrew
Collenette
Dromisky
Fournier
Graham
Marcil
Plamondon
St-Hilaire
Venne— 20

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a legislative committee.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, November 19, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division relating to the business of supply. The question is on the motion.

● (1525)

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

(Division No. 20)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Anders
Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Bélanger
Bennett
Bertrand
Blaikie
Bonwick
Boudria
Breitkreuz
Brison
Bryden
Burton
Caccia
Calder
Caplan
Carignan
Casey
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chatters
Coderre
Cotler
Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral
Day
Desrochers
Dhaliwal

Ablonczy
Alcock
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Assad
Augustine
Bailey
Bélair
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bigras
Bonin
Borotsik
Bradshaw
Brien
Brown
Bulte
Byrne
Cadman
Cannis
Cardin
Carroll
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Clark
Copps
Cullen
Cuzner
Davies
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Bailey
Bigras
Borotsik
Brien
Burton
Cardin
Chatters
Cummins
Davies
Desjarlais
Doyle
Duncan
Fitzpatrick
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hearn
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
McDonough
Ménard
Merrifield
Moore
Pankiw
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Robinson
Roy
Schmidt
Sorenson
Stinson

Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bergeron
Blaikie
Breitkreuz
Brisson
Cadman
Casey
Clark
Dalphond-Guiral
Day
Desrochers
Duceppe
Epp
Forseth
Gallant
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guimond
Harper
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Lanctôt
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau
Masse
McNally
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Pallister
Paquette
Perron
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Spencer
Strahl

Privilege

Discepola	Doyle
Drouin	Duceppe
Duncan	Duplain
Easter	Efford
Eggleton	Epp
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Fitzpatrick
Folco	Forseth
Frulla	Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gallant
Galloway	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godfrey
Godin	Goldring
Goodale	Gouk
Grewal	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Harb	Harper
Harvard	Harvey
Hearn	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hinton
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jennings
Johnston	Jordan
Karyiannis	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keys
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lancôt
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lill	Lincoln
Longfield	Loubier
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Macklin	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Marceau	Mark
Masse	Matthews
McCormick	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McNally
McTeague	Ménard
Meredith	Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell
Moore	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Pallister	Pankiw
Paquette	Paradis
Patry	Penson
Peric	Perron
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Proctor	Provenzano
Rajotte	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Robillard
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rock	Roy
Saada	Sauvageau
Scherrer	Schmidt
Scott	Serré
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	Skelton
Sorenson	Speller
Spencer	St-Jacques
St-Julien	Stewart
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tirabassi
Toews	Tonks
Tremblay	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Wappel
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert

Wood

Yelich— 234

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bourgeois	Collenette
Crête	Dromisky
Dubé	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Graham
Karetak-Lindell	Marcil
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Plamondon
Savoy	St-Hilaire
Torsney	Venne— 20

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has received notice that the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt wishes to make some submissions to the Chair with respect to a question of privilege that was raised yesterday by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in response to the point of privilege made by the member for Acadie—Bathurst on November 19.

I will not debate the policy matter involved but, by way of summarizing my past comments in the House, I will respond to the content of his remarks.

Yesterday the member in question made a factually incorrect and misleading statement about my tireless effort in the House to champion the cause of equality of opportunity and merit based hiring. It was an attempt to intimidate those who justly oppose the discriminatory impact of forced bilingualism on unilingual Canadians and the discriminatory effect of race based hiring.

Clearly the member for Acadie—Bathurst is evading the fact that we cannot discriminate in favour of someone on the basis of race or language without unfairly discriminating against someone else because of their race or language. He should withdraw his question of privilege and apologize to me and to all Canadians for his attack on and specious attempt to silence defenders of equality.

For the record, I stand solidly behind my legitimate criticism of the government's race based hiring scheme and discriminatory language laws. The truth of the matter is that those who support state sanctioned racism by hiding behind politically correct rhetoric instead of a white sheet can indeed be deservedly characterized as modern day Klansmen.

The Speaker: I am not sure I need to hear further from the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst at this time. I have the submissions he made the other day. I do not think the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt has added significantly to the debate. He has repeated really what he said before.

As I indicated in the House at the time, I will examine the matter and get back to the House if necessary.

I have notice of another point of order from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

HOUSE OF COMMONS SECURITY

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am rising with respect to the incident that occurred yesterday on Parliament Hill. Members of this party, and I hope all members of the House, were appalled and quite disturbed by the security breach that occurred when a protester was able to come so close to former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney during our ceremony yesterday and, for that matter, was also in some proximity as well to our current Prime Minister.

I understand the Board of Internal Economy intends to look into this. Obviously, we urge it to do that. However I would point out that the Board of Internal Economy meets and reports in secret.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our party, and I think probably on behalf of many other members, that you commit, as our presiding officer, to provide the House with a timely and full public report on whatever is learned from both internal and external agencies on precisely what occurred yesterday.

• (1530)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as one who was present yesterday at the same event, in fact I sat beside the hon. leader of the official opposition, I would just like to second in public his concerns about what happened yesterday.

Before we knew it, someone had entered the room and was able to run right up and have his hand right over the head of the former prime minister having just passed by the current Prime Minister. It seems to me that this should have been prevented.

I too would like to know why it was not prevented and why someone was able to proceed along that corridor, which had been cleared. There was no crowd between where the barrier of the people was and the wall where the former prime minister and the current Prime Minister had come in. Presumably somebody was at the doorway to prevent a person from rushing in the way he did.

I would like to register my own concern and hope that this is being looked at so nothing like this can happen again because it could have been a whole lot worse than somebody waving a flag.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all very concerned and extremely distraught to hear what happened. The Prime Minister of Canada was immediately beside the right hon. gentleman as well, and we are all equally concerned. However I want to be cautious with something that was said earlier and that was about the public reporting of what Mr. Speaker might discover.

We have spokespersons for the board, two who can answer questions in the House. There may very well be information which Mr. Speaker has to reveal to the board but for reasons of security, our spokespersons for the board will not be able to reveal that publicly.

Points of Order

I want the House to be cognizant of that as well so that our spokespersons for the board, namely the chief whip for our party and one representative from the opposition, are not made to say things which could be to the detriment of enhancing security measures around here. I recognize that is not what we want.

That is the only concern that I have.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I also was there yesterday, as were you. It was the most nervous time in the 10 years I have been in the House of Commons. It was the most frightening time I have ever experienced in the House of Commons. One did not know what would happen.

We were looking at all three of you, Mr. Speaker, you, the Prime Minister and the previous prime minister, wondering exactly what this man was trying to prove.

The security here is so very important, Mr. Speaker. You will be getting a letter which I wrote to you today. All of us in the House have to know exactly what happened. The person who was in the picture, which appeared in the paper today, looked like he may have been a civil servant because of what he was wearing. I pray to God that he was not.

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to interject in this conversation because I was there yesterday also. As the House is aware, I was under a death threat at one time in the House. I studied security in the House. I looked at the parliamentary precinct we work in.

I want members to know that I do not think it is any secret that there are over six security systems that work within the House and the other place. We have House of Commons security, the Burns type security that run the groups that go into parliament and the PMO has security. If 9-1-1 is called, the Ottawa police cannot respond to the House because there are so many security systems here.

I would suggest that it is time the House take action and form one security service for Parliament Hill. I have asked for this since 1998. Do members realize that plain clothes people can carry guns but uniformed people cannot. They are not in the same union. They do not have the same radio bands. They cannot talk to each other from one side of this House to the other side of the Hill.

Yesterday's incident was appalling to me because I have been through that. It is time Mr. Speaker that you and the House acted on this and that we finally have a security system that is a Parliament Hill precinct security system. If anyone objects to that, I would be glad to talk to them about it, but it is time.

• (1535)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obviously a very serious concern that somebody who should not have been in the room was able to approach so close to both the Prime Minister and a previous prime minister, as well as numerous cabinet ministers, the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament and a number of dignitaries. Obviously that is unacceptable.

Routine Proceedings

In this case there was no risk. The gentleman had been through two screenings, first, on entering the building and, second, before entering the public galleries of the House.

It is for this reason that I wrote to you, Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Board of Internal Economy and asked that it be on the agenda of the board, which includes members of all parties, later this day and that the board be thoroughly briefed and address any problems that the situation raises.

I repeat the caution of the House leader that discussing security in public is not always a good idea. The commitment should be to ensure that the issue is addressed, but not jeopardize security further by discussing our security arrangements publicly.

The Speaker: I thank all hon. members for their submissions on the point. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I am not likely to be the one coming back to the House. As was indicated by the House leader, the board has its own spokespersons who talk for it. Your poor Speaker has his lips zipped up there and here.

This matter will be brought up for discussion I am sure at the very next meeting of the board, which is in fact happening later this day. I thank the hon. members who have made submissions on this point. I assure them that all matters will be considered.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

OFFICE OF THE ETHICS COUNSELLOR

Mr. Joe Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the first annual report of the ethics counsellor, as prepared by the ethics counsellor, on the activities of his office since it was established by the Prime Minister, pursuant to the Prime Minister's commitment earlier this year that the office of the ethics counsellor will provide an annual report to parliament beginning in 2002.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 53 petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade relating to Bill S-2, An Act to implement an agreement, conventions and protocols concluded between Canada and Kuwait, Mongolia, the United Arab Emirates, Moldova, Norway, Belgium and Italy for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of

fiscal evasion and to amend the enacted text of three tax treaties, without amendment.

* * *

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-307, an act to amend the Criminal Code (child pornography).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this private member's bill amends section 163.1 of the Criminal Code to provide a minimum punishment of two years imprisonment for any person convicted of transmitting, making available, distributing, selling, importing, exporting or possessing for the purpose of transmission, making available distribution, sale or exploitation of any child pornography as defined in paragraph 163.1(1)(a), of the act.

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

* * *

● (1540)

[Translation]

CANADA-ISRAEL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ) moved for leave to introduce C-308, An Act to amend the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the dramatic situation that exists right now in the Middle East prompts me to introduce a bill entitled An Act to amend the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

Through this bill, I am asking Canada to act in a way that is consistent with its policy of not recognizing the military occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel since 1967.

The urgency of the situation calls for immediate action. This bill would ensure that goods originating from settlements under Israeli administration would be subject to the full rate of customs duties rather than duties at the preferential tariff treatment accorded by the agreement.

Canada would thus send a clear message to the international community. A year ago, the European Union adopted a similar trade measure and the European parliament went even further by asking the European Union to suspend its association agreement with Israel.

I would like to point out to the House that I wrote a letter to the Minister for International Trade on this subject last spring and I have yet to receive an answer from him.

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

* * *

[English]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-309, an act to amend the Official Languages Act (provision of bilingual services).

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the statement in the preamble of the document, the policy of official bilingualism is a source of national division rather than national unity, and it was created without the support of a majority of Canadians.

It is estimated the annual cost of official bilingualism for the public and private sectors is \$5 billion. The international language of business is English which constitutes a greater incentive for francophones to learn English as a second language than for anglophones to learn French as a second language.

While pursuing a policy of official bilingualism in the rest of Canada, the Government of Canada has tolerated the declaration of the National Assembly of Quebec that the only official language of Quebec is French which has undermined the rights of Quebec's anglophones. It is a matter of public concern that the Official Languages Act has resulted in discrimination against unilingual anglophones seeking employment with and advancement within the federal government.

Accordingly, the purpose of this enactment is to redefine the criteria set out in the Official Languages Act by which the language rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be provided so as to avoid unnecessary expense. It sets out a standard of 25% of the population speaking an official language as a significant demand that warrants service in the official language.

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

* * *

FISHERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-310, an act to establish the rights of fishers including the right to be involved in the process of fisheries stock assessment, fish conservation, setting of fishing quotas, fishing licensing and the public right to fish and establish the right of fishers to be informed of decisions affecting fishing as a livelihood in advance and the right to compensation if other rights are abrogated unfairly.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in a sense that preamble almost pre-empted me. However I want to remind the House that I introduced this bill in the last Parliament. It became a votable bill. I have to give credit to my colleagues on this side of the House. All opposition parties supported the bill. I was very disappointed that the government did not support it but I had a lot of interest from certain government members who wished they could have supported it.

Given the new dynamics on that side of the House and the split within their own caucus, I would expect that they now would come forward and support this. The trick will be to get the bill votable so we can have that debate on the floor of the House of Commons again.

There is no question that we have to protect our fishermen so this is aptly called the fishermen's bill of rights, and more politically correct in upper Canada the fishers' bill of rights.

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

● (1545)

HEALTH INFORMATION PRIVACY ACT

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-311, an act to protect the privacy of patients and the confidentiality of their health information.

He said: Mr. Speaker, following the tabling of the Kirby report and on the eve of the Romanow report I thought it would be appropriate to bring a bill like this forward. Information in people's records in terms of their visits to the hospital, their doctor and health records are generally important documents and must be kept private.

We have had examples in Canada where that information has been leaked to corporations and sometimes insurance companies. This has had a huge impact on particular individuals. These corporations and companies do not have the right to have access to that information. Sometimes this type of information has landed in the wrong hands and has been misused against patients.

This bill lays out the rights of individual patients in terms of the privacy of information contained in the health care sector.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today. The first petition asks Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps against pedophilia. There are more of these petitions to come.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I wish to present deals with stem cell research. The petitioners call upon Parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research to find the cures and therapies necessary to treat the illnesses and diseases of suffering Canadians.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I stood when you called motions, but other people also stood. I wonder if we could revert to motions after petitions.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the House give its consent to the hon. member for St. John's West to revert back to motions now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

APPENDIX TO HANSARD

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for its courtesy.

Routine Proceedings

There have been consultations among parties in the House and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move, seconded by the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons:

That the speeches delivered at the unveiling of the official portrait of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney be printed as an Appendix to *Hansard*.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member for St. John's West have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

IRAQ

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by citizens of the city and county of Peterborough, and surrounding areas. These citizens are concerned about the potential for war with Iraq.

The petitioners mourn the deaths and tragedies which occurred in New York, but they point out that a pre-emptive strike to overthrow the government of Iraq would be a flagrant breach of international law. They say that such an attack would undoubtedly result in the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians, including children. They also point out that such an attack would leave a legacy of hatred against the west.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to refuse to cooperate in any way in a war against Iraq and to use Canada's diplomatic efforts to convince the United States, Britain and the United Nations to choose the tools of diplomacy, not the weapons of war, for establishing peace in the Middle East. The petitioners also call for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq.

• (1550)

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition from citizens of the Peterborough area that deals with child pornography.

The petitioners point out that the creation and use of child pornography is condemned by the clear majority of Canadians and that the courts have not applied the current child pornography law in a way which makes it clear that such exploitation of children will always be met by swift punishment.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote and glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present. I will try to be brief because both of the petitions that I am presenting have been presented by other members of Parliament today. There is obviously a campaign going

on and that is only appropriate. It is nice to know that Canadians can get organized to put their points of view forward.

The first petition has to do with child pornography. It calls upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia for sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with the issue of stem cell research. The conclusion of this petition calls upon Parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research to find the cures and therapies necessary to treat the illnesses and diseases of suffering Canadians.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition here signed by many people from all across Canada who have great concerns about the exploitation of our children in child pornography. They call upon Parliament and our government to take steps to stop the foot dragging, to do something that will affect and protect our children against pedophilia, and against sado-masochistic activities with children. Those activities must be outlawed now.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions on two subject matters. Like others, I have a petition from approximately 120 people in the Chatham area of Ontario. They call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials that promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the other two petitions I have are concerned with the protection of human life. The petitioners point out that modern science has unequivocally and irrefutably established that a human being begins to exist at the moment of conception. They call upon Parliament to bring in legislation defining a human fetus or embryo from the moment of conception, whether in the womb of the mother or not and whether conceived naturally or otherwise, as a human being, and making any and all consequential amendments to all Canadian laws as required.

COAST GUARD

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today. The first petition has to do with the Coast Guard. It is signed by British Columbians from Port McNeill, Woss, Delta and other communities on the Lower Mainland.

The petitioners note that the Coast Guard is suffering from a lack of resources. The lack of resources was evident last summer when the Coast Guard was unable to attempt a rescue of citizens trapped in an overturned vessel. They note that there is a failure to provide money by the government for an additional hovercraft to provide protection at Vancouver airport.

