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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 10, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[*English*]

PENSION ACT

Hon. Rey Pagtakhan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-31, an act to amend the Pension Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act.

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

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association which represented Canada at the joint committee meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Brussels, Belgium, February 16-18, 2003, and at the annual economics and security committee consultation with the OECD held in Paris, France, February 19, 2003.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The committee has considered vote 20 under finance in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004 and reports the same.

[*Translation*]

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts regarding the Public Accounts of Canada 2001-02.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts regarding chapter 7, "Canadian Space Agency—Implementing the Canadian Space Program", of the December 2002 Auditor General's report.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to both these reports.

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food entitled "Bovine Tuberculosis in the Immediate Vicinity of Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba". Pursuant to Standing Order 109 the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

The seriousness of this potential impact on the domestic bovine industry gave rise for this report. Stakeholders, the committee, and I anticipate an early positive response to our recommendations.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 27th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the inclusion of a code of conduct in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. I would like to thank the members of the committee from all parties and the staff for working so hard to get us to the end of the first stage of a two stage process.

* * *

● (1010)

PETITIONS

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to present two petitions today. The first calls upon the government to take all necessary measures to curb the use of child pornography. This has been signed by several hundred people in my riding.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with stem cell research. It calls upon the government to take all possible steps to encourage the use of non-embryonic stem cells or adult stem cells. It is signed by several hundred people in my riding.

CANADA POST

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present two petitions. The first one deals with rural route mail couriers who are requesting to have the right to organize and to negotiate with Canada Post.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by a great number of people. The petitioners 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 be outlawed.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 460 residents of Canada. The petitioners wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that hundreds of thousands of Canadians suffer from debilitating diseases, such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, muscular dystrophy and spinal cord injury.

The petitioners support ethical stem cell research that uses adult stem cells. Adult stem cells have shown significant research progress without the immune rejection or ethical problems associated with embryonic 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.

CANADA POST

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by rural route mail couriers. The petitioners ask Parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the privilege to present to the House of Commons a petition signed by residents of Crowfoot, more specific from Drumheller, Munson, Rosebud, and Carbon, Alberta.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to protect children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are completely outlawed of banned. This petition reflects the opinion of a majority of Canadians in condemning the creation and use of child pornography, and so it is a pleasure to present this petition to the House.

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise to present a petition from Canadians who seek recognition for Chief Tecumseh, who united the first nations to fight for the British alongside General Brock.

On October 5, 1813, the two armies met at the Battle of the Thames. The British fled but Tecumseh covered their retreat. General Brock and Tecumseh were both killed in the War of 1812. The contributions of Chief Tecumseh and first nations to the War of 1812 are not well-known. This is something that should be studied by historians, members of Parliament, and citizens of Canada.

These citizens call upon Parliament to approve a monument to honour Chief Tecumseh at the place of his death.

[*Translation*]

IRAQ

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by nearly 2,400 people from the riding of Beauport —Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans and the greater Quebec City area.

These petitioners are all pacifists and are all opposed to the war now being waged in Iraq by the American-British coalition. They think that a war in Iraq would have destructive effects, endanger the lives of thousands of Iraqi civilians, and have disastrous effects on the entire Middle East. They ask us to oppose any direct or indirect participation by Canada in a war in Iraq.

● (1015)

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present two petitions.

The first petition deals with rural route mail couriers. Their contention is that they earn less than the minimum wage and feel that they have been denied the right to bargain for higher wages. They feel that they have been discriminated against because their wage is at an unfair level and has basically remained there. They feel that they need a different system to help them get what they want.

These petitioners call upon Parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act and I am pleased to present that petition.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with stem cell research. The petitioners believe that the moral status of the embryo from all sources should outweigh the potential benefits of embryonic stem cell research.

They call upon Parliament to affirm the value of human life from conception and to pass laws to protect the human embryo from experimentation and destruction.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition that has been duly certified by the clerk on behalf of one of my constituents, principally Phillip Crossman from Minto, New Brunswick, and other residents of the Minto, Chipman and Fredericton region.

Their concern stems from potential additions to sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code that could potentially infringe on their right to have freedom of speech and to share their religious beliefs without any fear of prosecution.

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I wish to present three petitions on behalf of the constituents of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

The first petition calls upon Parliament to protect the rights of Canadians to be free to share their religious beliefs without fear of prosecution.

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls upon Parliament to protect the health of seniors and children, and save our environment by banning the disputed gas additive MMT as it creates smog and enhances global warming.

MARRIAGE

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls upon Parliament to pass legislation to recognize the institution of marriage in federal law as being a lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to table in the House, all from the province of Ontario.

The petitioners request that this House recognize the importance of allowing the parents of children to be actively involved with them after divorce and that discrimination on race, gender or religion be eliminated. I present these petitions on behalf of these people and many others who wish to have contact with their 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, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ASSISTED HUMAN REPRODUCTION ACT

The House resumed from April 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, an act respecting assisted human reproduction, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-13 today. It is a very important subject matter and one that is not to be trifled with and one that is not to be decided lightly.

I will begin my analysis of the bill by dividing it into two steps. First is the analysis of the process by which we have arrived here. Second is an analysis of the substance of the bill.

As I proceed with my remarks the House will see that for a variety of reasons I will be unable to support the bill. I want to explain those reasons because, in my view, this is truly a very important bill in respect of the dignity of the human person.

I will begin with the process. I find the process that the bill took objectionable for four particular reasons. I would like to discuss each of those four reasons in some detail.

First, there are two aspects to the bill. Of course I am simplifying what is an extremely complicated bill. Some parts, in my opinion, one cannot understand unless one is a scientist or medical doctor. However, I am a legislator and a lawyer and certainly I can understand the legislative and legal aspects of the bill. One aspect of the bill is that it would prohibit certain activities, in this case cloning, and another is the portion which deals with the regulation of certain aspects of this particular medical practice.

When the bill was first being discussed by the then minister of health, now the Minister of Industry, there was a great deal of discussion, certainly within our caucus, as to the nature of the format that the bill should take. A lot of members of Parliament very strongly urged the minister to, in effect, split the bill so that there would be a separate bill dealing with cloning and another bill dealing with regulated activities.

I can say, with as much certainty as one can have, that if that advice had been taken and a bill had been brought in to prevent cloning simply by itself, leaving all regulated activities to another bill, that bill undoubtedly would have sailed through the House of Commons, likely in record time.

I do not say this simply because I am pulling something out of the air. I want to bring to the attention of the House the act in the United States that did just that. It could not be shorter unless it was a joke. It is really two sentences and a maximum of a couple of pages. Basically, it prohibits human cloning, end of story. It has very few sections but it is very clear. I will get back to the definition of human cloning a little later in my remarks but it defines human cloning very clearly and broadly as follows:

> The term 'human cloning' means human asexual reproduction, accomplished by introducing nuclear material from one or more human somatic cells....

I underscore the words “or more”.

It could have been done. It has been done in the United States. There would have been no reason not to do it. One has to ask why it was not done. Why was a bill not presented to ban human cloning and then another bill presented dealing with regulated activities?

My speculation, as a member of Parliament, is that it was done to either entice or coerce. I will let members choose the word they wish to use. Members of Parliament who had great difficulty supporting certain aspects of the regulated part of the bill were reluctant to not vote for the bill because it also bans human cloning. We would be left with a situation where if we were to vote against the bill, because there were parts of it with which we could not agree in terms of the regulated aspect, we would also be voting against banning human cloning. How can we do that?

● (1020)

On the other hand, if I were to vote for it I would be banning human cloning, which is something we all want, but I also would be literally approving parts of the bill with which I cannot live. That was a very difficult thing for me to deal with. Because the bill was proceeded with in that way, for me that was strike one on the issue of process.

The previous minister of health, currently the Minister of Industry, asked a question of the health committee. I am not a member of the health committee but I commend its members for their work on the bill. It was an onerous task over many months. The minister asked the committee to examine a bill prior to second reading and make certain recommendations.

The health committee took that request very seriously and travelled across the country to hear witnesses who had many interesting and important things to say about the bill. The committee debated and basically did what the previous minister of health, now the Minister of Industry, wanted it to do, which was to examine the bill and present a report for the minister's consideration.

Sure enough, that was exactly what it did. The health committee requested a comprehensive government response to that report within 150 days. That is not unusual because if we look at Standing Order 109 it states:

> Within 150 days of the presentation of a report from a standing or special committee, the government shall, upon the request of the committee, table a comprehensive response thereto.

It is not "may". It is not "can". It is "shall". It is mandatory under our rules that the government, when requested, shall table a comprehensive response to the committee report in the House of Commons. Did that happen? No, it did not.

If we look at Marleau and Montpetit at page 886, under the subject "Government Response", the learned authors state:

> Speakers have consistently refused to define "comprehensive" in this context, maintaining that the nature of the response must be left to the discretion of the government.

That is fine. I have been in this place 14 years and I have enjoyed every minute of it. In my experience on numerous committees I have never seen a request for a comprehensive response by the government either ignored or, as I see it in this case, toyed with by saying "Our comprehensive response to your considered report is another bill". That to me is a slap in the face to the work of the health committee and to the people and witnesses who contributed to that work.

Why is a comprehensive government response required? It is because the committee made numerous recommendations. If the government did not like the recommendations it would have been incumbent on the government to explain. Therefore when the committee studied the new bill old ground would not need to be rehashed. The committee would know and perhaps even agree with the government's reasons for not agreeing with some of its recommendations. If the government agreed with some of its recommendations, then there would be no need to talk about those recommendations.

In this case, on the 150th day after the request was made, the government tabled Bill C-13. That is not a comprehensive response by any definition in my opinion as a member of Parliament.

Marleau and Montpetit goes on to state:

> The Standing Orders do not provide for any sanction should the government fail to comply with the requirement to present a response.

That is true. There is no sanction in the rules. However if we believe the government, in ignoring what it is supposed to do under our rules it has taken away our ability in committee to enact proper legislation for the country. Therefore the sanction each and every one of us can use is to vote against the bill and send a message.

● (1025)

Because the government did not table a comprehensive response to the committee report, that is, for me, strike two on process.

When Bill C-13 was called, it is my understanding that the present Minister of Health at no time appeared before the health committee to discuss the bill or its predecessor under the subject matter of the bill. I am not talking about an idle question or two when the minister appeared for estimates. I am talking about a minister of the crown appearing before a health committee, presenting the bill after it has been passed at second reading, discussing the issues, encouraging the committee to make whatever amendments it wishes to make or do whatever study it wishes to do, answer responsible questions of committee members and then allow the committee to proceed with its work.

When I have been on committees where legislation has been presented the ministers have appeared. I do not know whether the committee asked the minister to appear. If it did not it should have. It is inconceivable to me that a committee would proceed with a bill without asking a minister to appear to defend the bill. Let us assume the committee did and if it did then the minister did not appear despite being requested to do so. That is wrong.

If the committee did not ask the minister to appear that also is wrong but the minister should have appeared of her own volition. If one believes strongly enough in a bill one should be there to defend the bill in front of the committee. That to me, on process, is strike three.

After considerable study, the bill went through the health committee which made numerous amendments. One presumes that those amendments were thought out, debated, perhaps even hotly debated, a consensus eventually arrived at, and the bill was brought forward to the House with the committee amendments. What happened?

The government immediately filed amendments to negate the amendments that the hard-working committee brought forward and, for all intents and purposes, offered, certainly to me, very little guidance as to why I, with my limited knowledge of the bill, should overturn amendments thoughtfully brought forward by the health committee simply because the bureaucrats in the Department of Health did not like it. That is the wrong way to approach a bill. It has happened numerous times and I am sick and tired of it.

If there is some reasonable reason for a committee amendment to be overturned then let us hear in debate from the government why it should be overturned. We are being accused in the media all the time of being trained seals, getting up and doing what we are told. That is not true and it certainly is not true on this bill.

The government wants to overturn amendments thoughtfully brought forward by the health committee. It has happened with the environment committee and the justice committee, and it should stop. If the government wants to continue doing that then it had better provide reasoned responses as to why, not just a blanket statement saying that this is not required. That is, for me, strike four on process.

To go back to a comprehensive response, if the government had tabled a comprehensive response when I originally talked about it, some of the amendments might not have even come forward because the explanations would have been there. It is a self-defeating thing for the government not to provide a comprehensive response. That is four strikes on process alone, never mind the substance of the bill.

Let us turn to the substance of the bill. It is a complicated bill. I am not a scientist but we are legislators. We are required to pass this act. The bill reminds me, and I will paraphrase, of the example of a camel being the result of a committee being asked to design a horse.

● (1030)

The bill is a combination of clauses drafted by the Department of Justice, by the Department of Health and by scientists. It is a hodgepodge. It is very difficult to understand. As a lawyer, I look to certainty of wording and that is what I want to talk about. Let us look at the actual bill and the words therein. I do not need to go very far into the bill in order to demonstrate what I am talking about. Let us look at the definition of embryo:

> "embryo" means a human organism during the first 56 days of its development—

Human organism is a new concept. Notice that it does not say "human being"; it says "human organism". At least for once in our statutes we are actually acknowledging that upon conception, the product of conception is human. At least that is in the bill. It is human on conception; it is a human organism.

What is the bill going to do? It will allow experimentation on humans. I cannot agree with that. In any event, at least there is a definition. It says that an embryo is a human organism during the first 56 days of its development. What a human organism is after 56 days of development is another matter.

We then go to clause 5, prohibited activities. It says, "No person shall knowingly" and it goes through a number of prohibitions, many of them using the phrase "human being".

Human being is not defined. Why is human being not defined? Because there is a logical disconnect. It makes sense that there is a logical disconnect because we get into the issue of life and when life begins.

The minister says there is no need to define "human being", that it is well defined in case law and therefore there is no need to define it in the statute. This is the same minister who, when she was minister of justice and I brought forward a bill to put into statute the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, said to me, "Oh yes, the government supports that concept. It is clearly defined in case law. We do not need to enshrine it in statute because the common law recognizes what marriage is".

What has happened is that advice that was given to that minister and previous ministers and subsequent ministers by the Department of Justice is wrong. It has been proven wrong. One or two judges on one or two courts can change 150 years of case law just like that. That is exactly what has happened.

All of the lawyers who gave that advice to those justice ministers that it does not need to be put into statute should be fired. Those lawyers should try and make their living on the streets because by giving that kind of advice they would starve to death.

If the government cannot define marriage because it is defined in case law and it will never change, and a year later we are into a huge discussion of what marriage is, can we imagine what the definition of human being is? In fact, there is a definition of human being and it is in the Criminal Code. The definition of a human being is:

> A child becomes a human being within the meaning of this act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother, whether or not it has breathed—

A child is not a human being according to the Criminal Code until the child is right outside its mother.

What does that mean? That means for example, in the bill a person cannot for the purpose of creating a human being make use of any human reproductive material. What if a person does not want to make a human being? What if someone just wants to make a human organism? Then there is no prohibition.

What about clause 5(1)(g):

> —transplant a sperm, ovum, embryo or fetus of a non-human life form into a human being;

What if a person does not want to be transplanted into a human being as defined which is coming out of the mother's womb? What if a person wants to transplant it into something just before it comes out of the mother's womb?

There has to be a definition. Words have to be tied up. It is absolutely ridiculous to suggest that the common law will cover the term "human being".

I did not think I would talk for 20 minutes and I am shocked that I did. However, I think I have given enough reasons that the bill has to be defeated.

● (1035)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Colleagues, a friendly reminder that cell phones are not allowed in the House.

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, while my hon. colleague talked for 20 minutes, I think he just nicely warmed up the subject. He could have gone on for another 20 minutes and still not reached the depth of the material that is there.

As committee members we worked on this very intensely over the last two years and with great frustration as he described. We have been ignored as a committee. The recommendations coming from the committee over the last two years have been completely overlooked on at least four different issues.

The hon. member talked of strikes one, two, three and four. I can give him strikes five, six, seven and eight as to why this piece of legislation should not be allowed to proceed. One is the recommendations on surrogacy. Another is the regulatory agency. Another is the embryo and what that changes as far as the ethics of a nation. Another is donor anonymity.

Would my hon. colleague comment on some of those issues that he did not have enough time to comment on? Would he explain his views to the House on those issues?

● (1040)

Mr. Tom Wappel: Mr. Speaker, I will address some of the issues the member spoke to as I know he has worked hard on the bill.

In the bill "human clone" is defined as being obtained from a single—living or deceased—human being, fetus or embryo. In the United States "human clone" is defined as meaning:

> —human asexual reproduction, accomplished by introducing nuclear material from one or more human somatic cells—

This is a huge difference and any scientist will tell us that. This means that the current definition of human clone in the bill would not prohibit the following techniques of human cloning: pronuclei transfer, mytochondrial transfer, and DNA recombinant germline gene transfer.

That is enough reason to say that we have to have some precision in the bill. Why were the same words not used in the Canadian bill as were used in the American bill? It at least would have provided some consistency across North America. If we are going to say "single", then why not say "single or more"? What possible harm could there be?

The bill is the personification of the commodification of the human being. We are paying people to be surrogate mothers. I cannot support experimentation on human organisms. I cannot support that Frankenstein-like concept. It is ghoulish. I cannot support the commodification of the human being.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague specifically when it comes to the idea of surrogacy.

One amendment came forward with regard to opening up the whole area of surrogacy which would allow not only the payment of expenses but also the payment for loss of salary. It opens this whole area up to commodification beyond anything the committee ever dreamt of. In fact, it was one of the things the committee was concerned about. Committee members were unanimous that this not be allowed to happen. However, this was overturned by the House in an 11th hour amendment at report stage. It is unbelievable.

The most important part of the bill is the regulatory agency. The regulatory agency will regulate this issue into the 21st century and beyond. The individuals who sit on that agency are very important.

I wonder if my colleague has the same concern as I do regarding the regulatory agency and the power of the minister to control it and to determine who sits on it. I do have some discomfort with regard to the amendment that was overthrown, which passed by a vote of 116 to 114 at report stage. This allows the individuals to have a conflict of interest while sitting on the agency.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on that.

Mr. Tom Wappel: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the regulatory agency Patrick Taylor, MD, professor emeritus at the University of British Columbia's faculty of medicine and a past director of the infertility clinics at the University of Calgary and University of Manitoba, wrote an article wherein he called the bill a bad bill. Some of his reasons I agree with and some I do not agree with.

About the regulatory agency he said:

> Now to this add some of the provisions of Bill C-13.... An assisted reproduction agency is to be established. On the principle that, "War is too important to be left to the generals", there are no provisions for any representation on the agency's board from the physicians, nurses and scientists who are experts in the field nor from those most directly affected—the infertile. Yet this board will regulate almost all infertility care and research in Canada. Treating the infertile is no less a reputable medical procedure than caring for the victim of a heart attack. Would you like to have a lay cardiology agency dictating how much and what kind of care you could have if you suffered a heart attack?

Perhaps it is an overstatement, but it is food for thought.

A lot of Bill C-13 simply ignores legitimate concerns of a lot of stakeholders. It is not necessarily appropriate at the last minute to try to change various specific parts of a bill, although it is always a good attempt. These things should have been noticed by the government and the bureaucrats who advise the government. They should have made either the changes or a proper reasoned, debated case for why they rejected the changes.

● (1045)

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask these questions because they are very important. My question is about the amendment we put forward on donor anonymity and on which my hon. colleague has not had an opportunity to comment.

The idea is that when an egg or sperm is donated for the purpose of reproducing, we have to allow the ability of the child produced from that to know where he or she came from and understand who his or her genetic parents are. In Canada somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 children are born this way every year.

It is unbelievable that this piece of legislation is now protecting the parent rather than providing opportunity for the child. It gets the principle wrong. The principle is that the child must be protected and if the House will not protect the interests of the child, who will? The next person who has to be protected is the parent, and then the science and the researchers. In this area of the bill, it changes that paradigm so that it protects the parent above the child. The bill gets it completely wrong.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague would comment on his perspective of the idea of donor anonymity.

Mr. Tom Wappel: Mr. Speaker, in my early days of practice I used to facilitate adoptions. One of the key things I felt was very important was to give as much information as possible about the biological parents to the adoptive parents because of the potential for future diseases and things that the child, and indeed the adoptive parents, should know or should be aware of. It is very important that we know as much as we can, and that the child know as much as the child can, about the products of conception.

I am not on the health committee but I have been told something which I cannot confirm, but just having been told this was enough to shock me. It was my information that some infertility clinics in Canada are getting, or were getting and maybe still are, their sperm from United States prisons. The prisoners are donating their sperm at $25 a shot, if I can put if that crudely. It is shipped up here, of course with complete anonymity, and that sperm is being sold to various clinics for a substantially greater amount of money.

That may not be true, I do not know. I think the matter was raised in the health committee. It may not be true, but simply because it was raised, I wonder how many Canadian infertile couples would be happy to know that there is at least a possibility that the sperm donor is a prisoner in an American prison.

It is beyond me that one would not want to have as much information as possible available to the child about the product of conception, how that person was conceived, and what the DNA factors were of that person.

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to some of the issues surrounding Bill C-13. I want to speak in a fairly broad sense, not being a lawyer like our hon. colleague across who just spoke in a passionate and honourable way in addressing the bill.

I want to speak about the feelings and concerns I have heard from my constituents. These are based around moral attitudes, perhaps even with a religious base, but nonetheless they are valid considerations to enter into this argument.

In fact, this bill is so divisive because there are those who have these particular moral views and those who do not have that same type of view. We are not taking into consideration all the information if we do not take into account what the people in our ridings are feeling. They have demonstrated this over and over with the numerous petitions that have come through this place requesting that we emphasize post-natal stem cell research rather than embryonic stem cell research. Thousands of names have been added to those petitions that have come through this place. I may remind members of that more than once as I talk about the bill.

I support assisted human reproduction and stem cell research. I would support a complete ban on cloning, whether it be reproductive or therapeutic. I would support a ban on animal and human hybrids, which is taking a human egg and adding animal sperm. Sex selection, buying and selling embryos, and paid surrogacy are all dangerous steps that need to be banned.

I am not sure the bill adequately bans any of those and the hybrid human is one example. It is quite a familiar sight when we look at comic books or some of the entertainment features that are being published in today's world where there are mutations for the kids to watch. I think of the ninja mutant turtles where they not only took on humanistic characteristics, but some of the characters were part animal and part human. We find those examples going back in history. However, this is a dangerous area for us to get into and we should be sure that is banned altogether.

I support the recognition that the health and the well-being of children born through assisted human reproduction should be placed ahead of the interests of adults, physicians or researchers involved. We talk about doing things in the best interests of the children and we talk about that in the Divorce Act and in other places. Surely, if we are talking about assisted human reproduction, we can remember to take note of the interests of the children who are being produced and put them ahead of the interests of those involved.

Sometimes the reproduction of a human being is only incidental to what a researcher hopes to gain from the research. We live in a world that is selfish, where so many are willing to sacrifice the lives of other people in order to see their lives enriched in some way, whether it be by finance, fame or whatever. I believe we need to place the interests of adults and researchers involved as subordinate to those of the children who may be born by this process.

● (1050)

I support the protection of the uniqueness of all individuals, their right to life and human dignity. We come into this world with little enough dignity. We come in naked and penniless and will go out that way unless someone dresses us, cleans us up, and puts us in a fancy box. Human dignity is something that must be maintained and valued. To materialize or commercialize the making of embryos, whether it be for research or whether it be an overproduction of embryos, even for assisted human reproduction in a legitimate sense, goes beyond what I would like to see happening. I know that it is being done already.

We hear of multiple births. We hear of quintuplets, sextuplets and numbers of children being born and then without fail it is discovered that these are people who have been working with some fertility drug or some assisted human reproduction process of some kind. What we are not told is how many embryos were created that were left over and/or frozen, and/or disposed of in some way. This bill opens the door to that and, therefore, we lose the respect for human life and dignity when we commercialize these products.

I support the right of all persons to know the identity and the necessary biological information of their birth parents. I have already mentioned that we tend to be somewhat selfish. As the hon. member across the way pointed out a moment ago in his speech, it is extremely important for children to maintain the right to know their biological ancestry and to know the biological information concerning any disease that might have been in their family. This bill falls far short of that.

The selfishness to allow someone to profit, as in a $25 per shot deal, and not require the identity of that person is beyond me. No matter what form that takes, any donors who are willing to contribute to an assisted human reproductive process need to subordinate their desires to that of the children being born. We must take responsibility as adults for these children who will be born.

There are some common errors made in the arguments and ideas propagated by the proponents of embryonic stem cell research. Let me talk about the defence based on the opinions of people who do not believe in or do not hold any absolute principles of right or wrong. We find many times that people believe everything is relative. Simply because the human reproduction process is interrupted early in its life does not mean it is not a human being. It is, in fact, being hijacked and used in some other way. It does not mean that it is right simply because that human being has not yet seen the light of day or has not yet exited a mother's womb, as the Criminal Code requires.

We know that people hold to this idea that there is no such thing as right and wrong. There are thousands of people in this country who disagree with that. There are right and wrong principles. There are things that are right and there are things that are wrong. Just because, as human beings and because of our education and technology, we are able to interrupt the processes of life does not mean it is right.

● (1055)

I am thinking of the story that I heard recently people who challenged God on creating life. They decided to have a contest. So God said, "Okay. I did this from dirt". The contestants said, "Okay. We will do it from dirt too", and they began to gather up some dirt. God said, "Wait a minute now. You've got to get your own dirt".

We are gathering up the particles that we did not create and then we are claiming the right and the ability to create life from these particles. I do not think that is right. We are interrupting a process that comes from somewhere else. I think there is an origin of right and wrong.

Every day in the House, as institutionalized and formalized as it is, we take a little bit of time at the beginning to acknowledge God. If God exists we would presume that God would have the power to create.

On Wednesdays we sing O Canada as we address the flag. As we sing "God, keep our land...", we are acknowledging daily, even in this place, that there is a power that goes beyond us. That is where moral authority comes from.

It is wrong to create a life, or put together the ingredients in any scientific way, solely for its destruction or for the benefit of another. No matter what we say, those components that are put together were not created out of nothing by us. We took what is already here and put it together. To do it for our benefit and for its destruction should be absolutely wrong.

Embryonic stem cell research requires the intentional death of innocent human life. It should be an absolute. It is an error to ignore the genesis of human life or to ignore the right of all human life to be protected from harm and death as much as possible. It is an error to believe that the embryo is a potential human life. An embryo is human life with potential. We sort of reverse things once in a while and to make it sound better.

For example, notice how we say human embryo. We say human fetus because that makes the subject an embryo. It makes the subject a fetus and only the modifier is human.

I want to remind the House that when we talk about a wagon we talk about a red wagon, particularly in the English language and this may be different in the French language which has a different structure. In English we talk about a white elephant, a baby elephant, but we do not talk about an embryo human, a fetus human, or a baby human. We reverse those so that the subject is not human.

A former member of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies stated:

> The human embryo is a human individual with a complete personal genome, and should be a subject of research only for its own benefit....You and I were all embryos once. This is not an abortion question. When an embryo is not physically inside a woman, there is no possible conflict between that embryo and the life situation of anyone else. There are many across the spectrum on the abortion question who see the embryo as a human reality, and hold that to destroy it or utilize it as industrial raw materials is damaging and dehumanizing, not only to that embryo but to all human society.

● (1100)

That sums up what I wanted to say about that idea.

I will now address the fourth error. I believe it is an error to place the emphasis on embryonic stem cells when the scientific evidence points to postnatal stem cells as showing more promise without the ethical problems of embryonic stem cells and without the same problems of recipient rejection.

I am no expert on this subject but I understand that no one has ever been cured or helped from any disease by any embryonic stem cell. However I understand there are quite a number of people, and the number is continually growing, of those who have been helped by the implantation of postnatal, that is adult stem cells into their bodies.

I have a few personal conclusions to make. First, embryonic stem cell research should be avoided at this time. It is ethically controversial and it is strongly opposed by large numbers of Canadians, as is demonstrated by the tremendous volumes of petitions and signatures that have been tabled in the House.

Second, postnatal stem cell research should receive our complete focus for both medical and ethical, that is moral, reasons. If this has the greater potential, as science indicates at this point, why would a responsible government not give at least a three year moratorium, which the official opposition has asked for, on embryonic stem cell research and allow the postnatal adult stem cell research to develop as it should so there is not competition here? I believe it is because some people simply do not want adult stem cell research to win out over embryonic stem cell research, actually because that leads to life. It would be life-giving and the embryonic is not.

Third, a human life should be respected and protected in whatever stage it is observable. The dignity of human life must be preserved. Of all that we do for convenience and technological advancement, we do not do ourselves any favours, nor do we do our children down the line any favours, if we continue to allow the erosion of the dignity of the human being.

The fourth conclusion is that the truth about scientific and medical facts around stem cell research must be recognized and given without misrepresentation. It is unfortunate that such an emphasis on embryonic stem cell research has been put out there. It is made to sound almost as if people will die like flies if we do not sacrifice some embryos. That is not a good representation of the scientific truth.

Fifth, the rights of any child born because of assisted human reproduction should supercede the rights of any donor. Children must have the right to know their identity and their family medical history. It is only fair to the children being born.

The last conclusion I have is that the recommendation of our minority report, which states that the final legislation clearly recognizes the human embryo as human life and that the statutory declaration include the phrase "respect for human life", should be included and should be a part of everything we do in this field.

● (1105)

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I rise to speak to Bill C-13. The Government of Canada is providing much needed leadership by putting in place the legislative framework to ensure consistency in the measures governing assisted human reproduction for the one in six couples who have trouble beginning their families.

We hope the bill will finally lay to rest the fact that there have been charlatans, people who have preyed on some of our most vulnerable families in terms of promising them the world and delivering literally nothing.

The bill must go forward so that families trying to have a family can do so knowing that their safety, privacy and health will be taken into consideration, and that it will be conducted in a safe and ethical framework, which is what the bill does.

We must reaffirm the three objectives of the bill: to help couples build a family without compromising their health and safety; to prohibit unacceptable practices, such as human cloning; and to make sure that related research in infertility treatments and serious disease take place within a regulated environment.

It is imperative that all potentially beneficial research take place in a tightly regulated environment which is what the bill would do. The bill places Canada in line with the measures taken in many other industrialized countries. I think it is comprehensive, integrated and draws on the best practices and experiences from countries around the world. It is the result of extensive public consultation across Canada and it reflects a consensus on some of the most complex and challenging issues facing our society.

People must also understand, regardless of what commentaries have been made in the House, that the bill effectively bans cloning. The lack of scientific knowledge reflected in some of the speeches in the House was really upsetting to me. For people in the House to think that the bill does not prohibit unauthorized research on human embryos and that it would allow cloned embryos to be implanted in the embryonic stage and harvested, is just nuts.

The idea that we have parliamentarians talking about creating humans from mitochondria just actually lets us know that they have no idea of science. As I get to the end of my remarks, I want people to understand that it gives me some concerns about the need for a scientific understanding by members of any proposed agency for the conduciveness of the bill in terms of the research.

As a family physician I have always been impressed by the poignancy of the plight of the infertile couple. It is a medical problem, an emotional problem and a social problem but it is one of the few problems where people are told to get over it and forget it. However in my experience as a family physician, people cannot and do not get over it. The desire to have a family that is biologically related is huge. We need to ensure in everything we are doing in terms of progressive legislation that we do not have the unintended consequence of sending people, which is a normal instinct, underground or to the United States.

Ever since the royal commission's results came out I have had serious concerns about using the Criminal Code for issues regarding women and their bodies. I believe the Criminal Code should be used with respect to cloning and the scientists.

● (1110)

However, when it comes to the relationship between a woman, her physician and the specialists dealing with this, I have serious concerns about the donors in this bill. I personally will work on that as the bill goes to the Senate and in its review in three years.

It is interesting that the bill has had such a long gestation. I think Valerie Lawton's comprehensive article in the *Toronto Star* reminded us that the royal commission's report on reproductive technologies was titled "Proceed with Care". It has been 10 years since that 1,300 page report resulting from consultations with 40,000 people and only now are we starting to fill that legislative void.

There is no question that the bill has been tough. As Ms. Lawton pointed out in her article, the opinions on the bill are sharply divided. The pro-lifers, the people who have trouble conceiving babies the usual way, children conceived in laboratories, ethicists, fertility doctors, sperm banks, researchers and the people suffering from diseases that could one day be treated or cured because of the research involving embryos, all have very different points of view. Therefore it has been very difficult to proceed in this way, to find effective compromises and a proper legislative framework.

It is important that the research on stem cells continue, both on embryos and on adult stem cells. I do not think one researcher in Canada has told us that we should not move forward vigorously on both files, that we cannot put all of our hopes on adult stem cells when it is very clear that at the present time there is so much promise in the embryonic stem cell lines.

We must continue to remind ourselves, as there has been this big debate around stem cell research, that the bill is actually about helping couples who need help. The bill is about assisted human reproduction. It is about creating a safe and ethical environment for couples having trouble getting pregnant.

It is important that this debate is around embryos that are left over after tormented couples decide they have had enough of an extraordinarily invasive and difficult time with in vitro fertilization, that they will not do any more cycles and there are a couple of eggs left over. It is, therefore, with their consent that they would, in this bill, be allowed to decide whether these embryos will go to the laboratory to be used to find cures for the difficult diseases like juvenile diabetes and muscular dystrophy, or whether that same frozen embryo goes into the basket. It is pretty clear. I think women and their partners have every right to choose whether those frozen embryos go toward saving lives and curing diseases.

