



CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[English]

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will be meeting with President Bush toward the end of this month.

Although there has been improvement in the BSE situation, I hope he will use this meeting, as he has in the past, to urge that the Canada-U.S. border be opened to all Canadian beef and other ruminant products, including livestock.

Most people now realize that the closing of the border had little or nothing to do with health or science.

A single animal with BSE that did not even get into the food chain in Canada and a single animal in the United States triggered a massive and disproportionate response.

It made little difference that both animals were rapidly traced. It made little difference that the U.S. and Canadian herds are genetically one and the same. It made little difference that international experts ruled that the border closing was unnecessary.

I urge the Prime Minister to convey such arguments to Mr. Bush and to stress that the border should be completely opened immediately.

The BSE crisis has been a tragedy for farm families across Canada.

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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should be reminded about how this Liberal government

has had to make serious corrections after their policies turned out to be highly inequitable and simply unfair.

First, the Liberals provided hep C funding for a very limited group of people: those infected between 1986 and 1990. Finally, they had to expand the funding program after an outcry from victims and their supporters.

Then the Liberals expanded the veterans independence program to support widows if their spouse passed away on or after May 12, 2003. However, all those widows whose spouses died prior to May 12 were simply disqualified from those programs. Following yet another outcry, the Liberals were forced to make changes again.

And now our troops. The Liberals have given needed tax breaks to some troops, just some troops, for serving in dangerous areas but denied many others the same consideration. Again, they had to retreat and expand the program after the troops demanded fair treatment.

The Liberals should apply the principle of equality in all cases and stop trying to cheat Canadians who need the help when they need it the most.

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MEMBER FOR THORNHILL

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 25 year ago, the hon. member for Thornhill saw a need to improve her community. Being a woman of action, she made a public commitment to her family and neighbours and was elected to the North York municipal council in 1978.

The hon. member was elected to represent the people of Oriole in the Ontario legislature between 1985 to 1997. As a member of a provincial parliament, she became the first Jewish woman to become a minister in Canada.

In 1997 the hon. member was elected in the newly created riding of Thornhill. For seven years she has spoken with passion and conviction, representing the views of her constituents here in the House of Commons.

In 1999 the hon. member for Thornhill became the first Jewish woman to serve as a federal cabinet minister when she was named Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and was appointed to cabinet a second time in 2002 as Minister of National Revenue.

For 25 years she has been a strong voice for her community and her—

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●(1405)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

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BADMINTON

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, April 12, 2004, I had the privilege of participating in the opening ceremonies of the 2004 Junior National Badminton Championships hosted by the Boulevard Club in my riding.

Keith Arthur, head coach at the club, and Stan Viezner, the tournament chair, hosted perhaps the most successful junior badminton tournament to date.

The theme for this year's tournament was "Playin' Proud" which reflects the individual efforts that all participants have made in dedication, commitment, discipline and fitness in order to compete at this level.

The week long event featured 217 of the best Canadian badminton players in the under 14 and under 16 age categories, representing eight different provinces.

There were 10 main events, with singles, doubles and mixed categories in each group. Ontario managed the top spot with six gold medals.

I wish to congratulate all those who participated in the under 14 and under 16 Junior National Badminton Championships.

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COMPTON—STANSTEAD

Hon. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me talk about Compton—Stanstead, the jewel of Quebec's eastern townships.

Do members know that Compton—Stanstead is the home of some great Canadians? Why one of Canada's greatest prime ministers, the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent, called it home. In fact our current Prime Minister is our neighbour.

Folksinger David Francy, who just won another Juno Award, writes his award winning music from the inspiration drawn from its beauty and cultural harmony.

A little-known fact is that Bishops College School is home to Canada's oldest cadet corps. This year it will be celebrating 125 years.

Did I mention it is also the home of the Hon. Jean Charest, the Premier of Quebec; the Hon. Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, the Deputy Premier; and the Hon. Pierre Reid, Quebec's Minister of Education?

Even Hollywood is getting in on the act. Veteran Hollywood actor Donald Sutherland has a home there.

On top of all that, Compton—Stanstead is surrounded by some of the finest members in the House, such as the member for Shefford, the member for Frontenac—Mégantic and the member for Brome—Missisquoi.

Mr. Speaker, even you have sampled this wonderful corner of Quebec, Compton—Stanstead.

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TAXATION

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the release of Monday's Statistics Canada report on the birth rate in the country should send a loud, clear message to the Liberal government.

Families are being forced to have fewer children because they cannot afford to be a single income family and cannot afford day care or even find day care.

The solution is simple: provide equal tax breaks for parents who choose to raise their own children. Parents should be given the option to raise their children at home without incurring a financial penalty.

Do we not trust parents to make the right choices for the children they love? The benefits would be astounding if we did. We could see the job market open as parents leave formal employment in favour of raising their children, waiting lists at day care centres would evaporate, and the birth rate would most certainly increase.

Our children, however, would receive the greatest benefit, as they would be brought up in the most nurturing environment, their own homes.

Instead of punishing stay at home parents, why not provide equal tax treatment to those who choose their families over their careers?

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BILL C-260

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my happy task to thank a number of colleagues and supporters for their assistance on Bill C-260, an act to amend the Hazardous Products Act (fire-safe cigarettes). As we know, to take a bill from first reading through to royal assent requires a lot of hard work, patience and cooperation.

I would like to thank the Deputy Prime Minister, who was then the Minister of Health, and her parliamentary secretary, the member for Madawaska—Restigouche. As well, when the current Minister of Health took over the portfolio, he immediately saw the health and safety benefits of the bill.

I also want to thank the critic for the Alliance Party, the member for Yellowhead, the critic from the Bloc Québécois, the member for Hochelaga—Maisonnette, the critic for the NDP, the member for Churchill, and the critic from the Progressive Conservatives, the member for New Brunswick Southwest.

The chair of the health committee, the member for Oakville, was very helpful in freeing up time for the committee. In the Senate, the ultimate sponsor was Senator Morin, who was very helpful, as were Senator Smith and Senator Kenny. I am running out of time, Mr. Speaker, and I will have to—

●(1410)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I learned that as of Saturday, Canadian National will begin work to extend a siding into the city limits of Drummondville.

The line will be 12,000 feet long, will cross Notre-Dame street near downtown, and will make it possible for a train capable of carrying dangerous goods to remain there for a period of 30 to 60 minutes, and disrupt traffic.

CN's own representatives admit that Drummondville will be the only city expected to live with such a situation in a highly urbanized area.

The people of Drummond remember the rail accidents at Saint-Basile-le-Grand and Saint-Hilaire and fear for their safety and their environment.

For these reasons, I call on the Minister of Transport to intervene and have the authority already granted to Canadian National suspended, in order to force the company to rethink this project.

I am in favour of improved rail service, but not at the expense of the quality of life of the people of Drummond and their environment.

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LOUISE ARBOUR AND GUY LALIBERTÉ

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week it was revealed that two Quebecers are on *Time* magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

Guy Laliberté, president and founder of the Cirque du Soleil, and Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, have made their marks in their respective fields on a worldwide scale. With his creativity, Mr. Laliberté has reinvented the world of the circus. Young and old all over the world have been amazed by the theatricality, athleticism and parallel reality in the Cirque du Soleil.

Ms. Arbour is recognized throughout the world as a leading light in international law. This brave and tenacious woman was able to bring Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic to justice for war crimes in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Canadians are proud of their fellow citizens. I would like to thank and congratulate Ms. Arbour and Mr. Laliberté for their accomplishments.

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[English]

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about a spirited member of my constituency, Deloraine's Lionel Laval, a volunteer whose work and community service have contributed to the growth and prosperity of south-western Manitoba.

Lionel has always had a keen sense of community. Lending a hand to his church, school board, the Lions Club, numerous sports teams

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and the Chamber of Commerce, Lionel pitches in no matter what the project.

While Lionel Laval stands out in his community, he is not entirely a one of a kind person. In reality, he is the epitome of rural Canada, devoted to his community, its prosperity and its future. Rural Manitoba has many such devoted people.

Lionel would agree that rural life infuses people with a sense of belonging. It is a common thread that runs through rural Canada, a thread that weaves a strong fabric.

Lionel will be embarrassed when I tell him about this statement but that is just the kind of guy he is. Lionel does not do it for the glory or the recognition. What drives Lionel comes from somewhere deep inside him, a kind of pride found in the hearts of rural and small town Canadians.

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[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Yolande Thibeault (Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some of Canada's best successes are its policies on seniors. They include, in particular, the retirement income system and programs to reduce the number of low income seniors by 90%.

We have improved seniors' quality of life, as the following facts prove.

We are the only G-7 country with a perfectly balanced public pension plan, the long term sustainability of which has been proven by experts.

Seniors in Canada benefit from our five year plan to cut taxes and grant over \$2 billion per year in tax credits, such as the age credit and the pension income credit.

We fund the New Horizons program for seniors to enable them to lead active lives and contribute to their communities.

There are fewer seniors living below the poverty line than any other group in Canada. This Liberal government believes that it is critical for seniors to remain in good health—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

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[English]

WOMEN VOTERS

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, “for every eight men in Parliament, there are only two women among them”. That quote is from the great website and campaign called YoungWomenVote.ca, initiated here on Parliament Hill by three interns: Chi Nguyen, Crystal Graber and Cloë Rowbotham. Their goal is to get 20,000 young women to pledge to vote and make their voices heard in the upcoming federal election.

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We in the NDP applaud their campaign and the energy with which they approach it. This is long overdue, and this House needs to reflect the women of Canada. It is time to put patriarchal politics to rest and close the gap that has seen women so under-represented.

We are proud that in our party affirmative action and equality for women are key priorities of our leader, Jack Layton. We are determined to change the face of politics. It is critical to empower young women to engage in the political process to strengthen democratic and equality seeking goals.

YoungWomenVote.ca is a great initiative. We know they will achieve their goals.

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•(1415)

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during national volunteer week, I want to pay special tribute to the thousands of people of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and elsewhere in Quebec who, every day, put their time and skills to use helping their neighbours.

National volunteer week is a chance for the public to better understand just how much volunteers contribute to sports and recreation, community, institutional and cultural affairs. These individuals work tirelessly, and by working with local associations and agencies, they help tens of thousands of people attain a better quality of life, stay in touch with the rest of society and break the isolation and solitude that many suffer.

Volunteers are an essential resource in our society. I want to take this opportunity during this special week to thank all those who devote their time and energy to improving their communities.

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MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of five mental health agencies in the Asbestos region. La Croisée, le Havre, l'Intervalle, the Asbestos general hospital and the CLSC-Frontenac received the Most Innovative Mental Illness Awareness Week Event award for 2003.

The Canadian Psychiatric Association awarded this honour to these agencies for the innovative and imaginative documentary called *Je t'aime pareil*.

I congratulate those who become involved in such innovative community activities to unmask mental illness.

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[*English*]

MILITARY HERITAGE

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one would expect that Canada's cultural artifacts are secure in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, as it is the country's depository of history, but on Friday, April 2, a British collector discovered that the

Victoria Cross belonging to Filip Konowal, the only Canadian of Ukrainian heritage to earn our country's highest military award, was for sale at an Ontario auction house.

Previously, officials at Canada's War Museum, which is part of the Museum of Civilization, insisted that Konowal's medal was simply misplaced in their collection. It was misplaced in 1973.

At a time when some would question whether a military career was an honour worth pursuing, Canada's response should be a proud showcase of our military heroes, not careless treatment of their artifacts. One has to wonder if the Victoria Cross belonging to Billy Barker, Canada's most decorated soldier from Dauphin—Swan River, remains secure.

Our military heritage must be protected and proudly displayed to remind all of us of how much we owe and value our brave men and women in uniform.

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STAN DARLING

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to mark the passing of a most exceptional former member of the House of Commons: Stan Darling. He served the residents of Parry Sound—Muskoka with distinction for nearly half a century.

For 30 years, Stan Darling served as a municipal councillor. At the young age of 61, he was first elected to the House of Commons as a Progressive Conservative member of Parliament in 1972, serving the residents of Parry Sound—Muskoka for an additional 21 years, retiring in 1993 at the age of 82.

He was an admired and respected figure within his community and in the House of Commons, yet his greatest legacy can be seen in the lakes, rivers and ponds that we have today. For over 10 years he served as a crusader in raising the issue of acid rain to national prominence. His relentless pursuit resulted in a momentous accord with the United States on acid rain, resulting in dramatic reductions of emissions of sulphur dioxide both north and south of our border.

Canadians and our environment are both better today because of Stan Darling's contribution to public life.

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[*Translation*]

QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 78 years ago today, on April 21, 1926, was born in London, England, Princess Elizabeth, the first child of the Duke and Duchess of York, who would eventually become King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Oral Questions

After her father's death on February 6, 1952, she assumed the throne and her coronation was held on June 2, 1953. For 51 years she has been visiting Commonwealth countries continuously in order to meet her subjects in person.

[English]

On October 12, 1957, Canada welcomed the Queen for the first of her 20 visits. Millions of Canadians from the four corners of Canada had the opportunity to see and to meet Her Majesty.

On behalf of all Canadians, and I hope on behalf of all members of the House, I would like to wish a happy birthday to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1420)

[English]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has had 24 hours to study the documents referred to yesterday.

These memos from public works show the Prime Minister repeatedly breaking contracting rules, all set up to benefit his allies at Earncliffe.

Why did the Prime Minister mislead Canadians with claims of ignorance and innocence, when he knew exactly how the system worked and he worked it?

Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.): Actually, Mr. Speaker, the documents show nothing of the kind.

What in fact happened was that the first contract was a contract that the government inherited when we took office. It was a contract that had been awarded to the previous Conservative government and we simply continued with it.

Following that, there were two extensions because public works was going through a new procedure. It said that instead of having open bids, they would be extended. Then, at the end of 1994, there was a competitive bid which was won. That competitive bid was adjudicated and administered by public works.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Prime Minister said yesterday and today, the memos from Guité and Kinsella were written after the Prime Minister said he ended his rule breaking practices. They show that the contracts were not subject to the kind of open tender that he claims.

Does the Prime Minister still deny the facts laid out in these memos?

Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I affirm the facts as they in fact were.

The fact is that the contract was bid on in an open tender. It was administered and adjudicated by the Department of Public Works, not the Department of Finance.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): I will read it for the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. It said:

—only one bid was submitted which was by Earncliffe Strategy Group. Unofficial comments were received by...my organization, that the scope was unclear and bias to one firm, so why waste time and money on a bid that they had no chance of winning.

That is what it says here. If these contracting schemes with Earncliffe were so legitimate, why did the Prime Minister's successor at finance immediately cancel them when he assumed office in 2002?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, let us review the chronology of what happened.

The first contract referred to here was in fact issued by the Conservative government. It was clearly within the limits and the rules permissible at that time. That was in September 1993.

Then, in July and September 1994 there were extensions of that previously existing contract because the new contracting process by public works was not yet in place. It was put in place in the fall of 1994. A competitive process was held, and that is when the Earncliffe firm won on a competitive basis.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's problems with numbers are well documented. He failed to catch the \$1 billion boondoggle at HRDC, missed the boat over \$1 billion on the gun registry, does not have a clue about the \$250 million wasted in a sponsorship scandal, and failed to differentiate between \$130,000 and \$161 million given to his shipping empire.

Apparently the Prime Minister is bad at math and has a poor memory. Now he claims he does not know how his buddies got these contracts.

Canadians deserve to know, who is running the show, Earncliffe or the PMO?

Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of a finance minister, myself at that time, who had some problem with numbers, let us go through some numbers.

We inherited a \$42 billion deficit from that party and a debt to GDP ratio that was going through the roof. What is the net result? Today we are the only G-8 country not in deficit. We are the only one in surplus. I understand those numbers.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, CPC): Here is a figure, Mr. Speaker, \$161 million to CSL.

[Translation]

In a note to Chuck Guité, Warren Kinsella expresses his concerns about the improper awarding of contracts to the minister's friends at Earncliffe. The note in question shows that the Department of Finance, headed by the current Prime Minister, had awarded four contracts in violation of Department of Public Works rules.

And the Prime Minister knew nothing?

Oral Questions

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman makes the allegation that somehow the contract was wired.

When the criteria is in the contract, for example, that the lead consultant should have a minimum of five years of media experience and that sort of qualifying ability, that hardly appears to be a wired contract.

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[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while ordinary people are paying income tax, CSL International, a branch of the Prime Minister's family business, is avoiding the tax man. Thanks to Bill C-28, personally ushered through Parliament by the Prime Minister, this is legal, provided all decisions are made in Barbados. It is just a sham, however; all decisions are made in Montreal.

Will the Prime Minister, who was in flagrant conflict of interest, at least have the decency to ask his family business to pay back the \$100 million it has illegally diverted from the Quebec and Canadian tax systems?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is going back to a variety of questions that he asked in the House a number of months ago, confusing two different companies and two different corporate rules.

They are quite separate things and the one does not effect or involve the other, and they should not be mixed.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is no confusion here. It is very precise. They would like to make things as confused as they feel.

The Income Tax Act calls for a foreign branch of a Canadian company to be administered abroad in order to be exempt from Canadian taxes. In actual fact, CSL International in Barbados is just a front; the orders come from Montreal.

Will the Prime Minister now have the courage to ask his family business to pay retroactively the taxes it avoided paying Quebec and Canada, to the tune of at least \$100 million? That is what tax evasion is—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the hon. gentleman is referring to the impact of Bill C-28, from a previous Parliament, which has absolutely nothing to do with CSL.

Second, the hon. gentleman makes reference to the tax rules applicable in Barbados. Different people have different views on the tax rules applicable in Barbados.

I would refer him to an article that appeared in the February 13 edition of the *National Post*, written by a distinguished Canadian lawyer in a firm in which the senior partner is the hon. Lucien Bouchard.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we knew the Prime Minister was in conflict of interest in passing Bill C-28, which, despite what the Minister of Finance has said, was tailor made for international shipping companies like the PM's. We now know that his family business was in contravention of the Income Tax Act. As a result, the Quebec and Canadian tax systems did not get \$100 million in taxes.

Is the Prime Minister aware that a number of other companies have followed his example, and as a result \$23.9 billion left Canada for Barbados in the year 2002 alone, thereby escaping taxes in Canada and Quebec.