Routine Proceedings

They call upon Parliament to demand of government that it adequately fund the Coast Guard and that it separate the Coast Guard from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

• (1555)

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do as well with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The petitioners are noting that the federal minister of fisheries has a constitutional obligation to protect wild fish in their habitat and they are calling on him to do just that. They call on him to protect wild fish in their habitat from the effects of salmon farming.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the last petition is concerning child pornography. The citizens signing this petition note that the courts are not seeming to make it clear that the exploitation of children should be met with swift punishment. They call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities are outlawed.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have before me today a petition with 2,895 names from the greater Saint John area concerning child pornography.

Each and everyone of us knows that Canadians all across the nation are very worried about what has happened just recently in British Columbia with regard to child pornography and artistic merit. The courts have not applied the current child pornography law in a way which makes it clear that such exploitation of children will always be met with swift punishment.

Therefore the petitioners here, the 2,895 signatures, call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed. I pray that the House will deal with this immediately.

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by over 500 fine citizens of Saskatchewan who are appalled at this nation's inability to protect our children from child pornography. They call upon Parliament to take all the steps that will ensure that any of those kinds of materials would be, indeed, against the law in this nation.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from Allyn and Kristy Dupuis. They and other signatories to this petition ask that Parliament take all necessary steps to protect our children from sexual predators by outlawing materials which promote or glorify sado-masochistic activity involving children.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 24, 27 and 28.

[Text]

Question No. 24—**Mr. Mark Assad:**

With regard to properties within the Gatineau Park: (a) how many have been declared surplus and are presently for sale; (b) what are the size and location of those properties; (c) by what process and according to what criteria were these properties declared surplus; (d) how many properties within the park and on its periphery have been declared surplus over the last ten years and accordingly placed on the market for sale; (e) does the National Capital Commission plan to dispose of additional properties within the park over the next ten years; (f) what are the size and location of those properties; (g) what was the total number of acres belonging to individuals within the Gatineau Park on September 1992; (h) what was the total number of acres belonging to individuals within the Gatineau Park on September 2002; and (i) how many individuals own land within the Gatineau Park, what are their names, and the size of their property or properties?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): I am informed by the NCC as follows:

(a) No National Capital Commission, NCC, properties within the current legal boundary of Gatineau Park have been declared surplus and as such, none are presently for sale.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) Not applicable.

(d) Since September 1992, the NCC has disposed of 150.7 ha, 372.37 ac, which includes the Vorlage Ski Club having an area of 112.85 ha, 278.85 ac. Currently, two properties on the periphery of the park are being offered for sale: a 0.05 ha, 0.12 ac, parcel along Alexandre-Taché Blvd and a 2.39 ha, 5.93 ac, parcel along Chemin de la Montagne, both in Gatineau (Hull).

(e) No.

(f) Not applicable.

(g) Information on the total number of acres belonging to individuals within the park on September 1992 is not available since the NCC does not maintain a registry of properties belonging to individuals.

(h) Information on the total number of acres belonging to individuals within the park on September 2002 is not available since the NCC does not maintain a registry of properties belonging to individuals.

(i) Information on the number of individuals that own land within the current legal boundary of the park, their names and the size of their property or properties in individual ownership is not available since the NCC does not maintain a registry of this type of information.

Question No. 27—**Mr. Rick Borotsik:**

Can the government provide an estimate of the impact on net farm income of energy cost increases that may result from the Kyoto Protocol implementation measures?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): On October 11, the government released a report which estimated the impact on Canada's economy of a policy similar to that contained in the draft plan on climate change.

Speaker's Ruling

Changes to energy prices resulting from the Kyoto protocol implementation measures would be expected to have very small impact on the overall economy and agriculture, based on the following outcomes from the analysis:

—fuel prices, gasoline and diesel, would not be expected to change;

—electricity prices would be expected to decrease; and

—natural gas prices would be expected to increase, but without significant impact on agriculture sector because of its small share of farm costs and because of the possibility for more energy efficient farming practices and technologies.

As Canada's plan evolves as a result of discussion with the provinces, territories and Canadians, my department will undertake further analysis of the economic impacts and opportunities resulting from action on climate change.

The cost of not implementing Kyoto could be high. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, warns that severe droughts, such as that in southern Canada in 2001, are expected to become more frequent as the climate warms, perhaps doubling in frequency within the next century. Inaction is not an option.

Question No. 28—**Mr. Rick Borotsik:**

Can the government provide information regarding the fiscal impact on net farm income, of increased on-farm use of ethanol and bio-diesel, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as trading in carbon credits?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Based on recently completed analysis of the potential economic impact of reducing emissions, there would be very little impact on net farm income from meeting the Kyoto target.

Changes to energy prices resulting from the Kyoto protocol implementation measures would be expected to have a very small impact on the overall economy and agriculture.

Furthermore, it is thought there will be positive implications for agriculture and rural economies through expansion of bio-fuels production. This will increase demand for agricultural products that are used as feed stocks to produce ethanol, corn and wheat, and bio-diesel, soya, canola oil and animal fats, and would create new jobs in building and operating ethanol and bio-diesel plants.

Farmers have an opportunity to be rewarded economically for their new actions to address climate change such as adopting soil conservation practices which enhance agricultural sinks. The draft plan on climate change enables an emission trading system to be designed in a way that would allow farmers to be financially rewarded for the sinks or emissions reductions credits they generate by selling these credits into the emissions trading system. Agriculture also has opportunities to adopt more energy efficient farming practices and technologies which help to control costs and reduce emissions at the same time.

The potential for greenhouse gas, GHG, reduction from the agricultural sector can be broken down as follows:

—a potential of 10 megatonnes, Mt of CO₂-equivalent, of GHG reductions in 2010 in the form of agricultural sinks resulting from actions currently underway, business as usual, and this is essentially due to farmers undertaking responsible environmental stewardship, and improved farm management practices promoted by federal government programs such as Action Plan 2000, Budget 2001, the Greencover program and the Agricultural Policy Framework, and provincial government programs; and

—further adoption of agricultural sink enhancing and GHG reducing initiatives could lead to an additional 8.4 Mt of reduction that could be used as offsets in the domestic emission trading, DET, sector.

[*English*]

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the requirement of the Standing Orders I hereby give notice that I am applying for an emergency debate today concerning the inadequate funding of Canada's defence forces.

The Minister of Industry has stated in an interview that our military requires additional money to purchase equipment, to train personnel, and to meet global demands. The Minister of National Defence as well has stated that there is a need for money, but he is having a difficult time convincing the government.

We know what is happening in Iraq. We know that the government of the U.S.A. has come forward and asked Canada to participate. Right now we cannot. We are truly in dire need.

It is time for a debate in the House with regard to funding, CF-18s, Sea Kings, and submarines that cannot even be used, for heaven's sake. There is so much debate that needs to take place. It should be the number one priority for the government.

● (1600)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: With the greatest of respect that the Chair has for the hon. member for Saint John, in my opinion I regret that her submission does not meet all of the exigencies at this time.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions government orders will be extended by 20 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That this House take note of proposals for modernization and improvement of the procedures of the House of Commons.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in today's take note debate on the modernization of the House of Commons. Parliament is an evolutionary institution that we must continually modernize to meet the varied needs of parliamentarians and all Canadians.

Since this government came to office under the very capable leadership of the right hon. Prime Minister, in 1993, we have been guided by the idea that parliamentary reform is necessary to restore public confidence in Parliament and to end the erosion of its role that began under the previous government.

We went to work right away in 1993 to implement our electoral promises. As a result, members are now involved in the budget process thanks to the annual prebudget consultations held by the Standing Committee on Finance. This work done by the finance committee has now become an institution. Canadians from across the country come to meet their members and tell them that they wish to speak before the committee during the prebudget consultations.

Members, Liberal members at any rate, vote freely on all private members' bills. There are free votes within our party, more than 100 since 1993. I encourage other parties to adopt this modernization one day. Fifteen private members' bills have become law since 1993, far more than under any other government in Canadian history.

Members participate in take note debates on major national and international questions. There have been 43 of these since 1993, or 44 counting today's.

We call upon the appropriate House committees to make recommendations on draft bills, such as the one on the ethics commissioner position, which is currently with the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

More bills go to a committee before second reading. This procedure was established by my predecessor, the Right Honourable Herb Gray, whom I may call by name now that he is no longer a parliamentarian. This gives members an opportunity to propose a broader range of amendments. Since 1993, the government has submitted 34 bills to committees prior to second reading.

The government has improved its reports to Parliament in connection with the budget, in order to help the committee examine government spending.

In 1997 we amended a whole series of standing orders in order to reflect the presence of the five parties in Parliament. I would remind

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hon. members that, at that time, the leaders were: the member for Langley—Abbotsford, with whom I worked closely, once we had the five parties, to improve the way the system was working, the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, the member for Winnipeg, and the same leader of the Bloc Québécois as we have now.

We had to work together to change a whole series of standing orders in order to make Parliament workable in a totally extraordinary situation—there had never before been a parliament with five political parties—and we managed to do it.

In 2001, after the 2000 election, we tabled the changes in the House of Commons. In order to facilitate the legislative process, the House clarified the Speaker's role with respect to motions at report stage.

The process we were using was an archaic one, as hon. members will recall, and it had us voting all night to change a comma or semicolon, or something equally minor. It was not modern; we have modernized the Parliamentary rules in order to make them better.

• (1605)

This was another initiative taken by our Prime Minister. He had mentioned it in his red book. We provided an additional \$1 million to the Library of Parliament for its Research Branch for parliamentarians. This is modernization. An additional \$900,000 was earmarked for the research services of political parties and caucuses.

Based on the questions that are put to us in the House of Commons, it is not always obvious that these political parties received additional research money, but they actually did. The salaries paid to hon. members are more transparent and much more in line with those of similar groups in our society.

We had a strange way, to say the least, of remunerating parliamentarians. This made Canadians wonder about the whole process. That process was not particularly generous, but it did not match that of other Canadians. Therefore, we changed it.

The budgets of hon. members were increased by \$20,000 and their accommodation allowance by \$3,000. So, a whole series of changes were made.

[*English*]

In 2001, Mr. Speaker, under your excellent chairmanship, we had the modernization committee. At that time we modified 26 standing orders. Now the Leader of the Opposition can refer two sets of estimates to committee of the whole. That was unprecedented.

The House can require 30 minute debates when we have time allocation and closure. There used to be a situation where members of Parliament were questioning and they would stand on points of order, or alleged points of order, about whether the government was justified in moving time allocation when the opposition delays bills, which it does from time to time. Now there is a formal process to do that. There is a half-hour question period.

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More take note debates are being held. As a regular part of the House leaders' agenda, every week now is the subject of take note debates. The House leaders of every party can go there and raise the concerns of their various caucuses about what the subject of a take note debate should be.

As a matter of fact we were asked in the House of Commons today whether we should have a debate about some international treaty or other to which I answered that it was a fine subject for the House leader of that particular member's party to bring forward. This has been a very useful process, particularly since September 11. We have to raise a number of issues in debate in the House.

We have simplified the process for emergency debates. We now have them in committee of the whole, based a little on the U.K. example where members can congregate around the clerk's table in a way that makes for a debate that is less formal.

We have changed the number of weeks that we sit to permit people to be with their families during March.

We now have deferred votes immediately after question period. We did so today.

We have made the appointment of all officers of Parliament subject to House of Commons approval, formalizing what had been, to a degree, an informal practice. Now we have that. Should a new clerk be appointed many years from now when our clerk retires, that would be the subject of a vote in the House should the House demand a vote on that. That was not previously provided for in the rules.

In 2002, we are again responding to the changing interests of members.

We have had modernization of our rules in the current year. I am not only speaking of what happened last week. The royal assent bill was passed which allows royal assent to be given to legislation through a written procedure. The way they have done it in the U.K. for countless years, we now have it here at the House of Commons.

We have established a new Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates and created the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

We have adopted a procedure for making all private members' business items votable.

The House agreed to require the election of committee chairs by secret ballot, although the process by which we reached that was not one about which I was personally overenthusiastic, as the Chair would know.

We are here today to talk about the 2002 modernization committee. The 2001 committee report stated that there were to be other procedural changes. It was in 2001, Mr. Speaker, again under your able chairmanship, that we stated that we wanted to have another modernization committee report after the next election. We are here now. We will have the second modernization committee. Following consultation with other House leaders, we have agreed to start the modernization committee to consider further improvements to House rules.

I am pleased that House leaders of all parties have looked at this as enthusiastically as I have. The difference this time, though, is that House leaders felt that if they were accompanied by perhaps a representative from their various caucuses it would not be just House leadership participating in it, but others like caucus chairs, or other people should they not be available, would be a useful addition to the process. Since procedural changes affect all members, it makes sense to do it that way.

• (1610)

I want to take just a couple of moments and give the House a few ideas of the changes as I see them, respectfully. Other members will contribute and I hope that at the end, as we did last time when we came back for a second round of debate about changes in the House of Commons, we will do that again once we have consulted our caucuses and once we have worked on this for some time.

I want to suggest to my colleagues that the U.K. and Australia have made a number of useful changes and we should inform ourselves of what those two jurisdictions have done and inspire ourselves with what they have done.

The U.K. has finished the second phase of its modernization. It has moved the time for question period. I am not sure we should do that, but we should at least consider what it is doing to see what the benefits are. The U.K. has agreed to the programming of legislative stages of bills. It has a process by which to agree on the overall time for when a bill starts and when it ends. If it spends more time in committee, it spends less time at report stage and so on. We would ascribe an overall time and then we would decide whether we want a lot of House debate, a lot of committee debate and so on, within that set timeframe. Is that something that would interest us? I think we should at least look at it.

The U.K. and Australia have adopted a chamber parallel to the House of Commons. Westminster Hall in the U.K., for instance, debates issues of local concern. Australia has what it calls the main committee, which considers legislation later on in the process. To what extent, for instance, could this kind of chamber be used to debate committee reports, concurrences and other things like that? I do not know. There are a number of things that perhaps should be done in this kind of forum, which would be something superior to a committee but a little less than what the House is. Perhaps it could be televised all the time when it sits, a little like we have for some committees.

Anyway, these are ideas.

I want to raise the issue of reinstatement of government bills after prorogation. We do that for private members' bills. The Quebec National Assembly does this already. Phase two of the U.K. modernization committee has recommended it. Why are we not doing that here? It seems a little inconsistent to go through a procedural motion and two days of debate and closure to do that which we should do on the very first day. Why do we not just do it? We do it for private members' bills, so we have established that it is a good process.

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What about committee review and the ability of whips to apply a previous vote to a successive vote, structuring what we do most of the time anyway in a way that would enable whips to work more closely together? Why not do that or why not at least explore doing that?

What about this idea of concurrence in committee reports and ways in which we could deal with this? We have reports where no concurrence is sought by the committee and concurrence is moved in the House, or we ask the government to comment but we move concurrence before the government has. Surely there is something wrong with that procedure. It seems to me that it needs modernization.

How about changing Standing Order 104, which requires committee memberships to be re-established and start all over again every September? I have been in a whip position. I have been deputy whip, as it were, in opposition and deputy and chief whip in government. I have never yet figured out what this is supposed to do except give a giant headache for about one month in September of every year to anybody who is a whip. Perhaps we should look at this and instead have membership expire only when there is a new session. Anyway, it is a theme that the committee should look at.

How about reviewing Standing Order 43 to allow a process to move to 10 minute speeches for a government motion? There is an anomaly here between government bills and government motions. Government bills fall to 10 minutes after a certain period of debate while government motions remain at 20. Perhaps that is just an oversight, but it does not look right and I am sure it is not right. Of course, as I said, I am sure that it is accidental.

What about modern technology to be used for members of Parliament? We do not even have electronic voting in here. Electronic voting is one issue, but it is not the only one involving technology, and I do not want to make it look like the be-all and end-all.

•(1615)

What about encouraging our colleagues to have more functional websites? We have a greater use of technology with which to consult Canadians, for instance. What about the webcast of House of Commons committees proceedings? What about electronic filing of motions? Why do we have to physically send a written motion to the office in 2002, in the most technologically advanced nation on earth, which I think we are? Surely there is something wrong with that. We could advance those processes and make them more modern.