As we look at the important parts of the bill and the overall benefits that exist in the bill, I want to comment on some of the issues that I hope will be dealt with in the Senate or at the review stage of the bill. We must realize that legislation such as this has to be made responsive and relevant to the emerging needs. The existence of an agency will help but, with the experience in England, the agency must be able to anticipate and move with the science, it must be able to comment and it must be able to regulate the emerging science.

● (1115)

I am a little concerned at the moment that the makeup of the agency precludes the people that know the most about this area. Patrick Taylor's op-ed piece in the *Globe and Mail* which says that war is too important to be left to the generals is a very interesting concept. Even members in the House have been so confused by the science. We need to ensure that the people on the agency have the scientific background to be able to interpret the information coming to them. Otherwise they will be at the mercy of the people briefing them when it comes to making those ever important decisions.

The infertile community is worried that the board of the agency could be constituted of people who do not understand what their problems have been. The reality is that a ban of gestational carriers or donors would mean that they would have to either go underground or go to the United States.

It is really important as we move on a registry that we move on the kinds of things that could really help. We must also have people who have had experience with adoption. In that way we can learn from their adoption experience and help couples move forward. There is a need for updated medical information in such a registry. We need the capacity to do this in an open way and in a way that will enable the tracking of genetic information and social information in terms of the offspring of the pregnancies.

I am worried about the word "mandatory" in reference to counselling which is in the bill. As a family physician who did a lot of this kind of counselling, I am worried for the couples who do not have a family doctor. I am worried about the capacity, even in a community like Ottawa, where there are only a couple of psychologists that are available. I am worried that we will pre-empt the ability of couples to get the help they need if we are too strict about the definition of counselling in the bill.

I am concerned in the interpretation that even couples who use their own eggs and/or their own sperm, in the technicality of the bill would be forced to go to counselling, even when the genetic material is their own. I am also concerned that anybody undergoing this sort of procedure in terms of assisted human reproduction would have to register in a registry even if it is their own eggs or their own sperm. I think that is an invasion of their privacy and I hope that will be dealt with in the regulations.

It is extraordinarily important as we move forward that the people for whom this bill is intended, the one couple in eight couples, feel they have been listened to. Some of the toughest moments in my practice have been when I have had to tell someone of a diagnosis that will mean they will never be pregnant, whether it was Turner's syndrome or cancer.

The double whammy of a bad diagnosis plus the inability to ever consider being pregnant cannot be emphasized too much. It is totally underestimated and is a huge secret in terms of the actual torment couples in our country go through. I have to think of when those women realize they are not pregnant again after all they have been through to try to have a pregnancy.

● (1120)

Husbands would sneak into my office without their wives knowing. They wanted me to know how tough it was on their wives, how tough it was on their families and how their wives were not able to function at work in the ongoing difficulty in trying to have their own biological children. It is very easy for people to say, "Get over it. Turn the page. Get on with your life". That has not been my experience as a family physician.

I think that people who wanted to adopt would have adopted before going through the kinds of procedures that couples are going through, those who have chosen to try to have some sort of pregnancy of their own genetic line. It is not a luxury for these people. It is a medical problem they face. We as Canadians should support this extraordinarily important wish of these couples and help them to become parents and grandparents.

The bill is an important first step. I think it is comprehensive. I think it has done an important job in this legislative void. I think everyone will work to try to make it better both in the Senate and in its review in three years.

I also hope we will get the agency up and running as quickly as possible so that the much needed research is not delayed. I hope as Canadians we will start to have a better understanding of the extraordinarily large part of our society that is having trouble getting pregnant.

I will be proud to vote for the bill. I still hope that one day we can do a better job for the infertile community. I also hope that all members of the House will see how important this is and will get behind it and support the bill.

● (1125)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Colleagues, this is the second reminder this morning that cell phones are not permitted in the House.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, there are so many little babies at the present time who are looking for homes, who need to be adopted. There is absolutely and unequivocally no way that the government or anyone sitting in the House should ever vote for this kind of embryonic stem cell research.

I cannot believe that anyone here in Canada would want us to do that to a little tiny baby. I look at the young people who come to the House every day and I think, if that had been the case, they may not be sitting here today.

If a couple gets married and wants to raise a child, there are all kinds of children out there to be adopted.

I cannot imagine why the hon. member would not vote against the bill and would vote in favour of it.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the hon. member, as a family physician for 25 years, I can say that there are not tons of babies to be adopted. I will quote from Dr. Patrick Taylor, who said in the *Globe and Mail*:

> Because virtually no babies are available through children's aid societies, private adoption fees are high, and international adoption costs more than $25,000. In a country that prides itself on egalitarian principles, such options are often out of reach for the average person.

There may be older children to adopt, but it does not matter because this is not about why not just adopt. This is about a couple who wants to have a child of their own biological genetic line, and the grandparents also want that, and they want to make sure that all possibilities to do this have been exhausted.

I implore the hon. member to try to find a baby to adopt in this country. There are difficult children in orphanages. There just are not babies. Why are Canadians in trouble in Guangdong province? They have been over there trying to adopt a baby from China. There are the babies in Romania as well. If it was easy to adopt here, Canadians would not be spending up to $40,000 to try to adopt.

The most insulting thing one could ask one of these couples is why they do not just adopt. I wish the hon. member for Saint John would have a private conservation with one of those couples and say that to their faces.

● (1130)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, California has the snowflake program where one can adopt a surplus embryo. That might be a good compromise. People could actually have their own child.

The member raised some interesting points that I believe the Senate should look at. I support her in raising those issues, even with regard to the criminalization of some of those acts. I think it is an important issue. I do not think we did those subjects justice.

I would like to ask the member to cast her eyes upon clause 5(1)(c). I would like her opinion on it. It states:

> No person shall knowingly for the purpose of creating a humanbeing, create an embryo from a cell or partof a cell taken from an embryo or fetus ortransplant an embryo so created into ahuman being;

I draw her attention to the first phrase, "No person shall knowingly for the purpose of creating a human being". What if the person's purpose is not to create a human being, i.e., a born person? What if it is to do research, i.e., to create an embryo, to halt its development, to extract stem cells? Would not the member agree that this clause only deals with those items where the purpose is for the creation of a human being but would not cover, and would not in fact ban, the creation of embryos for research?

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I am not as knowledgeable about the various clauses as the member for Mississauga South. However, I believe that throughout the bill it is totally prohibited to create an embryo for any other purpose than reproduction. I have been reassured from every legal opinion sought that it is well covered in the bill.

On the issue of criminal acts, as the hon. member knows, my amendments which did not pass in the House were to move all of the donor items, sperm, egg, as well as gestational carriers, from the prohibited part of the bill into the controlled act part of the bill because I did feel that it was totally possible to regulate it. It is less than 2,000 pregnancies a year in Canada. We could have done it in a regulation and with a licensed clinic. The doctors who did the work would be at a huge risk to lose their licences to practise medicine or lose the licence for their clinics.

I feel that the idea it actually is criminal, and to the people donating, or the couples themselves, is something that I have felt strongly about since the royal commission. I will continue to try to get it out of the Criminal Code.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jeannot Castonguay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her speech. As we know, there are embryos left over from the process of assisted reproduction. Obviously, with donor permission, the bill would allow research if that were acceptable. Some couples will opt for the other option, of merely allowing the embryo to thaw and to die.

The experts who spoke before the Standing Committee on Health in connection with Bill C-13 told us that embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells behave totally differently. They believe parallel research is necessary in order to learn more about how each cell functions. This could lead to health discoveries that would benefit mankind.

I would like to have the hon. member's opinion of the importance of parallel research using both of these cell types.

● (1135)

[*English*]

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we proceed on both avenues of research. We cannot know which will bring the results that we all want in terms of the cures for these diseases. As a lot of members have said, even though adult stem cells do have some promise, there is no question that researchers themselves know the potential of embryonic cells to make all kinds of cells is imperative to moving forward on the kinds of disease entities that we need the most. We must go forward.

I will ask my hon. colleague this later but I do not think there was one stem cell researcher in Canada who testified and said that we should stop doing embryonic research because they were so satisfied with the progress they were making on adult stem cell. Every researcher to whom I have talked, even those researchers working in the adult stem cell area, are absolutely clear that we must proceed on embryonic research if we are to bring to fruition the kind of breakthroughs in the diseases we have.

I understand there was one researcher from the United States, from some religious college of something, who was found to testify differently. However I have every confidence that we must proceed on both kinds of research to get to the much needed cures.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise again in the House to speak against embryonic stem cell research. I am not opposed to adult stem cell research I am opposed to embryonic stem cell research. The number one issue is to put the child first, the parents second, research third, and it must be in that order. If we are to do it in that order, we will protect the child.

I received a little plastic baby in the mail, which I have outside. With that little plastic baby was a note that said we had to protect the child. I cannot believe anyone in the House would not want to protect that innocent little child. We are not opposed to the use of adult stem cells. They are used to treat Parkinson's, leukemia, MS and many other diseases. We are all in support of that. I feel very strongly that researchers should focus their efforts on adult stem cell research. I cannot understand why they want to go with embryonic stem cell research.

I talked about the adoption of children and the hon. member who just spoke said they could not find them. I do not what happens in Ontario or wherever she lives because in my riding of Saint John we have no problems. We have children who wish to be adopted, to have a mom and a dad.

When I was mayor of Saint John, one of my employees was waiting for a child. I called the province and helped her adopt a child. Not too long ago I was at a function. A young man who was with a lady came to me and said, "Elsie, this is the little baby you gave me". He is about 10 or 12 years old now. There are all kinds of children across this nation who need a mom and a dad and we should focus in on that.

The idea that the fundamental principles of ethics are appropriately based on a consensus of interested persons who express their opinions in regard to moral choices rather than on the divine law is understood by human reason and is given in revelation. There is a failure to realize that a human being, innocent and possessing the inherent right to be protected and not killed or harmed in any way, comes into existence at the moment of fertilization of a human ovum by a human sperm. It is at fertilization, right at the beginning. People can say whatever they want. Those who wish to use embryonic stem cell research can say whatever they want, but that is the fact.

This fact was denied by those who promoted ESCR when they defined the beginning of life at implementation rather than fertilization, which is a minimum of seven days. If anyone saw that little plastic baby, no one in the House would ever harm a child. Human life begins at fertilization and anyone who says it does not is absolutely and unequivocally wrong.

We truly have a lot of work to do in the House. I look at the path we are going down. Every day I look up at the gallery and see all the young people present. We have with pornography and John Robin Sharpe. He is protected but the tiny children are not protected. We are doing it again. This should never be in the House of Commons. This should never be debated here. There is no reason in the world for any elected official in the House to be in favour of embryonic stem cell research. We are elected and when we are here, we are here to protect the unborn, that embryonic cell.

● (1140)

I just mentioned that when it comes to child pornography, then it come to this, I get so dismayed. When I was asked in 1993 to run for election, I was told I could do so much more for my people if I were on the Hill. I came here because I believed in the child. I believe in doing what is right. Sometimes I get so dismayed when I see what is passed in the House of Commons. I look at our young people and at those tiny babies. When I see those little tiny babies, I ask myself how could they take a cell and stop the birth of that child.

There is no question that we are in a high tech world and that we need lots of research. However adult stem cell research the way to go. No one is hurt with that. Researchers can do that. Why do they want to do research on embryonic stem cells? Will somebody in the House tell us why?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Money.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne: Yes, that is right. That is exactly what it is. There will be no negative debate on adult stem cell research, but there is a negative debate on embryonic stem cell research. We here because we believe in protecting the unborn. That is the way we have been brought up.

I cannot understand how anyone who is a doctor would be in favour of it. When the medical science is as advanced as it is in our age, there are times when we have to debate between what we can and what we should be doing, not what we are doing. That is exactly what we are doing here today.

I am truly concerned. Science and technology have given us a point of debate in this age old discussion. What we are debating today, with the amendments and the countless motions made by the members of the House related to this, is designed to regulate human reproduction, stem cell research and cloning. There is no way we should be into cloning at this point in time.

Problems have been outlined by Dr. Peter Andrews of the University of Sheffield, England who said, "Simply keeping human embryonic stem cells alive can be a challenge". A Harvard University researcher has said, "In my view human embryonic stem cells would degrade with time".

They can do the research they feel should be done with adult stem cells. However human embryonic stem cells have never been used successfully at any time in clinical trials. They have a lacklustre success in combating animal models of disease and carry significant risk including immune rejection and tumour formation.

We in the House have an obligation to ensure that each and every one of us has our voice heard to protect the unborn, to protect that little innocent child, to protect that little embryo that will become a child. I cannot believe we have to debate this. I have spoken two or three times on this. Living in Canada, which is known as one of the best countries in the world in which to live, I cannot believe we are allowing this to happen in the House of Commons.

● (1145)

If we continue in this direction we are not going to be looked upon in a positive way by other countries. We are going to be looked at in a negative way. There is a need for more voices every day to speak out against embryonic stem cell research. I honestly believe that those who are in favour of it have not done their homework. I will never, ever vote in favour, as long as I live, of allowing this to take place.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to express my feelings in the House.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to sincerely thank the hon. member for the wisdom she brings to this place on so many issues. She spoke very eloquently about one of the most important issues that has come before this place since I have been a member of Parliament.

I have a comment. The House may want to know that it was reported in this week's press, on Monday I believe it was, that the U.K., which has been doing this research for over the last 10 years, is reported to have used 40,000 human embryos for embryonic stem cell research and does not have one reported case of success. I think that tells us what the dimensions of the issue are.

The member made some comments with regard to adult stem cells versus embryonic stem cells and the promise of that research. Notwithstanding that a physician rose in here and said no researcher ever came before us and said we should not do that, well, of course: the researchers all want something. Dr. François Pothier, in a round table before the UNESCO Friendship Group of Parliamentarians, said that the reason adult or non-embryonic stem cells are not as attractive is, in his words, that there is no money in adult stem cell research.

On June 21, 2002, it was reported in the research of Dr. Catherine Verfaillie that it had been found that stem cells from human bone marrow could be morphed to become virtually every cell in the human body. The member may want to comment on this. Dr. Alan Bernstein, president of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, called it a beautiful paper. To conclude, he said, "...it looks like the minimum one can say is the old view...is going to have to be modified", i.e. the fact that embryonic stem cells can do more than non-embryonic stem cells. He agrees.

● (1150)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne: Mr. Speaker, as I stated, it is not the adult stem cell research we are opposed to but the embryonic. When they had 40,000 human cells in the U.K. and not one of them was a success, that is 40,000 children. We should just think about it.

For anybody who says there are not enough children to adopt and all of that, I have to say that we could use 40,000 more young people right here in Canada. We truly could, but we do not take their cells and say, "We are going to kill you because we are going to do research". And then nothing happens. That is a living example right there in the United Kingdom that the embryonic stem cell research does not work. No one can prove to us, and no one will ever be able to tell me, that it does.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my colleague for her address to the House, and hopefully to millions of Canadians, which would be even greater.

I have just two quick points. The first is on adoption. I want to make it clear that I have suggested this. I have watched young people place their names on a waiting list. In some cases they have been able to adopt three children. There is a waiting list. Every time I have helped somebody or suggested this, there is a waiting list. Let us be clear about that.

Second, last night I was at the Forum for Young Canadians. Members know that I go around and take pictures with the group and so on. There was a small girl. She obviously had been crippled at birth. I went over to her, along with one of my colleagues from the Bloc, and I took the little girl's hand. She was able to walk. I took her picture. What thought do members think went through my mind? Members understand, and I think most Canadians understand, that this child was a delightful child. She was allowed to live. That is what life is all about.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne: Mr. Speaker, I have two grandchildren, one a young boy and one a young girl. When I look at them and think of the debate we have had, I ask myself, "How could anyone take their lives? How could anyone hurt these children?"

I want to say that in the 28 years since I became involved locally and in the House, debates like this one and the John Robin Sharpe case tug at my heart, and my family's as well. We cannot believe that here in Canada we would even allow this. These researchers are saying they want to do research. As my colleague on the government side has stated, they wanted to take 40,000 of these human cells in the United Kingdom, and none of them are successful. I wonder how many they want to take here. It will be more than 40,000.

Some day there will be no young college students in the gallery, no pages or the rest of them. Do we take their cells? No way. No way should this ever happen in the House of Commons or in Canada and no way should anyone in the House vote in favour of it.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, we are advised by the experts that half of the embryos which are cryogenically frozen actually do not survive the thawing process, which makes the whole situation even worse. However, in the United States, the President's Council on Bioethics has been asked to pursue research on how we can store women's ova and not store fertilized ova. That way we would not in fact be creating human beings for storage. We would actually be storing and thawing only the ova. That research is getting there. Would the member agree that this would be a more logical approach rather than simply saying there are surplus embryos so we might as well use them for research?

● (1155)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do agree with the member. I certainly do. Our researchers should take a look at that as well.

This is what I do not understand. Why have researchers not looked at this? Why are they going in the direction they are when they know, looking at all of the research that has taken place in other countries, that it does not work? Half of the frozen embryos do not even survive.

Mr. Speaker, would you freeze this young man sitting here? I would not freeze him. Glory be to God, I would not do that to anyone. I would go over and hug him. That is what I would do. I am sure the Chair would too. We would not do that to him or any of these other young people here. No, we would not do that.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you and I appeal to every one of my colleagues to defeat this bill. If they do, I will stand up and I will give them full marks. I will tell them they are wonderful. I will tell them they are great. Who knows, I might even vote for them in the next election if they do that. One never knows.

But it is a serious situation, one that brings tears to my eyes, it truly does, because I know, I have seen and I have friends who have adopted little ones. They are wonderful moms and dads. They truly are. I have to say that if this research is done with embryonic stem cells, then there will not be little ones to adopt. The hon. member on the government side says there are not enough children to adopt now and this will play a major role in making sure there are no children to adopt, that is for sure.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the former president of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, in a now famous speech at Stanford University in September 1994, "Forgetting We Are Not God," reminded his listeners that the greatest human folly occurred in the 20th century under those leaders in governments who had failed to understand "how unbelievably shortsighted a human being can be who has forgotten that he is not God".

We are engaged here today in a debate where it is well to remind ourselves of the folly of forgetting that we are not God, that when moral and ethical absolutes are lacking, great evil can be done, and if experience is our guide, almost surely will be done.

A fundamental failure in Bill C-13 is that it is ethically and morally neutral as to a preference between embryonic stem cell research and adult stem cell research. The bill does not, nor does the government, commit itself to substantial new funding for adult stem cell research. The bill and the government have tragically failed Canadians on this point.

First and foremost this is an ethical and moral debate because we are talking about human dignity. Much is at stake. We are shaping the future of what it means to be human in Canada. We cannot blindly follow the path of expedience, tailoring our understanding of human dignity to what is scientifically possible.

It is important to remember that scientific understanding does not render other forms of human understanding obsolete or irrelevant. The scientific understanding that the human body contains cells which in turn contain DNA does not trump a parent's understanding of a particular human as their child or a moral and ethical understanding of that child as a member of the human race.

Having a scientific understanding of the human body may be required to evaluate a proposed experimental medical treatment, for example, but it does not reduce a child to a collection of chemicals and cells.

In practice, any scientific understanding a parent may have is likely to make only a very minor contribution to their overall understanding of their child. Importantly, scientific information does not relieve even the most scientific parents of the obligation to make decisions regarding their children in the most comprehensive and just manner possible, as a scientist, as a parent and as a citizen, under the law and under God.

The same obligation holds on a larger scale for members of Parliament charged today with making legislative and policy decisions for society. Evaluating whether a highway should be built in Delta does not require a detailed understanding of how to pour asphalt in the rainy weather that we are often blessed with. Such an evaluation does require an understanding of where the road will lead and what purposes it will serve.

Similarly, evaluating public policy on genetic engineering, embryonic stem cells or human cloning does not require a detailed understanding of the underlying technology, but rather a willingness to weigh the issues raised by this technology in a broader social context without merely deferring to the judgment of scientists.

On moral and ethical issues, scientists are no more prepared to provide an intelligent answer than anyone else. In moral and ethical debates, the professional competence of the scientist is limited to a presentation of the facts.

Society has developed a collection of habits, customs and norms that assist us in making prudential and moral judgments when confronted with new experiences and situations. Prudential judgments are concerned with the practical assessments of risks and benefits: What are the most fitting means to achieve a desirable end? Moral judgments are concerned with the nature of right and wrong, with what should and should not be done in a free and democratic society. "Thou shalt not kill" is an example of a moral prohibition deeply ingrained in our culture that has led to the legal prohibition of murder.

In both prudential and moral and ethical matters, we have certain cultural guideposts that assist us in evaluating new situations as they arise. If someone proposed doing away with Parliament, we would instinctively know that this is an imprudent course of action. History tells us of the likely consequences of such actions.

If we witness one man shoot another on the street, we can rather quickly determine that one man killed another, and furthermore, if the shooting was not in self-defence, that this killing would be homicide.

In both cases we have clear cultural, historical and personal experiences that assist us in determining the proper course of action. But judgment based on past experience has its limits. As objects become further and further removed from the common experience, they also become further and further removed from the common wisdom that is culture.

● (1200)

Because modern science is in the business of discovering new things, it is constantly uncovering items that seem to defy our cultural coping mechanisms. Indeed, that is why we are engaged in this debate today.

Great claims are being made for the therapeutic and drug development potential of human embryonic stem cells and their derivatives. We are told that we are standing on the cusp of a medical revolution, if only the law will permit the necessary research on human embryos to be carried out.

The fundamental ethical objection is that the creation or use of embryos for research is wrong and their destruction indefensible. This implies two things: first, that embryos have a moral status; and second, that in a moral calculation we must appreciate that we violate the protected interest of embryos by deploying them for research or destroying them. Of these two points the first is critical, for, if this does not hold, the objection does not get to first base and it can only apply in an attenuated form.

The human embryo must be directly respected. It matters not that it cannot experience distress or make its own choices. It is not like a rock or a stone. It is a living thing and a member of the human species. As such, it must be protected by the overarching value of respect for human dignity. It has moral and ethical status and to treat it like a rock or a stone is to compromise human dignity.

Canada has always regretted doing the expedient thing rather than the right thing. We remember with shame the removal of Japanese Canadians from the fishery and the sale of their boats and equipment during the second world war. Similarly, we remember the refusal of our government to allow, in the days before the opening of the second world war, the entry into Canada of Jews desperately trying to escape Nazi Germany. Let us not repeat the errors of the past.

Why is a debate about embryonic stem cell research so fundamentally important? First, fundamentally the debate over embryonic stem cell research is about what a human being is, what rights a person has and what respect society owes that person. When people cannot agree on so fundamental an issue, terrible things can happen.

Second, this is an aging society about to confront many uncomfortable ethical dilemmas about vulnerable and unwanted people. What Parliament decides now about embryos sets a precedent for all subsequent legislation. It writes a guidebook for future debates about health and health spending.

The role of a scientist is to give facts. From the ethical and moral perspective scientists have done a marvellous job in giving us the facts, indeed all the facts we need to make an informed ethical judgment: embryos have a fully human genetic tool kit; given the right conditions an embryo will grow into a baby; and embryos are vulnerable and cannot survive without a favourable environment.

If the embryo is a person, it is the human rights, no matter how big it is or what it looks like. No person can be experimented on against his or her will. No person can be dissected for profit. This is a fundamental principle of a democratic society.

Regrettably, much of the debate on this issue has taken place on emotional grounds, pitting the hope of curing heart-rending medical conditions against the deeply held moral and ethical convictions of many Canadians. Such arguments frequently ignore or mischaracterize the facts. To arrive at an informed opinion on human embryonic stem cell research, it is important to have a clear understanding of precisely what embryonic stem cells are, whether embryonic stem cells are likely to be useful for medical treatments and whether there are a viable alternatives to the use of embryonic stem cells in scientific research.

A single stem cell line can produce enormous amounts of cells very rapidly. For example, one small flask of cells that is maximally expanded will generate a quantity of stem cells roughly equivalent in weight to the entire human population of the Earth in less than 60 days. Yet despite their rapid proliferation, embryonic stem cells in culture lose the coordinated activity that distinguishes embryonic development from the growth of a tumour.

Much of the debate surrounding embryonic stem cells should be centred on the ethical and moral questions raised by the use of human embryos in medical research. In contrast to the widely divergent public opinions regarding this research, it is largely assumed that from the perspective of science there is little or not debate on the matter.

● (1205)

The scientific merit of stem cell research is most commonly characterized as "indisputable" and the support of the scientific community as "unanimous", rather like their support for Kyoto. Nothing could be further from the truth. While the scientific advantages and potential application of embryonic stem cells have received considerable attention in the public media, the equally compelling scientific and medical disadvantages of transplanting embryonic stem cells or their derivatives into patients have been ignored.

There is no scientific consensus about the need for human embryo experimentation. The letter from a group of leading medical researchers to the Australian senate committee studying a bill somewhat similar to Bill C-13 is instructive. It reads:

> We the undersigned medical researchers submit the following points for consideration of our elected representatives:

1. While accepting that the debate about destruction of human embryos for research purposes is primarily an ethical one, it is relevant that from a purely scientific point of view, arguments claiming the urgent need for embryonic stem cell research are not compelling.

2. Undue expectations have been created in the community, particularly in those with various medical afflictions, as to the imminence and likely scope of embryonic stem cell therapy.

3. The community has not been properly informed of the scientific difficulties involved in developing embryonic stem cell therapies, which include major obstacles of immune rejection and cancer formation.

4. Research using adult stem cells, by contrast, avoids issues of rejection and cancer formation, and has the clear advantage of being able to use the patient's own cells to repair any deficits.

5. Such research on stem cells derived from adult and placental tissues, which has seen great advances in the last three years is quite compelling in its clinical promise, and does not involve the destruction of nascent human life.

6. In proper medical research, "proof of concept" must first be established in animal models before moving to human subjects. Such proof using embryonic stem cells has not been established in any conditions such as Alzheimer's, MS, diabetes and Parkinson's which are so often part of public discussion.

7. Therefore it is scientifically premature and improper to move human experimentation at this early stage of research.

8. Consistent with proper research principles, we advise that there be a moratorium on the destructive use of human embryos until, if ever, animal models are able to adequately demonstrate "proof of concept", and human safety issues have been adequately addressed.

There are at least three compelling scientific arguments against the use of embryonic stem cells as a treatment for disease and injury.

First and foremost, there are profound immunological issues associated with putting cells derived from one human being into the body of another. The same compromises and complications associated with organ transplant hold true for embryonic stem cells. The proposed solutions to the problem of immune rejection are either scientifically dubious, socially unacceptable or both.

The second argument against the use of embryonic stem cells is based on what we know about embryology. Failing to replicate the full range of normal developmental signals is likely to have disastrous consequences. Providing some but not all the factors required for embryonic stem cell differentiation could readily generate cells that appear to be normal but in fact are quite abnormal. Transplanting incompletely differentiated cells runs the risk of introducing cells with abnormal properties into patients. This is of particular concern in light of the enormous tumour forming potential of embryonic stem cells.

The final argument against using human embryonic stem cells for research is based on sound scientific practice. We simply do not have sufficient evidence from animal studies to warrant a move to human experimentation.

While there is considerable debate over the ethical, moral and legal status of early human embryos, this debate in no way constitutes the justification to step outside the normative practice of science and medicine that requires convincing and reproducible evidence from animal models prior to initiating experiments on humans. While the potential promise of embryonic stem cell research has been widely touted, the data supporting that promise is largely non-existent.

To date there is no evidence, none, that cells generated from embryonic stem cells can be safety transplanted into adult animals to restore the function of damaged or diseased adult tissues. The level of scientific rigour that is normally applied and legally required under the Canadian Food and Drugs Act and its regulations in the development of potential medical treatments would have to be entirely ignored for experiments with human embryos to proceed.

● (1210)

As the largely disappointing experience with gene therapy should remind us, many highly vaunted, scientific techniques frequently failed to yield the promised results. Arbitrarily waiving the requirement for scientific evidence out of a naive faith in promise is neither good science nor a good use of Canadian taxpayer dollars.

Despite the serious limitations to the potential usefulness of embryonic stem cells, the argument in favour of this research would be considerably stronger if there were no viable alternatives. This, however, is not the case.

In the last few years, tremendous progress has been made in the field of adult stem cell research. Adult stem cells can be recovered by tissue biopsy from patients, grown in culture and induced to differentiate into a wide range of mature cell types.

The scientific, ethical, moral and, some would say, political advantages of using adult stem cells instead of embryonic ones are significant. Deriving cells from an adult patient's own tissues entirely circumvents the problem of immune rejection. Therapeutic use of adult stem cells raise very few ethical and moral issues.

In light of the compelling advantages of adult stem cells, what is the argument against their use? The first concern is a practical one: adult stem cells are more difficult than embryonic ones to grow in culture. There is a concern that scientists do not yet know how many mature cell types can be generated from a single adult stem cell population.

In theory, embryonic stem cells appear to be a more attractive option because they are clearly capable of generating all the tissues of the human body. In practice, however, it is extraordinarily difficult to get stem cells of any age to do what we want them to do in culture.

There are two important counter arguments to the assertion that the therapeutic potential of adult stem cells is less than that of embryonic stem cells because adult cells are restricted and therefore unable to generate the full range of mature cell types.

First, it is not clear at this point whether adult stem cells are more restricted than their embryonic counterparts. It is important to bear in mind that the field of adult stem cell research is not nearly as advanced as the field for embryonic stem cell research. With few exceptions, adult stem cell research has demonstrated equal or greater promise than embryonic stem cell research at a comparable stage of investigation.

Further research may very well prove that it is just as easy to teach an old dog new tricks as it is to train a wilful and unpredictable puppy. This would not eliminate the very real problems associated with teaching any dog to do anything useful, but it would remove the justification for age discrimination in the realm of stem cells.

The second counter-argument is even more fundamental. Even if adult stem cells are unable to generate the full spectrum of cell types found in the body, this very fact may turn out to be a strong scientific and medical advantage. If adult stem cells prove to have restricted rather than unlimited potential, this would indicate that adult stem cells have proceeded at least part way toward their final state, thereby reducing the number of steps scientists are required to replicate in culture. The fact that adult stem cell development has been directed by nature rather than by scientists should greatly increase our confidence in the normalcy of the cells being generated.

There is clearly much work that needs to be done before stem cells of any age can be easily used as medical treatment. It seems only practical to put our resources into the approach that is most likely to be successful in the long run.

In light of the serious problems associated with embryonic stem cells and the relatively unlimited promise of adult stem cells, there is no compelling scientific argument for taxpayer supported research on human embryos.

Embryonic stem cell research goes to the heart of how we view human life, both at its earliest and its final stages. As in the case for all matters of life and death, this research raises issues that are both painful and profound. Resolution of these issues should certainly not be based on unfounded speculation and emotional exploitation of those desperately hoping for a cure.

The bill opens the door to the use of human life as simply raw material, to make objects and commodities out of life.

It is written that Moses, after he presented to the people of Israel all the law that God had given him, said this:

> I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life that you and your descendants may live....

Today we face the same fundamental moral choice. We must choose life.

● (1215)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for all of his work and research in presenting important information to the House. I would like to make a comment and ask a brief question.

My comment actually stems from a June 21 article in the *National Post* on the research of Dr. Catherine Verfaillie in which verified research recorded that adult stem cells could be morphed into hundreds of specialized cells inside the body. In commenting on that research, Dr. Alan Bernstein, the president of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, called it a beautiful paper and indicated:

> Aside from the ethical issues, if one could take one's own adult stem cells from bone marrow and use them to cure Parkinson's disease, you wouldn't have to worry about [immune] rejection problems. So this would be just a huge advance.

He also went on to say, "It looks like as a minimum one can say that the old view about embryonic stem cells having more potential than adult stem cells is going to have to be modified". He certainly does support what the member presented to the committee.

My question has to do with the commercialization of this research. I wonder if the member would like to comment with regard to the fact that the Patent Act is not affected by this bill. Therefore the biomedical research and the commercialization of that research may in fact be a driving rationalization as to why they want embryonic stem cells more than adult stem cells. That might be one of the reasons. I cite Dr. François Pothier who told parliamentarians that in his view the reason they do not want adult stem cells is "because there is no money in adult stem cells".

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Mississauga for the question and for the marvellous amount of work he has done on this very important issue. He deserves to be commended for his efforts at making this issue understandable to many of us and to the Canadian public. I thank him for that.

I think that the fascination that science has with embryonic stem cell research is derived from two matters. The first one is money. It seems that money flows to the notion of embryonic stem cell research, not because it is more promising or has the potential to provide cures for diseases as we have discussed in our talks, but simply for the diabolical challenge of producing, I believe, another human being.

I think ultimately that is the fascination with embryonic stem cell research. I can see no other reason. It is either money or this diabolical thrill that will result from producing the first human Dolly.

● (1220)

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for the work that he has done, as well as the member opposite.

Yesterday, April 9, we as Canadians officially declared that day to be Vimy Ridge Day. In doing so we recognized that close to 4,000 people died in that battle. They were all volunteers I might add.

Since that time, we have done nothing in Canada that I know of to remember those who have lost their lives prior to birth. I, along with a group from the Canadian Women's League, erected a monument in a small town in honour of those whose lives had been taken. That was a rare event, but I was proud to do it because Canadians must not continue down the road they are on at the present time.