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the hon. gentleman is confusing the impact of Bill C-28.

It is clear in the very language of the legislation and it was clear when the evidence was heard before the standing committee of this House that Bill C-28 does not have, did not have, and will not have any connection or impact at all on CSL.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can we believe the Prime Minister when he says that his kind of politics will be different, when we realize he custom tailored legislation to benefit his family business, that his company received \$160 million in hidden contracts, and that he also custom tailored contracts in favour of Earncliffe, a company owned by his buddies?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every piece of legislation put before the House that related in any way to offshore companies and offshore taxation presented by the then finance minister was aimed at closing the loopholes and establishing tax on a fair basis, going exactly in the opposite direction to that alleged by the opposition.

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• (1430)

LOBBYISTS

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

I say to the Prime Minister through you, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP is as concerned about the influence of corporate lobbyists as we are as to how they are hired and what the details of the contracts are. In this respect, it has come to our attention that Earncliffe is sitting in on confidential meetings in which government policy is being decided.

I want to ask the Prime Minister, is this true? Could he tell the House whether Earncliffe is allowed to sit in on confidential meetings where government policy is decided or not?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, government policy is determined in cabinet and by cabinet, with the Prime Minister in the chair. There are no private consultants in the room.

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not just about cabinet meetings. Again, I ask this question of the Prime Minister because it is about the nature of his government. It goes to the heart of what the influence of corporate lobbyists is in his government.

I ask the Prime Minister, what is the role of Earncliffe in his government? Can he tell us, for instance, given that one of its clients is MDS, a for profit health care company, how we can have confidence in the government's decision with respect to health care when Earncliffe, who has a client in the for profit health care industry, is right at the table and has such a close relationship with the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance has just said, government policy is determined in cabinet and by cabinet.

There are outside consultants who may well advise on matters of communication and that kind of thing. There has been no lobbying by any firm of me as far as I am concerned.

I will say to the hon. member that there are outsiders who have certainly given us advice in terms of health care, to begin with, the hon. Roy Romanow.

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GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Earncliffe scandal is nothing more than the government's version of insider trading. The Prime Minister is nothing more than Martha Stewart in a blue suit.

The fix was in to guarantee that contracts went to the PM's friends at Earncliffe. A public works memo confirms that.

Why does the Prime Minister continue to mislead Canadians about his role in this scandal?

Hon. Stephen Owen (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have had various documents brought forward to our attention in this House. The place where these documents should be taken, so that the opinions expressed in them can be tested against other opinions, is the public accounts committee and the judicial inquiry that will be forthcoming soon.

Instead of raising in the House, and unshared with the public accounts committee, a memo which expresses a particular opinion, it should be put to the public accounts committee and to the author of that document. That is where these questions should be construed.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to ensure that I heard the minister correctly. He is saying now that he wants the public accounts committee to investigate the Earncliffe scandal as well, the one that the Prime Minister is directly involved in.

Is that the minister's position?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I am sure the Minister of Finance appreciates the ovation but we have to be able to hear the answer and we do not want to waste time. The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor. A little order, please.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman continues down a very confusing path.

What the documents indicate, what the Prime Minister has said, and what others have said, not just today, but over a long period of time, is that there are four contracts being discussed here: one that predated the existence of the government; two that were extensions because a new process was not put in place; and a fourth that was issued under a competitive process.

That is what the evidence indicates and those are the facts.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what the documents really show. Public works investigated and found that the finance minister, the current Prime Minister, had acted contrary to cabinet approved guidelines.

That is what they found in 1995. They said this was simply unacceptable. The truth is starting to come out about how the Prime Minister led the way in breaking and abusing contract rules.

Is it not true that the Prime Minister was very comfortable in—

● (1435)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me refer to the very document that the hon. member has in her hand

Contract No. 1 was issued in September 1993, before this government came into office. Contract No. 2 was issued by the Department of Public Works. Contract No. 3 was issued by public works. Contract No. 4 was issued by public works.

The process was administered by the appropriate department.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a good try, but here is what the investigation by public works really found out.

Tenders for finance department work were written with a clear bias to the one firm favoured by the current Prime Minister. Other firms just quit bidding because they figured out it was all rigged. So, in order to give pork to his cronies, the Prime Minister broke all of the accounting rules laid down by the cabinet.

The Prime Minister claims to want to clean up this mess, but how can he do that when he is standing in the rubble of all the rules he broke himself?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member is being a little selective. In the very document she is referring to there is a clear indication that there was considerable confusion with respect to the administration of some of the rules.

Oral Questions

Let me just add one quote, "Within our own department", that would be the department of public works, "we have at least three sectors that can issue contracts for public opinion research and each sector probably has a different definition of what is public opinion research".

It was that very confusion that we were trying to resolve in favour of competition.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's Minister of Health, Philippe Couillard, stated yesterday that accepting Canadian standards or being accountable to Ottawa in matters of health was out of the question.

Faced with such clear words, how can the Minister of Health still imagine that it is right to demand accountability from the Government of Quebec in the matter of health care, when it is not the federal government's responsibility to provide health care and when all its interventions only complicate the situation?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to talk with Minister Couillard after the speech I gave in Toronto yesterday. He was completely comfortable with what I had to say.

I agree completely that it is not our place to impose conditions on the provinces. The way we want to work is to develop a plan with the provinces by setting objectives they would agree to themselves, in a completely transparent way. No government is asking for accountability from another, but the point is to be transparent vis-à-vis our citizens, within our own jurisdictions.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there was one man who was unhappy with the health minister's actions and that was Jean Charest. He said, "Health is the Quebec government's responsibility. It makes good sense, and for that reason, there is no question about making compromises".

Does the government realize that the blackmail it is perpetrating with respect to Quebec and the provinces is done at the expense of the ill, and that they are the ones who will pay the price for the federal government's obsession with sticking its nose into other people's business?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what our government wants is partnership with the provinces. We want to play a supporting role to permit the provinces to carry out the very important responsibilities they have toward Canadians. We intend to work with them.

There is no question of conditions. There is no question of accountability. There is no question of one level of government being accountable to another. It is a question of each level of government being accountable to the public, in a completely transparent way.

OLDER WORKERS

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last fall, Whirlpool employees gave the Liberal member for Montmagny-L'Islet a plan to create an older workers assistance program, the funding for which would be provided by the employees, employers, Quebec and Ottawa.

Can the Minister of Human Resources Development tell the House if his Liberal colleague for Montmagny-L'Islet passed this plan on to him? Since time is of the essence, as the plant will close on May 14, when does the minister intend to follow up on the workers' request?

• (1440)

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to realize today that the member opposite has taken a page from the Liberals. That is wonderful.

Pilot projects have been implemented. We are currently analyzing the results of these pilot projects. Obviously, if the results are positive, decisions will be made and the necessary measures taken to provide people with long term programs.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is time to change the record; he played the wrong one in answering my question.

During the 2000 federal election, in answer to a question on the POWA, a Liberal minister told the workers at Beloit in Sherbrooke, "In a changing society, we need a program to help with the transition". That minister is now Prime Minister.

Four years later, can the Prime Minister tell us what concrete measures he has put in place to ease the transition for workers over age 55 who lose their jobs? When will he finally fulfill the promise he made in 2000?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the results speak for themselves. This is not just about transitional measures. The best program is a job. Are there jobs in Quebec and in the region? Yes, obviously. For example, last year in Canada, we created 157,000 jobs for older workers, 43,000 of them in Quebec. I see these as positive results, but the Bloc is playing to the gallery.

* * *

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister tells us that he followed the rules for awarding contracts. That is not so. This was not a public tendering process, but a government policy for bending the rules and awarding contracts to Earncliffe.

How can we trust this Prime Minister who breaks the rules in order to put taxpayers' money in the pockets of his friends like Earncliffe?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. gentleman is misreading the documents. The documents indicate that the Prime Minister and his staff argued for greater competition, not less. They argued for it sooner rather than later. A more competitive system was finally assembled and put into place in the fall of 1994. A competitive contest was held, and it was under that basis that the Earncliffe contract was awarded.

[Translation]

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the documents show that rules were broken. They were broken by Alfonso Gagliano, the Minister of Finance, and the Prime Minister himself.

Why is the Prime Minister unable to show leadership and ask Canadians to forgive him for having broken the funding rules and putting money in the pockets of his friends at Earncliffe? Why does he not show leadership and simply ask for forgiveness?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the series of contracts with respect to Earncliffe have been thoroughly discussed in the House, not just in the last number of days but in fact many years ago. They are probably the most exposed and debated contracts in the history of contracting in Canada.

All the evidence that has been referred to in the memo that is before the House now is completely consistent with the information given before. The first contract predated the government, the next two were extensions while a competitive process was assembled and the fourth was issued on the basis of a competitive process.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing to have a Minister of Public Works and Government Services who has a firm grasp of the obvious and who agrees with his predecessor, David Dingwall, that the Prime Minister's contracting practices with Earncliffe left a bit to be desired.

I would like to give him another opportunity to confirm that he agrees that this matter should be referred to the ad scam inquiry being led by public accounts.

Hon. Stephen Owen (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the public accounts committee is looking into issues of contracting with respect to advertising and sponsorship. Opposition members are suggesting, through these documents that they have raised in reference in the House, that this has something to do with it. If that has something to do with it, they should put it before the committee, make their arguments and put their questions to the author of the memo they are referring to, who will be appearing before the public accounts committee. It is that simple.

• (1445)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC): It looks like that minister will have as long a political future as certain Liberal candidates in Burnaby, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Prime Minister. First there was the \$137,000 handout to his shipping empire that turned out to be \$161 million. Then he professed to be shocked about Liberal ad scam corruption happening right under his nose. Now he is outraged that

leaked documents show how he broke contracting rules to shovel tax dollars to his friends at Earncliffe.

How exactly does the Prime Minister expect Canadians to believe that he had nothing to do with and knew absolutely nothing about breaking the rules to benefit his buddies?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman persists in trying to turn all the facts upside down and on their heads. The fact of the matter is the information being referred to by him in this memo does not establish at all what he is alleging.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

[English]

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. Research is key to a cure, and the Canadian prostate cancer research initiative is a national leader in supporting innovative cancer research.

It is my understanding that there had been a commitment from the Department of Health for the annual funding of \$10 million supporting this research. Will the minister commit to ensuring that the department goes through with this funding?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the five years of funding for prostate cancer research that began in 1999 was a fixed period initiative that provided the necessary boost to increase Canada's capacity in this area.

This government is now taking an integrated approach to cancer control that aims to reduce the incidence, mortality and morbidity of all cancers rather than focusing on a few particular tumour sites. In 2002 the CIHR was created to support health research. In 2003-04 the CIHR allocated almost \$8 million to prostate cancer research.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister whose Liberals constantly criticize Conservatives for things that his Liberal government supports.

Could the Prime Minister explain why Canadians should be afraid of the Conservative leader for supporting Bush's war in Iraq, but be comfortable with his Liberal defence minister, appointed by him, who fervently maintains that invading Iraq was the right thing to do? Could the Prime Minister explain this absurd contradiction?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's policy in respect of Iraq has been very clear for over a year. The Prime Minister totally supported the position we took. I think when we look at what is taking place in the Middle East today, we would all agree that position was the correct position to take.

The position taken by the Leader of the Opposition would have had us there with our troops, with the danger, with ourselves exposed to problems that were no part of Canada. The Prime Minister and the government are firmly correct on the position in Iraq, and we will remain where we always were in the best interests of Canadian people.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again the Prime Minister has not answered my question.

On one hand the Liberals are saying that the Conservatives are wrong to support President Bush's war in Iraq. On the other hand the Liberals are comfortable with the idea of the Prime Minister having appointed the biggest hawk in this Parliament as Minister of National Defence.

Can the Prime Minister explain why the Conservatives are wrong to support Bush's war, but his own Liberal Minister of National Defence is right to support the war?

Right Hon. Paul Martin (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the difference between the two is very clear. What the Leader of the Opposition wanted to do was send our troops to Iraq during the war. That is exactly what he said on the Fox network in the United States.

What our government wants to do, what our Minister of National Defence wants to do, is send our troops to Haiti to secure and maintain peace. He wants to send our troops to Afghanistan to secure peace. Our Minister of National Defence wants Canada to help these countries build their institutions. There is a fundamental difference between—

• (1450)

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister. The hon. member for St. John's West.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance pleaded innocent to any wrongdoing regarding the issuing of contracts. He said that all the rules throughout the process were indeed followed.

How then can he account for the secret internal letter sent to him by his colleague David Dingwall stating that the minister's department had demonstrated a pattern of non-compliance with and avoidance of Treasury Board guidelines?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the specific letter that was referred to was one dated in March 1995 that talked about a certain polling activity that needed to be done in relation to the budget and the activities flowing out of the budget in the spring of 1995.

I explained at that time that there was an urgent reason why the work had to be done so the program could be administered properly, and that when the whole process was completed, the program was reviewed and received a favourable report from the Auditor General.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister brags about the speed with which government and even he himself dealt with issues regarding the contracting. He became the minister of agriculture on November 4, 1993. He was reprimanded for breaking the rules by the then minister of public works on July 25, 1995, 628 days later.

I am not sure of the minister's definition of speed, but how could this pretentiously cautious minister let his department get so far out of control?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman is referring to guidelines that came into place, not in 1993 but in the fall of 1994. Therefore the period of time that is being referred to here is a much narrower one than the hon. gentlemen indicates.

Also, the issue that had to be dealt with was not in 1994 but in the spring of 1995 in a very narrow window between the budget and spring seeding time.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister tried to mask his role in the government-wide contracting scandal by claiming that it was urgent that he hand untendered contracts to Earncliffe.

When David Dingwall blew the whistle, the member for Wascana had been agriculture minister for 628 days. That is almost two years of being seized by urgency. That has to be hard on anyone.

Since the urgency defence has been blown, what excuse will the minister use today?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the letter that was circulated yesterday indicates very clearly what the timeframe was. The timeframe was the period of time around the budget in March 1995 and spring seeding time in 1995, which was only a matter of six or eight weeks.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Liberals are preparing to trot out their old scare tactics in the next election and they are off to a good start.

There are too many Canadians who are afraid that there is not a Liberal alive willing to follow the rules when it comes to spending taxpayer money.

Will the finance minister stop hiding behind his urgency defence and admit that he was a kingpin in the decade of Liberal corruption?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the case for urgency is laid out in very specific terms in the letter that was circulated yesterday. It indicates the argument very clearly.

It was important to make sure that a \$1.6 billion program operated effectively. I am pleased to say that at the end of the program, after a review by the Auditor General, the report was indeed that it had been handled properly.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Edith Gendron, who works for the Department of Canadian Heritage, has just received an ultimatum to resign as president of the organization *Le Québec, un pays*.

Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage plan to intervene and call her departmental staff to order, on the basis of the 1991 Supreme Court ruling that confirmed public servants' right to legitimate political activities?

Hon. Hélène Scherrer (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that concerns departmental human resources and, as such, is between the department and the employee in question. The department has assured me that the matter was being handled in compliance with all standards applicable to the public service of Canada.

• (1455)

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, could the minister explain to us how membership in *Le Québec, un pays* would prevent Ms. Gendron from performing her duties properly, those duties being to administer programs to promote the teaching of French as a second language in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia?

Hon. Hélène Scherrer (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to reiterate my position, I have given no directive in connection with this. It is most definitely a matter between the department and an employee, a human resources matter.

* * *

[English]

TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS CANADA

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party is continuing its shameful policy of subsidizing Canada's largest corporations.

The Liberals recently gave Rolls-Royce Canada \$30 million through Technology Partnerships Canada. This corporate welfare program has given \$2.4 billion of taxpayer money since 1996 and has recovered less than 2% of that money.

This is completely scandalous. How can the government justify to hard-working taxpayers using this money and giving it to large corporations like Rolls-Royce?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Technology Partnerships Canada is a program to help develop technology in Canada, which will impact all Canadians. Rolls-Royce is not the only one involved, there are a number of companies throughout the country, British Columbia included.

Whether in the west or the east, this is a program to help us remain competitive internationally. We are very proud of it.

[English]

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the \$30 million grant was given to Rolls-Royce to develop industrial gas turbine engines.

In addition, less than four years ago the government gave over \$50 million to the same company, Rolls-Royce, to—wait for it—research and develop industrial gas turbine engines. Does it sound familiar? This was over \$80 million for the same purpose. It has to be the Rolls-Royce of photocopying.

How can the government justify giving over \$80 million of taxpayer money to one of the largest, most profitable international corporations and getting back less than 2% since 1996?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has the facts wrong. Those are two completely different projects. Two different technologies will be developed that will help other companies in the country to be more competitive and more innovative. I think they will be very good for the economy and for Canadians.

First, these are not contributions. They are like loan guarantees. The company will repay the Government of Canada.

[Translation]

The objective of this program is precisely that: for the government to share the risks of developing high technology with industry.

* * *

[English]

MUSIC INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been advised by members of Canada's music industry that the funding for FACTOR, the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Records, will expire on March 31.

The expiration of this fund will affect every facet of Canada's music industry, but individual Canadian artists will be affected the most.

What will the government do to provide sustainable funding to FACTOR to ensure there remains a launch pad for tomorrow's Canadian recording stars?

Hon. Hélène Scherrer (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me the chance today to repeat what I said publicly at the Juno Awards a few weeks ago.

At many round tables I heard the success stories surrounding FACTOR funding and also I heard about the worries surrounding the non-funding of FACTOR.

Let me be very clear. The government remains very committed to Canadian artists and I will ensure that they have the necessary tools to continue succeeding both nationally and internationally with sustained long term funding.

*Oral Questions***RCMP PENSION FUND**

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety was quick to defend the commissioner of the RCMP when questioned about his potential involvement in the misappropriation of \$4 million of RCMP pension funds. She said "There is no conduct on the part of the commissioner that needs to be investigated". How does she know?

It is the duty of the minister to protect and defend Canadians' interests, including 4,000 RCMP pensioners. Why has the minister prejudged this investigation?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact there has been no prejudging of this investigation.

As I have assured the House on a number of occasions, there are no funds missing from the RCMP pension plan. In fact, the RCMP has called in the investigative assistance of the Ottawa police service. I think it is incumbent upon all of us at this point to let the Ottawa police service carry out its investigation.