Some would argue that some drafting initiatives regarding plainer language should be looked at. I am a little nervous about that one, but it is still something that we should explore to see what others do. I would like to move perhaps a little more slowly than others in that area, but still, I do not think it would be a modernization debate without at least raising this.

[Translation]

The purpose of this debate, today and tomorrow, is to consult our colleagues on this initiative. I am looking forward to hearing the advice of my colleagues from both sides of the House. I welcome this opportunity to work with the other House leaders on this initiative, as we have done previously. Of course, this time, it will be

with the leaders and other representatives who will be sitting with them.

I must say, to conclude, that as the sole member of the group of leaders and ministers, my duties will force me to leave momentarily to chair a cabinet meeting. I may therefore miss some of what my hon. colleagues will say. I will come back to the House later. There is no lack of respect intended. I have already indicated to the Leader of the Opposition in the House that I may not be able to catch all of his presentation.

I will be back later, however, and I will also be following the debates in the House tomorrow. I look forward to working with my colleagues, and you too, Mr. Speaker, I hope, if you agree to chair this committee, once it has been formally established.

If I assess the modernization work done so far, that is phase I, it has been greatly successful, well run and well managed. There has been excellent participation by parliamentarians from all parties, without any partisanship, so that together, we can make this great institution for which we all have respect grow.

I thank my hon. colleagues. Later, when I have a chance to come back to the House, I will listen with interest to their remarks, which I hope will be constructive ones. I hope that mine were. I urge members, today and tomorrow, to express their concerns about the rules and about how we could improve this House of Commons, which is so dear to us.

•(1620)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I note that some members are wondering if there are to be questions and comments. The Chair's understanding is that in fact the first two speakers of course have unlimited time and there are no questions or comments until we actually get to the third party to speak. Of course with unanimous consent the chamber can do anything it wants. I will leave it at that.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I know that the government House leader must go to a cabinet meeting. I will make sure he gets my notes and I am sure he will anxiously have his staff tape my speech so he can watch it tonight to help put him to sleep.

I am very happy to participate in this modernization committee debate. The first thing I would like to discuss is a recommendation from our Building Trust II document, which my party presented here at the start of this Parliament. I would also at this time like to thank my colleague from Fraser Valley who initially a couple of years ago brought in a document called Building Trust I, which was followed by a modernization committee.

Mr. Speaker, you chaired our modernization committee meetings, which were very fruitful and brought forth some very positive changes here in the House of Commons.

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The issue I want to address surfaced two weeks ago during the procedural wrangling over the vote on the secret ballot elections at all committees. What Canadian Alliance is recommending in Building Trust II is that the Standing Orders be amended to ensure that motions to concur in committee reports be put to a vote. This recommendation seems rather minor on the surface, but its impact on the authority of committees would be huge.

As hon. members know, the authority of parliamentary committees stems from the adoption of their reports by the House. Prior to the adoption of the McGrath committee recommendations in the mid-1980s, committees could deal only with the matters referred to them by the House. They could not undertake studies or make recommendations without being directed to do so by the House. Giving committees freedom from this restriction was probably the most important committee reform that came out of the package of reforms. However, this was only the first step. Other steps are required to give committees true independence and real authority.

The second step toward the goal of freedom and democracy for committees came two weeks ago, when the House adopted a Canadian Alliance motion that amended Standing Order 106 and introduced secret ballot elections at committees. This reform will enhance the independence of the chairmen, releasing them from the heavy-handed control of the Prime Minister's Office.

What is missing is a mechanism to ensure that motions to concur in reports come to a vote. This is vital to the authority of committees. Currently, the government, simply by talking on a report for a morning, can prevent a report coming to a vote. In these cases, the motion to concur in a report becomes a government order and can thereafter be moved only by a cabinet minister.

I refer you, Mr. Speaker, to the order paper. There we will find the concurrence motions regarding the report of the procedure and House affairs committee calling for secret ballot elections at committee. Below each motion to concur in the committee report is a note in italics, which reads "Cannot be moved (see Government Business No. 5)".

How did that happen? The simple answer is that the government leadership did not want that report to come to a vote. The government suspected, and it was correct, that this report would get the support of the majority of members of the House and the government did not want that to happen. As we saw on Thursday, November 19, 2002, the government moved the concurrence motion and talked it out until 2 p.m., at which point the motion was automatically adjourned and the motion became a government order, to be moved at the prerogative of the cabinet. What kind of power do these committees really enjoy when their reports, which are where their powers lie, can be shelved by a few government members delivering their canned speeches?

We ended up getting a vote on the secret ballot procedure for committees through a supply day, but even after that it did not come easy. The government House leader went to extraordinary efforts to try to derail a vote on our supply motion. He was expecting a double hit for his manoeuvre to talk out and shelve the committee report. He argued that because the concurrence motion was moved and adjourned, the Alliance motion dealing with the same subject matter should not be allowed to be moved. Not only was he not satisfied

with complete control over committee reports, he wanted complete control over the subject matter of supply motions.

His obsession for total control is reflective of his master, the Prime Minister. By seeking such control for a lame duck Prime Minister, the government House leader, and I do not like to say this because he is a good friend and a colleague, has become a lame duck himself. He should have known enough to say no to the Prime Minister. It is not that difficult to do so. He should have joined the 56 members of his caucus who did say no. He at least would be on the right side of the parliamentary reform debate. His reputation going into the next phase of modernizing the House has been tarnished by his actions to prevent a simple reform such as secret ballot elections at committee from going forward.

Getting back to committees and the government manoeuvre to shelve their reports, when the media refer to committees as powerful, as they sometimes do, they do so out of ignorance. Committees have no power while this government manoeuvre exists.

● (1625)

The government House leader has suggested in the past that we restrict the moving of concurrence motions until the government has had a chance to respond to a committee report. Not all committee reports deal with the government. We did not need the government's opinion on secret ballot elections at committee. This was, as the Prime Minister said, a matter of procedure and a matter for the House.

Reports sending for persons and papers have nothing to do with the opinions of the government. Most likely the committee is responding to a stubborn government department that refuses to comply with a committee's request. Reports defending the authority of the committee in matters of contempt have nothing to do with the government. It is the height of arrogance to assume that every report needs the government's approval before proceeding.

Once we get the independence of committees straightened out by ensuring that their recommendations can come to a vote in the House, we need to give them a little more power over government appointments.

The resistance for this reform is once again the Prime Minister but he has a new partner. His tag team partner is none other than the member for LaSalle—Émard. Both the Prime Minister and the member for LaSalle—Émard believe that the House should not enjoy a veto over order in council appointments that do not deal with officers of parliament. They base their beliefs on the notion that they are preserving parliamentary tradition and responsible government.

How wrong they are. Let us consider a few responsibilities of the government and the role of the House.

Legislation that proposes to spend money required a royal recommendation and, while it is the exclusive right of the cabinet to attach such royal recommendations to legislation, the final decision to proceed with legislation rests with the House. If the House does not concur in the government's legislation the legislation dies.

Let us consider the government's other prerogative, the way in which taxpayer money is spent. Through the estimates process, the final say as to that spending rests again with the House. Raising taxes through ways and means motions are another exclusive prerogative of the government, yet it can only continue if the House permits it. The government proposes officers of parliament, yet it is the House that has the authority to ratify or deny such appointments.

Let us recap. The House has a veto over government legislation. It has a veto over how the government spends money. It has a veto over the government's prerogative to change a tax. It has a veto over the appointment of officers of parliament.

How can the Prime Minister and the member for LaSalle—Énard possibly argue that it is inconsistent or unparliamentary for the House to have a veto over order in council appointments? Clearly, it is inconsistent for these appointments to be excluded from the veto power of the House.

How do we see this power being exercised by the House? It would begin with committees. We do not expect them to review every appointment. In cases where an appointment is particularly bad, and Alfonso Gagliano is an excellent example, committees should have the power to review and recommend that an appointment be withdrawn or not proceeded with. The House should then have the opportunity to vote on the committee's recommendation through concurrence of its report.

You can now see how this all fits together, Mr. Speaker.

During the public debate on secret ballot elections at committee, the television media used the review process of Mr. Gagliano's appointment as an example of how a partisan chairman, chosen by the Prime Minister, can hinder the independence of committees. We saw on the news how the chairman of the committee reviewing Mr. Gagliano's appointment acted very partisan. She was not acting in the interest of the committee process but in the interest of the Prime Minister. The media was suggesting that had the chair been duly elected by the committee the outcome might have been very different.

If all the reforms I am recommending here today were in place I believe the outcome of that particular committee review would have been very different. The chairman, being elected by a committee, would likely allow the committee to do its work if the committee were free to decide that the appointment of Mr. Gagliano should be removed, which I think most members and Canadians believe, then it could report that recommendation to the House and the House would be given the opportunity to consider the recommendation of the committee without procedural obstacles and with the powers to remove an appointment. Canadians would not have the embarrassment of having as their ambassador to Denmark, Alfonso Gagliano.

• (1630)

I want to comment on the authority of the House with respect to motions calling on the government to take action. We have passed motions calling for action and often the government does not take that action. The establishment of the sex offender registry is one great example. Going back over 10 years there was the NDP motion regarding child poverty. Both were ignored yet passed by the House.

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When the House passed a motion directing the procedure and House affairs committee to make all private members' business votable, the government's first reaction was to throw up its hands and give up.

On October 24, 2002, the House adopted a motion that read:

That, before the Kyoto Protocol is ratified by the House, there should be an implementation plan that Canadians understand, that sets out the benefits, how the targets are to be reached and its costs.

My concern is that the government is planning on ignore the motion and ratify the Kyoto protocol without regard to the conditions of the motion passed in the House. However the motion is different from motions calling on the government to act. The motion refers to the House only.

The House, by adopting that motion, placed a restriction on itself from considering any motion or legislation that would ratify the Kyoto protocol until certain conditions are met. When the government voted for that motion it probably did not consider that angle. We will no doubt be arguing that one in the weeks to come so I will return to the type of motions that give an instruction to the government because there are certain things that private members cannot do and the House would have to rely on the government to act, such as changes to a tax, spending money, et cetera.

If motions that call on the government to act are not binding then what good are they? Most of my speech addressed the lack of authority afforded committees but we have a more serious problem with the lack of authority of the House with respect to these types of motions.

We must find a way to ensure that the government gives effect to the motions that the House passes. If it is a matter of disrespect, then perhaps through its powers of contempt it can enforce its authority in obvious cases when the government ignores the wishes of the House. There may be budgetary restraints that give the government legitimate reasons not to comply but there are some examples where the government is obviously being very dismissive of a motion.

The other reforms we need to look at are supporting the election of senators who would then have a democratic mandate to carry out their constitutional responsibilities. We can start by encouraging the Prime Minister to appoint senators who have been elected. At present there is an Alberta vacancy and an Alberta senator duly elected by the people in the province of Alberta, and he should be the one appointed to the Senate to fill that vacancy, and the sooner the better.

In Building Trust II, we suggest reforms to the way we consider regulations and there are suggestions how to improve the consideration of supply. We address the issue of smaller committees, which was also a recommendation of the McGrath committee that cannot be carried out in a five party House so we have a suggestion to remedy the problem of large, unruly committees. Scheduling conflicts between committees and the House is also in the document.

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We will be proposing a petition reform idea that would empower citizens to bring issues for a decision to Parliament and not just use the process to be heard.

There are all kinds of goodies in Building Trust II and I will be submitting a copy of that to the modernization committee for its consideration.

I look forward to the weeks ahead where I know that the House leaders and other members of each of their parties will be sitting with you, Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of this modernization committee. I sincerely hope that when we have completed our task we will bring forward the recommendations that, not only my party but other parties have looked forward to, to modernize Parliament and make it a place where every member of Parliament has a voice, has a say.

The fact is that after the election of committee chairs was passed last week, the next day the government immediately agreed to all private members' business being votable. It was a major step forward in the House. It means that a member can come here, even an independent member who is not part of a caucus, and still get one piece of legislation on the agenda that will be votable and may be passed to bring good legislation to the country. I think that is an extremely good example of how things have to be improved. A member has to know that he or she is part of a system that helps make the laws in Canada and not one that is run out of the office on the third floor, the PMO.

•(1635)

I look forward to the modernization meetings over the next few weeks but I look forward even more to a report that will make serious changes to Parliament so that all members of Parliament can be involved in the day to day activities and the changing of laws for the good of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this debate on behalf of the Bloc Québécois. The purpose of this debate is primarily to modernize the Standing Orders, which govern the proceedings and procedures of this House.

We Bloc Québécois members had the opportunity to benefit, to a certain extent, from clear rules, which is not to say that the Standing Orders of the House of Commons should not be updated or modernized. However, I remember that, in 1993, a large number of sovereignists, 54 of them, were democratically elected by Quebecers. These were the Bloc Québécois members. At the time, given the number of seats that we won, we were the second largest party and thus became the official opposition.

I clearly remember the battles that took place in this House and in some committees because we, sovereignists, had been elected. Some members of this House whom I will not name because some of them are no longer here—and I am not making this up; those who are listening to us can look it up in the 1993 debates—said “It makes no sense that sovereignists would form the official opposition”. In other words, if there had not been these Standing Orders applied by the then Speaker of the House, Gilbert Parent, and if the government had listened to these people, it could have led to quite the little situation of anarchy.

So, the Standing Orders are, to a certain extent, the rules that protect democracy in this House.

As for us Bloc Québécois members, there is no ambiguity as to why we are here. There is no ambiguity as to our sovereignist convictions. However, we said that as long as Quebec is not a sovereign nation, as long as Quebecers continue to pay \$32 billion in taxes to Ottawa every year, they have the right to elect people to represent them in this House.

The point I want to make is that, as is the case in any evolving and ever-changing society, our Standing Orders—the democratic rules by which we are governed—need to be updated. Therefore, we agree with the government that we need to hold a debate on modernizing our procedures.

Of course, there will not be enough 20-minute allotments to fully develop this theme. But I understand that we will have another opportunity to do so. From what the government House leader said earlier, the House leaders committee will hold meetings, probably chaired by you, Mr. Speaker, to draft proposed changes to our current Standing Orders.

For the purpose of this debate, let me go over some of the changes that we feel need to be made.

The first change is the following. We agree with the proposal made by my hon. colleague, the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast and House leader for the Canadian Alliance, to have a secret ballot to elect committee chairs and vice-chairs. Again, I want to congratulate the hon. member for being so persistent on this matter.

However, as the Prime Minister told us and as the government House leader reminded us earlier in his speech where he made some suggestions, we should seriously consider the opportunity to take this one step further to enhance our democratic process. Which is why the Bloc Québécois is recommending that the chairs and vice-chairs be distributed half and half between the opposition and the government, half of them coming from the government party and the other half from the opposition.

•(1640)

I think this would ensure greater fairness and, again, greater democracy.

The government leader often refers to changes made in the United Kingdom or in Australia. He seems to like what is being done in these two countries. I will remind the government leader that committees chaired 50-50 by opposition members and government members exist not too far from here. This is how it has been working for decades at the National Assembly in Quebec, under successive Liberal, Union nationale and Parti Québécois governments. If it works in Quebec, why would the federal government not agree to take democracy one step further by instituting 50-50 chairing of committees?

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The second change is the following. We in the Bloc Québécois are asking that any commitment made by Canada on the international scene be subject to a vote in the House.

I am convinced that this will not come as much of a surprise, because during question period and in debate, we have repeatedly asked that all issues such as the sending of troops abroad or international treaties be subject to a vote. If we agree that this parliamentary assembly, made up of 301 men and women democratically elected by their fellow citizens, represents the ultimate expression of democracy, why not ensure, before sending troops to Iraq or participating in peace missions around the world, that there is first a clear, open and transparent debate in this place? Why not have a debate before signing international treaties?

There is talk of signing a pan-American free trade agreement, creating the FTAA. We in the Bloc Québécois have serious questions to ask the government concerning this future FTAA agreement. Why would the government not let the debate take place in this House to take advantage of the opposition's insight? I hope the government does not think it knows it all or has a monopoly on truth. I think that members from all parties can make constructive contributions. International treaties need therefore to also be ratified through a vote by this House.