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, there were a couple of items I would have liked to have included in my speech, but as you may have noticed, there was a bit of a race to get it all done. My friend mentioned Vimy Ridge. I have a couple of quotes from France and Europe that are important.

Philippe Séguin, the president of the National Assembly of the French Republic, remarked in the mid-1990s that the trend toward the enactment of bioethics laws "illustrates a growing awareness around the world that legislators must, despite the difficulties, act to ensure that science develops with a respect for human dignity and fundamental human rights, and in line with national democratic traditions".

That trend is further illustrated in the preamble to the Council of Europe's convention on human rights and biomedicine, which requires its signatories to resolve "to take such measures as are necessary to safeguard human dignity and the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual with regard to the application of biology and medicine".

Lastly, even the European Union directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions calls for the need for patent law to respect dignity. It emphasizes this by proclaiming that "patent law must be applied so as to respect the fundamental principles safeguarding the dignity and integrity of the person".

There is a very well-stated and profound feeling in the world that what we are talking about today says something significant about how we view ourselves as humans and how we view the human species. This issue and the vote, as I noted in my speech, will provide a guidepost, in a sense, on where we are going as we proceed down the road to making laws, whether in respect to abortion or ongoing variations of this particular issue about which we are talking.

We should be dealing with the fundamental issue of what it takes to be a human. That is the starting point. Unfortunately I do not believe the government has taken that into consideration in presenting the bill.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope others will have an opportunity to read the member's speech. It brought forward important considerations for all colleagues to deal with.

When the bill was tabled the minister commented that the bill would not permit the creation of embryos for research, but that if there are leftover embryos, why not use them for research? That seems to be a conflict of interest.

The process of in vitro fertilization was developed by medical scientists, by researchers. It appears that they are using drugs to make women hyperovulate and in fact create surplus embryos. It appears to me to be self-serving that, by this process, they are creating these embryos, which are creating a surplus, which are creating the supply for this research. This is contrary to the bill, because the bill says we should not be able to create an embryo for research purposes. This is a contradiction in my mind and a conflict of interest.

● (1225)

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, the terminology the member used is the terminology of the day in that leftover embryos are really leftover humans. I do not know any leftover humans but I think that is a dangerous road to walk down.

The issue is how do we define human life and what respect do we have for human life? That has to be the starting point of this debate because in reality that is the issue on which we will be voting.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I join in the applause for my colleague from Delta—South Richmond in his really brilliant remarks before this place. I think it was one of the most impressive interventions in this long debate. I gather this will be the last time that I rise on this bill. I have spoken to it several times, particularly at report stage, and I participated in some of the hearings of the Standing Committee on Health which studied the bill exhaustively.

I would like at the outset to commend all of those, including my friend from Mississauga South and particularly my colleague from Yellowhead, indeed the former member for Calgary Southwest and others, for having the courage and intellectual and political integrity to dig deeply into an extraordinarily complex issue, but one of great moral import. They have done what many other members have not in understanding that this bill is perhaps the most important that we will consider in the life of this Parliament. This is a bill that defines our values as a nation, which reflects whether or not Canada lives up to its true promise as a land of generosity and compassion and which respects inalienable human rights and human dignity.

I regret to say that the bill in its current form fails to live up to that standard. It fails to live up to what we aspire to be as Canadians, to be a welcoming and generous society to the weakest among us. The bill makes choices which are not necessary and which will lead to a further denigration of the inalienable right to life and the inalienable dignity of every human being.

Let me say at the outset what this bill seeks to do. I will then address what I regard as its deficiencies. I will finish with a meditation on my own voting intentions on this bill and how I have come to the conclusion that I have.

First of all, in my view the bill does contain many laudable elements. Among them is a prohibition on human cloning. Let me say parenthetically there had been some debate at committee and report stage about the efficacy of the bill's prohibition with respect to cloning. Indeed, some pointed to the testimony of Catholic University of America bioethicist Dr. Dianne Irving to the effect that the previous definition in the bill, the definition which stood when the bill was reported from the standing committee to the House, was insufficiently comprehensive to actually ban all forms of cloning technology.

Thanks to the member for Mississauga South, an amendment was adopted by the House which incorporated a far more comprehensive definition of what constitutes cloning. Consequently I am confident in asserting that the bill does indeed plainly ban cloning. That is clearly its intent. If the bill is passed and proclaimed, I believe that no malicious researcher, prosecutor or court could misinterpret the clear intent of Parliament to ban the odious, profoundly morally problematic technology of cloning.

The bill further bans the creation of human embryos for non-reproductive purposes, but there is a deep philosophical problem in the way that it does so, which I will revisit in a moment.

It prohibits experimentation on or usage of embryos after the 14th day of development. It prohibits manipulation for the purposes of sex selection. It prohibits other forms of genetic manipulation on nascent human life. It prohibits hybrids or chimera, although there is some question about the efficacy of that prohibition. I think it deals in an appropriate way with paid surrogacy. It prohibits the sale or trade in reproductive material and at least limits the momentum toward commodification of this technology in so doing. It would create, as we know, a regulatory agency to oversee research in these areas and to ensure the statutory prohibitions are respected, ostensibly in the promotion of "human dignity and rights" ethical principles.

● (1230)

Frankly, there is much to commend in the bill because today we have a complete and abhorrent legal vacuum in this country with respect to these technologies of manipulation of innocent, nascent human life. Legally, any one of these odious practices which regard the nascent human being as a means to a utilitarian end can proceed without any statutory prohibition or, indeed, regulation.

Clearly, twelve years after the report of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies and two and a half years after the tabling of draft legislation in this place to address the absence of a law, it is time for us to be seized of the threat posed to human life and, indeed, the possibilities offered by some of these ethical technologies. That is why we do need to pass some form of legislation with respect to many of the matters covered in the bill.

However, let me focus now on my profound objections to the deficiencies of the bill. First let me say that the bill is predicated on a false philosophy of man, a false understanding of who we are as human beings and what gives us our dignity, wherein lies our claim to certain rights. Let me quote, for instance, a central and operative clause of the bill, clause 5, in which paragraph 5(1)(b), under the heading "Prohibited Activities", reads:

> No person shall knowingly
>
> (b) create an in vitro embryo for any purpose other than creating a human being or improving or providing instruction in assisted reproduction procedures;—

This reflects a central flaw in the philosophy which undergirds the bill, in two respects. Saying that no person shall knowingly create an in vitro embryo for any purpose other than creating a human being suggests by implication that one could create an embryo for a purpose other than that of creating a human being. This is completely illogical.

It is tautological to say that the creation of an embryo leads to the creation of a human being. An embryo is the product of the fertilization of the reproductive genetic material of a mother and a father of the homo sapiens species. It can be no other than the offspring of human parentage. It is therefore, biologically speaking, human, and it is a being. It has its own independent momentum. It has its own independent genetic code. It has its own identity. It is a separate, living, organic human being.

To suggest that an embryo can be something other than a human being is to argue against elementary biology, elementary science and, indeed, an elementary philosophical understanding of what man is.

The second philosophical problem in this clause, which reflects the entire ethical framework of the bill, is that it defines the value of the human being not in what it is, but in what it can do. It defines the value of the human being in a utilitarian context.

The bill states:

> No person shall knowingly
>
> (b) create an in vitro embryo for any purpose other than creating a human being or improving or providing instruction in assisted reproduction procedures;—

● (1235)

What the bill states is that a human being can be created in vitro and can then have research performed on it, can be manipulated and can be destroyed. There is a verb that describes the destruction of a human life at whatever period, from its most nascent moment to its last possible moment of full maturity. When that human life is destroyed it is killed. To kill is the verb that describes the deliberate ending of a human life. Let us be plain about what we seek to authorize in the bill. We seek to give legal authorization for some, in the putative name of science, to kill human beings. Yes, they are tiny human beings, nascent human beings, human beings which offer no ostensible useful value to us, but human beings nevertheless.

Here lies the fundamental philosophical problem in the bill, which is this: Is a human being a means to an end which can be, under certain circumstances, even tightly regulated circumstances, regarded as a means to an end, or does the human being in every instance, from the moment of its creation, possess an inviolable dignity? This is the basic moral chasm that separates those who support and oppose the sorts of technologies which this bill seeks to govern.

For my part, I embrace the human view, the humane view, the moral view, that every human being possesses an inalienable dignity. In the words of one of the foundational documents of liberal democracy, the declaration of independence, words that can be embraced by people of goodwill in every culture: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men", that is to say, all human beings, "are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights", amongst which is the right to life.

To say "endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights" may be a politically incorrect reference. It may be politically incorrect to suggest that there is a higher authority whence derives our inalienable dignity, but in my view there is no other possible source. Indeed, we reflect this ancient wisdom in the preamble to our own Constitution Act, 1982, which states: "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law...".

That preamble, often dismissed and ignored, reflects the basic foundation of liberal democracy, which is that we possess inalienable rights endowed by an authority higher than ourselves, higher than the state, higher than any court, higher than any other man. And without such an authority endowing us with that dignity, then violence can be licitly done to that human dignity, which of course has happened with such reckless abandon in the history of the 20th century.

We now stand on the precipice of a new age of violating that inalienable human dignity if we permit these technologies that regard the human person as a means to an end, as a commodity for our use. If we embrace that ethic, then we continue the fundamental philosophical error of the 20th century that led to the deaths of so many. Let us not forget that the utilitarian ethic of biological sciences began in its most malicious form in Nazi Germany with the eugenics programs of the 1920s and 1930s.

● (1240)

Let us not forget that the first victims of totalitarianism in the 20th century were the mentally retarded, those deemed deficient, those who were seen as a means to an end, who did not possess in themselves an inalienable dignity but could be seen by scientists, and indeed by the state in that case, as simply human matériel to be used, whose biological material could be content for research and science in this glorious new age to improve the standard of of living of those of us deemed sufficiently perfect to benefit from that kind of manipulation of human life.

I submit that regarding the human person as a means to an end, regarding a human being at any stage of its development or existence as a legitimate basis for destruction in order to extract scientific knowledge or material, that basic error in this bill reflects the basic error of the Nazi eugenics program of the 1920s and 1930s. We must not go down that road.

What I say perhaps sounds extreme, because it seems so much more benign to simply extract a little tiny embryo the size of the head of a pin and manipulate it scientifically. After all, it does not look like a human person and it does not have the emotions of a fully mature human person, but it is a human person nevertheless. If we begin to make the distinction of what constitutes human personhood on the basis of external characteristics, the presence of personality or consciousness, then we enter a slippery slope, again which leads only to violence and destruction of human life and threatens the dignity of us all. That is my fundamental objection to the bill.

Let me say that for all of what I have said, I have seriously considered voting for the bill for the following reason: because, as I said at the outset, we currently live in a complete legal vacuum with respect to controlling the regulation of these technologies. As deeply imperfect as this bill is, I have been tempted to support it in order to enshrine in legislation such provisions as the ban on cloning, the prohibition of genetic material for the purpose of sex selection, the ostensible prohibition of human hybrids and chimera, the commodification of reproductive material, et cetera.

In this, I am governed by the moral teachings to which I make reference in these questions, and I quote from chapter 73 of the encyclical letter of the Gospel of Life by His Holiness John Paul II where he says that:

> A particular problem of conscience can arise in cases where a legislative vote would be decisive for the passage of a more restrictive law... in place of a more permissive law already passed or ready to be voted on. Such cases are not infrequent...In a case [such as this], when it is not possible to overturn or completely abrogate an [anti-life] law, an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and at lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality. This does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law, but rather a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects.

Governed by that, I and others in this place have sought to ameliorate this bill, have sought to improve it. I put before the House an amendment which would have had the effect of banning embryonic stem cell research and which, sadly, was defeated by a vote of 160 to 40.

● (1245)

Yet, after much consideration, I have come to the conclusion that I will vote against this bill. I do so in the hope and belief that its defeat would compel the government to adopt the initial recommendation of the health committee to split the bill, to pass expeditiously those aspects prohibiting cloning and other of the most odious procedures and would allow us to draft a bill which more closely would reflect the values which I have outlined in my speech about the enviable dignity of the human person as it relates to embryonic stem cell research.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member not only for this speech but a number of speeches he has given on this issue. He obviously has a strong set of moral, ethical and family values which this bill does not share, and he is here to point out.

I agree with the member that this bill should be split but not simply for the sake of splitting it since we have come this far. We need to defeat the bill, split it out and come back with the bill on the prohibited acts simply because we could pass it at all stages very quickly and have it in force quicker than this bill could go through the rest of the process, with all the problems on other items, other than the prohibitions.

I also wanted to point out to the member that Dr. Dianne Irving and Dr. Ronald Worton have made representations to the health committee and to parliamentarians that this bill does not totally prohibit cloning and that a couple of techniques have slipped through the cracks, which is very serious because if the bill does anything, it should ban cloning.

Finally, with regard to chimera to which the member referred, the definition of chimera is an embryo into which a cell of a non-human life is put into a human life. That is for this bill. However the medical definition is putting non-human into human or human into non-human. It is both ways. This bill only prohibits the implantation of non-human cells into human life forms but does not prohibit the transplantation of human reproductive material into non-human life forms. The minister has admitted as much and has said that this is necessary research.

I want to assure the member that he has a lot of support in this place and that this bill should have been, and still can be, split to come back banning the basic prohibitions, which include banning cloning, genetic alteration, sex selection, the creation of hybrids, chimeras, as well as the purchase and sale of human reproductive material so we do not commodify human life. Life is too sacred.

Could the member comment on that?

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I concur and would emphasize once again that this is not simply the view of the member and myself but rather was the view, I believe overwhelmingly, of the Standing Committee on Health which spent several months examining draft legislation two years ago.

It is regrettable that the government should have sought the expert advice of that committee and the dozens of witnesses which appeared before it only to reject the principal recommendation, which was to divide the non-controversial prohibited elements of the bill, in particular from embryonic stem cell research.

If this bill passes, I hope our colleagues in the Senate will assert their legitimate constitutional prerogative and indeed reflect the democratic view of the health committee of the House of Commons to divide this bill so we can more quickly arrive at a prohibition on the most odious technologies.

Perhaps we can have a bit of an interlocution because we have a few minutes. I would like to ask the member, if he is perhaps going to raise another question, if he could comment on what he believes would be the legal disposition of embryonic stem cell research in the absence of the passage of this bill. In other words, would we or would we not have a more liberal environment which would permit more broadly embryonic stem cell research if this bill were not to pass?

This is a serious concern that I have had and I have raised this in good faith. If he is going to rise on another question, I would ask him to address that point to myself and others who are tempted to vote for an imperfect law, which is an improvement over the status quo.

● (1250)

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, the member asks an important question. If we do not pass this bill, does it leave us in a regulatory vacuum and should we not have some rules?

We do have rules. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research have developed guidelines after an exhaustive research based on the royal commission findings back from 1993, as well as from the tri-council policy statement which was the best wisdom of scientists with regard to research on human beings. The CIHR guidelines embody all of that. Unfortunately, it only applies to publicly funded research but all other researchers respect that simply because it represents the vast majority of the body of science. Those guidelines are in force as of April 1 of this year, so currently embryonic stem cell research will go forward but it will go forward under, I believe, ethical guidelines.

With regard to whether or not it should be banned totally, that is still a question the House will have to consider.

My question for the member has to do with polling. I understand in the United States a survey of Americans with regard to embryonic stem cell research was done. They asked if people would approve of embryonic stem cell research to find potential cures and therapies for various diseases but to be aware that the embryo would have to be destroyed and there were ethical alternatives. Seventy per cent of Americans opposed the destruction of embryos for research because the embryo had to be destroyed and there were ethical alternatives.

In Canada a similar poll was taken but not all the information was given. It asked people to tell them if they were in favour of using embryonic stem cells to find cures to the illnesses and diseases of Canadians. Seventy per cent of Canadians said yes. However they did not have the rest of the information.

Could the member comment on that? When we use polls so haphazardly, it tends to give misinformation and maybe even mislead the public.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I concur with the premise in the member's question that people if they are presented with the notion that embryonic stem cell research will definitely lead to vast improvements in medical research and therefore the treatment and potential cure of degenerative diseases, will tend strongly to support that outcome.

In my speech I made a moral and philosophical case against the legality of creating human beings for the purpose of their destruction. However one could just as easily and effectively, even if one does not accept the principles that I have articulated, say that there is at least some value, perhaps not an absolute value as I assert, in that nascent human life. Therefore we have to have a pretty extraordinarily high standard to manipulate it and destroy it.

I submit that all the research indicates that standard cannot be demonstrated. As other members here have pointed out, postnatal stem cells, non-embryonic stem cells, have led to demonstrable medical advances in patients dealing with multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, severe combined immunodeficiency disease and forms of cancer.

I quote from the editor and chief of Stem Cells magazine from September 2001 who said:

> I continue to think that clinical application [of embryonic stem cells] is a long way off for at least two reasons. Prior to clinical use of embryonic and fetal stem cells, it will be necessary to thoroughly investigate the malignant potential of embryonic stem cells. In addition, a much more comprehensive elucidation of the immune response is necessary to provide the basis to prevent transplanted stem cells and their progeny from being rejected by the transplant recipient.

In other words, what we are seeking to legitimize in the bill and fund through the agency is a proto-technology which is completely unproven to provide any medical advantage to any medical benefit and which in itself creates certain very significant hazards.

If Canadians, as the member points out, were to know those two facts, I believe we would see an overwhelming public opposition to the legalization and financing of embryonic stem cell research and enormous public support for increasing funding to and raising the profile of postnatal stem cell research. That is what we ought to do.

If we are really concerned compassionately about the victims of these degenerative diseases, then let us really put our money where our mouths are in terms of advancing postnatal stem cell research rather than lowering ourselves to the point of creating life in order to destroy it.

● (1255)

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken twice on this subject. Before I do so again, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Mississauga South who has done a tremendous job of research to try to make us aware of various details in the bill that need to be looked into much more thoroughly.

The last time I spoke I mentioned the fact that all of us here certainly would draw a consensus in regard to human cloning. Without exception, I think all parties and all members in the House would agree that human cloning as such should be banned.

The last time I spoke I suggested there was a debate as to whether the aspect of human cloning, which is one of the key features of the bill upon which we all agree as a principle, might not be defined closely enough in the bill so as to leave no possibility of some form of cloning taking place. We suggested that amendments be made to tighten the definition of human cloning.

Unfortunately, the bill as it stands today leaves open this debate. It leaves open the possibility that the definition in the bill, as put forward by many who feel this definition is not thorough and complete, should be reviewed and revised.

I really hope if the bill should go forward, as I hope it does not in its present form, that this whole subject be reviewed completely and thoroughly by the upper house when it reaches there, if it does. I hope this whole question is reviewed thoroughly by calling witnesses so we can be completely aware. To pass a bill, which one of the main purposes is to prohibit human cloning, and not ensure that the definition is tight enough to completely ban cloning, would be to fail our duty as legislators and parliamentarians.

I know I clearly stand in a minority here, certainly a minority in my party. I probably stand as part of a minority among Canadians at large. If polls were taken today, most Canadians would support embryonic cell research. Some of my closest friends have written moving letters to me, asking me to back the bill because they believe embryonic cell research will change the lives of suffering relatives, a child in one case.

I am extremely conscious of the fact that human suffering has to be allayed and that we cannot dismiss research that will help do that. At the same time, I have this fundamental belief which is anchored in the fact that I believe human life starts at conception and includes an embryo. To destroy embryos willy-nilly, whether it be for a lofty purpose or a lesser purpose, is something I cannot accept in my convictions and in the belief system to which I hold.

● (1300)

I know how difficult it is when I am faced with omnibus legislation that contains some parts with which I agree totally, for example, the prohibition on human cloning, or the research on adult stem cells. To refuse to accept the whole bill because some parts of it are fundamentally against one's basic beliefs is not an easy decision to make. At the same time this is a decision I feel that I am bound to make because the very essence of this bill, as it relates to human life in all its forms, is denied when we say that research involving embryos in large numbers will happen because we will sanction it through this bill.

Were we to admit that embryonic stem cell research would be valid ethically, which in my case I do not, the least we could do in that case would be to adopt the recommendation of the health committee that ethical criteria be set within the bill so that research in embryonic stem cells be surrounded by parameters, by bounds, and by constraints so that there would be a set of markers and ethical guidelines in the use of embryonic stem cells.

This is what the health committee recommended. It certainly does not go as far as I would want because I do not want embryonic stem cell research in the first place. But even then, this suggestion, which to me is perfectly logical assuming that one accepts in the first place that embryonic stem cell research is acceptable, was rejected by the government.

There was also a suggestion made that a stem cell bank be set up. If a stem cell bank were set up, it would have the effect of reducing the need for embryos to be used in research. It would lessen the impact of the bill on embryonic research. But that again was rejected.

A definite conflict of interest would exist in the new agency that would be set up to oversee stem cell research in that we would allow representatives of the pharmaceutical and biotech companies to be part of the board that would licence biomedical research including stem cell research. If that is not a conflict of interest, I do not know what it is.

The last time I spoke I suggested that ethical guidelines be set up to ensure that there would be a set of parameters, a set of markers to prevent conflicts of interest. Research in these key ethical areas, to some of us moral areas, should not be undertaken without constraints, without clear ethical guidelines and prohibitions. Again, that was rejected.

● (1305)

It must be admitted that in the society of 2003 people who hold the beliefs that I do, wherever they may be, in the House of Commons or in society at large, are a minority. That, I concede. It does not make that minority necessarily wrong. A minority of one may still have the right on his or her side.

What I find sad and unacceptable is to say that the minority opinion which believes deeply and convincingly in life from the time of conception must somehow be viewed as being from another planet, from another century, or from ages past. It is dismissed out of hand as if it does not count.

There are reactionaries out there, however, I do not believe I am a reactionary. I do not believe I belong to another age. At the same time, I strongly believe that there are ethical and moral issues which are extremely profound in our society even though they may be held today by a minority of Canadians or parliamentarians.

I do not believe that this ethical and moral position that people hold strongly, whether they be in a minority or not, has been listened to by the powers that be regarding the bill. Somehow any suggestions made, including those of the health committee, have been dismissed out of hand, as if the powers that be in ethical and moral judgment know best and we, because we are in the minority, do not count. I do not find that fair and acceptable.

Even though we may be smaller in numbers the votes that took place at report stage showed that a large body of opinion shares our point of view. It may not be a point of view that is popular. It may be a point of view that is viewed by many as regressive. Nevertheless, it is a point of view that strongly believes that in matters of life there are ethical elements which go far beyond legislation in black and white forms. These beliefs, the ways of life, and the ways of thinking that certain people hold must be taken into account with sensitivity and certainly consideration.

We have asked time and again to have the bill split so that the cloning part of the bill would be on its own. I think we would find overwhelming support for the bill to go through and it would go through so rapidly that at least it would show that there is a tremendous consensus on one large clause of the bill to ban human cloning. I think that it is important that it happen as soon as possible.

By making it an omnibus bill and joining controversial issues which the powers that be knew to be controversial from the start, and would present ethical and moral dilemmas for many members here, as was shown by the votes last week, it seems to me that in fairness there should have been far more regard and consideration to the points of view of that minority. There are, after all, a number of parliamentarians who represent a point of view which cannot be dismissed out of hand because it goes deep into belief, conviction, and a way of thinking that at least some of us think is right.

● (1310)

If this bill were to clear the hurdles because of the majority in place, then I would take my plea to the upper House because that is its role. Its role is not just to pass legislation rapidly, to simply obey the dictates and say Bill C-13 must go through as soon as possible because it is part of the big plank of the government. The Senate must do its work in looking at all the objections that many of us have brought forward here and not to be obstructive. From our point of view it must have objectivity and conviction in looking at these points of view, and review the bill and call as many witnesses as possible to address the fair points of view on the other side which we have brought forward.

For example, is the definition of human cloning really watertight or is it not? Are the people and experts who say that it is not completely invalid in their thinking or do they have a point? Should it be heard? Should we not find out before we pass a bill in its final form that we have heard all sides of the story? If those questions have to be answered once more, that is the job of the upper House. I ask it to find out whether we are going too fast into many areas, such as embryonic stem cell research, and all the pitfalls that have been brought forward by my colleagues, particularly the lack of ethical guidelines within the advisory board, et cetera. I ask it to look at all these things.

Once this bill is passed, so much is left to regulations that will take at least two years to be issued. We are accepting a bill with many phases of it still hidden in the dark. Certain regulations will not come forward until two or three years. These are the issues that we would ask the upper House to look into more deeply, if by any chance this bill were passed. We would ask it to do its work properly, call witnesses, and hear the points of view of all parliamentarians in the House who have brought forward their objections and convictions and, in fairness, be taken into consideration as well.

This is my plea today. I hope that Bill C-13, an important bill for most of us whatever our conviction, becomes a bill that represents the point of view of not only a majority but takes into account that many of us, and I am one of them, feel deeply that there are still many flaws in the legislation. Those concerns need to be addressed. Passing the bill just because of a majority will not be sufficient to allay the preoccupations, concerns and deep feelings that we are going in the wrong direction.

● (1315)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis for taking the time to inform himself and to share his views and opinions on the bill. He is a well respected member in this place.

The member spent a great deal of his intervention raising the spectre about whether the bill adequately defines the prohibition of human cloning. The member should know there is a dispute. It is confusing to me that this would be a matter of opinion. One parliamentarian gets up and says that it bans all cloning. Another one says no and cites expert research. I would have thought this was an objective determination rather than my word against someone else's.

I agree wholeheartedly with the member that the upper chamber must resolve this by consulting with objective authorities and experts. Dr. Dianne Irving said that the bill, as it presently stands, would not prohibit the following forms of cloning: first, pronuclei transfer; second, formation of chimeras and back-breeding; third, microcondria transfer; and fourth, the use of DNA-recombinant gene transfer, also known as eugenics.

We had an expert in Dr. Dianne Irving from Georgetown University in Washington who made submissions to the health committee but she was not called to amplify on her written submission nor was she given an opportunity to appear before the committee. Should the Senate not only be encouraged but instructed to resolve what has turned out to be the appearance of a disagreement between members of Parliament because we are not the experts? Our opinions are not relevant if we are not trained in the science. What we should be doing is calling whatever witnesses that would be necessary to objectively analyze the bill.

For example, our definition says that a human clone is obtained from a single living or deceased human being. The bill passed by the U.S. house of representatives in February, bill H.R. 534, said that it was derived from cells from one or more human beings.

Our definition, therefore, clearly disagrees or is in conflict with the U.S. definition in the bill that it passed. Clearly there is evidence that there could be a problem and we have to resolve it on an objective basis.

Having said that, I would be most interested in the hon. member's comments.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: In my view, Mr. Speaker, the upper house is there to review bills and make sure they become watertight if by any chance there are loopholes left by the House of Commons.

I know of many bills, and many of them are of far less importance than this one, that have been looked into deeply by the Senate. Witnesses have been called. Sometimes bills have lagged on for months in the Senate. One current example is the cruelty to animals act which has been tied up in the Senate for many months.

It would seem to me that on an issue as fundamental as this one, especially in light of the suspicion that the definition of human cloning, among many other issues, is incomplete and leaves gaps, that the least the Senate can do is to carry out a very thorough examination of the bill, including calling witnesses, such as Dr. Irving, and other objective specialists, as my colleague suggested, who can shed light on this key question and not only this key question but all the other issues relating to the bill that have been controversial in the House of Commons and have left us with many questions in our minds.

I think it would be terribly sad on a bill of this importance if the Senate were to whitewash it and say "Oh, well, the House of Commons has pronounced itself. It's fine. We need it. Let's pass it overnight and that's it". That would be a tragedy because if there is one bill that has a key importance, not just for us here but for all Canadians, and which sets certain guidelines for the future in a difficult ethical and moral areas, it is Bill C-13.

I agree completely with my colleague from Mississauga South that the Senate should do a thorough review of the bill, including calling witnesses on the definition of human cloning and all the other issues for which we have been left with many questions.

● (1320)

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has been in the House for a considerable length time and has lived in Canada for a considerable period of time.

My question is about how the bill, if passed, will change the ethics of a nation. The principle we have lived under is that respect for human life is a Canadian value. One of the fundamentals is the protection of human life, regardless of how vulnerable it is.

This legislation changes our ethics. In it we are prepared to destroy life for the sake of research. Therefore, instead of protecting human life we are prepared to destroy life for the greater good of society. It changes the whole foundation on which we built the law for which Canadians have come to respect and enjoy.

If we were to apply that principle, the health care dollars that will become precious as we move forward in the next 10, 20, 30 or 40 years, we could perhaps say that grandmothers at a certain age should not have treatment, perhaps the mentally challenged should not have treatment, or perhaps the handicapped should not have treatment because it is a different ethic.

If the ethic is for the greater good of society, we cannot afford it. I know that sounds extreme but does my hon. colleague not see the change of ethic that we will be vaulting ourselves into if we allow this legislation to go forward the way it is?

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, there has been a trend in society to feel that people who question many of the so-called progressive and popular notions of human life are today regressive and out of touch.

We had a debate in the House on euthanasia perhaps two years ago. I remember the debate surging forward again. We can almost sense a trend in society that we are moving gradually toward the position of Holland. Many people hold the position, as the government of Holland does, that euthanasia should be permitted legally.

I believe that human life is so precious that once we start to play with the notion that it is acceptable to deal with it so long as the end justifies it for the greater good of society, I think we are on a very slippery slope.

In the case of euthanasia, I made the point myself that I have a severely retarded child. He cannot speak, cannot hear too well and has tremendous health problems. He goes for dialysis three times a week. The judgment call from the hospital was that since he is a so-called unproductive member of society and is severely handicapped should he take the place in dialysis of a healthy human being? I applauded the doctor who decided that he should be given the same shake as anyone else in society.

One day when I am gone and he is 60 or 70 years of age will the people who are in place then judge that his life is so useless, that he is suffering, that maybe for his own sake he should be let go? I will not be there to defend his interests and he will not be able to speak for himself.

I suggest to members that the minute we start playing with matters of life and death, the minute we start to say that people who have deep ethical and moral feelings and convictions about life are passé, that they are of another generation, that they do not see it, I think we are on a slippery slope.

If I were the only one standing here, and I know I will not be, and my views were being viewed as reactionary or belonging to the deep past, I would not care. I really think the most precious thing we can fight for at all times is human life in all its forms.

● (1325)

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is good to rise to speak today following the member for Lac-Saint-Louis and his comments on his personal situation. I have heard this before from the member. He has a unique outlook on the protection of those in our society who cannot protect themselves.

I am not sure how much belief he has that the Senate will do the right thing with this bill. I would have more confidence if the Senate were not loaded up and appointed to such a degree that there is a majority in the Senate who support the government's wishes. I believe if the Senate were elected and equal we perhaps would have a chance to do something here, but I am not sure that will happen under the present situation.

Bill C-13 is a very troubling to speak to because there are things we support and things we oppose. We have had thousands and thousands of names on petitions tabled in the House on this issue. Many Canadians have become involved, have made themselves knowledgeable on the issue and have offered input. We certainly do appreciate that.

When we get into the protection of human life and the creation of life to destroy it for the benefit of another life, it becomes very complex and gets into the whole idea of respect for life and respect for health situations. When we get into cloning we talk about ethical issues. It gets more and more involved as we go on.

This goes back 10 years to the royal commission's report on new reproductive technologies. However, in the early stages, it was brought to the House by the former member, Preston Manning. He was our lead on this, and I have mentioned this before. He brought together experts from across North America I believe, if they were not all from Canada, to talk about the human genome and the mapping of the human being. It was a very informative session. It was not a committee meeting. It was an exploratory meeting, a seminar type of issue. People were brought forward to give their various views, and there were various views. Even with the scientific and medical communities, people had diverging opinions on this issue.

At that point in time I became aware of the complexity of the entire issue, especially when we start dealing with ethics, morals, science, health, the good of man and all of these issues. When one boils it down to try to make it into a piece of legislation, it is not an easy thing to do.

I do want to thank all those across Canada, and certainly in my riding, who brought their opinions forward on this bill on both sides. Some support some aspects of it and some do not support other aspects. It is not cut and dried as to the opinions that are brought forward for various reasons.

One of the things we keep hearing from members is the fact that this bill should have been split up. The things that we all agree on, we could agree on quickly and get into legislation. The other issues, which are controversial, we could spend more time on and have more public debate and input so we could really come to a conclusion after a more indepth analysis of the situation.

I would like to mention a few things. There are many issues in this bill, but in the short time I have I will try to deal with some of the things we do support, some of the things we do not support, some of the reasons we do support them and some of the reasons we do not support them. One of the things we fully support, of course, is the ban on reproductive or therapeutic cloning: chimeras, animal-human hybrids, sex selection, germ line alterations and the buying and selling of embryos. Those are cut and dried. The banning of those items is something that I think we would be able to quickly put through the House because there would be a vast majority of Canadians who would support the banning of all of that.

● (1330)

This may seem strange coming from a party that believes in less government, but in this instance we do support a regulatory body to monitor and regulate fertility clinics. However we want to see some changes in the bill. This is important. If we get into a situation through fertility clinics where more embryos are created than are needed to satisfy what then becomes a market driven issue, a supply and demand type issue, we get into the whole issue of creating life for profit, which would go into research that would destroy life.