• (1500)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety has prejudged and prejudiced this investigation by publicly exonerating the commissioner of the RCMP.

In the past the minister has refused to comment on matters that are before the courts or that are subject to a police investigation. Why in this case did the minister whitewash this investigation before the inquiry was even completed?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, far from there being any whitewash, I have been informed by the RCMP that no funds are missing from the RCMP pension fund. I also have been informed by the RCMP that it has in fact called in the Ottawa police service to conduct a thorough investigation.

I suggest that we await the outcome of that investigation.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian agricultural income stabilization program only provides grain producers with compensation based on the average price of grain for the past five years, a depressed price because of U.S. and European subsidies. Unfortunately, Ottawa's rigidity forces Quebec and its farmers to apply blanket Canada-wide rules and precludes the development of truly suitable programs.

What is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food waiting for to relax the support program and the agricultural policy framework, and allow the money to be used to meet the needs of the agricultural industry?

[English]

Hon. Mark Eyking (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Agri-Food), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have many programs available to help farmers throughout the country, whether in Quebec or out west, when margins go down in

their income. There is money available for farmers right across the country, even in Quebec.

* * *

NATIONAL DRUG STRATEGY

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at least two teenagers died this week in Quebec from inhaling butane gas. Many young people die or are permanently damaged every year from solvent abuse. Twenty per cent of Canadian kids will have tried sniffing by grade eight. Yet this is not a government priority.

There is so much it could do: additives to gasoline, penalties to merchants of misery, treatment for addicts.

Why has the government taken no action? Has it already forgotten the children of Davis Inlet? Why is the government just a spectator to this human tragedy?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me say, in response to the hon. member's question, that it is in fact a very serious question and that is why this government has funded and renewed our national drug strategy.

The tragedies, of which the hon. member speaks, are happening in our communities, which is why our national drug strategy will not only deal with enforcement but will deal with education and treatment, and work with local communities all over the country to ensure we reach young people and their families in their schools and in their communities to deal with this.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL UNITY FUND

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—L'Érable, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it has been three weeks since the Prime Minister's cabinet said it would be able to provide information on the secret national unity fund within 48 hours. On Monday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board said he had no record of the events and that he had to prepare a list of these events.

What is the President of the Treasury Board waiting for to table the existing lists of events that received money through this fund?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Treasury Board Secretariat is working with all the departments in order to gather information on the use of the national unity reserve. In order to obtain this type of information, it must scrutinize all government programs and activities that go back a number of years. A certain amount of time is needed to complete this process.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

●(1505)

*[English]***PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Hon. Stephen Owen (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table two letters, in both official languages, one from a flag outlet in B.C. and the other from Les Scouts du Québec.

* * *

*[Translation]***ETHICS COMMISSIONER**

Hon. Jacques Saada (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, biographical notes on Bernard Shapiro. The government has recommended Mr. Shapiro for the position of ethics commissioner.

Pursuant to Standing Order 111.1(1), I have asked the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to consider the proposed nomination of Mr. Shapiro as ethics commissioner.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Health, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the government's response to the report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages entitled, "Access to Health Care for the Official Language Minority Communities: Legal Bases, Current Initiatives and Future Prospects".

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*[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 111 petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which deals with the committee's request that legal fees for public servants called before this committee in relation to chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the November 2003 report of the Auditor General of Canada be paid for by the government.

Notwithstanding Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a response to this report as soon as possible.

*[Translation]***OLD AGE SECURITY ACT**

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-515, an act to amend the Old Age Security (monthly guaranteed income supplement).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to oblige the government to reimburse the \$3 billion it owes in guaranteed income supplements to the elderly from whom it has been withheld.

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

* * *

*[English]***INCOME TAX ACT**

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-516, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (Campobello Island, Deer Island, Grand Manan Island and White Head Island).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, to recognize the special and isolated status of Campobello Island, Deer Island, Grand Manan Island, including White Head Island, by making each of them a proscribed northern zone, so that persons living there will be entitled to a residency deduction under section 110.7 of the Income Tax Act.

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

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●(1510)

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

Hon. Jacques Saada (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in accordance with subsection 3(5) of the Act respecting employment in the Public Service of Canada, chapter P-33 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, this House approve the appointment of Maria Barrados of Ottawa, Ontario, as President of the Public Service Commission for a term of seven years.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried on division.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I wish to present eight petitions, each containing several hundred names of Canadians. They call upon Parliament to take whatever action is required to maintain the current legal definition of marriage in law in perpetuity, and to prevent any court from overturning or amending that definition.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today on behalf of my constituents of the Sunshine Coast Peace Group.

This organization opposes the participation and attack, invasion or occupation of foreign countries, and is calling upon Parliament to declare Canada's non-participation in such aggression, to urge the UN to seek peaceful solutions, and to forbid the export of arms to any nation involved in military attack.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions today, all from my riding of Mississauga South.

The first is referring to matters under Bill C-250. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that all Canadians are appalled by hate motivated attacks and believe that promoting hatred towards any person or group is wrong.

They also point out that in accordance with religious texts, the petitioners believe that all people are worthy of respect and dignity as human beings, but they also believe that for moral and religious reasons, certain sexual practices are morally unacceptable.

The petitioners therefore call upon Parliament to take all necessary measures to protect the rights of Canadians to freely share their religious and moral beliefs without prosecution.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on a related matter, the notwithstanding clause. The petitioners point out that the Ontario Court of Appeal has made a ruling in regard to Bill C-250 on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They also point out that the Constitution has provisions under section 33, a notwithstanding clause, to override the charter.

They therefore petition Parliament to invoke the notwithstanding clause to pass any law so that only two persons of an opposite sex can be married.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is with regard to stem cells.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that all Canadians support ethical stem cell research, which has

already shown so much potential. They petition Parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research to find the cures and therapies necessary for Canadians.

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and honoured to present a petition signed by hundreds of citizens in my constituency and residents throughout the province of Manitoba who are concerned about immigration policy. They are very concerned that the government has neglected to consider that the family remains a cornerstone of Canada's immigration policy.

They call upon the government to amend our present legislation to ensure that members of families not now included in the family sponsorship category have a way to come to this country. They specifically call upon Parliament to endorse and support the legislation before the House, Bill C-436, once in a lifetime legislation.

● (1515)

LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to present several petitions today.

As the father of two adopted children who suffer from fetal alcohol syndrome, members will appreciate how I feel about the first petition. It calls upon Parliament, subsequent to a motion that was passed in the House on April 23, 2001, to enact legislation and regulatory changes that would prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages in Canada unless the container in which the beverage is sold carries the following visible and clearly printed label: Warning: Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of approximately 1,200 Canadians from right across the country, these petitioners add to the growing total of thousands of people who have petitioned the House asking that Parliament take whatever action is required to maintain the current definition of marriage in law in perpetuity, and to prevent any court from overturning or amending that definition.

It is a pleasure to present these petitions.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present three petitions on the same subject.

The petitioners acknowledge that marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children. The definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman is being challenged and they call upon the House 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.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by constituents in Red Deer.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call upon Parliament to immediately hold a renewed debate on the definition of marriage and to take all necessary steps to preserve marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. Each of the petitions calls on Parliament to recognize marriage as a lasting union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of others. The petitioners call on Parliament to do whatever it can to ensure that that definition remains intact.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 55, 57, 59, 61 and 69.

[Text]

Question No. 55—**Mr. Norman Doyle:**

What quantities of fish were caught on the Grand Banks by foreign trawlers and landed in Newfoundland and Labrador ports between October 2001 and October 2003?

Hon. Geoff Regan (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, about 17,990 tonnes of groundfish, primarily Greenland halibut and redfish, and 25,000 tonnes of shrimp were caught by foreign trawlers on the Grand Banks and landed in Newfoundland and Labrador ports during the period between October 2001 and October 2003.

Question No. 57—**Mr. Norman Doyle:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, what was the substance of all reports generated between January and October, 2003 on the amount of cod and other "moratoria species" that have been caught, or are suspected to have been caught, by foreign fleets on the Grand Banks?

Hon. Geoff Regan (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, preliminary estimates indicate that catches of moratoria species in 2003 are significantly higher than the 5,000 tonnes estimated in both 2001 and 2002. However, the final determination of catch for the period required has not yet been finalized. A more complete response will be provided when the analysis is complete.

Question No. 59—**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:**

With regard to housekeeping and grounds maintenance benefits available under the veterans independence program, VIP, to surviving spouses: (a) what is the total number of surviving spouses who could potentially benefit from extending eligibility for these benefits to all veterans spouses; (b) based on the current participation rate, what is the estimated number of spouses likely to participate in the program as a result of removing the September 1, 1990 cut-off restriction; and (c) what is the estimated cost of delivering these services to the total number of spouses in (a) and (b)?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), beyond those covered by the regulatory changes of December 3, 2003, we estimate there are between 1,400 to 2,800 surviving spouses of deceased veteran clients who (a) received VIP benefits and (b) who passed away before 1990, the first year spouses became eligible for VIP.

In response to (b), based on the current participation rate, it is estimated that between 1,000 and 2,000 of these surviving spouses

would not be living in an institutional setting, and thus would likely participate based on need.

In response to (c), the maximum estimated cost of VIP housekeeping and grounds maintenance for the total eligible spouses, group A, is \$4.9 million for the current year and \$3.6 million for those likely to participate, group B.

Question No. 61—**Mr. Gary Schellenberger:**

For the last government fiscal year, how many auditors has Revenue Canada employed to verify the accuracy of personal and small business not medium or large businesses and not public companies income tax returns, what is the average salary for these auditors, and how much tax was collected due to the efforts of the auditors, i.e., that would not have been collected if they had not been auditing?

Hon. Stan Keyes (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the specific questions raised by the hon. member, the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, formerly the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, wishes to provide the following information which is based on individuals and unincorporated businesses, such as proprietorships, as well as small incorporated companies, with sales less than \$15 million:

One, in the last fiscal period ending March 31, 2003, the CRA employed 4,462 auditors to verify the accuracy of personal and small business income tax returns. Two, the average salary of these auditors was approximately \$55,000. Three, the total recoveries attributable to these auditors were approximately \$1,774 million.

The number of auditors and their salary costs relate to auditors in tax services offices only and does not include any supporting functions or activities.

Question No. 69—**Mr. Inky Mark:**

With regard to migration integrity officers: (a) how many individuals are currently performing the function of a migration integrity officer; (b) what is the difference between migration integrity officers and migration integrity personnel; (c) what is the job description of a migration integrity officer; (d) what relationship does a migration integrity officer have with international intelligence agencies, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Canada Border Services Agency; (e) how many complaints have been brought against migration integrity officers during the 2003 calendar year; (f) what type of document identification training does a migration integrity officer receive; (g) what type of protective clothing is issued to migration integrity officers, including all uniforms or protective clothing issued; (h) to whom does a migration integrity officer currently report and are there any plans to readjust their departmental reporting relationship; (i) what contracts have been awarded that relate to the migration integrity function; and (j) at what locations are migration integrity officers posted?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, responds as follows.

With regard to migration integrity officers, in response to (a), there are currently 45 migration integrity officers, MIOs.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (b), the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, does not use the term migration integrity personnel. In most cases, however, each MIO has a dedicated locally engaged migration integrity assistant, MIA. Depending on the local environment, the classification level of the assistant and the nature of the work at the specific location, the MIA will provide program support ranging from responding to general questions about entry requirements up to providing on-site advice to airlines at the boarding gate.

In response to (c), major activities of the MIO can be broken into four areas as follows:

The control activities include providing advice and document expertise to airlines and providing training on documents and irregular migration to airline and host government.

The intelligence reporting activities cover the areas of irregular migration, people smuggling and trafficking; program integrity; organized crime; war crimes and human rights; national security; and anti-fraud trends.

The international liaison activities include promoting international cooperation and partnerships with foreign missions, agencies, host country officials, and key interest groups in the region of responsibility; and representing Canada in bilateral and multilateral discussions and negotiations involving anti-fraud, interdiction, control, intelligence and security.

The anti-fraud area of activities includes being a source of expertise on documents and program integrity; providing training, guidance and support to Canadian mission staff on document fraud and irregular migration; and data reporting.

The emphasis given to a particular area depends on the specific local requirements.

In response to (d), MIOs report to the CBSA Immigration Intelligence Branch. Many MIOs receive Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, briefings prior to posting. CSIS and RCMP are viewed as consumers of general MIO reporting on country events and trends in irregular migration. MIOs have no formal relationships with international intelligence agencies. Their principal international points of contact are with other diplomatic personnel, as well as with host government police, immigration and border agencies having responsibilities for immigration control matters.

In response to (e), for the period from January 1, 2003 to December 11, 2003, the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, did not exist as a distinct agency.

The CBSA was created by an order in council on December 12, 2003, from the transfer of components of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. No complaints have been brought against MIOs for the period of December 12, 2003 to December 31, 2003, nor were any complaints brought against MIOs prior to the creation of the CBSA.

In response to (f), in addition to basic immigration officer or foreign service immigration officer training which includes elements of document examination and fraud detection, all MIOs attend a

three week specialized training course which includes one week of intensive document examination and fraud detection training. At the end of the document training each officer must pass an exam by jury.

There is substantially more emphasis given to document training than given by counterparts. United Kingdom immigration service airline liaison officers receive one day of document briefing; the United States currently intends to provide only a half day briefing on documents under its immigrant security initiative deployments overseas.

The answer to (g) is none. As the MIO is not an enforcement field officer, no protective clothing is required in the performance of his or her duties.

In response to (h), MIOs currently report to Control Division, Immigration Intelligence Branch of the CBSA. The CBSA is a new agency and although it is reviewing its structure, there is no existing plan to amend the present reporting relationship for MIOs.

In response to (i), The CBSA was created by an order in council on December 12, 2003, from the transfer of components of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. No contracts have been awarded relating to the migration integrity function for the period of December 12, 2003 to March 10, 2004.

In response to (j), the MIOs are posted in 39 strategic locations overseas in Africa and the Middle East, the western hemisphere, Europe, and Asia-Pacific.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 58, 68 and 71 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 58—**Mr. Norman Doyle:**

To which and to how many foreign trawlers did Canadian authorities issue citations for illegal fishing on the Grand Banks between 1992 and 2003?

Return tabled.

*Government Orders*Question No. 68—**Mr. Inky Mark:**

With regard to immigration queue data: (a) how many cases are currently considered active within the immigration application queues; (b) how many cases are currently considered inactive within the immigration application queues; (c) how many cases are currently considered active within the permanent resident queues; (d) how many cases are currently considered inactive within the permanent resident queues; (e) how many cases are currently considered active and inactive in the “removal orders issued” queues; (f) how many cases with removal orders executed are currently considered active and inactive in the queues; (g) how many student visa applications are currently considered active in the queues; (h) how many student visa applications are currently considered inactive in the queues; (i) how many visitor visa applications are currently considered active in the queues; and (j) how many visitor visa applications are currently considered inactive in the queues?

Return tabled.

Question No. 71—**Mr. Inky Mark:**

With respect to the government's Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI): (a) how does the department evaluate “value for money” in connection with VSI grants; (b) what, if any, audits has the department conducted on any of the agencies that have received grants; (c) what groups have received grants and what did they produce; (d) how much of the grant money has gone to operational and administrative expenses; (e) what types of outcome or results-oriented evaluations have been conducted to date; (f) is the VSI a permanent program or does it have a “termed” mandate; (g) if there are audits, who conducts them and what are they measuring; and (h) how does the department report “value for money” to Parliament in relation to the VSI program?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have some questions on the Order Paper. Questions Nos. 11 and 13 were asked on February 2; Question No. 17 was asked on February 3; and the last one was asked only on March 25. However, some of these questions date back to the previous Parliament. I know from documentation I received under access to information that the answers were prepared for the last Parliament and I still have not got them.

If the rumour mill is correct, this Parliament may be winding down and my questions have not been answered. I would like to get those answers.

The point on the fourth question, Question No. 80, is that the question relates to the government position on nautical charts. The fishing and boating season is increasing now with the better weather. It is important that those questions be answered.

• (1520)

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, I know nothing of the specifics of these questions. However, there are two remedies. I can undertake to determine where they are in terms of the process, or, if we have gone beyond the time limit, they could be referred to the standing committee.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

TLICHO LAND CLAIMS AND SELF-GOVERNMENT ACT

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, an act to give effect to a land claims and self-government agreement among the Tlicho, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada, to make related amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support Bill C-31, the Tlicho land claims and self-government act. While my hon. colleagues have addressed specific aspects of the bill, I would like to take a broader view and situate the bill in a northern context.

I am convinced that Bill C-31 will have a significant and overwhelmingly positive impact on Canada's north. Unprecedented prosperity is already underway in the north and for the first time aboriginal people are participating as full partners. There is no doubt in my mind that these trends are definitely linked. I am also convinced that Canada's long term prosperity depends upon continuing to foster growth in the northern economy. To ensure that this growth benefits all Canadians, northerners must be directly involved.

The Tlicho seek to increase their participation in the economy. Through Bill C-31, the House has the power to grant them their wish and advance Canadian prosperity. Simply put, the legislation before us today gives the Tlicho people the legal status, tools and resources they need to access an equitable share of northern prosperity. The legislation would create the democratic institutions of local government which would ensure that future generations can protect Tlicho culture and safeguard traditional lands.

This legislation has arrived at a favourable time in the history of the north. Allow me to explain by citing a few facts. Canada will soon become the world's third largest producer of diamonds, thanks to the successful mining operations in the Northwest Territories. This success is made sweeter by the partnerships struck between first nations and the mining companies.

One of the first agreements was struck between the Tlicho and Ekati. Other deals involve aboriginal trucking and facilities companies. As a result of these agreements, northern communities are benefiting significantly from the diamond projects. In 2002, aboriginals accounted for more than 30% of the workforces at Ekati and Diavik.

Government Orders

A study conducted in 2003 by the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Chamber of Mines estimated that at least 200 aboriginal businesses now operate in the mining sector. These businesses generate revenues in excess of \$500 million per year. Similar projects are underway across the north: to mine nickel near Voisey's Bay, Labrador, and to extract and develop oil sands in Alberta.