There is another point I have often made. I am acting as deputy House leader. I am acting in this capacity temporarily, because my colleague, the member for Longueuil, gave birth last week. Incidentally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her. Serving as House leader on Fridays during oral question period reminds me once again that we, as parliamentarians, must take a serious look at productivity on Fridays.

I often count the number of members present on both sides of the House on Fridays, and I dare say it is paltry. I do not mean to suggest that members who are not present are not working. I am sure that they are busy in their offices or in their ridings, but we must take a serious look at productivity on Fridays.

I can hear the government House leader saying, "yes, but from 10.00 a.m. to oral question period, we would lose one hour of debate. From noon to private members' business at 1.30 p.m., we would lose even more time for debate".

If the government were serious, it would come up with a concrete proposal. We in the opposition—I do not wish to speak for the other opposition parties—could seriously consider prolonging the sitting hours. I recognize that the government may have a legislative agenda. However, I must say that it is a meagre one lately. However, a party in power—that is not in a leadership campaign, as is the case with the Liberal Party right now—usually has a fairly hefty legislative agenda.

I recognize that if we take time away for government orders on Fridays, this time, which cannot be compressed, must be added elsewhere. We could make it up during the remaining days of the week, even if it means starting a half hour or an hour earlier. Instead of starting at 10.00 a.m., we could start at 9.00 a.m. Instead of finishing at 6.30 p.m., we could finish at 7.00 p.m. to make up during the four remaining days for the time "lost" for debate on government orders .

On the other hand, I am not calling for there to be no Friday sittings. I am not asking for a day off. Anyway, it always makes me laugh to be asked by reporters when we are adjourning for the summer or for Christmas, "So, what are you going to do in your three months of holidays?" I have heard that twice since 1993. I invite the reporters to spend a weekend with me, when I have eight or ten social activities over the weekend. I invite them to come and bring their colleagues, to see whether we take seven straight weeks off over the holiday season. I issue an invitation to the representatives of the media.

The purpose would not be to have an extra day off. We could, however, do something productive with our Fridays. Here is what I propose on behalf of my party for Fridays.

I know that it is not done in the United Kingdom or Australia, much to the displeasure of the government leader. I suspect this sometimes bugs him.

In a parliament like the Quebec National Assembly, Fridays are the day for what is called "interpellation". This means an inquiry on a given subject, of which the appropriate minister is forewarned. The minister has time to prepare and there is a period of questions and answers and exchanges of views on a given subject between the opposition critics and the minister.

For example, they could address the Coast Guard, immigration or official languages. The minister has to be there on Fridays, as do the members taking part in the inquiry process, of course. This could lead to something highly productive.

I would like to see serious thought given to this, and maybe an on-site visit. Perhaps the government leader would prefer Australia or the UK, but he could go to Quebec City. There are, by the way, some worthwhile things being done in the Quebec National Assembly.

If worthwhile things are being done in other legislatures, in the legislative assemblies of Manitoba or Alberta, they can go and see for themselves what is going on.

• (1650)

A fourth element is that we would like more flexible rules regarding petitions. We have had debates on this issue. The government House leader told us about new technologies. An increasing number of Canadians have access to the Internet. We need some clarification regarding the possibility of accepting petitions through the Internet. The signature does not appear on the Internet. Therefore, we would need an Internet signature. Something could be done to modernize the presentation of petitions.

Petitions are a valuable tool for citizens. On any given issue that affects them, people will contact their member of Parliament and tell him "Our group met and we think that the government should take a stand on this issue".

I believe in the petition process. The government is even required to respond to petitions. This is another illustration of a country that has a democratic process. I will not elaborate further on this issue, but we could look at the presentation of petitions through the use of new technologies.

Government Orders

Fifth, I would like to say, on behalf of my party, that the rules governing parliamentary privilege should be tightened up. I am referring to Standing Order 33(1) on the need to respect the primacy of our institution, namely Parliament, and on the privilege of parliamentarians to be the first ones informed of ministerial decisions.

The list of examples is getting longer. There have even been a few instances where we surprised the leader of the government with the news that press conferences had been held in Victoria or Halifax, while we parliamentarians had not been informed.

I think that the Standing Orders could be tightened, so that ministers and parliamentary secretaries, if they are not ashamed of their decisions, of their announcements, are required to make them before all of us here, and not out of the spotlight in a Kiwanis club or in a chamber of commerce in Vancouver, before a partisan audience that applauds them and laps up every word.

We want ministers and parliamentary secretaries, if they are not afraid of their decisions, to announce them here in this House, where opposition members can question them.

My sixth point is the following: earlier, the government House leader mentioned that the voting process has improved following the most recent changes made to the Standing Orders. We no longer spend hours voting on commas and semicolons. I admit that there was room for improvement and, indeed, some improvement has been made.

I am asking the government House leader to go a little bit further in his thinking and to tell me what he thinks of the suggestion that I am going to make—and I see that other House leaders are listening carefully. I would like the committee of House leaders to look seriously at the possibility of having electronic voting. I know that my fellow parliamentarians are not unanimous on this.

When I was on parliamentary missions, for example with the Association des parlementaires de la Francophonie and as guest speaker in Sofia, Bulgaria, I had the opportunity to visit parliaments in fledgling democracies. After the Romanians and the Bulgarians got rid of the communist regime, they elected their first parliament in the early 1990s.

For example, electronic voting is used in Bulgaria, as well as in France, in Russia, at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and in the United States. However, because some people are attached to British parliamentary tradition, we still go through the exercise of rising one after the other for hours. I would like the committee to consider electronic voting.

Earlier, the government House leader mentioned free votes. He seemed so proud when he said that there had been 110 free votes in the last few years. Those who are not familiar with procedure will think that this government is transparent and open because it allowed 110 free votes.

When a vote is on an item under private members' business, a bill introduced by a member who is not a minister, it is always a free vote on both sides of the House. So when the government House leader brags about those 110 free votes, all he did was follow the Standing

Orders. Items under private members' business are always subject to a free vote.

In closing, the government House leader talks a lot about improvements that were made in the United Kingdom and in Australia. I would like to remind him also that, in Australia, senators are democratically elected by the people. If he is so fond of what they do in Australia, he should consider the possibility of having our senators democratically elected.

• (1655)

I will conclude by expressing the hope that there will be improvements in discipline and decorum in the House.

Even today, I had a group of 58 people from my riding who made comments to me, following oral question period, without blaming any particular party, about discipline in the House, which should be improved for the good of democratic expression.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, could my colleague comment on an earlier comment by another one of my colleagues about the election of senators and the fact that recently in Alberta a senator was elected municipally, on the municipal ballot, with some 250,000 votes from the people of Alberta.

Would he not think that would be substantial enough to affect the Prime Minister's choice when he is looking to appoint a member from a province that substantially indicates by the populace its senatorial choice and should the Prime Minister in effect respect that in his appointment?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: I would respond to my colleague from Edmonton Centre-East by saying that, as a first choice, Quebecers would like the Senate to be abolished. We do not see the need, in the current system, for a second House, particularly when we know that the Senate costs taxpayers \$54 million a year.

We, in the Bloc Québécois, say that the only way to get rid of the Senate is for Quebec to achieve sovereignty, for then we will no longer have a Senate.

I would also tell him that, in the current system, it would be better, if the status quo is maintained, to have democratically elected senators, of course, until the Senate is abolished.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief comment and question for the member. It seems to me that we risk losing something if we go to electronic voting, and I know a lot of people approve of it for a lot of very understandable reasons. However I have found over the years that there are unintended consequences of various reforms.

Government Orders

I would just ask the hon. member to reflect on what happens prior to a vote. Prior to a vote is a time when all members are in the chamber waiting to vote. It is a time when backbenchers talk to cabinet ministers, cabinet ministers talk to other cabinet ministers and opposition talks to government. I have always found it a useful time for buttonholing cabinet ministers or other people to whom I otherwise do not have a chance to talk. This is one thing that has been on my mind when I think of electronic voting. I think of us all coming in here with a card, as individuals punching our card into the desk and leaving. It seems to me that collegial opportunity is something that would be missed.

I ask the member to reflect on what might be an unintended consequence of a voting procedure that would eliminate that kind of opportunity.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: I recognize that the House leader of the NDP is a seasoned parliamentarian. He was first elected in 1979, I believe, and I have a great deal of respect for his experience. However, I would say to him that one does not preclude the other.

I have had the opportunity to express myself on this at the procedure and House affairs committee. First, the voting station could be located somewhere here in the House. I do not agree with the idea of voting from our offices, or while we are at it, from our riding offices.

I think that we should maintain a 15 minute or half hour bell to ensure that members have the time to get here, and to provide time for the informal conversations that take place between colleagues on both sides of the House. When the bells stop ringing, we should have some five or ten minutes, the time needed, to enter our electronic card into the voting station. The end of the bells would mark the time to vote, and the results would be known almost immediately. As such, we would still keep the opportunity to meet with our colleagues from the other parties.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member's response toward the senate is something that I would like to follow up on. Assuming that we are not going to have a sovereignty issue in the province of Quebec and that we are one country, I think the member would agree with me that one of the problems we have in this country is that too much power is concentrated in the hands of too few, in the Prime Minister's Office.

The Australians, the Americans and the Germans have a federal system of government. I think that the regions in those countries feel that they are better represented. They feel that way because they have a senate that has real power at the centre and can represent their interests effectively and act as a check and a balance on the concentration of power in the prime minister's office.

Would my learned colleague see the merit, if the country is to stay intact, in having an elected senate that can fairly represent all the regions, including his region, at the centre and take some of the power away from the Prime Minister's Office?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, what did not help with the fact that people have lost faith in the institution, is when they saw the absences of Senator Thompson who, I believe, set foot in the Senate 21 times over a 14-year period.

This does nothing to help the credibility of the institution. We must look at how political appointments are made. The people who want to keep a second House say, "It guarantees regional representation". However, I believe that regional representation—given the number of seats in the House, we would have to look into this if it is not fair—is already guaranteed enough, to a certain extent.

However, I do agree with the member when it comes to the process for appointments. We have seen the latest appointments made by the Prime Minister. He appointed a very popular artist in Quebec, Jean Lapointe, to the Senate, even though he continues to tour throughout Quebec and give performances.

I trained as a lawyer and I no longer have time to devote to any cases. I no longer have any time for practicing law, because my job as an MP has become a full time job, seven days a week. How could the likes of Jean Lapointe, who has been appointed to the Senate, or Jean-Louis Roux, whom the Prime Minister appointed to the Senate, continue to perform? Is being a senator a full time job? That is something that has to be asked.

We who are members of Parliament on either side of this House do not have time to continue our second careers in parallel. Ours is a full time job, a seven day a week job.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to pick up on the electronic voting proposal. I have voted against the government about six times in my nine years here. Always it took courage to rise in my place and be seen to be voting against my colleagues. On one occasion I was the only one who stood.

It serves two purposes to stand and be counted. One is to make sure that members do not squander party solidarity by too easily being able to vote without being seen by constituents and without being seen by one's colleagues. Alternatively, one of the reasons to stand up and be counted is to send a message to the government that members are not happy with the legislation before them.

I would suggest to my colleague opposite that if we have electronic voting, these two great instruments of standing up and being counted and sending messages to the government and to Canadians at large on how we stand on legislation is an important privilege of being a member of Parliament that should not be lost.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, I have already had the opportunity of answering that question. I will repeat what I have already said.

Government Orders

Instead of standing up one after the other, which takes an average of 15 to 18 minutes, we could have an electronic system with one, two, three or four stations in order to get it all over with in four or five minutes. For the public aspect of our expression, we would vote using an electronic card with an access number. It would be possible to see whether we had voted for or against a given item. Perhaps the following day, as is the case at the present time in *Hansard*, or the *House of Commons Debates*, to use the correct title, it could be seen who had voted in favour and who against.

I have objections to the performance of popping up one after the other like performing dogs or trained seals. It is counter-productive. I realize that this could be indicated in *Hansard* the following day. People would see who voted with the government and who against it.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to say that I agree with the Bloc member. As in several other legislative assemblies, there is a lot to learn from Quebec's National Assembly on parliamentary reform.

[*English*]

I am always pleased to talk about parliamentary reform. It has been a preoccupation of mine. In 2003 it will be 20 years ago that I was appointed to the special committee that was struck at a time of crisis in the life of Parliament.

You perhaps will recall, Mr. Speaker, the bell-ringing crisis, when the bells rang for 16 days in this place and the whole place ground to a halt. As a result of that, a special committee of the House was struck, under the chairmanship of former Liberal whip Tom Lefebvre. The work that committee did in 1983-84 actually became the basis for a much more prominently known report called the McGrath report, but really the first report of the Special Committee on Reform of the House of Commons, sometimes known as the McGrath report, in effect was what the conclusions were that had been reached by the Lefebvre committee in a previous Parliament. I sat on both those committees.

I want to begin by saying that at the end of the day procedurally we can lead many horses to water, but we cannot necessarily make them drink, because ultimately parliamentary reform is a cultural matter. Parliamentary reform is something that happens in the individual and collective heads and minds of members of Parliament and their respective political parties. No amount of tinkering with the rules or with how committee chairmen are elected or whatever other things we might do, while all of these are appropriate and all help to create a context in which that cultural change might be encouraged, will do it. Ultimately what needs to happen is that people need to change their way of relating to Parliament and to each other.

It seems to me that we have an opportunity after the vote today to see whether or not there has been a change in the attitude of the House and in the attitude of the government toward the House.

The House just passed, unanimously, an NDP motion calling for the withdrawal of proposed amendments to the Income Tax Act having to do with people with disabilities. The government yesterday was asking us to weaken our motion so that it might be able to feel freer to vote for it. In the end, we refused to weaken our motion. Because our motion was so correct, I think, because it called

for something so obviously right, in the end the government voted for the NDP motion.

So that motion is there now. Tomorrow I want to see an announcement by the government that those proposals have been withdrawn, that the wishes of the House have in fact been respected, because too often I have seen motions passed unanimously in the House and then nothing has happened.

I remember a motion from February 9, 1999, when the House unanimously passed a motion calling for a national ban on the bulk export of water. Do we have a national ban on the bulk export of water? No, we do not, yet the House unanimously called for such a ban.

So one of the things we need to have around here is a little more respect for the decisions taken either by the House or by committees. When there is a unanimous recommendation by a committee that something happen, it should happen. We should not have to bring the matter before the House and have the House express itself as it did today.

However, now we have the committee and the House. The next stage is for the government to show respect for the House and the committee and make that happen. I think that when this kind of thing starts to happen, then we will know that we have made real progress at the cultural level with respect to parliamentary reform.

● (1710)

I listened to the member from the Bloc. He talked about the need for chairmen of committees to be chosen from different parties. I recall that this was one of the things that we did achieve for a short time. Probably not too many members of Parliament know this, but following the initial implementation of the McGrath committee, the House adopted two different kinds of standing committees, standing committees that would do investigative work and study of different issues while legislation would go to special legislative committees. Those special legislative committees were actually chosen from a panel of chairmen made up of people from all parties.

We had a very good experience with that. We abandoned that system for a bunch of other reasons, but one of the good things about that system was that members of opposition parties, all opposition parties, got to exercise the role of chairman and we actually developed a number of people who become known for their expertise at chairing committees. I just wanted to put that on the record.

There are a number of things I would like to talk about, things that we have suggested and that still have not been achieved. I would like to put them on the record.

We wanted, and we still do want, the Standing Orders to be amended to give the Speaker authority to determine whether there has been reasonable opportunity for debate before a motion of time allocation or closure is heard. We still think that the Speaker should have the authority to protect Parliament and a minority point of view in Parliament from being abused in a time-allocated way by the majority. It is not unusual for speakers in other parliaments to have this kind of power and I think our Speaker should have it too. That is certainly something that the NDP will continue to work for.

Government Orders

We also wanted the minister responsible for the legislation that was having time allocation moved on it to have to come to the House and answer questions for 60 minutes. We got 30 out of the modernization committee. Not bad. I think it is a good start and a good procedure to have that requirement put upon a government that wants to move time allocation with respect to any particular legislation.

We would like the House to be taken more seriously. I think that the Bloc member made this point. Over and over again I have had occasion to rise in the House and complain that major policy announcements were being made outside the House. Here we are in a week when we have just come back and it appears that the government does not have much on its agenda, but one of the things it could have on its agenda is having ministers making policy announcements in the House and taking the House seriously. Then the opposition could respond and Canadians would come to see the House of Commons as the place where major policy announcements are made. That might be an improvement in terms of how Canadians see the House of Commons.