We do oppose the human cloning aspect of it because we feel it is an affront to human dignity, to individuality and to the rights of a person. I have tried to wrestle with this. We have dealt with animals being cloned, but for the life of me I cannot understand why anybody would want to clone a human being. I think some of this lends itself again to creating what could be considered a half life, somebody who just has organs and the things that can be harvested for transplants, but would not be considered a full human being. That is of deep concern to me. I do not think we should ever start down that road.

We brought forward a motion back in September 2001 and tabled it at the health committee. It called on the government to immediately ban human reproductive cloning. However that was dismissed. The government preferred to have an indepth bill brought forward to deal with all the issues of reproductive technology, so here we are today with a bill that we are struggling to get through, to understand and to point out that some of it we respect and support and some of it we do not.

In the preamble of the bill some of the highlights are that the health and well-being of children born through assisted human reproduction must be given priority which, of course, almost goes without saying, and that human individuality, diversity and the integrity of the human genome must be preserved and protected. This is what is in the preamble. The concern we have with some of it is that some of it sounds good, but if we look at it closer, without definition and without more clarification, it becomes somewhat confusing.

We support the recognition that the health and well-being of children born through assisted human reproduction should be given absolute priority. The health committee came up with the ranking of whose interests should have priority in decision making around assisted human reproduction and related issues. These are listed in what the health committee considered to be their priority. Number one of course is children born through AHR, assisted human reproduction; adults participating; and researchers and physicians who conduct the research.

While the preamble recognizes the priority of the offspring, other clauses of the bill fail to meet this standard. Children born through donor insemination or through donor eggs are not given the right to know the identity of their biological parents. We will get into that a little bit further. That is important as a person progresses through life.

In my personal situation, we needed to find out, for health reasons, who were the parents of an adopted member of my family just to be sure we could understand some of the things that were going on. Doctors like to know too what our parents and grandparents went through so they know what to watch for and what problems may arise. It is important, when needed, to be able to find out who they were for health reasons.

The preamble of the bill does not provide for an acknowledgement of human dignity nor respect for human life. That is important. It should be in the bill. It should be clarified. Without question, it should be addressed.

The bill is intimately connected with the creation of human life, yet there is no overarching recognition of the principle of respect for human life. We feel that is a great deficiency that needs to be addressed.

Our minority report attached to the committee report states that the final legislation clearly recognize that the human embryo is a human life and that the statutory declaration include the phrase "respect for human life". We have included that in our minority report. It was not part of the main report; it was part of our party's attachment. We believe that the preamble and the mandate of the proposed agency should be amended to include reference to the principle of respect for life.

● (1335)

When we get into the research using human embryos, the bill states that it would allow for experiments using human embryos under four conditions.

One, only in vitro embryos left over from the IVF process can be used for research. Embryos cannot be created for research, with one notable exception. They can be created for the purposes of improving or providing instruction in assisted human reproduction procedures. That is where we get into the whole regulatory issue. How many embryos would be produced for the IVF processes? Would there be more produced than necessary knowing that there would be a market for them?

Two, written permission must be given by the donor. We think it should say "donors". It takes two to create an embryo. That singular term is troublesome and should not be there. It should be plural.

Three, the bill would allow research on a human embryo if the use is necessary. Necessary is a broad word which is not defined and it should be.

Four, all human embryos must be destroyed after 14 days if not frozen.

That is what is in the bill. Those are the four instances where a human embryo would be allowed to be used in experimentation.

I will expand on some of our concerns. Embryonic research is ethically controversial and divides Canadians. Numerous petitions have been tabled in the House on this issue. Most of the petitions that I tabled asked that we explore the use of adult stem cells first before ever going into embryonic stem cell research. We also actually called for a three year moratorium on any embryonic stem cell research while the adult research was further investigated. Embryonic stem cell research inevitably results in the death of the embryo, early human life. For many Canadians this violates an ethical commitment to respect human dignity, integrity and life.

There are some other issues having to do with the research using human embryos. Adult stem cells are easily accessible. They are not subject to immune rejection and pose minimal ethical concerns. Embryonic stem cell transplants are subject to immune rejection because they are foreign tissues. Adult stem cell use for transplants typically are taken from one's own body.

That is something that we do not really consider when we are looking at it. If we use an embryonic stem cell and put it into another body, that is foreign tissue and anti-rejection drugs would have to be used forever.

Actually there has been no successful use of an embryonic stem cell but there has been lots of good progress using adult stem cells. They are being used today in the treatment of Parkinson's, leukemia, MS and other conditions. It is important to note that is happening and is successful. We should put our emphasis there.

We should explore all avenues of expanding adult stem cell research before we ever go near the other. It states in our points that embryonic stem cells have not been used in the successful treatment of a single person.

We did call for a three year moratorium or a prohibition on experiments with human embryos and this corresponded with the first scheduled review of the bill. Our amendment to this effect was actually defeated at the health committee.

There are a number of issues to deal with regarding adult and embryonic stem cells, such as their differences and in which direction we should go. We have clearly stated our position that we should be dealing with adult stem cells. More experimentation needs to be done to explore the advantages that can be derived from that before we go any further into the embryonic stem cell area.

There is also the issue of donor anonymity. That is an important issue to me for personal reasons and for many other various reasons. The bill states that although the agency will hold information on donor identity, children conceived through donor insemination or donor eggs will have no right to know the identity of their parents without their written consent to reveal it. That seems a little strange to me. Then it states that donor offspring will have access to medical information of their biological parents.

In order to get into that research to find out who one's parent were and what their situation was, one would have to have written consent from them. It does state that there would be access to medical information if required, but I will have to clarify that as it is a little confusing.

● (1340)

Donor offspring and many of their parents want to end the secrecy that shrouds donor anonymity and denies children knowledge of an important chapter in their lives. The Liberals claim to want to put the interests of children first, but in this case think the desires of some parents should trump the needs and interests of the children. We say it should be the other way around.

In our minority report, we stated:

> Where the privacy rights of the donors of human reproductive materials conflict with the rights of children to know their genetic and social heritage, the rights of the children shall prevail.

We went on further in our report and stated that the government attaches a higher weight to the privacy rights of donors than to the access to information rights of offspring. In my mind this is backward.

An identified donor is a responsible donor. If all donors were willing to be identified, then people would donate for the right reasons. Today, one main motivation for anonymous donation is money. Here we get into the whole aspect of this becoming a profit driven industry, and all for the wrong reasons.

There are other points that we in the Canadian Alliance have issues with. We feel that this is an issue of conscience, an issue of ethics and an issue of morality. There must be a free vote by all parties on this issue. We as members of Parliament must be given the opportunity to vote on this according to our conscience. I know Canadian Alliance members will be given that opportunity. To date that indication has not come from the government side. I believe there is a lot of support for this on that side of the House. This should be a free vote. All members should be allowed to vote as their conscience dictates.

I do not know if there will be another opportunity to speak to the bill before the debate collapses. I appreciate the opportunities I have had. I have risen to speak to this piece of legislation three or four times. It is not an easy issue. Hopefully as it progresses further through the system we will still have an opportunity to amend it and make it better and more acceptable to all Canadians.

● (1345)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-13 is a very important bill. It is a bill which still has some controversy surrounding it in terms of whether or not cloning is actually banned in all its forms and all its techniques.

There is still some controversy surrounding the efficacy of drugging women to the max to harvest embryos and create surplus embryos for research. This is a major concern to people in terms of surrogacy for profit and also in terms of embryonic stem cell research which requires the destruction of embryos.

I have quite a number of questions for the member. If other members want to ask questions that is fine, but there are more questions I would like to ask.

My question has to do with some provisions that are not in the bill but which I believe should have been included in it.

In terms of conflict of interest, the bill provides a provision whereby if a board member of the agency has a relationship with either a licensee or an applicant for a licence, that person cannot be a member of the board. The health committee changed the bill to expand it to anyone who had a pecuniary interest in downstream activities so there would be no conflict of interest. The report stage motion put forward by the minister overturned the committee's work, and we are now back to someone who has a relationship with a licensee or an applicant for a licence.

My concern is with regard to the board members who will license and authorize research. In its present form after the reversal of the committee's work, Bill C-13 would permit pharmaceutical companies and biotech companies to be represented on the board of directors. This concerns me.

I will leave my question at that and ask the member for his comments. If there is time left, I would like to ask him another question.

Mr. Rick Casson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Mississauga South for the question and certainly for his work on the bill. It cannot be easy to do what he and some of the other members on that side of the House have done over the last little while. They are working hard to contravene a decision or some of the choices which their government has chosen to make. It is good they are able to do that. It will be interesting to see how that develops as we progress through this.

When we get into the whole issue of conflict of interest of who can or cannot be on the regulatory board, it just stands to reason that anywhere through this whole process if someone has a monetary advantage of being close to the regulatory board, then that should be a conflict of interest. That person should not be allowed to sit on that board.

The whole idea that this could become an industry is very troubling. Anything in the regulations or through this agency and its mandate that stops that from expanding is good. We see people with dollar signs in their eyes when they deal with this issue and that needs to be brought in line.

I certainly hope that carries through. As the member has indicated, that has been reversed at committee. However the conflict of interest has to be in there to keep people from being put into positions of responsibility and authority who would eventually have some benefit from the process that exists.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair will recognize one more spokesperson on this matter before we move to member's statements. I do confess to having somewhat shortened the question and comment period but I think if members look at my record over time, I have stretched it at times too. The hon. member for Vancouver Centre.

● (1350)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to stand and speak in support of this bill. The bill is a result of a royal commission having spent over two years travelling this country, bringing about recommendations that would lead to the making of the bill. That was over 10 years ago. During those 10 years, three subsequent ministers of health in this government also consulted with groups, with experts and consulted broadly among themselves in an effort to bring about this bill. The bill also was discussed by the Standing Committee on Health, which also made recommendations.

This bill is a composite of all the best advice that the government could get in balancing a technology that has been in existence now for over 15 to 20 years, that has been completely unregulated, that has no ethical barriers or boundaries on it and that is continuing to carry on without any restrictions or regulations whatsoever.

It is important that we do not delay any longer, over the 12 years that we have been dealing with this issue, and that we get onto at least a set of regulations and guidelines.

The bill is not perfect. I would hazard to say that I know of no bill that is absolutely 100% perfect. However it has struggled to take all the advice of all of the groups, including the Standing Committee on the Health, to bring about the bill and to find a balance between the good that this technology and research can do against the risk of harm and unethical behaviour. That is what we must always seek to do. That is why I support the bill. I think it has managed to find that clear balance to deal with some of these issues.

The bill took the advice from the Standing Committee of Health of which I was a member. The advice and the recommendations, many which were made by the standing committee in its amendments, were extremely important. For instance, the committee made significant amendments on the establishment of the assisted human reproduction agency of Canada. It raised the age limit for surrogate mothers to 21. It made it explicit that the health and well-being of children be a priority. It added an anti-discrimination clause. It rejected cost recovery in the issuance of licences. It enhanced parliamentary oversight to include a review of regulations and a mandated three year review of the legislation. It removed the ability of the board of directors to delegate licensing decisions. It added a specific authority to regulate the number of children that could be born from a single gamete donor. It strengthened information requirements to ensure the agency must provide to the public on risk factors that may lead to infertility. Those are substantial amendments which the committee made and which were incorporated in this bill.

Some members criticized the government by trying to overturn only three substantive amendments that the standing committee put forward on Bill C-13. Having accepted so many amendments, those three were not accepted. The member who brought up the concern about this was also known to say that he was very impressed with the quality of work that was done by the committee and that the report on the draft bill was the best report he had ever seen.

Why did the member put forward over 51 motions at report stage that in effect would have completely overturned the work of the committee and the long 13 years of work of the royal commission, of the minister and of public hearings?

Let me just touch on some of the concerns people have had on this bill.

They are concerned that research comes out of the work on reproductive technology such as stem cell and embryonic stem cell research. There is an argument that we should not allow for that research to occur or we should only allow adult stem cell research to occur and not allow embryonic stem cell research.

I know been many quotes from a lot of people who have done this research that have been used to suggest that these researchers do not want embryonic stem cell research. However I would quote from those same researchers.

Dr. Alan Bernstein, president of the CIHR, said that he thought this legislation was a model for the world. He said that it balanced the ethical and social concerns that the Standing Committee on Health had expressed with the potential or promise of these cells to cure disease.

● (1355)

Dr. Freda Miller, who does research on adult stem cells said:

> —my fear is that my work with adult stem cells, which may not come to fruition, would be used as a rationale for halting the work on human embryonic stem cells...if the adult stem cells don't come to fruition, we're left with nothing.That is my biggest fear as a scientist, that my own work won't pan out and will be used as justification to stop something that actually does look like it will pan out, because embryonic stem cells have been put into adult animals and shown to generate the right cell types.

The work of embryonic and adult stem cells has the potential for in fact stopping a great deal of human disease, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, and for being able to regenerate and doing a whole lot. Most important, they have the ability to stop mortality and morbidity in human beings.

Knowing this is the good work that comes out of this research, we must continue to do the research. Recognizing that as always in any science there is the good and there is the potential for harm, we must clearly build an ethical and regulatory framework that would allow the research to go on but that would protect and prevent the harm that could come out of this research. The bill finds that exact balance.

I wanted to also say that the member for Yellowhead has quoted Dr. Catherine Verfaillie from the University of Minnesota whose leading edge work is demonstrating increased flexibility in adult stem cells. Dr. Verfaillie has reached the exact opposite conclusion. She agrees that we must continue to use both types of research, both embryonic and adult stem cell in order to move forward.

The member for Mississauga South stated that Worton, who is the CEO and scientific director of the Ottawa Health Research Institute, is likely to become a Nobel laureate for his research in health. His work is much respected in Canada, and certainly by the health committee. I agree with that statement, so let me quote Mr. Worton on his November 19 presentation to the Standing Committee on Health. He said:

> —the most likely scenario...is that no one cell type will be the magic bullet for all types of therapy...therefore it would be premature to eliminate research on one of the most versatile cell sources to date, and that is the embryonic stem cells.

We can see that all researchers, even the ones who have been quoted here, are very much in favour of continuing this basic research on the two lines of stem cells, but with strong regulations.

We have heard that the bill will allow cloning, chimera and pathogenesis. The bill specifically prohibits it. In my last speech regarding this issue in the House of Commons, I spoke to the scientific data and the scientific truth of how the bill would ban cloning, pathogenesis and chimera. Therefore some of these fears are not really true.

The bill states that there is a concern that the bill will lead to commodification. The bill specifically bans the commercialization of donors of any kind, whether they be ova, sperm or gametes. One thing I did was bring forward an amendment to the House, which the hon. member from Mississauga suggested was a most unusual thing to do. However the hon. member from Mississauga brought 51 amendments in the same way, over the same period of time and in the same manner that I did.

My amendment does not commodify surrogacy. It recognizes that only in a very limited and clearly prescribed instance, when during the process of a pregnancy there is considered to be medical harm to the fetus or to the mother and if a physician specifically intervenes with bed rest and that person has to take time off work, that on certification from that physician and specifically and only when the mother and the fetus are at risk, that person should be reimbursed for time lost from work. That is all that my amendment does.

Finally, the bill seeks to keep the balance that our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms seeks and that is to assist and recognize the disadvantage of minorities and balance it with the public good, and the bill does that. If it is not passed we will be left with nothing and we will have people continuing to do this research and reproductive technologies with no regulations or guidelines.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*English*]

VATCHE ARSLANIAN

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Mr. Vatche Arslanian, a Canadian who was killed on Tuesday while working for the Red Cross in Baghdad.

Growing up in Armenia, he immigrated to Canada from Syria in 1975. Mr. Arslanian became an artillery officer in the Canadian Armed Forces, a town councillor, and the deputy mayor of Oromocto, New Brunswick, before he joined the Red Cross in 1999.

Once in Baghdad, he was quoted as saying:

> The most satisfaction you get is helping people. It's something that touches the heart; it gives you great satisfaction.

Mr. Arslanian's courage and compassion for humanity is admirable, and the ideals for which he worked so hard provide an example that we would all be so fortunate to be able to follow.

I would ask the House to join me in extending our condolences to Mr. Arslanian's two younger sisters and his mother. We will all miss Mr. Arslanian.

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IRAQ

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today we are beginning to celebrate the liberation of the Iraqi people. Saddam Hussein was responsible for the death of over one million people and his grip on the people is gone.

It is true that lives have been lost in the conflict, military and civilian lives on both sides. This is sad and regrettable, but unfortunately, unavoidable. We need to thank our American and British allies for being willing to put their lives on the line and in some cases to give their lives to stand between the tyrant Saddam and his victims.

Saddam's torture chambers are shut down. No longer will men, women and children have to suffer in ways so horrendous that I cannot even bring myself to describe them explicitly. Lives have not been given in vain. We cannot bring back those who have already died, but thousands, maybe millions more, of his future victims have been saved.

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[*Translation*]

CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Yolande Thibeault (Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year spring brings with it cancer awareness month. This is the subject of my statement.

As Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said so well, “In life there are no solutions, there are only active forces; they must be created and the solutions will follow”.

The community of Rimouski has understood this and created a permanent fund in memory of Luc Beaupré, who died in February 2002 at the age of 31, following a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Mr. Beaupré, a well-respected police officer from the community, will live on in the memories of the people of Rimouski thanks to the creation of this fund. The fund will raise money for the Association du cancer de l'Est, which helps people living with this terrible disease.

I invite my colleagues to join with me in sending those involved our best wishes for success in this excellent initiative.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in January 2002 the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal delivered a ruling concerning Ernst Zundel and his Internet hate site.

The tribunal concluded that the “tone and expression of these messages is so malevolent in its depiction of Jews, that we find them to be hate messages within the meaning of the act”.

Zundel simply moved to the United States and continued his activities there. Now that the Americans do not want him, he wants back into Canada. He does not want to go back to Germany because there he would face charges of suspicion of incitement of hate.

The charges stem from his website, one that denies the murder of six million Jewish people during the second world war. Why would we allow this man into Canada, a man who incites hatred? In 2002 Zundel said after moving to the United States, “Now I'm in Canada-denial. I have put Canada behind me”.

Let us hold him to his word and deny his entry back into Canada. He has no place in Canadian society.

[*Translation*]

THE HOMELESS

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just before Christmas, the St-Claude shelter for the homeless in Laval was engulfed in flames that destroyed a large part of the facility.

In response to the losses suffered by this charitable organization, the people of Laval made generous contributions during a benefit Christmas concert to raise money and help the shelter to quickly resume its work in the community.

This is another heartwarming example of people's generosity. We hope that it will not be long before the St-Claude shelter once again opens its doors to the less fortunate.

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● (1405)

[*English*]

VATCHE ARSLANIAN

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Vatche Arslanian, a former resident of Oromocto, New Brunswick, who lost his life in Iraq on Tuesday.

Mr. Arslanian was working with the International Red Cross. His life ended when the vehicle that he was driving came under gunfire in eastern Baghdad. Vatche Arslanian was 48 years old. He had been in Iraq for two years, distributing food, water and medicine, and installing generators to help keep the lights on in hospitals. One of his colleagues had this to say:

> He was an amazing man. We did a number of interviews with him before the war broke out and he was very determined that he was staying and helping those people who needed him so desperately.

The Canadian Alliance wishes to extend its sympathy to Mr. Arslanian's family, friends and colleagues. We also pay tribute to the International Red Cross for the dedication and selflessness of those who put their very lives at risk in the service to others.

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SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today a CPR program for grade 10 students will begin at Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit, Nunavut. This program will see high school teachers teach their students lifesaving CPR skills and heart health knowledge every year thanks to sponsorship by community minded partners, such as Tahera Corporation, Ayaya, and First Air.

The ACT Foundation, with the support of its pharmaceutical company partners, AstraZeneca, Aventis and Pfizer, and community partners, brings the high school CPR program to schools across Canada.

I wish to thank Inuksuk High School, the ACT Foundation, and community partners, and congratulate the students who will participate in this important training.

[*Translation*]

LAURENT MIGUÉ

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award was recently presented to Laurent Migué, a resident of Repentigny.

In 1983, Laurent Migué founded the Association de Repentigny pour l'avancement de la musique, or ARAM, to foster greater interest in classical music and the arts, particularly among young people.

As president, he organized the association's fundraising activities, staging numerous events such as benefit nights.

Mr. Migué is the heart of the association, to which he has dedicated himself body and soul for nearly 20 years. The Association currently presents more than 450 artistic events per year, involving over 10,000 participants.

Through his tremendous dedication, Mr. Migué has helped local musicians develop their skills and enriched the lives of music lovers.

Bravo and thank you, Mr. Migué.

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[*English*]

KINSMEN CLUB

Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Kinsmen Club of Mount Forest in my riding of Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey on the occasion of its 40th anniversary.

The Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada represent the country's largest all-Canadian service organization, made up of Canadian men and women gathered together in clubs for the purpose of bettering their communities by performing hands-on service work, fundraising for important community projects, and having fun.

I myself have been a member of the Kinsmen Club of Mount Forest for over 25 years, and have seen firsthand the hard work and dedication this organization has provided in my community.

The association's mission statement is one that we could all stand to live by which is “Grow. Learn. Make friends. Have fun”. The Kinsmen Club of Mount Forest has been serving the community's greatest need now for 40 years and I wish to congratulate it.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary Southwest, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the 31 Canadian soldiers who have been serving on exchange with our allies in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For the past 23 days our traditional allies, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and others, have been fighting to liberate the people of Iraq from the oppressive rule of Saddam Hussein.

To serve in armed combat for the sake of freedom and democracy is among the most noble of sacrifices that our fellow Canadians can make. Our exchange officers have earned the respect and pride of our nation. We wish to pay tribute to our naval personnel who continue to serve in the Persian Gulf. Their task is a difficult and often dangerous one.

We are proud of our men and women serving in our military. We honour and respect their efforts and dedication to the cause of freedom. We in the official opposition thank them and their families for their sacrifices. We pray for their safety as they continue to show the best of all that is Canadian.

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● (1410)

PAUL KIPIN

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 5 Etobicoke North lost one of its most energetic and committed citizens. Paul Kipin gave most generously of his time and talents to better our community, and he made a difference.

Paul's overriding passion was to build bridges between people of different race, colour, religion, and ethnic origin. In this work he was very active on the Etobicoke Multicultural and Race Relations Committee for many years. He served as director of communications for the Etobicoke Chamber of Commerce and chair of the Rexdale Community Development Committee.

I had the great honour last November to present to Paul, on behalf of Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in recognition of his many years of community service.

Paul was a printer by trade and was very active in Liberal Party politics. He was our resident photographer and frequent provider of signs, newsletters and a continuous stream of communications products.

I wish to extend my condolences to Paul's beloved wife Jacqueline, their children Paula and André, his surviving brothers Pete, John and Nick, and his sister Mary. Paul Kipin was faithful to his family and to his community, and he was a good friend. He will be missed.

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STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the time has come for the Liberal government to make a decision concerning the future of the steel industry in Canada.

In the aftermath of the American decision to protect its industry, even though it exempted Canada, the Canadian industry has become even more vulnerable as low-wage imports that might otherwise have gone to the U.S. penetrate the Canadian market and threaten good paying jobs in Canada. Yet, the Liberals continue to dither on this file and have failed to act.

The NDP calls on the government to heed the advice of Lawrence McBrearty, National Director of the United Steelworkers in Canada, who has called for a minimum 30% tariff. The government must stop being afraid of the WTO.

Let us join with the Americans in fighting any WTO objection to protecting the North American steel industry and the good paying jobs that go with it.

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[*Translation*]

SMOKING

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to the participation of 1,210 people from the Centre-du-Québec region in the "Quit to Win Challenge", an initiative of the ACTI-MENU health program, in cooperation with many partners.

More than 30 days have now passed since the challenge began. Once the discomfort of withdrawal has lessened, participants should not overestimate their ability to resist the desire to smoke. To help them persevere, "Quit to Win" offers many tips from ex-smokers.

In addition, whether or not one registers for the challenge, it is possible to get help and support seven days a week through the "J'ARRÊTE" hotline.

No matter how many people register for the challenge, there will always be winners: the people who have a chance to become future ex-smokers.

I encourage all the participants to remain smoke-free, and offer them another incentive: the only way to escape increased tobacco taxes is to "butt out" once and for all.

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[*English*]

OPEN EARS FESTIVAL

Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to share with the House the government's support for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Association's Open Ears festival in Kitchener. This festival provides a unique artistic experience of contemporary music for 10 days each May.

The Open Ears festival consists not only of traditional concerts but also guided sound walks, electroacoustics and sound poetry. The new inner ear component explores nine sound based sculptures and installations across the city to further cultivate the listening interests of festival participants.

Kitchener is a vibrant city that enjoys exploring the cultural and artistic experiences that our diverse region provides. I am proud to see the government's commitment of $45,250 to Kitchener's Open Ears festival. It is a true adventure of music and sound.

I wish to invite all honourable members to come to Kitchener for 10 days in May and taste our city's musical diversity.

Oral Questions

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, PC): Mr. Speaker, representatives of Newfoundland and Labrador met with the hon. Minister of the Environment in an effort to have the minister reverse his decision to downscale the weather station in Gander.

The province submitted a proposal to keep the station active for the purpose of maintaining a public and marine forecasting service. The minister is well aware of its history and purpose. The people of the province maintain that the changes to the Gander weather office would, in effect, penalize the province, compromise the safety of the individuals and industries which depend on accurate and timely forecasting.

The proposal given to the federal government would continue to provide public and marine weather forecasting, thus maintaining the federal government's presence in Newfoundland and Labrador. It will take 11 forecasters to do the public and marine forecasts for the province, whether they are located in Gander, Halifax or anywhere else. The advantage is that the experience of forecasting is already in Newfoundland and Labrador and is right in Gander.

If Atlantic Canada is destined to have only one weather forecast production centre, then it should be the Newfoundland and Labrador Weather Centre.

* * *

● (1415)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the 1885 head tax on Chinese immigrants, the imprisonment of Japanese Canadians during World War II, the anti-English bigotry of forced bilingualism, the constitutional entrenchment of racial discrimination and race-based hiring quotas are all examples of Liberal racism and intolerance which divide Canadians against each other.

The Liberals refuse to acknowledge that we cannot attach conditions of race to social policy without unfairly attacking the equality rights of all Canadians. The most vile scheme in this hidden agenda to undermine the equality of all Canadians is special race-based privileges for Indians.

Clearly the vast, though silent, majority of Canadians oppose the racist effort by Indian lobbyists and Liberals to build a society that divides us into so-called first nations and the rest of us. Furthermore, the federal government policy of segregating Indians and forcing taxpayers to pay $8 billion a year for this neo-apartheid system is unconscionable.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

IRAQ

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government may have missed the war in Iraq but Canadians do not want to miss the peace. Yesterday I asked the Prime Minister if he had phoned President Bush and Prime Minister Blair and offered the assistance of Canada in the reconstruction of Iraq. He apparently had not done that but he has had an additional 24 hours to do that so I ask the government this.

Has the Prime Minister called our allies and offered that assistance? If he has, can the government share the contents of that conversation? If not, why not?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in close contact with the American and British authorities and many others to discuss how we can be of help in the reconstruction of Iraq. There is the humanitarian aid issue and there is the reconstruction issue.

The Prime Minister has made it very clear that Canada will be there. President Bush has made it clear that the United Nations will be playing a vital role.

We will be tailoring our aid to that which will enable the Iraqi people to get back on their feet in the context of working with our allies, our friends, the United States, the United Kingdom and through the multilateral institutions in which traditionally Canada has been very strong.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the foreign affairs minister did not indicate whether the Prime Minister made those calls. It is a sad day when the Prime Minister is reluctant to call our best allies.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said, in reference to the reconstruction of Iraq, we will see what they propose and we will say what is or is not possible. Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs explain to us what conditions would prevent Canada from participating?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are no prerequisite conditions. In all cases, we will be looking at two things.

There is the provision of aid, which is one thing. Reconstruction is another. That is what we will be looking at. But since everyone has said that the UN has a critical role to play, and given the role being played by our colleagues, the British and the Americans, we will work together with everyone to ensure the well-being of the people of Iraq.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping the answer would be that Canada would participate unconditionally.

[*English*]

Canadians want to help and already there is evidence of the need of help, for instance in the area of civil order. The police of Iraq and Saddam Hussein are obviously discredited and unable to function.

Has the government considered or is it prepared to offer the allies the help of the RCMP to help with policing in Iraq as it did in Haiti?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we are willing to look at all requests, all offers. We have not exactly got a request yet. We have to look and see where we can be the most useful.

I think it lies very ill in the mouths of the very party that for years was saying that the one thing it intended to cut, as the most wasteful thing in the House, was CIDA and our aid and our ability to give aid and reconstruction. Now it is crying for it. For years it was crying to eliminate it. Will the Alliance make up its mind?

● (1420)

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians do not understand why the government chose not to help our allies disarm Saddam Hussein. They do not understand why the Prime Minister has been so reluctant to disavow Saddam's dying regime. Now Canadians have no idea why our navy forces in the gulf have apparently been told that if they catch any fleeing agents of Saddam's regime they are not to hand them over to the U.S.-led coalition.

Catch and release might be a good policy for fisheries but it is poor foreign policy. Will the Prime Minister please explain himself?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have explained very clearly in the House several times, there are two missions going on in the gulf. There is the war against terrorism in which Canada is proud to be involved. There is the war against Iraq in which Canada is not involved.

It is for this reason that in the event that an Iraqi soldier or member of the regime is captured, a very unlikely event given the state of that regime and the fact that our ships are hundreds of miles away, in that highly hypothetical situation, the navy has instructions to call back to Ottawa and we will consider the case.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the House recently the Liberals supported an Alliance motion that said clearly that if Saddam or any of his agents were captured, they would be brought to justice.

Our allies are still sacrificing their lives today in hand to hand combat. They need to know that on some of the lines, on some of the perimeter, if there are Canadians there and they capture fleeing fugitives, they will hand them over to the allies.

Why will the minister not tell them to do that?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what I said in the House yesterday when asked this question, that the House had already passed the motion urging the government that if Saddam Hussein or other people in his regime were captured, they should be turned over to an international court and brought to justice.

I said that precise answer yesterday and that remains my answer today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the reconstruction of Iraq will be carried out under the auspices of the UN, in order to minimize upheaval for the people of Iraq. To Kofi Annan, it is a matter of legitimacy, while our Prime Minister sees it as a matter of watch and wait. "We shall see", he said yesterday.

How can the Prime Minister justify this wait and see attitude, when he should instead be pushing to have the UN oversee the reconstruction of Iraq?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, President Bush himself has said that the UN has a vital role to play. Tony Blair, his coalition ally, has stressed its role as well. Everyone knows that the UN will have a role to play and everyone knows that the coalition will also have a role.

For the moment, the attitude Canada must make known to the Iraqis and our international colleagues is that we are there to help them, but the situation needs to be clarified somewhat before we can promote or express any specific reaction.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Dick Cheney was far clearer with his statement that the United Nations was not equipped to play a central role in the reconstruction of Iraq. The U.S. wants to play that role, when in fact the UN should be responsible for coordinating efforts.

Yesterday, Dick Cheney took a swipe at the United Nations. In this context, could the Prime Minister be clear, once and for all, and inform President Bush that, in Canada's opinion, the UN must be in charge of the reconstruction. WIll he put George Bush straight for once, instead of hemming and hawing as he has from the start?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our attitude has never changed. We desire the well-being of the people of Iraq. We will be there to help them. We are looking for ways of cooperating with the international community in order to ensure that well-being, through humanitarian aid, and to ensure that the reconstruction of Iraq leaves the Iraqi people better off in modern society.

This will be accomplished in a collaborative effort with all those who share that same position.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that he had been very busy on the phone with his counterparts from other countries discussing what should happen next in Iraq. However, he did not specify whether or not he was proposing anything concrete.

If the Prime Minister has no proposals to make, could he at least let his counterparts know that the transfer of power in Iraq should be done under the auspices of the United Nations?

● (1425)

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there will be many stages in Iraq. There will be a stage of securing, which requires military measures for now. President Bush said last night that the war was not over yet.

Naturally, the United Nations will have a role to play. Naturally, we are all prepared to help. However, members opposite should allow some time for the war to come to an end before accusing us of doing nothing. Let us be reasonable.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the minister had listened to my question, he would know that I was asking him, "Can the Prime Minister let his counterparts know that the transfer of power in Iraq—this is something that requires preparation—must be done under the auspices of the UN?" It is important to remember that the Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, said that, above all, the UN has the legitimacy that the country, the region and the people of the world need.

Does the Prime Minister support this statement and is he prepared to take a clear position and share it with his counterparts and the world?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Kofi Annan specifically said that the UN must have a role to play for the legitimacy of what happens and appoint an interlocutor to communicate the UN's position.

We will do the exact same thing. These are negotiations. They are complex. We must wait for resolutions from the Security Council. However, Canada is on board to provide humanitarian aid to Iraq and to guarantee the well-being of Iraq and the people of Iraq during the reconstruction that will commence, not today, but very soon.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs will know that in the last 24 to 48 hours, various members of the Bush administration have hinted that Syria might be the next object of a regime change war.

I wonder if the Minister of Foreign Affairs could tell us whether or not Canada has expressed any concern to the United States over these hints that have been coming out of the Bush administration. The government claims to have been very clear about its opposition to this kind of war. Is it very clear now about the opposition to any further wars of this kind?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has always taken the position that we must work in this world to have a multilateral system which guarantees peace and security for all of us.