All of these projects will generate substantial profits for investors and deliver significant benefits for first nations and northern communities. I am convinced that partnering with aboriginal organizations in these projects is key to Canada's long term prosperity.

My belief is based on two concurrent facts. First, the natural resources of the north are vast and relatively untapped and, second, many aboriginal communities concentrated in the north are keen to participate as equal partners in the development of these resources. However, many of these communities face significant barriers. Ownership of resources and legal status are often in doubt, forcing potential investors to take their money elsewhere.

The Government of Canada has an important role to play to ensure that the vast economic potential of the north is realized in a sustainable and inclusive way. By devolving certain powers to the territories, for example, we help ensure that decisions about resource development are made by the people most affected. By negotiating land claims and self-government agreements, for instance, we help ensure that aboriginal communities can access resources and develop their economies. We help create the conditions that attract other partners.

Bill C-31 is a case in point. The centrepiece of the legislation is the Tlicho agreement, a tripartite agreement negotiated during the past decade by Canada, the Northwest Territories and the Tlicho. While several clauses of the agreement are complex, their overall effect is relatively simple: the Tlicho will become a self-governing entity with the tools to enable it to raise capital and develop infrastructure.

• (1525)

Under Bill C-31, the Tlicho will have the authority to collect taxes, levy resource royalties, license businesses and manage their lands and resources. The Indian Act will no longer apply. The Tlicho will still be subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and all federal laws of general application, including the Criminal Code.

The Tlicho have clearly demonstrated that they are ready to exercise these powers wisely. Although comprised of only a few thousand members, the Tlicho manage their own schools and a long term care facility. They have built and now successfully operate an airport. They have negotiated social service delivery agreements with the government of the Northwest Territories.

The Tlicho are ready, willing and able to play a larger role in the northern economy. We must ensure that the Tlicho have every opportunity to succeed in this role.

Modern land claims agreements have provided aboriginal people with the means to become partners in the economic development of their regions. Makivik Corporation, which represents the Inuit of northern Quebec, concluded a land claim agreement in 1976. They have supported and developed the traditional economy of their

communities while at the same time becoming major partners in the broader economy. They own a major airline and a construction company and are partners in northern shipping ventures and commercial fisheries.

Overall, these agreements provide aboriginal groups with governance, economic tools and land and resource benefits, which are contributing to their self-reliance, cultural well-being and successful participation in the broader economy.

I believe that the success of partnerships between private sector companies and aboriginal groups has forever altered the business climate in the north. Diamond mines in the Northwest Territories demonstrate the advantage of this new operating environment.

Diavik and BHP Billiton have adopted a stewardship approach that demonstrates tremendous respect, both for the environment and for local communities. Diavik, for instance, signed an impact and benefits agreement with the Tlicho before the company opened the Ekati mine.

Today the majority of the mine's workforce is comprised of northerners and nearly 50% are aboriginal. The mine buys 70% of the goods and services it needs from suppliers based in the Northwest Territories. Tlicho Logistics, a company created to provide services to Ekati, employs more than 106 aboriginals.

The partnerships with diamond companies enable first nations to realize community goals. By taking advantage of training opportunities, residents are acquiring the skills they need to develop and manage their own businesses. As a result, young people in the north can look forward to a more prosperous future. As a result, the number of Tlicho people enrolled in post-secondary studies has increased sixfold in the past four years.

The mining companies also benefit by tapping the knowledge of the people most familiar with the fragile environment of the north. In addition, the people of Canada benefit as strengthened aboriginal communities contribute socially, economically and culturally.

I believe that the Government of Canada must encourage businesses in northern communities to form respectful, mutually beneficial partnerships. Clearly this approach will stimulate new levels of economic activity in the north and produce tremendous advantages for all Canadians.

This House has an important role to play in ensuring that these advantages are realized. By adopting Bill C-31, we can support the considerable efforts of the Tlicho to contribute to Canada's economy. I urge hon. members to grant this legislation swift passage.

Government Orders

● (1530)

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-31, the Tlicho land claims and self-government act. This bill represents the aspirations of a principled and trustworthy people determined to honour commitments made by their ancestors.

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Cree]

(English)

What I have said in my language is that it is a great honour to look at a region that was ascertained by Treaty No. 11 and to look at the treaty signatories of these communities, the ancestors, and the youth, with their aspirations for the future. This will be a public form of government. Not only will it be inclusive of aboriginal people, the Tlicho, the Dogrib people of Treaty No. 11, but the Tlicho are making provisions for all people who live within their territory to be a part of that governance.

That kind of vision is very welcome, for my people in the northern half of the province of Saskatchewan. I urge them to look at that sort of governance. Aboriginal and non-aboriginal people can work together, coming together as one, and create a governance structure that can serve all our needs.

For more than a decade, the Tlicho have led a comprehensive process of consultations and negotiations. The fruit of those efforts, the Tlicho agreement, forms the centrepiece of the legislation that is now before us.

Today we are considering a bill that would significantly influence the destiny of a people. In the interests of the Tlicho and all Canadians, I believe we must give our wholehearted support to this legislation.

The agreement at the heart of the legislation is significant in many ways. It marks the first agreement in the Northwest Territories to include comprehensive land claims and self-government. It would provide certainty for the exercise of aboriginal and treaty rights within the traditional territory of the Tlicho, almost 20% of the Northwest Territories itself.

Within their traditional area, the Tlicho would gain ownership of a parcel of land, 39,000 square kilometres in total, along with self-government powers and control of land and resources within that area. The amount of money involved is also substantial. Approximately \$150 million would be paid out over several years. The Tlicho would also be guaranteed a share of the revenues generated from resource development in the Mackenzie Valley.

The process that led to the agreement was remarkable and comprehensive. Consultations and negotiations went on for over 10 years. Hundreds of sessions were held, involving dozens of private and public sector groups and thousands of people. The tripartite agreement that emerged from these efforts involves Canada, the Tlicho and the Government of the Northwest Territories. In fact, the territorial assembly has already passed legislation to ratify this agreement and will enact two other related pieces of legislation in the near future.

To ensure that the tripartite agreement respects the interests of all other aboriginal groups, the Tlicho negotiated separate overlap agreements with the Sahtu Dene and Métis, the Gwich'in, the Deh Cho and the Akaitcho Treaty No. 8 Dene.

As my esteemed colleagues have recognized, the Tlicho have gone to extraordinary lengths to secure an agreement suited to their unique situation. To appreciate the significance of the agreement's particular future, it is important to know a bit of Tlicho history.

The Tlicho are a Dene people. They are of the Dene nation. They are nomadic, historically using and occupying vast tracts of land near the Mackenzie River, Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake. They lived off the land and often followed migrating herds of caribou. The land was revered because it provided sustenance, and its value was incalculable.

European explorers called them the Dogrib, a name that stuck with them for a century or more. Explorers brought new diseases such as measles and influenza, which decimated the aboriginal population, but the Dogrib found a way to survive and to maintain their relationship with the land.

● (1535)

When oil and gas were discovered in the 1920s in the north, treaty negotiations that followed quickly gathered momentum. At a ceremony in Fort Rae in 1921, Treaty No. 11 was signed by Chief Monfwi. Annuities were paid to 440 members of the Dogrib Band. More than eight decades later, the anniversary of the signing ceremony is still celebrated in the Tlicho communities. Ceremonies of the treaty's signatory should also be celebrated by Canadians. This historic agreement created our country, and Canada is truly a treaty nation.

When Treaty No. 11 was signed, Chief Monfwi traced the traditional lands of his people on a map. The boundaries, as he described, are identical, almost nearly to the line, of what is included in Bill C-31 today. The vision of the chief and the vision of his people was exact.

The treaty is also culturally significant to the Tlicho. In recognition of this, a unique provision in the agreement incorporates two aspects of the original treaty: payment of annuities and teachers' salaries. Education has always been a high priority for the Tlicho.

Given the geography and lack of development, the treaty did not result in the creation of Indian reserves, as in other regions of the country, or the disturbance of the Dogrib from their traditional lands as they moved around from lakes to rivers to all the traditional hunting and gathering regions of their territory. The treaty was seen by the Dogrib as a treaty of peace and friendship rather than one involving land issues.

The region's history informs the substance of our debate here in countless other ways as well. For instance, how the Tlicho reacted to the expansion of mainstream culture. As non-aboriginal society moved northward, some of the Tlicho began to feel that their traditions were being threatened.

Chief Jimmy Bruneau called on the Tlicho to "be strong like two people". To strive in the changing world, the Tlicho would need to learn the aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultures alike.

Government Orders

The strengths of the Tlicho were tested during the 1970s when a northern pipeline became economically feasible. The Berger inquiry was commissioned to investigate the potential social, environmental and economic impacts of this pipeline.

The inquiry proved to be a major turning point in the aboriginal relations. Television and newspaper coverage brought home stories of ancient cultures threatened by external developmental pressures. Berger's report predicted that the social consequences of a pipeline were not only serious, but also potentially devastating. His report recommended settling land claims before developing plans ahead. This has been the preclusion to the land claim negotiations that have been taking place.

Land claim negotiation processes were established to address this and to clarify land and resource rights and protect cultures. This is an integral part of this agreement. Land claim agreements were reached with the Inuvialuit in 1984, with the Gwich'in in 1992 and the Sahtu, Dene and Metis in 1994. Over the past decade, the Tlicho pursued their agreements based on land and self-government rights.

Three decades after the Berger inquiry, first nations and Inuit communities are better able to benefit from resource development projects in the north. As well, there has been evidence that development does not need to be postponed until land claim agreements and negotiations are fully completed. It is possible for aboriginal communities, with their leadership, to participate in development and build economic capacity while land claim negotiations proceed.

When diamonds were discovered on traditional lands, for instance, the Tlicho negotiated an impact and benefits agreement and implementation plan with the mining companies. As a result, the Tlicho gained access to a range of jobs and training opportunities, delivering even more opportunities to the Tlicho.

• (1540)

This is continuing with other developments that are taking place on their traditional lands and they will be taking the leadership role for negotiating for their people, the land and resources, and the water resources that exist within their territory.

Threads of recent Tlicho history are also woven into Bill C-31. The legislation would guarantee the Tlicho a role in deciding how the resources of the Mackenzie Valley might be developed through participation in public environmental review boards.

The entire Mackenzie River was ascertained as Canadian territory by both Treaties Nos. 8 and 11. The significance of this is difficult for many Canadians to appreciate, but the history of our country is based on treaty.

In the north, where large scale resource developments can have such negative impacts on the environment, participation is essential and respect of the peace and friendship treaties is critically fundamental.

The bill also calls for establishment of a democratic Tlicho government. This would be a public form of government that would include all residents of the Tlicho territory. The bill would empower the government to pass laws safeguarding their culture and

protecting traditional lands, and respecting policies of resource management and protection.

Under the terms of the legislation, key decisions would be made by the people most familiar with and most affected by local issues. I am convinced that this will lead to substantial improvements in housing, employment, education, social activities and the quality of life for all northerners, not only the Tlicho. Their vision is to include all people who live among them.

The Tlicho leaders believe their improvements are best accomplished by the Tlicho themselves, through a representative and effective government capable of exercising law-making authority and assuming new responsibilities. They also recognize that this objective will need to be achieved through partnership, partnership with industry in resource development, partnership with territorial government in the delivery of social programs and services and partnership with the federal government for a greater development of our Canadian north.

I agree with them wholeheartedly that the bill now before the House will help establish precisely these conditions and the foundation for a better future for their people and their nation. It would enable the Tlicho to become self-governing and assume jurisdiction over and responsibility for their own affairs.

It is very important that we highlight responsibility. There are huge responsibilities in dealing with their children, the raising of their families, the protection of their language, culture, their traditions as hunters and gatherers, their relationship with the animals, the fish and also the water. The life sources for many years for their people and their nation need to be respected and recognized into the future.

They also take up their rightful roles as landowners, administrators and entrepreneurs. This is a vigorous and vibrant, prosperous north and they will be inclusive of these kind of activities, not only trading within the domestic regions of provinces and territories of the Canadian north, but also into southern Canada and internationally.

The Tlicho will play an important part in establishing these partnerships with their territorial government, the federal government and the private sector, and participating in the future growth and development of the entire Northwest Territories, and also the Canadian north.

Today, we have been entrusted with the aspirations of a people, the Tlicho and the Dene nation. I ask that the House support the Tlicho as they strive to realize their potential. I am encouraged by the vision that the Tlicho have brought us to consider.

In my language I would like to speak directly to some of the provisions in the agreement so the people in my communities can understand because I would like to encourage them in regard to this type of agreement based on treaty, our Treaty No. 11 and Treaty No. 8. My constituency touches on the Mackenzie River system as well.

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Cree]

• (1545)

(English)

It is a great honour to see from the far north that the Dene Nation and its people, the Tlicho, have seen a vision of governing their territories in a cooperative manner, that all people living within their territories will be part of their governing structure. It does not matter from what part of the country or the world people come. If they live among the Tlicho, there is a place for them in their governance.

That vision was created with Canada as a treaty nation. A peace and friendship treaty was established; a blanket of peace and friendship.

A very noble visitor, the Dalai Lama, is visiting our country at this time. Peace and friendship has been his message all along. Maybe that is why he finds Canada so generous and open. The very foundation of the country was on peace and friendship.

The original nations of this land have to be given proper respect as well as the Tlicho and the Dene Nation to which they belong. The Dene Nation has to be celebrated in these houses as well. There is Cree Nation, the Mohawk Nation, the Blackfoot Nation, the Haida Nation, the Oneida Nation, the Innu Nation, the Inuit Nation and the Metis Nation. These are the original nations of this land, and they have to be a part of this governing structure.

Here is a self-government model that the Tlicho, the Dene people, have negotiated and drafted. They have included all people, all Canadians who live in their territory to be part of their governing structure.

To me it was very astounding that they had signed a treaty already. They knew that living under the Indian Act was not sufficient, that they had to draft something more. This gives me great honour to share with the House and also with the people back home who are listening.

That is what I envisioned for my region of the country. My region is governed by villages and reserves, municipal boundaries and reserve boundaries. Outside of that we do not have what southern Canada has as municipalities or counties, where the agriculture communities can put their minds together and create a democratic system of governance and representation.

The north does not have that. This self-government model addresses that. Any resource management or any resource development issue will be conducted in a democratic government. This is a self-government, a democratically elected government that will involve all residents of that region. Therefore, I celebrate this and I share this for all other regions of Canada to consider. Here is a Dene Nation that entered into treaty to share its land, to create a beautiful country, a treaty nation called Canada.

Now they have come to us. They need the provisions, the tools and the law-making powers. This is it. This is the Tlicho agreement, the self-government agreement. It is not only for their people. They are not selfish. They are drawing this self-government model for all people who will be living among them. I celebrate that. I congratulate them and I also send heartfelt greetings, through you

Government Orders

Madam Speaker, to the elders, the women, the men and the youth who have been involved in this.

A huge level of support came from their communities for this to be achieved. In the Northwest Territories, there is a huge number of aboriginal representation. Their world view took place. This was ratified by the territorial government. I congratulate the territorial government for allowing this kind of vision, this kind of self-government to take place.

Today, I encourage my colleagues in the House and in the Senate, where this law will also be considered, to entrust the vision that took place in creating this self-government model. It is a model that is truly Canadian. It includes all of us. We must be one country. The original nations and the new peoples who have come here, come here as one nation. To create laws and territorial and self-government models that involve all of us is truly a time of celebration.

• (1550)

This is truly a visionary document that involves many hours of work. It is very heartfelt. The Tlicho people are sacrificing and taking risks of their aboriginal title and rights. They are also putting them on the table to be shared with all others.

I congratulate them for that kind of vision and confidence in themselves as a nation. I celebrate—

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Cree]

(English)

There are many people who have travelled to many corners of the world to find Canada as their home. My vision of Canada is that we are a nation of rivers. This river aspect through Treaty No. 11 and Treaty No. 8 ascertained the entire eco-region of the Mackenzie River system.

These treaties are like a patchwork blanket of river systems. Treaty No. 6 in my area was the Saskatchewan River system. Treaty No. 10 was the Churchill River system. All these river systems make up a country. We are also a river of nations. We must be proud of our ancestors, no matter who or where they are. We must be proud that we are one country. We must flow as one.

For the Tlicho people, I celebrate the vision of their self-government concept. I encourage all my colleagues in the House to support this bill.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for an excellent description of the agreement. I know the hon. member, being of aboriginal ancestry, understands the benefits of self-government.

In Yukon, we have a number of the first self-governing nations in the country. For me, it is like night and day, the ones that have signed a self-government agreement. They have a full and modern government taking care of their own affairs.

I would appreciate it if the member would expand on self-government and its importance. There are some members in the House who do not have any first nations people in their riding, or at least communities that are large enough and cohesive enough to be self-governing aboriginal communities.

Government Orders

Could you outline the benefits of self-government as you see them and of the nature that this exciting legislation will fulfill?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): Please address your comments to the Chair. In response, the hon. member for Churchill River.

Mr. Rick Laliberte: Madam Speaker, for clarification, the self-government agreement includes the territories of the Tlicho, where the original chief, when outlining his traditional territory, would incorporate Great Slave Lake, Great Bear Lake and the Mackenzie River. This is a huge triangle that takes up 39,000 square kilometres.

However, the Tlicho people are also part of the Dene nation. The Dene nation must be recognized and celebrated as well. It must also be unified under a confederacy, as was envisioned by the peacemaker. It was a gift that was given to us here on this land. It was a man that was given to us with a message.

We have clan mothers of the Oneida nation, one of the original five nations of the Iroquois confederacy. That was a gift under the law of peace. There is an opportunity under this self-government agreement where the people of the Tlicho can govern their affairs within their territory, but there are provisions in this agreement that enables them to create opportunities within their Dene nation for greater associations and collectivity among their nation and other united nations.

The nations of this land must unite as one and live under the law of peace and that law of peace can be a gift that Canada can give to the world. The world is in so much strife right now—in the Middle East, in the south, and in every direction. There are conflicts. Maybe that gift of peace is here, but we as the original nations must come together as nations. We must collect ourselves.