When Canadians see major policy announcements being made elsewhere and they see, in some cases, arguably meaningless debate, because we are having more and more take note debates and we are not really debating motions that will be voted on and have some effect, arguably this is not something that enhances the reputation of the House of Commons. If we had more policy announcements being made here, as they should be, by ministers, it would be one way of enhancing the role of the chamber. This is something that I have argued for before and that I intend to keep arguing for.

With respect to standing committees of the House, we are not going to get real independence on committees until we implement the recommendations of the McGrath committee. It recommended that membership on committees be independent of whips for a certain period of time. Then, once people get appointed to a committee, they can replace themselves if they are going to be absent but they alone choose their replacement, so that members on committees cannot be disciplined, at least for a period of time, either for a session or an entire Parliament or whatever we determine. They cannot be disciplined by their whips and they cannot be removed by their whips if they begin to have independent thoughts.

Because we know all too often what has happened around here. Members, particularly government members, get on a committee, they study the legislation, they find out that it is maybe not as good as they were told it was, they begin to demonstrate critical faculties or independent thoughts, and the next thing we know they are not on the committee and what we often refer to as parliamentary goon squads show up to vote one way or another. They do not even know what they are voting on. This has to stop. One of the ways to do that is to appoint people to committees for the duration of a Parliament or a session and enable them and only them to name their replacements in circumstances when they cannot be there.

● (1715)

With regard to treaties, this is a funny kind of thing. We have asked for treaties to be considered by the House of Commons for a long time. I was surprised and pleased when the Prime Minister said that he would bring the Kyoto accord before Parliament to have it

debated and ratified. I hope this is the beginning of a new attitude on the part of the government and subsequent governments toward Parliament when it comes to the ratification of treaties.

If I am not mistaken, the Prime Minister is on his way to Prague at the moment to participate in a NATO meeting which is considering the expansion of NATO. Canada is the only country in NATO whose Parliament never debated the expansion of NATO, which is an alteration of a treaty. All the other countries in NATO, when the original expansion took place, debated the expansion of NATO, even the Westminster parliament. It was not required to do so, but nevertheless the government of Tony Blair provided the opportunity for that debate in the House of Commons in the United Kingdom. It is only in Canada that these issues are not regularly debated and are not required to be debated.

We will see how it is done. I do not want to approve of a procedure I have not seen yet, but the idea of debating and ratifying the Kyoto accord in Parliament seems to me to be progress. I hope from here on in we might see Parliament involved in a way that just does not suit the political agenda of the Prime Minister but happens as a result of a growing sense that Parliament is the place where treaties ought to be debated and ratified.

We would like to see some of the Standing Orders amended to reflect the fact that there are five parties of the House. We just went through a procedure. In this case it was the government and the official opposition that were treated differently than the other parties, and perhaps that should stand. However we have other Standing Orders where things are allocated in threes. It says that the first three parties shall have so many minutes in terms of speeches. These Standing Orders were designed when we had a three party House, nearly 10 years ago.

It is not too much to ask after nine years that the Standing Orders of the House of Commons catch up with the reality that we now have a five party House, or are we waiting until we go back to three parties so we do not have to change the Standing Orders. It is kind of ridiculous. All we are asking is a reality that was once recognized, that all the parties be treated the same, be reinstated through changing the numbers in the Standing Orders, yet that has not happened.

These are some of the things that I wanted to mention. The House leader of the official opposition talked about parliamentary review of appointments. The McGrath committee recommended that certain appointments be reviewed by House of Commons committees, although I do not think we went as far as to recommend that ambassadorial appointments be reviewed. I am not sure I agree that would be progress to have them reviewed by a parliamentary committee, but there is room for an expanded role of parliamentary committees in considering certain kinds of appointments. That recommendation goes back 20 years and we need to look at that.

Government Orders

I wish this was called the reform debate and not the modernization debate. I want to say that in closing. I think I said it at the beginning of my remarks the last time we set up a modernization committee. It is as if the government does not want to admit that it is reforming the House of Commons or does not want to be answerable to a spirit of reform but wants what happens to only be seen in the context of this modernizing paradigm of seeking efficiencies or whatever. We should not be apologetic about wanting to reform the House of Commons. People want the House of Commons reformed. They also want their electoral system reformed.

● (1720)

We will not be addressing voter apathy and voter cynicism about politics until there is parliamentary reform, which is just so much inside baseball to a lot of Canadians. Nevertheless they are concerned about the inordinate amount of power that the Prime Minister has, et cetera. They want to see a package. They want to see parliamentary reform and see electoral reform. Many people are arguing for a system of proportional representation. Some people want the Senate abolished or replaced with an elected Senate or something done to ensure that the regions are more properly represented at the centre here.

We need reform when it comes to campaign finances and the financing of political parties. I think the government is finally moving very slowly in that direction. We will see what it comes up with and what is finally produced.

In terms of democracy, ultimately we need to look at the trade agreements differently. I know not everybody in the House will agree with me but the fact of the matter is that we can have an absolutely perfect democracy in Parliament. We can have a perfect electoral system and all that. However, if in the end we have nothing left to decide because it is all decided at some trade tribunal somewhere, either at the WTO or the NAFTA, behind closed doors, non-transparently and decided only on the basis of what constitutes a barrier to commerce and not whether it is in the public interest, then we do not have much of a democracy. It seems to me that, at least from an NDP point of view, a debate about democracy in this country has to extend to debating the extent to which the trade agreements, global and regional, are restricting the power of duly democratically elected people to act in the public interest.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, a minor comment about voter apathy. One reason for voter apathy is the fact that for so long we have not had a strong opposition facing the government benches. In the British parliamentary system, one really needs a strong choice to galvanize the electorate. I just make that point in passing.

The member has a lot of experience in the House and I would like to share with him one thing that distresses me with the way Parliament works, and that is the total monopoly the Department of Justice has on the creation of legislation. One often finds oneself in the House trying to effect changes when the horse is already out of the barn.

I deplore, first and foremost, the new practice of referring bills to committee after first reading. What happens there is it deprives this chamber and people like myself of debate or to be even aware of the bill before it goes to committee. The member will agree that, as

committees are presently structured, the committees can be so weighted that there is not genuine debate in committee.

Second, could member also comment on any way he can see to give the House of Commons a greater role in the creating of legislation and in the analyzing of legislation, be it by adding to the legal staff of the House or by the creation perhaps of legislative committees that could be involved in drafting legislation, not just for private members but for government as well?

● (1725)

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the need for more staff in terms of legal help for members is an ongoing debate about what is and is not required.

However the member makes an interesting point about referring legislation to committees before second reading. This has tended to have been regarded as a very progressive step. However the member's skepticism is well advised in the sense that sometimes it is a way of fast tracking legislation. It is not a way of trying to have more input.

The argument goes that if we get it to committee before it has been passed in the House, there is less commitment on the part of the government. Therefore it is more open to changing it, et cetera, and members can have more say in the nature of the legislation before it actually comes before the House to be debated in principle at second reading.

However it may well be two things. First, it sometimes has been used as a way of fast tracking legislation and therefore should only happen when there is unanimity about sending it to committee that way.

Second, we act as if committees are this pristine place where democracy flourishes. Therefore, if we can just get it off to committee and have all this intelligent, rational, non-partisan, reflective input into the legislation somehow, this will be a wonderful experience. It will not be, necessarily, unless we have the kind of reform to the committee process for which many of us are calling. Only if members in the committee are truly independent of the government can they have that kind of input when the bill goes to the committee before second reading. If they are still under orders from the government, then not much has changed except that we have the appearance of a different process but we still have the same culture dominating that process.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the member for Winnipeg—Transcona. As far as House procedures and understanding this place, he is a prestigious person in the House.

With respect to question period, it has occurred to me that it brings a lot of disrespect to the House. It comes down to one single problem and that is the inability to get government cabinet ministers to answer questions. They are masters of evasion and of using devices to avoid answering.

It seems to be in vogue at the present time not to comment on personal cases or individual cases. However, when I open the newspaper, I read an article where the minister is commenting to the media about a personal case. It seems to happen quite often.

Government Orders

My past experience is as a lawyer. I have often thought that perhaps the Speaker should have the power of a judge in a trial and direct the minister to answer the question and not use evasive attempts to steer around being accountable.

What would the member suggest for bringing some real meaning to question period?

• (1730)

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that we can find a procedure that could compel government ministers to answer questions if they do not want to.

I would certainly agree with the member that sometimes there seems to be a selective reading of rules, some rules which may not even exist. Certainly the one that the member cited, the fact that cabinet ministers often say they cannot discuss a personal situation when in fact other times they do and, as the member says, sometimes outside the House.

On the other hand, I would not want to see the House of Commons be a place where we try to do our case work by getting into the details of personal grievances that people have against the government. We have to be selective and exercise judgment as to what we bring to the floor of the House of Commons.

I am an opposition member too and I am as frustrated as the hon. member with the quality of the answers we sometimes receive. I say in fairness that sometimes members of the opposition leave themselves open to inadequate answers through preambles that invite the ministers to address the preamble rather than the question.

My advice to the member is not to provide the ministers with anything to shoot at but the question itself. If they do not answer the question, then they look bad for not having answered it, rather than having appropriately engaged the member in some matter having to do with the preamble.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question about question period. The U.K. has arguably thematic question periods. In other words, not all ministers attend every day. By the way, I would not advocate that. Attendance is certainly not too rich around here anywhere, so I do not recommend that only certain ministers be on duty.

However what would the hon. member think of a process by which we would at least designate a day a week for a particular theme for question periods to ensure that we could perhaps improve unarguably the quality of the responses but also the quality of the questions too because they would all be in the same area?

We have to recognize that under our five party system one member asks about widgets, then another party asks about the aerospace industry, then it switches back to crime prevention and then back to widgets in the next question. It does not make for a very coordinated approach.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Order, please. I would ask hon. members to please address their comments to the chair. The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, yes, I am aware of how it works in the Westminster Parliament.

I have always thought there was some merit to the idea of being able to predict or telegraph not just to the media but to the public, that on a certain day a certain minister, because of a particular theme or whatever, would be under sustained questioning. I like that at one level, but I know that our system works entirely differently. Question period is generally about the story of the day in the newspaper and in the media. Not only is it that, but various parties are trying to create other stories of the day by virtue of bringing things to the attention of the public and the media by what they raise.

It is a difficult question. I understand where the government House leader is coming from. It may be that one of the things we could look at is trying not so much to replace question period with that, but to provide other opportunities for thematic events, not just dramatic events but thematic events, in which ministers could be questioned in a sustained way by members.

Perhaps it is in that context that we could look at other things that the government House leader mentioned, such as not a second chamber but main committees, or all the other kinds of things he was talking about, although I am skeptical about those myself.

I agree with him that we need to find more opportunities for sustained questioning of the same minister over time so that people can develop a line of questioning and really explore a particular issue.

• (1735)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Before I give the floor to the hon. member for Fundy—Royal, I am suggesting to him, because there is exactly 20 minutes left before we move on to private members' business, that he may want to use part of his 20 minutes for questions or comments.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my full time on debate. I would like to use my 20 minutes to discuss a very important issue that is on the minds of Canadians, which is that of parliamentary reform, democratic reform not only in this chamber, but also in the provincial chambers.

I bring to the attention of the House that the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada took this work of parliamentary reform seriously. We earnestly worked to develop a concrete list of proposals that Parliament should consider adopting. These proposals would empower parliamentary committees, empower individual MPs, empower the parliamentary process itself, renew the Senate and restore democracy to our most important institution, that being the Parliament of Canada.

Government Orders

Canada today has the forms but not the substance of parliamentary democracy. Over a period of more than 30 years cabinet has gradually slipped away from its parliamentary moorings, from its real accountability to Parliament. In all the commentary in this so-called elected dictatorship, one important point gets overlooked, which is that the current Prime Minister has no more legal or constitutional power over the House of Commons than had Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier or John Diefenbaker. The Commons has no less authority over the executive government than it ever had.

The solution to our problem lies with the members of the House of Commons themselves. They have the power to take back their rights and exercise them on behalf of the people who elected them.

The proposals the Progressive Conservative Party voted on at the convention in Edmonton relate to the House of Commons. They could be put into effect either by changing the rules, the standing orders, or by legislation that Parliament itself could enact. All it would take is a government committed to implement these changes, or backbenchers, opposition members and government private members who are bloody minded enough to push the changes through.

The federal Progressive Conservative Party wants to lead the way in revitalizing parliamentary democracy. That is what we did at our Edmonton convention. We borrowed and adapted some ideas of direct citizen involvement that have been utilized in the Scottish parliament and perhaps in the U.K. government. Essentially we have put forth a concrete list of proposals that would empower individual parliamentarians through enhancing parliamentary committees.

The Westminster and Canadian systems allow for a strong united executive government exercising real powers, but really accountable and responsible to the representatives of the people in Parliament. Strong government makes a strong Parliament with a strong democracy.

Without having to trace the history of the past 30 or 40 years, Canadians know that over that period executive government has relentlessly accumulated power. It has found ways to circumvent Parliament, which sadly in practice has become weaker, programmed to the convenience of the executive government.

We propose that Parliament could directly and fairly quickly make changes that would weed out this interference from the parliamentary process. The report that we tabled greatly limits the imposition of whips and House leaders to discipline and use party solidarity on virtually every vote in the House of Commons. The report we tabled last summer in Edmonton would make it more difficult for any Prime Minister to brandish the confidence weapon and threaten his followers with an election according to his mood swings.

The report that we presented would have Parliament legislate an ethics code for senators and members of the Commons, with special and more stringent provisions for ministers and parliamentary secretaries. Parliament would appoint an ethics commissioner who would report to us.

• (1740)

A year ago more than \$160 billion in spending estimates was deemed to have been approved in a procedural shortcut involving

one vote in the Commons without any committee having opened a book on the spending procedures. Progressive Conservative members of Parliament stood up in protest.

A few months ago the Auditor General gave chapter one of her report the heading "Placing the Public's Money Beyond Parliament's Reach". That says it all. Our report would go some way to restoring the power of the purse to the House of Commons, the ancient and fundamental power by which Parliament traditionally held the government to account.

I would like to take this opportunity to go into detail on the specifics of the report itself. There are essentially 14 chapters in the document, ranging from free votes to revitalizing Commons committees, and codes of ethics for parliamentarians, ministers and parliamentary secretaries. I would like to touch on a few of these initiatives.

One of our proposals under the chapter entitled "Free Votes, Confidence Votes and Party Discipline" is that free votes especially on amendments to government bills and at third reading stage of bills should be the norm rather than the exception. The extravagant and unwarranted use by government of the confidence convention with its threat of dissolution and a new election in the event of losing a vote would essentially be eradicated.

Another chapter is that members of Parliament themselves be assigned to committees by a vote of the House. Once there, they would be permanent and would serve until prorogation of that session of Parliament. A member of Parliament must co-sign any whip's notice for his or her removal from the committee. We could do away with the ugly spectre of a member of Parliament who was inclined to vote for a particular motion being tapped on the shoulder by a staffer from the whip's office and told to move on because someone else was taking his or her place. We saw this occur on countless occasions in the environment committee.

We also proposed that committee chairs and vice-chairs be elected by secret ballot by members on the committee. That particular issue has become increasingly more in vogue today than it was only a few weeks ago. It was an initiative we brought forward in a proposal last spring and was voted on by members of the Progressive Conservative Party last August.

We also propose, in order to provide a broader perspective at the committee level, that opposition parties should have a share of the committee chairmanships that is roughly equal to their share of seats in the House. This would be negotiated among the House leaders. The other place follows a similar route. I encourage the House of Commons to go down that track and allocate the chairmanships proportionately to the number of seats that the parties have in the House of Commons itself.

We also advocate that parliamentary secretaries and other MPs in receipt of extra pay, such as whips and caucus chairs, should generally not be eligible for membership on standing committees. Those standing committees should be there for parliamentarians and not merely there as a process to carry out the wishes of the executive branch of the government itself.