As we go into this period of reconstruction in Iraq, we will continue our traditional policies of working with all our partners around the world to make sure that we are working to construct a better world, a safer world.

Of course this needs multilateral cooperation. Of course this needs the United Nations. It needs the United States, and we will be actively engaged with our friends and allies in the United States to work with them as we go into this period.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer my question as to whether or not he had expressed any concern to the United States about the remarks that have been made in the last few days about the possibility of another such war, so I reiterate that question.

He mentioned reconstruction. The question really is, who will oversee the reconstruction? Under what auspices will the reconstruction take place, not just the humanitarian aid but the reconstruction itself? What is the position of the Canadian government with respect to that reconstruction? Under what auspices does the Canadian government want to see that reconstruction take place?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we very clearly said that we are willing to participate in the reconstruction. We want to collaborate with the international institutions which will be engaged in that reconstruction. We want to obviously collaborate with our colleagues, the Americans and the British, who are there on the ground. The important thing is the well-being of the Iraqi people. That is what we all search for.

Of course there will be a role for international institutions. We will be there to ensure that role is there to confer the legitimacy that Kofi Annan said it would. We are confident that President Bush said there will be a vital role. We will work with our American colleagues to make sure that both are satisfied.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister insists that Canada will play a role in the reconstruction of Iraq but will not say to whom he is talking or what he is telling them. Yesterday he told reporters that he might favour a federal model for Iraq and that Canada might offer advice on that issue.

Perhaps the acting prime minister will be more specific. Is Canada pushing for Iraq to become a federation? If so, to whom specifically are we making the case and with whom specifically are we working to establish the fundamentals of the new regime?

● (1430)

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we said, these are very early days. Canada by the way, has a very, very proud role in terms of our governance issues. Our charter and our federal constitution are looked at as models around the world. We are currently working in Sri Lanka with people who want to use and adopt it. It may well be that in Iraq people will be looking at a federal model to solve the problems of a very complex society.

The Prime Minister quite rightly said that we are there, we are willing to help. An offer of help does not mean he is forcing it on anyone. It means that we are there to help if our help is requested and we will give it of course.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, this is incredible. If Canada were serious about contributing to the reconstruction efforts in Iraq, it would already have put in place a team to coordinate those efforts. That is what Canada did in the early 1980s when we helped the world deal with the famine in Ethiopia. Back then the team was established under the leadership of the Hon. David MacDonald to coordinate Canada's efforts across departments.

Why has the government not taken a similar step today? Why has no one person been put in charge of coordinating our preparations?

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said several times, we have said it over and over again, we are going to be involved in reconstruction.

We have been involved in humanitarian aid. Certainly we are actively working on Canada's role and Canada's position and what we are going to be able to do, starting first with how we can meet the needs of the Iraqi people, how we can ensure that their humanitarian needs are met first, what role we can play in reconstruction and what services Canada has to offer. We are definitely working on that.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in order for Canadian troops fighting in Iraq to be covered by veterans benefits, the defence minister has to declare Iraq a special duty area. Yesterday the deputy defence minister said that the special duty area created for the 1991 gulf war covers Canadian troops serving in Iraq today.

If the government now acknowledges that the current action in Iraq is a continuation of a 1991 UN sanctioned gulf war, then why are we not fighting with our allies in Iraq?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the hon. member is chasing after red herrings.

The special duty area was created in 1988, if the member wants to know the facts of the matter, which is before the first gulf conflict.

In any event, none of that is at all to the point. The central point, as I have said many times, is that all of the people, the exchange officers in Iraq, get precisely the same benefits today as they would had Canada decided to participate in the war. That is the critical point.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the bombing in 1998 in Iraq was the continuation of the 1991 gulf war which was UN sanctioned.

The government has decided not to support our allies in Iraq because there is no UN support for the mission, so it claims.

If the government now acknowledges that the current action in Iraq is in fact a continuation of the UN sanctioned 1991 gulf war, then why will the government not support our allies in Iraq?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is another piece of convoluted logic.

The member refers to the bombing in 1998, but the point I made is that this agreement was established in 1988, 10 years earlier and long before the first gulf war, even by the calculations of the Canadian Alliance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the greatest concern at this time is certainly the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of Iraq. Decisions must be prompt and efficient, since so many lives depend on them.

Will the Prime Minister admit that the expertise in this area lies with the NGOs and the UN, not the U.S. Army, and consequently everything possible must be done to ensure that humanitarian aid is distributed under the UN umbrella?

[*English*]

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has already made a commitment of $100 million, of which $20 million has been immediately allocated, a number of which are UN partners, UNICEF, the World Food Program, the International Red Cross. We recognize that they can get aid to the people. Canada has made that decision.

The main challenge facing humanitarian agencies right now is gaining access to the civilian population. We are trying to work with that.

● (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the following statement was made in a press release from the organization "Enfants du Monde".

> The key United Nations documents protecting civilian populations are being swept aside, ignored, violated. The entire world is a powerless witness to these crimes against defenceless human beings. Who can speak of victory in such circumstances?

In response to such a cry of alarm, can the Prime Minister stop waffling and take an unequivocal stand so that humanitarian aid can be distributed and the population protected?

[*English*]

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we have done by announcing that we will contribute $100 million and immediately allocate $20 million to United Nations agencies, working with UNICEF, working with the ICRC, working with the World Food Program.

We recognize that they have the footprint on the ground so that they can deliver the water and the food and the medical needs for the children and the people of Iraq. They can address the needs of the Iraqi people right now.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, you will probably remember the suspicious contract that the former health minister signed with Joanne Meyer, the contract that went through an auto restoration company. The current health minister has been promising a report on that issue for weeks now. Here is her opportunity. Where is it?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me reassure the hon. member and all members in the House that the review is nearing completion. As soon as that review is completed, it will be made available.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me we have been hearing that same answer now for weeks. I cannot imagine if this is that straightforward a problem why we do not have the report. I certainly hope it is not because we are just about to go for a break. That report would not be released during that break time now would it? What is the holdup?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member that the review has absolutely nothing to do with break week or no break week.

What I feel that I have an obligation to do is make sure that I am in possession of all the facts. Once I am confident of that, as I have said before, the review will be made available.

* * *

[*Translation*]

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last summer the Canadian International Trade Tribunal published the results of its inquiry into the injury caused to the Canadian steel industry. Recognizing that there has been injury for five of the product categories being studied, it recommended the imposition of tariff rate quotas for four of them.

Since the injury was primarily due to price and not only to volume, will the Minister of Finance recognize that the imposition of tariff rate quotas will not solve the problem and that only the application of tariffs of at least 30% will enable the Canadian steel industry to confront the massive influx of foreign products into our markets?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the report was received, we have been working closely with the companies and with the steel industry. It must be understood that the industry is opposed to imposing a tariff on imports from the United States. That could create a problem with the WTO, as we have seen this week regarding the tariffs imposed by the United States. Therefore, we must certainly find a way to solve this problem, but we must consider the tribunal's decision and the options available to us.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the minister pointed out, last year the United States decided to exempt Canada from the safeguards that had been applied to protect the U.S. market from massive importation of steel from abroad. In this way, the U.S. recognized that the North American steel markets are fully integrated.

Does the government intend to exclude the United States from the application of any measures whatsoever intended to protect our market and our industry?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps now we all can see why it is so complicated. Unfortunately, the tribunal determined that the problem was with all imports, even those from the U.S. Thus, in order to do exactly as the tribunal asked, and what the industry has asked for, we must exclude the United States. That is based on a determination in Canada that is entirely different from the one in the United States, and it could cause us problems with the WTO.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, according to the customs minister, our customs agents are little more than bank tellers. They are authorized to collect money for the government, but if a security threat comes to our border, she expects them to call 911, dive under their desks and wait for the police to arrive.

When will the minister reverse this dangerous policy and make customs agents a proper security force and give them peace officer status?

● (1440)

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell the member opposite that in fact customs officers are doing a fine job. They have been given advice from the commissioner of the RCMP and an independent job hazard analysis has determined that firearms are not required. Whenever they need police assistance, we have a very good relationship with local police and the RCMP. I can tell the member that is the appropriate policy.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, our first line of defence at the border should not be, "Have a nice day, eh". It gets worse. This week the minister said the CCRA's security role at our borders is not protection, it is facilitation.

Is it really the minister's policy to want to facilitate murderers, drug traffickers and would be terrorists as they try to enter Canada?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing in the member's preamble is true. In fact, we have said very clearly that customs officers who are on the front line in the primary inspection at our ports, land borders and airports do an excellent job in identifying individuals and goods which are inadmissible to Canada. They have an excellent record in doing that. We should all be very proud of them.

I have said that on a continuous basis and I would ask the member to stand up and acknowledge that.

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HEALTH

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is great concern about the spread of SARS, severe acute respiratory syndrome. We now have over 200 cases across Canada and the greater Toronto area has been most affected.

Could the Minister of Health please give us her assurances that her department is providing assistance to Ontario? Does she have any medical or scientific information regarding who may be susceptible to SARS?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me reassure the hon. member first of all that provincial and local authorities, most notably in Toronto, are taking all reasonable steps to control the spread of SARS. We are working closely with Ontario on many fronts, including providing supplies as requested, such as X-ray machines and masks. We have 13 epidemiologists now on the ground in Toronto integrated into Toronto's public health effort.

I want to reassure everyone that the risk to the general population in Canada, including Toronto, remains low. Transmission in Toronto is only occurring through close contact with family and health care workers, which means we have no community transmission. The spread of SARS is not linked to any geographic region—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Windsor West.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, increasingly the Liberals use the excuse of national security to keep facts from the public. The latest is hiding key reports to show how the Chalk River nuclear facility may be polluting the Ottawa River.

A senior official of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission told a public hearing that information that could be made public is being withheld, all under the excuse of security.

Does the Minister of the Environment not agree that a radioactive Ottawa River is about security? What about the people who use the river? Will the minister make that report public? It is their right, it is their report.

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member and all members of the House that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission does its job to ensure that we protect all Canadians. When there are any leaks of this sort they are made public so the public is aware.

I do not accept the allegations that the hon. member has put forward, but if he has information that he wants to put forward that I can provide to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, I certainly would be willing to do that.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday an American court ruled that Visa and MasterCard owed their cardholders some $800 million U.S. for hiding surcharges on foreign exchange transactions. We have checked and the same hidden surcharges gouge Canadian cardholders too. The surcharge is usually between 1.5% and 1.8%.

I believe it is time the Liberals stood up to these credit card companies against their hidden charges. Will the minister today stand and say that what these companies are doing is wrong, and tell us what he will do about it?

● (1445)

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the issue. I will be happy to look into it as requested by the member.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, commenting on Canada's contribution to rebuilding Iraq, the defence minister told reporters "we have people that can teach policemen, help train armies". That is welcome news if Canada has made those kinds of offers.

Will the Minister of National Defence advise the House to whom specifically he has offered Canada's services in training Iraqi police and military personnel?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, when I was asked by reporters about this situation I said, quoting the Prime Minister, that Canada was always there to help in such cases, and I gave a number of examples where help might be provided. One of those examples was training police, another was in the area of governance and another was in the area of training armies, which we have also done effectively in the past. Those are some of the areas in which Canada may choose to provide aid.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, farmers expected the Minister of Agriculture to have a safety net package in place by April 1, almost two weeks ago, yet it was only a week ago that the minister hired two consulting firms to analyze this program and tell him how wonderful it was, while at the same time directing these same consultants not to consider a proposal raised by farmers.

Why is the minister afraid to allow a third party consultant to compare the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's proposal with his own?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should get his facts straight and read the letter that I sent back to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture approving the third party participants in this, that it approved as well, and also agreeing to analyze and to review the information it provided to me on March 28 of this year at 6 o.clock in the afternoon, three days before the end of the present federal-provincial agreement that ran out on April 1.

* * *

TOURIST INDUSTRY

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, anti-American comments by Liberal MPs are hurting the Canadian tourist industry.

The president of the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies says that he has received calls from agents informing him that the unrelenting anti-Americanism of the Liberals has affected up to one-third of their business. He says that Americans are phoning and cancelling their trips because they feel that Americans are not wanted here. This is striking particularly hard at Canada's summer festivals in cities like Stratford which depend on U.S. visitors.

How can the government refuse to disown these anti-American slurs of its own MPs when these are hurting Canadian jobs?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am astounded to hear this from a member of a party whose leader went on Fox television to repeat some of these things that we have all said we regret. I am astounded to hear it from a member of a party whose foreign affairs critic decided to write a letter—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. My recollection is that the question came from the Canadian Alliance Party. The Deputy Prime Minister is trying to answer but it seems there is objection from that particular group to hear the answer. This cannot be correct. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister has the floor. All hon. members will want to hear the answer.

Hon. John Manley: No, Mr. Speaker, they do not want to hear the answer. They do not want to hear about their leader and their foreign affairs critic sending letters to the *Wall Street Journal.* When will they understand that when we go abroad we speak with one voice.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are astounded to hear that Canada is supposed to respond to the Americans by remaining silent, by not speaking out and by not opposing what our government has to say.

I have received a letter from an American from Dayton, Ohio, who has written the following:

> I know, and like many Canadians...I am saddened for them because your government has so drastically severed all ties of good feeling with millions of Americans, including me.
>
> One cannot...heap abuse and actively work to undermine another, and still lay claim to friendship...

This American says that he has discarded his Stratford tickets.

Does this mean that Canadian jobs—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

● (1450)

The Speaker: I hope the Deputy Prime Minister could hear that question. I had trouble, but I would like to be able to hear the answer in any event.

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he makes the very point that I am trying to make.

Some people have said some things that have been regretted and have apologized. Why repeat them? That is what those members have been doing. They think there is some reason for them to go to the United States and report things to the Americans to make them angry at us. Why? Do they think they will vote against our government, or will they stay home during the Stratford Festival? If they would show a little discipline we would be building a new and better relationship.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has referred to a report drafted by an interdepartmental working group for the four ministers concerned, and given to them a month ago. Yesterday, the parliamentary secretary informed the dairy producers meeting in Quebec City that a decision by the minister will be forthcoming within two weeks.

Can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food confirm that a decision will be announced within the timeframe indicated yesterday by the parliamentary secretary?

[*English*]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Quebecois has asked that very same question several times this week and the answer is the same. The ministers have looked at the recommendations and the recommendations will be reported to the industry within the next few days.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there does not seem to be a very good connection between the parliamentary secretary and the minister.

According to our sources, the report offers three hypotheses: first, modification of the definition and reclassification. Second, a return before the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. Third, the implementation of safeguards.

Can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food guarantee that he will opt for the first, the only hypothesis that will make it possible to put an end to the importation of substitute products, as the dairy producers are demanding?

[*English*]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what my colleague, the Minister for International Trade, and I have been saying all along. A number of recommendations have been made by the industry and they have been looked at by the four portfolios involved in this. We will be making a final recommendation on that within the next few days.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Ontario farmers cannot operate without the knowledge of what supports are available for disaster assistance for the 2003 stabilization year. With the April 1 deadline past, market revenue insurance and other companion programs could end leaving farmers unprotected.

Will the Minister of Agriculture extend current safety net programming until an agreement is signed?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the industry and all the provinces have known for over three years that the federal-provincial agreements that were in place would be ending on March 31 of this year.

We have been working with the industry and with the provinces to put in place a new program that will cover both stabilization and disaster, which is exactly what the industry wanted.

The industry has known since June 20 of last year that the disaster program that was in place was, quite frankly, not liked by the industry. They requested changes to it and we will be making those changes for this year.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that companion programs are important risk management tools on which Ontario farmers rely.

Will the minister agree to look at the alternative proposals from the farmers and the provinces and take their concerns into consideration in the agricultural policy framework to end the uncertainty for Ontario farm families that they face with no agreement? Do it for the families.

● (1455)

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken that into consideration and the transition is there for the federal participation into some companion programs. The hon. member should be fully aware that the minister of agriculture for the Province of Ontario signed that framework policy in June of this year. They and their industry have known that and their minister signed that on behalf of her farmers in the Province of Ontario.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Veterans Affairs introduced in the House today amendments to the Pension Act and to the RCMP Superannuation Act.

Would the minister to tell the House what this will mean for the military and the RCMP personnel assigned to dangerous operations at home and abroad?

Hon. Rey Pagtakhan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments, working in collaboration with the Minister of National Defence and the Solicitor General, will provide finally round the clock comprehensive benefits to members of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP who are deployed to special duty areas and operations of elevated risk.

This will give greater peace of mind to the members and their families. Indeed, Canada is committed to attending to the well-being of Canadians who go in harm's way.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this past March, before the filing of creditor protection, Air Canada had a 10% drop in air traffic from last year. Since its recent creditor filing, SARS, the war in Iraq, gas prices and taxes, April's numbers are not likely to be that much better relative to last year's numbers for April.

The government cannot solve all the problems of Air Canada or the airline industry but it can stop contributing to the problem by lowering taxes and getting more people into the air.

Will the government eliminate the air tax, lower fuel taxes, lower airport rents or do any of these things to help get more people flying?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we are concerned with the industry and the situation in the industry. I think the hon. member knows that it is not only this industry that pays some of those taxes, excise taxes on fuel for example, nor can we respond with broad tax changes simply because one company finds itself in financial difficulty.

I think the member would know that it would cause a difficult precedent in a whole series of industries. However I can assure him that we continue to look at the charges that are levied in this as well as in other sectors.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, lowering taxes to get more people flying is not a bad precedent. It is actually a pretty good one that the government should consider.

The air industry needs leadership but instead of leadership it is getting muddle from this government. Yesterday the transport minister said:

> We're well aware that traffic is down (but) with a bit of luck...people's confidence will come back....

Why does the government not take concrete steps toward lowering taxes, putting more money in people's pockets therefore getting more people in the air, rather than wishing and hoping for a little bit of luck to bail it out of its problems?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member might have a case to make if he could say that Canada is the only country in which air travel is down, but that is not the truth.

I have to point out to him, and I am sure he would acknowledge it, that only on Tuesday did he vote against a bill which would lower the air transportation security charge. How many ways can one have it?

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade is saying over and over that lumber is his number one priority. Yesterday, the same minister told the committee that the assistance package for the softwood lumber industry and its workers is not under his responsibility.

My question to the government, under whose responsibility it is, is this: When will phase two of the softwood lumber industry assistance package be implemented?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I stated very clearly before the standing committee yesterday, and the hon. member was present, is that our government and the entire government team stand firmly behind the softwood lumber industry. Even in Washington, it is recognized that in 25 years cooperation has never been as extensive, strong and close. We will continue to work constructively with our industry, whose progress this past year has made us extremely proud.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were recently made aware of the terrible massacre of Congolese people in the eastern part of the country.

Could the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa and the Francophonie tell the House how Canada is contributing to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

● (1500)

Hon. Denis Paradis (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government's contribution takes the form of political and financial support to the peace process, through the Inter-Congolese Dialogue agreement.

Our special envoy for that country, Marc Brault, is working closely with the United Nations, our international partners and the interested Congolese parties.

At the UN's request, Canada is participating on the International Guarantee Committee for the implementation of the Pretoria agreement, which is holding its first meeting today in Kinshasa. Together with our embassy in Kinshasa, we are focussing on the security of Canadian nationals in that region.

* * *

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of the features of labour disputes that arise in businesses governed by the Canada Labour Code is how long they last. First Vidéotron and Cargill hired scabs, and now Radio-Nord is doing the same thing.

When will the Minister of Labour admit that, far from being an effective tool to settle disputes, the Canada Labour Code, which allows strike breakers, has become a surefire way to make matters worse and prolong these disputes?

Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in labour disputes, employees are fully aware that if they feel that replacement workers are being used, they can always ask the Canadian Industrial Relations Board to look into the situation.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the housing agreement promised thousands of affordable housing units, yet 18 months later in Ontario zero units have been built and B.C. has cut provincial housing funds. Canadians will not get housed on cuts and fake promises. They need dollars, political will and enforcement of the agreement.

At the housing ministers meeting next week, will the minister use the accountability mechanism or is he saying that housing is just another empty Liberal promise and sit and watch Ontario demolish the agreement?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were very proud to set aside $680 million for housing in partnership with the provinces to make affordable housing available to Canadians. When leveraged with the provincial money, it is well over $1 billion in housing for Canadian families. We are proud of the program. We are moving forward with it to make a real difference on the ground where it counts.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Bill Barisoff, Minister of Provincial Revenue of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, could the government House leader indicate what business he intends to deal with for the remainder of this week and the week following the Easter break?

Could he also indicate to the House what his intentions are with regard to Government Business No. 15, the government's failed damage control motion concerning Iraq? Are we expecting more debate on this motion? Will the House be allowed to vote on this motion? Or has he finally realized the futility of this and withdrawn this motion?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue this afternoon and tomorrow with consideration of Bill C-13, the reproductive technologies legislation, followed by Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and the Senate amendments to Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Criminal Code.

When we return on April 28, in addition to the bills I have just listed, if any remain, we will consider the legislation on RCMP pensions introduced earlier today—I believe it is C-31—and the Criminal Code bill that will be introduced tomorrow by one of my hon. cabinet colleagues. After that, we will move on to third reading of Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, if that stage has been reached.

I am looking forward to a number of committees reporting legislation in the near future and it would be our intention to proceed with report stages of those bills as quickly as possible, once the reports have been received.

The chief opposition whip has asked the House what is happening with the government motion concerning Iraq. Of course, we have debated Iraq this week and last week, and we even took a vote this week. As I indicated, during the next five days of the session at least —but that will depend on the progress we make—I do not intend to bring that motion back before the House. After that, we shall see.

● (1505)

[*English*]

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, the government House leader said Bill C-10. My understanding is that Bill C-10 is comprised of A and B. Does he intend to call both Bill C-10A and Bill C-10B or one or the other?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the Senate amendments to Bill C-10. These senate amendments would divide the bill in two, and create Bill C-10A.

Therefore, as the hon. members will agree, that is all that is before the House. The other bill is not before us at this time.

[*English*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I failed a moment ago to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Mayor of the City of Kingston, Mrs. Isabel Turner, and members of the council of the City of Kingston.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among parties in the House, and I think you would find consent for the following. I move:

That Motion No. 388 standing in my name on the Order Paper be hereby withdrawn.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-10—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I wish now to indicate to the House that I am ready to rule on a point of order raised on Monday, April 7, by the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast concerning the motion on the Order Paper to concur in the Senate's message to divide Bill C-10, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act.

I would like to thank the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast for raising the issue. I also wish to thank the hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and the member for Vancouver East for their interventions on the matter.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast raised a number of interesting points, stating that the message from the Senate regarding Bill C-10 could not be considered a stage of a bill nor could the Senate's division of Bill C-10 be considered an amendment. He went on to argue that the motion to concur in the Senate's message should therefore not be listed on the Order Paper under Government Bills as a motion in response to an amendment made to a bill but rather should be listed as a motion under the heading Government Motions.

In consequence, the hon. member argued that the notice given by the government to time allocate the motion was invalid since Standing Order 78 can only be used to curtail debate on motions related to the stages of bills and not on a government motion.

At the time this point of order was raised, I indicated that this matter had previously been before the House in December 2002, when questions were raised about the admissibility of the motion and the possible breach of the privileges of the House in relation to the actions taken by the other place in dividing the bill.

Speaker's Ruling

[*Translation*]

In my ruling delivered on December 5, 2002 I stated that there was no basis for a prima facie question of privilege, and I made the following point at that time:

> —while the Speaker agrees with the view of Mr. Speaker Fraser that privileged matters are involved where the Senate divides a House bill without first having the House's concurrence, this is not the case in this instance. Our concurrence has in fact been requested—

See *House of Commons Debates*, December 5, 2002, p. 2336.

[*English*]

Given the conclusions delivered in my ruling in December, the motion to concur in the Senate message to divide the bill is a proper motion and it is properly before the House, and accordingly I consider the issue of the admissibility of the motion closed.

In my December ruling, I also pointed out to hon. members that they would have the opportunity to debate the motion when it was brought before the House and to propose amendments as they saw fit. That process is well underway. Debate on the motion to concur in the Senate's request to divide Bill C-10 commenced on December 6, 2002, and members of the official opposition have since proposed an amendment and a subamendment to the motion.

On February 14, the government gave notice of time allocation on consideration of the motion to concur in the Message from the Senate, and this is the issue to which I would now like to turn. In his arguments, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast questioned whether the Senate message seeking concurrence to divide Bill C-10 could properly be considered an amendment and treated as a stage of a bill under the provisions of Standing Order 78. The December ruling on this matter found the motion to be in order and therefore properly before the House.

After full consideration of the arguments presented in this unusual circumstance, I have now concluded that the motion to concur in the Senate message to divide Bill C-10 is indeed intrinsic to the legislative process for this particular bill.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast sought to draw a parallel with the case of a motion from the House instructing one of its committees to divide a bill. Whereas it might be argued that such a motion is complementary to the legislative process already in train and not integral to it, in the case before us, the motion to waive House privileges and permit the other House to divide Bill C-10 is, in my view, clearly part of the critical path of the legislative process with regard to this bill.

For this bill to proceed down its unique and admittedly unprecedented legislative path to royal assent and proclamation, a decision must be taken by the House either to concur in or defeat the motion to concur in the Senate proposal to divide the bill. I therefore feel that this motion is part of the legislative process on this bill, not an additional motion introduced to do something to a bill otherwise before the House.

Speaker's Ruling

Given this set of circumstances, I find that it is in order for the government to give notice and move time allocation pursuant to Standing Order 78 on the consideration of this motion. I draw the attention of members to page 563 of Marleau and Montpetit, where the following point is made regarding the use of time allocation:

> ...although the rule permits the government to negotiate with opposition parties towards the adoption of a timetable for the consideration by the House of a bill at one or more stages (including the stage for the consideration of Senate amendments), it also allows the government to impose strict limits on the time for debate.

In conclusion, I would concur with the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast that this is indeed an unprecedented case. Absent a definitive rule or practice of the House with respect to the Senate's proposed division of House bills, the Chair believes it prudent to act with an abundance of caution. The Senate has properly sought the concurrence of the House in its proposed course of action and now awaits the decision of the House before proceeding further. This motion clearly seeks the concurrence of the House to divide Bill C-10, thus responding to the Senate request. This dialogue is intrinsic to the legislative process for Bill C-10 and the Speaker is thus bound to accept that the procedure being followed is acceptable in this case.

[*Translation*]

I would again take the opportunity to remind hon. members that they have the opportunity to debate the motion and to propose amendments to it within the rules of the House.

[*English*]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am also ready to rule on the point of order raised by hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia on Monday, April 7, regarding the vote held on Tuesday, April 1, on a private members' business motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

● (1510)

In his point of order, the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia drew attention to discrepancies between the video recording of the proceedings and the manner in which they were reported in *Hansard*. The hon. member maintained that *Hansard* reported the motion as having been carried unanimously, when in fact it was carried on division. He expressed concern that what appeared in *Hansard* may have been altered to conceal the fact that there was some opposition to the motion.

[*Translation*]

I wish to thank the hon. member for his interest in ensuring that our records accurately reflect the decisions of this House. Having reviewed both the transcript and the video recording of the proceedings, I can now report to the House on what transpired.

[*English*]

First, I am happy to assure all hon. members that, whatever the confusion that may have occurred in the Chamber on April 1, 2003—and I will return to those difficulties in a moment—the House's decision regarding private member's Motion No. 318, standing in the name of the hon. member for Scarborough Centre, has been accurately recorded as carried.

Second, I would ask the House to note, and I believe it is especially important that this be noted in view of the misinformation that has been circulated concerning this situation, that I have made inquiries and I am satisfied that there was no interference, at any time, by any hon. member or any member's office in the preparation of the final edition of that day's *Hansard*.

Now let us review the sources of the confusion and the nature of the discrepancies complained of by the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia. First, it may be helpful to review the manner in which decisions in the House are made and how they are recorded in our publications. These procedures are described in detail in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, beginning at page 481, but I will just summarize them here.

When debate on a question that is before the House has ended, the Speaker asks, "Is the House ready for the question?" If no member rises to speak, the Speaker proceeds to ask, "Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?" At this point, members respond by calling out either "yes" or "no". If only "yes" responses are heard, the Speaker simply declares the motion carried.

● (1515)

[*Translation*]

If the Chair hears members call out both "yes" and "no", then it will ask, "All those in favour of the motion will please say 'yea'; and then, 'All those opposed to the motion will please say 'nay'. Based on the responses given by members, the Speaker will usually state, 'In my opinion, the 'yeas' have it", or "—the 'nays' have it".

[*English*]

At this point, members can decide to hold a recorded division on the matter. If they do not want a recorded division but want to record that there was some dissent, they may so indicate to the Chair by simply stating "on division". The Speaker will then declare the motion carried or lost on division and both the *Journals* and *Hansard* will reflect that fact.

Alternatively, to hold a recorded division, five or more members must rise when the Chair has declared that the "yeas" or "nays" have it. The Speaker will then say, "Call in the members" and the House proceeds to taking a formal vote, or decides to defer the taking of the vote to some later time.

In my review of the events of April 1, 2003, it is clear that when the motion was declared carried, no one called out, "on division", nor did five members rise in their places to demand a recorded vote. Given that fact, the *Journals* for April 1, 2003, at page 642, state that, "the question was put on the motion and it was agreed to". Similarly, *Hansard* states, at page 5023, "Motion agreed to". There is no reference to "on division" because no member called out "on division" at the time the decision was announced from the Chair. A reader might infer from the text that this was a unanimous decision but it is clear that this was a decision where no dissent was recorded.

[*Translation*]

I will now return to the other concern expressed by the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia, namely, that the record of these events as published in Hansard, is missing information that can be heard on the videotape of the proceedings.

[*English*]

I agree with the hon. member that a number of the interventions that were made during the proceedings on April 1 were not included in *Hansard* or were changed in various ways. There was certainly some confusion in the House during the taking of the vote on the private members' business motion. There may have been a number of reasons for this.

For example, as frequently happens in private members' business, the sponsor of Motion No. 318 had exchanged places with another hon. member who had been slated for that time. I understand too that debate on the motion collapsed earlier than expected, thereby causing a vote to be taken when perhaps members had not anticipated one. Finally, this was the first item to come to a vote under the provisional rules governing private members' business. All these factors may have contributed to the situation but whatever the cause, the video record does reveal that a number of clarifications were sought and various corrective interventions were made as the House arrived at its decision.

The staff and editors who prepare *Hansard* every day work very hard to create a record of our debates that accurately reflects what is said and decided. In so doing, they are authorized to make the grammatical and editorial changes needed to ensure readability.

Hon. members will agree that this work is never easy and I believe that on that evening the staff faced some challenges. In carrying out their responsibilities in this particular case, the staff in *Hansard*, acting in the interests of readability and in all good faith, decided to eliminate some of the interventions in which members were seeking clarification of what was taking place, and preserve those statements which reflected the decision that the House ultimately arrived at.

The hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia argues that in this instance too much was left out and, although, as I said, I am entirely satisfied that the decision of the House is accurately recorded, I am inclined to agree, especially given the member's intervention, that future readers will be better served if the verbatim transcript is printed in *Debates*.

I have therefore asked my officials to review the editorial decisions that were made in this case and to make the changes necessary to render the *Debates* more complete. A corrigendum will be issued in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1520)

[*English*]

ASSISTED HUMAN REPRODUCTION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, an act respecting assisted human reproduction, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise again on behalf of the residents of Surrey Central to speak to Bill C-13, an act respecting assisted human reproductive technologies and related research.

The government stated that the legislation would protect the health and safety of Canadians using assisted human reproduction, that it would prohibit unacceptable practices and that it would regulate assisted human reproduction activities and related research.

Specifically, the bill is supposed to create a regulatory framework for fertility clinics, ban human cloning and commercial surrogacy, and restrict research using human embryos.

Key provisions in the bill include: prohibitions on human cloning; the creation of human-animal hybrids; and sex-selection of babies. It also includes payments to egg and sperm donors and so-called "rent-a-womb" contracts where women profit from carrying babies for infertile couples. It also would create a new agency to regulate how scientists and infertility clinics use human reproductive materials. It would issue licences to both research and treatments involving in vitro embryos.

We are dealing with an issue that will have a profound effect upon the lives of Canadians. It deals with the creation and death of human life. Needless to say, this field therefore requires some measure of public oversight and regulation.

It has been a decade since the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies issued its report called "Proceed with Care". The report was four years in the making and contained nearly 300 recommendations. The commissioners listened to the opinions of 40,000 Canadians. Four different health ministers have been involved in the debate. Since the bill was first introduced, I have heard from literally hundreds of my constituents. I would like to thank them for their opinions. Undoubtedly, this is an issue on which consensus is nearly impossible. Everyone has an opinion.

Pro-lifers, ethicists, fertility doctors, researchers, sperm banks, people who have trouble conceiving babies the usual way, children conceived in laboratories and people suffering from diseases, all have different points of view on the issues.

The common consensus is that the bill requires important amendments. I fully support bans on reproductive or therapeutic cloning, chimeras, animal-human hybrids, sex selection, germ-line alteration, buying or selling of embryos and paid surrogacy.

We in the official opposition recognize and support the need for regulating this field. I also support an agency to regulate this sector, although I want changes to it. Sometimes regulations are not good but in this particular field the regulations are the most important thing because in that way we can have oversight on this particular sector.

I will now turn to various areas of Bill C-13 with which I have special difficulty.