This self-government deal does not stop that. It creates provisions that the Tlicho can continue allegiance with the Dene nation and the Dene nation can seek allegiance, confederacy and alliance with the Cree, the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Tuscarora, the Seneca and the Cayuga. They can all be a collective and that is what Canada may not realize, but this real gift of peace is under our realm.

The original confederacy of the united nations under the Iroquois confederacy was looked at when the independence of the United States was being created, but it only looked at the virtual copy of the united nations under the law of peace. It only took a xerox copy. It never took the real spirit of intent of this law of peace. Canada has the opportunity to look at the real law of peace, to recognize it, and to allow these nations to come together to celebrate and nurture this peace.

I welcome the clan mothers who are in the House. I say to them to keep that sacred gift alive. I wish to commend the clan mothers of the Dene and the Tlicho, and hope that the mothers will find a way for peace because in war-strife countries it is the woman that will play a significant role in searching for a peaceful existence among our people.

• (1555)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: I apologize for not putting my question through you last time, Madam Speaker.

Harvard University has done a study that suggests that good governance is one of the prerequisites to community and economic development. I wonder if the member could comment on that.

The Tlicho people, as we know, have a number of excellent nascent business enterprises at the moment, but it is quite a challenge. They are geographically in the middle part of Canada. They are not in the high Arctic and they are not on the border with the United States, where most of Canada's population lives. They are more remote and hard to get at in that respect.

I wonder if the member could comment on the difficulty in surviving as a society and building a good community in that middle part of Canada, and how this agreement will help the Tlicho achieve that.

Mr. Rick Laliberte: Madam Speaker, the Tlicho have been very persistent to include resources in the Tlicho agreement. The land, water and minerals are part of the Tlicho agreement. In order to be vibrant in any of our first nations communities or first nations territories, we must have access to resources.

We must have access to resources not only for development or commercialization or profit making, but for training in the many trades that are included in the mining industry, the forest industry, and also to be vibrant in the new technologies that are taking place. A lot of these machines are now practically robots, where one individual can operate huge machines the size of this room with a joystick. To keep that type of technology maintained—not only the mechanics but the whole aspect of high tech because it is microchip technology—our people must be challenged into that type of technology.

Maybe some day the Tlicho will design a truly Canadian vehicle. I have been waiting. Volvo is a Swedish automobile and North American automobiles are basically American: Dodge, Chevrolet and Ford. Maybe some day we will have a Canadian automobile, which can be an all terrain vehicle, besides Bombardier.

Maybe the Tlicho, or somebody from the Dene, or maybe somebody from the north will design it where it can be driven through a muskeg, a true challenge for the Canadian north. Instead of paved highways, maybe this kind of vehicle would be truly all terrain. We need that kind of challenge; however, we need access to those resources.

There are special metals and special gifts that we were given, just like the responsibility of uranium. Huge tracks of uranium are entirely in the Dene regions of northern Canada. There are huge uranium mines in my northern region of Churchill River. However, that precious metal that is used for energy is also a responsibility because it can also do damage. We not only have rights but responsibilities.

This self-government agreement is based on responsibilities. There are huge responsibilities for the environment, training, and creating a better economy and quality of life for the people. It is based on the management of resources. There is no leverage if there is no leverage of negotiating these land resource deals.

Government Orders

I thank the hon. member for Yukon for raising this. It is certainly a significant part of the self-government deal. Without the provisions of resource management and access to resource development in the Tlicho agreement, the Tlicho people would not have the leverage to have a sound government and to have a sound future for economic or social development in that region.

Sustainable development is critical and the people at both community levels will be making those decisions. It is very important that the decision making level be brought to those people, not to bureaucrats in a department here in Ottawa or some other region like Yellowknife or Edmonton or some far off region. We must trust those people to make the decisions for their people and the people living among them for the greater good of the Northwest Territories and for the greater good of our country.

• (1600)

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to speak to the bill. To me, because of my background of experiences, it is one of the most dynamic pieces of legislation that has ever entered this House, which will have a fantastic influence on and control, to a certain degree, over the lifestyle and future developmental patterns of a great number of people in a large area of this wonderful country.

While my colleagues have addressed other aspects of the bill, I would like to describe how the legislation would improve educational outcomes for Tlicho young people and deliver additional benefits to all Canadians.

Societies around the world have long recognized the importance of knowledge and learning. Indeed, an impressive and ever-growing body of research indicates that investing in the education of our young people is probably among the most important investments our society can make. Our children are the very foundation upon which our country's future will be built, and it is this education that is of vital importance.

Exactly what kind of construction takes place? What kind of value system are we instilling in these young people? What are the principles of achievement and of self-respect. What are the positive signs of growth that will help, not only that individual to have a much happier life, but the entire community, which really means all Canadians?

I talked about the importance of the bill. I have been involved in education for many years. In a formal sense, I was involved for 37 years. I travelled to Indian reserves all over northwestern Ontario. I examined, helped and tested teachers in reserve schools and in schools in many communities throughout the centre part of Canada, which we refer to as northwestern Ontario.

I have watched children grow. I have watched children destroy. I have watched children blossom into young, productive, happy adults. I know, from all the experiences I have had in all those years, how extremely important the influence is of the social dynamics that take place in the school, especially with peer groups and those who try to influence, and do influence the members of that peer group, called teachers. However, even more important, is the influence of those people who are in the community, especially the families, the mothers and fathers. They are so critically important, as well as all those who are in daily contact with that growing individual.

I have seen some wonderful things happening in northwestern Ontario over the years. As I go along, I might take time and digress. My understanding is that if I wish and if I am able, I can speak here for an hour, two hours, three hours or more. Could you clarify that for me, Madam Speaker? Just exactly how much time are you offering me?

• (1605)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): You have exactly 15 minutes and 41 seconds remaining.

Mr. Stan Dromisky: Madam Speaker, in our increasingly complex global economy, a sound educational system is crucial. Knowledge is the key to self-sufficiency, quality of life and success of all Canadians. This is no less true for aboriginal people.

Three years ago I had a large group of young, aboriginal people from northwestern Ontario who went through the school system, left the reserves, came into the larger communities, completed their high school programs and then were so stimulated they went on to get college degrees, certificates in special activity areas, as well as university degrees.

We brought these people together, approximately 150 young people between the ages of 20 and 35. Every one of them were extremely successful individuals in the field of endeavour that they chose. Many of them became business people but they did not operate businesses on the reserves. They operated businesses throughout northwestern Ontario and Manitoba.

I was delighted to see these young people. It was too bad that story could not have been told to all Canadians, that these people are not lost. They will not be drifting up there forever. Where there is a will there is a way and if that will can be stimulated to the point where they can actually react to it, cross that threshold and carry on with their educational system and their pattern of programs, they will be successful.

Although much has been done in the past two decades to improve education outcomes for first nations young people in Canada, a significant gap in achievement still remains between aboriginal and non-aboriginal. However the gap is not only true for aboriginals and non-aboriginals. That gap is also true between those children who live in huge metropolitan areas with all kinds of facilities, services and programs built within the community, such as museums, parks and everything else, and the non-aboriginal people who live in small communities. They do not have all of these programs, facilities and enticements within the community to enrich the lives of our young people as they grow up in them.

Yes, the people in the bigger cities, even though they are crowded, have far more for the young children of today than many children have in the isolated small communities scattered throughout the country.

Government Orders

Due to their small size and geographical remoteness, many first nations schools are unable to deliver programs comparable to those offered in provincially run schools. Aboriginal students without access to on-reserve education often have to travel a great distance to attend schools. Historically, these factors have led to higher dropout rates and lower educational achievements among aboriginal youth.

We have a very large high school which was turned over by the Lincoln Board of Education to an aboriginal school authority. This school has several hundred students in it from all over northwestern Ontario. There is no residence for these children, but these young people, going from grade 9 to grade 12, are billeted in a multitude of homes throughout the community. I can tell hon. members that the relationship between the students in the school and the non-native students within the community, with whom they associate, is a very positive one. It is one of the best examples of helping these young people to make the adjustment.

Some of these young people come from areas of the country where they do not have the facilities and the services. Therefore we have to set up special programs for them to quickly acclimatize and adjust to the new environment which they find in the city.

Many people are not aware of the fact that many of our aboriginal people have only one place in their community to shop. It could be a Hudson Bay store and everything has to be in there. When they come into the city there are all kinds of stores: a store to buy clothes; a store to buy medicine; a store to buy hotdogs and hamburgers; a store three blocks away to buy doughnuts or whatever; a little further away a store to buy shoes; a store to buy cookies; and a store to buy vegetables or anything else. That is not like on the reserve. There has to be training and adjustment for many of these young people.

● (1610)

The agreement at the heart of the bill includes self-government for the Tlicho people, the transfer of a parcel of land and a payment of approximately \$150 million over 14 years, not one or two years but the next 14 years. The Tlicho have chosen to use this money wisely to repay debts accumulated during negotiations and to invest in social, educational and economic development. Approximately \$500,000 a year for the next 14 years will be set aside for scholarships, helping to ensure that aboriginal young people will have access to the same high quality, culturally relevant educational opportunities enjoyed by non-aboriginal Canadians. That to me is a significant part of the bill.

The Tlicho have a long history of commitment to education. When Chief Jimmy Bruneau shook hands 35 years ago with then Indian affairs minister, Jean Chrétien, he recognized that the Tlicho needed to make a concerted effort to prepare for the future and protect their way of life from rapidly spreading cultural and economic influences.

Chief Bruneau spoke of the need to blend northern and southern cultures, to "be strong like two people" and to learn from aboriginal and non-aboriginal traditions. The chief also realized that to achieve this goal, the Tlicho would need access to schools that delivered culturally based education to aboriginal children in their communities. That was a very wise move.

In 1971, Chief Bruneau's dream began to come true when a school bearing his name opened in the Tlicho community of Rae-Edzo. Today that school is one of five in the Tlicho community, all overseen by the Dogrib Community Services Board.

It is widely accepted that aboriginal communities know best how to meet the educational needs of their young people. This is why the Government of Canada encourages and facilitates co-operation between aboriginal communities, national and regional education organizations, provincial and territorial ministries of education, and other stakeholders to establish and support an effective first nations education system.

Such systems are positive and important steps toward aboriginal control of their children's education, not like the educational systems we have in every single province where we have special egg crate kinds of structures and a group of children are put in tiny cubicles.

From some centre, like Toronto, Ontario, the fee that we have to pay for those little chicken coops is decided by a group of people sitting in Toronto 2,000 miles away from the school who have no clue about the needs of that community or of the people and children who live in that community. That has to be force-fed to those children in there.

Today it is even worse in Ontario. Programs are fed to kids all over the province and then they are tested on whether or not they digested them properly. Why not use a computer instead of trying to make a computer out of the child? Let the child live wholesomely in his or her own environment.

These aboriginal people have the answer. Parents work with the teachers within the educational system and they decide how to enrich the lives of their children within that community.

I did my PhD in this area in other parts of the world. Wherever that is taking place, success is astounding, especially in the areas of education, people's attitude toward others in that environment, their attitude toward people in their communities and the world at large, but above all, their attitude toward themselves. I really have to give these people way up north in this isolated community a fantastic amount of credit.

● (1615)

I hope they will provide leadership in curriculum development and parental involvement in developing their educational lifestyle and programs for these children for years to come, throughout the entire country, and get rid of this nonsense that is taking place in a province like Ontario at the present time.

Bill C-31 will give the Tlicho formal control over education and social services, a control that the Tlicho people, through the Dogrib Community Services Board, have already demonstrated they can exercise with care and compassion.

Government Orders

Much like the man after whom it was named, the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School is innovative and offers culturally based education to young people. The school is proud to bear more than the chief's name: it also lives up to the spirit of the chief's dream. The school strives to meet the challenge of educating these young men and women to be "strong like two people", and it is succeeding in teaching Tlicho culture and language, along with science, technology and other skills young aboriginals need to succeed in today's workforce.

The school provides these young people with a broader range of career and lifestyle options than those enjoyed by previous generations. These increased opportunities are encouraging many more students to remain in school and graduate. Indeed, dropout rates have plummeted. More young people than ever now go on to post-secondary education, and in this community in June 2006 the school will graduate its first university-bound students.

As the economic prosperity of this community increases dramatically over the years in the future, a higher quality of life will be added to the lifestyle of all the people within that area, because many of these young people will continue with their education. Job opportunities will be generated and will increase in number in a very sophisticated manner, and in very professional areas too. They will come back to work with their people, serve their people and live with their people.

Helping young Canadians, including aboriginal youth, to stay in school is of paramount importance not only to the Government of Canada but also to the Canadian economy. A high school diploma is essential to a bright future. The alternatives can be devastating. Many high school dropouts end with a string of dead end jobs, chronically unemployed, unable to fit into the new economy and meet their full potential.

I do not have to belabour those points. We have had so much information—statistics galore by the bushful—brought into this chamber to tell us time and time again that we have to do everything in our power to help the provinces to get those children who are dropped by the wayside. They fall between the cracks and miss this golden opportunity in this wonderful country of ours to really pull themselves up by the bootstraps and become very happy and productive individuals in our society. If that does not happen, if they do not go through the educational system, the chances of them ruining their lives and maybe even ruining the lives of others are enhanced dramatically.

That is why the Government of Canada continues to make significant investments in education and training for aboriginal secondary and post-secondary students. These investments are designed to encourage these young people to remain in school, graduate and reap the lifelong benefits.

It is not just the young who will benefit from this agreement and the money that Tlicho people are setting aside for post-secondary scholarships. Tlicho men and women who have graduated from the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School and have gone on to further education are already returning to the community, bringing with them the benefits of the education they received outside. They are showing the community's youth what can be achieved through education.

They are also proving the wisdom of Chief Bruneau's original strategy. Men and women who graduated from the school that bears his name now own and operate dozens of successful business in the north. Others are part of the Dogrib Power Corporation, which operates a hydroelectric facility on Snare River. One young graduate who went on to earn two degrees has now returned to Rae-Edzo as the community regional post-secondary support coordinator. Accomplishments like this could be read out in the House for many years to come.

● (1620)

I will not be able to complete my lengthy presentation, but I would like to say congratulations to all those leaders of the community and to Chief Bruneau who had the foresight, the intelligence and integrity to stick to and hang onto his dreams and to make sure they are carried out. Congratulations, I say.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the area covered by the Tlicho agreement there are four communities where virtually all the citizens live. In those four communities, there are some non-aboriginal people. Could the member tell us how the rights of non-aboriginal people will be protected in this Tlicho agreement?

Mr. Stan Dromisky: Madam Speaker, that is quite obvious. It is just the basic principle: as "two people". That is what Chief Bruneau wanted. He wanted people living together, the non-aboriginal and the aboriginal, as two peoples. But they are within the same community and they function and operate within the same community. I am sure that over a period of time we are going to find a great deal of intermarriage taking place between the members of the two groups. There is no doubt about that.

However, the wonderful thing about it is that they work together. They see something, they have a vision of a problem that has to be solved, and they solve the problem together. It is not simply a question of turning the problem over to somebody else to solve, somebody who is not aboriginal. For many, many years in this country, problems have been solved for the aboriginal people. Somebody who was non-aboriginal solved them.

It is a wonderful working partnership in all five communities and it will continue to grow as more and more people locate in a growing, prosperous economic model that is situated way up north in Canada.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could just tell us briefly in global terms what will change for the Tlicho. The member's speech was very specific on education and another couple of areas, but the agreement covers a whole bunch of areas that were for Indian Act bands, and they will not be Indian Act bands anymore. There is land, there are resources and there is now law making ability. I wonder if the member could give us, for those who are not that familiar with the details, some generalities of how life will change for the Tlicho under this agreement.

Government Orders

•(1625)

Mr. Stan Dromisky: Madam Speaker, I think everyone listening must realize that this area we are talking about is a very prosperous area of the country. This is where we have diamond mines. There are five communities and the unemployment rate is practically nil. Everyone is working. Money is flowing. There are opportunities that can be purchased, but there are also services that can be purchased.

On the type of question that has been asked, I could go on for a long time. Let us take a look at it from the political scene. Let us look at what is going to happen politically in that whole area in the years to come. Sure, they will be influenced by what happens here in the House of Commons, and they will be influenced by what happens in the provincial governments in western Canada. And they will be influenced by the political decisions made by companies that have invested heavily in economic endeavours in that area, no doubt about it.

However, the most amazing thing, based on the educational model, is that the people will be accustomed to the political scene. They will be under the bill of rights. They will expect and even demand to have a major role to play in the political endeavours of that area for years to come. In other words, they are not going to be content to sit back and wait for the white man who lives in Ottawa under the Peace Tower to tell them what to do, when to do it, how high to jump and why. They will make the decisions and they will have a tremendous influence on the other forms of government throughout Canada.

I will predict for my hon. colleague who asked the question that from a political viewpoint there will be a model emerging in that area which will have an influence for many years to come on decisions made in this House that pertain to aboriginal communities.

I already have mentioned something about the economic factors. The spinoffs are fantastic. We already know that some have come back and have established businesses and services. Soon there will be highly educated university students coming back as dentists, doctors and so forth.

The spinoffs are unbelievable. With so many professional people and business people in the community, there has to be a support system. There must be more doctors, more dentists, more teachers, more carpenters, more plumbers, more engineers and so forth. There must be more shopkeepers, more store owners and so forth. It will keep on growing. It will go on like that for many years to come, because the prospect of delivering new diamond mines is unbelievable. I recently read a report about western, northwestern and central Canada, where over 100 sites that might hold rich deposits of diamonds already have been discovered, people feel.

Socially there may be problems. A surplus of money will generate social problems. There will be an element in our society that will have an effect on these people. There might be access to too much of anything: too much alcohol or drugs or other forms of human endeavour that have detrimental effects on the people. Who knows? The government of that district, Yukon, might even establish a huge casino. That is a nice way of indirectly collecting a lot of taxes from very wealthy people and using them for whatever the government wants to use it for in its districts, not only in that area of Yukon but in other areas.

What will happen to the family unit? It will all depend upon the dedication of the father and mother to their principles, their culture and their value system, on whether they really believe in them.

Let me give an example. It is really frightening and I hate to even talk about it, but we have so many Christians in the world who claim to be Christians yet their value systems crumbled a long time ago. As for principles, they do not have them. They have a few in the bag that they pull out to use to their advantage. It is these people I find most disturbing, because they teach their children. They teach their children to hate other religious groups in this society and in other parts of the world. To me that is extremely disturbing. Fortunately, there are not too many of that kind of people.