We advocate that when their bills and amendments are discussed, the ministers should be required to remain at committees while the witnesses are heard. In particular, ministers must be present for clause by clause consideration of their bills.

We also call for the establishment of a code of ethics system for parliamentarians to discipline parliamentarians for particular infractions. Our proposal essentially reads as follows:

Parliament should legislate a code of ethical standards for members of Parliament and senators, including particular and more stringent provisions for ministers of the crown and parliamentary secretaries, and create an "ethics commissioner" to be an independent officer of Parliament with authority to monitor compliance, investigate alleged breaches and report to either or both Houses as applicable.

• (1745)

The essence of this is to adopt what other professions do, whether it be the medical community or the legal community. No one likes being dragged before an audience of their peers and their peers would have a chance to make a determination about what particular sanction could actually be taken.

The ethics commissioner would report his or her findings to Parliament. Parliament would set up a discipline and ethics committee to decide what sanctions would be appropriate based on the recommendations of the ethics commissioner. Sanctions would include censure; fines; suspension, with or without pay; and declaring a member's seat to be vacant, which could trigger a byelection.

We also are advocating that we need to address the loophole that we have in legislative federalism. This really speaks to the Kyoto debate that we are going through right now. Hardly a week goes by without a meeting of 14 federal, provincial or territorial cabinet ministers in one part of the country or another, whether it is agriculture, environment, finance, health or justice. Under the present government, these meetings, like first minister's meetings, are held behind closed doors. On their agendas we have no idea what they are going to discuss in advance more often than not. Decisions involving billions of dollars of taxpayer money are made on policy and programs between these different levels of government, yet Parliament is not in the loop.

We are advocating that Parliament have a briefing session before any of these conferences between the federal, provincial and territorial cabinet ministers are held so that Parliament can understand what is being debated and potentially what is at stake, and that we provide some insight. Having that more constructive approach would have paid huge dividends in building a broader consensus with respect to climate change.

The government must, in advance of any federal, provincial and territorial meeting, table the agenda in Parliament together with a statement of the federal position on the major issues facing the conference. At that same time there must be an opportunity for opposition critics to express their views and to question the responsible minister. It is a very prudent approach for us given the nature of our federation itself. The same process must be respected immediately upon the conclusion of intergovernmental affairs ministers meetings.

I also would like to touch very briefly on Senate reform. I also would like to use my full 20 minutes, if I can. The House

Private Members' Business

empowered British Columbia to be a separate region for the purposes of a constitutional veto. Ontario has 24 Senate seats and Quebec has 24. I see no reason for B.C. not to be granted 24 Senate seats as well if we consider it an equal region, as well as the western provinces. Those are elements that are in this document.

• (1750)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I heard the member say that he wanted to use his full 20 minutes. His prerogative could be to ask for unanimous consent, if he wishes.

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, I ask for the consent of the Chamber to use my full 20 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent to allow the member five minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): There is no consent but the member can use his five minutes tomorrow, as well as his ten minute question and comment period.

[*Translation*]

It being 5:50 p.m., the House will now proceed to consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ) moved that Bill C-224, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to tell all workers currently locked out, who fall under the Canada Labour Code and cannot reach an agreement, that it is with them in mind that I introduced Bill C-224 and that I am bringing it forward for debate in this place today.

I wish to thank all those who contributed directly or indirectly to the drafting of this bill and those who agreed to support it, including my hon. colleague from the NDP who wrote a letter of support. When I held a press conference, my hon. colleague from Winnipeg Centre came along to show support for the bill. I want to thank all these people for their support, both at my recent press conference and in today's debate.

I will begin by describing the purpose of the bill. This is a bill to prohibit employers under the Canada Labour Code from hiring replacement workers to perform the duties of employees who are on strike or have been locked out.

At present, no area of staff relations is attracting more attention than the prohibition on the use of replacement workers. These are also referred to as strikebreakers or scabs.

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Regardless, there is no general prohibition on the use of replacement workers, or strikebreakers, in the Canada Labour Code, while this is prohibited under Quebec legislation. Hon. members are aware of the fact that, in Quebec, we have anti-strikebreaking legislation. Later in my speech, I will quote figures about the drastic drop in percentage of days lost since this legislation came into effect.

Subsection 94(2.1) of the Canada Labour Code does contain a prohibition relating to replacement workers, but this prohibition must be read carefully because it applies only if an employer uses them "for the purpose of undermining a trade union's representational capacity".

This prohibition is a very weak one, because all the employer needs to do is acknowledge the union in place, and therefore not undermine its representational capacity, to be entitled to use replacement workers or scabs. In other words, if an employer refuses to negotiate and then uses scabs, the Canada Industrial Relations Board can forbid their use. All that is necessary, however, is for an employer to negotiate, or pretend to negotiate, with the union for it to get around this prohibition and continue to use scabs. It can be seen, therefore, that this measure is ridiculous and opens the door to the use of scabs.

I am very pleased to see that the Minister of Labour is present in the House today during this debate, and I thank her for that, because this matter is a priority for certain companies at the present time, especially in Quebec.

In reply to a question I asked her in the House on June 19, 2002, she acknowledged this, stating:

The Canada Labour Code does not prohibit the use of replacement workers during a work stoppage.

This situation has created two categories of workers in Quebec: those who work in areas governed by the Canada Labour Code and those who work in areas governed by the Quebec labour code. What this means is that if the employer, even if the company is unionized, leaves the union in place but does not negotiate directly with the union, or if the employer allows tensions to flare up, it can hire scab workers under the current Canada Labour Code.

I do not know if members know what that does to workers when they see people going in to work every morning, doing their jobs and leaving at night when they are on the picket line and have no income. Quite often entire families suffer.

• (1755)

I can tell you that there is mounting discontent. Only Quebec and BC have legislative measures that prohibit the use of strikebreakers. The ban on scabs in Quebec and BC helps foster and maintain civilized negotiations during labour disputes.

I have a few statistics to share. They will most certainly get members of this House thinking.

There has been anti-scab legislation in Quebec since 1977, that is for 25 years. Hon. members will be surprised at the results. In 1976, the average duration of a strike was 39.4 working days. This figure dropped to 32.8 days in 1979, and to 27.4 in 2001. We have succeeded in providing employers and employees with equal power. We are able to get items on the bargaining table promptly, get

negotiations moving faster, because there is legislation obliging us to sit down and reach an agreement that is good for the employer and the employees. Negotiators are involved, as are unions. There is give and take. We have seen many instances of this in Quebec, moreover.

The unions sit down with the workers to tell them "Come on now, if we want to save the company, we have to put some extra effort into this". There are many examples of workers doing just that. Is it because this made-in-Quebec legislation, the anti-scab legislation, has given people a position of strength? This is not there on the federal level. It is time things changed, because there are situations where action is required, and required right away.

British Columbia has also had anti-scab legislation since 1993. Between 1992 and 1993, the amount of time lost to strikes dropped by 50%.

Here are some other statistics that speak for themselves. From 1992 to 2002, the average number of days of work lost under the Quebec Labour Code was 15.9. Under the Canada Labour Code—and hon. members will not believe their ears—the figure is 31.1 days, which is more than 95.6%. From 1992 to 2002, the number of days lost per 1,000 employees under the Quebec code was 121.3 days. Under the Canada Labour Code, the figure is 266.3 days, or more than 119.5%.

These figures do not tell the whole story, but they are troubling enough to force the government to seriously consider this important issue. The Liberal government has to explain to workers why it does not want to implement the initiative I am proposing today. But let me warn the government that workers will not give up. The labour minister can rest assured that neither will I.

I would like to talk about some labour disputes that are going on right now and that are really hurting the people. There is the dispute at Videotron. Things are really bad there. We know that a negotiator was appointed and that some people have been working really hard. It has been six long months now and they still cannot find a middle ground. I do not know how many issues have yet to be resolved.

Videotron workers were relying a lot on this anti-scab legislation. They had hoped that the bill would have been made votable, but unfortunately, that has not been the case.

If we could have voted for this bill, we would have given some support to these workers by ensuring that they could negotiate on a more equal footing.

This bill protects not only the employees, but also the negotiations. That is how I see it. It protects the negotiations. It ensures that people sit down and come to an agreement more quickly.

• (1800)

With the employees and the employer on a more equal footing, it is a lot easier to go back to work after a few days of strike or negotiations. People are much happier to go back to work, after negotiating an agreement that is good for the workers and good for the employer. It does not force the employer to agree to some kind of increase or anything like that, but it does force him to sit down more quickly at the bargaining table and find a middle ground.

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A more equal footing ensures quicker negotiations and a better climate afterwards, when work resumes. Without such a footing, how do you think the workers at Videotron or Secur—which is another company whose workers went on strike for several months and were offered pay cuts—reacted? The workers had no bargaining power. They went back to work. Do you think they were happy to go back to work the following morning? Not at all. But they had to because they and their employer were not on a level playing field.

It is far from over. I have the feeling that in the years to come the number of labour disputes will increase, because more and more collective agreements will have to be renewed. We have reached the point where we need to negotiate new agreements. After 10, 15 or 20 years of big profit business, some corporations now have to sit down with their employees and negotiate. Other companies have run into trouble and now have to open their books and renegotiate with their employees.

It has happened in Quebec. This is something the unions have had to face on a regular basis. They have come to some agreements. Workers have even invested to save their companies. That is the spirit we need. It is a very responsible attitude, but we must be able to provide these workers with the tools they need to make it through and eventually succeed.

I would like to talk about another company that is important to me. For us here in the House, it may not seem important, but for me and for others as well, it is extremely important. I am talking about Cargill. Employees have been on strike for about 30 months now. Some 40 or so employees—just a small group of employees, but they are employees with specialized skills—have been on the street for 30 months. The company even had the gall to put up a fence, so its people would not have to see them picketing on the street out front.

When the situation comes to something like this, it is because somewhere, someone has not done their homework. It means that people do not have the tools they need to get to the table and to negotiate an agreement. Right now, the employer has no willingness to negotiate a settlement; none whatsoever. So, for three years now, these employees have been out on the street, with no income, in Baie-Comeau, where it is not easy to find work with another company or in a specialized area.

If we do not act now, the problems will extend beyond Cargill, Vidéotron and Secur; there will be problems across Canada. It is even more maddening to experience these problems in Quebec, because we have anti-scab legislation. What is more, in Quebec, the labour code protects employer-employee negotiations. However, workers who are under the Canada Labour Code are out of luck and are not looked after by their government.

There will be a debate. We will continue to discuss it here in the House. I hope that all parties will take part and make a contribution to the legislation. I will end on that. Since 1989, we have been talking about this here, I could quote all the speeches. I have the names of members from all of the parties in the House who have introduced anti-scab bills. Even the Liberal Party has voted for such a bill.

I eagerly await comments from my colleagues, and I will come back to complete my comments during the five minutes I have left.

• (1805)

[English]

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on this important question of labour policy.

Bill C-224 seeks to amend the Canada Labour Code and more specifically part I of the code dealing with labour-management relations. As members will recall, there are three parts to the Canada Labour Code. Part I deals with labour relations issues, part II deals with workplace safety issues, and part III deals with workplace standards. The proposal to prohibit employers from hiring replacement workers pertains to part I of the code.

It was not that long ago that the Government of Canada went through a lengthy period of consultation with stakeholders in the labour community, including representatives of both employers and employees, prior to introducing amendments to part I that were debated and passed by the House.

The issue of replacement workers was considered carefully at that time, both through consultation and debate in the House. During the public consultation process it became clear there were two opposing positions being taken on the issue of replacement workers. Some thought there should be a general prohibition on the use of replacement workers during strikes or lockouts. The opposing view was that there should be no prohibition on the use of replacements.

The government sought to find a balance between these two positions. It proposed an amendment to part I of the Canada Labour Code to prohibit employers from hiring replacement workers if that action would harm the legitimate bargaining objectives of the unions. It was not to be a complete ban on replacement workers, but at the same time it would not allow employers to bring in replacement workers to prevent the union's legitimate bargaining objectives. That amendment was passed by the House as part of a package of reforms to the Canada Labour Code and came into effect in 1999.

There are still opposing points of view on the issue. Bill C-224 reflects one of these points of view but there remains two sides to the issue. One difference lies with being part of the government or being in opposition. An opposition member can afford to promote a particular point of view, but the government must take a stance with a broad perspective and act in the overall national interest.

That is what the government did when the matter was before the House earlier and that is what it would do now. I do not mean to dismiss the concerns raised by the member opposite. Indeed, we recognize she is representing a valid point of view that is held by particular interests.

We believe part I of the Canada Labour Code is able to deal fairly with the issue of replacement workers in the federal jurisdiction by accommodating the competing values and interests of employers, unions and employees.

Private Members' Business

I will explain how the existing legislation brings a balanced approach to the issue. The law that came into effect in 1999 did not impose a general prohibition on the use of replacement workers during a legal work stoppage. However, the law did prohibit the use of replacement workers for the demonstrated purpose of lessening a union's representational capacity rather than the pursuit of legitimate bargaining objectives. Such action could be described as an unfair labour practice.

If a union or employee organization believes an employer is involved in unfair labour practices, as just described, it has the option of filing a complaint with the Canada Industrial Relations Board. The board is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal responsible for the interpretation and administration of part I, and certain provisions of part II, of the Canada Labour Code. Its members include representatives from employer, union and independent third party groups.

● (1810)

If employees governed by the Canada Labour Code dispute the motives of an employer in using replacement workers they have the choice to go to the Canadian Industrial Relations Board which has the expertise and the mandate to deal with labour relations issues. It is the board's responsibility to determine the underlying causes of disputes and to help find agreement among the parties. In practice however, the Board receives few complaints of unfair labour practices under the replacement workers category.

How much of a problem is this? As a practical matter most federally regulated employers do not hire replacement workers during work stoppages. Instead, they reassign management or other non-bargaining unit personnel.

A recent study entitled "Impacts of Strike Replacement Bans in Canada" raised some questions about the conventional thinking concerning the relationship between a ban on replacement workers and the length and number of strikes. For example, the researchers discovered that a prohibition on replacement workers was associated with more frequent and longer strikes. These findings contradicted the perception that the absence of a provision in the Canada Labour Code for an outright ban on the use of replacement workers contributed to an increase in the number and duration of work stoppages. The study underlined the complex nature of this question.

The government believes the balanced approach that is set out in part I of the Canada Labour Code is the best way to deal with the issue in the federal jurisdiction. We do not see any compelling reason to change the law now.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am sure a couple of people are waiting to hear exactly what I am going to say on this. I see the grins starting already.

I will say at the start that I personally have a problem with the concept of replacement workers. I have said this publicly before.

However, rather than look at that, I want to look at the bigger problem. Replacement workers are a problem created inside a bigger problem. What is the bigger problem? The bigger problem is that in collective bargaining we end up in a situation where people are out of work when they are on strike.

If people are on strike, collective bargaining has failed. I have had people say that if I am against strikes I am against collective bargaining. Strikes are not part of collective bargaining. Strikes are the result of the failure of collective bargaining.

The Bloc member who brought the bill forward today said in her speech that Quebec has made great improvements by bringing in legislation to ban replacement workers. However, the average strike time is 27 days; that is 27 days that workers are without their wages.

I know a lot of people working at regular jobs who sometimes find themselves, particularly in the high cost years of starting out with their family, dealing with a mortgage, a car loan, the costs associated with young children and many other costs, being as little as a paycheque away from bankruptcy. If they lose one paycheque they start missing payments. In 27 days they are missing more than a paycheque. Yes, it is a problem for them if the company hires someone to replace them on the job but the bigger problem is that they are losing 27 days of wages which they cannot afford to lose.

In terms of replacement workers, two particular points are important. There are a lot of jobs that theoretically this would be addressed to if we were to put this in where replacement workers cannot be used because of the high technological nature of the job. It is not possible to go out and get people to come in for the short term and take over those jobs. There are situations where it can and is done, but there are a whole lot of jobs where it simply cannot be done.

The other side of that is that we have to look at the trade-off in terms of replacement workers. What is the other side of replacement workers? In terms of replacement workers it is a situation where a company hires someone to replace the striking worker.

I had an interesting situation in my own riding where a union newspaper went on strike for a long time. Replacement workers were not used but employees were on strike for a long time. Basically the employer was not even talking with the strikers.