First, there is embryonic stem cell research. The bill would allow for experiments using human embryos under different conditions. There are four different conditions but I will not go through them. However, by allowing the creation of embryos for reproductive research, Canadian law will legitimize the creation of human life solely to be used for the benefit of others.

● (1525)

Embryonic research is ethically controversial, as demonstrated by the numerous petitions tabled in the House which are probably gathering dust on the shelf. All the petitions called for embryonic stem cell research to be seriously reviewed.

Another concern is that embryonic stem cell research results in the death of the embryo, which is early human life. For many Canadians this violates the ethical commitment to respect human dignity, integrity and life. The Canadian Alliance opposes human cloning as an affront to human dignity, individuality and human rights. We have repeatedly spoken out against human cloning, urging the federal government to bring in legislation to stave off the potential threat of cloning research in Canada.

Embryonic research constitutes an objectification of human life, where life becomes a tool that can be manipulated and destroyed for other ends. In September 2001 we tabled a motion in the health committee calling upon the government to ban immediately human reproductive cloning. We are pleased that Motion No. 13 was passed last week at report stage to foreclose any possibility of new cloning techniques from getting by the bill's cloning prohibition.

Adult stem cells are a safe, proven alternative to embryonic stem cells. Sources of adult stem cells include umbilical cord blood, skin and bone tissues. Adult stem cells are easily accessible, are not subject to immune rejection, and pose minimal ethical concerns. Adult stem cells are already being used in the treatment of various diseases such as Parkinson's, leukemia, MS, and many other conditions. Meanwhile, embryonic stem cells have not been used in the successful treatment of a single person.

The focus on research should be on adult stem cells, being a more promising and proven alternative to embryonic stem cells. To that end, our minority report called for a three year prohibition on experiments with human embryos. Let us stop until we have enough resources and opportunities given by adult stem cell research. Our amendment to this effect was defeated in the health committee.

Bill C-13 proposes the creation of the assisted human reproduction agency to: issue licences for controlled activities, collect health reporting information, advise the minister, and designate inspectors for the enforcement of the act. The agency's board of directors would be appointed by the governor in council.

Clause 25 would allow the minister to interfere and give any policy direction to the agency. If the agency were independent, it would be answerable and accountable to Parliament and political interference would be more difficult for the minister. The entire clause should have been eliminated.

The Canadian Alliance proposed amendments specifying that agency board members be chosen for their wisdom and judgment, so that they could pursue the greater good for the sake of humanity. While regulating in that field, board members should not have commercial interests in the field of assisted human reproduction or related research, like fertility clinics or biotech companies. Conflicts of interest must be prevented.

Another area of concern is donor identity. The proposed assisted human reproduction agency would hold information on donor identity. Donor identity is important because children have the right to know who their parents are even without their written consent to reveal it. We must end the secrecy that shrouds donor anonymity and denies children knowledge of an important chapter in their lives.

● (1530)

In its review of the draft legislation, the health committee recommended an end to donor anonymity. The Canadian Alliance minority report clearly stated that where the privacy rights of the donors of human reproductive materials conflict with the rights of children to know their genetic and social heritage, the rights of the children shall prevail.

We must not deal with this issue lightly. It is an important issue and we must ensure that we get this right. All members should be allowed to have a free vote in the House so they can vote according to their conscience. This is an issue of life and death.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate concerning Bill C-13 and its previous nomenclature, Bill C-56.

This is a complex piece of legislation from a scientific and ethics perspective. This is pioneering legislation that we have not seen in a Canadian context in our history. The science has been evolving at a rapid pace and thus the reason for this legislation. About 10 to 20 years ago legislation of this sort was not required, but it is our duty as legislators to ensure that legislation is in place that will keep up with the ethical issues surrounding the scientific developments that we have had in this time period.

I approached the parliamentary research branch and had the Library of Parliament prepare a comparison for me of the legislative framework that exists in the United States and the United Kingdom, and benchmark it with Bill C-56 and Bill C-13, the legislation we have before us today.

I would like to compare those three approaches, but before doing so I would like to talk a little more generically about the bill itself.

Bill C-13 would give Canada its first comprehensive and integrated legislation dealing with assisted human reproduction.

There are three components to the bill: first, it would ban human cloning; second, it would give the government authority to regulate activities such as embryonic stem cell research; and finally, it would create an agency, the assisted human reproduction agency of Canada, to oversee the regulations set out in the act. In the absence of this legislation, no rules would exist to govern assisted human reproduction.

The first component of the bill would ban human cloning. It would prohibit unacceptable practices such as creating a human clone for any purpose, reproductive or therapeutic. Currently in Canada, human cloning is legal in the absence of legislation. If Bill C-13 were passed, human cloning would be banned.

The second component of the bill would give the government authority to regulate activities such as embryonic stem cell research. A main challenge in the matter of research on human subjects, including human embryos, is the necessity to strike the necessary balance between the need to seek the causes and cures of disease and disability, and the responsibility to ensure that our public policy framework can keep up with the science. Research has moved ahead faster than anticipated, and other governments have ensured through legislation that these discoveries truly advance the public interest.

The third component of the bill addresses the creation of an agency to oversee the regulations set out in the act. This agency would be called the assisted human reproduction agency of Canada. It would licence, monitor, and enforce the assisted human reproduction act and its regulations.

The Progressive Conservative Party was concerned with this issue, and that is why we encouraged the government to proceed with legislation as quickly as possible. The House may recall that over a decade ago our party commenced the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. That was the predecessor to ensuring that we had a legislative framework that could keep up with the science and the ethical issues that were developing during that period.

Bill C-13 is an extremely important piece of legislation that could have been managed better by the government. For example, of the three components of the bill, there was broad support among Canadians to ban human cloning. The government should have moved faster on introducing legislation that would ensure that end. A more effective manner of dealing with this wide-ranging bill would have been to divide the bill into two sections. One section would deal with banning human cloning and the second section of the bill would address assisted human reproduction procedures in a thorough and considered manner. By dividing the bill, each component would have been addressed individually.

● (1535)

The fact remains that Bill C-13 is a complicated piece of legislation. Even though the government could have done a better job managing the bill, it is a step in the right direction. After all, it is the first comprehensive and integrated piece of legislation dealing with assisted human reproduction in this country. Modern technologies and research in the field of science and health are quickly advancing. Rules, laws and regulations must be established to ensure that science does not move beyond human ethics. Clearly, research should not continue in a vacuum, regardless of one's position on the issues at hand. Many members in the chamber would agree that regardless of political, religious or social standpoints, we cannot continue without a legislative framework on this issue.

As I stated earlier, at my request the Library of Parliament prepared a brief synopsis comparing similar legislation in both the U.S. and the U.K. While this document provides only a peripheral view, it does highlight some important issues we may wish to consider. The proposed law in Canada is more conservative than the legislation in the United States and United Kingdom. I have the document comparing the legislative approaches of those two countries which I would gladly share with any member in the House.

As I have said, the legislation is complex because it deals with detailed issues that must be stewarded by strong legislation. Without any regulation or legislation on the issue of assisted human reproduction, the doors would be left wide open for scientific experimentation and interpretation.

I believe that the bill is a step in the right direction. I am not amenable to letting the ethics of these issues be left purely in the hands of scientists. We have a duty as legislators to ensure that there is a framework and that there are boundaries which are acceptable. Having no legislation is actually a policy. That policy would mean that the free enterprise market would dictate what ethics would govern these issues.

The government should be commended for moving forward with this legislation although the issues could have been managed in a better way.

I would like to illustrate my point. When I referred to the differences between the legislative approaches, I was referring to the document prepared by the Library of Parliament comparing the legislative frameworks of the U.K. and the U.S. with Bill C-56 and Bill C-13. There is even a chart at the end of the document.

Would embryonic stem cell research be permitted under this act? Yes, it would. It is also permitted in the U.K. and the U.S. Would a licence be required for such research? Under this act, yes. Under the U.K. act, it is; in the United States, it is not. Is the creation of embryos for stem cell research permitted? Under this act, it is not. In the U.K., it is, if properly licensed. In the United States, it is, if it is privately funded, and there are the bucks to do it.

Going through the document even further, it comes down to the fact that one could read the bill in terms of the act that was prepared by the U.K. in 1990. The British legislation may be perceived to be permissible in terms of the framework, but it is guided by finite regulation. The United States has had a protracted debate among its populace on this particular issue. In essence, even though it has had a stronger debate, it does not have legislation on these particular issues at the moment. The Canadian legislation is then a compromise between the two.

● (1540)

Ironically, the U.K. may appear to have the most permissive approach on embryonic stem cell research but in reality, its legislation imposes tight regulatory controls and compels the research community to proceed cautiously.

In the United States on the other hand, while there have been debates on embryonic stem cell activities and the appearance of related funding restriction, the reality is that the research community faces no legislative prohibitions or controls.

Canada has combined much of the cautionary approach evident in the U.S. debate over embryonic stem cell research with the U.K. example of placing more emphasis on the legislated controls with publicly funded research. The Canadian legislation has actually tried to adopt the best of the provisions that the United States has and that the U.K. has. I do not think we should have these issues in a legislative vacuum. We need to have legislation in place.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased on behalf of the constituents in the riding of Winnipeg Centre to say a few words on this important bill at this stage.

Bill C-13 deals with reproductive technologies. The debate on the bill addresses an important area as Canadians approach the whole issue of reproductive technology. As we have heard throughout the debate, there are many compelling reasons to support the regulation of reproductive technology.

We are all familiar with recent sensational stories about human cloning, about eggs being sold over the Internet, about acrimonious lawsuits over surrogacy. Even last year we heard the Raelians claim that they had successfully cloned a human being. People in my riding want to know what the government plans to do to look after their interests in light of such interesting debate going on.

Even though it is the tip of the iceberg, we believe there is unregulated research and unregulated activity going on in this field. I am sure all members of the House agree that others around the globe are absolutely committed to this type of research. We want to make sure that Canadian interests are not only represented, but are protected.

We are living in a time when the term "designer babies" has become part of the North American lexicon. Parents are selecting the biological traits of their children. Internet sites compete in the trade of celebrity reproductive materials, while countless others profit from those Canadians who are more than willing to buy access to any healthy eggs or sperm that might assist them in their drive to have children. Even more worrisome perhaps is that gender selection has become topical, with all sorts of new rationales being put forward in its justification.

Many of us are now very familiar with some of the less sensational personal stories that have come to our attention as members of Parliament. We deal with families that are dealing with the issue of infertility. Stories of joy have come to my attention, as have stories of heartbreak, as well as sacrifice and pain during the whole infertility treatment and the process of parents trying to achieve reproductive success.

Reproductive technologies have become widespread in Canada, yet unfortunately they operate beyond the reach of government regulations. Therefore, we are pleased to be able to address this today and have this long overdue debate.

Unfortunately, the technology has leaped ahead by leaps and bounds without comment or without intervention by the federal government, in spite of the fact that it was over 10 years ago that the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies released its report. We have to ask why it has taken so long for us to have this very necessary debate.

I would like to list some of the concerns of the NDP regarding the bill. One issue is that during the committee stage the member for Winnipeg North Centre worked very closely with members from other parties on that committee to move amendments and to garner support for what they considered to be important amendments. They thought they had succeeded in a number of areas to break through or build some consensus on that committee regarding pretty fundamental issues in Bill C-13 that speaks to the creation of the assisted human reproduction agency.

A very fundamental principle arose. In seeing that human reproduction could be viewed disproportionately as a woman's issue or an issue that pertains to women's health, our representative on the committee, the member for Winnipeg North Centre, put forward a motion that there should be gender parity on the board of this newly established agency. She thought she had broad support for that until the vote came down.

When that particular amendment was voted on in the House of Commons, it did not succeed. We thought that the member for St. Paul's was on board with this issue and the issue of women's rights. We expected her support. We were very disappointed to find out that my colleague did not get the support for this important amendment. In fact, I have a list of how the vote went on Motion No. 71. As I say, we were very disappointed that was not recognized as a priority issue.

● (1545)

If, as the government claims, the bill is concerned with women's health, we argue what better way to give that claim leverage for enforcement purposes than to state outright that the precautionary principle should and must be the governing principle. Yet every time my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre raised this amendment to entrench the precautionary principle to ensure that the principle is imprinted in the legislation, our efforts were voted down by Liberal members of the committee.

The NDP wanted to require the federal government to ensure that reproductive technologies and drugs and procedures specifically are proven safe before they are introduced and that the risks and benefits of any treatment are fully made available and that the evaluation of reproductive health services include women's experiences. Yet it was frustrating, I am told, for the NDP to try to have these views succeed at the committee level.

I point out the contrast that even though the chair of that committee regarding Bill C-13 at the time, the member for St. Paul's could not see fit to support these reasonable amendments. She has recently, as reported in today's newspaper in fact, been the outspoken champion of the rights of standing committees to have some real genuine decision making authority in this place. Many of us have been frustrated by the work of committees. Many of us have felt that partisan politics and whipped votes have spoiled the opportunity for committees to do meaningful work.

As recently as yesterday in the government operations committee that same member for St. Paul's was the one saying that the members would not go any further in the clause by clause analysis of Bill C-25 until such time as the government released all the pertinent documents that they felt that they needed. In that case they were cabinet documents regarding the public service act that they were making reference too.

I see a contradiction in that on the committee dealing with the public service act the member is the champion of free speech and the champion of independent activity for members of the committee yet on the bill dealing with something as critical as reproductive health and reproductive technologies, the member was not willing to go that far.

A fundamental concern for New Democrats in this whole legislative process has to do with the commercialization and commodification of reproductive technologies. Many Canadians have expressed concern from the very beginning of the formal public dialogue about reproductive technologies. Back in the 1980s this very issue was raised. Concerns were expressed about the government agenda being driven by powerful biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries whose primary obligation is to their shareholders and not really to women's health.

There is really nothing in the bill particularly relating to the control of research results that distinguishes between the government's position and the position of these industries which stand to profit greatly from people's very real desires to have children. It is capitalizing on people's unfortunate situations that they are unable to have children naturally and are seeking reproductive technologies in the case of infertility at least and so on.

We raised the issue of patents for instance. We do not believe it is proper that human life should be a patentable commodity ever. We should never allow it to happen. There is a need to ensure that public access to the benefit of research should be available without a profit motive being built into it. For us, patenting still remains a critical issue.

Patenting remains for the government a separate issue, but for most Canadians and certainly to New Democrats, questions of research and the control and application of research results are inexorably linked.

Bill C-13, while necessary, has to be crafted in away such as to be vigorously enforced if it is to accurately reflect the wishes of most Canadians who do not want to see the commercialization of human life and human genes or human tissue ever turned into a profit making initiative.

● (1550)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-13 at third and final reading. The bill deals with assisted human reproductive technologies and related research and is an extremely important piece of legislation.

As I listen to members from all the different parties in the House, I find that I can support many of the points made by members from each political party. Then there are some positions that I certainly cannot support, positions that are presented by members from all different parties as well.

This is an extremely important bill because it deals with issues of hope: hope for having a child when someone otherwise could not have one and hope for finding a cure or an effective treatment for diseases where until now there has been none. Hope is an important part of the bill. It also deals with some very difficult ethical issues. I am going to touch on these issues today as well in the final opportunity I will have to speak on the bill.

I want to say that certainly there are some things we support in the bill; some of them are prohibited by the bill and others are allowed. As a starting point, I want to quickly outline some of them.

I fully support, as I think probably all members of my political party do, bans on reproductive and therapeutic cloning, on chimeras, on animal-human hybrids, on sex selection, on germ line alteration, and on buying and selling embryos and paid surrogacy. I fully support these bans. We also support an agency to regulate the sector, although we do have some concerns about the agency and the way it would be set up. We have put forth recommendations for change and some of those have not happened.

On the issue of cloning, the Canadian Alliance opposes human cloning as an affront to human dignity and individuality and human rights. We have repeatedly spoken out against human cloning, urging the federal government to bring in legislation to stave off the potential threat of cloning research in Canada. In fact, this has been a large part of what we have dealt with in regard to the bill. In September 2001 we tabled a motion at the health committee calling on the government to immediately ban human reproductive cloning entirely. The Liberals deferred a vote on the motion. Their preference was to deal with cloning in a comprehensive reproductive technologies bill.

While we are not entirely happy with what happened, we are pleased with Motion No. 13 by a member of the governing party, which was passed in the House at report stage and which forecloses on any possibility of new cloning techniques getting by the bill's cloning prohibition. We had a grave concern with this.

I am going to deal with the research using human embryos. Some of the most difficult issues, some of the most emotional issues and in fact some of the greatest hope that stem cell research technology has to offer come under this section.

Stem cell research is an extremely exciting issue when we look at the hope it gives, hope in the areas that I talked about at the opening of my presentation, but there are also some very difficult issues to deal with that are connected with these issues. The bill allows for experiments using human embryos under four conditions. I actually find the language that was used surrounding the bill somewhat objectionable, but I will use that language.

First, only in vitro embryos left over from the IVF process can be used for research. Embryos cannot be created for research, with one notable exception. They can be created for purposes of improving or providing instruction for AHR procedures.

Second, written permission must be given by the donor, although the bill states donor in the singular, and I wonder why that would not be an issue involving both parents.

● (1555)

Third, there can be research on a human embryo if the use is necessary, but "necessary" is left undefined. We have concerns with that.

Fourth, all human embryos must be destroyed after 14 days, if not frozen.

These are things regarding human embryo research that I have concerns with.

Some of the concerns that I and many members of my party have are things that are overlooked, quite commonly, and one is that Bill C-13 would allow the creation of embryos for reproductive research. Canadian law would legitimize the view that human life can be created solely to be used for the benefit of others. Embryonic research is ethically controversial and divides Canadians. We can note that from the numerous petitions we have had in the House, on both sides of the issue. Clearly this is a very difficult ethical issue.

If members will listen to what I will mention later, I would argue that there is really no need to bring that difficult ethical issue into the discussion on stem cell research, because there is so much hope for adult or non-embryonic stem cells. They are safe. They are a proven alternative to embryonic stem cells. The sources of adult stem cells are the umbilical cord, blood, skin tissue, bone tissue, et cetera. There are many sources for adult stem cell research.

Adult stem cells are easily accessible and are not subject to immune rejection, which is a huge drawback to embryonic stem cells. They pose minimal ethical concerns. I have talked about those ethical concerns. Why do we want to spoil an area that has so much hope by bringing into the mix some very difficult ethical concerns? I believe we do not have to bring these concerns into the mix, quite frankly.

Also, the issue of immune rejection of foreign tissue is taken away by adult stem cell research because the stem cells are typically taken from the individual they are used by. Rejection is not an issue because they are from one's own body tissue. That is a huge advantage. As well, adult stem cells are being used today in the treatment of Parkinson's, leukemia, multiple sclerosis and other conditions. They are being used successfully in spite of the fact that adult stem cell research is quite new compared to embryonic stem cell research.

Many research companies have really based the future of their research regarding stem cells on embryonic stem cell research, yet we have found all kinds of problems with it, such as the issue of rejection and the difficult ethical issues. From adult stem cell research, which is in fact quite new, we have found none of these problems. Not only have we have found hope, but we have already found cures or treatments for conditions for which there were simply none previously. It offers great hope, and if we limit the research to adult stem cell research we can bypass those very difficult ethical issues.

Something that I think not many people understand is that in spite of the fact that research has been done on embryonic stem cells for a much longer period of time than it has on adult stem cells, embryonic stem cells and research on embryonic stem cells have not led to a single cure or effective treatment after all that time. Yet adult stem cells so quickly have led to these treatments and to this hope. Why would people object to putting that research aside until we can see just how effective adult stem cell research can actually be?

Great hope is offered by adult stem cell research. Very little has resulted from embryonic stem cell research. I call on the House to stay away from embryonic research. Let us cultivate that hope and the potential of adult stem cell research. Let us take the ethical difficulties out of the question. Let us move forward to provide more than hope, to provide cures and treatments for people who are suffering from diseases where none exist now and to provide children for people who simply cannot have children.

There are many things to support in the bill. Some things we simply cannot support. I look forward to more work in this area.

● (1600)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member, who seems to be fairly knowledgeable on the subject. It is a subject that requires a lot of study, there are a lot of different points of view and it is extremely important.

I actually was quite shocked by some of the opposition that he and members of his party have to the bill, even going so far as to vote against the amendment brought forth at committee which would have allowed 50% of the board of people who will govern this act to be women. The official opposition being a party that supposedly is for equal opportunity and understands that the balance of equal opportunity should mean equal amounts of men and women on a board that would regulate an issue such as this, as shocking as it was to see the government vote it down, it was more shocking to see the official opposition not support it.

I would have thought, and I think most Canadians would think, that simply to have the board members representing the Canadian public being 50% women and 50% men is not asking too much. Wherever one stands on this issue, whatever one's views might be, I think that would be the type of clear and fair statement that all Canadians would want to make. I am completely surprised and shocked that the majority, at least as I recall the vote, of the Alliance members of Parliament voted against any type of parity in that group. That is the point I wanted to make. I would rather have done so in the form of a question and had an answer to the question, but I very much appreciate having the opportunity to make that point.

● (1605)

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, before I go on, I have just a quick response to the member's point. I think we are looking for capable and competent people in this realm and on that particular board. If the bulk of them are women who are capable and competent people, then that is where we will go with it. It gives that kind of latitude. Just because someone who has a particular gender, one or the other, is put on a board is not adequate as far as we are concerned. That would be the response.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Let them all be women.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: They can be all woman, as my colleague reminds me, if they have the kinds of skills, backgrounds and capabilities for that kind of a role. That would be the Canadian Alliance position in respect of that.

I welcome this opportunity to speak again on this bill. It is something we have to think through very seriously. There have been some very noble efforts in the past months by members trying to improve this bill to mitigate some of the flaws and problems with it. As Bill C-13 stands, it remains deeply flawed, so right through to the end it requires our diligent attention.

Although the topic and terminology of the bill might appear intimidating to many of us, it is crucial that every member looks into the bill carefully so they can make a decision about supporting or opposing it based on a clear assessment of how this bill treats the most vulnerable members of Canadian society. That is the bottom line here. How does it treat the most vulnerable members of Canadian society?

A bill legislating reproductive technologies is definitely needed but we must ensure that it demonstrates the integrity of a responsible balance between the amazing medical and technological advances being made in the field and the value of the human subjects involved in and affected by this kind of research. Currently the bill has too many serious flaws to be allowed to pass after this final stage of debate.

The first issue that needs to be addressed is the issue of cloning. We have heard much debate about cloning, and I am thankful that members of the House passed Motion No. 13 in report stage in an attempt to ensure that all cloning techniques are addressed by the bill. However this issue is by no means over. In fact the bill still has major flaws concerning cloning since it applies only to human beings after birth. In its present form, even now that the bill has passed through report stage, the prohibitions outlined in the bill, specifically in subclauses 5(c), 5(e) and 5(h), clearly state that an activity is only prohibited "for the purpose of creating a human being". In other words, it restricts cloning only in respect of human beings. Therein lies the rub.

What is wrong with that, one might ask. The problem is that our Criminal Code only recognizes a human being as existing once the fetus has emerged completely from the mother's womb. There we see the little wrinkle, the flaw and the rub in this whole thing. It is a major flaw because it allows the cloning of human beings before they have come out the birth canal for the purpose of terminating them and using them for research right through the ninth month of pregnancy. That is horrific and it is abominable, as far as I am concerned. I do not believe it was something that was intended by the Minister of Health but it is a gross oversight and one which must be changed before the bill is passed.

A human embryo can be created by pro-nuclear transfer cloning and can then be implanted in the womb and gestated for up to nine months. As the bill now stands, the only regulation on this cloning would be that the embryo must be killed before birth, before the full nine months. Therefore the bill not only allows cloning but it ensures that the embryos cloned must be killed even after they have developed into a fetus and reached the age of viability were they to be outside the mother's womb.

Since the bill deals with human reproductive technology, the government is acknowledging, I guess indirectly or tacitly, that the embryos in question are human, yet we have this strange thing in our Canadian criminal law. Bill C-13 recognizes that embryos have worth since it imposes a 14 day limit on storing embryos without using cryopreservation. There is no denying that an embryo has the complete DNA of an adult human.

Suzanne Scorsone, the former member of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies states:

> The human embryo is a human individual with a complete personal genome, and should be a subject of research only for its own benefit...You and I were all embryos once. This is not the abortion question.

She goes on to state:

> When an embryo is not physically inside a woman, there is no possible conflict between that embryo and the life situation of anyone else. There are many across the spectrum on the abortion question who see the embryo as a human reality, and hold that to destroy it or utilize it as industrial raw materials is damaging and dehumanizing, not only to that embryo but to all human society.

● (1610)

Cloning clearly crosses the line of an acceptable ethical practice. It denies dignity, individuality, rights and even life to a vulnerable human person.

The government claims that the bill aims to preserve and protect human individuality and diversity and the integrity of the human genome. If this is indeed the case, every effort must be made to prevent this flawed legislation. Because it does not stop all forms of cloning, we need to stop it from passing third reading.

Another reason why the bill remains so deeply flawed is its acceptance of experimentation on the human embryo. It allows research on in vitro embryos that are left over from the IVF process, as well as embryos that are created for the purpose of improving or providing instruction in assisted human reproduction procedures. By allowing this practice, the government is saying that it is acceptable to create human life for the purpose of using it and then destroying it.

I remind members of the House of the many petitions that many members have read during the past months and which concern Canadians. They call on us to turn away from embryonic research and to promote the ethical alternative of non-embryonic research. The scientific evidence is indisputable in terms of the already proven track record of non-embryonic stem cells versus the non-existent successful track record in respect to embryonic stem cell experimentation in terms of alleviating human suffering.

I believe there is a political agenda driving this push for embryonic stem cell experimentation. There is also, as the speaker from the other party just observed, an economic agenda driving this course of action, particularly for companies that will have to provide the anti-rejection drugs for patients treated with embryonic stem cells. Those who claim a reasonable scientific agenda behind such research however still have not made a convincing case.

Non-embryonic stem cells, or adult stem cells as they are called in many places, are easily accessible, they are not subject to immune rejection and, most important, are in large supply from sources such as umbilical cord blood, as well as various adult tissues.

The effectiveness of adult stem cells has already been demonstrated in treatments for Parkinson's, Crohn's disease, multiple sclerosis, as well as other conditions.

In June of last year Canadian researchers reported success in adult stem cell trials with multiple sclerosis patients. They were treated with stem cells from their own bone marrow. Also, last year a U.S. child with sickle cell anemia was treated with umbilical cord stem cells that were harvested and stored following the birth of his mother. The early signs of that kind of treatment are very encouraging.

Stem cell researcher, Dr. Wolfgang Lillge, wrote in an article entitled "The Case For Adult Stem Cell Research" that the ethical use of adult stem cell research had shown promising results in both tests on animals and in cases with humans. He states:

> It has become clear from transplantation experiments with animals, that stem cells of a particular tissue can develop into cells of a completely different kind. Thus, bone marrow stem cells have been induced to become brain cells, but also liver cells... Despite the fact that basic research with adult stem cells is in its earliest beginnings and is in no way being promoted with urgency—there have been a growing number of reports lately with experiments with animals, from which it emerges that adult stem cells can successfully transform themselves into differentiated cells of organs of many kinds.

Some advocates of embryonic stem cell experimentation acknowledge the success with non-embryonic stem cells but they still argue for the need to explore all these other avenues of research including embryonic stem cells.

What these researchers do not seem to realize however is that money does not grow on trees, notwithstanding the way the current Liberal government likes to spend it. The fact is that every dollar thrown into the abyss of embryonic stem cell experimentation is a dollar that will not go into further developing already proven techniques with adult stem cells.

I am horrified that the Liberal government would actually take tax dollars from Canadians who are suffering from Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, sickle cell anemia, Crohn's disease and other terrible diseases and use them to chase a political agenda that is at odds with the scientific evidence.

There is much more that could be said. What the government should be doing is splitting this bill in two so that we can pass speedily a bill banning all the offensive technologies that all members of the House want to ban. Then we could spend more time dealing with the more contentious elements of the legislation without continuing to leave Canada in the position of having a legal vacuum in all aspects of genetic and reproductive technologies.

● (1615)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Saada: Madam Speaker, discussions have taken place among all parties and there is agreement, pursuant to Standing Order 45(7), to further defer the recorded division requested on the amendment introduced by the member for Yellowhead, regarding third reading of Bill C-13, until the end of government orders on Tuesday, April 29.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act , as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): There are 27 motions on the Order Paper for Bill C-9 at report stage.

[*English*]

The motions will be grouped for debate as follows:

[*Translation*]

Group No. 1: Motions Nos. 1 to 24.

Group No. 2: Motions Nos. 25 to 27.

The voting patterns for the motions within each group are available at the Table

The Chair will remind the House of each pattern at the time of voting.

[*English*]

In relation to the voting pattern, the Chair would like to highlight one particular voting application. In Group No. 1, the vote on Motion No. 3 has been applied to a series of 12 other motions. All these motions are technical in nature, that is to say, they propose modifications which make the English and French portions of the bill agreed.

Due to the editorial character of these motions, I have decided that one decision should apply to the entire series. Specifically, the vote on Motion No. 3 applies to Motions Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 23, and 24.

[*Translation*]

Hon. members who believe that any one of these motions refer to the substance of the bill and that it should be put to a separate vote are invited to approach the Table and present their arguments to that effect as soon as possible.

If necessary, the Chair will readjust the voting patterns and inform the House accordingly.

[*English*]

I shall now propose to the House Motions Nos. 1 to 24 in Group No. 1.

[*Translation*]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Wayne Easter (for the Minister of the Environment) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-9, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing lines 4 to 7 on page 2 with the following:

"but does not include the Executive Council of—or a minister, department, agency or body of the government of—Yukon, the Northwest Territories or Nunavut, a council of the band within the"

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-9, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing lines 32 to 36 on page 2 with the following:

"those lands, other than lands under the administration and control of the Commissioner of Yukon, the Northwest Territories or Nunavut,"

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-9, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 3 on page 4 with the following:

"tive et en temps opportun au processus"

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-9, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing, in the French version, lines 18 to 20 on page 5 with the following:

"environnementale du projet si une autorité fédérale—autre que la société d'État—doit prendre"

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-9, in Clause 6, be amended by replacing lines 24 and 25 on page 8 with the following:

"(2) An environmental assessment of a project under this section is"

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-9, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 39 on page 10 with the following:

"éventuellement—de l'expertise ou des connaissances vou-"

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-9, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing, in the French version, lines 16 to 21 on page 11 with the following:

"cées:

(*a*) s'il n'y a qu'une autorité responsable du projet, par celle-ci;

(*b*) s'il y a plusieurs autorités responsables du projet, par celle qu'elles désignent conjointement ou, si elles ne le font pas dans un délai raisonnable, par celle que l'Agence dési-"

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-9, in Clause 9, be amended

(*a*) by replacing, in the French version, line 18 on page 12 with the following:

"16.3 L'autorité responsable consigne et"

(*b*) by replacing lines 19 and 20 on page 12 with the following:

"tions pursuant to section 20."

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-9, in Clause 10, be amended by replacing, in the French version, lines 33 to 44 on page 12 with the following:

"(3) Dans les cas où elle estime que la participation du public à l'examen préalable est indiquée ou dans les cas prévus par règlement, l'autorité responsable:

(*a*) verse au site Internet, avant de donner au public la possibilité d'examiner le rapport d'examen préalable et de faire des observations à son égard, une description de la portée du projet, des éléments à prendre en compte dans le cadre de l'examen préalable et de la portée de ceux-ci ou une indication de la façon d'obtenir copie de cette description;

(*b*) avant de prendre sa décision aux termes de l'article 20, donne au public la possibilité d'exami-"

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-9, in Clause 11, be amended:

(*a*) by replacing line 16 on page 14 with the following:

"included in the Internet site."

(*b*) by replacing line 9 on page 15 with the following:

"*Canada Gazette* and included in the Internet site."

● (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to dispense with the reading of all the amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Wayne Easter (for the Minister of the Environment) moved:

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-9, in Clause 12, be amended by replacing line 9 on page 16 with the following:

"in relation to a project, the responsible authority shall publish a notice of that course of action in the Registry and, notwithstanding any"

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-9, in Clause 12, be amended by adding after line 14 on page 16 the following:

"(4) A responsible authority shall not take any course of action under subsection (1) before the 15th day after the inclusion on the Internet site of

(*a*) notice of the commencement of the environmental assessment;

(*b*) a description of the scope of the project; and

(*c*) where the responsible authority, in accordance with subsection 18(3), gives the public an opportunity to participate in the screening of a project, a description of the factors to be taken into consideration in the environmental assessment and of the scope of those factors or an indication of how such a description may be obtained."

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-9, in Clause 13, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 16 on page 16 with the following:

"sable veille à la tenue d'une consultation publique sur les"

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-9, in Clause 14, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 42 on page 17 with the following:

"susceptible ou non, compte tenu de la mise en"

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-9, in Clause 14, be amended

(*a*) by replacing, in the English version, line 7 on page 18 with the following:

"(2) Before issuing the environmental assess-"

(*b*) by adding after line 16 on page 18 the following:

"(3) The Minister shall not issue the environmental assessment decision statement before the 30th day after the inclusion on the Internet site of

(*a*) notice of the commencement of the environmental assessment;

(*b*) a description of the scope of the project;

(*c*) where the Minister, under paragraph 21.1(1)(*a*), refers a project to the responsible authority to continue a comprehensive study,

(i) notice of the Minister's decision to so refer the project, and

(ii) a description of the factors to be taken into consideration in the environmental assessment and of the scope of those factors or an indication of how such a description may be obtained; and

(*d*) the comprehensive study report that is to be taken into consideration by a responsible authority in making its decision under subsection 37(1) or a description of how a copy of the report may be obtained."