•(1630)

In the north, because of two strong people living together, working together and solving problems together, many of the problems of discrimination will disappear and we will get to the point where it will become insignificant.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was going to maybe raise a comment about the speech in terms of a suggestion of intolerance toward certain parts of our society, but I do not think the member intended to say that. I do not know to what he was referring when he said that there was a certain religious group in our society that was intolerant and promoted hate against other people. I am not sure what group that is, but I am will leave that issue aside.

Something just recently developed in the province of Saskatchewan. A band has announced that it will build an MRI clinic, for profit, on its reserve. How would a Liberal government approach that concept in terms of the Canada Health Act and payment of a for profit private facility in the health care system? What would the stand of the member and his government on supporting that initiative or attacking it?

Mr. Stan Dromisky: Madam Speaker, regarding the first point, I was speaking in global terms. I was rushing and I generalized. In the global context, in the world in which we live, there are religious groups that attack other religious groups and teach each other to hate each other.

The second point was in regard to an MRI machine that was to be introduced on a reserve some place in Canada. The member asked how our cabinet and government would approach that and how would we handle the problem. I think when that problem appears before the ministers, the cabinet and the departments responsible, they in turn will have to thrash it out and provide some type of guidance for the rest of the government members to debate and proceed.

Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-31, the Tlicho land claims and self-government act.

The principal component of this legislation is a tripartite agreement negotiated by the representatives of the Tlicho people and the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories. It is incumbent upon us to look at the collaborative approach adopted by the Tlicho and to go ahead and approve Bill C-31.

Government Orders

Close collaboration is vital to the national interest. I believe it is only through genuine participation and partnership between the government and the first nations that aboriginal communities can achieve effective self-government. It is only through open, transparent and accountable governments that the first nations will be able to build a strong, robust economy and develop healthy, enduring societies for the generations that come after us.

I am convinced that enacting this legislation will benefit not only the Tlicho but also the people of Canada. Strong, self-reliant first nations have much to contribute to Canada. They contribute economically, socially, as well as culturally.

Consider for a moment the potential impact of the current demographic projections. Perhaps members already know this, but Canada's aboriginal population is relatively young. Approximately half of all aboriginals are under the age of 25, and the birth rate among aboriginals is about twice that of the general population. With this growth comes immense opportunity: expanding markets for goods and services, a fresh supply of workers, as well as an increasing class of entrepreneurs.

Recent statistics indicate that aboriginal youth are much more likely than other young Canadians to start businesses. Today aboriginals own more than 30,000 companies, and that number increases every day. By nurturing this entrepreneurial spirit among aboriginal youth, I am convinced that we can virtually guarantee Canada's long term prosperity. The key is to ensure that aboriginals play an equal role in the planning and in the executing of economic development projects.

By enacting Bill C-31, the Tlicho will be able to increase their participation in the economy. Furthermore, by ratifying this legislation, the Government of Canada will send a clear message about honouring its commitments to aboriginal and first nation communities. In fact I am confident that negotiators working on land claim and self-government agreements across Canada will follow the progress of Bill C-31 with considerable interest.

I encourage all my colleagues to bear this scrutiny in mind as they consider the many merits of this very important legislation.

A close examination of Bill C-31 reveals how it will foster accountability and create self-reliance for the Tlicho. The Tlicho would form a democratic, responsive and representative government. Investors will appreciate the consistency and the certainty that this will provide. Ownership and control of resources will be transparent and it will be unambiguous. This will enable entrepreneurs to attract new business partners and also encourage investment in these new unfolding enterprises.

Under the terms of Bill C-31, key decisions would be made by the people most familiar with and most affected by local issues. The Tlicho government could enact laws in areas such as aboriginal language and cultural issues. They could develop social services. They would also have a key role and a say in the management of the land and the resources on Tlicho land.

The Tlicho would also be guaranteed representation on the land issues dealing with water and issues dealing with renewable resource boards, which would approve development activities within the

settlement area. This kind of active role and opportunity to decide what the decisions will look like is absolutely key as we go forward.

• (1635)

The Tlicho gain the freedom to establish partnerships. They have freedom to conduct business according to their needs, while at the same time respecting the interests of the already existing businesses and structures.

In short, the Tlicho will establish and maintain a democratic government within the constitutional framework of Canada. This government will respect Canadian law and it will recognize the Tlicho, like Canadians everywhere, are subject to the Criminal Code, as well as protected under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Tlicho have demonstrated that they know how to manage their affairs responsibly and can do it profitably. This is, after all, one of the more prosperous and successful aboriginal groups we have in the north. The Tlicho built and maintain their own airport. They help to manage their schools. They run a senior citizens' centre, as well as a long term care facility. The Tlicho have also negotiated service delivery agreements with the government of the Northwest Territories.

The Tlicho have also signed a number of mutually beneficial agreements with private sector firms. More than five years ago, an impact and benefits deal was struck with the Ekati diamond mine, which is located on the traditional lands of the Tlicho, and a second agreement was negotiated for the Diavik mine. This is good news. These deals have delivered a wealth of economic and social benefits to the Tlicho, such as jobs and opportunity for training. The money flowing into Tlicho communities as a result of these deals supports a wide range of social services.

The legislation before us will inspire new partnerships and will enable the Tlicho to honour their proud tradition of self-sufficiency.

This agreement also provides for a constitution that was created and ratified by the Tlicho before the agreement was signed. I think this is very significant. The constitution is critical. It is critical because it enshrines the community's governance structures and processes. These range from electing officials to drafting budgets to creating new laws. It also sets out the community's governing principles and guiding philosophy. Most significantly, the constitution was developed by the members of the community. The document reflects the wishes of the Tlicho. It does not reflect the views of consultants and lawyers.

The agreement is also the product of the Tlicho's consultative approach. Community meetings were held, ideas were put forward, issues were discussed and they worked through problems. This consensus building strengthened the agreement, and it will also improve the governance. As we know, people are far more likely to respect laws and to participate in governance structures that they themselves helped create.

Government Orders

Through this collaborative process, the Tlicho have shown that difficult issues can be overcome. They have been overcome through thorough consultation and with genuine understanding. They have demonstrated that an agreement can be tailored to fit local circumstances and that the rights and interests of everyone involved can be respected. They have been able to foster better relations with their neighbouring aboriginal groups. For instance, the Tlicho have successfully negotiated overlap agreements with the Sahtu Dene and the Metis, the Gwich'in, the Deh Cho and the Akaitcho Treaty 8 Dene.

The Tlicho are clearly ready to fulfill their obligations. They have been working toward this agreement for more than a decade. They have staged hundreds of information sessions. They have consulted broadly. They have secured the support of a range of public and private sector groups.

• (1640)

Enacting Bill C-31 will send a strong and positive message to other aboriginal communities. As the first agreement in the Northwest Territories to combine land claims and self-government, it demonstrates Canada's commitment to negotiate as the most effective means to achieve reconciliation with aboriginal people. The agreement's numerous distinctive aspects proclaim the government's determination to ensure that the unique needs of the aboriginal peoples are met. When I look at this agreement, I cannot tell members how proud it makes me to be a Canadian.

Many members of the House were members on April 1, 1999 when Nunavut, our third territory, came into existence. How many Canadians have stopped to think that the map of the world has been forever changed and it was done by the Canadian government, with the aboriginals and the citizens of a territory of Canada through negotiation? There was no civil war. Nobody bore arms. We negotiated and we found an agreement.

The bill before us has those same markings. It is about negotiation. It is about consultation. We can also hold up the Tlicho nation as a community that is responsible and is providing effective self-government. It can be used as a best practice, which I think is one reason why the members of the House need to take this incredible legislation to absolutely bind at the local level to a process to effect something that meets the needs of the Tlicho people.

When I was preparing for this speech I came across some statistics which I found really remarkable. We often talk about the lack of participation in the democratic process. I think it is something with which all members of the House are concerned. One only has to look at what these people went through for over 10 years and at the kind of participation they had for voter turnout. They had somewhere in the neighbourhood of, I believe, 83% ratification and the participation of those who were able to vote was extremely high. It speaks to the kind of empowerment that the government needs to create, not only with its aboriginal peoples but with Canadians right across Canada. We have empowered this group through their own hard work to manage their own resources.

I think back to when I was parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment and we were dealing with the species at risk legislation. The aboriginal groups were very impressed that we were able to have meaningful dialogue with them and to build into a piece

of legislation a reverence and an acknowledgement that aboriginal traditional knowledge had much to teach all of us about protecting species at risk and safeguarding their habitat; that the people on the land, the aboriginals, the trappers, the ranchers, the farmers, knew more about these species on their land than any scientist going in; and that it would be through this kind of partnership that we would be able to protect some of our most precious resources.

I encourage all members to become familiar with the legislation and to support it. This is an agreement where a total of 93% of the eligible voters participated in the vote and 84% of the eligible voters voted in favour of this agreement. This can be held out as a best practice, an example for all other aboriginal groups to bring together the best that is possible in partnership with, in this case, the Government of the Northwest Territories, as well as the Canadian government, to bring about the kind of structures which the people themselves have bought into.

I encourage all hon. members to support this very important bill.

• (1645)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Hinton): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherbrooke, Gasoline Pricing; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Agriculture.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not rise to speak for or against but rather to make an observation and then to invite a comment from the member for York North on this important issue.

I want to quote from the interim report released by the Senate last November entitled "A Hard Bed to Lie in: Matrimonial Real Property on Reserve", and I would invite the member to respond because it is an issue we should not ignore.

Members in the House know the important and extensive work done by the royal commission on aboriginal peoples over a long period of time. The member alluded to the length of time it took to arrive at this agreement. The royal commission not only took a long time but it spent a lot of money to arrive at its recommendations and I think we should pay attention to some of them.

One of the areas with which the royal commission dealt was matrimonial property. It is not something that is fully dealt with in the proposal, certainly not to the satisfaction of a number of aboriginal leaders and aboriginal grassroots people with whom I have spoken.

I just want to read this into the record. It states:

I believe that one of the basic rights we should be able to enjoy is the right to call a place, a community or a structure "home". Home is a place where we are safe and protected by family and friends. It is our private spot, where we can lock out the cares of the world and enjoy one another. It is also the place where, as a couple, when we plan a family, we know that this is the place where they will be safe, protected and loved. As a couple, you take a structure, and with personal touches from each of you, you make this your private world. You open your private world to family and friends, making them feel welcome when they visit you. However, make no mistake, this place is your private world.

Government Orders

Imagine the stress on a woman who knows that, if this loving relationship ends, then her world will crumble. Imagine the stress when this woman has children, and she knows, that not only she but also her children will soon have to leave the place she and they call home, and in some cases, must leave the community.

It is not an easy choice to decide that a relationship is not working and that the relationship must end. Normally, while there is a certain degree of animosity, most couples know that they must work out a mutually agreed upon arrangement for the disposition of property, including the home.

This would not appear to be the case for on-reserve women, as they hold no interest in the family home. There is no choice as to who has to move. It is the woman and, in most cases, it is the woman and her children. What a choice: be homeless or be in a loveless relationship, maybe an abusive relationship. Is that what Aboriginal women deserve? No, it is not. Is it humane? It is definitely not.

That is from the interim report of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights.

My concern and the concern of many members of this party is that the issues of matrimonial property are not properly, fully and fairly addressed in this agreement and that, if we proceed in this manner, there is the real possibility that we will perpetuate the circumstance. There is only one place in Canada where no such property rules exist and that is on reserves.

This uncertainty has its effects and those effects are well documented. I have spoken now to dozens of aboriginal women who have experienced firsthand the circumstances of a marital breakup and who have experienced firsthand the absence of any rules, regulations or officious authority that might protect them in that circumstance.

I ask the member, with all the good things that she has observed, with all the positive things that went into the process of developing this agreement, with all of that in mind, does she not feel that this particular issue is one that we must address? Is it fair to download this responsibility onto 600-plus first nations communities across Canada with the resources already stretched to the limit in so many of those communities? Is it fair to have a hodgepodge of rules or in fact no rules at all for such an important aspect, not just of the Canadian fabric but of the lives of these people who have been profoundly affected by the absence of such rules? Is this not an oversight that we should address and address it urgently?

● (1650)

Mrs. Karen Redman: Madam Speaker, the Tlicho government could well make laws that touch on the matrimonial real property and it will be able to make laws respecting the Tlicho lands, including leases granted by it and how such leases will be dealt with in the context of a marriage or, indeed, that of a marital breakdown between a leaseholder and another person.

However, unlike the case of land that is on reserves, territorial law respecting matrimonial property will apply to matrimonial property on Tlicho lands. These lands will be held in fee simple by the Tlicho government and will not be dealt with as though they were being held as reserve lands.

Although Tlicho laws will prevail over a conflicting territorial law, the Tlicho constitution is required to provide rights and freedoms no less than those of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam

Speaker, this agreement involves almost four categories of territory in the Tlicho lands. There is a larger category with certain harvesting rights; a smaller territory where there are environmental assessment controls and responsibilities; and there is even a smaller area that is the actual Tlicho lands. Within the Tlicho lands there are four communities, which is really the only place where people have permanent homes.

In those four communities there are some non-aboriginal people. I wonder if the member could outline how the non-aboriginal people will fit into this whole agreement.

● (1655)

Mrs. Karen Redman: Madam Speaker, the Tlicho agreement would establish a municipal-like community government and this would be pursuant to territorial legislation. Each of the four Tlicho communities would be covered under this agreement. All eligible voters can run and all eligible voters can vote for seats on the community council. Half of the seats on the community council will be guaranteed for Tlicho citizens and only a Tlicho citizen could run or vote for the chief of the community government. However the structure itself does engage all members of the community.

Mr. Lawrence O'Brien (Labrador, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to speak in this debate. I hail from a riding that is largely dominated by aboriginal parties, the Innu, the Inuit and the Métis of Labrador.

It is a genuine honour and privilege for me to rise in the House to speak to this legislation. Bill C-31 is no ordinary piece of legislation. The bill puts into effect the Tlicho land claims and self-government agreement. This is an historic step for the Tlicho people of the Northwest Territories and a milestone in the history of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The word milestone is entirely appropriate, for the Tlicho land claims and self-government agreement represents the accumulation of a long journey, one that has demanded patience, determination and conviction.

As this journey has now reached the House of Commons, I would like to offer my congratulations to the Tlicho people for achieving this momentous agreement. I am proud to declare my support for the agreement and for Bill C-31.

The benefits of aboriginal self-government are many. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has made this fact abundantly clear on numerous occasions. In the time allocated to me today, I would like to touch on just one of these benefits: strengthening economic development in aboriginal communities.

This is an area of which I am deeply concerned. I am very proud to see our aboriginal peoples move forward and to see the Tlicho people, as well as the aboriginal people that I represent, starting to do so very well in economic development.

Government Orders

The question is, why does the promise of economic development for the Tlicho people deserve special attention? As the House will recall, the government made a plea in the recent Speech from the Throne to foster such opportunities for aboriginal communities, to see aboriginal peoples participate fully in national life on the basis of historic rights and agreements, with greater economic self-reliance and improved quality of life.

The land claims and self-government agreement signed by the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tlicho people helps fulfill that commitment by recognizing the jurisdiction of the Tlicho people over their land, resources, language and culture.

Economic growth can occur only when people have their freedom to cultivate it. Most Canadians take this truth to be self-evident but I was struck by a comment made by the Tlicho elder, Mary Ann Jermemick, upon the signing of the Tlicho agreement last August. She said:

We were always told what to do and what we couldn't do. We could have somebody doing mining...right next to our house and we have nothing to say about it. Now at least we have some say about what's going on in our community and our land.

I think that is a very important statement and one that speaks well of aboriginal people throughout Canada and a statement that could be used by almost any aboriginal person. These are profound words spoken by a wise elder. With this agreement, the Tlicho people will now have the freedom to cultivate economic development. They will possess the authority to not only identify new and important opportunities but also to promptly and decisively pursue them.

How will they accomplish these worthy goals? Under the Tlicho land claims and self-government agreement, the Tlicho people will gain additional governance and administrative tools to strengthen their economy. Using these levers of prosperity, the Tlicho expect to create an entrepreneurial climate that will encourage investment and pave the way for new jobs paying good wages. Through the land, resource and financial benefits they receive from the agreement, the Tlicho will be in a better position to undertake new business ventures and forge profitable partnerships.

• (1700)

As new economic ventures get underway, other opportunities are sure to follow. With these exciting new possibilities on the horizon, it is important to remember that the Tlicho people are no strangers to entrepreneurship. In fact, they have provided an excellent example to other groups, aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike, of the benefits of hard work, the strength of partnership, and the value of innovative thinking.

The Tlicho people were the first aboriginal group in the Northwest Territories to develop their own hydroelectric project. Developed in the 1990s, the Snare Cascades hydroelectric project was a joint venture with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and represented the largest economic project undertaken by the Tlicho. A vital component of the regional power grid, the Snare Cascades project now generates more than four megawatts and supplies 7% of the territory's power. Labrador could probably help a bit because there are 5,500 in Great Churchill Falls.

The Tlicho also built, independent of any government funding, an airport in the aboriginal community of Rae-Edzo. The airport, which enables airlines to provide direct flights to Edmonton and Yellowknife, is sure to bolster a variety of industries in the region as traffic steadily increases.

The Tlicho currently partner with some of Canada's largest engineering companies, including Procon and SNC-Lavalin. The Tlicho nation is party to impact and benefits agreements with Diavik and Ekati, two prominent diamond mining companies in the region. Through these accords, the Tlicho have negotiated for guaranteed training and employment at both mines, enhancing the chances for increased employment and improved standards of living for the Tlicho well into the future.

It is no secret that the mining industry is the leading employer of aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. In the early 1990s, aboriginal people accounted for only 10% of full time mining jobs in the north. Direct employment since then has tripled to about 30% largely due to the aboriginal hiring and training initiatives at the two diamond mines.

In fact, at the end of 2001, 683 aboriginal employees, or 30% of the operation's workforce, worked for the Ekati mine or its contractors. At the end of 2002, 36 of Diavik's operating employees were aboriginal. Diavik anticipates that aboriginal workers will account for at least 40% of the company's northern workforce when the mine reaches full capacity.