At some point, because of the problem, as I have said, where people needed an income, these union workers started their own paper. They now have an employee operated paper where the very people who were on strike, and technically are still to this day on strike, and it has been years, now operate what would be a competing paper if in fact the original paper even ran. The original paper shut down and, for all intents and purposes, ceased to exist. Although technically it is still there on the books and they are still legally on strike, the workers have gone to work. That is the other side of replacement workers. They replaced the employer.

If we want to be truly realistic and fair, and I say this totally theoretically, and ban the ability of a company to hire replacement workers, although I do not endorse having replacement workers go in, we must also give those striking workers the ability to replace the company. It seems far-fetched but it is a direct correlation.

We can look at the other things that happen in terms of strikes. I have already mentioned the loss of wages. There is the loss of business income for the company which, in some cases, results in the company ceasing its operation. The workers would no longer on strike, they would simply be unemployed. There is harm to third parties.

• (1815)

In the early days of strikes, in a less complicated world when trade unions first came into the country in the 1800s, it was an economic tug of war between the employer and the employee. It was a question of who could do without the money longest; the employees for wages or the company for its revenues. There was certainly some collateral damage, particularly if it were a company town, but generally speaking it was related directly to those workers in that particular factory or business, or whatever it happened to be.

However, in this global economy, for example, when a relatively small group of people go on strike at the port of Vancouver, prairie grain farmers thousands of miles away could lose their farms if that strike goes on long enough.

When air traffic controllers, who are a relative handful of people in the grand scheme of things, go on strike the transportation of goods and people ceases. Therefore there is incredible third party damage to people who are not even a party to the negotiations.

I accept the sincerity of the member who brought the bill forward and her genuine concern about the people who are impacted by strikes but I think we need look at a bigger picture.

Strikes and lockouts have been the dispute settlement mechanism that has been used since trade unionism and collective bargaining started in this country, as I say, back in the 1800s.

A lot of things have changed. In those days if people wanted to go on strike or be in charge of a strike they had to be strong. They had to defend themselves against goons hired by the company who came out with clubs and beat people into submission. Those things have changed. The education of the union leaders has changed.

Everything about how it is done has changed; the adding in of mediators, conciliators and these types of things. However we have never changed the most fundamental aspect of disputes and that is the dispute settlement mechanism.

We need to look at alternatives. Like everything else, we do not wait until we have a perfect solution to try to make a change.

I and my party very much favour the concept of going to a mechanism, for example, like final offer arbitration. I talked to the labour critic for the NDP who said that yes, it is good in certain circumstances but that it does not work in all circumstances. Nothing does.

The member from the Bloc said that we need to have civilized bargaining, that we need to get people talking and working together.

Private Members' Business

I absolutely agree. The fundamental concept behind final offer arbitration is that we ultimately have each side take a final position. We can set out all kinds of parameters that must be followed in terms of the arbitrator who makes the final decision. We can lay it out in fine detail in terms of looking at corporate share profit, the economy and comparative jobs in other industries. All kinds of things can be put into the mechanism before it is even set up.

However, ultimately each side knows if they are being unrealistic. Let us say on wages that a \$2 raise is what would be reasonable if all the factors were weighed. The union says that it wants \$3 and the company says that because times are tough it wants a \$1 cut. That is unreasonable if the realistic benchmark is \$2. The workers will get \$1 more and the company knows that.

Consequently, the company can determine just as easily as the union can what the reasonable benchmark is. It may try to cut it but it will try to come close enough to it that the union cannot come in above it, win and have its demands prevail. What often happens in these cases is that the two end up so close together they often settle.

This is something I feel very strong about. I could go on for a long time but I see my time is up. I appreciate the intent the hon. member had in bringing the bill forward. I sympathize with the situation but I think that if we start putting band-aids on labour problems we will divert ourselves from focusing on the real problem that we need to come up with a way where workers do not lose any money, never mind 27 days on average.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to support the motion and Bill C-224, whose purpose is to create anti-strikebreaking legislation. This is a policy of the New Democratic Party. I am sure that I speak for all my colleagues when I say that I hope one day our country will be as progressive as the Province of Quebec with respect to our labour code.

The Canada Labour Code already has a section on this, but it is quite weak. There is a great need for a much stronger section in order to ban replacement workers.

[*English*]

I want to congratulate the hon. member from the Bloc for bringing forward this private member's motion. This is the kind of motion which over the years has been brought forward by NDP and Bloc members of Parliament. The member stands in a great tradition of persisting in trying to get various Liberal and Conservative governments to bring forward anti-scab legislation in the federal domain. I am talking about real anti-scab legislation, not the kind that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour sang the praises of earlier, which we know is not really anti-scab legislation.

Private Members' Business

It does not pertain to the kind of situation in which we want anti-scab legislation, that is to say an actual strike or lockout. As I understand the current article, it only pertains to whether or not a company is using it to undermine the union rather than the various other and more important ways that it can be used, and that has to be prevented.

As recently as yesterday, the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, Ken Georgetti, urged the federal government and MPs to support Bill C-224. He said:

In this matter, the federal jurisdiction is definitely outdated and backward compared to Quebec and British Columbia. The experience in both provinces has shown, without a doubt, that the express prohibition on hiring strike breakers has contributed immensely to civilized industrial relations during work stoppages on top of reducing significantly the statistics on work days lost to strike or lock-out.

Sometimes we forget that if we do things right it actually would have the appropriate consequences. I would want to take issue with those who would argue otherwise.

I was listening to my colleague from the Alliance. I heard an argument which I have heard elsewhere and which I find not to be correct, that is, that things have changed, that we do not need these kinds of laws now because everything is so much nicer, and that we do not have strikebreakers any more, or people who are on strike do not have to worry about goons or thugs. In some cases, the goons and thugs are the scabs themselves. They are actually hired for the purpose of treating striking workers in a particularly physically intimidating or violent way.

It was not so long ago I believe, in Ontario, at a strike which might have been in Chatham, where a striking worker was seriously injured by someone who drove a vehicle through the picket line. To suggest that somehow violence does not occur any more and that we have reached some new harmonious state of labour management relations in the country, or relationships between striking workers and other workers and people who are hired for the purpose of providing scab labour, is not true. I wish it was true but I do not think it is true. That is why we need this kind of legislation.

I have always felt particularly frustrated whenever I had occasion to visit picket lines in my riding where people have been on strike for weeks, months and sometimes years, and replacement workers had long since settled in. These people would walk up and down knowing that the work that they used to do was being done by someone else.

It seems to me that unless we can guarantee that these workers cannot be put in this kind of position we are forever guaranteeing something else, that is, if management is mean enough and nasty enough it will always win when it comes to a strike or a lockout situation. I say mean and nasty enough because sometimes management is not that way and does seek to go back to the table. However, the absence of anti-scab legislation really does create a situation in which the meanest and the nastiest can prevail if it wants to. That is not a good situation.

●(1825)

Not surprisingly, this often happens to me, I guess as a result of having been here so long, and I find that when issues like this come up I check the record and discover that I made a speech on this in 1995 or 1987 or 1983 when a previous private member's motion or

bill was up or when we were debating back to work legislation and all the other occasions we have had in this place to debate the need for improvement to labour legislation in this country.

One of the arguments I tend to make, and I want to make it today, is that I always find that these debates illustrate a kind of philosophical gap between how we interpret the actions of working people and how we interpret the actions of people with money, or the owners, if we like. I hear members talk in situations when there are strikes of small businessmen or farmers or others being held hostage by longshoremen or railway workers or whatever the case may be. I sympathize with the situations that people find themselves in, but I wonder why we do not have the same sense of offence when a small number of money speculators holds a whole country to ransom.

Why is it that when the powerful exercise their economic freedom and say that unless they get what they want they are not going to behave in the economy the way they normally do, why is that when they do that, we say "that's the way the cookie crumbles" or that is the way the market works or that is the way business operates? If money speculators say they are not getting high enough interest rates out of Canada so they are going to undermine our economy, we say that is a reality we have to adjust to. But when working people say they are not getting paid enough and they are not going to work until they do get paid enough, we ask them to take into account the effect they are having on other people. We ask them to have a moral consciousness when it comes to their economic behaviour.

I like that argument. I think we all should have a moral consciousness when it comes to our economic behaviour and ask ourselves questions about what the consequences are for other people of particular economic decisions. But I always find it odd that it is striking workers who are asked to consider the welfare of the whole country, that are asked to consider the effect of their strike on a particular sector of the economy or on Canada's exports or whatever the case may be. When a business or corporation says the same thing, when it says that it has to do something because its shareholders demand it or its quarterly profit margins demand it or the money markets demand it, its economic self-interest is regarded as sacred. Yet the economic self-interest of workers is held in a different category. Often, it is held in contempt.

I have always found these kinds of debates to be interesting in that regard. I long for the day when all of us, worker and owner, corporation and union, everyone, will have to answer for how their economic behaviour affects the overall well-being of the economy in the country. But in the meantime, I will not settle for a universe in which we have this double standard, where workers are asked to behave in a particular way while people with the money, the power and the ownership can act in an opposite way and everyone regards that as perfectly normal.

●(1830)

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say a few words on Bill C-224, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code. The purpose of the enactment is to prohibit employers from hiring replacement workers.

I support the bill. I have looked at the whole bill. It is not lengthy or complicated. Clause 2 of the bill would replace subsection 94(2.1) of the Canada Labour Code.

Private Members' Business

New subsection 94(2.1) says that an employer cannot directly or indirectly employ people to do the work of the people who are withdrawing their services. That sounds reasonable to me.

New subsection 94(2.2) would give an employer the right to take measures to avoid destruction of his property. That sounds reasonable as well.

New subsection 94(2.3) would limit the ability of the employer to abuse the rights he has been given under subsection 94(2.2). Again that sounds very reasonable.

New subsections 94(2.4), (2.5) and (2.6) would give the Minister of Labour the tools to investigate breaches of the act. That sounds reasonable again.

Finally, clause 3 of the bill would amend section 100 of the Canada Labour Code to provide a fine for the people found guilty of breaches of the act.

These are all reasonable clauses that should help employees and employers in their efforts to resolve differences in a very professional and rational manner.

As I said, I support the bill. I have long been a supporter of the fundamental right to strike. I have always been very reluctant to place any undue restrictions on an individual's right to strike. Bill C-224 is a way of making the right to strike more effective once a withdrawal of service becomes a reality.

All of us have seen many withdrawals of services in our lifetime. Some have been easygoing and friendly; others have become very loud and bitter. However in every case whenever replacement workers have been brought in, it has always made matters a whole lot worse. It has always raised the temperature of the people on the picket line. We all know what results when those things happen.

When people have been out on a dirty old picket line for days in the rain or snow, the sight of replacement workers being bused in is often too much for them to take. In that event we see that shouts replace dialogue and very often push comes to shove. Implementing Bill C-224 would reduce the acrimony and violence on the picket line.

Very often management will do as much as it can to replace workers who have gone out on strike. That is fair. Management is allowed to do that. It is allowed to keep the company operating if it can. However when the people in management start hiring people to help them, such as their friends, their neighbours and replacement workers, then we are talking about a different kettle of fish. This is where the acrimony and violence develops on picket lines.

A strike is about withdrawing one's services. It is not about having one's services replaced by people who have absolutely no right to be there.

•(1835)

We have to remember as well that life has to go on after the strike is over. Things get back to normal more quickly if there are no nasty incidents and no violence on the picket lines. Doing things professionally and rationally is in the best interests of both management and labour.

I support the bill. I hope it will help in reducing the incidence of violence and acrimony on the picket line.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the hon. members from all parties who have spoken on this bill. I think we have had a debate that was both enlightened and enlightening. I thank in particular the hon. members who spoke in support of my bill.

I will conclude by trying to address a number of points that were raised here in debate. I would like to point out that, since 1989, anti-scab legislation has been introduced in this House by various parties, on eight separate occasions.

There is therefore a demand for such a thing. It has been under discussion in the House for more than 12 years. That is unfortunate, because the results have been very close. In 1989, it was 72 for and 90 against. That is incredible. In 1995, it was 104 for and 114 against. We came within a hair's breadth of winning. That is sad, because we should be further ahead on this issue. The federal government is always lagging behind the innovative approach of Quebec.

We in Quebec are always ten years ahead and, once again, the government cannot manage to follow our lead by taking a progressive approach to this issue.

Earlier, my colleague from the Canadian Alliance talked about businessmen. When it comes to air traffic control and key positions, important positions that we cannot do without, then essential services are provided. That is how negotiations are run. One does not create panic by saying flat out "We will no longer be providing the services". Essential services must be provided while negotiations continue. These are negotiating positions, and they work. We know from experience that they do.

I think of the whole issue of businesses which, often, are taken over by foreigners who do not necessarily recognize our laws, are not familiar with them and have no interest in enforcing them because they came here to make money. The well-being of employees definitely takes a back seat, as far as they are concerned, as we have seen in the past.

Unless measures are imposed on them to protect employees by ensuring they have some bargaining power in negotiating, these people will not care at all. They could throw everyone out and hire all new personnel. That does not matter to them; this is not their country, and they are here to make money. All the more reason to have anti-scab legislation.

We are talking about globalization and it is coming. It is already here. So, let us not bury our heads in the sand, because this is of critical importance.

We can no longer tolerate a half-measure. I refuse to accept the term "half-measure". We need a real measure, a progressive and innovative measure, a measure that will reduce violence on the picket lines. When people have been on the picket lines for three years, something is wrong. A real measure will promote a fair balance in the negotiations between employers and workers.

Private Members' Business

Earlier the Canadian Alliance member said that even with anti-scab legislation, a strike could last some 20 days. Indeed, unions have strike funds to help workers make it through negotiations. Of course, the strike must not last six months, a year, two years or three years. No one wants that. I too wish that this is settled as quickly as possible, but not at the expense of workers. This situation is unacceptable, particularly in 2002. We cannot live like this. There must be some harmony within companies.

This is a forward thinking bill that requires courage on the part of the government. We are asking the government to show some courage. It will not cost one penny but it will require a good dose of courage to pass legislation that would protect people who have worked very hard throughout their lives, and who can often be the victims of abuse because they do not have this protection.

● (1840)

I am very pleased that we are reviewing the rules and the Standing Orders of this House, and I will be very involved in this process.

Finally, I hope that hon. members can present bills that will be votable items. Then, we will be able to introduce bills that will involve the government, that will force it to vote. I promise that I will come back with an anti-scab bill that is a votable item in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business is now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

[*English*]

It being 6:45 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:45 p.m.)

APPENDIX

Addresses

on the occasion

of the unveiling of a portrait

of the

Right Hon. Martin Brian Mulroney

Novembre 19, 2002

APPENDIX

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Right Hon. Martin Brian Mulroney
November 19, 2002

[English]

Hon. Peter Milliken (Speaker of the House of Commons): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, Mesdames et Messieurs. I would like to welcome you to this special occasion, as we prepare to unveil the official portrait of the Right Hon. Martin Brian Mulroney, 18th Prime Minister of Canada.

We will all remain standing for the national anthem.

[Editor's Note: *Whereupon O Canada was sung*]

Hon. Peter Milliken: Once again, good afternoon.

The portrait we unveil today is the concrete, tangible tribute we pay to a former prime minister, and we are privileged to be present at this latest commemoration of our political history as it is added to the collection contained within these walls. But this day also affords us the opportunity to acknowledge our respect and admiration for Mr. Brian Mulroney, an admiration shared nearly two decades ago by the *Edmonton Journal* when they described him in the following glowing terms:

"His eyes are Paul Newman blue. His hair has the swoop of the Robert Redford style and the voice and resonance of a Lorne Green school of broadcasting. The jaw is by Gibraltar." Given that flattering assessment, if politics had not beckoned, Mr. Mulroney might well have aspired to a career in film or television. In fact, not too long ago, at the conclusion of an interview with CBC-TV, he was asked whether he might consider returning to politics.

The journalist asked, "Not even a hint of a desire to one day get back in the arena?"

Mr. Mulroney replied, "No, not a hint. My desire is to come back as anchorman for CBC". I trust the media in attendance are taking note.

[Translation]

But his attraction to the world of media notwithstanding, there is no denying that Mr. Mulroney's interest in politics is a long-standing one, when he joined the Conservative Party during his university days.