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-9, in Clause 18, be amended by replacing, in the French version, lines 33 to 41 on page 20 with the following:

"(3) L'autorité responsable qui prend la décision visée à l'alinéa (1)*b*) à l'égard d'un projet est tenue de publier un avis de cette décision dans le registre, et aucune attribution conférée sous le régime de toute autre loi fédérale ou de ses règlements ne peut être exercée de façon à permettre la mise en oeuvre, en tout ou en partie, du projet."

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-9, in Clause 18, be amended by adding after line 47 on page 20 the following:

"(4) A responsible authority shall not take any course of action under subsection (1) before the 30th day after the report submitted by a mediator or a review panel or a summary of it has been included on the Internet site in accordance with paragraph 55.1(2)(*p*)."

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-9, in Clause 19, be amended by replacing, in the English version, line 26 on page 21 with the following:

"ment measures or for improving the quality"

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-9, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing, in the English version, lines 16 and 17 on page 26 with the following:

"study, the federal environmental assessment coordinator and, in any other case, the"

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-9, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing line 18 on page 26 with the following:

"Agency shall ensure that a copy of any"

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-9, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing lines 37 to 40 on page 28 with the following:

"the Internet site;"

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-9, in Clause 26, be amended by adding after line 25 on page 29 the following:

"(3) A screening report referred to in paragraph 55.1(2)(*k*) or a description of how a copy of it may be obtained shall be included in the Internet site not later than the decision referred to in paragraph 55.1(2)(*r*) that is based on the report, unless otherwise authorized by the Agency."

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-9, in Clause 28, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 46 on page 31 with the following:

«sous le régime de la présente loi que l'Agence»

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-9, in Clause 30, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 10 on page 34 with the following:

"domanial visée à l'alinéa *a*) de la définition de ce terme au"

● (1635)

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity today to speak to Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Today the government is moving 27 motions to again amend certain aspects of the work done by the members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development .

It must be kept in mind—and this strikes me as vital at this point in the debate—that this is a bill to amend existing legislation. The essence is there. The main thrust of the opposition from Quebec lies, of course in our rejection of the amendments, but as well in our opposition to the original legislation. Legislation was tabled in 1990, Bill C-78, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

I will remind hon. members that the National Assembly made a unanimous appeal to Ottawa, reminding the federal government that it had its own environmental assessment process which worked just fine, and that in fact many aspects of it constituted a model for the world.

I will remind hon. members that Quebec created the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement or BAPE in 1980. In 1978, we introduced our own environmental assessment system as part of the environmental quality act. Two years later, BAPE was created. Well before that, five years earlier, in 1975, Quebec had adopted an environmental assessment process.

In other words, as far back as 1975, Quebec had its own process of environmental assessment, which was strengthened by the creation of the BAPE five years later, in 1980.

In 1990, the federal government introduced a bill to create its own environmental assessment process, which interferes in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

As I have said, Quebec spoke with one voice by passing a motion in its National Assembly as follows:

> That... the National Assembly strongly disapproves of the federal government's bill to establish a federal environmental assessment process, because it is contrary to the higher interests of Quebec, and opposes its passage by the federal Parliament.

This motion, passed on March 18, 1992 by the National Assembly, set the tone for the opposition by all of Quebec, in solidarity and regardless of political affiliations, to this system and to the process the federal government had just put in place.

I would also like to remind you that on February 28, 1992, Quebec environment minister Pierre Paradis wrote to the federal environment minister, Jean Charest, to say that he was totally opposed to the process. Mr. Paradis wrote to Mr. Charest as follows: "Despite your explanations, we believe that the assessment system proposed in the bill will not be feasible, either for the federal government or for the Government of Quebec. It has already caused much insecurity among those involved, who would have to put up with the many overlaps the bill would allow.

We believe that the current provisions of the bill are far from sufficient to eliminate all possibility of overlap and provide an opportunity for practical agreements on implementation methods for our respective procedures".

● (1640)

Thus, on February 28, 1992, following a motion passed unanimously by the Quebec National Assembly, Quebec environment minister Pierre Paradis wrote to the then federal Minister of the Environment, Jean Charest—who is now the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party and engaged in an election campaign. The federal government refused to admit what it really wanted or to recognize that this bill interfered with the defence of Quebec's interests.

About two weeks ago, when I heard the leader of the Liberal Party of Quebec, during the campaign, telling the federal government that he intended to do everything in his power, and devote all his energies to trying to bring the environmental assessment process back to Quebec, I found it rather paradoxical. Because, at the time, he refused to bend to the wishes of the Quebec National Assembly.

Today, on the campaign trail, he tells us that he would be able to eliminate the environmental assessment process, which he authorized himself in 1992. This kind of double-speak is totally unacceptable.

This bill, unfortunately, tends once again to strengthen the underlying legislation. It creates distortions and overlaps with the Quebec environmental assessment process, which is a good process, according to all the stakeholders.

If Quebec were not assuming its responsibilities, that would be one thing, maybe. However, the opposite is true, the process is working well. If we compare the environmental assessment process in place in Quebec and the work of the BAPE to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which I did in committee, we see that Quebec's process allows for broader consultations than federal legislation in recent years, since it was adopted.

Why would we want to strengthen a federal act when the process works well in Quebec?

What we have here today is a fait accompli. The government opposite has refused to take Quebeckers' interests into account.

Back at second reading, I mentioned a study done by the Government of Quebec several years ago on the application of the federal legislation. The Government of Quebec made comments about the legislation. I would like to quote from an analysis the federal government received at that time from the Minister of the Environment, Jean Charest. The Government of Quebec felt that, and I quote:

> Bill C-13 is a steamroller condemning everybody to a forced uniformization, which might in turn jeopardize the environmental assessment process in Quebec and needlessly bring into question all our efforts in this area.

Members will recall that a judgment rendered several years ago by Justice La Forest stated that a federal department or panel cannot use the guidelines order as a colourable device to invade areas of provincial jurisdiction which are unconnected to the relevant federal powers.

We believe that this attempt to further strengthen, with Bill C-9, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, duplicates environmental assessment processes that already work well.

What the federal government could do is recognize Quebec's legislation and review process, and recognize the BAPE as the sole body to review projects, given that it has demonstrated that the process works well.

● (1645)

Therefore, inevitably, we cannot support this bill, and we will be voting against it when the time comes.

The federal government has to understand one thing, and that is that the process works well in Quebec. Why duplicate what already works?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Palliser, Agriculture.

[*English*]

Mr. Alan Tonks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise with respect to the report stage of Bill C-9. In spite of the comments that have been made by my hon. colleague, I would like to say how much I think that the committee's deliberations in fact were what I believe to be a true characterization of how in committee we should work to find consensus with respect to issues that on their appearance may divide us.

In that spirit, I would like to thank the members of the committee for the efforts that they have made with respect to making this legislation a practical working document and an understandable document that will guide Canadians, in partnership with both levels of government, the provincial and the federal, to understand the workings of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

In particular, I would like to thank the former parliamentary secretary, the member for Kitchener Centre, who in fact shepherded much of this legislation, at least the clause-by-clause process, through committee. I would like to express my appreciation to the member.

The standing committee heard from dozens of groups and from citizens about the need to improve Bill C-9. In fact, there was a wealth of information that was transformed into 75 amendments, which I believe will result in very practical improvements.

I would also like to say that almost 75 amendments were made to Bill C-9 during committee stage. As has been pointed out, these have been distilled down to two groups of clauses that will streamline the bill. I believe that Canadians and our environment will benefit from a legacy that the bill will establish and will continue through the application of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

I really do not know with respect to the points that have been raised by the hon. member that appear to be an exception of the spirit of that act, but I would like to reply to just one part of the concerns that he raised with respect to the conflict between provincial and federal legislation.

I would like to point out to the member that in 1998 there were approximately 160 projects that required both federal and provincial environmental assessment. In 1998, a Canada-wide accord on environmental harmonization and its subagreement on environmental assessment were signed by all provinces and territories, except Quebec, providing the foundation for a cooperative approach when both levels of government have environmental assessment responsibilities.

That spirit is embodied in clause 2(b.2) of the bill, which signals the importance of cooperation and coordination between federal and provincial governments when both levels of government are required, through their respective legislation, to conduct an environmental assessment of a project.

I hope that the hon. member will be in fact satisfied to some extent, although his province has not signed on to that accord, that the framework of the spirit and intent is embodied in Bill C-9.

I would like to focus my comments with respect to the timing of decisions and then on a few legal housekeeping items, as indicated by the Chair.

During our review of Bill C-9, Jeff Barnes of the Canadian Construction Association told the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development that under the current Canadian Environmental Assessment Act there have been unfortunate situations where the public only finds out about a project "when the bulldozers arrive on site". Obviously that is not appropriate or satisfactory.

Bill C-9 addresses this problem through the establishment of a government-wide Internet site for project information. This means that Canadians will be able to go on line to learn about projects proposed for their communities. Among other things, the Internet site will include notification that an assessment of a proposed project has started, notices requesting input from the public, and environmental assessment decisions. The standing committee strengthened and expanded the provisions for the Internet site in several ways.

● (1650)

For example, the notice of the beginning of an environmental assessment must be posted on the Internet within 14 days of the start of the assessment. Decisions on whether to require a follow-up program for a proposed project would have to be posted. Decisions on the scope of the project would also have to be included. We heard about this whole matter of scoping. It would pre-empt some of the other processes so the public would know whether decisions are being made with respect to scoping at the beginning of the process. The terms of reference for a mediator or a review panel would also be available online. All of these changes would help to ensure Canadians have the information they need to participate in environmental assessments involving the Government of Canada.

The standing committee made an amendment to delay any decision until 30 days have passed from the posting on the Internet site of the last document associated with the project. The idea of providing a reasonable period of time for the public to access information on the registry before decisions are made makes a lot of sense. This has been incorporated into the bill. There are problems however with the way the committee amendment is structured. The proposed motions before the committee have several refinements to the standing committee's original approach and I would like to outline them.

First, for screening level assessments that deal with smaller, less complex projects, the government motion provides that decisions may only occur 15 days after the notice of commencement. Information about the scope of the project would be posted on the Internet site. Motion No. 22 is designed to prevent situations where public access to reports may be delayed, even though final decisions have been made. Countless numbers of times great exception was taken to that through the public participation process.

Motions Nos. 15 and 17 are designed to provide the public and interested parties with ample time to comment on environmental assessment reports for larger and more complex projects. They ensure that these reports would be publicly available for at least 30 days before decisions would be made about those projects. These amendments would add precision to the important changes made by the standing committee. As a result, the public would be guaranteed a reasonable period of time in which it could access information and provide input, possibly influencing governmental decisions.

The balance of those clauses are legal housekeeping changes that would correct errors with respect to ensuring concurrence between the French and English versions of the bill and to ensure that Bill C-9 is consistent with other recent legislation.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to address Bill C-9 and this first group of amendments to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, or CEAA.

The bill is a result of the mandatory five year review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. While I was not part of the committee process, it is extraordinary to me that the government would introduce such a volume of amendments at report stage. Perhaps the standing committee thought it was the master of its own destiny and did something with the bill and now the government must fix it to suit itself.

The amendments in this group are almost exclusively government amendments to the bill and that seems a little curious after it has been through the clause by clause committee process.

The government failed to allow all of CEAA to be reviewed and limited debate on a number of important aspects of environmental assessment including the advancement of adaptive management techniques. This is regrettable and certainly was a big issue with some companies in my riding that were looking for movement from the government on that issue.

However, there are improvements to the bill which were passed in committee. They must be recognized and appreciated for the improvements they bring to the bill.

The bill has positives but they are clearly not entirely the answer. The amendments the government has put forward at report stage are no different. Some of the amendments are needed as last minute improvements to language and small technicalities. Others are designed to subvert the intent of the work of the committee.

The Canadian Alliance takes great exception and objects strongly to these tactics by the government. The Alliance opposes amendments designed to limit reporting by the government or any amendment designed to reduce transparency that was proposed by the committee.

On the positive side Bill C-9 would create a Canadian environmental assessment registry which would provide more public access to documents surrounding a project through an online database. A coordinator position would be created to administer this registry.

The committee often made positive improvements to Bill C-9 despite the best wishes of the government and the PMO. I assume that those improvements are being corrected to the government's satisfaction.

Here are some of the improvements. First, new scoping provisions would begin before a project is approved. These provisions would assist both project proponents and other interested groups to have a better understanding of the full scope of the project prior to submissions or objections being made. This transparency should increase trust between the groups that have traditionally clashed over environmental issues.

Second, the online registry would be improved to provide more and better information and to ensure that those without Internet access could still obtain the information they sought. However, certain government amendments would seek to subtly reduce some aspects of this transparency and we oppose such attempts.

The third improvement concerns the inclusion of reasonable time limits for the release of documentation. The Alliance amendments were accepted to ensure that the information posted on the registry would be timely and available to answer any concerns before significant issues develop.

Fourth, the legislation would automatically be reviewed in seven years. The review would be conducted by a committee which would allow the whole act to be opened up for improvements, not just sections that the government would deem important, as occurred in this round.

● (1655)

On the negative side the review is critical given the flaws that remain in the act following the review process.

First, crown corporations have been exempted from coverage under CEAA and over the next three years would be allowed to create separate regulations governing environmental assessments. The government did not adequately explain why separate regulatory regimes should be needed for any but a handful of crown corporations. The government should have provided a list of crown corporations requiring exemption with the reasons why. This was never done.

Second, Bill C-9 would amend the act to allow the minister to revisit an environmental assessment and return to the public for further consultations prior to issuing a decision statement. This could allow the minister to delay issuance of a decision statement simply because an issue was politically sensitive. Such discretionary power could be open to political abuse.

Third, the Alliance lobbied to provide municipal and local land use authorities equal input into the assessment process as would be enjoyed by first nations bands. Municipal governments could be affected by federal projects near or in their jurisdictions. They should have an equal right to express their concerns within the assessment process. Sadly, they do not.

Despite these concerns, the Canadian Alliance always seeks to balance environmental preservation and economic development. We support a timely, single window approval process with enforceable environmental regulations and meaningful penalties. While by no means perfect, Bill C-9 would amend the CEAA in a positive way in this respect by encouraging partnerships with interested parties on all projects. It is a step toward streamlining the approval process and providing proponents and interested parties access to needed information.

Between now and the next review of CEAA, the Canadian Alliance will be watching closely to see how the changes put forward in Bill C-9 would affect environmental assessment in Canada so that we can take the next step and improve upon the process. Environmental protection and the needs of industry must be meshed and both viewpoints must be considered in this process.

We reluctantly support Bill C-9 in the interest of compromise so that the reasonable amendments won in committee will not have been won in vain.

● (1700)

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-9, an act to amend the Environmental Assessment Act.

As we look at this first group of motions at report stage, it is useful to provide a bit of background to the bill that came about as a result of the requirements of the mandatory statutory review requirements set out in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act that was proclaimed 11 years ago and came into force in January 1995.

A section of the current act required that the minister responsible for the environment undertake a comprehensive review of the provisions and operation of the act five years after its coming into force. It also and required that within one year after the review, the minister submit a report on the review to Parliament, including a statement of any recommended changes.

Discussions and consultations took place between December 1999 through March 2000, and the precursor to this bill was tabled a couple of years ago.

At the outset the review was fundamentally flawed. We felt that the minister's report failed to address significant deficiencies revealed over the five year history of the Environmental Assessment Act and we initially opposed the bill based on the assertion that it did fail to address three principal criteria.

First, the current Environmental Assessment Act did not go sufficiently far enough to protect our environment and the changes proposed in Bill C-9, in our opinion, would weaken the legislation additionally.

Second, the legislation before us attempted to streamline and speed up the environmental assessment and review process but we felt seemingly to the primary benefit of developers and industry instead of protecting the environment and the public.

Third, the bill did not substantively address the measures needed to strengthen and improve safeguards to protect our fragile environment.

During debate on the bill and throughout committee hearings, my colleague, the member for Windsor—St. Clair, raised these and many other concerns regarding the lack of effectiveness, the lack of transparency and the inefficiency in the environmental assessment process. After reviewing the legislation and consulting with a variety of environmental, aboriginal and legal experts, that member submitted more than 50 amendments to Bill C-9 at the committee stage. The amendments attempted to redress some of the shortcomings that we had identified in the act. Most of those amendments were defeated and the bill that has returned from committee and is before us this afternoon has failed to address those concerns. They included predictability and timeliness for all participants in the process. It also failed to address enhancing the quality of assessments and ensuring more meaningful public participation.

Although the bill and the amendments partially address some of the concerns relating to the efficiency of the process, it is unclear to us how the effectiveness or transparency of the environmental assessment process will be improved through this legislation.

Many groups and individuals commented on the need to review the entire environmental assessment process. In fact, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, in its submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, commented on the need for review of the entire process and not simply to limit the scope to amendments made in the bill. It stated:

> —in its current form, CEAA will continue to be applied to fewer projects, with little or no opportunity for meaningful public involvement.

While Bill C-9 attempts to address some of the glaring inadequacies of the Environmental Assessment Act, it does not specifically address the shortcomings of the process.

While we would agree that there are some recommendations and issues within the report that we support in principle, we are unable to endorse the complete document because it fails to address the concerns that were laid out so clearly at the committee stage by the member for Windsor—St. Clair.

● (1705)

Unfortunately, the final report has been watered down over the course of numerous revisions. It appears that many of the concessions made during the drafting of the report were aimed at appeasing the Privy Council and the Prime Minister's Office instead of forcefully addressing the inadequacies of the environmental assessment process. We maintain that the changes proposed in the bill and report will move environmental assessment toward the lowest common denominator, much as our free trade agreements have done in other areas.

It is also regrettable that the report, which contains some strong wording in the text, lacks similarly forceful wording within its recommendations. The recommendations are just that and there is nothing compelling the government to actually act upon them.

As indicated earlier, one of our principal concerns was with the streamlining or harmonization of the environmental assessment process. Our concerns about harmonization seem to have been justified as the report includes section 1.3 which cites a provincial and federal harmonization agreement as an example of addressing the issues of co-operation, uncertainty and duplication of effort.

In fact, when we attempted to introduce amendments to create a greater certainty and less duplication of effort, they were defeated by members opposite at the committee stage.

The committee did hear considerable evidence to suggest that the federal environmental assessment is indeed not "making a significant contribution to sustainable development". The report, however, contains no meaningful recommendations for immediate changes to the process or for ensuring that changing the process would be given the highest priority in any subsequent review of the act.

Another instance of where we dissent from the findings of the report is in section 2.3 which states:

> —the Committee felt that the goals of Bill C-9 were laudable, and that the bill should improve CEAA and federal EA as a whole.

We remain skeptical and unconvinced that the bill will make meaningful improvements to the stated objectives in the process. In fact, the bill does not even address adequately the three goals outlined by the minister when it was first introduced.

Another area where we disagree is in section 2.8 which states:

> This report examines areas where the current federal approach has not succeeded, sets out a number of important challenges that remain to be addressed, and provides recommendations on what should be done. The report deals with the basic questions. In short, how can the federal EA process be improved to better meet the goals of sustainable development?

The report does not deal with the entire environmental assessment process and meeting the goals of sustainable development. Nothing in the report or the bill provides consequential reassurances that deficiencies within the Environmental Assessment Act and process will be remedied.

Throughout the examination of Bill C-9 the committee heard witnesses discuss problems with self-assessments, the failure of the regulatory authority to trigger an environmental assessment in a timely fashion and the lack of meaningful, timely public participation. These problems are not addressed adequately in the bill nor in the recommendations contained in the report. The report also lacks meaningful recommendations requiring enforcement or oversight mechanisms to ensure that federal authorities comply with the act.

These are just some illustrations of how we feel the report and the bill fail to deal with Canadians' stated concerns on our fragile environment.

It is disappointing that so much time and hard work has been dedicated to such a meagre piece of legislation as we see before us. The committee heard from numerous witnesses on the need to simplify the process. In the final analysis, Bill C-9 does little to meet these objectives and Canadians are left with a complex, confusing and basically inaccessible piece of legislation. Given the shortcomings of the act and the amending legislation, we recommend that an entirely new Environmental Assessment Act be introduced, an act that would create an environmental assessment process that would be efficient and allow for public participation.

We oppose this. Unfortunately and regrettably we have to stand in opposition to it. In conclusion I would simply say that we cannot support Bill C-9 or the recommendations of the report of the standing committee. We in this caucus would say that we need to leave a much softer footprint on our fragile environment. We did not simply inherit this planet from our ancestors. We are preserving it for our children and their children, and in that vein we are in opposition to Bill C-9.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this legislation is already 10 years old. The whole issue of environmental assessment deserves to be reviewed much more fully than it is in Bill C-9.

What happened is that an internal government study produced a bill dealing only with some aspects of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. A much more comprehensive assessment would have been required. It should have addressed fundamental questions like cumulative impact, which were raised repeatedly. To this day, 10 years after the act came into force, 99% of assessments take the form of screenings.

We need to determine how many steps ahead we are with Bill C-9. It must be recognized that the committee has done pretty consistent work, and worthwhile work. It has put forward proposals and amaendments that have certainly improved on the original bill.

Still, in what little time I have at my disposal, I would like to focus on considerations I think are critical to any environmental assessment bill.

[*English*]

I am talking about public participation, especially in screening, considering that most environmental assessments under the federal system take place as screenings; 99% do, amazingly enough. If we look at what has been happening, I think we will see that we have not reached the kinds of goals we wanted, first of all on screenings, if they have to be the majority of assessments. I hope that gradually we are going to move toward comprehensive assessments, which is what we have been asking for, to give more powers to the minister. The regulations could be published to give the minister all the powers he needs to declare comprehensive assessments instead of screenings that go from department to department, from the official of one department to the official of another department under the guise of environmental assessment.

I would like to quote what the Canadian Environmental Law Association proposed to the committee when it set out eight core elements that it felt should be the core elements in any system of law relating to environmental assessment. This is what the Environmental Law Association said in regard to core item No. 5:

> The legislation must provide for a significant public role early and often in the planning process, and thus must contain provisions relating to public notice and comment, access to information, participant funding, and related procedural matters.

The committee had suggested that, first of all, screenings be part of any public participation and notice. It had also suggested that a period of 30 days be put in place before any screenings are made into decisions. The government has amended this at report stage. It has provided a two tier system, effectively, in regard to screenings. The idea was that we do not want to delay small projects such as little bridges and so forth. Really, it is a two tier system, part of which reduces the 30 days to 15 days.

But I would like to point out, because the parliamentary secretary spoke at length in this regard, that the whole of this provision is subject to subsection 18(3) of the law, whereby discretion is given to the government to decide whether or not public participation, notice and publication will be required. It is at the discretion of the responsible authority as to whether this happens or does not happen. It seems to me that this very case of discretion negates anything that we would want to do in favour of greater public participation. It seems to me that public participation is the key to everything.

I would like to comment on a case that happened in Federal Court on March 4, 2003. It is a very recent judgment by Mr. Justice Blais of the Federal Court. In the case of the Sierra Club of Canada v. the Attorney General of Canada, Mr. Justice Blais found that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO, provided an inadequate opportunity for the public to comment on the screening report relating to a proposal by Bounty Bay Shellfish Incorporated and 5M Aqua Farms Limited to establish mussel aquaculture in St. Ann's Harbour, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. As a result, Justice Blais quashed DFO's approval of the project, ordering a reasonable period for review and comment on the screening report.

● (1715)

Justice Blais wrote:

> After a reading of subsection 18(3) of the [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act], it seems clear to me that, once the responsible authority exercised its discretion—

I point out that he said "discretion", which is still in the law.

> —and determined that public participation was appropriate, it had an obligation to give the public an opportunity to examine and comment [on] not only the EIS, but also the screening report.
>
> Such was not the case.

In fact, there was a ball game between Mr. Hominick and Ms. Donovan of DFO, which lasted a matter of days, between March 26 and April 3, 2002. Ms. Donovan, a very brief time after receiving a screening report from Mr. Hominick, decided to give approval of the project to the proponents.

Herein lies the whole question. First, should it be at the discretion of the authorities and the powers that be or should it be part of a compulsory obligation upon the ministry or agency to make sure that public participation, public awareness, public comment and public notice are part of the act? This is the question. One can say whether it is 15 or 30 days and whether small projects are different from big projects and arrange it accordingly, but if the discretion is left so that screenings, first of all, which are the great majority anyway, are not always subject to public transparency or a chance for the public to comment or to be given notice, then the whole case has to be reviewed. It is not satisfactory. Only full mandatory public participation will ensure that these screenings are done seriously.

What happens in every case that I have seen is that departments make these evaluations, one to the other. It has been commented on by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, who has said the process right now does not work.

In the minute that is left I would suggest that not only is a thorough evaluation of the present act, including this amendment to Bill C-9, required to bring environmental assessment a little step forward, bit by bit, clause by clause, but an overall evaluation is required to take in the whole principle of environmental assessment. Let us make it open to public participation, make it transparent and make it real.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C-9. I want to say from the outset that, like the hon. member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, I totally disagree with this bill.

I am also taking this opportunity to congratulate the hon. member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie for his excellent work on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. He has made it his prime concern to protect the interests of Quebec and what Quebec has been doing well, and even very well, regarding the environment.

This is why, in my opinion, Bill C-9, which amends the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, should not exist. This basic legislation came into effect on January 1995 and is the process through which the federal government decides whether or not to approve projects that could have an environmental impact.

The federal government wants to get involved in projects in Quebec that have already been approved by the Quebec government. Let us not forget that Quebec has an environmental process. When objections are raised, the BAPE gets involved and settles the issue.

I notice that, with this bill, the federal government is once again intruding on provincial jurisdictions, despite what the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis, who is a former minister in the Quebec government, just said. The hon. member just told us that he supports having two levels of environmental protection. Even though I truly admire the former Quebec minister of the environment, and even though I have always held him in high esteem, I completely disagree with him on this issue.

It is the opposite. The hon. member should realize that we alaready have a tool, which is not perfect but which we improve whenever we have an opportunity to do so.

I would like to give an example of what is currently going on in the Canada-Quebec infrastructure issue. There are major problems. This is an area where the federal, provincial and municipal governments each bear one third of the costs.

Let me give an example which clearly shows that the federal government does not have any business in the assessment process. I will give the example of a small community located in the riding of Berthier—Montcalm, close to Joliette. I am referring to the municipality of Saint-Jean-de-Matha.

This municipality had submitted a project for the construction of a dam. The Quebec government requested several studies from the municipality in order to ensure that the project was environmentally sound.

As hon. members are aware, I am the Bloc Quebecois critic for Canada-Quebec infrastructure and also for regional matters.

Once the documents were received and analyzed, the Government of Quebec registered it as one of its priorities and indicated this to the federal government, in order to obtain the federal one-third share of the funds requested.

However, this did not happen, as it should have, in view of what Quebec had required of the municipality in the way of studies and documents. Under the Canada Environmental Assessment Act, Environment Canada asked the municipality to carry out other studies, including ones on fish and migratory birds.

Imagine the cost of these additional studies. They would add up to $20,000 or $25,000 for a small municipality with a population of barely a few thousand. Ottawa does not plan to help it with these studies. It prefers bleeding the taxpayers of this little municipality dry to helping them. It has demanded additional assessments despite the municipality's having provided the Quebec government with documents that fully met its requirements.

● (1725)

What is more, when the municipality of Saint-Jean-de-Mantha indicated to the federal government that it could forward all the studies Quebec had required, the response was, “No, we do not want them. We want you to do the studies that we require”. Quebec had already required some, but now more are required.

So the response was no. Ottawa demanded more environmental assessments. It is Bill C-9 that prevents—

Mr. Claude Duplain: One case; that is only one case.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: Madam Speaker, I have the right to refer to a case, and this is a case that everyone knows about.

That is why I do not support Bill C-9. It constitutes complete interference with areas of provincial jurisdiction, especially in Quebec. Even Ontario, when it comes to the issue of infrastructure, has not agreed to comply with the federal government rules. Ontario has decided to make its own assessments and has said, “that is how we are going to do things”.

This is a useless bill that will cost a fortune, that will hamper projects in small municipalities and larger municipalities alike. It might also be a way for the government to hold back money, to keep from putting up its share.

● (1730)

This is a concrete example of the federal government's interference. The reason there have been so few infrastructure projects announced is obvious. It is because Ottawa blocks them thanks to legislation that duplicates what the provinces are doing.

Ottawa is probably the government that restricts itself the least to its own jurisdictions under the Canadian constitution. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, our dear Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, has the nerve to tell us that Canada is a decentralized federation. That is a joke. This just shows how out of touch he is, just like this bill is out of touch with the needs of all of the provinces.

That is why the bill before us today is unacceptable. Once again, Ottawa is like a bull in a china shop. With this bill, Ottawa has become the ingredient that has soured a good recipe. It is blocking the whole process, the sand in the gears. In other words, this bill is useless, because Quebec already has legislation that works very well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY SUPPORT FUND

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should make available to Members a support fund for community activities in each of their ridings.

He said: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank my hon. friend from Jonquière and all the hon. members who support me in this motion.

I am pleased to speak today on behalf of a sector of society that, unfortunately, is somewhat neglected and not often talked about. It is a sector without which society would have great difficulty functioning. Naturally, I want to talk about community groups. I think the time has come for Ottawa to invest in this fundamental social activity.

There are many community groups and without them we would have trouble coping, as I said before. In fact, all the so-called “institutions” of Quebec and Canada would not be a match for this task. We cannot simply say that we will look to the hospitals, the CLSCs, or all of Quebec's and Canada's institutions to help people in trouble.

There are community groups which are noteworthy for the type of intervention they offer and which are extremely useful to society. I have just noted a few of them, but there are hundreds in any riding.

For instance, there are all those people who take care of literacy activities and those who provide support to families. In my riding there is a group called “Famille en coeur”; instead of going to the CLSC, children and parents go there to talk about families and to share ideas about the way they can support each other, trading services or other things. There is no institution providing this service.

We also have suicide prevention groups. Suicide among young people is enormously costly for society in psychological, social and economic terms. These people are available to try to listen to young people and take preventive action.

There are also youth centres. Some villages in my riding have youth centres, and if it where not for these centres, there would be no young people left in the village. They would move away because there is absolutely nothing to do at night in their village. They would take off every night for the nearest big town without telling their parents. So, youth centres make a significant contribution. Those who work there are dedicated to youth. They are often experts, and they listen to and help provide guidance to young people.

The Mouvement écologique du Haut-Richelieu is another example. I am sure that there are many environmental movements in the various ridings across Quebec and Canada, some looking after a river or a lake or fighting to save wooded areas. We were just talking about the environment. These are the kind of people who develop the collective consciousness of a community. They, therefore, have important roles to play.

There is also what I call the disability constituency, with groups looking after disability support and housing for persons with disabilities, even if there is public funding for that. Ottawa is sometimes criticized for not making enough money available for social housing. Individuals who promote and advocate social housing for persons with disabilities get together and establish boards, many of whose members are often persons with disabilities. This is totally voluntary work they are doing. Transporting disabled people is no easy task. Specialized transportation is required.

Some of these people who get together, these groups of volunteers and boards who set up this kind of community group make an extremely worthwhile contribution to society.

As I said earlier, we must also think about what would happen if these groups were not there. I can also think of volunteer groups, volunteer centres, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Optimist Clubs and their credo "Friend of Youth", the Lyons Clubs and their motto "We Serve".

MPs are not the only ones serving society. And these people are doing it on a voluntary basis.

Let us also not forget that these people spend half of their time looking for funding. Recurrent funding is very rare. When these people get some appreciation, some recognition, when their member of Parliament tells them that they are doing a great job, they are always very pleased.

● (1735)

It is all fine and dandy to tell people, "We recognize your contribution, you are extraordinary, you are doing a fantastic job and we wish you luck". This has happened to me on a number of occasions. Unlike the federal government, the Quebec provincial government does recognize the work of community groups through a discretionary fund.

An MNA from Quebec or an MLA from another province that has the same type of fund can say, "I am pleased to support you and to give you a cheque for $1,000", whereas a federal member of Parliament can only say, "I am proud to give you my support, I wish you luck and good night, everyone".

This puts us in a slightly uncomfortable position. The federal government is not doing its share to help these community groups. It is important to support them.

At the present time, the only recourse we have is to take the money from our advertising budget. Imagine how I feel when someone representing a youth drop-in centre comes to my office and says, "Mr. Bachand, I got some money from the Member of the National Assembly. Can you do your part?" I have to say that we do not have that kind of funds at our disposal, but that we do have an advertising fund. So I have to ask, "Are you able to organize some kind of activity where we could put up a sign from the MP or put his card on the tables? If you can, I can give you $300 or $400". Often they have no activity planned, so we have to either go through all the red tape or take indirect means of recognizing them and helping them out

I think the importance of this budget is obvious, but people will probably have objections. "You know, it makes for more red tape". As for me, if I got another $10,000 or $60,000 in my budget, my staff would find the extra time to manage it, because I would have told them to. When it comes down to it, it will mean considerable recognition. It will be a plus for the riding, something community groups can count on.