The mine is well on its way to reaching this figure following a recent agreement signed between Diavik and I&D Management Services, a consortium of aboriginal groups. Under this agreement, I&D provides 100 employees to the mine, of whom half are aboriginal. These workers operate many of the ore haul trucks, excavators, dozers and other heavy equipment essential to the mine's operations.

A new school, for instance, now provides Tlicho youth with a broader range of career and lifestyle options than those enjoyed by previous generations. These increased opportunities are encouraging many more students to remain in school and graduate. Dropout rates have plummeted. Many young people are now going on to post-secondary education, and in June 2006 the school will graduate its first university bound students. That is a very important milestone.

The spirit of entrepreneurship is also reflected in the rapid growth of the local business community. Today, more than 200 aboriginal owned businesses in the region, with annual revenues in excess of \$100 million, are employing some 1,000 aboriginal people. These figures represent unprecedented growth in aboriginal entrepreneurship in Canada's north.

Here is more evidence of this growth. In 2001, Ekati spent \$105 million of its \$400 million operations support budget with aboriginal owned firms, a 62% increase over the previous year. At Diavik, by the end of 2001, the company had \$726 million in contracts with northern companies, including \$500 million with aboriginal joint venture firms.

Government Orders

●(1705)

These firms provide a variety of support services to the mines, namely, pit haul operations, explosives manufacturing, camp management and food services, employee recruiting, construction, engineering, and environmental management. Mining companies are fast recognizing that contract aboriginal firms in the region makes, above all else, excellent business sense.

I believe that I have made it clear that the spirit of entrepreneurship is alive and well among the Tlicho people. I have no doubt that the land claims and self-government agreement will help bolster the regional economy even further.

The agreement gives the Tlicho people greater and more immediate decision making powers to capitalize on business relationships and expand their entrepreneurial horizons. As those horizons expand, the range of work experience available to the Tlicho will continue to broaden. And it is precisely that breadth of experience that will foster ongoing economic development and innovation.

In this way the Tlicho agreement benefits all Canadians, by providing a model of economic self-determination that others might emulate, and by strengthening the central role played by an aboriginal community within a broader regional economy.

I want to offer my personal congratulations again. This agreement and the people represented in this agreement rivals the kind of support and the kind of development I see in my own riding of Labrador among aboriginal peoples. I wish to offer my sincere congratulations.

It is for these reasons, and many others, that I urge all members to lend their support to this historic piece of legislation, to see its passing, and to ensure that the economic promise of the Tlicho land claims and self-government agreement is made real.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: The vote is deferred until the end of government orders today when the other votes will take place.

* * *

●(1710)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from March 12, 2004 consideration of the motion that Bill C-12, an act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children and other vulnerable persons) and the Canada Evidence Act, be read the third time and passed, of the amendment and the amendment to the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Hon. members will recall that, on Friday March 12, 2004, the hon. member for Surrey Central proposed an amendment to the amendment of the motion for third reading of Bill C-12. This called for the Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to report back no later than April 5, 2004. The date in the amendment to the amendment having passed, I am obliged to declare that the amendment to the amendment out of date.

Resuming debate on the amendment standing under the name of the hon. member for Lethbridge.

[English]

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-12, an act to amend the Criminal Code, which, as everyone knows, is the protection of children and other vulnerable persons, and the Canada Evidence Act.

Bill C-12 proposes a broad package of reforms which seeks to ensure that the criminal law meets the concerns and needs of all Canadians, especially those who are most vulnerable among us, our children.

The bill has five key components. I would like to go through them one by one and give illustrations of how the bill would be implemented.

The first one is strengthening the existing child pornography provisions by broadening the definition of written child pornography and narrowing the existing defences to one defence of public good.

What this means in reality is that the existing defences for child pornography would be reduced to the single concept of the public good. A person would be found guilty of a child pornography offence when the material or act in question does not serve the public good or where the risk of harm outweighs any public good it serves.

The bill now defines the public good as including—and I think this is important—“acts or materials that are necessary or advantageous to the administration of justice or the pursuit of science, medicine, education or art”.

Government Orders

The proposed reforms would also expand the existing definition of written child pornography to include material that is created for a sexual purpose and predominantly describes prohibited sexual activity with children. The current definition of child pornography applies only to material that advocates or counsels prohibited sexual activity with children, and this is strengthening the concept that at the end it is the ultimate public good that must be served.

The second component is the creation of a new prohibited category of sexual exploitation of young persons, as evidenced by the nature and circumstances of the relationship, including: the age of the young person, any difference in age between the young person and the other person, and the degree of control or influence exerted over that young person.

This provision would provide new protection to young persons between 14 and 18 years of age. Under the proposed reform, courts could infer that a relationship is exploitative based on its nature and circumstances, including the age of the young person, any difference of age, the evolution of the relationship, and the degree of control or influence exercised over the younger person. This new category would focus the court's determination on the conduct or behaviour of the accused rather than on the consent of the young person to sexual activity.

The third component is to increase the maximum penalties for offences against children and make the commission of an offence against any child an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes.

These tougher sentencing provisions include, under the government's reform proposals, penalties for offences that harm children. The maximum sentence for sexual exploitation would double from five years to ten. The maximum penalty for abandonment of a child or failure to provide the necessities of life to a child would more than double from two to five years. The abuse of a child in the commission of any Criminal Code offence would also have to be considered as an aggravating factor by the court and could result in a tougher sentence.

The fourth component is the facilitating of testimony by children and other vulnerable victims and witnesses by enhancing their ability to provide clear, complete and accurate accounts of events while at the same time ensuring that all of an accused person's rights are protected and respected.

• (1715)

These measures to protect children and other vulnerable persons as witnesses involve several reforms which will help ensure that participating in the criminal justice system is less traumatic for the victim or witness. Current Criminal Code provisions would be expanded to allow all witnesses under 18 to benefit from testimonial aids in any criminal proceeding, not only those involving sexual and other specified offences.

These aids include providing testimony from behind a screen or by closed circuit television or having a support person accompany the young witness. Current provisions generally require that the Crown establish the need for a testimonial aid. Given the potential trauma of the courtroom experience for young witnesses, the proposed reforms acknowledge the need for an aid.

For all testimonial aids, the judge retains the discretion to deny the aid or protection where its use would interfere with the proper administration of justice. In addition, the facilities to permit the use of a screen or closed TV circuit must be available in the courtroom before the judge can permit their use. Fundamental rights for the accused are fully respected under the proposed amendments.

These reforms also would allow children under 14 to give their evidence when they are able to understand and respond to questions. A competency hearing, which is currently mandatory, would no longer be required.

The fifth component is the creation of a new offence of voyeurism to criminalize the surreptitious observation or recording of a person in defined circumstances that give rise to a reasonable expectation of privacy.

This new offence of voyeurism is influenced through the rapid technological developments of recent years. They have brought many benefits to Canadian society, but they have also had implications for such basic matters as privacy. Web cameras, for example, which can transmit live images over the Internet, have raised concerns about the potential for abuse, notably where the secret viewing or recording of people involves a serious breach of privacy or is made for sexual purposes.

The proposed offences would make it a crime in three specific cases to deliberately and secretly observe or record another person in circumstances where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists: when the person observed or recorded is in a place where one is reasonably expected to be in a state of nudity or engaged in explicit sexual activity; when the person observed is in a state of nudity or engaged in explicit sexual activity and the purpose is to observe or record a person in such a state of activity; or when the observation or recording is done for a sexual purpose.

Distributing material knowing that it was produced through an offence of voyeurism would also be a crime. The maximum penalties for all voyeurism offences would be five years' imprisonment and the copies for sale or distribution of a recording obtained through the commission of a voyeurism offence would be subject to seizure and forfeiture. The courts could also order the deletion of voyeuristic material from a computer system.

I believe that Bill C-12's objectives are clearly stated and reflected in the preamble. Paragraph one states:

Whereas the Parliament of Canada has grave concerns regarding the vulnerability of children to all forms of exploitation, including child pornography, sexual exploitation, abuse and neglect—

These words are an emphatic statement of purpose in Bill C-12.

Paragraph three of the preamble also notes as an objective that Bill C-12 seeks:

...to encourage the participation of witnesses in the criminal justice system through the use of protective measures that seek to facilitate the participation of children and other vulnerable witnesses while ensuring that the rights of accused persons are respected—

Government Orders

• (1720)

I believe we should all be readily able to recognize these objectives as not only important but fundamental to our collective efforts to provide better protection to our children and other vulnerable persons. I hope that all hon. members will support Bill C-12.

Much of the debate on Bill C-12 has focused on the proposed child pornography amendments. Canada's child pornography laws are among the toughest in the world. Bill C-12 will make them tougher still. I believe this bill's proposed expansion of the definition of written child pornography and the narrowing of the defences to one single defence of public good, now defined in Bill C-12, respond in a very direct and meaningful way to issues highlighted by the March 2002 case involving Robin Sharpe. I hope that all hon. members can support Bill C-12's child pornography amendments. I hope that all hon. members can support the bill.

Mr. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, I would like at this time to move, seconded by the member for Lakeland, that the amendment be amended by adding "and that the committee report back to the House no later than June 1, 2004".

The Deputy Speaker: It is a matter of procedure, but of course every matter of procedure is important. Just to review where we were, when the hon. member for York South—Weston concluded his remarks, I then called for questions and comments. The member for Battlefords—Lloydminster rose to propose this amendment, which, in terms of substance, is in a correct form, but the Chair cannot accept the proposal at this time while the member gained the floor on questions and comments.

I will have to go back to the House and ask for questions and comments. Then of course subsequently if the occasion arises, the member getting up on debate would have that same opportunity.

I will go back to the previous question on questions or comments. There being no response, we will resume debate with the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

• (1725)

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if this is the appropriate time, I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding: "and that the committee report back to the House no later than June 1, 2004".

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair wants to make sure that it is doing things in the proper order and I thank the House for its understanding and cooperation.

Hon. Gar Knutson (Minister of State (New and Emerging Markets), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, and all members of the House, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-12, an act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children and other vulnerable persons) and the Canada Evidence Act.

This is not among my normal course of work being a Minister of State for International Trade. I know I share the concern with all members of the House about the protection of children and vulnerable people.

Bill C-12 proposes a broad package of criminal law reforms that seek to strengthen the criminal justice system's protection and response to children and other vulnerable persons.

Although I will focus my comments on child pornography, I would also like to note that Bill C-12 contains other important reforms. It proposes to strengthen protection for young persons against sexual exploitation. It would increase the penalties for offences against children. It would facilitate testimony by child and other vulnerable victims and witnesses. It would create a new offence of voyeurism.

As I said, I would like to focus my comments on the amendments relating to child pornography.

The sexual exploitation of children, society's most vulnerable group in any form, including through child pornography, is to be condemned. I know there is no debate among civilized people on this point.

Bill C-12 recognizes this and proposes amendments to our existing child pornography provisions that I believe will serve to better protect children against this form of sexual exploitation. Canada's child pornography laws are already among the toughest in the world and as my colleague before me said, Bill C-12 would make them tougher still.

First, Bill C-12 proposes to broaden the existing definition of written child pornography to include written material that describes prohibited sexual activity with children where the description is the predominant characteristic of the material and it is done for a sexual purpose.

The proposed amendment reflects Canadians' belief that these types of written materials pose a real risk of harm to our children and society by portraying children as a class of objects for sexual exploitation. Bill C-12 clearly states that such materials are not acceptable.

Second, Bill C-12 proposes to narrow the existing defences into one defence, of public good, a term that is now specifically defined in the bill. Under the new law, no defence will be available where the material or act in question does not serve the public good or where it exceeds or goes beyond what serves the public good.

The public good defence recognizes that in some instances, such as with the possession of child pornography by police as part of an investigation, such possession serves the public good and should be protected. It also recognizes that art or material that has artistic value can serve the public good. However and unlike the current artistic merit defence, the proposed public good defence in Bill C-12 will not be available for such art where the risk of harm it imposes to society outweighs any potential benefits that it offers.

Canadians have been demanding that we respond in a direct and meaningful way to the issues that flowed from the March 2002 case involving Robin Sharpe, and this is exactly what Bill C-12 does. The adoption of Bill C-12's amendments will reaffirm Canada's leadership role in protecting children from sexual exploitation through child pornography.

I note from the clock that I am running out of time, so I just ask in closing that all hon. members support these amendments.

Government Orders

● (1730)

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2004

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 23, 2004, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the previous question at the second reading stage of Bill C-30.

Call in the members.

● (1800)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 47)***YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assadourian
Bagnell	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Brison
Brown	Bulte
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Castonguay
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Comuzzi	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepolo	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Folco	Fontana
Frulla	Fry
Galloway	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Guamieri	Harvard
Harvey	Herron
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jennings
Jobin	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Longfield	MacAulay
Macklin	Malhi
Maloney	Marcel
Marleau	Matthews
McCallum	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry

Peric
 Pettigrew
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Price
 Provenzano
 Reed (Halton)
 Robillard
 Savoy
 Scott
 Shepherd
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Stewart
 Telegdi
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
 Tonks
 Valeri
 Volpe
 Whelan
 Wood— 143

Peterson
 Phinney
 Pratt
 Proulx
 Redman
 Regan
 Saada
 Scherrer
 Sgro
 Simard
 St-Julien
 Steckle
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Tirabassi
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Wappel
 Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Benoit
Bigras	Blaikie
Borotsik	Breitkreuz
Bryden	Burton
Cardin	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Clark	Comartin
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	Day
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant	Gaudet
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin	Goldring
Grewal	Grey
Guay	Guimond
Hearn	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Lalonde
Loubier	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	Marceau
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield	McDonough
McNally	Ménard
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Obhrai
Pallister	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proctor	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Rocheleau
Roy	Sauvageau
Schellenberger	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	St-Hilaire
Stinson	Stoffer
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews	Tremblay
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne
White (North Vancouver)	Williams— 96

PAIRED

Members

Bennett	Bergeron
Bourgeois	Bradshaw
Crête	Fournier
Lanctôt	Speller— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The next question is on the main motion.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I think you would find unanimous consent of the House that the members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House, with the Liberals voting in favour.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Conservative members present today will be voting no, and I would like the name of the member for Calgary Southwest to be added to our rolls.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois vote against this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic Party vote no on this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, both Progressive Conservatives will be voting yes on this motion.

● (1805)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 48*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assadourian
Bagnell	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Brison
Brown	Bulte
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Castonguay
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Clark	Comuzzi
Cotler	Cullen
Cuzner	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepolo
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Easter
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Folco
Fontana	Frulla
Fry	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Guarnieri
Harvard	Harvey
Herron	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jennings	Jobin
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee

Leung	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Malhi	Maloney
Marcil	Marleau
Matthews	McCallum
McCormick	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McTeague	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peric
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Saada	Savoy
Scherrer	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi	Tonks
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood— 144

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)	Benoit
Bigras	Blaikie
Borotsik	Breitkreuz
Bryden	Burton
Cardin	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Comartin	Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
Day	Desjarlais
Desrochers	Doyle
Duceppe	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Fitzpatrick	Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Goldring	Grewal
Grey	Guay
Guimond	Harper
Hearn	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Lalonde
Loubier	Lunn (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	Marceau
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield	McDonough
McNally	Ménard
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Obhrai
Pallister	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proctor	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Rocheleau
Roy	Sauvageau
Schellenberger	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	St-Hilaire
Stinson	Stoffer

Government Orders

Strahl
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)

Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tremblay
Wayne
Williams— 96

PAIRED

Members

Bennett
Bourgeois
Crête
Lancôt

Bergeron
Bradshaw
Fournier
Speller— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

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

* * *

[*English*]

WESTBANK FIRST NATION SELF-GOVERNMENT ACT

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of Bill C-11, An Act to give effect to the Westbank First Nation Self-Government Agreement, as reported with amendment from the committee, and of Motions Nos. 1 and 3.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the motions at report stage of Bill C-11. The question is on Motion No. 1.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negatived on the following division:)

*(Division No. 49)***YEAS**

Members

Anders
Cummins
Schellenberger
Stinson

Burton
Mark
Schmidt
White (North Vancouver)— 8

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Asselin
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Bélangier
Benoit
Bevilacqua
Binet
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Brison
Bryden
Caccia
Cannis
Cardin
Casey
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Clark
Comuzzi
Cuzner

Ablonczy
Alcock
Assadourian
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Casson
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chatters
Comartin
Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral

Davies
Desjarlais
Dhaliwal
Discepolo
Dromisky
Duceppe
Duplain
Eggleton
Epp
Farrah
Folco
Forseth
Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Goodale
Grewal
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harvard
Hearn
Hinton
Ianno
Jaffer
Jobin
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Knutson
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Longfield
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacAulay
Malhi
Marceau
Marleau
Matthews
McCallum
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
Ménard
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna
Moore
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Obhrai
Pacetti
Pallister
Paradis
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proctor
Provenzano
Redman
Regan
Reynolds
Robillard
Roy
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Sgro
Simard
Solberg
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Stoffer
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Tremblay

Day
Desrochers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Duncan
Easter
Elley
Eyking
Fitzpatrick
Fontana
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Galloway
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goldring
Graham
Grey
Guay
Harper
Harvey
Herron
Hubbard
Jackson
Jennings
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lalonde
LeBlanc
Leung
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Macklin
Maloney
Marcil
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield
McCormick
McGuire
McLellan
McTeague
Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paquette
Parrish
Penson
Perron
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Price
Proulx
Rajotte
Reed (Halton)
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Rocheleau
Saada
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Strahl
Telegdi
Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi
Tonks
Ur

Valeri
Volpe
Wasylcia-Leis
Whelan
Williams

Vanclief
Wappel
Wayne
Wilfert
Wood— 230

PAIRED

Members

Bennett
Bourgeois
Crête
Lancôt

Bergeron
Bradshaw
Fournier
Speller— 8

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 lost.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Chair to verify with the clerks if the vote of our colleague from Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour was recorded. We clearly heard, on this side, the clerk refer to him as the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

The Speaker: Yes, the clerk has informed me that an error was made.