In 1976, he ran for election as Conservative leader at the party's national convention, but it was not until 1983 that he won the leadership and gained his first seat in the House of Commons. In the election the following year, Mr. Mulroney's Conservatives won 211 seats in the House of Commons, the largest number in Canadian history. Four years later, the Conservatives won another majority.

[English]

In his nine years in office, Mr. Mulroney brought in two free trade agreements and introduced the goods and services tax. The language

rights in New Brunswick were entrenched in Canada's Constitution. The Nunavut Agreement with the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic set in motion the creation of a third territory in Canada, representing a major achievement in aboriginal land settlement.

Internationally his stand on South African apartheid won him respect around the world. He also negotiated an acid rain treaty with the United States and was an architect of the Sommet de la Francophonie.

[Translation]

He also endeavoured to achieve constitutional reform. The Meech Lake accord attempted to define conditions under which Quebec could sign the 1982 constitution, but failed to become law when it was not passed by the Manitoba and Newfoundland legislatures.

Another endeavour to secure constitutional unanimity was undertaken with the Charlottetown accord in 1992. A national referendum was called on this agreement, but it was ultimately defeated, and Mr. Mulroney resigned from politics in 1993.

[English]

It has been said that he himself was surprised, given his love of politics, that he was so easily able to turn the page, to leave politics behind and move on to different professional challenges. But today is a day for reminiscences after all, so I ask his indulgence while I take a moment to express my admiration and appreciation for a man whose dedication to his party, his constituency and his country are above question.

As Speaker of course I have no political leanings, but when Mr. Mulroney and I were last in the Chamber together, our political differences were somewhat more marked. Nevertheless there was never any doubt that like everyone who sits in the House he only wanted one thing, and that was to try to improve the lives of his fellow citizens. We may not have agreed on how this could best be achieved but his priority was always to place his skills at the service of his party, his constituency and his country, and for that we all applaud him.

Leadership is not an easy burden, but he carried it with grace and dignity, wit and compassion. I am delighted to note that the passage of years has obviously not affected those qualities. I am sure the *Edmonton Journal* would be equally pleased to see that time has been kind to those features so eloquently described in that article written a number of years ago.

[Translation]

I invite the Hon. Lucie Pépin, Speaker *pro tempore* of the Senate, to address us.

Hon. Lucie Pépin (Speaker pro tempore of the Senate): Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, honourable colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, just before leaving his position as Prime Minister, in June 1993, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney said words whose truth is unquestionable, words that go straight to the heart of this ceremony. On the role and responsibilities of the Canadian Prime Minister, he said, and I quote:

The leadership of a modern democracy... is a great challenge. The most important responsibility of a Canadian Prime Minister, as prime ministers of any political party have learned, is the preservation and enhancement of Canadian unity.

Those who have met the challenge of assuming the leadership of our country have all, without exception, made huge efforts and countless sacrifices in the interest of their fellow citizens and in the service of the unity of Canada. Each one of them deserves our recognition and our respect. This is why we pay tribute to our former prime ministers by dedicating portraits to them.

The Right Hon. Brian Mulroney left a deep imprint in Canada's history and in the minds of his fellow citizens. He served his party, his riding and his country with great distinction. And while today we are recognizing the former Prime Minister, we are also saluting and honouring this particularly warm person, a person who is exceptional in every respect.

His successes are many and they are remarkable. As a former Quebec member of Parliament who was elected for the first time, like Mr. Mulroney, at the 33rd general election, held on September 4, 1984, I was among those who were able to see his achievements first hand.

[English]

Naturally, among the most important of these exploits are the Free Trade Agreements, which he successfully negotiated despite intense resistance from opposition parties and every corner of Canadian society. Moreover, he reached out across the cultural divide to build bridges between English and French Canadians, and for that he deserves our thanks and praise. As my colleague Senator Lowell Murray put it so well on February 24, 1993, Brian Mulroney will be remembered:

“As the national leader who, one-hundred years after the death of Sir John A. Macdonald, redeemed the heritage of our first prime minister and renewed [the Conservative Party] as a partnership of English- and French-speaking Canadians dedicated to national unity and national development”.

[Translation]

Building on this political union, this historical collaboration, he managed an impressive feat, not once but twice getting elected a majority government dedicated to the pursuit of very ambitious objectives, which prompted Canadians to contemplate their past carefully and reflect in depth on their future. All Canadians, and all parliamentarians, I am sure, are profoundly grateful to him for engaging us in historical debates whose ultimate goal was to strengthen the foundations of our federation.

His talents, however, were not limited to politics. On the human side, Prime Minister Mulroney also had excellent qualities. I know that he often took the time to phone members, regardless of their political stripes, to extend words of comfort in times of distress or illness, words for which I remain grateful to you.

[English]

And in the area of concrete government measures, this compassion translated into several important initiatives. Among them were programs designed to protect children and target assistance to those most in need. As well, his government made great efforts toward developing national strategies in the areas of AIDS, drugs, family violence, breast cancer and tobacco. As a nurse and former president of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I am personally compelled to thank him and commend his efforts in those areas.

[Translation]

Today, we contemplate the past with emotion and pay tribute to the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney by unveiling his portrait. And if a picture is worth a thousand words, this one will certainly bring to mind countless memories of very exciting times and of a man who showed talent, persistence and courage as the 18th Prime Minister of Canada.

So, Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, welcome home and thank you.

Hon. Peter Milliken (Speaker of the House of Commons): The Right Hon. Jean Chrétien will now speak.

[English]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Madam Speaker, Mr. Mulroney, Mrs. Mulroney, Mulroney family, dear friends, chers amis, ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered today to hang Brian Mulroney on Parliament Hill and I suspect he takes some great pleasure from the knowledge that I will be the next to hang.

Speaking of hanging, in recent days I have read with great interest stories in the media that you should come back. I want to make it clear today that if you come back, I am staying. The trouble is I think we both know that if we did it, we would be living in Ottawa as bachelors.

In all seriousness, I am very, very pleased to be here today with you for the unveiling of the portrait of the 18th Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney.

You and I are among the very lucky few who have known firsthand the special thrill and unique sense of gratitude that is felt when Canadians freely choose you to fill the highest office in the land. There is no higher honour in our democracy than being chosen Prime Minister.

[Translation]

We are members of a very special group. Regardless of partisan differences, regardless of the convictions or ideologies that separate them, all Prime Ministers share one and the same goal: to make Canada an even better country.

When you assumed the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party in 1983, it had been a quarter century since that party had formed a majority government. And no Conservative Prime Minister had enjoyed two consecutive majorities since Sir John A. Macdonald. A year later, you recorded the strongest parliamentary majority in the history of Canadian politics. Then in 1988 you had another healthy majority. You led the country in turbulent times. The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement is one achievement for which you will go down in history.

On the international scene, you were a fervent and eloquent opponent of apartheid in South Africa. Your government's active participation in the Rio Earth Summit moved Canada into the lead role it now plays in the world as far as the environment is concerned, thus preparing Canada for the eventual ratification of the Kyoto protocol.

[English]

Mr. Mulroney, our paths have crossed many times in politics. Your election in 1984 inspired me to quit politics for a few years. You were a formidable adversary in the House of Commons. That is what democracy is all about, but there has never been any doubt of the overriding objective that we have always shared: making Canada a stronger, more just and more prosperous nation.

We welcome you back to Parliament Hill to unveil the fine work of Igor Babailov and as you take your rightful and permanent place among this truly distinguished gallery of Canadians.

[Translation]

Welcome to Parliament, Mr. Mulroney. Once again, it is an honour to be here with you, and to have the privilege, here on Parliament Hill at this time, to address such a large number of Conservatives. Thank you very much.

Hon. Peter Milliken: I thank Madam Speaker and the Prime Minister.

[English]

Now I would like to ask Mr. Mulroney to join me at the portrait

I would like to say a few words about the artist chosen by Mr. Mulroney for this portrait.

Born in Russia, Igor Babailov painted his first portrait at the age of four. In 1979 he was selected in a nationwide competition to attend Moscow's School of Fine Arts. His art education continued at the acclaimed Surikov Academy where he received the degree of Master of Fine Arts. There, he was officially commissioned to paint Nikita Khrushchev's granddaughter, Natasha.

[Translation]

He emigrated to Canada in 1990 and established his reputation as a portrait painter in the tradition of the old masters, both in Canada and abroad.

Mr. Babailov has painted numerous portraits in the last twenty years, including portraits of U.S. President George W. Bush, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Rudolph Giuliani and Nelson Mandela. His work also includes landscapes, scenes and large murals.

[English]

I would now like to invite the Right Hon. Mulroney, eighteenth Prime Minister of Canada, to address us.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney: Mr. Speaker and Prime Minister, madame la Présidente du Sénat, chers amis, I wish they hadn't hustled that guy out so quickly. This was one of my supporters. I remember the old days when we would bus people like that in.

Some people pay attention, especially during leadership campaigns.

[Translation]

I would first like to thank you for your kind and generous words about me. This is a very special occasion for me and my family. I am deeply honoured by your presence and your comments.

[English]

I begin by thanking you all for your elegant and generous words. I think those are probably the finest speeches you have ever made in this building. This is indeed a very special moment for me and my family and I am genuinely honoured by your comments and grateful for your presence.

I am especially indebted to Igor Babailov, a truly gifted artist, who has done a remarkable job on my portrait, considering what he had to work with. In most Canadian families, when a baby is born, the happy parents count the baby's fingers and toes. When I was born, my parents measured the chin. This was a sobering moment for young parents. But they were optimists and as my father later said to my mom: "Just be thankful, it was before metric".

Through a combination of great skill and sure talent, Igor has neutralized any unduly prominent features, for which I and future visitors to the Prime Minister's Gallery will be eternally grateful.

I am genuinely delighted to see you all in such numbers. But then, I was forewarned of such a large turnout, following a conversation I had in New York with Mort Zuckerman who, because of his Canadian origins, was aware of today's ceremony.

Mort told me of attending with a friend the funeral of a widely unloved Hollywood movie mogul.

Mort gazed around the synagogue just before the funeral service began and was absolutely astonished by the huge turnout. When he commented on the size of the crowd, his friend replied: "Well Mort, give people what they want and they'll turn out in droves!"

You know, it's difficult to feel sad on such an occasion but I have mustered a great deal of sympathy for John Turner, a victim of cruel and unusual punishment. He and I now hang side by side in the Prime Minister's gallery and John is condemned to stare at me for eternity.

[Translation]

In the 135 years of this magnificent country's history, only 20 people have born the title Prime Minister. I therefore consider it a remarkable privilege to have been elected, then re-elected to the position.

And as most of you are no doubt aware, none of this would have been possible without the love, encouragement and support of Mila and our children, who have given me great pleasure by being here with me today. I would like to introduce Mila and my children.

[English]

I was very pleased to see the Prime Minister here today. He is on his way to Prague. I am very grateful that he would take the time to be here. I am also quite surprised. I thought he had retired.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney: My memory is failing somewhat now, so I went back to Hansard and guess what I found? On February 27, 1986, Prime Minister Mulroney speaking in the House on the occasion of Jean Chrétien's retirement from politics, and I quote from Hansard: "Jean Chrétien was a brave and dedicated member who served Canadians and his constituents with energy and dignity. This extremely likeable man has made an unforgettable impression on all Canadians." Did I say that?

I was flipping through my morning copy of the *Globe and Mail*, of February 28, 1890 and, wouldn't you know, came across a report on the unveiling of Sir John A. Macdonald's prime ministerial portrait. The *Globe* reports "that the address to [Prime Minister Macdonald] was as laudatory as the English language would permit". I find nothing wrong with that custom).

The *Globe* then observed that Sir John A. "told his admiring followers that he was the father of responsible government in Canada, the joint father of Confederation and that the peace, progress and prosperity of the country for the past quarter of a century was wholly due to the Conservative Party". And some of you thought I was guilty of hyperbole!

But then the *Globe*, in a tradition that has fortunately survived to this day, introduced some measure of balance into its report of the occasion. The *Globe* continues and concluded, "Someone has said that the chief business of old men is to tell stories which nobody believes and this is pretty much the case with [Sir John A.].". The journalist concluded, "Anyone familiar with the history of Canada knows that Sir John was the opponent of every measure of reform... and that he has held power by a set of the most rascally acts that ever disgraced the statutes of a free country". Gee, as the Prime Minister and I can testify, some things never change, eh!

[Translation]

I am also pleased to see that members and senators from all political parties are here today. I have lasting friendships with members of the opposition who touched me with their compliments and the nature of their comments.

[English]

Canada's vibrant democracy is advanced by the collision of great ideas and the articulation of competing visions for our country. It may surprise some but this actually can be done effectively without the politics of personal destruction. There is room and often a need for powerful debate, dissent and disagreement anytime a government acts in an important area of public policy.

As they did in my time and as they will forever, opposition parties must be vigilant and vigorous and, if need be, unrelenting in their pursuit of a noble objection. And through it all, good days and bad, opposition parties must always retain a sense of confidence and optimism as they recall the words of Lester B. Pearson who said, "Don't be downhearted in the thick of battle. It is where all good men would wish to be".

Which is why, although history remembers Prime Ministers in a special way, Canadians should never forget that it is the individual member of Parliament whose contribution is the foundation of our parliamentary system and the hallmark of our democracy.

Over 9 years after leaving these halls, I can tell you that the part of political life I miss most of all is my caucus. I loved them all and deeply respected their sacrifice and admired their commitment. The focus of my week began not on Monday but on Wednesday with caucus and ended early the next Wednesday morning with a group of MPs for an early breakfast at 24 Sussex just prior to the beginning of caucus again. In between, their preoccupations became my priorities. So every Wednesday I witnessed a microcosm of Canada, replete with challenges, achievements, tensions and dreams, as I watched men and women from vastly different regions and backgrounds and languages, struggling to understand each other's views while seeking to harmonize their differences into coherent national policy. Those moments exemplified for me the very essence of parliamentary democracy and the splendor of a commitment to Canada, and while they occurred in my caucus, I know they occurred in every other caucus as well.

[Translation]

It was among my colleagues from caucus that I most clearly heard the voice of Canada. Every week, men and women from across the country shared their pride and their hopes, their plans and their concerns. They did not all speak the same language, nor did they all see the future in the same way, far from it. However, in their own words and in their own way, each one of them said, "I love Canada and I want to make it a better place for those who come after me".

On many occasions, in these circumstances, I was reminded of the words of our great literary figure from the Charlevoix, Félix-Antoine Savard: "Blessed are those who live in harmony."

[English]

It was both in this room and a few steps from here where we gathered to consider the great issues on our agenda, from free trade to the GST, from Meech Lake to the Gulf war, and many others. After remarkably candid and direct debate, often in an atmosphere of withering criticism outside, we came together in mutual friendship and loyalty and presented a singular policy and common approach to Parliament and the country.

Sometimes we succeeded and sometimes we failed. I remember recalling for caucus the words of Reinhold Niebuhr: "Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing fine or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith..."

So it is in the life of Canada. I will be forever grateful to all members of Parliament for their contributions. But in a special way I will be forever grateful to that group of men and women, members of Parliament, who stood with me in proud and sometimes lonely solidarity, as we defended policies we knew to be unpopular at the time but which we believed to be in the long term best interests of Canada and all her citizens. In the fullness of time, history and a more reflective nation will tell us whether our hopes for the ultimate success of these policies were realized.

As I return today to Parliament Hill for the first time since my resignation as Prime Minister, I want to say simply that I feel both humble and proud to know that my likeness, such as it is, will now be a part of this magnificent building and that I will have the honour of being with so many great Canadians, all of whom loved our country dearly and served her well.

To all of you, irrespective to be sure of political party, because so many durable friendships are made on the floor of the House of Commons and with people in the broader Ottawa community, to all of you who were kind enough to associate with me and my family in

a supportive way over our lifetimes and particularly our time here, I want to say a special thank you. I want to thank you all for being here on what for us is a very, very special day. Thank you all.

Hon. Peter Milliken (Speaker of the House of Commons): Thank you very much, Mr. Mulroney. That concludes the proceedings. I have the pleasure of inviting all of you to join our guest of honour in the Hall of Honour for a reception.

[*Translation*]

I thank you for having attended these proceedings.

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