Others may say, "It is too complicated, and I will have to choose between them". Obviously, as MPs, we do have to decide where to focus our time and attention among the causes submitted to us. When we do indirect publicity in order to help out, we are more or less saying, "I am doing this for you, but I cannot do it directly for this or that reason". This is part of what an MP has to do every day.

If hon. members read my motion carefully, they will see that I did not want to get into the nuts and bolts of it. When one does, one has to get into the mechanisms for acceptance, how the funds will be allocated, and if a minister of the Crown needs to be involved.

I do not want to get into that, but I just want to say that I imagine the Board of Internal Economy will have something to say about it. I hesitated, I wanted to put an amount, but finally decided not to, because what I want to do primarily is convince my colleagues of the principle.

I want to convince my hon. colleagues that it is important to have such a fund and that it be available to them. Of course, there are programs in the federal system and people can be referred to them. But to do that, someone has to make calls and try to find the person in charge. Then that person calls us back two weeks later and no one is certain just what the criteria are for this kind of activity. When things get completely bogged down, we go over and see our hon. friends on the other side, the ministers, to try to convince them that the group's application is for a worthy cause and that it deserves funding.

That is very complicated and takes a lot of time; success is not guaranteed. Finally, the application gets sent on to someone else, in programs for which the individuals in question do not qualify. At times, it is the beginning of a term or the end of a fiscal year and there is no money left. Apologies are made, and we are told to try again in the next budget; we have to go back to another budget and the process slows down accordingly.

People get discouraged. Community groups begin to understand that they cannot count on the federal member for their riding, but only on their member of the National Assembly. In Quebec, that is often what happens.

Therefore, I have not set an amount, nor have I indicated how the fund is to be created. I invite my hon. colleagues to remember that the idea is for them to have some discretionary funding available.

● (1740)

If they decide they have a particular affinity for one group and they find that they do excellent work in the riding, they cold give it the amount they wanted. If they find that another group is not as good, or if that group's results are less impressive, they can give less money, or they can say, "We will not give any money".

I think that it is important for members to recognize this kind of work. It is important that members say, "yes, you contribute to society in Quebec and Canada. Yes, we recognize that the work you are doing helps. We know that your situation is difficult, because you are constantly looking for recurrent funding".

However, when someone from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul came to see us, saying, "My fridge broke down, what can you do to help?", I was forced to improvise. I had a steel panel made, which I attached to the fridge because the man could not afford a new fridge, and the MNA had already given him money and did not want to give more.

So we are forced to come up with these types of solutions to try to abide by the law, because we do not want to do anything illegal, either. We abide by the law. We have been told, "This is now done through advertising". Obviously, since the sponsorship scandal, there have not been any more sponsorships in our ridings. If we send a bill to Ottawa with sponsorship written on it, it is rejected.

So we are forced to advertise. We put signs on tables. We stick posters on the walls. We attach panels on fridges. We are forced to do all sorts of things. We leave MP business cards on tables at the Cage aux sports, or other steakhouses, because there is an organization there that night doing fundraising that wants our support. We have to do that kind of thing.

It would be much simpler if we could say to these organizations, "Drop by my office. Bring your mission statement. Come with your board of directors. Bring your results. Then we will see what kind of money we have and how much we can spare". Then we could decide how much money we have and what we want to give this group. It seems to me that this would be the right way to do things.

I also want to point out that advertising will remain an item. However, instead of allocating $30,000, $40,000 or $50,000 of a member's budget, which may total $230,000 next year, to advertising, this will help members, who will no longer have to resort to the kind of ploys I just described to have money to recognize the work of community organizations.

It is therefore important that this be available. I want to remind my hon. colleagues that this will be an additional budgetary tool. As I said earlier, I do not know whether it will be included in their budget or be separate. I leave it up to the Board of Internal Economy to decide. What matters to me is the principle, and it is on this principle that I urge my hon. colleagues to vote.

If you recognize the work of organizations in your ridings, you will have a tool especially designed for that, and they will be very grateful to you. It will be one more tool.

I think the time has come to recognize these community groups. I listed a number of them earlier, and there are many more. I am sure that the hon. members who are listening can think of many such groups and are as inclined and anxious as me to help them. The costs involved will not be astronomical. When the government is running budgetary surpluses totalling $13 billion, it seems to me that a few millions should be made available to recognize these community groups.

I notice that my time is almost up. I will conclude by saying that the time to recognize these groups has come. They need to be encouraged. They need to be supported. I urge my colleagues to think hard and long about this. This kind of budget and funding should make everyone happy. Let us set the issue of arbitration and mechanisms aside. Let us make this budget available and promote the work of community groups without which the community and society at large could not function.

● (1745)

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for having raised this issue, which has piqued the interest of some of the hon. members. I would like to ask him some questions.

First, with such a system, how could we be sure that public funds were not being used in a partisan way? That is one problem I can foresee.

Second, what are the circumstances in which such a fund could be used?

Third, how could we ensure proper management of this fund? I do not doubt that the hon. member's intentions are good. Nevertheless, we do know that where government programs are concerned, our parliamentary system requires that the ministers appear in the House and answer questions; thus they are answerable for these programs and must take responsibility.

With such a system, how could this responsibility be ensured?

Mr. Claude Bachand: Madam Speaker, as I said, I do not want to get too technical, but I think that someone should be in charge, perhaps a minister of the Crown.

As for the issue of partisanship, I think the hon. member must also have a say in career placements every summer. He has some discretion. In my riding, the process is as follows: the employment centre comes up with a series of projects and public officials say, "These are the ones that we approve. We know that you have the last word; so put them in the proper order". Some negotiating goes on with public officials. So, there is a degree of discretion involved.

I also remind the hon. member that when we decide to provide advertising for figure skating or for a spaghetti dinner organized by the Optimist Club, the amount that we give is also at our discretion.

I must say that I personally do not ask all kinds of details of the person who walks into my office. I look at the cause that the person is promoting. If it is a worthy cause and if some success has been achieved over the past few years, I am inclined to give and to give a little more. But I agree with the hon. member that we can never completely eliminate partisanship.

Personally, I do not want to talk about partisanship. When a person comes to my office with an interesting project, when there is a good community group involved, I make an effort. This instrument would help us make additional efforts to help community groups.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and for having brought to the attention of this House the importance of supporting volunteer action in the various communities of Canada and Quebec.

I know that some months ago the federal government felt the need to do its part toward helping the communities. A framework agreement was negotiated between the government and the communities of Canada and Quebec to make financial support possible.

I think that this government always has the same reflex, which is not negative in itself, to always involve the bureaucracy. There are merits to that. I do, however, think that there is no department which has as much of a finger on the pulse of all the communities as this House of Commons does. We have a representative of this House in each and every one of the 301 ridings in Canada and Quebec.

Why does the government not wish to provide community assistance via these representatives? We are in the best position to identify local needs.

I will just point out in closing that we in Quebec have asked ourselves whether there was not a relative advantage on the partisan level which would work in favour of the incumbent when there was an election, if a discretionary budget of this nature were allocated. The Quebec chief electoral office looked into this and the finding was that, no, there would not be an advantage to an incumbent.

So there is also no need to worry about a partisan advantage, because this would all be jointly administered by the MPs and the department identified as the administrator of the program, as is the case with the summer career placements and HRDC.

● (1750)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): There is almost no time left for a reply. The hon. member for Saint-Jean may respond briefly.

Mr. Claude Bachand: Madam Speaker, I only want to say that I support my colleague with respect to his comments regarding the importance of elected officials. There are programs that are managed by officials. We can intervene, but it takes longer.

Elected officials need to be trusted. Again, this fund would be for all members, without exception, regardless of political stripe. It would be fair and avoid partisanship.

[*English*]

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to take part in today's debate on Motion No. 393 put forward by my highly esteemed colleague from Saint-Jean, who I might add is also a member of the defence committee. He has served with great dedication and commitment over the past few years on the defence committee.

The motion reads:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should make available to members a support fund for community activities in each of their ridings.

The motion, as has been indicated, calls on the government to give money to MPs who would administer these funds to support community activities in their ridings. I cannot support the motion unfortunately, since I believe it is unnecessary and as well, it could be very negatively perceived by Canadian taxpayers.

I do not believe the motion is necessary because the government already delivers programs to support community activities in a variety of ways. In the course of the next few minutes I will attempt to outline some of the ways in which the government does act to support various community activities.

For example, the Department of Canadian Heritage provides funding to support local initiatives related to arts and culture. Arts Presentation Canada provides funding to volunteer and non-profit organizations for arts events and festivals. The funding provided can be up to 25% of the event's cost. That is very significant funding. Cultural Spaces Canada provides funding to non-profit organizations, cities and aboriginal councils for cultural infrastructure, such as the construction and renovation of arts facilities.

Of course members are free to lobby the government to support initiatives in their own communities. However, giving additional money for MPs to use at their discretion would, in many respects, only serve to duplicate the various programs that the government already has.

The government also has programs where MPs are formally involved in the decision making process, such as in the employment programs administered by HRDC. For example, the summer career placements program provides employment experience for summer students as part of the government's youth employment strategy.

The program consists of wage subsidies to employers to hire summer students. The program spends $91 million a year, which is allocated first by provinces and territories and then by constituency. Regional HRDC officials assess proposals based on said criteria and then provide a list of proposals to the local MP for their concurrence.

Another program is the job creation partnerships program provided under the EI act. This program is delivered in the provinces where no labour market agreements exist, such as Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and P.E.I. The program provides $2 billion so that workers can obtain job experience. HRDC formally consults local MPs on specific projects.

One can see that the government already provides programs to support local activities. Today's motion would only serve to duplicate some of these programs.

I have a more fundamental concern with the program proposed in the motion and that is how Canadian taxpayers might perceive it. If we are to give money to MPs to spend at their discretion, there could easily be a perception that the money could be used for partisan purposes. That has already been alluded to by the hon. member for Halifax West. I am sure that this is not the intention of the hon. member who proposed the motion. I have absolutely no doubt as to the integrity of the hon. member for Saint-Jean in this respect.

I am confident that most parliamentarians, certainly the vast majority, would use the funding for worthwhile, non-partisan purposes. However, there is that risk that Canadian taxpayers and voters would not share this view.

● (1755)

I am also concerned that Canadians could have a perception that this money would not be an effective use of funds, especially since it would duplicate, in many cases, existing government programs. This concern is highlighted by the fact that the motion before us is silent on how the accountability issues would be addressed or for what purpose the money would be used.

I would draw the attention of the House to Ontario's brief experience with a similar program, which provides a good example of why we should be careful with the type of program that is proposed in this motion. Ontario had a program that allowed members to charge costs associated with attending events, such as fundraising events. However this program was abandoned after one year because it was negatively perceived. In this regard we have to learn from the Ontario experience.

The member for Saint-Jean has put forward an approach for the spending of public funds that does or should at least raise serious concerns for all members of the House. The motion could raise serious concerns among Canadians about the proper use of public money, accountability for public spending and the role of members of Parliament in general.

I served on municipal council in Nepean for close to nine years and for a couple of terms, I was part of a grants committee which was part of the city's processes. Although we did dispense some money to various groups for various purposes based on certain criteria, what we ended up finding was there were so many good and valid groups that we simply could not support because there was not enough money or perhaps because they missed some aspect of the criteria that we had established.

As well, from a general standpoint, we are members of Parliament, we are legislators and we are constituency workers as well. We try to solve problems that people bring to us involving various departments. In terms of our function, we are not a grants agency and we have to keep that in mind as well. We simply cannot be all things to all people, and we should know this as members of Parliament. The moment we start to go down that road, it will be a very difficult moment for MPs.

Speaking about the general accountability issues here, the Auditor General would have a field day with a program of this nature. The Auditor General of course is charged by Parliament to ensure that the Canadian taxpayer is getting value for money spent. I cannot help but think that the Auditor General would come to the conclusion that this program would be something of a boondoggle, to use a phrase that has been thrown around in the House over the course of the last few years. From that standpoint, I am rather surprised that we have an opposition member proposing this.

Let us talk very briefly about the amount of money that might be involved. If we were to provide, for instance, $10,000 to each member of Parliament, that would cost $3 million. If we were to double that, to $20,000, it would be $6 million. In terms of what the Canadian taxpayer views, these are not inconsequential sums. We have to keep that in mind as well when we are looking at any expenditure.

I want to come back to the point about the intentions of the hon. member which are very good and very valid. However we have to remember that old phrase that the road to hell is sometimes paved with good intentions.

I will not be supporting this and I would urge, for the various reasons that I have given, all members of Parliament, certainly members on this side of the House, not to support this motion because in the final analysis I do not think it is good value for money.

● (1800)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am very honoured to rise and debate an issue in the House that is of importance to some members.

I would like to first congratulate the member because quite clearly he has thought about something that is important to him and he put together a private member's motion. He submitted it and it was drawn. Therefore I congratulate him for having his motion drawn. That is something for which I am still waiting.

The House knows that we now have the list where everyone's bills or motions are drawn, so I can no longer say that mine has not been drawn, unfortunately. Of course I am at about spot 194 and I have a suspicion there will be an election before my number comes up, be that as it may.

With respect to the elements of the motion, I want to begin my speech by stating unequivocally that I cannot support it. I would like to explain my rationale because I did think about this quite a bit. I was assigned to look at this one for our party, and I was pleased to do that. I have very good reasons to be opposed to this and I will go through them one at a time.

First, as was mentioned across the way, I believe this really opens itself up to interference. I think of this example. There are many voluntary and very fine charitable groups in my riding, as I believe there are in every riding in the country. I choose which ones I want to support. I get many requests and for some of them I write a cheque. The House knows that we now do not have such a fund, so therefore when I write the cheque, it comes out of my own personal money. Actually it comes out of my wife's account. No, I am kidding, she actually draws on my account from time to time. It really is our money that pays for it.

I want to give an example of a group that I have never supported at all. The members invited me to their fundraiser. They said, "Mr. Epp, as a member of Parliament, you're very presence here will help us to have a successful event". I smiled, thanked them and I could hardly believe it was true. I guess when we have MP after our names some people hold us in higher esteem. That is good and we need to work on ensuring that it continues to be true.

I went to the function. It was a fundraiser, so it had a silent auction. I walked around and I have no idea why but I put a bid on a DVD player. I do not have a television or a stereo that accepts an output from one of those things. My equipment is 40 years old. I am never home to use it anyway. Therefore I put a bid on it, never realizing that my bid, the first bid, would also be the last bid, so I got in a really nice box a DVD player for which I had absolutely no use but it was a good donation to that group.

I brought it home, and one day I mentioned this to my family. My son said that he would be quite willing to assist me in my dilemma . Now my son has a nice DVD player and the group, which was a private school, has an additional $150 that it would not have had otherwise, but I was quite happy to do that.

Should we be using taxpayer money for this kind of thing is one of the questions here. I think not. The taxpayers entrust money to us to support government programs. I think there ought to be criteria for programs that are eligible for funding. If those criteria are met, then those people should receive that funding. If those criteria are not met, they should not. It should not depend upon who one's friend is.

● (1805)

Each one of us have personal preferences when it comes to charities that we choose to support. I do not think it is right at all for taxpayers, who come from all groups, to have to put money into a pot and then have to depend upon one person to use that money and to reallocate it.

I am rather surprised that the member from the Bloc has suggested this, for a couple of reasons. First, I am surprised that the Bloc would want to have a federal intrusion into a provincial matter. Most social programs, such housing, hospitals and all these things, are under provincial jurisdiction. If the Bloc wants to keep the federal government out of this, why not just handle it inside the province?

I heard a member say "my money". That is the next argument from the Bloc that surprises me. Public accounts notwithstanding, which show this not to be true, the Bloc members contend that they are sending more money to Ottawa than they receive back. I also, by the way, would counter that the public accounts do not actually reflect that as a fact, but that is what they contend. Therefore they would be better off if the federal government did not do this. They then could keep their money in the province. They could do way more with it than if they send it to Ottawa and only receive part of it back.

I have couple of other things to mention in this regard. As members of Parliament, we should concentrate on serving our constituents in two main areas, the first being in the legislative area. We ought to come to Ottawa, debate and vote freely on bills and motions that produce the best laws for this country. That should be our first priority.

Our second priority should be to assist our constituents when they run into trouble with various government departments. Those are the criteria on which we should be judged come election time: Did we do a good job on that?

If we were to introduce something like this, people would be making voting decisions based upon whether or not we were approving money for them out of this fund. I do not want that. I do not want to be judged on the fact that I was given a finite amount of money to give away, to the best of my ability, to whoever asked and then more people asked and I had to say "Sorry, there is no money left", and they would say "Well I am not going to vote for him again, he does not care about us". I do not want to introduce that. It is a false criterion to evaluate at election time.

The last thing I want to talk about is the fact that Alberta, provincially, has such a program. In fact, it has two programs: one is the community initiatives program and the other is the community facility enhancement program. Both of those programs are ways that the Alberta government uses to redistribute to the communities money that it gains by the lottery corporation, by its gaming taxes and the royalties it gets. That is partially how it redistributes that money. I have actually been in meetings where people have been almost fighting with their MLAs about who will get the money and who will not. I think it is really bad.

Again I will come back to my previous point. There ought to be set criteria. If people meet them, they get the money. If they do not, they do not get the money. It should not be based upon who can be the best friend or the best lobbyist.

I am also concerned about the fact that the motion says "the government should make available to Members a support fund for community activities". In other words, it would go to the members and then the members would have it to disburse.

In Alberta, notwithstanding what I just said and notwithstanding the fact that the MLAs' recommendation, as everybody knows, is the primary criteria for whether or not the money is expended, if we look at their criteria, they are very specific on which non-profit groups can get it, all the details on how to apply for it, and there are rules on maximum payouts and even maximum amounts for which they can apply. They must have matching money that they earn and all of these things are taken into account.

● (1810)

With all due respect to the member for Saint-Jean, I appreciate that his private member's bill was drawn and that he stimulated the debate tonight, but I will not be able to support this motion. I will continue to help charitable organizations with my own money when I make that choice and that gives me much greater freedom.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, this has been a very interesting debate. I want to thank my colleague from Saint-Jean and tell him that we had a brief discussion about his motion this morning in our meeting, and it produced an instant reaction from members of our NDP caucus. Some were strongly in favour of his motion and thought it was a fabulous and very creative idea. They wanted to seize the opportunity to act on it. Other members, though, I have to say, had a different reaction and saw it as one big headache.

He has suggested that in this debate we should talk about the principle and I think that is a good idea. We could look at how such a program would be implemented and think of all kinds of criticisms or benefits, but to look at the principle is important.

Right now a lot of groups in my community in East Vancouver are facing some of the most difficult situations that they have ever faced. They are facing massive cutbacks by the provincial government, particularly as they relate to social advocacy programs, community services for people with disabilities and people who live below the poverty line, and single parents.

My community has faced massive cutbacks, and those cutbacks hit the people who are on low incomes and depend on the services of community organizations and advocacy groups. I am sure this is also true in places like Alberta and Ontario where there have also been massive cutbacks. These people have really been feeling the crunch.

Every month or so in my community we put out a bulletin of funding sources for organizations, because people are desperate to know about government funding sources at any level or in private foundations or other kinds of trusts. This has been a very popular resource that we have produced, because groups want to know where they can find a few dollars, or $5,000 or $10,000, or just a couple of thousand to keep them going. I know there is a very great need for this because of government cutbacks. We have certainly experienced it at the federal level. This has produced a massive social deficit in this country.

The member has put forward the idea of establishing a fund whereby a member of Parliament would include in his or her duties the idea of looking at organizations and their various priorities and needs, and the idea has a lot of merit. On a personal level, I think in principle this motion is something that should be considered.

I know that some of my colleagues had concerns about whether or not it would set up a situation whereby it would take a lot of time to deal with what might be quite a small amount of money. They are also concerned about whether or not it would create a situation where we would be inundated with requests.

I was reminded of that with the Queen's Jubilee Medal. I do not know what other members experienced, but in my community a process was set up that was at arm's length. Community representatives decided who would get the medals. We made decisions that were representative and diverse. The people who were chosen were very well deserving, but I was amazed at the feedback I received from people who were really ticked off and very upset because they did not get a medal. I am sure other members had that same experience. I think it was that kind of example some of my colleagues had in mind.

One of the government members raised the issue of partisanship and accountability. I want to focus on that. If that is one of the reasons why this motion would be shot down, I have to say that if we want to look at anything that is partisan we need look no further than federal programs. We have seen the most gross examples of partisanship in some of the federal programs. I think that at a local level we would probably see more transparency and more accountability because we are more visible in the local community.

● (1815)

In terms of accountability if there were such a fund, I think that where those funds go would be very much scrutinized in that riding or in a local community. It would be very difficult for a member to be either highly partisan or dispensing funds in a way that was somehow unbalanced or really without a sense of accountability. I think the community itself would begin to speak out. I do think that in many ways the benefits that would be derived in a local community would outweigh some of the problems that a member might encounter.

It would be a matter of setting up an open and transparent process with criteria. I would not want to see a fund that could just be handed out to one's friends with no criteria and no goals or objectives. I think if that were done, there would then be much more accountability than we have ever seen from any of the massive funds we have seen doled out to various Liberal cronies and funds.

If such a fund did exist, I think in many respects it would really help organizations in terms of seed money. Sometimes a group, while it is trying to secure other levels of government funding, needs funding that is more for transition purposes. Sometimes a very small amount of money can produce a lot of benefit for that organization and the service it provides.

In fact, one of the examples I wish to provide is that of the former member of Parliament for Vancouver East, Margaret Mitchell. I know that many members of the House know and respect her. She was a member from 1979 to 1993. She actually used one of her member's increases, put it in a trust fund and created the Margaret Mitchell Fund for Women in East Vancouver. Then she actually contributed other funds. It is now managed by VanCity Savings community foundation. It has been an incredibly important fund in my community. It actually came from the member of Parliament as her own donation. It has grown to the extent where it is now used as very important seed money, for emergency money for local organizations that actually are working with women in East Vancouver in terms of equality issues, anti-poverty issues, justice issues and so on.

That is one example of what a fund like that has been able to do. It is actually already in existence because of a former member of Parliament who set a great example of what she was willing to do to help her community even after she retired as the member of Parliament.

The motion will go to a vote. It is private members' business and it has been a very good debate. I think the member will see that members of our caucus have varying points of view. Maybe there is a good opportunity to convince people here. I know there are concerns about the motion. Some people think it will just be a can of worms, something they do not want to get into. I think there are others of us who think that the principle of what would be established is something that is very worthy of consideration.

I thank the member for bringing forward motion forward. I think it is actually a really good debate to have. It is interesting to hear the different points of view.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Duplain (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion. I must say that this is an extraordinary motion that would give members the opportunity to accomplish things that would help them serve their ridings.

This type of fund has been around for some time now in Quebec, I believe it is called the Fonds de soutien aux organismes communautaires, or support fund for community organizations. It is a discretionary fund; members may, at their own discretion, provide money for community groups in their ridings.

I will say that the motion moved by the Bloc Quebecois is nothing new for us, because, for a long time now, we in the government benches have been working on such a project. We have not moved a motion, but we have been working internally to see how such a fund could be set up. The member for Beauce has been working on this for years.

The Quebec caucus supports the idea. I cannot speak against the Bloc Quebecois' proposal, even if it is an opposition party, given that this motion reflects something that we have always been working toward.

Dozens of community groups in all of our ridings work with no money, with no funding, scraping by on $10 and $100 donations they get from all over in order to help people in certain situations. These are organizations that help the disadvantaged and people with disabilities, and there are all kinds of these groups.

I was listening to my colleague from the Bloc Quebecois relating what we have all experienced in our ridings. Every week, we take calls from people who received discretionary funding from members of Quebec's National Assembly. They come to see us right away to see what the federal government can do. We try to steer them toward programs with standards, but often these programs are not aware of the latest developments. Things change so quickly that programs cannot always keep up with what is really happening in our ridings.

I did not expect to have to speak to this today. When I got here I discovered that the Bloc Quebecois member was bringing this motion forward. There may be certain differences of opinion even within our party, but these are usually on how this program could be structured. That is what we are looking at, how it could be structured in order to be acceptable, and particularly in order to avoid procedural pitfalls and to ensure that each amount given to organizations ended up being used properly.

We wanted it mainly used for the community sector. We have to ensure that these funds are made available to people without revenues or means to get things done outside of public donations.

Often, as we know, these organizations run some unbelievable activities. In my riding, some people donate time to help children with problems at school to improve their skills and do their homework. I have seen some organizations that make reimbursable loans, maybe only of $200, to totally disadvantaged people. They help people with absolutely nothing, not a cent in the bank, to pay their phone bill or feed their family breakfast. They lend them $200 or $300, which has to be paid back when they get their benefits or find a job. Often they do not earn enough to make ends meet.

● (1825)

At the same time, what is surprising is how we are able to encourage all these volunteers who work so many hours every week to help others. The only compensation they get right now is congratulations. We could give them a bit more by helping them.

Often, we are not talking about large amounts. Often they come to us for $1,000, $1,500, or $2,000. That is a lot for them. They leave our offices with incredible energy to volunteer even more of their time. We see this in our ridings. In rural areas, such as where I live, the opportunities to help these groups are incredible.

There are probably just as many opportunities in cities. I am less familiar with urban areas, but I know for a fact that there are groups that look after the homeless. This is more often seen in cities. In any case, there are the same opportunities to help in urban areas as there are in rural areas.

I am at a loss for words, but I think that we really should be encouraging these groups. I have no idea what will come of the Bloc's motion, but it is absolutely essential—there are no ifs or buts about this in my mind—that this program be well structured, to ensure that funding is provided on a non-partisan basis and properly targeted. Assistance has to be provided to the volunteer movement and those not-for-profit organizations that help society in many regards.

My friend opposite made a point, which is true, that often, we try to encourage these people with $100 taken from our advertising budget. We all do that. Often, we are unable to let them go without giving them a little something, because they are in such dire straits.

I have met at my office with five or six representatives from the same organization at a time. These are individuals who volunteer dozens of hours a week, and they are coming to us to ask for as little as $100. Five or six of them come to meet with us for an hour to get any amount they can, because they really need it.

What should be spelled out properly, however, is the need for transparency in such a program. I invite the hon. members of the Canadian Alliance—earlier, someone from the Canadian Alliance said he was opposed—to see the transparency of this initiative. We are talking about giving a little more flexibility to MPs. They are best able to choose, to determine where the needs are in each riding and what the various organizations can do in their respective ridings. This is very important.

That is why I will support the motion put forward by the hon. member of the Bloc Quebecois. Then, we will surely have to finalize the guidelines and see how this program can be run with a very high degree of transparency.

In closing, I want to let the hon. member know that I will be supporting his motion.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to tell my hon. colleague that I find the intention behind his motion truly admirable. I would also like to commend my hon. colleague from the Liberal Party for his sensitivity to this way of doing things, which is very important for the people in our ridings.

I worked for 10 years for an MNA. I was the one who administered this discretionary fund provided by the Government of Quebec. We never had a problem of any kind in the administration of this program. It was intended for people who really needed it. It gave them a little extra that helped them make ends meet.

● (1830)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but the time has run out. The hon. member will have nine minutes to finish her speech when the House resumes debate on this motion.

[*English*]

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, it has been said by a former minister of agriculture in this place that if three farmers were to agree, two of them would have to be dead first. When it comes to the agricultural policy framework, the government has managed the near impossible, because farm leaders are virtually unanimous in their opposition to the risk management program being foisted upon them by the federal Department of Agriculture.

At a time when farm incomes are under severe stress, at a time when farmers really need a safety net, the government is proposing new safety programs that offer considerably less than what has existed heretofore. Does this happen at a time when agriculture is booming? Hardly.

The first thing to say is that farmers and rural communities are hurting as never before. Realized net farm income across Canada for 2002 will be well below that of the previous year and certainly below the five year average. In the province of Saskatchewan where I come from, realized net farm income is predicted to reach record low levels when the numbers are announced late next month.

We would expect under such circumstances that a government with a handsome surplus would be coming to the assistance of farmers in their time of need but that is not what is happening. Federal spending on agriculture today is approximately half of what it was just a dozen years ago. In terms of total government spending, the amount spent on agriculture has fallen from 2.8% of overall spending 12 years ago to 1.4% in the current budget.

About 10 months ago the Prime Minister announced the agricultural policy framework with great fanfare. He said Ottawa was providing more than $5.2 billion toward a long time fix for agriculture. The fix was that much of the new money so-called, was earmarked for items in the agricultural policy framework, things such as improving water supplies, environmental plans and export markets but very little actually went into the pockets of farmers to help solve the drought and the cost price squeeze that they face.

To make matters worse, we have the high subsidies from international areas, the United States and Europe in particular. The United States is now subsidizing pulse crops. There is no other country in the world that subsidizes pulse crops except the dear old U.S.A.

Canadian farmers are suffering a trade injury that amounts to an estimated $1.3 billion a year as a result of these subsidies. Farmers and their organizations, as well as provincial governments, have been pleading with the government to provide compensation to cover off that amount. However, the Minister of Agriculture went out of his way last June to say that the APF did not relate to trade injury, a point that was reinforced in the recent federal budget.

Farmers and farm organizations and provincial governments were all uneasy about last June's announcement. They heard the sizzle; they have not yet seen the steak and they are definitely not eating much of it.

The new agricultural policy will revamp NISA and will put a greater emphasis on crop insurance. Farmers have done their homework and they find that in the future they will be paying more and receiving even less in disaster protection than they currently receive.

The government, we would submit, is engaged in a public relations smokescreen to create an illusion that there is genuine consultation while all the while the department intends to go its own way on a policy that is really aimed at allowing the government to spend less in perpetuity on the farm community. Some 22 groups took the highly unusual step of bypassing the agriculture minister completely and writing directly to the Prime Minister. They told him in effect that they were being ignored.

They asked and the provinces have asked that the current safety net programs be allowed to remain in place for an additional period of time, one more year, while real consultations and negotiations occur. The minister kept promising that he would have new—

● (1835)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Duplain (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to reply to the concerns expressed by the hon. member on March 18, 2003, regarding the agriculture policy framework and the timeliness of implementing the new business risk management programs.

First, I would like to say that the agriculture policy framework is essential to strengthening the agricultural sector across Canada.

The agriculture policy framework has five elements: food safety and food quality, environment, science and innovation, renewal, and business risk management. With respect to business risk management, we propose to establish a common foundation of risk management programs across the country, based on demand. This foundation would in turn be based on an expanded NISA and on crop insurance. This common approach is necessary for two reasons.

First, in order to protect farmers from trade problems. The only way to protect our producers against countervailing duties is to guarantee uniform federal treatment for all regions and all products.

Secondly, we believe it is important that, when the Government of Canada intervenes financially, all farmers are treated equally, whatever their province of residence.

Our new series of risk management programs include features that are major improvements for producers. We have integrated new parameters to ensure greater protection against market decline, and we have included measures to help new farmers.

Producers can select the required level of coverage each year and get coverage with only one third of their contribution to the account. I can assure the House that these programs are affordable.

We recognize that the transition to the new proposed programs will take time. As the hon. member knows, the agricultural policy framework provides for a three year transition period. Therefore, there will be no sudden change overnight. We advised all the provinces that we are prepared to continue to share the costs of their programs for a period of three years. After that, we want all federal funds to be allocated to the two national programs, namely NISA and the production insurance program.

Farmers will not submit claims under NISA for 2003 before the end of that same year at the earliest. As for the measures taken regarding the crop insurance program, they will remain essentially the same next year, except that new products will be added up until 2005. Cash advance programs will also remain in effect.

This series of risk management programs directly reflects the comments made by industry officials and producers themselves. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the provinces have undertaken the broadest consultation process ever on the new risk management programs.

We have great confidence in these new programs. In fact, we have agreed to have an independent review conducted, as requested by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

This independent review will assess the anticipated performance of the new risk management programs, compared to current programs, including NISA, CFIP and companion programs. The review will focus on the degree to which the proposed programs meet the objectives set by the ministers of agriculture.

[*English*]

Mr. Dick Proctor: Madam Speaker, there are some solutions to this. Ottawa must consult openly with farm organizations and provincial governments to provide new safety net programs that would be acceptable to the industry. The government must protect the incomes of Canadian farmers and producers, and that means doing more than simply acknowledging the impact of American and European subsidies.

We need a food production system that would allow Canadian farmers to earn a decent living. We need a policy that would create some economic stability and job creation in rural Canada. We are on the verge of doing permanent damage to agriculture and the future of agriculture. It is our responsibility to ensure that we protect the industry and enhance the lives of those who live in rural Canada.

I would urge the government and the minister to consult in a meaningful way with farmers, farm organizations, and provincial and territorial governments to put agriculture on a firm footing for both today and tomorrow.

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Duplain: Madam Speaker, the process of developing new programs took most of a year. With regard to the most important changes being studied—stabilization payments and disaster aid under NISA—we still have close to another year to fine-tune the administrative details before program delivery begins.

It is important to make a distinction between the program year and the time when producers receive benefits. The programs that will apply in 2003 have already been defined and, in general, 2003 will not be different from any other year. At the end of 2003 and 2004, producers will begin to notice the effects of the changes being made in accordance with the agriculture policy framework's new 2003 programs.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

The House therefore stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:41 p.m.)

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