Is there unanimous consent to put in the name of the member for Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour instead of that of the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The result remains the same.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

An hon. member: It is to be defeated on division.

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated on division.

(Motion No. 3 negated)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that members who have

Government Orders

voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yes, except those who indicate otherwise.

I wish to point out that the member for Willowdale is absent.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1825)

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

(*Division No. 50*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Asselin
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
Bélanger
Benoit
Bevilacqua
Binet
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Brisson
Bryden
Caccia
Cannis
Cardin
Casey
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Clark
Comuzzi
Cuzner
Davies
Desjarlais
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dromisky
Duceppe
Duplain
Eggleton
Epp
Farrah
Folco
Forseth
Fry
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gallant
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Goodale
Grewal
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harvard
Hearn
Hinton
Ianno
Jaffer
Jobin
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes

Ablonczy
Alcock
Assadourian
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey
Barnes (London West)
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Casson
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chatters
Comartin
Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral
Day
Desrochers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Duncan
Easter
Elley
Eyking
Fitzpatrick
Fontana
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Champlain)
Galloway
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goldring
Graham
Grey
Guay
Harper
Harvey
Herron
Hubbard
Jackson
Jennings
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)

Government Orders

Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lalonde
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Longfield	Loubier
Lunn (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	Macklin
Malhi	Maloney
Marceau	Marcil
Mark	Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
McCallum	McCormick
McDonough	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McNally	McTeague
Ménard	Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell
Moore	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Obhrai	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Pallister	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Penson
Peric	Perron
Pettigrew	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon	Pratt
Price	Proctor
Proulx	Provenzano
Rajotte	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Robillard
Rocheleau	Roy
Saada	Sauvageau
Savoy	Schellenberger
Scherrer	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Simard	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
St-Hilaire	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Stoffer	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tirabassi
Toews	Tonks
Tremblay	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Wappel
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	Wilfert
Williams	Wood— 230

NAYS

Members

Burton	Cummins
Mayfield	Schmidt
Stinson	White (North Vancouver)— 6

PAIRED

Members

Bennett	Bergeron
Bourgeois	Bradshaw
Crête	Fournier
Lancôt	Speller— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Motion agreed to)

TLICHO LAND CLAIMS AND SELF-GOVERNMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, an act to give effect to a land claims and self-government agreement among the Tlicho, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada, to make related amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-31.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that members who have voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yes, except those who indicate otherwise.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Conservative members present here tonight will be voting no on the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP will be voting yes to the motion.

Mr. John Herron: Post Progressive Conservatives will support the motion, Sir.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 51*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assadourian
Asselin	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bagnell	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Binet
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Brisson
Brown	Bulte
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Cardin	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Clark
Comartin	Comuzzi
Cullen	Cuzner
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies

Desjarlais
 Dhaliwal
 Discepola
 Drouin
 Duplain
 Eggleton
 Farrah
 Fontana
 Fry
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Gallaway
 Gauthier
 Godfrey
 Goodale
 Guarnieri
 Guimond
 Harvey
 Hubbard
 Jackson
 Jobin
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keyes
 Knutson
 Laliberte
 Lastewka
 Lee
 Longfield
 MacAulay
 Malhi
 Marceau
 Marleau
 Matthews
 McCormick
 McGuire
 McLellan
 Ménard
 Minna
 Murphy
 Nault
 O'Brien (Labrador)
 O'Reilly
 Pacetti
 Paquette
 Parrish
 Peric
 Pettigrew
 Picard (Drummond)
 Plamondon
 Price
 Proulx
 Redman
 Regan
 Rocheleau
 Saada
 Savoy
 Scott
 Shepherd
 St-Hilaire
 St-Julien
 Steckle
 Stoffer
 Telegdi
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
 Tonks
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Wappel
 Whelan
 Wood— 179

Desrochers
 Dion
 Dromisky
 Duceppe
 Easter
 Eyking
 Folco
 Frulla
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
 Gaudet
 Girard-Bujold
 Godin
 Graham
 Guay
 Harvard
 Herron
 Ianno
 Jennings
 Jordan
 Karygiannis
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
 Kraft Sloan
 Lalonde
 LeBlanc
 Leung
 Loubier
 Macklin
 Maloney
 Marcil
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 McCallum
 McDonough
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McTeague
 Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
 Mitchell
 Myers
 Neville
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Owen
 Pagtakhan
 Paradis
 Patry
 Perron
 Phinney
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Pratt
 Proctor
 Provenzano
 Reed (Halton)
 Robillard
 Roy
 Sauvageau
 Scherrer
 Sgro
 Simard
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Stewart
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Tirabassi
 Tremblay
 Valeri
 Volpe
 Wasylcia-Leis
 Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott
 Bailey
 Benoit
 Breitzkreuz
 Burton
 Casson
 Cummins
 Doyle
 Elley
 Fitzpatrick

Ablonczy
 Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
 Borotsik
 Bryden
 Casey
 Chatters
 Day
 Duncan
 Epp
 Forseth

Private Members' Business

Gallant
 Grewal
 Harper
 Hinton
 Johnston
 Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 Mark
 McNally
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Obhrai
 Penson
 Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
 Ritz
 Schmidt
 Solberg
 Stinson
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Wayne
 Williams— 57

Goldring
 Grey
 Hearn
 Jaffer
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
 Mayfield
 Merrifield
 Moore
 Pallister
 Rajotte
 Reynolds
 Schellenberger
 Skelton
 Sorenson
 Strahl
 Toews
 White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED

Members

Bennett
 Bourgeois
 Crête
 Lanctôt

Bergeron
 Bradshaw
 Fournier
 Speller— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1830)

[English]

THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 380 under private members' business.

● (1840)

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

(Division No. 52)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
 Assadourian
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)
 Barnes (London West)
 Bellemare
 Bertrand
 Bigras
 Blaikie
 Brown
 Calder
 Caplan
 Casson
 Catterall
 Chamberlain
 Chatters
 Cummins
 Davies
 Desjarlais
 Dhaliwal
 Discepola

Anders
 Asselin
 Bakopanos
 Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls)
 Benoit
 Bevilacqua
 Binet
 Bonwick
 Bulte
 Cannis
 Cardin
 Castonguay
 Cauchon
 Charbonneau
 Comartin
 Dalphond-Guiral
 Day
 Desrochers
 Dion
 Doyle

Adjournment

Drouin	Duceppe
Duncan	Duplain
Easter	Epp
Eyking	Farrah
Folco	Fontana
Forseth	Fry
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Galloway
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Grey	Guay
Guimond	Harper
Harvey	Hearn
Hinton	Ianno
Jackson	Jennings
Jobin	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lalonde	Lastewka
Lee	Leung
Longfield	Loubier
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	Malhi
Maloney	Marceau
Marcil	Mark
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
Mayfield	McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)	Ménard
Merrifield	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Moore	Myers
Neville	O'Brien (Labrador)
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Casey	Clark
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Bellechasse—Etchemins—Montmagny—L'Islet is not present to move his private member's motion on the Academy of Science pursuant to the notice published in today's Notice Paper. Accordingly, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[Translation]

GASOLINE PRICING

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the trucking industry is suffering quite a bit from the often unjustified increases in the price of gasoline that also put an unnecessary strain on consumers' budgets. We know that the government is doing very little about the negative effects of increased gasoline prices.

On March 23, 2004, I asked the minister about this. I asked him whether he would agree to create a petroleum monitoring agency, as recommended by the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. To my surprise, the minister said that prices should be and are determined on the market price.

In the meantime, the government has officially announced that it rejects the request by the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology to create a petroleum monitoring agency in order to protect consumers from abuses by the oil companies.

In the government's response there are two important factors that need to be taken into consideration: of course there are market forces, but there is also the very important factor of the democratic deficit within the decision presented by the government.

Adjournment

Regarding market forces, the government says it must not get involved in the process. However, as hon. members may know, since 1970, through subsidies or indirect benefits to the oil industry, the government has invested \$66 billion. If that is not interfering in market forces, then I do not know what is. During that same time, only \$326 million was invested in clean energy. The government recently gave the oil and gas industries \$250 million. Yet, we all know full well that the oil companies have not stopped making huge profits.

There should also be serious concern about management in the petroleum industry and about the GST and other taxes that are collected. No one will forget the 1.5¢ in GST added to the price of gasoline. That is yet another example of indirect interference in market forces. Nor will we forget that the government, on the eve of the election in 2000, gave everyone \$125. Thus we see that the government has a serious management problem. We know very well that it was not just people who bought gasoline who received that money. There were also people who did not really need it.

We also know that when the committee passed this recommendation, all the Liberal MPs were in favour. The Prime Minister often says that he wants to eliminate the democratic deficit and yet he does not listen to his own members.

Therefore, concerning the management of the petroleum industry and the government's involvement, what I am really asking the minister this evening is why he refused to create this petroleum monitoring agency. I repeat; it was a one-shot request. It could have enabled the government to find out how petroleum prices are managed.

• (1845)

Hon. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. Allow me to thank the standing committee for considering a matter that concerns many people.

As a result of its research, the committee recommended that the federal government create an independent petroleum monitoring agency responsible for collecting and providing information on gasoline pricing and tabling an annual report.

The government, particularly this department in cooperation with other departments, considered the committee's recommendation. The government believes nonetheless that its current activities, combined with research about the situation across Canada and abroad, information largely provided by the private sector—provincial sectors and a number of organizations must also be taken into consideration—represent the most practical and efficient way of informing consumers.

We must not forget that, exceptionally in times of crises, the federal government would be able to invoke the Canadian Constitution to interfere in a sector such as this one. However, under the Constitution, the provinces clearly have the jurisdiction and the responsibility for regulating gasoline pricing.

I am convinced that my Bloc Québécois colleague does not intend to encourage us to ignore provincial jurisdiction, particularly that of Quebec.

The only role the government plays in this is administration of the Competition Act. The Competition Bureau is the federal body responsible for ensuring that product prices in all non-regulated sectors of the economy are set by market forces and not by price fixing. Its role is to monitor this in all sectors of economic activity.

Since 1985, the Government of Canada has had a market-driven energy policy. This means in particular that domestic prices for oil and refinery products are based on the international price of crude oil.

Recent price hikes on petroleum products in Canada are in large part connected to developments in the international markets over which Canadians have no control, such as the huge jump in crude oil prices triggered by the increased world demand and the tight markets.

In the United States in particular, there are other complicating factors, particularly the general strike in Venezuela, the war in Iraq and civil strife in Nigeria. These geopolitical factors have contributed to reducing the available supply. What is perhaps more important is the resulting consumer uncertainty. As a result, fuel prices have risen and become more unstable, and the fluctuations are reflected at the pump.

Natural Resources Canada also plans to redesign its site to make it more accessible to the public, and to provide better links to other information sources.

I would just add in closing that, for the past 20 years, the Government of Canada has developed other solutions to help Canadians make wise energy choices and reduce their energy bills.

Through the programs of Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency, considerable efforts have been expended to ensure wide distribution of information on vehicle fuel efficiency. The office is also actively involved in promoting energy efficiency and the use of alternative fuels.

• (1850)

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary's time has expired. The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

Mr. Serge Cardin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has obviously alluded to the Competition Act.

For a long time now the public has been under the impression that it is being had. Furthermore, a member of this House, the Liberal member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, at one time had the support of several Liberal members when he made public a report indicating that there was collusion in the oil industry. However, the Conference Board analyses stated that there was no collusion.

Adjournment

The public still feels that it is being taken for a ride. There is no doubt that the world price of oil has an influence. Often, however, the increase at the pump does not reflect this. We also know that there are speculators, which makes the price fluctuate quite a bit. The price also varies considerably from one region to the next and this is not always related to transportation costs.

Profit margins are being created at the processing and refining stage. Given that all the oil companies post the same prices on the same day, it is practically impossible that there is no collusion. Having a petroleum monitoring agency would have been good for the public and helped the government regain the public's trust.

Hon. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the representatives of the Bloc are not here to find solutions, but rather to focus on the problems.

This is the approach they take to every issue, be it health, employment insurance, or anything else. In this particular instance, the government is working along with the provincial governments, while respecting jurisdictions.

I am certain that, if my Bloc colleague made a comparative study of gas prices around the world, he would realize that we are not the worst off. The government is putting measures in place to promote the development of better energy sources and thus impact on all environmental considerations. Ultimately, the costs to all Canadian consumers will be far lower.

Even on the international level, I am certain that steps taken by the various governments, within jurisdictional limits, will contribute to lower resource prices.

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the manner in which the Minister of Foreign Affairs chose to answer my question which I asked on behalf of the farmers and the softwood lumber producers in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Canadian exporters rely upon an open border. Diplomatic relations with our closest and largest trading partner must be a number one priority.

The Canadian consulate in Washington is our most important diplomatic posting. The Minister of Foreign Affairs knows full well that the ambassador position in Washington has been used by this government as a patronage plumb in the same way that ambassador postings around the world are being used as dumping grounds for old Liberal Party hacks.

The minister also knows that the current posting to Washington has expired. The minister knows that John Manley was offered the spot—

• (1855)

The Speaker: The hon. member knows that she cannot refer to hon. members by name. I assume that she means the hon. member for Ottawa South and she will want to make sure she refrains from using members' names in discussion in the House.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I thought he had retired.

The hon. member for Ottawa South was offered this spot but refused to go because he assumed there would be another leadership convention after the upcoming election. He figured it would be better to plot here in the capital than to be run out of the country by a dictatorial Prime Minister who knows no compassion when it comes to dealing with his rivals.

Rather than trying to insinuate something that is not, the government should also know that loading up ambassadorial postings with Liberal Party hacks is causing a morale problem with our foreign service. Many retired heads of missions look back nostalgically on the days when promotions were made on the basis of merit and Canada was a leader in diplomacy.

There was a time when the Canadian foreign service attracted the brightest and the best. Nothing can be more insulting than spending 30 or 35 years in the foreign service and then getting squeezed out on the basis of not what one knows but who one knows.

We enjoyed a good reputation around the world. Canada's role has been marginalized by an indifferent government that rarely backs up words with action. Denmark was so insulted when the government dumped Alfonso Gagliano in their country as ambassador that it responded by invading Canada and claiming a piece of our territory in the high Arctic.

While Canadians were asking what the Danes did to deserve this kind of treatment, the Danes were busy raising their flag on Canadian soil. No wonder the Danes acted the way they did.

Hon. Scott Brison (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada-U.S.), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has attacked the reputation of our foreign service officials and in fact, with her pernicious and misinformed attack, has actually done more to hurt the morale of our foreign service than she realizes.

It is a misinformed attack because, first, we recognize the importance of the Canada-U.S. relationship as our most important external relationship and the complexity of that relationship. That is why we must ensure that the position of ambassador to the United States continues to be filled by a qualified individual. I can assure everyone that is indeed the case.

The position has been staffed, for instance, for the last three and a half years by a competent career diplomat with over 35 years of foreign service experience. She mentions that people with 30 to 35 years of experience in the foreign service are getting pushed aside. This is somebody with 35 years of foreign service experience representing the interests of Canada across the world and making a difference, and the hon. member has attacked and impugned his reputation.

I want to point out very clearly that the individual I mentioned is a career foreign service official who has defended the interests of Canadians valiantly over a career of 35 years, and his position did not expire in October. That is another piece of misinformation that the hon. member has come to the House unprepared to explain today.

As order in council appointments, ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the Prime Minister, rather than for a fixed period of time. For administrative purposes, by and large, the heads of mission assignments are established for a period between two and four years, plus any extensions depending upon the location.

Adjournment

If we were to review the history of the ambassadors to the U.S., we would see that the position has been held for periods of anywhere from one year, in terms of John de Chastelain, to eight years for Allan Gottlieb from 1981 to 1989. Most ambassadors to the U.S., however, have a period of four years or more.

Our current ambassador presented his letters of credence to President Clinton on October 19, 2000. He has therefore yet to reach the three and a half year mark in his term. He has not even served four years.

While in Washington, I can tell everyone that our current ambassador, supported by a talented and dedicated group of officials, has and continues to work diligently to defend and promote Canadian political, economic and trade interests in the United States.

Here at home, as the president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce recently said about our Prime Minister, "this Prime Minister gets it when it comes to Canada-U.S. relations".

We are taking a more sophisticated approach to Canada-U.S. relations. In addition to my appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, we now have a cabinet committee on Canada-U.S. relations, a cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister that deals with, across departments and ministries, issues of relevance to Canada-U.S. relations.

Beyond that, through the enhanced representation initiative, we are increasing by 50% our missions and our representations in the U.S. over the next year. We are also setting up a secretariat in Washington that will help support the efforts of legislators, from both sides of the House and from all parties, in an effort to defend Canadian interests when they are building relationships with other legislators.

The fact is that we are strengthening our representation in the U.S. by 50% and we will be serving the interests of Canadians.

● (1900)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, how demoralized the current ambassador to Washington must feel as a career diplomat. As soon as the current Prime Minister was sworn in, the first thing he wanted

to do was replace him with someone he felt was a threat to his leadership.

I want to go back to the appointment to Denmark. Even though the Prime Minister fired Alfonso Gagliano, the damage was done. Now the Prime Minister has finally decided to travel to Washington. It should be funny to see what kind of photos the Prime Minister's handlers allow to be sent back to Canada. If he is being too chummy with the United States president, the socialists cannot wait to attack. If the Prime Minister does not at least make some attempt to repair relations with our largest trading partner, the tens of thousands of Canadians who were relying on—

The Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member's time has expired.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, as I was discussing prior to the cellphone of the hon. member interrupting our discourse, I want to assure the hon. member that as a government we are committed to strengthening Canada-U.S. relations, a relationship that is strong, functional and effective in defending our interests in Washington.

The Prime Minister made substantive and symbolic progress in his meeting with the president in Monterrey. In fact, it was after that meeting that President Bush said he recognized that the BSE issue was not simply a Canadian issue but a Canada-U.S. issue, that we have an integrated beef industry and, as such, we ought to work together on both sides of the border at the official and the political levels to reach a common, science based approach which will enable us to defend that interest anywhere in the world.

That is what we are committed to as a government. That is what we are working to achieve. I would hope that all members of the House from all parties will continue to work to those efforts. We will continue to support that engagement.

● (1905)

The Speaker: It being 7:05 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:05 p.m.)

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